



*KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA*  
**KAHO‘OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION**

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COMMISSION MEMBERS

JOSHUA KAAKUA, Ed.D  
*Chairperson*  
CARMEN HULU LINDSEY  
*Vice-Chair*

SUZANNE CASE  
‘ĀNELA EVANS  
SAUMALU MATAAFA  
BENTON KEALII PANG, Ph.D  
MICHELLE PESCAIA

Michael K. Nāho‘opi‘i  
*Executive Director*

**PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, February 24, 2022**

1:30 pm

Online via ZOOM and livestreamed via YouTube

**COMMISSION MEMBERS**

**PRESENT:** Josh Kaakua, E.D., Chairperson; Carmen Hulu Lindsey, Vice-Chair; Suzanne Case; Saumalu Mataafa; Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D; Michelle Pescaia

**EXCUSED:** ‘Ānela Evans

**KIRC STAFF:** Michael Nāho‘opi‘i, Executive Director (ED); Matthew Hatakeyama, Administrative Officer (AO); Daniel Morris, Deputy Attorney General (DAG); Terri Gavagan, Commission Coordinator (CC); Margaret Pulver, Public Information Specialist (PIS); Courtney Kerr, Ocean Resources Specialist (ORS); Dean Tokishi, Ocean Resources Program Manager (ORPM); Paul Higashino, Restoration Program Manager (RPM); Cassandra Smith, Volunteer Coordinator (VC); Lopaka White, Maintenance & Vessel Operator (MVO); Grant Thompson, Logistics Specialist (LS)

**GUESTS:** Eric Brundage (Dawson, Inc.)

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 pm. Roll call was conducted, and quorum was established with six Commissioners.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Minutes of December 13, 2021 Regular Commission Meeting**

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Lindsey moved to approve the minutes of December 13, 2021 regular commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pang.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved by the majority of the Commissioners present via roll call: Commissioner Case-abstain; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Vice Chair Lindsey-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were made.

#### IV. ACTION ITEMS

##### A. Review and Approve Amendment to the FY 2022 KIRC Operating Budget

ED Nāho‘opi‘i requested that the Commission approve an increase of \$60,000 in the FY22 budget.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the recommended motion reflected several changes which occurred after the revised FY22 budget was approved by the Commission on December 13, 2021:

- 1) addition of the new Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant (CWC) Project to the Ocean Resource Management Program
- 2) addition of \$42,341 in reimbursable trust funds to the line item for Ocean Resource Management/CWC/Materials & Supplies
- 3) shift \$2200 from non-reimbursable trust funds to reimbursable trust funds in the line item for Reserve Operations/Contracts/Base Camp to reflect CWC grant funding for on-island internet communications
- 4) transfer \$7500 from non-reimbursable trust funds to reimbursable trust funds in the line item for Reserve Operations/Contracts/Base Camp to reflect CWC grant funding for on-island meals
- 5) correction of a spreadsheet formula error in the line item for Administration/Outreach/IMLS NHMS Grant resulting in an increase of \$18,925 in reimbursable trust funds

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained the budget reflected only the portion of the Coastal Wetland Conservation grant expected to be spent in FY22.

Staff expected the trust fund balance at the end of the year will be \$20,400 higher than previously projected.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Lindsey moved to review and approve amendment to the KIRC FY22 operating budget with an increase of \$61,266.00. Commissioner Mataafa seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Mataafa asked regarding the error in the spreadsheet if the amounts in the spreadsheet were correct and if the only the total was wrong. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded there was an error in the formula so that the numbers did not roll up into the total. The approved total was short by \$18,000. However, the numbers in the different funding sources were correct.

Commissioner Pang stated that he would abstain from the vote as he was employed by Fish and Wildlife.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved by the majority of Commissioners present via roll call: Commissioner Case-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-abstain; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Vice-Chair Lindsey-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye

**B. Authorize Executive Director to extend Base Camp Contract with Dawson, Inc. for FY23**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i requested the authority to extend the Base Camp Management Contract with Dawson, Inc. for May 15, 2022, through May 14, 2023, in the amount of \$497,297.67.

