



PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA Marine National Monument

NEWS RELEASE

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Native Hawaiian Practices Reborn: Traditional Sailing Canoe *Hikianalia* Greeted at Nihoa by Cultural Practitioners *Native Hawaiians meet in a “chicken-skin” encounter at Nihoa*

(Honolulu, HI) – September 9, 2013 marked a significant point in Hawai‘i’s history when Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners greeted the Polynesian wa‘a kaulua (double hulled sailing canoe) *Hikianalia* as she concluded her maiden voyage to Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) under the direction of six apprentice navigators and four of Hawai‘i’s five pwo (master) navigators.

“To be on island and to greet her (*Hikianalia*) – Hawai‘i to Hawai‘i – was special,” said Pelika Bertelmann, one of the founders of the nonprofit Nā Maka o Papahānaumokuākea, which led the Nihoa trip. “When was the last time a native Hawaiian was on Nihoa and a wa‘a (canoe) came around the corner? We don’t even know.”

Cultural practitioners arrived at Nihoa days before and were in the midst of finalizing a project documenting the histories of the NWHI through interviews conducted with members of communities from Kaua‘i and Ni‘ihau. The trip to Nihoa allowed cultural practitioners to spend time on the island and re-connect to the place known to them previously only through stories handed down from their kūpuna (ancestors). Two of the fourteen participants, Keala Kai and Presley Wann, had a lineal connection to Nihoa as their great-grandfather Alexander Hailama was a known resident of both Kaua‘i and Nihoa in the early 1900s. “It just felt so right to be here because of our connection to our tūtū Hailama and his ‘ohana (family) that lived on Nihoa,” said Wann.

The Polynesian Voyaging Society began its World Wide Voyage on May 29 with a sail around the Hawaiian Archipelago, and Nihoa was one of the last stops on the voyage. *Hikianalia* set sail from Kaua‘i en route to Nihoa to undertake its first deep sea leg of the World Wide Voyage, named Mālama Honua.

“Papahānaumokuākea is a symbol and reality of the importance of protecting our oceans and this is truly cornerstone to why we are embarking on the World Wide Voyage,” said Nainoa Thompson, Captain of *Hikianalia*. “Equally important is the fact that this voyage marks the first hands-on challenge for the six young apprentice navigators on board.” According to Thompson, the passage from Kaua‘i to Ni‘ihau to Nihoa is the perfect training ground for apprentice navigators to train for their ultimate test to find Tahiti and then voyage around the world, as the island has no artificial light and is not within view of other islands. “The weather was favorable and the apprentice navigators worked well as a team, taking care of each other to pull off near-perfect navigation, pulling Nihoa out of the sea,” recalled Thompson proudly.





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The meeting between sailing canoe and Native Hawaiians on Nihoa was not planned. Perhaps it was coincidence or fate, or perhaps it was the desire of their ancestors that for the first time in hundreds of years, a Polynesian voyaging canoe received a live greeting from Nihoa. It was the last day of the cultural practitioners' journey when *Hikianalia* arrived. They greeted the navigators with the powerful sound of the pū (conch shell) and oli (chant), to which the *Hikianalia* crew reciprocated with their own pū and oli.

“Experiencing this special place through the eyes of our ancestors - combined with the arrival of *Hikianalia* - was truly an opportunity for native Hawaiians to feed places like Nihoa with who we are, as Hawaiians, and our lives as they exist today,” said Bertelmann. “Journeys like this are so important for ourselves, our people, and our place. Because once you remove Hawai‘i from this special place, it is no longer Hawai‘i.”

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Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed to ensure ecological integrity and achieve strong, long-term protection and perpetuation of Northwestern Hawaiian Island ecosystems, Native Hawaiian culture, and heritage resources for current and future generations. Three co-trustees - the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, and State of Hawai‘i - joined by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, protect this special place. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was inscribed as the first mixed (natural and cultural) UNESCO World Heritage Site in the United States in July 2010. For more information, please visit www.papahanaumokuakea.gov

