

NATURE'S NEWSFLASH 2014



Aloha! Nature's Newsflash is a semi-annual publication that features stories and insights of conservation activities that help preserve and protect Moloka'i's native natural resources. If you would like to contribute information to our publication, please send it to The Nature Conservancy, P. O. Box 220, Kualapuu, Hawaii 96757.

Let's all make a difference by "Thinking globally, Acting locally"!

November Issue

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The Majestic Honu

By: The Nature Conservancy Molokai Staff

Mo'omomi Preserve is a very rare and special place that native species like the green sea turtles or *honu* call home. During the months of April through November, *honu* like this old mother use the beaches of Kalani and Kawa'aloa to nest, laying their eggs deep in pits, then covering them over with sand to incubate. A couple of months later, the buried eggs will hatch and the young *honu* emerge together from the sand pit and head for the sea. A single large female *honu* such as this one can lay up to 400 eggs in a year.

We would always see this majestic mama *honu*, exactly as she's pictured here, basking peacefully on Kalani beach in Mo'omomi Preserve. We do not see her anymore.

In May 2014, we received a report of a slaughtered turtle at Kalani Beach in the Mo'omomi Preserve. Staff confirmed the report and an investigation was initiated with the State's Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement (DOCARE). The investigation revealed that indeed a large female green sea turtle was intentionally killed. Based on the evidence at the site, the large mother turtle was slaughtered on a "table" the perpetrators had fashioned from two car tires that had washed up on the beach. She had been full of eggs, which she most likely would have laid within the next few days. This mother turtle's eggs, instead of finding safety in those sands, were found strewn across the surface of the beach along with blood, fat and portions of her womb. The investigation is still pending and no arrests have been made.

Green sea turtles are a protected species under the **Endangered Species Act (ESA)**. The **ESA** is a federal law passed in 1973 to protect endangered and threatened species from becoming extinct (dying out). Therefore, it is a federal crime to take, possess, sell, import, export or even transport any green sea turtle, including their eggs.

We believe that the slaughtered *honu* is the very same mama that we would see at Kalani beach. Our staff and dedicated community volunteers are deeply saddened over the loss because we knew her as a mother for the area, yet she was treated without respect and her future generations were cut short.

As a result of the turtle slaughter and ongoing trespassing and vandalism, we have had to suspend our vehicular Fishing Pass Key System. Vehicular trespassers have continued to cut fences and damage gates, so we are pursuing prosecution of vehicular trespassing in the interest of preventing further property damage and protecting the native resources. To our vehicle pass key users, especially to those who honor our system rules, we hope to be able to accommodate you again, but we are not sure when. The coastal foot trail is always open to access Mo'omomi Preserve, but please enter with respect to the place and the native resources that live there.



Little Fire Ant (LFA) Surveys

MoMISC will be conducting surveys to detect LFA on Molokai. Surveys will begin in areas where LFA is most likely to be established. Potential introductions of LFA to Moloka'i could be on plants and goods coming from highly infested areas like Hawaii Island, Maui and Oahu. Please go online to <http://www.littlefireants.com/> to learn more about LFA. If you think you may have LFA call MoMISC at (808)553-5236 ext. 6585. Remember that PREVENTION is key to fighting invasive species so please think before you import goods to Moloka'i. Mahalo!

SUMMARY UPDATE of the EAST SLOPE WATERSHED PROJECT

as of October 2014

Submitted By: The Nature Conservancy Molokai Program for the East Molokai Watershed Partnership (EMoWP)

Background

The East Molokai Watershed Partnership (EMoWP) was formed in 1999 in response to the ongoing loss of native forests on Molokai. Native forests are the islands' primary source of fresh water. The EMoWP is a voluntary alliance of landowners, community and conservation groups, and funders who support actions that improve and take care of Molokai's native forests. The Nature Conservancy's Molokai Program is the coordinator of the EMoWP and helps to develop and implement plans and management actions.

