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October 23, 2026

North Kohala Shares What Worked, and What Didn't, After Hurricane Lala

Residents posted 122 ideas at a community gathering on September 30. Topping the list: kūpuna check-ins, a communication point in every neighborhood, and self-reliance.

On September 30, North Kohala residents gathered in the Kohala High School cafeteria to talk about Hurricane Lala: what got them through and what has to change before the next storm.

The Kohala Resilience Hub organized the evening with the North Kohala Community Resource Center (NKCRC), the North Kohala Community Development Plan (NKCDP) Utilities Group, Kohala Radio, St. Augustine's Church and the North Kohala Community Emergency Response Team.

Posters around the room covered five topics: communication, damage, utilities, safety and resources. Residents wrote down what worked and what didn't, then used sticker dots to vote for the ideas that mattered most to them.

These ideas drew the most votes:



Photos by Kimi Vakauta
"Lonesome Bob" and "Uncle David" of KNKR 96.1 radio man the station's table.

- Build self-sufficiency, person by person. The idea that topped the night: if each person is prepared,

their family will be, and if families are, the whole community will be.

- A communication point in each

area. Residents called for a buddy system for kūpuna and for making sure kūpuna have radios at home.

- A kūpuna directory. A list of elders and others who need help, and what they need, so neighbors know who to check on.

- Bulletin boards in each area, at the post office for example, for people who can't use or don't use social media.

- A sign-up list for kūpuna and people with disabilities at the hospital or health center.

Other ideas with strong support were a shared trailer for laundry loads, more tree trimming on neighboring and empty lots, and longer-lasting repairs to state and county roads. Residents also asked for a shared green waste container in each neighborhood, since the transfer station allows only one load a day.

What worked

Residents also gave credit where it was due. The neighborhood chain-saw response team drew the most votes on the "what worked" post-

See Lala, Page 2

Kohala Unupa'a's Educational Adventures



Photos by Kohala Unupa'a

Instructors from the Division of Aquatic Resources, an agency under Hawaii's Department of Natural Resources, teach keiki how to make a limu press. This traditional and scientific process preserves marine specimens, bridging observation with marine science.

By North Kohala Community Resource Center

This summer, dozens of North Kohala keiki traded classrooms for coastlines, hiking watershed trails, testing water quality, and learning traditional land practices from kūpuna and cultural practitioners across the ahupua'a—from mauka

to makai.

This year's Summer Day Camp and Overnight Leadership Camp were made possible in part through a grant from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, whose support allowed the program to serve

See Unupa'a, Page 2

Kohala May Get a Green Waste Dump Next Year

By Toni Withington

The Ka'auhuhu Solid Waste Transfer Station could get a separate ramp and bin for green waste installed as early as next year. It would allow residents to dump yard and garden waste into a bin separate from the main trash container, as we now do for cardboard.

"The project has been budgeted and is in progress, just waiting for procurement of the funds," according to Michael Rivera, Chief of the County's Environmental Management Solid Waste Division.

Rivera and Alexander White, Recycling Specialist for the division, met last month with John Winter and Toni Withington of the Utilities Group of the North Kohala Community Development Plan. The Group has been seeking solutions to the mixed waste problem for several years.

Before the storms this summer, the large compacting bins contained from 17 to 20 percent of green

waste in the almost-daily runs to Pu'uana'hulu Landfill in Waikoloa. That number has since grown. The landfill accepted approximately 213,000 tons of waste last year, while the Hawi transfer station handled about 3,900 tons of that.

The County currently pays almost \$1,100 to haul an average of 11 tons of trash per day from North Kohala. A separate bin, with its own ramp, would be emptied when full, Rivera said. The bin would save some of that cost.

Green waste from all dedicated green waste bins is processed into mulch, which is currently offered for free at the County's main yard in Hawi.

White said the procedure cooks the pulverized green waste for at least 15 days to kill all pathogens, bugs and frogs, helping to prevent the spread of invasive species.

The Utilities Group had been working for years on alternatives to

See Green, Page 2

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Lala, from Page 1



Jeff Coakley and Lani Bowman keep the mood upbeat while gathering info.

ers. Many people asked whether more residents could get chainsaw certified, with sponsors or government funding paying for training.

St. Augustine's Church was thanked for letting people charge phones and devices from its generator. Residents also pointed to the coconut wireless, generator rentals, community distributions of ice, water and meals, and Kohala Radio's public service announcements about food, water and ice.

What the survey shows so far

NKCRC also handed out a community needs survey at the gathering and online. The first 57 households to respond tell a story that matches the posters: homes held up, but people were cut off.

- 96% said their home is safe to live in. Damage was mostly downed trees.

- Among households that lost service, 94% lost internet, 83% lost electricity and 74% lost cell service.

- Power was typically out about five days. Homes up Kohala Mountain Road near Ka'auhuhu Homestead were out 11 to 12 days, and

some in Kapa'au and Hāwī had no internet for two to three weeks.

- 58% had little or no clear picture of the storm's impact while it was happening.

- 55% of households include kūpuna 65 or older.

- 35% lost work or income, and more than a third of farms, fishers and home businesses were affected.

- Percentages are of households that answered each question.

Missed the gathering? Take the survey

If you couldn't make it on September 30, your experience still counts. Please take the survey at www.northkohala.org/lala. The more households that respond, the clearer the picture of what North Kohala needs before the next storm.

Mahalo to everyone who came out and shared their mana'o, and to the Kohala Resilience Hub, NKCRC, the NKCDP Utilities Group, Kohala Radio, St. Augustine's Church and the North Kohala Community Emergency Response Team for bringing the community together.

Unupa'a, from Page 1



Haumana (students) at a brackish pool, where they removed invasive species.

dozens of Kohala youth ages 8 to 18 and Kohala kūpuna with hands-on environmental education rooted in place and culture.

Campers explored some of North and South Kohala's most significant watersheds, from Ohai Ula in Kawaihae to Ma'umae, observing tidal change, currents and coastal conditions. "On the first day of camp, the water was really dirty with trash, so my idea is to not put trash into the water," said one young camper. That awareness became action through shoreline and stream cleanups, native plant installation and invasive species removal.

The camps also drew on Indigenous and local knowledge, connecting students with kūpuna, lawai'a (traditional Hawaiian fishermen), native plant specialists, and navigators. In one memorable session, campers entered a forest with a traditional chant asking permission before harvesting palapalai fern,

later used in lei prepared for the group. They also met fourth-generation farmers who taught them about taro and rice-patch traditions still practiced in Waipio valley today.

For the teen leaders, many of whom grew up in Kohala Unupa'a, the experience is about more than a summer job. "Work hard, but also keep stories alive, and always talk to your kūpuna," one returning leader said.

The program culminated in a community ho'ike, where campers presented research on seasonal fishing, traditional place names, hunting regulations, and coastal stewardship to parents and neighbors. Program Director Amoo Kainoa extends her sincere gratitude to the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation for its support—an investment not just in environmental education, but in the next generation of Kohala's watershed watchers and caretakers.

Green, from Page 1

separate and keep the green waste in Kohala and was ready to propose an alternative, but Rivera revealed the efforts to install as green waste bin. He said green waste makes up part of the long-standing contract the County has with the commercial operator of the Pu'uanaulu Landfill. While the County pays Waste Management, a private corporation that manages the landfill, \$15 million to deliver 40,000 tons of waste per year, it only supplies an average of 35,000 tons. So, the County pays for the shortfall but considers it worth doing to extend the life of

the landfill.

As for recyclable material, White said all the HI5 material is sent off island, primarily to the west coast, for recycling. All the glass from the bins at transfer stations is ground up locally. Aluminum is the most profitable to recycle.

