

# *Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa*

**"E Ho`ohanohano a E Ho`omau...**

**...To Honor and To Perpetuate"**

**PO Box 1111, Kalaupapa, Hawaii 96742**

July 13, 2011

Steve Prokop, Superintendent  
Kalaupapa National Historical Park  
PO Box 2222  
Kalaupapa, Hawaii 96742

Dear Steve,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the four Alternative Plans and other proposals presented by Kalaupapa National Historical Park regarding the future of Kalaupapa in its General Management Plan (GMP). Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa congratulates Kalaupapa National Historical Park (KNHP) for undertaking this enormous – yet essential – process. The 'Ohana looks forward to offering comments as a partner to KNHP and developing a planning tool that will lead Kalaupapa into the future.

I am writing on behalf of the 'Ohana Board of Directors that includes four Kalaupapa kupuna, six family members/descendants and three longtime friends.

The 'Ohana continues to support the Position Paper that we submitted to KNHP in the summer of 2009 after the first round of meetings on the GMP. The Position Paper was developed through meetings held by the 'Ohana in the first four months of 2009, research of minutes or notes from previous 'Ohana meetings, notes from other meetings held earlier about the future of Kalaupapa and other planning documents. The Position Paper has been supported by the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and other leaders.

These are some of our comments on the proposed alternatives and other information presented in the most recent newsletter:

**The visitor experience.** There seems to be a great deal of emphasis on "the visitor experience" with little or no mention of Native Hawaiians or family members. Native Hawaiians should not be considered "visitors" in their own land; family members should not be considered "visitors" in the place where their ancestors once lived and died.

The 'Ohana believes there needs to be an emphasis on opportunities for family members/descendants of those sent to Kalaupapa and for Native Hawaiians.

Kalaupapa will always be a place of great importance because of the legacies of Saint Damien and Blessed Marianne Cope, who is also expected to become a Saint. There have often been discussions about spiritual retreats in the future for persons of all beliefs. These individuals would benefit from a type of visitor experience that is different from a day-only visitor.

**Native Hawaiian access rights.** Native Hawaiians are given special access to places where their ancestors are buried or where they wish to practice their culture. Discussions need to take place with Hawaiian organizations to come to an agreement on access now and in the future.

**Homesteading.** It does not seem that the word “homesteading” appears a single time in the newsletter and there is nothing about homesteading in any of the proposed alternatives, yet this is one of the key issues in the future of Kalaupapa where the ahupua`a of Kalaupapa is owned by the Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL). Whether there is homesteading at Kalaupapa in the future or not, it simply must be part of the ongoing discussions.

**The purpose of Kalaupapa National Historical Park.** On Page 2 of the current newsletter, there is the following statement:

“All of the preliminary alternatives must be consistent with the purpose for which Kalaupapa National Historical Park was established.”

The purpose of Kalaupapa National Historical Park is to preserve the lifestyle of the existing community and to share the history of those individuals who were taken from their families and sent to Kalaupapa because of government policies regarding leprosy. Ninety percent of these individuals were Native Hawaiians. This purpose must be emphasized in any future plan regarding Kalaupapa National Historical Park. This is not a “national park” where the emphasis is on recreation, scenic views, hiking trails and enjoyment, but a “national historical park” where the emphasis is on preserving an important chapter of history and passing down that history to future generations as accurately as possible.

Education and perspective must be a necessary component of any programs/activities at Kalaupapa. The natural beauty of Kalaupapa will always appeal to visitors, but that beauty must be presented with respect to those who arrived at Kalaupapa years ago with no or little hope of ever returning home. For instance, the scenic views that are so beautiful to visitors or new employees today would have represented great loneliness and separation to those who were isolated at Kalaupapa. Any visitor to Kalaupapa needs to know this through orientation programs and reminded of this throughout their visit.

**Expansion of the boundaries of Kalaupapa National Historical Park.** The ‘Ohana does not support the National Park Service acquiring additional lands at Kalaupapa and does not support expanding the boundaries of Kalaupapa National Historical Park to include the Pelekunu Preserve or the Olokui Natural Area Reserve. The GMP should

focus on the existing lands that NPS manages through the lease with DHHL and Cooperative Agreements with the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the churches. The ‘Ohana does not support the exchange or acquisition of any lands currently owned by DHHL or DLNR with NPS.

