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*Ki'ei aku i ka hālāwai, hū.
Gaze out to the horizon, whoa.*

- EXCERPT
E ALU PŪ NETWORK OLI

Aloha 'ohana and supporters,

Browse KUA's image archive over the last decade and you'll see a familiar scene: Someone, often a kupuna (elder), points somewhere just beyond the frame. Others gaze in that direction. A finger points to the moon, to limu on the shoreline, to trace movements on the tide, winds or rain up mauka (mountain side)... a flash out on the horizon. Something to observe, to question, to learn. A finger points the way.

I imagine the genesis of the scientific process started this way. An observation made. Questions ensue. Tests, analysis, deeper interpretations and understandings follow. Process repeats and refines. Over time insights sharpen, Human relationships to the environment are informed. Over and over for a long time, long before it is written down.

KUA serves networks of communities engaged in the regeneration of ancestral place-based observational learning, situated knowledge and practices of spiritual, philosophical, ethical and practical impacts on their lives in balance with their environment. Recent professionalization of scientific processes doesn't negate the value of indigenous traditional ecological knowledge and practice. Ways of knowing can co-exist and complement each other.

This year E Alu Pū, like their ancestors before, crossed the world in difficult times to engage in governance and diplomacy at the World Conservation Congress in Marseille, France. They looked out, saw traces of change in the undulations of the ocean. With indigenous peers they jumped in. They helped change the narrative. They pointed at pathways toward the power of people, their places and traditions.

The horizon of the last two years was hazy. It left many dizzy and bewildered. It's difficult to realign the canoe in unfamiliar currents. Yet many rural and Native Hawaiian communities rose to the challenge. Their global peers did too. Since KUA's founding our community leaders have pointed to our fundamental infrastructure—our environment and a more virtuous relationship to it. A relationship and foundation to be rebuilt.

Here at home, community fishery management efforts continue, the significance of indigenous aquaculture inspires food system discussions and actions, community leaders designed an app to collect observations and catalyzed deeper explorations into kilo (observation) and in 2022 communities will celebrate the significance of limu (seaweed) for our entire community.

Returning from France we saw Native Americans hired to oversee and lead environmental governance at the highest levels of the US government. The White House issued a memo "to recognize Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK)" and set forth a mandate to better integrate and respect ITEK in federal decision-making nationwide.

Now local, national and global environmental issues witness shifts, at least in rhetoric, that seem to elevate the voice, perspective and empowerment of indigenous people, and local and underrepresented communities. Foundations and governments discuss increased focus and movement of resources to more local levels of governance and to community efforts where situated knowledge and practical mālama (caretaking) occur.

We observe, amidst instability it's difficult to see the destination. However, communities have pointed in the direction we need to go. They pointed in the direction long before this pandemic and they will continue to point our way through it.

We look forward to 2022. To re-weave the social fabric of our connections to each other. To point once again together and re-affirm the destination.

Kevin Chang, Executive Director, Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo
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LONOIKAMAKAHIKI

E Alu Pū Gathering, Kīpahulu, Maui, 2014 PHOTO CREDIT: KIM MOA

Loko I'a Needs Assessment



Hui Mālama Loko I'a
November 2020
Synthesized by:
Kui'āina Ulu 'Auamo
University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program
Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Science Center

HUI MĀLAMA LOKO I'A

is a growing consortium of *kia'i loko* (fishpond guardian/caretakers) and stewardship organizations from *loko i'a* (traditional Hawaiian fishponds) across Hawai'i. This network came into existence in 2004 as an opportunity for *kia'i loko* to empower each other and leverage their skills, knowledge, and resources related to *loko i'a* restoration and management.

VISION: perpetuate 'āina momona through *loko i'a* culture.