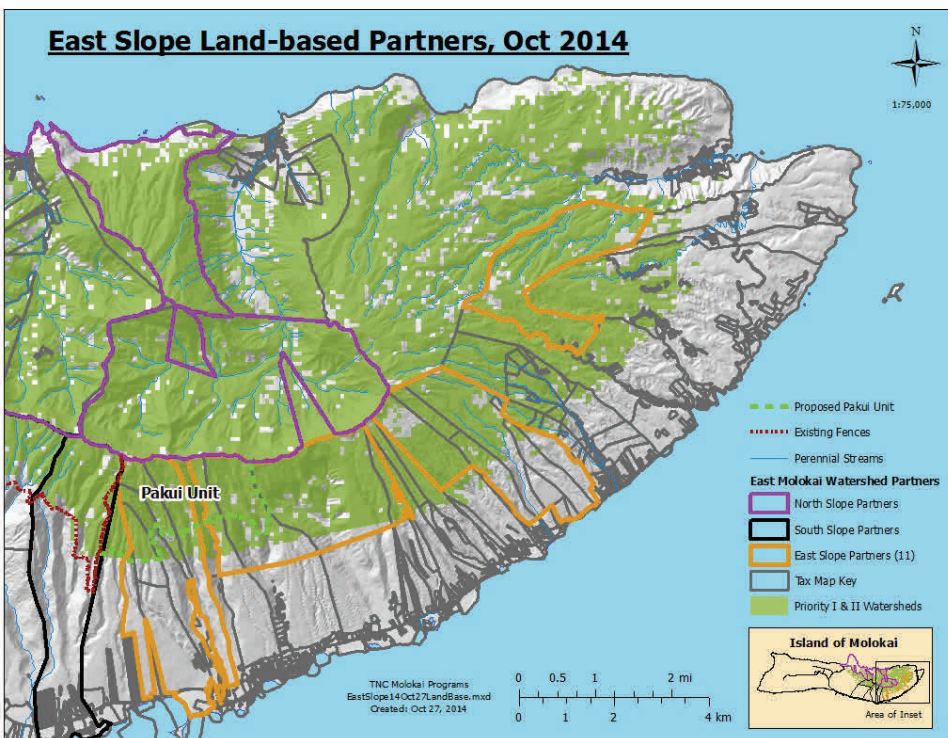
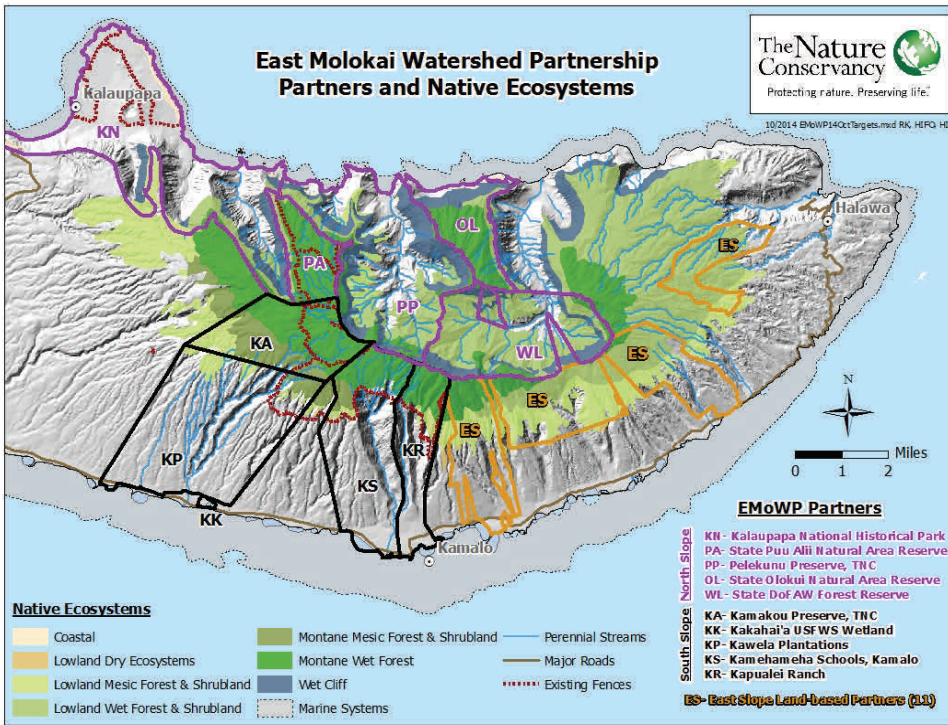
From 1999 to 2013 the EMoWP managed approximately 30,000 acres, including much of north and central Molokai, and east to Kapualei (see East Molokai Watershed Partnership Partners & Native Ecosystems map). The majority of the remaining native forest that is not being protected on Molokai is located in Pua'ahala to Hālawā (also being called the "East Slope") and provides a significant amount of the island's fresh water. Some Mana'e mauka landowners wanted to see expanded protection of these native forests, so the EMoWP pursued the development of a Draft East Slope Watershed Start-Up Management Plan in 2013. The Draft Plan was a first attempt to balance native forest protection with community wants and needs.

