



## OFFICE OF MAUNA KEA MANAGEMENT NEWS

August 28, 2012

### How Shared Knowledge Can Help Protect Tropical Mountains

Leading scientists from around the world convened here on Hawaii Island to present, explore and discuss tropical alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems. The international symposium was hosted by the Office of Mauna Kea Management in collaboration with the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies and with support from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

The symposium titled "Vulnerable Islands in the Sky: Science and Management of Tropical Island Alpine & Sub-Alpine Ecosystems," brought together scientists and professors who specialize in the study of tropical alpine and sub-alpine systems to share information, discuss common issues and concerns, open communications and establish a network for future collaboration.

Symposium participants from England, Scotland, Canary Islands, South Africa, Australia, Japan, and the US, including Hawaii, came together to present research on scientific findings being conducted in New Guinea and Southeast Asia, Papua Province, Indonesia, Mount Kinabalu, Dominican Republic, Canary Islands, the uplands of the Piton des Neiges volcano in the southwestern Indian Ocean, West Africa, tropical Andes, Haleakala and Mauna Kea.

Presentations included studies being conducted on mountain climate change, the evolution in mountain ecosystems, and the dynamics of ecosystems found in these areas of the world.

One of the symposium highlights included presentations and site tours of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa. OMKM Director Stephanie Nagata and Mauna Kea Management Board member Ron Terry opened the Mauna Kea session



with a review of 12 years of community-based management.

Other presentations about Mauna Kea included the latest



### OMKM Mission

To achieve harmony, balance and trust in the sustainable management and stewardship of Mauna Kea Science Reserve through community involvement and programs that protect, preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and recreational resources of Mauna Kea while providing a world-class center dedicated to education, research and astronomy.

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research on the wēkiu bug, mapping Lake Waiau using 3-D technological approaches, and a discussion on controls and current conditions for the above tree-line communities. As a precursor to their field trip to Lake Waiau and the Mauna Loa Observatory, participants had the opportunity to hear University of Hawaii Institute for Astronomy's Native Hawaiian Astronomer Dr. Paul Coleman give a special presentation on the history of astronomy in Hawaii dating back to early Hawaiian wayfinders. The symposium closed with a panel discussion with representatives from the Native Hawaiian, astronomy, and commercial tour communities, followed by an open discussion and perspectives on issues facing tropical alpine communities.

This inaugural symposium was a resounding success.



A new network of communication was established among scientists dedicated to the study of tropical alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems, research collaborations are being discussed, and the realization that shared knowledge can play an important role in helping to protect our tropical high mountains including Mauna Kea.



The Office of Mauna Kea Management looks forward to future research symposiums that will continue to be beneficial in the mitigation of impacts,

and development of strategies and solutions for protecting, preserving and enhancing the cultural and natural resources in University of Hawaii's management areas on Mauna Kea.

## ABOUT OMKM

### Office of Mauna Kea Management

The Office of Mauna Kea Management is charged with day-to-day management of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve as prescribed in the Master Plan. The adoption of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve Master Plan by the University of Hawaii Board of Regents in June 2000 marked a critical milestone in the management of Mauna Kea.

Meetings and public hearings spanning a period of nearly two years went into the formulation of the Master Plan, which established management guidelines for the next 20 years. The Master Plan reflected the community's deeply rooted concerns over the use of Mauna Kea, including respect for Hawaiian cultural beliefs, protection of environmentally sensitive habitat, recreational use of the mountain, and astronomy research.

It places the focus of responsibility with the University of Hawaii at Hilo (UHH). The UH-Hilo Chancellor established the Office of Mauna Kea Management and the Board of Regents established the Mauna Kea Management Board in the fall of 2000. The Mauna Kea Management Board in turn formed Kahu Ku Mauna, a council comprised of Hawaiian cultural resource persons to serve as advisors.

