



Save Koloa Provides Update on Kauai Endangered Species to US Dept of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

Non-profit group is working to preserve Kauai's unique environment and Native Hawaiian culture

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Today, Save Koloa, a project of non-profit E Ola Kakou Hawaii 501(c)(3), announced that it has submitted detailed information regarding two native Kauai endangered species to the U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service to assist in the agency's 5-Year Status Review. Kauai, specifically Poipu, Koloa, is the only ecosystem in the world that supports the two species: the Kauai Cave Wolf Spider (*Adelocosa anops*) and the Kauai Cave Amphipod (*Spelaeorchestia koloana*). Both were listed as endangered in 2000 (65 Fed. Reg. 2348, Jan. 14, 2000) and as a result, 272 acres in Southern Kauai were federally designated as 'critical habitat' to provide for their ongoing protection (68 Fed. Reg. 68, April 9, 2003). Details on the viability of these creatures, current threats to their environment and specific preservation actions were formally submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by leading environmental law firm, Soluri Meserve, on behalf of Save Koloa.

"Once extinct, there would be no coming back," said Save Koloa founder Elizabeth Okinaka. "It is our kuleana (responsibility) and we have it in our power to ensure that these species continue to

live and can thrive on Kauai.”

Currently, two major proposed developments threaten these species due to their location on and directly next to designated critical habitat in Poipu, including a mainland developer's proposal to build 282 condominiums. The 25-acre parcel proposed for the Kiahuna Poipu Golf Resort condominium project contains a network of underground caves and lava tubes. Both listed species require a unique combination of conditions to survive: darkness, warmth, low air movement and humidity, conditions that would be jeopardized by development.

It is notable that the Koloa lava tubes of Kauai and their associated endangered fauna have been identified as one of the ten most endangered cave communities in the world (Tongvig and Mylroie, in litt. 1998; Belson 1999).

The delicate caves and lava tubes, in addition to providing habitat, are culturally significant archeological features that were used as burial sites by Native Hawaiians. In Hawaiian culture, ancestral bones, (called 'Iwi'), possess a person's mana, or spiritual essence, and are, thus, considered sacred.

Bridget Hammerquist, JD, founder of non-profit 'Friends of Mahaulepu' noted, "The community is taking action as it is clear that Kauai's ecosystem is under siege by outside developers aiming to exploit the land, while ignoring endangered species, culture and history – all for profit."

"Would-be developers on critical habitat for these species can't take or kill these federally listed animal species; an incidental take permit through a lengthy Habitat Conservation Planning process is required prior to construction. If a developer proceeds without incidental take coverage, it becomes a law enforcement matter," explained attorney Osha Meserve. She continued: "Save Koloa values the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's designation of this important habitat, along with ongoing oversight to ensure that new development does not destroy or threaten this last haven for these irreplaceable Kauaian species."

In addition to receiving assistance from attorneys at Soluri Meserve, Save Koloa and non-profit E Ola Kakou Hawaii are also receiving assistance from noted environmental law firm Chatten-Brown, Carstens and Minter; Kauai-based non-profit, Friends of Mahaulepu 501(c)(3); and the Sierra Club Kauai Group, Hawaii Chapter.

Letter to USFWS: The Status Update submitted to the US Dept of Fish and Wildlife Re: Endangered Species can be viewed on the Save Koloa website at:
<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/0e5722d9-e971-4298-ae9c-8bbe14ac83f1/FINAL%20-%2021.09.30%20Save%20Koloa%20Ltr%20re%20FWS%205%20Year%20.pdf>.

About Save Koloa: Save Koloa, and non-profit E Ola Kakou Hawaii, a 501(c)(3), are committed to preserving the unique environment of Kauai and to supporting and maintaining access to the island's culturally significant areas.

Please visit: www.savekoloa.com and www.eolakakouhawaii.com

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