

Nā Mo'olelo o Kona



Collecting oral histories of Kamehameha Schools land is helping the Land Assets Division form the basis for the perpetual management and educational use of the land

A deep blue sky, the rattle of coconut fronds and the rush of small waves on the shore set the backdrop for one of those special days in Hawai'i nei.

In late August, at Ke'ei in south Kona, Kamehameha's Land Assets Division (LAD) and Kepā Maly of Kumu Pono Associates gathered five *kūpuna* for a morning of sharing and reflection on the histories and traditions of the Ke'ei area.

The event was recorded on video by Nā Maka o Ka 'Āina as part of a broader study being prepared for LAD to collect the traditions, historical accounts and *kama'āina* recollections of Ke'ei.

The lands of Ke'ei lie at the southern end of Kealakekua Bay and contain the site of the Battlefield of Moku'ōhai, where Kamehameha began his rise to power. The lands came to the estate from Bernice Pauahi Bishop's mother, Konia, and had been in her family for generations.

Ke'ei was also the home of the great warrior Kekūhaupi'o, who played a key role in the death of Capt. James Cook and in the training of Kamehameha.

"This is part of a long-term

effort to record the *mo'olelo* of Pauahi's lands legacy and to understand something of the depth of the relationship that *kama'āina* families share with the land," said land planner Jeffrey Melrose of LAD.

"It will help to form the basis of our perpetual management of these lands and serve as a resource for the development of curriculum and educational programs to be developed at existing outdoor camp facilities in south Kona."

On that morning in August, *kūpuna* spoke of old place names, fishing practices, farming in the *kula* region, families and how things have changed over the years.

Kūpuna Bill Panui '47 spoke of the battlefield and the need to respect and interpret its importance. He also shared his dream of Ke'ei as a place to educate young people to the ways of the past and to perpetuate the practices and traditions that served the area so well for generations.

Other *kūpuna* taking part in the oral history project included Katie Andrade, Maile Mitchell, Howard Ackerman and Mona Kahele.

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– JEFF MELROSE

Hema



of South Kona)

“Through oral history projects, we learn from *kama’āina* about traditional land use, and this information helps us choose how we manage these lands into the future,” said Ulalia Woodside, LAD’s stewardship resources coordinator. “The information gathered includes ocean resources such as the different kinds of *limu* that were gathered along the coast, and the fishing grounds – if fished according to traditional *kapu* seasons – ensured a bountiful catch for *kama’āina* of that area.

“On the *ma uka* lands food crops such as *kalo* and *‘uala* flourished. With specific planting methods, food crops were also grown on the *ma kai* lands. For *kama’āina*, these lands provided everything needed to sustain a community, and these lands can again serve to teach future generations self-sustenance,” Woodside added.

The oral history projects also provide a huge bounty for Kamehameha’s ‘Āina Ulu program, which uses KS land as an integrating context for education. Woodside said when it comes to Ke’ei specifically, the educational program potential is nearly limitless.

“Ke’ei is the site of a number of historical events, and many historical figures spent time there,” she said. “Learning about these historic events and the feats of our heroes and heroines not only instills pride in our people, but also

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“This was really a highlight in my career at Kamehameha,” said **Wendell Davis ’71**, Kamehameha’s West Hawai’i Neighbor Island Regional Resource Center coordinator and *kahu* of Kahikolu Congregational Church in Nāpō’opo’o.

“To watch *kūpuna* share with one another, and to see the world through their eyes, brought me much closer to my own ‘*āina hānau* at Ke’ei. This effort will have lasting value for Kamehameha Schools, for the families in Kona Hema and for the members of my congregation far into the future.”