The Commission was provided a comparison of quotes of specific services for FY23 and FY22 in the Commission packet.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that amount on the FY23 line for with total monthly services with GET (General Excise Tax) is incorrect in the memo table. The amount listed was without GET. The correct total is \$407,996.16. The correct delta ( $\Delta$ ) was \$26,352. All contract differences below were correct.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i discussed differences in the quote amounts between FY22 and FY23. The pay escalation was already planned. There was a pay correction that reduced the work force. There was an increase in administrative hours as increased purchasing coordination starts with Dawson purchasing food and the KIRC purchasing other items. It was noted that the contingency item funds would revert to the trust fund if unused. The increase in the contingency transport funding was to allow replacement of boat runs on the last day of island access with helicopter transportation. Boat runs may be reintroduced later if hardships developed.

Commissioner Mataafa asked what the basis for the increased administrative hours was. ED Nāho‘opi‘i requested Mr. Brundage provide more details for this requirement. Mr. Brundage explained the increase was based on what was learned over the first year of the contract. Mr. Brundage found that he was spending more hours when he was not on island managing the contract. There was also a pay increase for the general maintenance technician. He has not seen a pay increase since he started working several years ago. Mr. Brundage also noted that the amount budgeted for helicopter transportation of \$1200 per month was based on a quote received from Windward. However, the actual amount charged had been below \$1000 so it could be anticipated that not all the transportation contingency funds would be utilized.

Commissioner Mataafa asked Mr. Brundage if he anticipated an increase in FY24 based on his experience. Mr. Brundage responded he did not think so unless Dawson’s overhead costs increase.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i added that if costs increase significantly then the time on island might be reduced.

Commissioner Pang asked if a performance review was performed for these contracts. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded he usually conducts one at the end of the performance period. He also goes out to island and conducts a site inspection as well as reviews issues with Mr. Brundage. He stated that there was a good working relationship between the KIRC and Dawson and that the contract was as lean as possible, especially with COVID measures needing to be implemented.

Vice Chair Lindsey commented that she thought ED Nāho‘opi‘i was very prudent.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Lindsey moved to approve to authorize the Executive Director to extend the Base Camp Management Contract with Dawson, Inc. for the period May 15, 2022, through May 14, 2023, in the amount of \$497,297.67. Commissioner Pang seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved by roll call: Commissioner Case-yes; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Vice-Chair Lindsey-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye.

**C. Authorize Executive Director to extend Communication Services Contract with Harmer Radio and Electronics, Inc. for FY23**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated that the major difference between the quotes for FY22 and FY23 were the costs of the telephone and data circuits. All internet services will be added to the Harmer contract. Currently staff cannot get high speed internet access in the office through the normal procurement process. Internet access services would be added to the Harmer contract which would also result in getting high-speed internet access to the boat house as well as cost reduction.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i also noted that there was an increase in the site rent on Lāna‘i for the microwave relay. There was also an increase in the cost of solar panel maintenance. Staff has found that more maintenance to these panels was required. These panels are separate from the main grid. They are part of the stand-alone power system for communications and monitoring when the base camp is shut down.

There is an increase in the contingency fund of \$1000 which would be returned to the trust fund if it was not utilized. It reflects the staff’s estimate for repairing of the radios, replacement of batteries, etc.

Commissioner Mataafa noted the cost-of-living adjustments (COLA). ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that it was less than 8% which Harmer implemented across the board on all their contracts.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Lindsey moved to authorize the Executive Director to extend the Communications Contract with Harmer Radio and

Electronics, Inc. for the period May 1, 2022, through April 30, 2023, in the amount of \$75,012.07. Commissioner Pang seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved via roll call: Commissioner Case-yes; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Vice-Chair Lindsey-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye

**D. Review and Approve Proposed CY 2022 Ala Loa Dates for the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that he met with the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO) coordinators who gave him five additional dates which were highlighted in the memo.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Pang moved pursuant to HAR §13-261-13 and Section 8 of the Palapala ‘Aelike Kahu‘āina, approve the proposed additional access dates for work on the Ala Loa for the 2022 calendar year as requested by the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO) as KIRC approved and authorized activities. Vice-Chair Lindsey seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved by roll call: Commissioner Case-‘ae; Commissioner Mataafa-‘ae; Commissioner Pang-yes; Commissioner Pescaia-‘ae; Vice Chair Lindsey-‘ae; Chair Kaakua-‘ae

Chair Kaakua noted the Ala Loa was important as it would provide more access to the more remote parts of the island for the PKO and other community members.

