

Place-based education and cultural sustainability initiatives on Lānaʻi

Trustee's note: This month's column is written by Kepā Maly, resident of Lānaʻi, cultural historian and ethnographer.

In 2008, Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (one of five signatory parties in a 1987 MOA on the island of Lānaʻi) engaged in a capacity-building initiative with the Lānaʻi Culture & Heritage Center (www.lanaich.org). OHA's support facilitated development of a series of place-based stewardship programs engaging Lānaʻi's Hawaiian families and various partners in activities that are now growing and engaging multiple generations and participants in the rich Hawaiian legacy of Lānaʻi.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education Native Hawaiian Education Act, the place-based education program "E 'Ike Hou Iā Lānaʻi – Embracing Lānaʻi's History through Language and Literacy" is a three-year program that began in 2013. The year-round programs are offered free of charge to Lānaʻi residents and those interested in our island history.

As a part of the year-two (2014) programs, Lānaʻi CHC has been hosting a series of cultural landscape and literacy workshops, and just completed a three-week field school in Hawaiian Lifestyles, Archaeology, Marine Biology, Watershed Systems, Stewardship and Literature. The summer enrichment camp was open to students entering grades 6-12 and recent high school graduates. Activities engaged participants in programs rooted in the native lore and practices of Lānaʻi, and linked traditional knowledge with modern skills in environmental resource-management programs.

Upper Lānaʻi High & Elementary School students and recent graduates who completed the three-week course may also apply their experiences to development of college credits in English 100 and Anthropology 200.

The program integrates traditional Hawaiian-language accounts penned by natives as early as the 1830s, and foreign accounts of Lānaʻi. The historic literature documents practices, beliefs and changes that have occurred on Lānaʻi over the last

180 years. The program integrates place-based knowledge of land, sea, water and people that are uniquely ours on Lānaʻi.

Through a revival of traditional knowledge, history and sense of place, E 'Ike Hou Iā Lānaʻi seeks to inspire wise use, stewardship and cultural sustainability among Lānaʻi's present and future generations.

Students in the summer program participated in both classroom and fieldwork. The activities included: (1) surveying a traditional Hawaiian fishpond at Waiaʻōpae along the windward shore of Pālāwai Ahupuaʻa, (2) mapping ancient



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Participants in the E 'Ike Hou Iā Lānaʻi place-based education program learned about the nearshore marine environment and worked on mapping projects at Hulopoʻe Beach in June. - Courtesy: Kepā Maly

loʻi kalo and other cultural-archaeological resources in Maunalei Valley, (3) engaging in programs of literacy in Hawaiian and English, and (3) exploring the marine environment with Hawaiʻi Pacific University marine biologists and visiting the Sea Education Association (S.E.A.) 135-foot research sailing vessel. Lānaʻi CHC has been working closely with Lānaʻi High & Elementary School, Pūlama Lānaʻi, Honua Consulting, UH-Maui College, Hawaiʻi Pacific University/S.E.A., Queen Liliʻuokalani Children's Center and community partners to create an engaging place-based curriculum for Lānaʻi. Instructors included specialists in a wide range of fields including archaeology, marine biology, musicians, university professors, as well as longtime Lānaʻi resident fishermen, anthropologists, environmentalists and cultural practitioners.

Mahalo a nui to the many partners who have supported the vision of cultural sustainability on Lānaʻi. ■