



NEWS RELEASE

Contacts: Charlene Ka'uhane
President
Ka'uhane Communications, Inc.
Phone: (808) 243-2290; Fax: (808) 243-2211
E-mail: charlene@kauhanecommunications.com

Keli'i Brown
Director of Public Relations & Promotions
Maui Visitors Bureau
Phone: (808) 244-3530; Fax: (808) 244-1337
E-mail: keli@mauivb.com

THOUGHTFUL ECO-EXPLORATIONS Sensitive adventures amid a subtle landscape

MAUI, Hawai'i – In stream-rich valleys, on verdant mountains, in dry, cool areas, along the shore, Maui Nui hosts the rarest landscapes on earth, ecological communities of plants and animals not found anywhere else. The vital importance of this wondrous biodiversity has spurred an exciting spectrum of eco-minded visitor activities that harmoniously blend thoughtfulness, environmental education, fun, and active exploration.

Take Skyline Eco-Adventures, which combines short hikes with thrilling, high speed zip line rides that soar over canyons and ravines. Behind the excitement burns founders Danny and Buck Boren's commitment to the environment. Company staff members actively participate in native forest restoration, receive paid community service days, and take recycling seriously. In addition, the company donates a percentage of its sales to 1% For the Planet. "We believe that by making meaningful monetary and physical contributions toward preservation efforts on Maui, we can make a difference," Danny says.

Hike Maui employs a team of expert wilderness guides who deeply care for the land they engage, and it provides a choice of awesome explorations. including adventures in the waterfall canyons and forested ridges of the West Maui Mountains. Founded in 1983, making it one of the oldest hiking companies in the State, it has been called Maui's "grandfather of ecotourism."

Much of the precious natural beauty of Maui is tucked away on private property. Maui Eco-adventures has access to several privately-owned sites and offers rainforest and



waterfall hikes laced with information about Maui’s cultural and natural history. This company also offers out-of-the-box ideas for outdoor exploration — for example, a kayak/hike exploration of West Maui, or a night in Haleakalā Crater with a personal chef.

Haleakalā National Park descends all the way to the sea through the pristine Kīpahulu region, ending at the sparkling freshwater pools of ‘Ohe‘o Gulch. Visitors can only reach this rural region via the challenging, gorgeous three-hour Hāna Highway, but it is worth the trip. Hiking here is self-guided and rewarding. A mesmerizing two-mile hike to Waimoku Falls, for example, follows a stream and includes two canyon-crossing bridges as well as a mystic bamboo grove.

Steep-walled ‘Īao Valley in Central Maui near Wailuku has been carved by the largest stream in Maui Nui, and has long been famed for its 1,200-foot rock landmark, ‘Īao Needle. In this sacred valley are burial places of the highest ali‘i (chiefs). In 1790, Kamehameha I defeated King Kahekili of Maui at ‘Īao in a bloodbath caused largely by Kamehameha’s access to Western arms. So many died that their corpses blocked the stream; the attack became known as the Battle of Kepaniwai – the damming of the waters. You can hike the cool, forested ‘Īao Valley rich with native plants on your own or with skilled guides from Hawai‘i Nature Center. A non-profit environmental education organization, the Center also runs a small, eco-educational interactive nature museum, a must-stop for kids. Today, Kepaniwai is the site of a cultural park.

An invaluable source of information on Maui Nui trails and treks is Nā Ala Hele, a State of Hawai‘i program established in 1988 within the Division of Forestry and Wildlife. Its website provides maps and advice for 18 trails on Maui and one each on the islands of Moloka‘i and Lāna‘i.

Moloka‘i is so undeveloped that environmental experiences are inevitable. At the east end, in Hālawa Valley, Hawaiian families have undertaken the historic task of replanting ancient taro patches, or lo‘i; they are taking visitors on guided two-mile hikes up the valley to beautiful Mo‘o‘ula Falls. Stone works speak silently of the valley’s 1,000-plus-year human history.

The cliffside trek down to Kalaupapa Peninsula in Moloka‘i is a once-in-a-lifetime experience of sensational natural beauty and compelling human story. Now a National Historical Park, Kalaupapa is the site of a former “leper colony,” where Father Damien and Mother Marianne labored and sacrificed their very lives to assist victims of Hansen’s Disease exiled there. Visitors have the option of traveling the trail’s 26 switchbacks by foot or on the back of one of Moloka‘i’s famous mules.



On Lānaʻi, a superb wilderness experience takes you to the Munro Trail, a challenging 8-mile trek over an unpaved road to the top of the island's only mountain, 3,370-foot high Lānaʻihale. Be prepared for magical vistas of the surrounding red-dirt land.

Of course, many other eco-adventures exist on Maui Nui. Don't forget the tropical gardens, for example, including Maui Nui Botanical Gardens in Kahului, an often overlooked depository for the plants of Maui Nui, providing a center for environmental education, Hawaiian cultural expression, conservation, biological study, and recreation.

pau/end