**V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

**A. Legislative Update**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported HB1577 Relating to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission which requests funding of \$500,000 for operations and funding two full-time positions received 25-30 testimonies in favor. It passed during a hearing of the House Committee on Water and Land. The Chair of that committee, Rep. Tarnas, recommended that it be fully funded. The Senate companion bill, SB3013, was passed with amendments during a joint hearing of the Senate Committee on Water and Land and Hawaiian Affairs. Both bills now head for the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Finance. No hearing has been scheduled.

The proposed state budget (HB1600 Relating to the State Budget) has not been scheduled for a hearing.

The other legislative bill that may affect the KIRC is SB2067 Relating to Burial Sites which would establish an inter-division program between DLNR’s State Historic Preservation Division, county burial councils, Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to address the location, movement, and restoration of Hawaiian burial sites, or ‘iwi, exposed or likely to be exposed due

to coastal erosion. The KIRC serves as the burial council for Kaho‘olawe, and burial sites are monitored by the Cultural Working Group. The bill has passed its second reading and has been referred to the Committee on Ways and Means (WAM).

**B. Executive Director’s Report**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported there was no budget variance with new budget. The KIRC was still operating 15% under budget.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained the Commission to the long-range schedule was provided in the Commission packets.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that no Commissioner is terming out this year. Some Commissioners will term out next year.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported the KIRC will begin recruiting for an Ocean Resource Specialist II (ORS II) to start in FY23. This position is being funded for two years by the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s national Coastal Wetland Conservation (CWC) grant.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i updated the Commission on COVID-19 procedural changes based on the latest CDC guidelines regarding berthing accommodations. Both huts will now be used during island accesses. Bed separation will be maintained in each hut which will continue to limit the number of people in each hut.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that staff received notification that the State Capitol will reopen to the public on March 7, 2022. In person hearings will also start. Staff was anticipating the re-opening of state offices sometime next month. Staff was trying to determine what type of meeting to hold for future Commission meetings. The next Commission meeting could be in person. ED Nāho‘opi‘i received feedback from other divisions that the preference was to have either an all in-person meeting or all remote meeting and that having a hybrid meeting where some people are at the meeting, and some are remote is a technological challenge. If a person who is remote drops off there is a possibility that quorum is lost, then the meeting is lost. Staff was anticipating an in-person meeting in June.

Commissioner Case noted hybrid meetings are allowed once the emergency rules are lifted but they can be difficult.

Vice-Chair Lindsey commented that they (OHA) tested a meeting in which the trustees were in one location, but testifiers were allowed to Zoom into the meeting and that she felt that it worked well. She also announced that OHA had a new trustee, Mililani Trask.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported he met with Representative Yamane who introduced HB1577 which requested \$500,000 funding in general funds for KIRC operations and additional two support workers for field operations.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i also met with Senator Gabbard in response to the senator’s announcement to DLNR for any bills it wished to introduce outside of the Administration’s legislative package. Senator Gabbard introduced the senate bill companion to HB1577 (SB3013).

ED Nāho‘opi‘i met with Representative Tarnas to brief him on HB1577 and its importance to the KIRC’s financial future. The representative was fully supportive of the bill.

**B. Review Expenditures as of October 31, 2021**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that the expenditure report was included in the Commission packet.

**VI. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained the format for the project status updates are under revision to make them more uniform and informative for the Commission.

**A. Status Update on Current Commission/Administration Projects**

1. KIRC Virtual Museum-Stage 3: Collaborations & Special Collections  
CC Gavagan explained this project is funded by the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The staff continues to fully catalog items exported from the previous database to the current database (PastPerfect) in preparation for publishing on the newest version of Kaho‘olawe Living Library website, hosted by PastPerfect. The Commission will be given a link to explore the website and provide feedback.
2. KIRC Live-Stream and VR Expedition Project  
PIS Pulver explained that this project was being funded in the amount of \$98,230 by Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program of IMLS. Most of the funding was for communication costs that will allow live streaming. The main focus was to provide safe and meaningful access through the development of a template or a pilot VR expedition which would look at different significant sites that a volunteer would see and work in. Drone footage has been collected in coordination with PATH staff. The recorded areas include Base Camp, Honokanai‘a, Kealaikahiki, Pu‘u ‘O Moa‘ula Iki, LZ1, Pōkāneloa, Kealialalo, and Keanakeiki. Staff was still processing the footage. The deliverables also include sharing some live stream videos from island accesses throughout the next year. Staff hopes to ultimately document 50 sites or features which would go up onto a new web page which is focused on outreach and information for public consumption. Traffic on that website will be monitored to see if it is promoting meaningful access and evaluate user engagement.