MISSION: empowering a network of *kia'i loko* whose kuleana is to reactivate, restore, and cultivate *loko i'a* guided by *loko i'a* culture in pursuit of 'āina momona for 'ohana and communities

Loko I'a Needs Assessment | Resilient Loko I'a

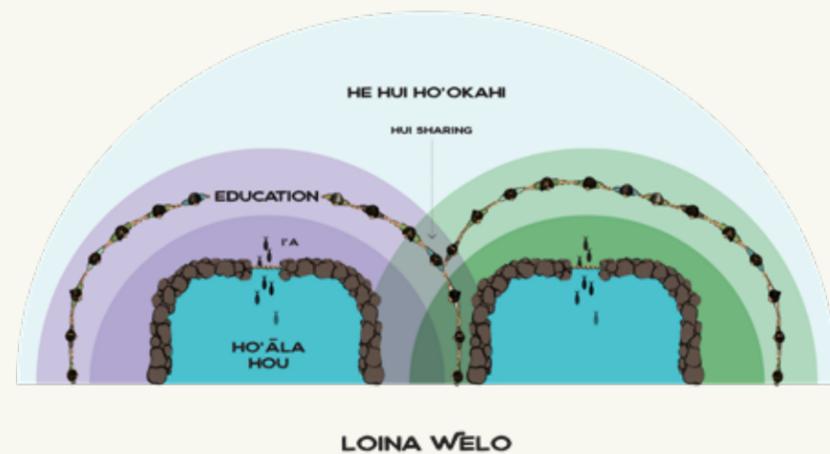
The Loko I'a Needs Assessment is the first comprehensive compilation of the research ideas and needs within the community of fishpond managers, landowners, and stewardship organizations to inform adaptation of fishpond practices toward their resilience, adaptation, and sustainability in the face of a changing climate.

This inaugural report, synthesized in partnership with the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program and the Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Science Center, reflects the needs, interests, visions, and ideas of the Hui Mālama Loko I'a as documented in their collective and cumulative conversations in 2019. Rooted in conversations that started in 2014, and whose seeds were planted in the foundational *loko i'a* movements beginning in the 1970s and extending through the 1990s, this living document firmly acknowledges the pathways that previous generations laid to make this effort possible -- pathways of on-the-ground caretaking, community advocacy, historical research, and funding support.

Compiled by a diverse community of *kia'i loko*, contributors, writers, and partners, the project required facilitation of a year-long process to enable practitioners to voice their needs, articulate their priorities, and create pathways for resilience in their places and practice. The effort ultimately informs the development of future research, monitoring, and planning for *loko i'a* throughout Hawai'i and serves as an important example for funders, academic institutions, and other resource/boundary organizations on how to implement deep listening and engagement with community-based experts who most often know the most critical questions to ask about the issues facing our communities.

Strategic roll out opportunities will continue throughout next year and includes the development of an informational website. To explore the newest evolution of thoughts and perspectives on *loko i'a* resilience please visit www.kuahawaii.org/resilientlokoia

Six focus areas of the Hui Mālama Loko I'a ILLUSTRATION CREDIT: KELSEY IGE



Mahi i'a Oral History | Kū a Lanakila Nā Mahi I'a: The Fish Farmers Stand Victorious

Kū a Lanakila Nā Mahi I'a is an oral history project that uplifts the innovation and pioneering spirit of our elder generation of aquaculturists in Hawai'i. It will include interviews with *kūpuna* in the indigenous aquaculture community of *loko i'a* (fishpond) practitioners, many of whom fought to protect fishponds from destruction and further loss. These leaders and community activists planted the seeds for the movement of fishpond revitalization that continues to grow today. We aim to document and uplift the lived experiences of these *mahi i'a* (fish farmers) as a means to ensure that we continue to hold restorative aquaculture as a crucial part of our food systems into the future.

Initiated in the summer of 2021, the project provides participating interns with oral history interview training, led by Kēhaulani Kupihea of Mauiola Ke'ehi, as well as the opportunity to learn about, gain exposure to, and begin building their own networks within the *loko i'a* community. Selected oral histories collected during the project will also be featured in the NOAA Voices Oral History Archives.