The Utilities Group meets monthly on the third Wednesday of each month at 3:30 p.m. in the Senior Center behind the statue. It is open to the public and anyone interested in learning about and assisting in power, water, waste, and telecommunication operations in Kohala.



Keiki at Keokea Beach Park with their hut made of driftwood.



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The next meeting of the NKCDP AG will be held on Monday, November 2, at 4:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. Members of the community are urged to attend.

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Water and Power Fixes Due on Beers Road

By Toni Withington

The storms of summer took a toll on all Kohala, including the slopes mauka of Hawi. With its aging infrastructure, Beers Road was hit hard. But now, it may be in line for some long-anticipated upgrades.

The quaint, narrow county road was built by the sugar plantation over a hundred years ago, servicing a few homes and a small labor camp. The power line now wanders through the forested back-

yards of several properties. The ancient waterline has been subject to 24 breaks and outages in the past decade.

When falling trees tore down the power line during storm Lala in August, repair crews could not reach it because of the many downed trees on private property, leaving many residents without power for 15 days. Then, on Labor Day weekend, the water line broke again, gushing a torrent alongside

the pavement.

Several residents had been for years encouraging Hawaiian Electric Company (HECO) to re-locate the powerline along the Beers Road easement. This time they asked the Utilities Group of the North Kohala Community Development Plan to support their request. That group drafted a letter to HECO that the main Advisory Group of the NKCDP voted unanimously this month to pass along to the electric company.

"This will undoubtedly improve continued service for users and reduce the company's maintenance costs," the letter says.

The Utilities Group of the NKCDP first approached the Department of Water Supply (DWS) about replacing the often-broken waterline along Beers Road in 2013. Working with engineers in the department, the project was listed on the Capital Improvement Program budget in 2017, to be funded with \$500,000 in fiscal year 2022. In the following years it was repeatedly pushed to the future.

This month the DWS was expected to sign a contract with the planning firm Foresight Engineering "to prepare bid documents (plans, specifications, cost estimates) for the future construction of the replacement waterline," according to DWS deputy Kawika Uyehara.

"The Beers Road waterline

replacement remains an important project for the Department of Water Supply (DWS), and we are preparing to move forward with the project," he added. As work proceeds, the department will be working with other agencies, such as the Department of Public Works, for their review, coordination, and permitting of the project.

"The project will bring the waterline and parts of the roadway to current standards," Shari Uyeno of the Engineering Division reported in an email.

Uyehara said DWS will provide project updates for the community.

NKCDP Advisory Group Agenda

Date: Monday, Nov 2, 2026, **Time:** 4:30 p.m.
Place: Senior Center (behind the statue)

AGENDA
ANNOUNCEMENTS
PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS
Kohala residents are encouraged to attend and voice their opinion on issues. They may even recommend actions and suggest subjects not presently addressed.
SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS (Please see adjacent NKCDP Meeting Notes for information on issues currently being addressed.)

Affordable Housing - Housing needs for families in Kohala.
Agriculture - The future of agriculture in our area.
Community Access - Ways for Kohala residents to have more mauka and makai access.
Growth Management - Zoning, permits, and variance requests and how they affect us.
Health and Wellness - Kohala health care infrastructure and emergency response.
Parks, Roads, View Planes and Erosion Control - Infrastructure problems and projects.
Utilities - Utility and waste stream issues.

Investigatory Subcommittee on Re-zoning and Agricultural Property Tax Rates - Kohala input to the ongoing County reassessment of zoning and agricultural tax rate reduction criteria.

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PUBLIC INPUT AND AGENDA SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEXT MEETING
ANNOUNCEMENTS



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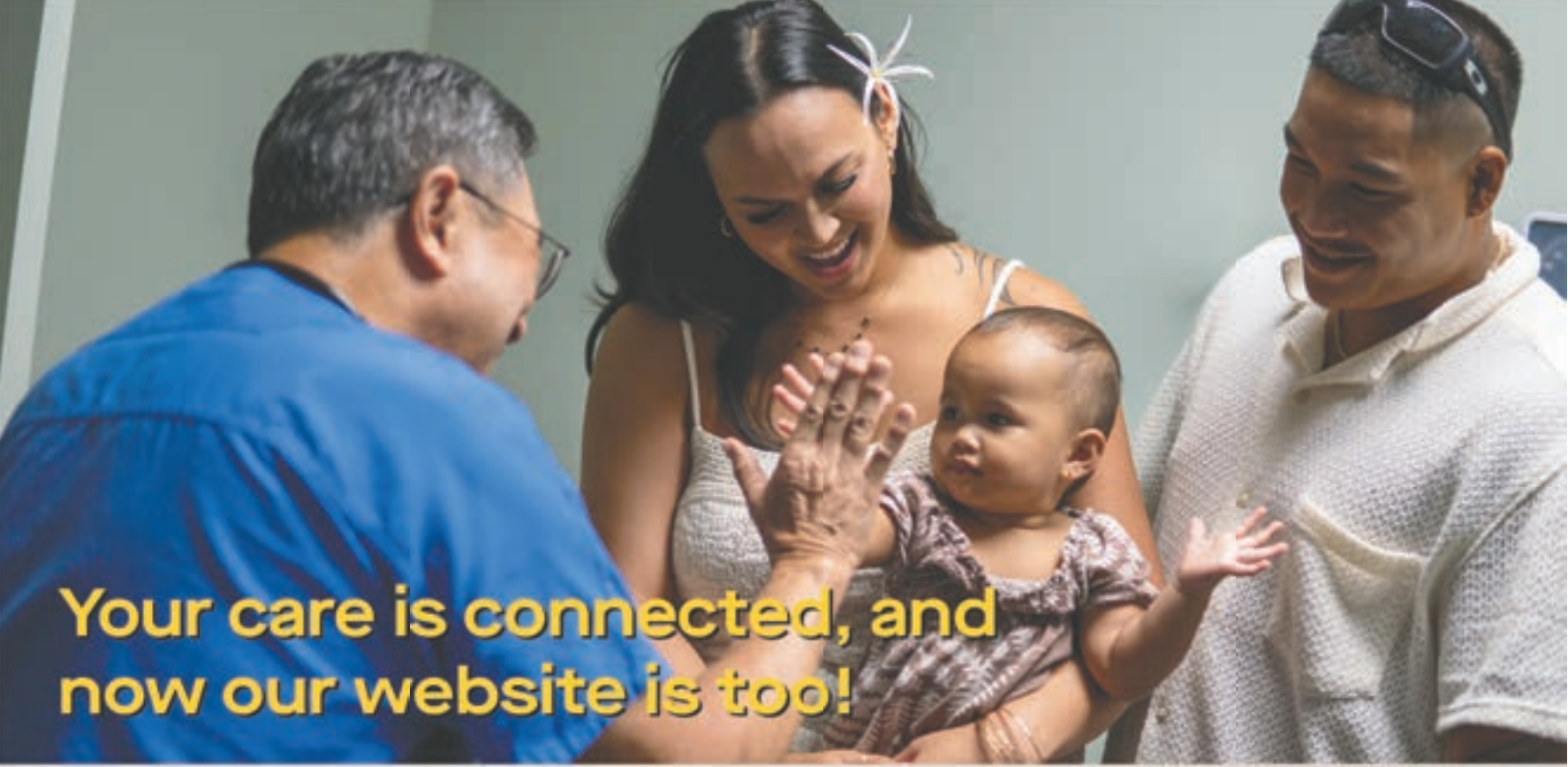
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Hawai'i State House of Representatives Update

From the Desk of District 8 Representative David Tarnas



*Photo courtesy of David Tarnas
Representative David Tarnas
speaks for North Kohala as a
member of the Hawai'i State House
of Representatives.*

Aloha! The heavy weather we've experienced these last six months has been difficult for everyone. It seems like we are getting one hurricane or tropical storm after another without a break! It wasn't long ago that we were experiencing consistent drought conditions. This experience indicates that we should expect more frequent and more intense storms – especially with the warm ocean water caused by the El Nino event currently affecting the Pacific around our islands.

