

Native peoples often abused

As IUCN World Conservation Congress participants gathered to deliberate on global conservation issues, comparable issues also prevail in Hawaii.

While attending, I noted one common factor permeating throughout the sessions — governments and political leaders have failed to protect the natural and cultural resources as well as the rights and traditional practices of indigenous peoples.

Meanwhile, their voices are ignored or silenced as they strive to protect their lands, waters and ways of life. Politicians have allowed foreign and corporate business interests to degrade and adversely impact these resources and the peoples intimately connected to them.

Similarly, government and political officials in Hawaii have failed to protect our natural and cultural resources and the rights and customary practices of Native Hawaiians, even though the state Constitution and laws mandate such protection from the mountains to the sea. Instead, business and special interests are continuously allowed to supersede existing state laws.

Malama Hawai'i — Malama Honua (Care for our Hawai'i — Care for our Earth).

E. Kalani Flores
Waimea, Hawaii island

HSA 9/16/2016 9/21/91/6

Feds apologize for dead sea turtles in landfill 9-30-16

HONOLULU — Federal officials are apologizing to the public after three sea turtle carcasses were found uncovered in an Oahu landfill routinely used to dispose of the endangered sea creatures.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officials said leaving dead sea turtles at the Waimanalo Gulch is a normal procedure for the agency. But they acknowledged the turtles should've been covered with dirt or cloth and said the extra measure wasn't taken because of staffing issues.

"In this case, due to under-staffing, regrettably the turtles were not covered over with soil," NOAA research biologist T. Todd Jones told Hawaii News Now. "The perception is that the animals were left and they weren't cared for and that's what we apologize for."

Nuuanu resident Jason Oka had been throwing out trash when he noticed the dead animals on Monday and took a photo.

Debbie Herrera, who works with the organization Malama na Honu to protect endangered Hawaiian green sea turtles, said she was surprised that the agency disposes of sea turtles at the dump site.

"They're really respected so this is surprising, very surprising. That is absolutely opposite of everything I have ever been told," Herrera said, adding that the disposal was an honest mistake.

NOAA handles 150 to 200 dead sea turtles in Hawaii each year.

One of the turtles spotted by Oka at the landfill was killed after being struck by a boat. The other two were sick.

Jones said the federal agency is looking at different options for disposing of dead sea turtles and hopes to work with other agencies on a solution.

By West Hawaii Today staff and wire sources