Year of the Limu | During the 2021 Hawai'i Legislative Session, limu practitioners in the Limu Hui proposed their first legislation as a hui, a resolution with enthusiastic support from KUA network members and partners calling for the declaration of 2022 as the Year of the Limu. While the reso passed out of the Senate, its House companion ran out of time, so we've approached the Governor to make the declaration through executive order.

The "Year of the Limu" initiative was created to raise awareness about the importance of limu to Hawai'i's biocultural heritage and nearshore marine environment and as an indicator of the health of our *ahupua'a* land system and our people. Our hope is to recapture, retain, and share cultural and environmental knowledge about limu for the benefit of all the people of Hawai'i and the many generations to come.

Activities planned for 2022 include a campaign to name a state limu, the production of a Year of the Limu Calendar and other fun limu swag and opportunities for the public to engage with limu at community educational events throughout the *paē'āina*. We have also partnered with the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to republish the much-beloved cookbook and limu resource, "The Limu Eater" by Heather J. Fortner. Stay tuned for more updates and event news.

SHIMA Program | A collaboration between KUA and the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST), the SHIMA: Okinawa-Hawai'i STEM Education Collaborative was a joint STEM education workshop for high school students in Okinawa and Hawai'i. While initially planned as an in-person summer student exchange until COVID-19 concerns made travel from Okinawa to Hawai'i impossible, we were still able to connect and provide a meaningful exchange virtually.

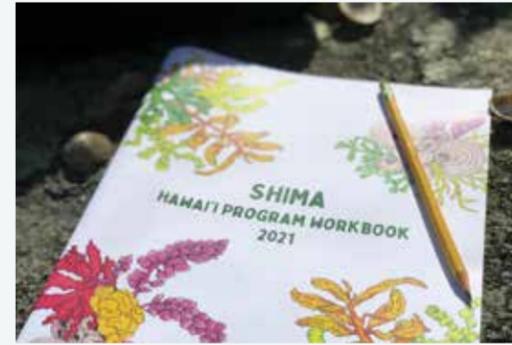
The Hawai'i program, which included a five week online lecture series, provided an opportunity for 'ōpio (youth) from across the *paē'āina* to connect with and learn from experts in the field of limu, including professionals and practitioners from both academia and the community. Cross-cultural shareback and learning with the Okinawa student cohort highlighted the connections between our island cultures, resources, and traditional natural resources management practices while encouraging interest in limu and the fields of science and technology. We look forward to other opportunities to connect with our SHIMA friends in the coming year.

A Hui Hou, Uncle Wally | As we close a year of marked transition for our KUA 'ohana, from shifts in leadership to the passing of giants in our network 'ohana, we also want to pause to recognize and celebrate a transition of another kind. That of our beloved no-nonsense straight-talking (for hours) hole-in-the-wall lunch buddy, closing-circle crybaby, jolly-ole Okinawan-Kepanī Unko, mentor, and ogo namasu specialist, KUA's resident loea limu and O.G. Limu Hui Coordinator, Uncle Wally Ito, into for-real-kine retirement!



For those who haven't already met her, we'd also like to introduce our new Limu Hui Coordinator, Malia Heimuli, who has been the *kāko'o* for Uncle Wally for the past two years. Malia Heimuli is from Kahalu'u, Ko'olaupoko, O'ahu. Starting off as an intern in the *ma'uokele* of Kōke'e to the *nāhele* of Ka'ūpūlehu and Waikōloa, she has worked for the past 10 years with non-profit organizations in *mālama 'āina* and youth-programming across our *paē'āina*. As a native plant nerd and a recent limu enthusiast, she finds her passion in the pursuit of 'āina momona. "I am looking forward to meeting in-person soon and working with everyone in the Limu Hui, helping to bring awareness of limu and celebrate during next year's 2022 Year of the Limu!" Says Malia!

