

Sunday, December 6, 2009

From Dr. Mela Kuslo

Testimony In Favor of Aligning Ke Ala Hele Makalae in Wailua Beach Park

submitted to Kauai Path via e-mail

I would like to share my thoughts.

The path is a wonderful project, very dear to me as I grew up in a community which built many bicycle paths in my youth. I was in school and could ride my bicycle and walk my dog safely everywhere. Wherever possible our paths are along a river or a lake. They are shared by pedestrians, bicyclists, dog walkers, roller skaters, baby strollers and wheelchairs. I never heard of any incident due to sharing the paths in more than 30 years.

Of course everybody has to be considerate of other users. I am convinced we Kauaians and also the visitors will be able to use the path that way. This includes respect. Respect for the land and the people, the ancestors and the sacred grounds. To use the land for the benefit of people does not mean to abuse it.

A path -built in the least intrusive way- over such sacred ground will remind and encourage people to think of and spiritually connect to those who lived here before and whose bones were buried there. Nobody ever thought of forbidding access to the beach in those areas - this would not have been in the spirit of the ancestors. Making the beach area accessible for the elderly and disabled, too - I cannot imagine that the spirits of the ancestors would feel anything but joy to have them there.

To build the path along the beach and have for instance a column, maybe a piece of local art, with inscriptions about the spiritual meaning and sacredness of this location, installed, would inspire everybody using the path and show Kauai's

Aloha.

Mahalo for listening

Dr. Mela Kuslo



Hui O Mana Ka Pu'uwai Outrigger Canoe Club

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Introduction: Brian Curll President of Puuwai Canoe Club, Sponsor for the Kapaa Warriors Outrigger Canoe Paddling Teams and the Kapaa Boys and Girls Club. Race Director for TriKauai Triathlons Series. BA from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in Medical and Health Sciences, Masters worked in Retrovirology. Worked with the World Health Organization for 18 months type-classing retroviral strains in North Korea and Communist China. On Kauai worked as a Medical Social Worker and volunteer monthly distributing food through the Kauai Food Bank to needy families and homeless in Lihue, Hanamaulu, Kapaa, and Anahola Communities.

Puuwai Canoe Club and its members utilize the Wailua River and Wailua Beach on a daily basis year-round. Our Board of Directors has instructed me to support of the Kauai Path on Wailua Beach for the following reasons.

Over the last dozen years we have been an active Community supporter with our clubs Youth Programs. We as a club realize the importance of supporting Healthy Eating and Active Living Initiatives that can support healthier lives for children and families across Kauai.

Prevalence of childhood obesity: Obesity Numbers

Percentage overwhelmed and at risk for overweight BMI \geq 85th percentile

Fourth-Graders: At Risk 15.7%, Overweight 20.2% = Total 35.9%

High School Students: At Risk 17.8%, Overweight 18.9% = Total 36.7%

Looking at the last clinical studies, researchers expect that 50% of at risk young people will go on to develop insulin-dependent diabetes later in life. On Kauai, that would mean approximately 11,000 people with insulin dependent diabetes or 1 in every 6 people that you see on the street.

The Kauai Path will advance, Hawaii Department of Health's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015 through its following effect on the community.

Families, friends, and individuals are already using the path on a daily basis. We know that role modeling is one of the strongest influences in a child's life. Parents are the best role models. The use of the Kauai Path by families is one of the strongest influences that we can have for young people to develop an active life.

Healthy young people have the best chance to become healthy adults. Risk factors for chronic illness, like heart disease, high blood pressure, type II diabetes and osteoporosis have their roots in childhood inactivity.

Providing access to physically active opportunities helps promote long-term health. Families and children who get regular physical activity have better cardiovascular fitness, stronger bones and muscles, lower body fat and perhaps even fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression. Kauai leads the state in teenage suicides.

Wide and varied access to the Kauai Path, provide safe, pleasant and green opportunities for increased physical activity, and is supportive in the development of daily activity.

Team Sports: because of fundamental cost, transportation difficulties, and seasonal limitations are insufficient answer to tackling our inactivity problems. I already have the jocks; the 8 to 18-year-olds are who are interested in sports and who want to be strong and fit and 90% of the time they are a joy to work with.

This is a crucial time for our community to focus on creating opportunities to promote exercise for the majority of our population that do not have fine athletic skills individuals who are not natural athletes. We need to provide everyone with the chance for activities that are enjoyable, accessible, at low cost, and simple to do.

The amazing Beauty of Wailua Beach adds joy and happiness to anyone who frequents it, encouraging people to walk there. My hope is that instead of plopping on the couch with a snack or a beer, people will meet friends and go for a walk there, because when they get home they feel relaxed and happier.

Yes, there will be an expense. Everything cost you something! I hope that those individuals who are opposed to the Kauai Path at Wailua Beach will recognize that our support of this project is not about disrespecting them or the sacredness of the area, but rather about asking some members of the Traditional Hawaiian Community to make a difficult decisions in favor of this path to help create a healthier future for everyone, but specifically for the future health of the children of Kauai.

Sincerely,
Brian R Curll
President
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