All of this heavy weather gives us even more reason to make sure we are well prepared for natural disasters affecting our community. Please consult the websites of the Hawai'i County Civil Defense and the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency to get all the details to pack a "Go Bag" and prepare a family plan.

Make sure you and your extended family prepare hurricane supplies of food and water; have sufficient batteries and flashlights; clear branches and brush away from the house; and have a family plan to respond to an earthquake, hurricane, wildfire, and tsunami. Also, please check in with your elderly friends and family members to make sure they are prepared as well. Working together, we can make sure our community is resilient and safe!

The recent hurricanes, tropical storms, and earthquakes have caused significant damage to many private homes and businesses as well as public infrastructure, includ-

ing roads, highways, airports and harbors. At a recent news conference, Governor Green announced that preliminary damage, recovery, and future resilience needs following four major disasters that struck Hawai'i in 2026 total approximately \$1 billion.

Current estimates and recovery commitments reported by state agencies total approximately \$686 million from the March Kona Low storms, the May 22 magnitude 6.0 Hawaii Island earthquake, Hurricane Lala and Hurricane Lowell. The state has also identified at least \$319 million in proposed resilience and mitigation projects to strengthen critical infrastructure and prepare Hawai'i for future disasters.

Damage to roads has been significant. The Kona Low Storms in March caused damage to DOT infrastructure totaling about \$192 million. The May earthquake caused damage to roads totaling about \$1.5 million. Hurricane Lala caused damage statewide to roads totaling about \$28.5 million. Emergency repairs to Route 11 in Ka'u are underway. Hurricane Lowell caused major damage, especially to Kauai, along with impacts to Oahu and Maui, and about \$6.5 million in damage to Hawai'i Island roads.

The Governor said, "Four major disasters in six months have caused extraordinary damage across our state and made clear that recovery and resilience must move forward together. The costs identified so far approach \$700 million, and the investments needed to strengthen our critical infrastructure bring the total challenge to approximately \$1 billion. We will pursue every available federal resource, use insurance and state funding responsibly, and work with the Legislature to protect our people and prepare Hawai'i for what comes next."

Across all four disasters, the Governor and his team reported that 1,290 homes were affected, including 74 destroyed, 451 with major damage, 514 with minor damage, and 251 otherwise affected.

Please go to Governor Green's Facebook page to access the video of the September 23 news conference with the Governor and top administration officials providing details on the damage assessments and recovery plans.

All of this talk brings to mind

our own roads in Kohala. The good news is that Hawaii Department of Transportation (DOT) has allocated \$12,000,000 to rehabilitate the pavement of Akoni Pule Highway from Mahukona Park to Hawi Road. This much-needed project will begin work soon.

According to the DOT, there is currently a contract to repave and restore the pavement on Kohala Mountain Road from mile marker 6.4 to mile marker 10.4. The project ID is STP-0250(008). This project was awarded to Grace Pacific LLC and contracted to start in 2022. The DOT informed my office that Grace Pacific was pulled from the Kohala Mountain Road to complete emergency repairs on Route 19 in Naalehu and will resume its work on Kohala Mountain Road upon its completion of the emergency repairs. DOT expects Grace Pacific to wrap up the Kohala Mountain Road repavement contract soon, at which point an inspector will ensure that they meet the standards of the project. I would highly recommend taking pictures of any unsafe areas and sending those images to DOT.HWY.HawaiiDistrict@hawaii.gov to ensure that those issues are known prior to the completion of the project.

For highway safety issues, please contact the Hawaii County Highways Office at 808-933-8866. I recommend that you provide pictures of the unsafe roadway along with detailed information on the problem area. Images can be shared with the DOT at dot.hwy.hawaiidistrict@hawaii.gov. I would also recommend that you contact the DOT Public Affairs Office at (808) 587-2160 or dotpao@hawaii.gov. Please copy me on any emails you send to DOT so I can keep informed. It is good for DOT to hear from citizens as well as their legislators.

While these natural disasters test our resilience, we can learn from this experience and be better prepared for the next storm. At the legislature, I will do everything I can to help strengthen our community's infrastructure. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the Kohala community as your State Representative.

Your input and advice are always welcome. Please contact me anytime at (808) 586-8510 and reptarnas@capitol.hawaii.gov. Mahalo nui loa!

Future KMN Deadlines

It's important for the Kohala Mountain News to receive ads and news submissions by the following deadlines. Otherwise, submissions may not be accommodated.

November Deadlines
Ads and News: 11/6/26
Calendar: 11/13/26
Distribution: 11/20/26

December Deadlines
Ads and News: 12/4/26
Calendar: 12/11/26
Distribution: 12/18/26

*Our purpose is to enhance
and strengthen the community
by fostering continuous
communication and
understanding among the
various cultures, residents and
constituents.*

ABOUT US

Publisher/Ad Sales Manager
Tom Morse ☎ 345-0706
ltmorse@aol.com

Managing Editor
Maureen Garry ☎ 494-4237
kohalanewseditor@gmail.com

Layout & Calendar Editor
Annalene Kotzé ☎ 339-4951
kohalacalendar@gmail.com

Bookkeeper
Jill Kupitz ☎ 896-2332
jillkupitz@gmail.com

October Contributors

Lowell Angell, Boyd D. Bond,
Darnell Carvalho, Henry
Dulan, Lucy Hinokawa, James
Hustace, Roy Kimoto, Marc
Kinoshita, Tom Morse, Wendy
Nickl, North Kohala Commu-
nity Resource Center, Leilani
Silver, David Tarnas, Lynda
Wallach, Wajira Wansa, John
Winter, Toni Withington.

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must address issues
affecting North Kohala
and be accompanied by
the author's name, address
and telephone number.
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subject to editing, and shorter
submissions will receive
preference for publication.**

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Kohala Mountain News
P.O. Box 639,
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County Council Update

From the Desk of District 9 Councilmember James Hustace

Aloha Kohala!

As we move into fall, recent storms have reminded us why preparedness, resilient infrastructure, and neighbors looking out for one another matter so much. Mahalo to everyone who came together when it counted and the work you continue to do in strengthening our communities for future challenges.

North Kohala residents recently gathered for a community storm debrief and preparedness discussion organized by the Kohala Resil-

ience Hub and community partners. Residents shared their experiences from recent storms, discussed communication, and ways to strengthen community resilience. Mahalo to Kathy Matsuda, Boyd Bond, and everyone who helped make this important conversation possible.

October brought another full agenda of Council work. Bill 147 continues discussions around transient accommodations, including regulation, enforcement, housing, neighborhood impacts, and the

visitor industry. I am preparing amendments as we move forward. Bill 183 would adjust wastewater service rates and create a separate hotel classification.

Our aging wastewater systems need major investment, and I continue to examine whether the proposed cost allocation is fair, sustainable, and supported by sound data.

Other measures before the Council this month include Bill 184,

See CC update on Page 6



Photo courtesy of James Hustace
Councilmember James Hustace represents North Kohala as part of Hawai'i County Council District 9.

supporting greater use of native plants in County landscaping; Bill 191, strengthening erosion and sedimentation enforcement; and Bill 192, extending a share of property tax revenue for housing and homelessness programs through 2029.

Bills 199 and 200 would establish a County historic place marker program and a County mo'olelo interpretation program.

For North Kohala, where so much of Hawai'i's history is rooted in place, these measures offer an opportunity to better recognize, preserve, and share the stories that connect our communities to generations past.