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Current status

Management Planning: For the last few years, the EMoWP has been gathering input on the Draft Plan from the community, including residents, landowners, hunters, 'Aha Moku, users, scientists, fishermen, etc. Now that the East Slope is part of the EMoWP, this input will be incorporated into the EMoWP Management Plan. The EMoWP Management Plan outlines the EMoWP's goals and strategies for all of its management areas (South Slope, North Slope and East Slope) and the Plan is updated every five years. The Partnership is now working on the 2020 EMoWP Management Plan, which covers fiscal years 2016-2020 (July 2015-June 2020). The 2020 Plan will be finalized by June 2015, but prior to that date copies of the draft will be made available upon request.

Planning for the East Slope has and will continue to coordinate with community planning initiatives that involve the entire ahupua'a such as the Mana'e ahupua'a planning work being funded by OHA and spearheaded by Malia Akutagawa and Harmonee Williams. Input from the entire community is welcomed on all these plans.



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East Slope Partners: The EMoWP will work with any community member and landowner who want to protect native forest on their property either directly or indirectly. In August 2013 the first East Slope landowners signed the EMoWP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to become partners. By signing the EMoWP MOU these partners are committed to working together to improve and protect East Molokai's native rainforests. Currently, the East Slope Management Area includes eleven partners (see East Slope Land-based Partners, Oct 2014 map).

East Slope Management Priority: The immediate priority for the East Slope is the native forests atop the ahupua'a of Pua'ahala to Kalua'aha, also being called the Pāku'i Unit. This priority is based on the health of these forests, their function of collecting and storing water and community support for their protection. The primary actions needed to manage these native forests are: fencing, removing the damaging non-native feral animals and weeds, and monitoring.

These action items for the Pāku'i Unit alone will take several years to implement and feedback from the community has been supportive of an incremental approach. Because it is not feasible to plan for management actions so far in advance, the 2020 plan doesn't pursue immediate action steps for areas east of the Pāku'i Unit (i.e. Mapulehu to Keopukaloa to Pāpalaua). Once the Pāku'i Unit has been fenced, the animals within the fence have been removed, and weed control and monitoring actions are in place, then the EMoWP may consider management of other areas in the East Slope where there is landowner support, community support from ahupua'a residents and others, and the necessary funding.

Overall Management Strategy and FY2015 (July 2014 - June 2015) Action Items for the Pāku'i Unit: The EMoWP's overarching management strategy for the Pāku'i Unit is to improve and protect Pāku'i's native forests by eliminating the threats of invasive plants and animals through fencing, animal control, weed control, native species restoration, community involvement, education, and monitoring.

FY 2015 Action Items:

1. Ground Surveys
2. Cultural Impact Assessment
3. Environmental Assessment

Ground Surveys: Since May 2014, the EMoWP, along with members of the Mana'e Mauka Working Group, have been ground surveying the Pāku'i Unit. The purpose of these surveys is to learn as much as possible about Pāku'i's forests, to determine the safest, most effective fence route to protect and enhance them, to identify and catalog native and non-native plant and animal species in the area, and to monitor non-native animals in order to better understand their numbers and movement. These surveys are estimated to continue through June 2015, and have already resulted in the discovery of many rare species that haven't been seen in the area for close to a century.

Cultural Impact Assessment and Environmental Assessment: In the early part of 2015 development of a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) and an Environmental Assessment (EA) will begin for the Pāku'i Unit. These assessments are not required by law for this project, but are important to the Mana'e community, TNC, and the EMoWP. The CIA and EA may take a significant amount of time and there will be opportunities for community members to provide input.

The Pāku'i fence has not been funded yet. At that time, fence construction will not begin until the ground surveys, CIA, EA, and 2020 EMoWP Management Plan planning initiatives are complete and input from ahupua'a residents of Pāku'i has been gathered.

Feel free to contact Stephanie or Wailana with any questions at (808)553-5236. Mahalo nui!



Experienced fencers, Justin Luafalemana, Shannon Lopez, & Brian Naeole, assessing the steep Ōhi'a gulch.



James Espaniola uses GPS technology to map the fence route above 'Ualapu'e.



Justin Luafalemana & Wailana Moses assist with the first ground survey.



Justin Luafalemana & Stephanie Dunbar-Co surrounded by intact native forest in East Kalua'aha.

