



**Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association  
May 2017 Newsletter**

[Top Level](#)

[Oral History  
Film Project](#)

[Dues Payment  
& Membership  
Form](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Officers, Chairs  
& Contact Info](#)

[Newsletter  
Sign up](#)

[Past  
Newsletters](#)

[Community  
Emergency  
Response Team  
\(CERT\)](#)

[Emergency  
Preparedness  
Plan](#)

[PMKCA  
Constitution  
& By-Laws](#)

[Business  
Roster](#)

[Current  
Reports](#)

**President's Message**



*PMKCA President Joe Clarkson*

Aloha PMKCA Neighbors

After an informative presentation by Steve Vujnovich to the PMKCA board about a new project involving our Hamakua gulches, this Trail Rhythms report was written by long time board member Duncan Dempster. Thank you, Duncan, for your report. The meeting included two guests who traveled from North Hilo district just to hear about the new venture.

**Trail Rhythms**

One of our PMKCA members has turned an interesting avocation into an unusual full-time vocation. Steve Vujnovich, long-time resident of the Pa'auilo Mauka area, was traveling through Sand Gulch awhile back when he looked down from the bridge and saw a bunch of a trash among the boulders at the bottom. He investigated and much to his amazement and disgust, the "trash" turned out to be multiple cans of used motor oil, some spilled into the water and others intact. He removed the oil and cleaned the area with assistance from Jim Millar and the volunteer Fire Department pumper truck. Later, he was lured deep into the gulch only to find more trash and litter. In the process, Steve realized just how stunning and beautiful the rugged, rock-studded terrain is. He appreciated the almost magical feeling of being at the bottom of Sand Gulch as well as other gulches, while at the same time knowing that all the litter will eventually make its way into the water table and ocean. With the steady encouragement of his wife, Rene, he vowed then and there to do something about it.

What they did was embark on a two-year personal crusade to learn all they could about rough terrain hiking and rappelling. Steve obtained the required licenses and credentials from the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA). He networked with many nonprofit clean-up organizations who expressed the need for getting waterways and gulches cleaned. He has achieved the certification of Single Pitch Instructor from the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA). This has helped him establish a pilot route down the Mid-Kalopa gulch (Sand Gulch) with a safe and eco-friendly entrance and exit. The goal of this effort was to establish a reliable path to help clean out the middle gulch.

The State of Hawaii has offered to grant him permits for conducting group trips and cleanup efforts in the gulches located on state land. To issue these permits the state required that he become certified as a professional in the field, which involves purchasing expensive liability insurance and undergoing intensive training. He has spent the past year working diligently to hone his craft to meet the professional standard required. This certification will enable him to operate as a professional guide and instructor in the realm of vertical rock climbing and rappelling.

The only way for Steve and Rene to maintain these standards and to make this idea sustainable was to create Trail Rhythms, LLC. This company/venture allows them to bring in funding and interest from off the island, money which they will be able to put back into the community and the land. Working as a professional in this field will also afford Trail Rhythms the time and resources to volunteer with the other organizations to train and help them with their community gulches and water-ways.

Furthermore, as a community leader in the field, Trail Rhythms, LLC will pledge to donate a percentage of its profits back into community programs and land stewardship efforts. They are currently in the process of determining what will yield the most benefit while keeping the program sustainable for the future. He will conduct four tours a week at best, operating on a 1:4 ratio. This means one guide for every four program participants, better than the national average which is typically 1:6. In keeping with their goal of adhering to traditional Leave No Trace principles, maintaining low traffic in the gulches will be of primary concern.

For more information about this impressive project, you can contact Steve and Rene directly at 808 987-9375 or email them at [waterwavesaloha@yahoo.com](mailto:waterwavesaloha@yahoo.com).

Best Regards,

Joe Clarkson  
President, PMKCA

**Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association**

PO Box 408

Paauilo, HI 96776

© Copyright 2006-14. All rights reserved.