I am grateful that the Council recently approved District 9

Contingency Relief Fund support for the Kohala Resilience Hub's Kūpuna Day. I will be bringing forward another North Kohala-focused resolution for Council consideration on October 21 to support the Kohala Resilience Hub's Keiki Christmas Toy Drive. I am hopeful this funding will also receive Council support and help strengthen another important effort serving North Kohala.

I am also continuing work on legislation focused on long-term community wildfire resilience. The first step is establishing a County process to identify areas of elevated wildfire risk, creating a foundation for future discussions around defensible space, access, water supply, construction standards, and other mitigation strategies.

October is also Stop the Ant month. Residents are encouraged to collect ant samples and submit them for identification. Free collection kits and instructions are available at stoptheant.org.

As always, I encourage you to stay engaged. Your conversations, emails, and testimony help guide my work and ensure community voices remain part of the decisions before us.

I am honored to serve as your Council Member. You are welcome to email me at james.hustace@hawaiicounty.gov, call our Waimea office at (808) 887-6077, or our Hilo office at (808) 961-8564.

Wishing you good health and aloha!

Talk Story on Kohala Field System Slated



Photo credit: Ulu Mau Puanui
Remnants of the Kohala field system, an ancient Hawaiian dryland agricultural network.

By Marc Kinoshita

As you drive to Waimea on the Mountain Road past Pu'uhue in the early morning or late evening, have you ever noticed the long lines that dot the landscape in the rolling green pasture?

The "lines" are remnant walls of the ancient Kohala Field System, a massive, pre-contact, ancient Hawaiian dryland agricultural network covering 25 square miles. At its peak in the 18th century, the field system sustained a thriving regional population estimated between 20,000 and 120,000 people.

The Kohala Heritage Center will present an Exhibit and Kūkākūka [discussion/talk story] with Kehaulani Marshall on the Kohala Field System on November 6 at 5:00 p.m. at the Center.

Kehaulani Marshall is a Native Hawaiian educator, agriculturist, and community leader who serves as the Executive Director of Ulu Mau Puanui.

Her work centers on reviving ancestral Hawaiian agricultural knowledge and restoring historic farming ecosystems.

E Komo Mai for an evening of sharing ancient knowledge and how it is being learned and taught by Ulu Mau Puanui with Kehaulani Marshall.

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A photograph of a man in a blue shirt and shorts working on a stone structure, possibly a well or a small building, in a sandy area.

October

Women's

HEALTH

&

Breast Cancer

Awareness

Month

A photograph of two women sitting on a bench, engaged in a conversation. One woman is wearing a blue shirt and the other is wearing a purple shirt.

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The logo for Hāmākua-Kohala Health, featuring a stylized green plant and the text "HĀMAKUA-KOHALA HEALTH".

Aikane

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GREEN WASTE REMOVAL

COMPOST

CINDER

SAND

A photograph of a red Aikane truck, a large dump truck, parked on a grassy area.

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MULCH

GRAVEL

SOIL

Buddhist Temples Sound Bell for Peace



The weekly Monday Kohala Bon Dance group rang the Kohala Hongwanji kansho (temple bell) again for worldwide peace. Left to right: Karla Park, Renee Ito, Eva Botelho, Susan Laughlin, Randee Golden, Jean DeMercer-Breese.

By Wendy Nickl
Kohala Hongwanji Mission and Kohala Jodo Mission Buddhist Temples participated in the Hawaii Peace Day “Ring Your Bell for Peace” event. This is the sixth annual event with its origins in 2007, when the Hawaii State Legislature became the first state in the U.S. to enact a law proclaiming

September 21 as Peace Day. On September 21, hundreds of participants in Hawaii, across the nation and around the world shared our universal aspiration for peace by ringing bells, chimes, and other instruments for five minutes beginning at 9:00 a.m. It was a glorious sound of hope for peace on our planet Earth.



Photo by Vicky DeMercer
Left to right: Rodney Park, Karla Park, Renee Ito, Al Nickl, Wendy Nickl, Vicky DeMercer meet at the Kohala Hongwanji temple to ring the bell for peace.

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52-277 Keokea Park Rd., North Kohala
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Two permitted classic Hawaiian style homes on one lot. This well-built quality duplex has charm and significant income potential. The building contains two separate 3-bedroom, 2-full-bathroom units, totaling six bedrooms and four full bathrooms.

54-2461 Kynnersley Rd., Kapa'au
MLS 731819 | \$788,000 FS

Spacious home with an impressive 2,062 sq. ft of interior living space; ocean and pasture views, huge eat-in kitchen, giant studio space, fresh interior paint, updated laundry & bathroom fixtures, beautiful backyard.

53-4214-A Akoni Pule Hwy, #153B,
MLS 731017 | \$375,000 FS

The most affordable fee simple home in North Kohala. Beautifully maintained studio cottage with large picture windows. Landscaped with producing banana, mango, coconut, pomegranate, mountain apple, fig and soursop trees.

52-236 Keokea Park Rd., Kapa'au
MLS 731865 | \$360,000 FS

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Kohala High School 2026 Football Team



Photo by Tom Morse

Head Coach: Earl Hoshida; Assistant Coaches: Wilton Camara, Kekoa Iokia and Jason Ontiveros; Players: Benjamin Cabral, Kyle Caniedo, Bradd Carvalho, Chase Chilton, Makana Dela Cruz, Kin Edmond, Keali'i Elarco, Joseph Emeliano Jr., Nash Ishimine, Chaedon Kawai, Brett Lajala-Debrum, Titus Mackillop, Fernando Marroquin, Akima Matsuda, Journey Medeiros, Aiden Padilla, Aidyn Pasco, Elijah Perez, Kaualeinahua Reyes, Zayne Salvador-Medeiros and Gemmsin Taomia.

2026 Annual 4-H Livestock Show & Sale

Story and photos by Darnell Carvalho
The Hawaii County Annual 4-H Livestock Show & Sale was held at the Rocking Chair Ranch/Anderson Arena in Waimea on June 19 and 20. 4-H club Hui Hanaiahuhu of North Kohala, under the leadership of Fern White and assisted by Darnell Carvalho, Terri Impson and Lauren Ongoy, participated in this year's show. Other participating clubs include Hamakua 4-H Club, East Hawaii 4-H Ranchers, Kau 4-H Livestock Club and 4-H Pineapples.

Hui Hanaiahuhu members AR and Ruby Richards each raised a Market Lamb that was one of the highest selling lambs at the auction and placed high in carcass. Toby Ongoy raised a Breeding Ewe. The lamb program started on March 31, and members had 75 days to tame and raise their lambs for show and auction. In addition, they needed to keep record and project books documenting their leadership, community service and the caring of their project animal from feeding, weight gain/loss, exercise, medical treatment, grooming, etc.

On Friday, June 19, the show started with the weigh-in of the animals. Participants then had judging competitions where they judged the confirmation of lambs, hogs, steers and heifers. They also had to name



AR Richards with Lambules, Ruby Richards with Stage Freight and Toby Ongoy with Daisy Espresso.

different cuts of meat and name the species. Record and Project books were also turned in for judging.

There were fancy chickens, rabbits, goats, lambs, hogs, steers and heifers at the show. Participants

showed their project animals on Friday and Saturday.

4-H helps young people develop quality friendships and teaches youth important life skills such as leadership, decision-making, personal-coping skills and helps them acquire and use knowledge. 4-H is a program about our future.

Congratulations to all the 4-H Livestock participants. They worked hard and did a great job.

Celebration for Richard Elliott Scheduled

By Beverly Aslett

There will be a celebration of life for Richard Elliott, past owner of Paradise Postal, at Keokea Beach Park on November 14 from 3-6 p.m. It will be in a Hawaiian tradition with a blessing from Kahu Kealoha Sugiyama, a fellow kupuna. There will be a potluck meal and all are welcome to join.

