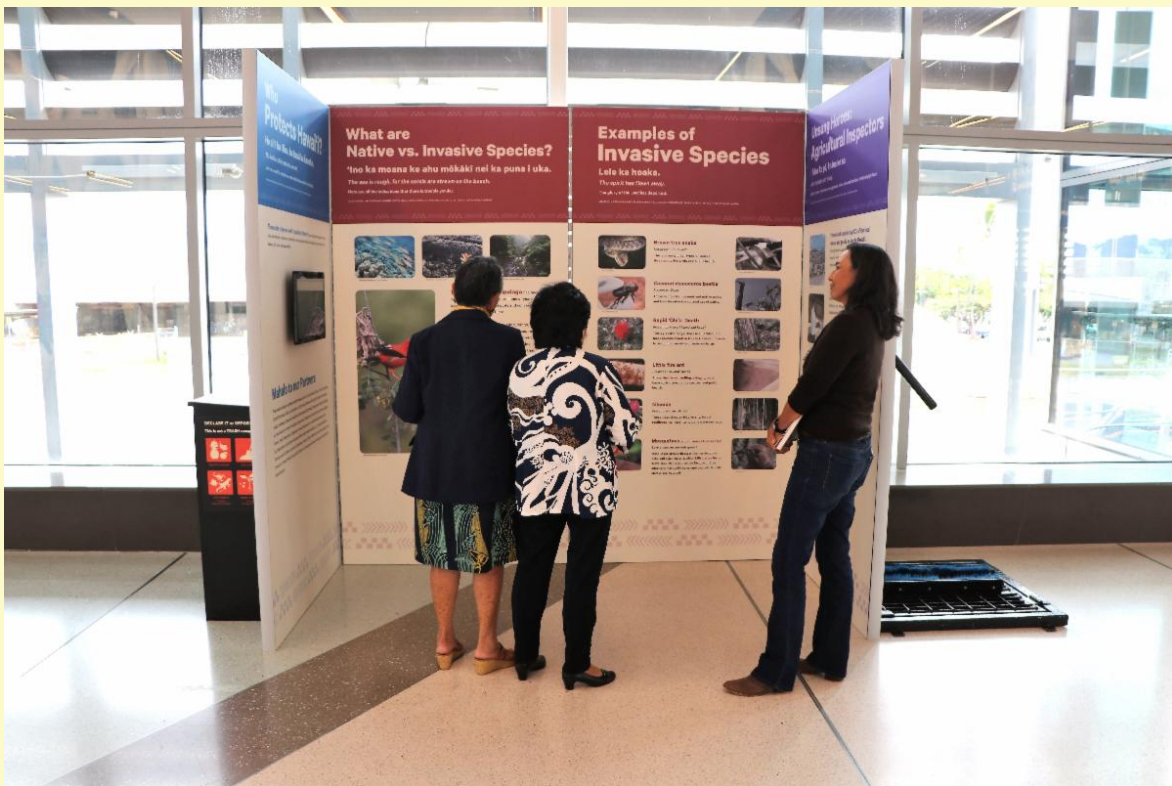




April 2023 Newsletter

PMKCA Member gets a Video Spot on Invasive Species

Joe Clarkson
PMKCA President



The new Invasive Species exhibit at Honolulu Airport, Photo: Daniel Dennison, DLNR

The threats that invasive species present to our unique island habitats and their inhabitants, human and otherwise, are getting more attention these days. At the state level, more funds are being devoted to keeping dangerous pests off our shores and to controlling or eliminating the pests that have made it into our homes and landscapes.

Locally, here on the Hāmākua Coast, we find that most residents have a high level of concern about the impacts that invasive pests have on their daily lives, health, local agriculture, and the natural world.

The work of the Pa'auilo Mauka Kalōpā Community Association to share information about threats from invasive species was recently recognized in a new interactive exhibit at the Honolulu International Airport. The purpose of the exhibit is to educate travelers to the risks imposed by invasives to Hawaii's

agriculture, unique environment, and human health. Travelers with some spare minutes might take from the exhibit a realization that their actions and behaviors can either protect or harm Hawai'i.