Don't worry tho, Uncle Wally still plans to be involved with KUA activities through the 'Ewa Limu Project and the Limu Hui and will continue his limu growing efforts and support of limu restoration projects. Uncle Wally, here's to your official *kūpuna* promotion!



THE LIMU HUI was created in 2014 at the request of *kūpuna* (elders) who gather and care for native Hawaiian limu (seaweed) around the islands. Hosted by 'Ewa Limu Project the focus of this initiative was to "gather the gatherers" and identify loea limu (limu experts) in our communities who still retain knowledge of and practice the many traditional Hawaiian uses of limu.

Since then the network has grown to include over 50 cultural practitioners, educators, researchers and community members from across Hawai'i who are committed to the protection, perpetuation, preservation and restoration of limu knowledge, practice and ancestral abundance of limu throughout our islands.



E ALU PŪ is a movement of community projects, families, groups, and organizations involved in the stewardship of bio-cultural resources throughout Hawai'i.

An intergenerational learning network, the communities of E Alu Pū are connected by grassroots values that drive their efforts toward a collective vision of 'āina momona—healthy abundant land/sea and people.

Each year, network members gather together to share lessons learned, support and teach each other, and work side-by-side. While COVID-19 has prevented us from gathering alo ā he alo (face to face) we have nurtured those productive spaces for growth and pilina (connection) virtually.



E Kilo Pualu (Let's Kilo Together) | The E Kilo Pualu App is an evolution of the Community Kilo Survey developed by KUA and community network leaders in partnership with CI-Hawai'i, DAR staff and Maui-based app developer, Sam Aruch of Natural Resource Data Solutions (NRDS). Based on frameworks from community experts and launched on Piko o Wākea (Spring Equinox), the app is a central tool for collective monitoring efforts that combines project management, GIS, data collection, reporting, and analysis. It is a digital tool that kua'āina communities can convene around for monitoring their places, learning and group analysis and also provides a platform to sharpen our kilo, deepen understanding, fortify community knowledge and advocacy for mea'ai pono & 'āina momona.

The development of this community monitoring tool has also led to deepened collaboration with the State and other NGOs to advance monitoring efforts through the Community Based Monitoring Hui that brings together community members, intermediaries, researchers, scientists and the State to elevate the power of community collected data to have equal or increased credibility with decision makers. The goal is to gather data with enough statistical power, and standardization, but still driven by community questions and needs.

Ko'a + Digital Equity | In 2020, in an effort to remain connected and responsive during the early days of the pandemic and to create regular check-in opportunities between the KUA team and network members, KUA hosted a series of informal weekly virtual gatherings called "Moshimoshi" that engaged a range of topics, activities, and celebrations. As the appetite for extraneous online meetings subsided, we shifted to hosting more curated and intentional "Ko'a" conversations, renamed after fishing ko'a or gathering areas for fish to congregate and be nourished. Now, invited speakers provide presentations on current issues, short learning opportunities, and Q&A sessions for network members and partners.

Nā Kai 'Ewalu | Since April KUA has convened, a group of fishers that meet to discuss their catch observations and learn from each other what subtleties like coloring, milting, gonad size, gut contents, or behaviors indicate. This group of fishers, called Nā Kai 'Ewalu, after the eight seas that join the Hawaiian Islands, is led by Uncle Mac Poepoe of Moloka'i who asked us to help gather a community of practitioners so he could cross reference and potentially validate his monitoring studies.

Ho'oikaika Kilo (To strengthen observation) | This workshop series is an effort to honor, reinforce and strengthen various schools of kilo—the constant learning, shifting, adapting, sense making, sense-engaging, info gathering, storytelling & action cycles that in turn strengthen all our work for 'āina momona.

