

HER 2020 End of Year Report

As many of you know, Hawaii Environmental Restoration's (HER) primary project focuses on the restoration and preservation of Keau'ohana State Forest Reserve. Since June of 2014, Keau'ohana has undergone an intensive restoration process that has focused on the control of invasive plant species, and the planting of native species on ~30 acres of the most biodiverse portion of the reserve. Our crew has continued weekly restoration efforts toward preserving this precious resource through a good number of environmental and socio-economic challenges (Hurricane Iselle, Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death, 2018 Lava Event, and now COVID).

Although HER education outreach was largely compromised due to the pandemic, Keau'ohana rainforest received consistent restoration attention over the year 2020. HER efforts averaged four active crew members working a 7 hour day per week; work days were often supported by one or two volunteer members as well. Despite loss of State funding, our functions were possible this year thanks to HER reserved funds from a generous past donation by Ann Kobsa's of Malama O Puna, and \$5,000 contributed from the Atherton Foundation. This year has focused on the fourth systematic pass of the entire 30 acre restoration site, beginning with the east swath which had not been done since the pre-lava 2018 event. It has been a slow and grueling process of recovery, but we are now three-quarters complete. This achievement does not include numerous additional passes conducted in the volunteer loops (5 acres) as well as regular maintenance of the 2 mile trail system. A total of 584 trees were planted in Keau'ohana this year! Volunteer hours were a record low of 219 due to Covid-19 limitations. And most importantly, enclosures now surround the natural colonies of endangered ha'iwale at the heart of Keau'ohana thanks to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. **(Current Crew from left to right: Jeremiah O'Brien, volunteer Namele Naipo-Arsiga, Koa Quivetia, Jon Rathbun, and Jaya Dupuis taking picture).**



Prior to the pandemic, special events were coordinated in the forest with Hawaii Community College and the University of Hilo. Outreach events in the community included a presentation and tabling at a sustainability event held at the Imiloa Astronomy Center, and presentations at the Niaulani Art Center in Volcano village. HER is looking forward to becoming more active in the community again. In the mean time outreach coordinator Kelly Collins, and President Jaya Dupuis have been working on developing the basic infrastructure to provide a growing number of schools and organizations with a virtual education option in 2021. Our extended goal is to help educate people about general Hawai'i plant issues and solutions, and how they could help support the lowland environment by making wise plant choices for sustainable living in their own lives. Technical assistant James Elston, has worked hard as well on website improvements to help us better engage with you, our beloved supporters! Our work is also supported by Jim Buck (CPA) who does an excellent job keeping our finances transparent and in order. Again, we thank each and every one of you for your unique contributions and support to our fundamental mission and morale. We could not thrive without your care! Please consider continuing to hold our hand through these troubled times...Your membership is precious to our forest ohana!