**“The Sensitive Zone”** – This area, marked in purple on the maps, changes from Alternative Plan to Alternative Plan. How can resources be considered “sensitive” in one plan and not in another? The more people who are allowed to visit, the more the “sensitive” resources must be protected. What makes the “sensitive” zones sensitive? Do these areas contain burials or pristine archaeological features? It also appears that other areas not included in “The Sensitive Zone” could contain possible burials. How will all of these sites be protected, but also be available for Native Hawaiian access and sharing these important places with the public?

**Camping.** The ‘Ohana opposes any form of camping anywhere on the peninsula. Camping leads to destruction of the camping site, more rubbish and the need for portable toilets. For at least the last 40 years, campfires have been prohibited at Kalaupapa due to the serious fire hazard they present to this historic area where the ability to combat fires is extremely limited. In addition, camping promotes recreation. It is simply not an appropriate activity for KNHP and is inconsistent with the widely stated desire to “see this place stay sacred.”

**Children.** The ‘Ohana supports the community of Kalaupapa deciding the age limit of those allowed to visit Kalaupapa in the near-term future, but when there is no longer a patient community, the ‘Ohana supports that children of any age be allowed to visit. Any child under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult. The ‘Ohana especially hopes that student groups will be encouraged to visit Kalaupapa with proper supervision.

**The Kalaupapa Memorial.** There was little mention of the Kalaupapa Memorial in the newsletter. We expect the Memorial to become one of the most important sites on the peninsula, especially for family members. The GMP should note that the Kalaupapa Memorial will be constructed within the site of the former Baldwin Boys Home in Kalawao. We also believe that it should be stated that the ‘Ohana and NPS will work cooperatively regarding operations, interpretation and maintenance of the Memorial.

**Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa.** There is no mention of the ‘Ohana as a partner with KNHP, yet the ‘Ohana has welcomed KNHP as a partner in development of the Kalaupapa Memorial. In addition, a previous superintendent said that he would involve the ‘Ohana in development of an interpretation program. The ‘Ohana has a number of leaders who are professionals who have been involved with the preservation of the history of Kalaupapa over the years – and who are still involved with important research that is helping families learn more about their ancestors through our “Restoration of Family Ties” program. In addition, the ‘Ohana has conducted educational programs and presentations outside of Kalaupapa, developed educational materials, and is working with schools to help students learn the accurate history of Kalaupapa.

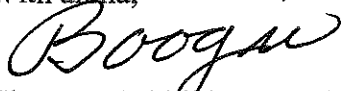
**More planning.** On Page 2 of the current newsletter, there is the following statement:

“When you read the management options, keep in mind that these are just initial ideas.”

The ‘Ohana hopes NPS will not select any of the alternatives at this time, but incorporate important components missing from all of the alternatives – the question of homesteading, access for family members/descendants/Native Hawaiians, the Kalaupapa Memorial, the role of Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa – and possibly have another planning discussion with the people of Kalaupapa where Hawaiian organizations or other organizations connected to Kalaupapa are invited to select their own representatives to participate followed by additional discussions with the public. We appreciate NPS hosting “open houses” for the public where individuals can offer comments or in small groups, but we also hope that NPS would consider holding open discussions where an exchange of ideas can be helpful in gathering more complete information or revealing serious concerns. All of this will eventually lead to a plan that will honor and perpetuate the legacies of the people of Kalaupapa.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer these comments on behalf of Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa. We also plan to post this letter on our website and share it with others.

With aloha,



Clarence Kahilaniwa, President  
on behalf of the Board of Directors of Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa:

Pauline Ahulau Chow, Vice President  
Pauline Puahala Hess, Treasurer  
Makia Malo, Director  
Gloria Marks, Director  
Mark Ellis, Director  
Glenn Harada, Director  
Sol P. Kaho`ohalahala, Director  
Colette Y. Machado, Director  
Charmaine Woodward, Director  
Patrick Boland, Director  
Sister Alicia Damien Lau, OSF, Director  
Valerie Monson, Secretary/Coordinator

cc: Alapaki Nahale-a, Chairman, Department of Hawaiian Homelands  
William Aila, Chairman, Department of Land and Natural Resources