



Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association

Photo courtesy of Karl Backus

Monthly News & Updates

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Happy New Year! January 2022 Newsletter



PMKCA in 2021

Looking back on an unprecedented year of volunteering.

Article by Ruth Bennett,
.PMKCA Veep

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*PMKCA supported the "Feeding our Keiki
and Kupuna" meals program.*

2021 is behind us now, and a new year is ahead. Personally, I sometimes find it difficult to be encouraged about the future, given that the word "pandemic" still applies to our everyday lives. In many ways we are all suffering the effects, but at the same time many of us have found new ways to become involved in our communities and make contributions where we can.

To halt my own drift toward pessimism, I've taken some time to recount what the members of the Pa'auilo Mauka and Kalōpā Community Association (PMKCA) – *and others!* – have done over the last year to remain engaged in our communities and to provide support wherever possible. It helps me to look back on some of those activities... maybe it will encourage you as well.

Many of us in the communities of Kalōpā and mauka Pa'auilo are retired kupuna. Our personal health risks tend to be greater, but we have more time on our hands and fewer obligations from jobs or school-age children. When our individual health conditions allowed us some room to move, we haven't wanted to sit on the sidelines. Many of our members have found new ways of becoming involved in community programs and charities.

The "**Feeding our Keiki and Kupuna**" meals program, organized by the **Honoka'a Hongwanji's Peace Committee**, has given several of our members the chance to make regular contributions of time and products. One member has made a weekly donation of around 20 dozen eggs from their farm. Another member has become a key team leader in the preparation and distribution of an average of 300 meals every single Friday. Others have donated their time and made monetary contributions to the meals and food

distribution program.

Our members have been actively involved in the support of the **Hāmākua Youth Center** which provides services and activities to neighborhood children and their families. In 2021 the Center cared for enrolled keiki from 7:30 am to 5 pm by supporting their virtual schoolwork, sharing Hawaiian and multicultural customs, and preparing kokua bags for the entire community.

Other members have donated their time to the restoration of the **Honoka'a swimming pool** which has served many swimmers in our community for years. A recently started and ongoing project is the reinforcement of the pool equipment room so that pool filtration and pumping equipment can be accessed safely. PMKCA members also contributed labor and some of the funds needed to rebuild the pool main circulating pump. We can now hope that it may only be a matter of weeks before the pool opens again.



*Joe Clarkson works in the pool's equipment room.
Credit: Sarah Anderson*

We have all paid attention to the challenges faced by our **local businesses, service providers, and restaurants**. Members are active in the **Honoka'a Business Association**, a volunteer organization that furthers the interests of business owners in the area. Our members and friends patronized stores and farm markets, buying locally, seeking out local repair shops and other services and locally made products. PMKCA newsletter articles written by members throughout the year focused attention on local farms and businesses and our resident artists and craftspeople.

Organizationally, PMKCA has not been able to invite members and others to attend its meetings in person. We have had to cancel our important general meetings (we especially miss our legendary July picnic meeting in Kalōpā Park!) and have resorted to peering at each other through computer screens when holding Board and committee meetings. Still, many of the activities of the association have continued – and even a few new interests have been identified and explored.



Our intrepid team of **Kalōpā Park** supporters has continued its efforts to help maintain trails, restore natural areas, and keep invasive species at bay. They provide a free nature trail pamphlet to park visitors, from a kiosk that asks for donations to cover printing costs.

The Kalōpā Park Team prepares for trail work. Credit: Sarah Anderson

The June 4 wildfire

unexpectedly threatened many homes and pastures in the Pa'auilo area. Some of our members' homes were in its path and we endured the shock and fear the approaching fire generated. The **Pa'auilo Volunteer Fire Company Eight Alpha (8a)**, a group that PMKCA supports, was called up by the county fire department and was actively engaged in fire suppression until the fire was pronounced entirely out. Other residents of the

community rallied to move livestock from pastures in the path of the flames and to bulldoze fire breaks that helped to save other residential areas from devastation.

Our local **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**, hampered by pandemic restrictions from holding in-person meetings and training exercises, shifted over to testing and developing emergency communications capabilities. One activity was mapping the range of handheld radios in our challenging hill-and-gulch terrain. This would be essential information if a search-and-rescue operation needs to be mounted.



CERT team members practice a rescue. Credit: Gary Miller

Another CERT activity was establishing connectivity to the internet via ham radio for emergency communications in case all the normal telephone or cable infrastructure gets wiped out.