Commissioner Mataafa asked when staff expected to complete the updates and go live with it. PIS Pulver responded they expected to have a pilot completed by July 2022 for the website.

Commissioner Pang asked if there was any policy about too much sharing because of potential vandalism of sites or native plants. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that the KIRC does control access to the island and that most of the native plants are in remote areas so that individuals would need to come in from shore and hike nine miles inland. Most the native plants on island are not that rare except for the Kanaloa plant. The only area that had past vandalism was the Kamōhio burial site which is very remote. PIS Pulver also responded that the Restoration Program manager did bring up a concern about archaeological sites located near the coast and staff was trying to mediate that concern by the way information was being presented such as not showing the point of access to the areas.

**B. Status Update on Current Restoration Program Projects:**

1. Hakiowa Operations and Maintenance Plan 2021  
RPM Higashino explained that the deliverable for this project included planting of 5,000 native plants, installation of 20 check dams, reading of eight soil erosion pin transects, 28 baseline photo points and seven drone images for comparison. The grant is for \$122,228.05 which includes \$30,042.14 in matching funds. The granting agency is the Clean Water Branch of the Department of Health (DOH), State of Hawai‘i. A KIR Specialist II was hired for one year. There have been 2,000 native plants and 11 check installed to date. Staff is a little behind schedule in planting due to the cancellations of the December and January accesses. Staff expected to catch up by April 2022.
2. Coastal and Upland Wetland Restoration of Kahoolawe  
RPM Higashino explained that areas involved in this project include Keanakeiki and Lua ‘O Kealialalo. The deliverables for this project include the removal of alien plant species, planting of 10,000 native plants. No work has been done on the removal of alien plants and staff will be ordering plants later this year for planting in October 2022.
3. Soil Enrichment Trials in Degraded Coastal Wetland Areas  
RPM Higashino explained the deliverables was to establish plots using biochar to enrich the soil within the project areas. All the biochar plots have been established. Additional plots within this area will be established during the March access. The grant was for \$10,000 and the granting organization is Ducks Unlimited.
4. Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa Partnership Project  
RPM Higashino reported that there are currently 20 plants in cultivation. The plants are at the Olinda Rare Plant Facility and at Ho‘olawa Farms, both on Maui. The group meets quarterly and is currently working on a plan to protect the plants in the case of a natural disaster. The group is currently trying to build 22 planter boxes. Discussion is continuing regarding where these other plants will be going to. Staff was unaware of any plants in the wild currently.

Commissioner Pang asked if staff was looking for funding. RPM Higashino responded yes.



Chair Kaakua asked if any specimens were on island. RPM Higashino responded none that staff were aware of. Staff visited the population on 'Ale'ale some time ago. Access to that area is very hazardous. He believed that helicopter pilots will not do that type of run any more. The only other access is via the ocean which requires scaling a barren cliff.

Commissioner Pang suggested using drones. RPM Higashino responded that staff has discussed this but one of the limiting factors was the ocean conditions affecting staff's ability to get around to that part of the island. It was possible to launch drones from the land side. Staff will look at this possibility. Clearance corridors would need to be established to get to the cliffs.

Vice Chair Lindsey was excused at 2:40 pm.

Commissioner Mataafa asked if there was at time period for completion for Restoration Program grant projects. RPM Higashino responded that the DOH project ends September 30, 2022, the Kanaloa plant working group is ongoing, the soil enrichment program ends August 31, 2022. Restoration staff was planning to complete the obligations by the corresponding deadlines. ED Nāho'opi'i added that the period of performance will be added to the top part of the project update template.