Kole Aku, Kole Mai | This kole (talk story) series are intermittent sessions that connect our network members with their national and international peers and allow us to hold space for meaningful stories to be shared back and forth. This reciprocation of mo'olelo and 'ike is what satisfies our desire to uplift one another. Featured guests have included our friends from the Tolowa Dee-ni' and Qwelmintec Secwepemc Nations. We hope continued sharing of stories will lead to future opportunities for in-person exchange between E Alu Pū network members and youth and our indigenous partners abroad.

"Protecting our Organization, Protecting our Volunteers" | This workshop series led by Klapperich International Training Associates LLC. and Hands in Helping Out, offered network members a space to talk through different scenarios as they opened back up for community workdays, school groups, and visitors and provided info to help them develop their own COVID related safety policies for staff and volunteers.

Lawai'a Pono + Community-based subsistence fishing areas (CBSFA) | Currently, the Mo'omomi (Moloka'i) CBSFA final rule-making decision is pending. Public scoping meetings for both Kīpahulu (Maui) and Miloli'i (Hawai'i) were tentatively scheduled for December 2021. Success in these efforts are important progress indicators to the state's 30x30 commitments. KUA staff and other partners continue to assist communities on planning outreach strategies and advocacy efforts.

The Lawai'a Pono Hui is led by members of E Alu Pū and others interested in advocacy around community-based fishery management and traditional ecological knowledge and practices. Ironically, COVID's impact led to one of the most active legislative sessions for our networks. KUA facilitated weekly policy check-in calls and leveraged time with

legislative consultants to advocate for one of the state's most successful marine policy focused sessions to date. To prepare for the upcoming 2022 session, community leaders have called for "Legislative Study Halls," a bimonthly series developed in partnership with Resources Legacy Fund, Hawai'i Public Policy Advocates, CI, TNC and OHA to help create learning opportunities, build understanding and foster habits and pathways for networks members to engage in environmental governance and advocacy.

IUCN World Conservation Congress | KUA is an inaugural Indigenous People's Organization (IPO) member of the IUCN. In September, we sponsored a cohort of 10 E Alu Pū network members to accompany 20-40 Hawai'i



state delegates to the World Conservation Congress in Marseille, France. During the Forum, members of KUA's delegation substantively and impactfully participated in 11 separate Forum events in partnership with the United Nations, TNC, IUCN, IUCN-IPO, IUCN-CEESP and the ICCA Consortium.

Before the WCC, KUA drafted and passed two WCC Motions on Indigenous Aquaculture and an IUCN-IPO audit in partnership with UH Law School's Environmental Law Program. At the Assembly, UH served as a proxy for Kamehameha Schools, the Edith Kanakaole Foundation and Inuit Issittormiut Siunnersuisoqatigiifiat (Inuit Circumpolar Council). Our delegation members participated

IN MEMORIAM

Uncle "Teddy" Kawahinehelelani Blake | Earlier this summer, we said goodbye to Theodore "Teddy" Kawahinehelelani Blake, a steadfast community leader, advocate for cultural preservation, limu practitioner, and beloved kupuna within our network 'ohana, who passed away at his family home in Koloa, Kaua'i on July 18, 2021.



Uncle Teddy was often the first one to show up to a meeting—with friends in tow—and also the first one to fall asleep during that same meeting. Whatever impression Teddy left, he was definitely an unforgettable character.

We'll miss your daily check-in calls sprinkled with jokes and positive affirmations, your penchant for hyperbole, your words of wisdom, and the wise-ass ones as well. In spirit with your kolohe smiles and the sassy puakenikeni that almost always adorned your ear, here is a story retold by Wally about the ways in which you helped us through this season of shifting sands and how we'll carry your stories with us in many more seasons to come.

"Teddy Blake and Nutgrass" by Wally Ito | Small kid time, whenever Ted would get into trouble, his dad would punish him by making him go outside to pull weeds. But not anykine weeds. His punishment was to go out into their yard and pull out 1,000 nutgrasses with the nut still attached. He had to do this before he was allowed to come back into the house.