Everyone visits Hawaii because of its beauty and uniqueness, two qualities which are changing. Several islands now have little fire ants that live in trees and fall like rain when it's windy stinging people and blinding animals. Coqui frog calls are so loud they keep you awake at night! *Miconia* trees are so destructive that it is overpowering and killing our native environment, slowly creating a *Miconia* forest. We have fireweed that easily spreads in the wind and has toxic qualities that hurt cattle/livestock by making them sick or even killing them. These are only a few invasive species now plaguing the Hawaiian Islands. There are many more impacting our environment, economy, and everyday lifestyle. Millions of dollars is spent on control efforts in Hawaii every year!

Are you willing to put Molokai's unique lifestyle at risk? Do you have to have that exotic plant or animal, imported potting soil or animal feed, that livestock or reptile? Like everything else now living here on Molokai it has to travel here somehow. It can come with birds on the wind, float in the ocean on the waves, or it can get here by people. WE can control only one thing, what WE bring here to Molokai. Before importing what you think you absolutely need, think about the possible impacts it could have on our island. Even if you are bringing in things that aren't invasive, it could have invasive pests hitchhiking to Molokai. Are you willing to risk our way of life by bringing and shipping things here?

Next time you are enjoying the beauty and uniqueness of Molokai's forest, close your eyes and imagine it with nothing but *Miconia*. As you lay on the beach and enjoy the sunshine, imagine little fire ants raining down on you with each cool breeze giving you multiple electric flame-like stings and bites. Or while you lay sleeping in your quiet neighborhood late at night, imagine a loud "ko-kee" call persisting throughout the night. Help prevent these invasive species from coming to Molokai and impacting our environment and our lives. You can start by learning more about invasive species online at <http://www.hear.org/>. Keep alert of suspicious invasive pests and report them to MoMISC at 553-5236 ext. 6585.

Mahalo Nui Loa!

Billy & Malia Akutagawa, Ella Alcon, Kief Apo, Steven Arce, Justin Avelino, Dan Bennett, Robert Bento, Kenji Brito, Jennifer Brown, Rick Chong, Kamahele Chow, Sydney Olana Chow, Catherine Cluett, Eric Co, George Coelho, Helen Coelho, Juanita Colon, Cheryl Corbiel, Harris Dudoit, Sonny Dunnam, Albert & James Espaniola, Bill & Francis Feeter, Sonny Friel, Nora Furuno, Coral Gonzales, Paul Graesser, Michael Grinnell, Kaulunae Hamakua, Paul Hosten, Daniel & Brandi Imakyure, Harvey James, Ryan Johnston, Kiloaulani Kaawa-Gonzales, Tubz Kalipi, Ron & Cammy Kimball, Joe & Joe Jr. Kitagawa, Tony Ladesma, Julie Leach, Ikaika Lester, Chevy Levasa, James Loughren, Justin Luafalemana, Doug & Lil Macmillan, Penny Martin, Daniel Masutomi, Hanohano Naehu, Dara Naeole, Jimmy Naki Jr., Emilia Noordhoek, Rylen Nuesca, Gail & Ryan Okata, Tyson Pactol, Kamalani Pali, Heather Place, Milton Place, Cyrus Siu, Kawehi Soares, Vincent Soeda, Kathy Tachibana, Robert & Sheldeen Takeo, Satoshi Tanaka, Ililani Sawyer, Pia Ward, Joshua Pastrana & Harmonee Williams, Daryl Yasunari, **Kaneohe Boy Scout Troop 329, State Maui County DoFAW crews, The Molokai Land Trust:** Clayton English, Josh Yamashiro, Solomon Kaaui, Butch Haase, and **Kilohana School 4th Grade:** Mapuana Dudoit, Chad Lima, Trinity Napoleon-Lima, Jay & Cassidy Duquette, Daylan Hoffman, Jazmine Stone, and AJ Togia.

Mahalo to our October 2014 wedge-tailed shearwater bird banding crew: Dr. Fern Duvall, Isabelle Walker, Butch Haase, Audrey Newman, Russell Kallstrom, Bill Garnett, Wailana Moses, Ane Bakutis, Patty Pali, Kristen Coelho, Lorri Misaki, Phyllis Murakami-Siu, Stephanie & Tealohi Co, Mary Kanohokula, Diane Pike, Margaret Marcom, Jennie Abshire, Lehua Cho, Riki Cooke and Darrell & Karen Crisp.