Richard died in Boise, Idaho on August 15, 2026 during a bone marrow transplant. He had fought a hard battle with five primary cancers. He loved his community in North Kohala and wished to have his ashes returned here.

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2026 Annual 4-H Horse Show



Hawaii County Equine Show Champions (left to right): Senior Champion: Thalia Ongoy, Reserve: Amberlyn Hickok; Junior Champion: Toby Ongoy, Reserve: Ruby Richards; Beginner Champion: Julie Cross.

By Darnell Carvalho

The Hawaii County Annual 4-H Horse Show was held on August 8–9 at the Rocking Chair Ranch/Anderson Arena in Waimea. Members of East Hawaii Ranchers and Hui Hanaiahuhu came together in competition to showcase their acquired skills and knowledge in working with and understanding their equine partners.

Some of the events featured at the County Horse Show included Horse Judging, Reining, Ranch Riding, Showmanship at Halter, Stock Seat Equitation, Trail Horse, Ranch Riding, Barrel Racing, Pole Bending, Keyhole, Stake Race, and Record Book. This year also included English riding: Hunt Seat, Bridle Path Hack and Hunter Hack.

4-H helps young people develop quality friendships and teaches youth important life skills such as leadership, decision-making, personal-coping skills and helps them acquire and use knowledge. 4-H is a program about our future.

We would also like to extend a big Mahalo to all our sponsors whose charitable donations funded the awards and ribbons to honor the achievements of our Equine members.

Congratulations to all the 4-H Equine participants. They worked hard and did a great job.

IRONMAN Triathlon Turnaround in Hawi



By Tom Morse

On October 10, the IRONMAN World Championship once again had the bike turn around in downtown Hawi. The event draws tens of thousands of visitors to the island every October to see or participate in the most prestigious race in the IRONMAN series. The race consists of a 2.4-mile swim in Kailua Bay, a 112-mile bike ride from Kailua Pier to Hawi and back, and a 26.2-mile marathon ending on Ali'i Drive.

Prompted by damage caused by Hurricane Lala—in addition to an earlier 2026 gift of \$164,000 in charitable support—IRONMAN Foundation donated \$350,000 toward two mobile health trailers plus medical and dental services for Ka'u.

North Kohala Public Library November 2026 News and Programs

By Leilani Silver

Did you know? The Hawaii State Public Library System offers self-paced online music lessons from master musicians through ArtistWorks. It provides instruction for popular string and band instruments, including the 'ukulele. Whether you're a beginner or an advanced player, ArtistWorks offers a unique opportunity to learn at your own pace, from the comfort of your home, and receive valuable feedback on your progress.

A valid HSPLS library card provides free access to their entire catalog of video lessons for 30 days. Visit our website and use the quick link for ArtistWorks to sign up and get started.

Chinese Medicine Tools for Cold/Flu Remedies with Ila Jhaveri on November 2 at 3:00 p.m. All participants will walk away with useful and highly effective tips on using food-as-therapy, acupressure, and other lifestyle tools as well as info on acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine.

Chess Club: November 2 at 5:00 p.m. Both beginners and veteran players are welcome to challenge others in this classic strategy game. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Preschool Storytime: November 4, 18, and 25 at 10:00 a.m. We gather to sing songs, read a few simple stories, then make a craft or do an activity every Wednesday. Great fun for 2–5-year-olds and their parents or caregivers.

Lego Club: November 4, 18, and 25 at 2:00–3:30 p.m. Join us every Wednesday for some imaginative fun as we build cool creations out of Legos. Creations will be displayed at the library.

Kohala Kendama Club: November 5, 12, and 19 at 3:00–4:00 p.m. Join us every Thursday for some Kendama fun. Show us your tricks or learn some new ones. All levels welcome. Complete a trick card and get a prize. Bring your own Kendama or use one provided by the library.

Heluhelu Quiz Bowl Team Meeting: November 6 at 2:45 p.m. Continued discussion of the books and trivia related to the Heluhelu Quiz Bowl. Snacks provided. Program is for 4th to 7th graders of any school; public, private or homeschooled.

Crystal Alchemy Singing Bowl Soundbath: November 9 from 5:30–6:30 p.m. Join Leilani Silver for a unique immersive experience of being "bathed" in the vibrations

See Library, on Page 10





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Library, from Page 9

of eight 432 Hz Crystal Alchemy Singing Bowls made from 99.9 percent clear quartz. The tremendously powerful high frequencies instantly reduce stress and tension and create a relaxed and meditative state that supports healing and regeneration. Participants are encouraged to bring a yoga mat and water.

Adult Book Club: November 10 at 11:00 a.m. Join us for a discussion of “The Foursome” by #1 New York Times bestselling author Christina Baker Kline. The book is available to pick up at the library.

Hawaiian History Talk with Boyd Bond: November 16 at 5:30 p.m. Join us for an informative talk story about Hawaiian History with local historian Boyd Bond.

Pokémon Trading Card Game: November 24 at 3:00 p.m. Interested in the Pokémon Trading Card Game, but don’t know how to play? Join us to play your first Pokémon card game and learn all about using the Battle Academy board game, generously provided by the Friends of the North Kohala Library. Already know how to play? Bring your deck and challenge other experienced players or come talk about deck building and card collecting.

Teen/Adult Board Games: November 30, at 5:15 p.m. Calling teens and adults! Come for a fun night of board games! Play one of the games provided or feel free to bring your own to share!

All programs are subject to change. If you require an auxiliary aid or accommodation due to a disability, please contact the library at least seven days before the program date.

North Kohala Public Library Hours:

Mon:.....12-4 p.m., 5-7 p.m.
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MOVIE THEATERS IN KOHALA

The Kohala Theater 1940-1958

Fourth in a Series

This multi-part story originally ran in the Kohala Mountain News beginning in June of 2014.



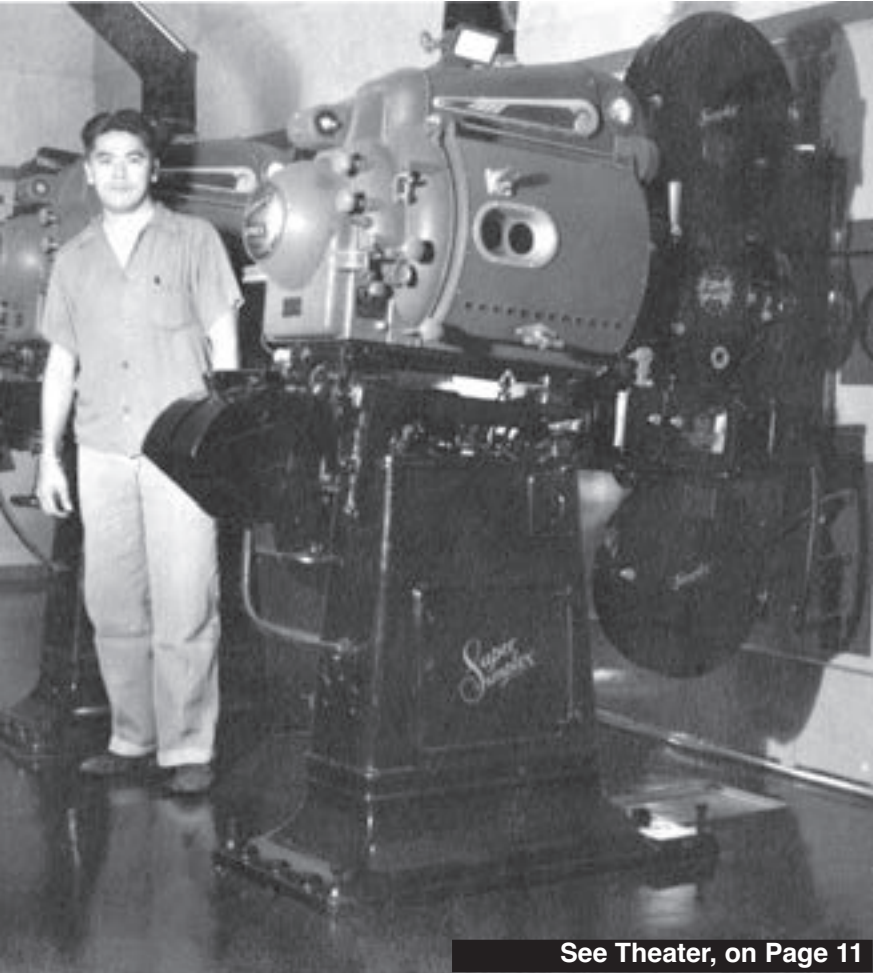
The Kohala Theater in Halaula, c. 1949. Photo courtesy of Faye Mitchell