If you have any kind of experience pulling nutgrass, you

passionately in the negotiations and development of several motions that were significant to KUA, IPOs and issues of climate. In particular, we were honored to support a motion renouncing the Doctrine of Discovery. We also played a role in drafting and supporting the Global Indigenous Agenda, met with the highest leadership of IUCN to support it, and successfully lobbied to have the first permanent IPO representative to the IUCN Council. KUA delegates supported other IUCN-IPO efforts throughout and held a closing event attended by over 100 attendees.

Expanding the Network Evaluation Toolkit Shareback | Debbie Gowensmith is a longtime supporter of community-based natural resource management in Hawai'i and one of the original founders of the organization that would later become KUA. Debbie has been working as our Contract Evaluator for a number of years and has helped us develop and refine our evaluation practice. She recently earned her Ph.D. in Research Methods and Statistics from the University of Denver. Her dissertation research combined the use of social network analysis and qualitative comparative analysis in evaluating the collective impact of the E Alu Pū network.

In the first quarter of 2021, Debbie took some time with our Lohe Pono Fellow, Kinohi Pizarro, to listen, survey, record, and look deeply at what network members perceive to be site-based results of networking with each other and overall network-scale contributions. The result of this work helps us better understand how creating spaces to help folks forge connections makes a difference. Debbie has also opened up weekly "Office Hours" for staff and community members to drop-in, pose questions, and receive easy feedback and assistance with non-profit organization management. Mahalo Debbie!

understand how difficult it is to pull that many nutgrasses with the nut still attached. Nutgrass sends out thin, easily breakable runners. If you are not careful when pulling out this weed, you will end up with the blades but not the "nut." It takes a lot of digging and a lot of effort to pull out the blade with the nut still attached. Pulling out 1,000 is harsh punishment.

The young Teddy Blake figured out a way to evade harsh punishment by growing his own nutgrass in a plot of sand. Pulling 1,000 nutgrasses from a bed of sand was easy. He could quickly pull out the required amount of nutgrass and have plenty of time to play. Instead of changing bad behavior to avoid punishment, he chose to continue his rascal ways by concocting a plan to get around harsh punishment.

I often work in my garden. One of the burdens of gardening is pulling out nutgrasses with the nut still attached. Every time I do this I think of Teddy. The way nutgrasses keep popping up in my garden, I will be thinking of Teddy Blake for the rest of my gardening life.

Cami Kameaaloha Kanoa-Wong | In September the lāhui collectively grieved the passing of another hoā, aloha 'āina warrior and mana wahine, Cami Kameaaloha Kanoa-Wong. Cami's warmth, energy, 'ike, the EA she embodied, and the legacy she leaves behind will reverberate through our community for generations. Aloha Pumehana & Mahalo, Beloved Cami.



Earlier this year we said Aloha to our co-director, colleague and mentor, Miwa Tamanaha. After a lot of thought, pule and conversation, and over a decade in leadership at KUA, Miwa decided to step down from her position as Co-Director in March.



Miwa's contributions in service to our kua'āina and in building our organization into what it is today are immeasurable. As a community organizer, network weaver and one of the founders of our nonprofit, Miwa strengthened and fortified the backbone that is KUA. She built our organizational capacity, raised millions in resources for our communities, and guided us and others within the networks strategically toward our shared vision of 'āina momona.

In her leadership practice at KUA, Miwa embodied that konohiki mindset we often speak of that invites ability and willingness in the way she observed, cultivated and cared for our growing 'ohana. In her quiet unassuming way, she brought things to order, kept us on track and nudged us to really dig into the heart of what matters, our 'i'o.

The last two years of the pandemic have been a journey through shifting sands, indeed. During a season of transition unlike any other, we know that nothing is certain. Yet still, with eyes fixed on the horizon, hazy as it may be, a few hopeful truths remain. We know the substance of the work we do is greater than any one person. It builds upon the work of those who came before us and draws upon a greater collective intelligence.