The organizers of the exhibit were creating an interactive set of video segments featuring 20+ individuals (invasive species experts, field workers, and community members) who would give their unique points of view about their interest in protecting Hawai'i.

PMKCA's VP, Ruth Bennett, was asked to participate in the creation of this exhibit to provide the perspective of a resident who is playing a role in her agricultural community in identifying and controlling invasive pests.

Back in November 2022, Ruth was interviewed and videotaped for a 2-minute talk story about her experience with **Rapid 'Ohi'a Death (ROD)** on her property in mauka Pa'auilo. "The videotaping was a first for me!" she said. "I guess you're never too old to make a mistake that leads to a contribution that ends up on film!"



Interactive video segments talk story about invasives. Photo: Daniel Dennison, DLNR

A big mistake leads to a big contribution.

The mistake Ruth made was allowing her goats to damage five mature, beautiful 'ohi'a trees in her pasture, leading to the death of the trees from Rapid 'Ohi'a Death. Goats like a varied diet, and the bark of the 'ohi'a tree was irresistible to them. Before Ruth was aware of the potential threat, the goats had stripped much of the bark off the trunks of the trees. The damage allowed the spores of the ROD fungus to enter the living cambium layer of the trees and within months, the trees died.

PMKCA was just beginning to focus attention on invasive species, having formed a committee to assess the risks in our area. Ruth joined the committee just as her trees were dying. She contacted the Big Island Invasive Species Committee (BIISC.org) for help and their crew came out to evaluate the trees

in the goats pasture. They were all infected with the killing fungus. Every tree was felled and reduced to a pile of dead but still infectious wood.

Since then, Ruth's contribution ("penance," Ruth calls it) has been in writing and speaking and advocating for more awareness and action in her community so that we have a better chance at limiting the impact of invasives while researchers find ways to combat them.

Early last year, Ruth was one of two people on Hawai'i Island to be awarded a certificate from the state legislature in recognition of her work on the Big Island in informing her community about invasives.



Ruth Bennett on her Pa'auilo ranch.

Where to find the Invasive Species interactive exhibit.

When you are in the Daniel K. Inouye Airport in Honolulu, look for the exhibit on the **new Mauka Concourse, Terminal 1**. Besides featuring the interactive interviews (touch a screen, watch a short video), there is an interactive game for keiki and grownups called "Be an Ag Inspector" (spot the invasive in a shipment or your suitcase), and a boot-cleaning station to encourage travelers to brush seeds and spores and pests from their shoes before continuing their journey.

If you are not likely to see the exhibit in person at the Honolulu airport, you will find the sequence of video segments at this link. <https://vimeo.com/showcase/9881996>. The interviews are all fascinating and informative. You will find Ruth's interview on page 2.

As you watch Ruth's video segment, Ruth wants you to know that she tried hard to keep the photos of her sheep out of the video! "I'm describing goat damage, and you're looking at sheep!" In the end, however, she recognizes that a sheep with an appetite can do damage to native plants, too.

Ruth also wishes to thank the two people who escorted her through the interview and videotaping process: Kawehi Young Lopez, the knowledgeable and engaging community liaison for BIISC, and Easten Tanimoto, a talented independent videographer. "They made the creation of my 'two minutes of fame' into a delightful experience I won't ever forget!"

The exhibit is just one of the many resources that focus attention on the threat of invasive species and the plight of our island life. As Ruth says at the end of her segment, "Visitors and new residents can help instantly, just by being informed."



PMKCA Meetings & Events

Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, April 13, 2023 - 6PM Location: TBD

If you have any interests or concerns, we encourage you to email any Board member and to attend the April 13 Board meeting.

Join PMKCA or Renew Your Membership for 2023!!

PMKCA dues are only \$20 per calendar 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, PO Box 408, Pa'auilo, HI 96776.

Easy-peasy - and important!

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Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association

Photo courtesy of Karl Backus