**C. Status Update on Current Ocean Program Projects:**

1. Marine Science Education and Training from a Hawaiian Perspective on Kaho'olawe: A Pilot Project for Maui Youth  
ORPM Tokishi reported that this project was completed, and staff met all obligations except for one. This was creation of a film with students. Not all the participating students from Maui High School completed the image release form. Staff used texts from the students' journals and surveys instead in newsletters and other publications about this project. This was a mini grant of \$15,000 and expired October 2021. The final report will be submitted tomorrow. The KIRC has billed \$15,000 but it has not been received. The KIRC was not working directly with NOAA but through the DLNR Fiscal Office.
2. Engaging Hawai'i Communities through Kaho'olawe culture, history, and coastal restoration  
ORS Kerr reported this grant project ran from December 2020 through December 2021. The project was now completed. All deliverables were accomplished—8,000 plants were planted, an Emory tool was created with which to measure beach width and a shoreline profile graph was built with hopes of maintaining this method and comparing seasonal variations of the beach widths. This project utilized 53 volunteers and an average of 1407 people were reached remotely via social media posts. This will be the last update on this project because it is completed.

Commissioner Pescaia noted that the report stated \$22,000 was spent and \$22,000 was billed but that \$18,000 was received. She asked about the discrepancy. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that the KIRC was waiting for the last check. Staff will continue to report on this grant until the payment is received.

3. Marine Debris Removal from Kanapou on Kaho‘olawe  
ORMP Tokishi reported one of the three scheduled accesses was completed. The next accesses are scheduled for August and October 2022. Two to three tons have already been staged. The obligation was for five tons. The next two accesses will focus on collection and the removal process via helicopter. Some of debris will be used for soil erosion control mauka. The Ocean Resources and Restoration Programs were coordinating that effort. This grant of \$76,000 expires on December 31, 2022. Most of the funding will be used for helicopter transportation. A little over \$13,500 was already spent. Nothing has been billed.
4. Restoring Coastal Wetlands on Kaho‘olawe Island, Hawai‘i  
ORS Kerr reported that this was a U.S. Fish & Wildlife grant, and the project goal was to enhance 2.69 acres of wetland in Honokanai‘a. The deliverables were to remove invasive alien plants, reintroduce native plants and reduce siltation. This grant allows the KIRC to hire an additional ORS II for a two-year period. A pilot study with the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) Geography Department researchers and students will be conducted. A Sonde device which monitors long term water quality, and a weather station will be purchased and utilized. This grant was awarded in January 2022 and staff was still working on necessary state and federal compliance requirements.

## **VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FYI**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted the FYI documents included in the packet, including testimony and PKO Post Huaka‘i reports. He also requested that the Commissioners send him any suggestions to improve the format of the project status updates. Eventually the updates will become part of a digital dashboard.

Commissioner Mataafa asked Chair Kaakua what his preference would be for future meeting formats. Chair Kaakua responded he personally liked the remote meetings. They were quick, efficient and it allows more people to be involved statewide. He did hear what Commissioner Case said about having to have a hybrid venue for public participation and that we all must get better at that. He did like the face-to-face interactions. It was easier to get people involved in hybrid meetings. He was going to ask the staff to reach out to the Commissioners when scheduling the next meeting for their preferences.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i added that for hybrid meetings the public site would need to be at the DLNR building on O‘ahu due to the constraints at the Maui KIRC office. This would mean getting acquainted with the technology at the DLNR building.

Commissioner Case noted that it does help when there is a hybrid meeting people still use this format where each face appears so that they do not get lost in a crowd as when a

cameral is focused on a table with people sitting around it. It was difficult to get this type of interaction. People do prefer the convenience of being able to testify remotely, particularly from the neighbor islands. Under the new rules you only need to have a place for the public to come testify and everyone else could be remote. A computer would need to be available and a monitor to keep track of who was next.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated that staff would poll the Commissioners and get feedback from other boards regarding the pros and cons of the different meeting formats.

Chair Kaakua noted that the KHON story on Kaho‘olawe would be run tonight. ED Nāho‘opi‘i also noted that there was Kaho‘olawe exhibit at the downtown Na Mea location.

PIS Pulver added that there was a story about Kaho‘olawe on KITV during their morning program and they are interested in doing a two- or three-part series, potentially on island. Staff was also interviewed by Hawaii News Now that will be on tomorrow.

Commissioner Pang asked if the news stories are kept on the KIRC website. PIS Pulver responded that not every piece of media coverage is put on the website but that it was a good idea, and that staff will make sure there is a space for that on the new outreach page. Commissioner Pang added that it should be right next to the donation button.

#### **VIII. NEXT MEETING AND FOLLOW UPS**

There were no follow ups.

#### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 pm.