Perhaps one benefit of living on an active volcanic island, we become acclimated to the ground shifting beneath our feet and the wave action changing our shoreline with each passing season. Like the indigenous grassroots island people KUA supports, we are steadfast in our commitment to care for our 'āina and each other.

As Miwa has transitioned into a new role as a member of the Limu Hui, beloved ally, friend and supporter, so has our work as KUA staff. Like the kua'āina, we observe, ask questions, learn from each other, adapt and reaffirm our destination.

The ways in which Miwa shaped our collective hana, the level of excellence she strived for in her work, the safe spaces she helped create for us to share, grow in our practice, and take care of ourselves and each other, are threads that guide us through seasons of transition. The values of compassion, accountability, equity, transparency and deep listening that she lifted up during her time at KUA have become foundations for the KUA way. They are the constellations we look to follow through unfamiliar currents.

VISIT our blog to read our full tribute to Miwa along with messages from other beloveds in our network who benefited from the invisible magic of her many gifts: www.kuahawaii.org/mahalo-miwa/

"Everything begins before it begins"

2022 will mark KUA's 10 year anniversary as a nonprofit org. While many hoaaloha are familiar with KUA's work, some may not know the story of where it all began. With support from the Pisces Foundation we'd like to share some of that story here.



"KUA was called into being by one of our kupuna (elders), Uncle Mac Poepoe, who gave it life and breathed it into existence," says early KUA co-founder Debbie Gowensmith.

On the Hawaiian islands, the loss of stewardship traditions and cultural practices that connect people with 'āina (land or earth—literally "that which feeds") has impacted every area of community life and health, including people's ability to feed themselves.

"Models indicate that the current resident population in Hawai'i is not much larger than that of pre-Western colonization," says Debbie, "and the people pre-colonization were feeding themselves just fine. Since then, the output of Hawaiian fisheries has declined 80-90 percent. The kua'āina—the grassroots community folks—are the experts in fisheries management."

"Hawaiians are not stewards. They are kin," says Auntie Maka'ala Ka 'aumoana, KUA board member and executive director of Hanalei Watershed Hui. "Living on a small island, the most remote landmass on planet earth, gives you a unique perspective on your responsibility. Fishermen know things scientists never will."

Kelson "Mac" Poepoe, a fisherman from Mo'omomi, Moloka'i, experienced the worrying trends first-hand in the ocean, on land, and in his community

In the Beginning

Understanding that the community deserved more input into the management of water and land, Uncle Mac called for a gathering to share knowledge and reclaim traditional cultural practices and rights. The first meeting occurred in December 2003, a gathering of 13 communities in Mo'omomi with funds from longtime supporters the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation and the Hawaii Community Foundation.

That first meeting started a chain reaction. "Their very first priority was to transmit knowledge from elders to youth," says Debbie. "Five weeks after the first gathering, one of our elders passed away, and it solidified that purpose."

In 2004 a second gathering was held on O'ahu, where young people made short films to capture kūpuna wisdom. By 2005,

CCN was facilitating twice-annual gatherings. By 2006, the work began to deepen and spread. Appropriately, people learned of the network by word of mouth.

During those early years, the network facilitated the planning for Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea, an organization on O'ahu dedicated to education and protection of over 100 near-shore acres including a mile of coastline.

As momentum continued to grow, the network supported a string of neighboring communities on Kaua'i, including Hā'ena, Waipā and Hanalei. Caretakers visited one another and learned how others exercised their kuleana (rights and responsibilities) to care for the resources in their unique places.

Growing and Facing Challenges

In 2006, national fishing groups tried to insert right-to-fish bills into Hawai'i state policy. Suddenly communities in the network split on what they thought would be best for their place related to the potential regulatory changes. The group would emerge from this crisis stronger, as it helped them realize what was right for one place might not be suitable for another. They needed to trust each other's place-based knowledge and wisdom.