PMKCA's **Invasive Species committee** was also unable to meet regularly but continued its efforts to stay connected to the concerns about invasives threatening our communities. The Two-Lined Spittle Bug (TLSB), a serious threat to our ranch lands and ranching community, was the subject of a newsletter article in August. Committee members have kept track of the research and eradication efforts by state and county agencies to control other invasives, such as Rapid 'Ohi'a Death (ROD), Little Fire Ants (LFA), and Rat Lungworm Disease (RLWD).

The activities of other committees have been curtailed but members continue to stay informed about issues within their scope. The **Roads, Traffic & Safety committee** keeps tabs on county road work and helps to inform residents of bridge and road repair activities and other road safety conditions. The **Water, Health & Utilities committee** keeps track of county water supply issues and power line repairs. We sent out bulletins to our members and others on our general mailing lists about emerging conditions in our communities. Even lost and found pets and livestock have made it into our bulletins!



Company Eight Alpha (8a), volunteer firefighters with equipment stationed in Pa'auilo. Credit: Braiden Malicki.

During this challenging year, our members haven't neglected any new developments that might affect our communities or offer opportunities that might benefit our residents.

After the June fire, a lot of interest was generated in raising the level of education and preparedness in our communities, concerning **wildfires and fire safety**. We are now connected to the **Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization** and will be involved in disseminating information to our communities about wildfire risks and how to keep our families and properties safe in a fast-moving wildfire.

In late May, we revived one of Dolores Ramos' pet projects – **a road clean-up day!** Members of PMKCA and others walked many of our roads collecting trash and making note of road conditions that might need to be addressed. Nearly 20 people were involved in the effort. Sixteen truckloads of trash were removed from a single spot within the eucalyptus forest along Pohakea Road by two determined members! A few days later, the fire burned through the same area and would have found extra fuel at the dump site.

Several members have become interested in the issue of **household water quality**, especially in rural communities like ours in which some residents depend on catchment tanks for their household water supply. Members have been invited to join a community advisory board which will work on better water safety standards and methods. With Rat Lungworm a health factor in many rural communities, better protection methods for catchment systems are of greater importance.

Other members of PMKCA have taken on the issue of **herbicide use along roadsides**. Their interest is to provide safe and viable alternatives for controlling weeds without the use of Round-Up and other such products, and to help influence the county agencies and utility companies to find viable methods for maintaining roadsides.

At the end of the year 2021, one new member's interest in **native reforestation** on his property brought together a new hui of residents who had similar interests. Several members of the community have years of experience in establishing native forests, or in growing native plants. Other folks are considering the option for land that had once been forested. The group came together for a tour of several properties, assisted by our local

forestry expert.

Phew! For a year in which we were all somewhat hunkered down, then struggling to find our new comfort level after vaccinations, new variants, and the constantly changing guidelines for gatherings, it looks like we have accomplished a lot!

Our members and other residents might take a minute to feel a bit of pride in being a part of such a resilient, creative, caring and engaged community. I'm certainly feeling encouraged, after writing all this about what our community accomplished in 2021.

May the new year give us all new ways of enjoying our community and of contributing to its well-being, safety, and happiness. And may each of you be well and find joy in every day.

By searching the internet for the organizations mentioned, you can find your own ways to donate your time, funds, products, and skills and make a local difference.

If you are a resident of the Pa'auilo Mauka and Kalōpā communities and have an interest in PMKCA, we would welcome your unique contributions. You'll find more information about membership, our active committees, and contact information for our Board members and committee chairs on our website, www.pmkca.org.

Coming PMKCA Meetings

We continue to work at the Board and committee level on behalf of our communities. If you have any interests or concerns, we encourage you to email any Board member.

PMKCA Board of Directors Meeting (via ZOOM) Thursday, January 13, 2022, 7pm

If you would like to attend, we encourage you to email any Board member for details on joining the online meeting.

**Regretfully, our January Annual Membership Meeting
will once again be cancelled.**

JOIN PMKCA or RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP for 2022!!

Membership in PMKCA is on a calendar year basis; so, with the arrival of 2022, we are beginning a new membership drive. New members are particularly welcomed. Current members are encouraged to renew your membership in 2022.

Dues are only \$20 per year - and help support so many great community activities. Click the "Visit our website" link below and choose Membership/Dues). We offer a PayPal option, or mail a check made out to PMKCA to PO Box 408, Pa'auilo, HI 96776.

Visit our website



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