By Tom Morse

The Kohala Theater was built in 1940, five years after the Hawi Theater and the same year as the Kahei Theater. It had approximately 775 seats, more than the other two theaters combined. It was designed by the famous architect C.W. Dickey, who also designed many buildings in Honolulu, as well as the Volcano House on the Big Island. The theater was a joint project of the Kohala Sugar Company and Consolidated Amusement, which purchased the Hawi Theater from Harold Sugiyama at the same time as it opened the Kohala Theater.

The two large neon “KOHALA” signs could be seen from a great distance at night. Covered walkways added style to the entrance. A large trellis supported a beautiful growth of hua pala vines, noted for their bright orange flowers and shiny, dark green leaves. The occluded glass blocks were a distinguishing characteristic. A large lobby featured a concession area braced by potted palms. There was no balcony; the projection room and an office were above the lobby.

The theater was open every evening, with matinees on Saturday and Sunday. There were no matinees on weekdays, so as not to distract the workers. A few cents extra bought reserved seats in the center rows. Filipino movies were shown on Thursday nights. All the Kohala theaters were a popular retreat for soldiers on rest and recuperation



See Theater, on Page 11

Photo courtesy of Roy Kimoto

The projection room housed the most modern color and sound projectors, pictured here with operator Kazuo Kamoto. Two projectors were needed to allow a smooth transition between rolls of film.



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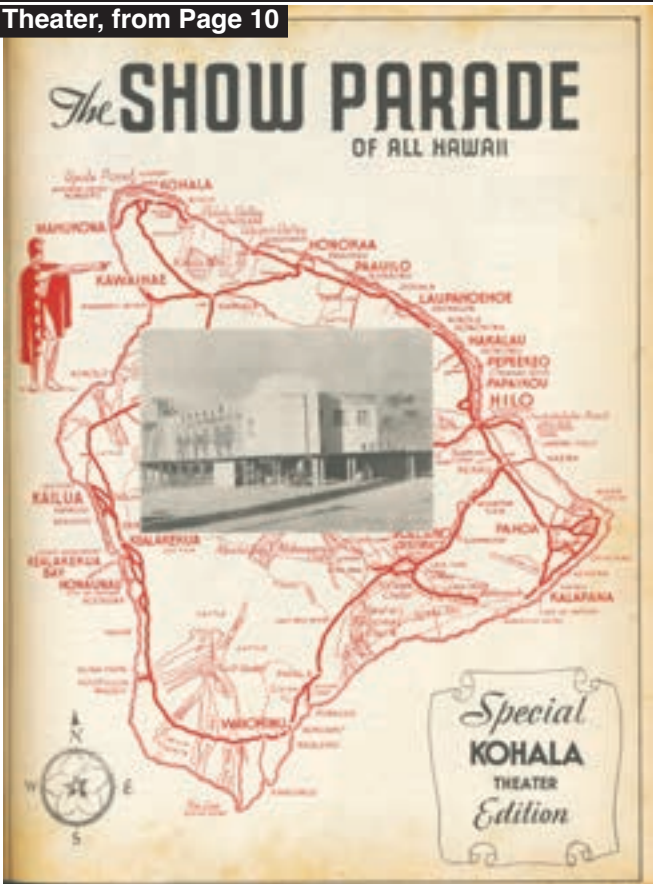
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Theater, from Page 10



Courtesy of Lowell Angell
The theater opened to much fanfare. Shown here is publicity about the new theater from Show Parade, a publication of Consolidated Amusement.



Courtesy of Lowell Angell
The first manager of the theater, Jack Sanborn, was the Master of Ceremonies on opening night. Consolidated Amusement operated the theater but staffed it mainly with Kohala residents. Pictured here is the staff on opening night.
Top row, left to right: Kuni Iwaoka, Projectionist; Edith Mizushima, Cashier; Kazue Nakagawa, Cashier; Jack Sanborn, Manager.
Second row: Ikuo Hisaoka, Chief Usher (who later became a Hawaii County Councilman, and for whom the gym at Kamehameha Park was named); Frank Caitano, Usher and Projectionist; Rod Hinokawa, Usher; Hideo Naito, Doorman.
Third Row: Tereso Laure, Attendant; Joe Carvalho, Poster Service; Muchi Koomoa, Poster Service; Santos Ramairo, Usher; Isidro Tagorda, Usher.
Bottom Row: Edward Silva, Herbert Silva, Joseph Crivelho and Joseph Franca; Show Parade Magazine Distribution.



Courtesy of Lowell Angell
The playbill from the opening night shows an extensive program with live singers, dancers, an orchestra, two newsreels, a cartoon and, of course, a feature film.
Welcoming talks were given by the President of Consolidated Amusement and the General Manager of the Kohala Sugar Company.

from 1942 to 1945 during World War II.

Other Kohala residents were employed at the theater in the coming years, including Violet Caravalho as an Usherette in 1950-51, and Madeline Gonsalves as a Cashier in 1955. Richard Bartolome was a long-time Usher. Rod Hino-kawa became the Manager in 1955.

Consolidated Amusement brought in two Managers from Hilo: Isaac Silva 1942-43, and Mr. Aguirre in 1957.

See Theater, on Page 12

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The next article, The Kohala Theater, Part 2: Life in Halaula and The Theater Closes, will be the fifth and final article in this series.

Courtesy of Henry Dulan
This photo shows the rural nature of the theater’s location, ironic with its size and seating capacity. No one remembers it ever being close to full, although one kupuna recalls that the only time there was a traffic jam in Kohala was when the theater let out.



Photo courtesy of Lucy Hinokawa
The Consolidated Amusement Staff in 1947.
The men: Kuni Iwaoka, Jose Follisco, Rod Hinokawa, Richard Bartolome, Manager Aguirre, Frank Caitano, Kazuo Komoto.
The ladies: Alice Vinta, Mieko Murai, Maggie Obina, (unknown), Teruko Yoneda.



Courtesy of Henry Dulan
An earlier photo shows the ticket booth. Note that the vines had not yet grown up the trellis on the left.



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Hālāwa Sugar Mill and Plantation

This story was originally printed in the January 2015 issue of the Kohala Mountain News.

Kakau e Boyd D. Bond

The arrival of Dr. James Wight in Kohala was both tragic and unfortunate, yet his influence in Kohala and to Hawai'i Island was positive and profound. Wight started operating the Hālāwa Mill and Plantation, the second oldest sugar mill in Kohala nei in 1873.

He established it on the hills above the road just Pololū direction after the Kamehameha Stone at Hālāwa stream. James Wight (pronounced white) was born in India in 1814 to parents of Scots-Irish descent, educated in Edinburgh and graduated in 1836 in Medicine at the age of 22. He then traveled to Australia to practice his craft, which he did for the next 13 years.