By 2008, the network adopted the name **E Alu Pū**, suggested by member and fishpond caretaker Hi'ilei Kawelo. The phrase describes how the pualu (a type of surgeonfish) swim together in schools; it's a command or call: **move forward together**. The network communities continued to let Debbie know that they needed technical assistance, organizing, and policy support she and others were providing.

With the network's commitment and under Debbie's leadership, CCN became the Hawai'i Community Stewardship Network (HCSN) the following year. HCSN continued to support the E Alu Pū network. By 2012, they decided to form a non-profit organization and adopted the name Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (KUA).

The definition of the Native Hawaiian term kua is "back" like a "backbone" that holds up and fortifies the greater body. Kua'āina represents the grassroots, rural peoples of Hawai'i. Ulu means "to grow", and 'Auamo is a carrying stick held on multiple shoulders to share the burden of carrying something of great weight forward. Together the phrase means **"grassroots growing through shared responsibility."** Miwa Tamanaha and Kevin Chang became KUA's co-directors, incorporating the organization and beginning the continual work of fine-tuning its structure for maximum effectiveness. Around that time, the E Alu Pū network also formed a youth council for leadership development, mentoring, and succession.

"I keep seeing all the challenges we have," says longtime member Uncle Damien Kenison, a fisherman in one of the last remaining traditional Hawaiian fishing villages, in Ho'okena, Hawai'i. "It's more than trying to retain our fishing rights. It's trying to affect the political process. We need to have a good understanding of what our community needs, each of us, and then KUA's role is to help us achieve that goal."

During those early years, the network helped support the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana in the development of a management plan for a community-based subsistence fishing area in Hā'ena, Kaua'i. This effort took over 15 years of community organizing and more than 40 community meetings and habitat assessments that included traditional ecological knowledge gathering. The state eventually approved the plan in 2013, and the Hā'ena CBSFA became the first officially designated subsistence fishing area in the state in 2015.

"The state created a law based on the work of Uncle Mac. It's the only law I know of in the state that allows the community to partner in co-governing resources, and it's driven specifically by native Hawaiian voices of place," says Kevin.

Connecting Past, Present and Future

The impact of KUA's work to connect community around traditional ecological knowledge continues to grow. Today, the E Alu Pū network has grown to over 40 community-based stewardship initiatives, families, and organizations that are working to mālama (care for) dryland forests, taro farms, fishponds and fisheries across Hawai'i. KUA also supports and

facilitates a statewide network of traditional Hawaiian fishpond projects and practitioners called Hui Mālama Loko I'a as well as a growing network of limu (native seaweed) practitioners, educators, researchers, and community stewards known as the Limu Hui.

The work is bigger than any one organization. It is a movement.

"What is an origin story? Everything begins before it begins," says Miwa. "We can go back into the Hawaiian renaissance and joy and music being

an inception point and then bringing back language. Today there are more speakers of Hawaiian than ever. There's innovation all around us to continue to create those spaces to share knowledge."

Going back further, E Alu Pū youth council member and taro farmer Josiah Deluze describes the effective land and sea management practiced in Hawai'i before Western contact.

"From a Hawaiian perspective, we have a good model of as near as you can get to a perfect community," he says. "Each land division from mountain to sea has a caretaker. Each is a community, and everyone has a role: from the upland farmer to the nearshore fisher. Then you come together and share what you have with a super complex trade system. Everyone knows their role, and they share and help each other build."

"It's called the konohiki mindset," says Kevin. "Their work was to connect the people and the place to the government."

TO CONTINUE READING the full story, visit: www.kuahawaii.org/about/origin-story/

Alice Skipton creates strategic content for mission-driven organizations. She wrote this story in partnership with KUA and Rethink Outside, a campaign focused on a shared tested narrative and storytelling intended to shift how people think about and prioritize the outdoors. A version of this story also appears on the Rethink Outside website under the title "The Power of Knowledge-Sharing"