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## ‘Ahahui Mālama I Ka Lōkahi

Hawaiians for the Conservation of  
Native Ecosystems

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I am Charles Pe'ape'a Makawalu Burrows, a Kanaka Maoli, whose kupuna and 'ohana are from Molokai. I am also president of 'Ahahui Mālama i ka Lōkahi. The 'Ahahui is a Hawaiian conservation organization, and has always advocated for the conservation of Hawaii's wao kele ecosystems by supporting efforts to reduce or eliminate feral pigs in those areas whether they be on Molokai or on other islands. We're not against Hawaiian or local islanders' food subsistence in hunting for pigs and the axis deer as long as they are in already disturbed alien forested habitat. We would encourage local hunters on Molokai to cooperate with the Nature Conservancy in eradicating the European/Polynesian hybrid pigs from Molokai's last remaining fragile montane ecosystems.

I take issue with the Molokai Hunters Association's claim that TNC is trying to take away from future generations of Hawaiians. In fact, they are working hard to save vital Hawaiian places so our grandchildren and their grandchildren can know the places and the plants and the forests that our ancestors knew and loved. The many resources there, the kinolau of our akua and 'aumakua, are a treasure far more valuable than meat from introduced animals. Any thinking Hawaiian can see that, but leaders of the Molokai Hunters Association seem blinded by their anger at not getting their way. They call for public meetings, but at those meetings, obscenities and threats fill the air from their side with no respect given to others. Consequently nothing is accomplished. TNC has instead been meeting with smaller groups across the Molokai community and has reached hundreds of people. So claims that Hawaiians were not contacted and informed is incorrect. This type of bullying behavior with threats and attacks on those with whom they disagree with is not pono (right) in the Hawaiian cultural values of ho'oponopono.

It would be with hewa (sadness) that the destruction of irreplaceable Hawaiian plants and animals, our 'aumakua, will occur if the Molokai Pig Hunters Association don't cooperate with conservationists in the mālama of the 'āina.

In short, it is clear to me that the Molokai Pig Hunters Association is forcing a false choice between hunting and conservation. Hunting is a part of Molokai lifestyle and The Nature Conservancy is not trying to take that away from anyone. For nearly twenty years, they have worked with the Molokai community and with volunteer hunters to control pig and goat populations on their preserves.

The project TNC is planning will enlist the help of conservationists from New Zealand to test new ways to control animals in the core, native-dominated forest. It is an area hunters rarely go, because the forest is so intact and thick, and the animals so infrequently found. The effort will be to see if those small areas can be rid of animals and with the kokua of the Molokai Pig Hunters Association, salvage where possible the carcasses for food -- it is not an island-wide eradication. That misconception is promulgated to no one's benefit. The work is planned on private conservation lands only. Sport hunting will go on for Molokai.

Put simply, there will always be pigs, goats and deer on Molokai, but unless we take strong action now, there may not always be a native forest. I encourage pig hunters with families on Molokai to raise pigs in their homestead areas the way that our kupuna did in ancient times.

Sincerely,

Charles Pe'ape'a Makawalu Burrows, EdD  
President of 'Ahahui Mālama I ka Lōkahi