While in Australia Dr. Wight discovered two things: one was that he had a strong entrepreneurial bent, and the other was his future wife, Jane. Jane Tomkins Wight was born in Cape Colony, Africa, of English-Irish descent. She was educated in England and traveled to Australia following her own graduation at the age of 22, presumably to find work.

She met James there in 1848, and they had a child together out of wedlock, so almost immediately decided to depart for California and the great Gold Rush. They did so in 1850, while Jane was pregnant with their second child. Dr. and Mrs. Wight arrived in Honolulu in 1850 and decided to visit the other islands before continuing to California. In early August, having stopped briefly at Kawaihae, they continued north, whereupon their ship ran into the rocks in a storm and sank near Māhukona.

Their young daughter Ada was brought to shore but had not survived the stormy seas. As the good doctor ran off to the mission station ten miles away, Mrs. Wight went into labor with their second child. There were no facilities there in those days; only a small number of grass huts dotted the hill above the bay. Jane Wight was taken to one of these hale pili, where she delivered one child alongside the body of the other and fell asleep exhausted. Having been raised in wild Africa



*Photos courtesy of greenbankhawaii.com/
wightfamily.html*

Jane Wight

and not knowing what to expect, at first Mrs. Wight feared her husband had been taken prisoner by the natives and eaten. "And think of it," she once told her friend H.R. Restarick, "I was afraid of the kindest people in the world who had only come curious to see a white woman and her baby!"

Eventually her husband returned with assistance. Knowing that further rescue would take time, he recovered some of the wood from the wrecked vessel and began construction of his own home. Persuaded to stay by Rev. Bond, he built a small store in Hālāwa in 1851, which he sold to S.G. Wilder in 1884. Dr. Wight did not establish a medical practice per se in the islands, preferring to follow his business interests.

However, he gave his services freely whenever presented with a need, kept up a pharmacy as part of his store and was called upon to attend members of the royal family when they were visiting in the district. Dr. Wight also became Judge Wight, serving as circuit court judge from 1852 to 1863, and was appointed school agent for the Kohala District in 1869.

Dr. Wight became a partner in the Kohala Sugar Plantation when Rev. Bond leaned on him to sell some of his Halaula property to the new mill enterprise—taking stock instead of cash for payment,



James Wight, Sr.

as Bond had done. As time and resources allowed, Wight continued to purchase land as it came up for sale, eventually owning properties from Māhukona to Makapāla. When Wight began his own Mill in Hālāwa in 1873, the plantation was only 972 acres. Yet the mill produced about 1,000 tons of sugar—twice as much as Kohala mill with one-third of the land!

Dr. Wight had encouraged nearby Hawaiian and Chinese families to grow sugar on their own lands, and he would process their cane and split the profits of those sales with them 50/50. In 1879 when the planters and mill owners of the district banded together for mutual benefit, Dr. Wight was selected president of the group, and Dr. Lyman Thompson was elected vice-president.

The doctor leased his lands at Puakea for sugar production and had a small ranch there to produce beef for food locally as well as oxen as beasts of burden. He developed the landing at Honoipu with his own money, although the kingdom later pitched in with some upgrades.

Remembered also as a horticulturist, Dr. Wight is said to have been the first to import orchid plants from England and the first to bring a live ironwood tree from Australia. While decidedly not a member of the Kohala Club, he was a member

of the British Benevolent Society and of the Lehua Club, which was devoted to "promoting common interest and fellowship between natives and foreigners." Greenbank, his home in Kohala, was patterned after an English country estate and built next to a 400-year-old taro lo'i, possibly upon the site of an old heiau, or temple.

The house was two stories high, with an attic and a Polynesian style lanai around three sides. It was a social center in Kohala for many years. Jane's garden next to the house became famous throughout the islands. The Wights eventually had 13 children, although four did not make it to adulthood. Their daughter Clara married H. R. Bryant, who later promoted the flower industry on Hawai'i Island and is largely responsible for our nickname, "the Orchid Isle." Wight became interested in politics and was elected in 1886 to the House of Representatives.

The following year he was appointed to the House of Nobles. Remembered for his independent stands in both houses, he is reported to have strongly opposed annexation in 1894. Hālāwa Mill survived until 1929, when the mill closed and the lands were leased out to Niuli'i Plantation and Kohala Sugar Company. Hālāwa Camp became a residence of craftsmen and specialists, paid a salary somewhere between that of field labor and luna (overseer). It supported a nearby village, including a tailor, a butcher and a general store. Sugar operations continued at Puakea until 1933, when the lands were turned over to ranching.

Parker Ranch leased the Puakea ranch lands beginning in 1934 and purchased them outright 12 years later, continuing to ranch there until the late 1980s. Dr. Wight died September 2, 1905, at the age of 91. Mrs. Wight died in 1915, and they are both buried in Hālāwa. Greenbank, once maintained by the Wight Estate, is no more. However, the family cemetery remains below the old taro lo'i next to Hālāwa stream, each in its own way giving silent testimony to Hālāwa's past.

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	12:00PM		SENIOR BALANCE, STRENGTH & FITNESS	KOHALA INTERGENERATIONAL CENTER	238-6111
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	5:30PM		DEFIANT BRATS (WOMENS' AA)	AINAKEA HOME	747-9627
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	8AM	9AM	TAI CHI WITH PETER BEEMER	OUTSIDE HISAOKA GYM	895-0737
	8AM		YOGA/PILATES BEGINNER CLASS	OUTSIDE HISAOKA GYM	333-8275
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	6PM	8PM	TABLE TENNIS/PING PONG	OLD COURT HOUSE	889-1099
WED	10AM	11AM	STORY TIME	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	889-6655
	12PM	6PM	THRIFT SHOP	ST AUGUSTINE'S	889-5390
	2PM	3PM	LEGO CLUB	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	889-6655
	3:30 PM	4:30PM	RMD TAIKO CLASSES (NOT 1ST WED)	JODO MISSION	895-2025
	5PM	6PM	CHOIR PRACTICE	ST AUGUSTINE'S	889-5390
	6PM	8PM	FREE MEAL AND BIBLE STUDY	KALAHIKIOLA CHURCH	218-4872
	6PM	7:30PM	SEIBUKAN KARATE ACADEMY	HISAOKA GYM	889-1828
	7PM		SPIRITUAL HEALING SERVICE	ZOOM	989-5995
	7PM	8PM	ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS	ST. AUGUSTINE'S	895-5843
THU	8AM	4PM	TOOL LIBRARY	54-3842 AKONI PULE HWY	213-7779
	9:30AM	10:45PM	HEALING CIRCLE FOR ADDICTS	NANI'S GARDEN	805-452 9501
	3PM	4:30PM	KOHALA KENDOMA CLUB	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	889-6655
	5PM		OPEN CIRCLE MEDITATION (NOT 2ND)	KEOKEA BEACH PARK	889-5390
	6PM	8PM	PICKLE BALL	HISAOKA GYM	333-8712
	6PM	8PM	TABLE TENNIS/PING PONG	OLD COURT HOUSE	889-1099
FRI	8AM		NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS MEETING	WILEY HALL ON IOLE	805-452-9501
	8AM	9AM	TAI CHI WITH PETER BEEMER	OUTSIDE HISAOKA GYM	895-0737
	4PM		FOOD PANTRY	ST AUGUSTINE'S	889-5390
SAT	8AM	12PM	HAWI FARMERS MARKET	HUB MURAL	895-7870
	8AM	4PM	TOOL LIBRARY	54-3842 AKONI PULE HWY	213-7779
	6PM	8:30PM	KARAOKE	KO PIZZA	313-0514
SUN	6PM	7PM	SEIBUKAN KARATE ACADEMY	HISAOKA GYM	889-1828
	7PM	8PM	RECOVERY DHARMA MEETING	RED COTTAGE VILLAGE HUB	(907) 888-8166

