

Notes from Hawaii Dolphin Initiative Community Meeting Held on October 28, 2017

HDI Turns One Year Old

This was the approximate one year anniversary since the formation of the Hawaii Dolphin Initiative. Below is a summary of what has been accomplished so far.

1. We agreed to work towards building trust and the ability to listen respectfully and collaborate.
2. We identified stakeholder groups that would be directly impacted by NOAA's proposed regulations - examples being people with “swim with dolphin” related businesses and members of the “Dolphinville Community”.
3. We discussed the goal of creating an irresistible agreement, which continues to be a work in progress.
4. We created the mission statement: *Bringing Harmony To Communities In A Sustainable Way*.
5. Sub committees were defined emphasizing:
 - o Education before Regulation
 - o Honoring the Hawaiians
 - o Citizen Science Matters.
6. A steering committee was formed.
7. DLNR Chief Law Enforcement Officer, Lino Kamakau, addressed the group. He was open to collaboration. He gave his perspective on dolphin behaviors that might be stress indicators. He stated that being in the general location of dolphins is fine as long as we do not pursue. See his presentation at: www.HawaiiDolphinInitiative.org. Lino encouraged us to join DLNR's Makai Watch which requires attending a class and taking a test for certification.
8. NOAA has been invited to participate. Thus far, no representatives have addressed the group. Furthermore, NOAA have specifically indicated they have no intention of engaging with the HDI.

9. The Education Committee is the core committee that's created suggestions for taking action. While much has been achieved, the time is now to take action.
10. We acknowledge the necessity of engaging with residents from the three bays and listening to their opinions and respecting their needs. A few Hawaiians have already addressed the group.

Alan Cambra from Ho'okena Beach Addresses the Meeting

Alan represented himself as a Ho'okena resident. He is on the board of "Friends of Ho'okena." He gave a brief history of Ho'okena. In the 1950s 29 families lived in the area. There were two small stores in the community and there was no road. The organization "Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park" was formed due to a hate crime that occurred.

"In 2007, Friends of Ho'okena Beach Park an outgrowth of Kama'āina United to Protect the 'Āina (KUPA), signed an agreement with the County to transfer management oversight of the park at Ho'okena to FOHBP. They have hired community members to maintain the park and provide park security via the "Aloha Patrol."

<http://imagesofoldhawaii.com/hookena/>

The group members concern themselves with managing Ho'okena Beach and building the community. An example is funding the feeding of opella.

The group is concerned about people swimming with dolphins. They want dolphins to just rest and not be harassed by swimmers.

His message to our community and other visitors who enjoy Ho'okena and desire to swim with dolphins was "What about us (local resident Hawaiians)? What about our culture?" It appears the Ho'okena residents and board members of "Friends of Ho'okena" believe we do what we want as Americans with little regard for their needs.

Alan stated that if we wish to bring tour groups to Ho'okena we should ask for permission. He didn't state who we need to ask for permission.

In response to a question from the floor, Alan said there's no single Hawaiian voice. Residents, who have lived close to Ho'okena, Kealakekua Bay and Honaunau Bay for their entire lives, need to each be consulted. Members of each of the three communities have their own opinions and needs.

He shared that in the 1950's there were too many sharks in Kealakekua Bay. Nobody swam. The Lesley's fished and put chum in the water.

Michael Hyson stated that there was a location close to Ho'okena where babies were born in the ocean and assisted by dolphins.

It was stated that there are different traditions with different groups of Hawaiians

HDI Community Discussion Following Alan's Message

The meeting participants were highly appreciative of Alan clearly sharing his position regarding the current practice of swimming with dolphins and how to proceed here out. We now have clarity about how to start communicating with more depth with the Ho'okena group. Previously Alan has said, "Let's keep talking."

Mike Jacobson stated that NOAA is the entity we may need to confront in the future as they have made it clear they have no intention of participating in the HDI's mission, which is to bring harmony to communities in a sustainable way. Instead they are focused on introducing regulations to prohibit human-dolphin interaction.

Nigel Patterson read a Call for Action from Lanny Sinkin. He stated we need to take concrete action with our plans to become educators of those who desire to swim with dolphins – t-shirts, flyers, volunteers, kiosks etc. If we implement the vision by taking

action, we have more clout if we do have to challenge NOAA in court. *It was thus important the Education Committee regroup and work towards achieving consensus, including with the residents at the bays.*

It was stated that we can't trust the courts because they are becoming more conservative. It was emphasized that people's livelihoods are on the line. We need to take action vs. just talking and expressing opinions.

Joan Ocean shared that a previous protocol for interacting with dolphins – ex. swim with hands by one's side, no feeding etc. kept NOAA at bay

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New Positions

Kathryn Jensen was nominated and appointed as the new **secretary**. This job needs to be shared by Kathryn and another person due to the fact that she's off island 4.5 months of the year. No one volunteered to share the responsibilities. The co-secretary position remains vacant. HDI members are encouraged to step up and participate. Waiting for others to act is inappropriate.

Gonnie Heggan was nominated and appointed as the new **treasurer**.

David Kerchman was asked to become the head of the **Education Committee**. He's taking time to make a decision. (Update: David has since accepted the position.)

GoFundMe Campaign

A **Go Fund Me** Campaign has been set up to raise money for promotion and potential legal representation. See www.HawaiiDolphinInitiative.org for more information and to contribute.

As of October 28th about \$1400.00 has been raised. (Update: as of Nov 8, a total of

\$2,705 has been raised. Donations range from \$5 to \$500, with an average amount of \$93. NO amount is too small – or too large!)

We're all prompted to connect via Facebook, email lists etc. asking our network of contacts for donations.

It was suggested that we create links to the site and [Go Fund Me](#) page via Facebook.

We're encouraged to share our dolphin experiences via [Facebook](#) as a great P.R. strategy.

Perceived Slow Pace of Progress

Frustration was expressed the HDI had not achieved more in the year since its inception. Nigel Patterson encouraged the participants to actively engage rather than sit back waiting for others to make things happen on their behalf.

Kit Kelly said boat captains are fragmented and competing amongst one another hence they don't get involved with this group.

Kit stated we would raise local awareness about our group and our mission by wearing t shirts and wrist bands.

He agreed that the common ground of those who swim with dolphins from shore and commercial operators is the well-being of the dolphins.

Next Meeting Date

Provisionally planned for December 16, 2017

Please participate in one of the HDI groups. Your freedom to continue to engage with the dolphins in the wild may depend upon it.

