

ON Sat., Aug. 12, some 400 guests gathered beneath the verdant walls of Waimea Valley for a rededication ceremony marking the completion of the conservation purchase of Waimea by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, in partnership with the City and County of Honolulu, the U.S. Army, the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, the Trust for Public Land and the National Audubon Society.

Many of those in attendance had struggled for years to save the valley from development, and an atmosphere of hope and joy permeated the celebration. The combined hālau of Kumu Hula Sonny Ching and Vicky Holt Takamine offered ceremonial hula and chant on terraced platforms rising up the valley wall, several musical ensembles provided nahenahe melodies, and everyone enjoyed a delicious ‘aina awakea (luncheon feast).

Among those who lent their voices to the event were OHA Chairperson Haunani Apoliona and Administrator Clyde Nāmu‘o; Mayor Mufi Hannemann; DLNR Director Peter Young; state Rep. Michael Magaoay; Audubon Society representative Diana King; Butch Helemano, kahu of Pu‘u o Mahuka He‘iau; and Josh Stanbro of the Trust for Public Land, which helped broker the Army’s share of the purchase. Cultural expert Cy Bridges recited his genealogy, which includes ties to Kamehameha I’s famed kahuna nui, Hewahewa, who once ruled over this ‘valley of the priests.’

We hope you enjoy this selection of images and words from a very special day. To view an expanded online photo gallery of the rededication ceremony, visit www.oha.org.



Photos: Derek Ferrar

WAIMEA KAUIKA HANO

waimea is honored



“It’s a memorable day, because the Office of Hawaiian Affairs now owns Waimea Valley, which means that the Hawaiian people own Waimea Valley, and that’s a wonderful thing.”
—OHA Administrator Clyde Nāmu‘o

“Your efforts to preserve Hawai‘i’s natural splendor will be a legacy to be enjoyed and appreciated by all who love the islands.”
—Message from Sen. Dan Akaka

“I am very, very humbled to be here as a representative of a great individual and a great people that lived here in this valley.”
—Cy Bridges, descendant of Hewahewa Nui

“It’s a blessed day for all of us who call O‘ahu home, as we return Hawaiian lands to Hawaiian hands. It’s an opportunity to say mahalo nui loa to all of you who have waited very patiently through the years to make sure this day comes about.”
—Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann

“As new landowners, we will do our best. As advocates for Native Hawaiians, we will continue to do our best. As partners in this community, we will do our best. In the care of this ‘āina, and in the honor of its ancestors, we will do our best. What we ask that you all do in turn is to contribute your best to bring peace, well-being, pride and dignity back to Waimea Valley.”
—OHA Chairperson Haunani Apoliona