**Night out
at bamboo**

Nov 6th.....First Fridays Prime Rib Dinner
Nov 13th.....Movie Night at Bamboo
Nov 19th.....Johnny Sholtz Band
Nov 27th.....Closed "Happy Thanksgiving"
Nov TBA.....Sip and Paint at Bamboo

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30TH, 2026
5-8 PM
COSTUME CONTEST:
Kids • Singles • Couples

KIDS SPOOKY ART CORNER **CARICATURE ARTIST** **PHOTO BOOTH** **APPLE BOBBING**
FACE PAINTING **PRIZE DRAWING** **MUSIC, DANCING, FOOD**

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MONTHLY CALENDAR 2026							
	DAY	START	END	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	VENUE	PHONE
11/2	MON	3:00 PM		ILA JHAVERI TALK-COLD/FLU REMEDIES	CHINESE MEDICINE TOOLS	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
11/2	MON	4:30 PM		ADVISORY GROUP MEETING	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
11/2	MON	5:00 PM		CHESS CLUB	BEGINNERS AND VETERAN PLAYERS WELCOME.	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
11/4	WED	4:00 PM	6:00 PM	KOHALA NIGHT MARKET	FOOD TRUCKS, CRAFT VENDORS, MUSIC	HUB MURAL	(808) 895-2025
11/4	WED	4:30 PM		KOHALA COMMUNITY ACCESS GROUP	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
11/4	WED	5:30 PM		TEMPLE OF SPIRITUAL HEALING	GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP - CALL FOR ZOOM LINK	ZOOM	808-989-5995
11/6	FRI	2:45 PM		HELUHELU QUIZ BOWL TEAM MEETING	BOOKS AND TRIVIA DISCUSSION, SNACKS PROVIDED. FOR 4TH-7TH GRADERS.	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
11/6	FRI	3:00 PM	6:00PM	FEATURED ARTIST RECEPTION	RECEPTION FOR FEATURED ARTIST CHAD GRAY	‘ŌLENA GALLERY	808-345-1779
11/6	FRI	5:00 PM		KOHALA FIELD SYSTEM	EXHIBIT AND KŪKĀKŪKĀ WITH KEHAULANI MARSHALL	KOHALA HERITAGE CENTER	
11/7	SAT	8:00 AM	11:00AM	THRIFT SHOP		ST AUGUSTINE’S	808-889-5390
11/7	SAT	9:00 AM	1:00PM	BAZAAR		ST AUGUSTINE’S	808-889-5390
11/7	SAT	9:00 AM	6:00PM	SOIL SYMPOSIUM II	LIVE MUSIC, FARM-FRESH LUNCH, WORKSHOPS IN MUSHROOM CULTIVATION,	STARSEED RANCH	HIP AGRICULTURE
11/7	SAT	5:00 PM	7:00PM	RAKU & FRIENDS OPENING NIGHT	OCEAN RAKU POTTERY CERAMIC EXHIBITION, ON VIEW NOV 7-30. PUPUS AVAILABLE.	KOHALA ARTIST COOPERATIVE	808-854-1058
11/9	MON	5:30 PM	6:30PM	SOUND BATH	CRYSTAL ALCHEMY SINGING BOWL SOUNDBATH	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
11/10	TUE	11:00 AM		ADULT BOOK CLUB	DISCUSS “THE FOURSOME” BY CHRISTINA BAKER KLINE	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
11/11	WED	9:00 AM		AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROUP	NKCDP	LIBRARY	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
11/11	WED	5:00 PM		GROWTH MANAGEMENT GROUP	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
11/16	MON	5:30 PM		HAWAIIAN HISTORY TALK	TALK STORY WITH LOCAL HISTORIAN BOYD BOND	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
11/18	WED	3:30 PM		UTILITIES GROUP	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
11/18	WED	5:00 PM		PARKS, ROADS VIEW PLANES GROUP	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
11/19	THU	9:00 AM	11:00AM	SACRED HEART FOOD BASKET	FOOD DISTRIBUTION	SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH	808-889-6436
11/20	FRI	4:00 PM		HEALTH & WELLNESS GROUP	NKCDP	OLD COURTHOUSE	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
11/21	SAT	11:00 AM	1:00PM	TOOL LIBRARY WORKSHOPS	USEFUL AND BEGINNER-FRIENDLY TOPICS	TOOL LIBRARY	808-213-7779
11/24	TUE	3:00 PM		POKÉMON TRADING CARD GAME	LEARN TO PLAY OR BRING YOUR DECK TO CHALLENGE OTHERS	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655
11/25	WED	4:00 PM		RESTORATIVE YOGA THERAPY CLASS	WITH CARLA ORELLANA - BY REQUEST	CALL FOR LOCATION	808-238-6111
11/26	THU	5:00 PM		AGRICULTURE GROUP	NKCDP	NKCRC	IMUAKOHALA@GMAIL.COM
11/30	MON	5:15 PM		TEEN/ADULT BOARD GAMES	PLAY GAMES PROVIDED OR BRING YOUR OWN TO SHARE	NK PUBLIC LIBRARY	808-889-6655



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Māhukona Park's Future?

Story and photo by Toni Withington

The County of Hawaii is once again calling reconstruction of Mahukona Beach Park a “priority.” Tagged by mayors Harry Kim and Mitch Ross as a “highest priority,” the park has lost all its amenities and deteriorated since the 80-year-old pavilion was condemned in 2019.

But officials at the County’s Department of Parks and Recreation (P&R) affirmed at a meeting last month that the word “priority” is again in play.

The meeting was called for by the Parks, Roads, Erosion Control, and Viewplains Group (PREV) of the North Kohala Community Development Plan.

Attending for P&R were Clayton Honma, director; Melissa Samura, deputy director; and James Komata, chief planner. Also present were Senator Tim Richards, County Councilmember James Hustace, and for PREV, John Winter and Toni Withington.

Winter started the meeting by detailing the many years that Kohala resident volunteers made repairs to the failing pavilion. He pointed to the request by P&R for support from the Kohala community for design ideas, to which Kohala responded with three public planning workshops sponsored by Malama Māhukona to find out what the community wanted in the newly constructed park. The



Hurricane Lala tore up the landscape at Māhukona Beach Park, including uprooting many kiawe trees.

detailed report and conceptional plan map were presented to P&R in March 2025, but the group had not received any response. Fresh copies of the plan were distributed at the meeting.

Photos taken of the park after the storm Lala in August showed

many of the larger kiawe trees toppled over, leaving no shade over the parking lot, the grounds a mess of weeds and damage from storm waves.

Several years ago, P&R told Malāma Māhukona that it had \$400,000 in-hand to demolish the

pavilion and build a temporary platform on the pavilion site. Most of the funds were used for simply removing the structure and contaminated soil around it. In 2022, P&R’s proposed budget listed \$4 million as a high priority to be used for improvements to Māhukona Park. Last year \$2 million was budgeted for planning and design to be done by a consultant.

Director Honma praised James Komata for keeping the park’s needs before the administration. He listed federal mandates for improving handicapped and wastewater facilities at all parks for sapping much of the department’s budget for the last several years.

Deputy Samura said she would closely review the community’s recommendations and work with Komata to keep the project planning moving forward. She and Komata agreed to meet quarterly with PREV Group to keep the community engaged.

Senator Richards and Councilmember Hustace both said they would follow up with support to fund the park improvements and to speed up the planning process.

The highest priority action proposed by the community report was: “Before anything can happen at Māhukona, an archeology survey needs to be completed for the protection and stabilization of any historical and burial sites.”

All agreed on that first step.

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