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For Immediate Release

OFFICE OF MAUNA KEA MANAGEMENT HIRES WALLY ISHIBASHI AS CULTURAL OFFICER

Hilo, Hawaii—The Office of Mauna Kea Management (OMKM), charged with the management of approximately 12,000 acres of State-owned land on Mauna Kea, continues to advance its mission to *malama* (take care of) Mauna Kea resources with the recent hiring of Wallace “Wally” Ishibashi Jr. as Cultural Officer.

“The University of Hawai'i through the Office of Mauna Kea Management is committed to protecting the cultural resources and fostering a greater understanding of the rich cultural heritage of Mauna Kea. Wally's role as cultural officer is to help OMKM instill awareness and understanding about Mauna Kea's deep cultural significance through outreach and educational programs. As long as the University has a presence on Mauna Kea, OMKM will continue to monitor, document and protect the archaeological and cultural sites for future generations,” stated OMKM's Director Stephanie Nagata.

Ishibashi will assist with implementation of OMKM's Cultural Resource Management Plan and will develop and provide a cultural training program for those using Mauna Kea for cultural, scientific, and recreational purposes. In addition, Ishibashi will serve as cultural monitor and as a cultural advisor for staff including Rangers and the Visitor Information Station at Hale Pohaku. He will assist with outreach efforts within the Hawaiian community and the general public, and will work closely with the Kahu Ku Mauna Council.

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Ishibashi Hire

“I look forward to promoting a greater understanding of the rich cultural heritage of Mauna Kea and ensuring that Native Hawaiians continue to have a voice in the management and stewardship of the mountain,” said Wally Ishibashi.

A Hawaii Island native of Hawaiian, Japanese and Chinese ancestry, Ishibashi was born in Hilo and raised in the Keaukaha Panaewa Hawaiian Homestead. His Kealoha Poliahu and Makuakane families have ties to the Kaohe *ahupuaa* (land division) and specifically to Kukaiau Ranch, Kukuihaele and Waipio Valley. Poliahu is known in Hawaiian mythology as one of the snow goddesses and is believed to have lived on Mauna Kea.

Every year we would go up Mauna Kea to learn about different areas of the mountain. Lessons we learned from my uncles who were rangers for the Department of Land and Natural Resources included respect and proper care for animals and the *aina* (land). I was always taught the importance of balance between the old ways and new ideas. Cultural preservation is essential and balance is *pono* (righteous),” said Wally Ishibashi.

For the past 20-plus years, Ishibashi has served as a Business Agent and Division Director for ILWU Local 142. He was recently appointed by Governor Abercrombie to the Hawaiian Homes Commission representing East Hawaii. He is a member of the Royal Order of Kamehameha I Moku o Keawe, Moku O Mamalahoa Heiau, Hawaiian Community Representative for Hawaiian Homes Keaukaha Panaewa Association, Hawaii Island United Way Executive Board Member and the Democratic Party Precinct Chair for Papaikou.

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The Office of Mauna Kea Management

The Office of Mauna Kea Management is charged with day-to-day management of Mauna Kea Science Reserve as prescribed in the Master Plan. The adoption of the Mauna Kea

Science Reserve Master Plan by the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents in June 2000 marked a critical milestone in the management of Mauna Kea.

Meetings and public hearings spanning a period of nearly two years went into the formulation of the Master Plan, which established management guidelines for the next 20 years. The Master Plan reflected the community's deeply rooted concerns over the use of Mauna Kea, including respect for Hawaiian cultural beliefs, protection of environmentally sensitive habitat, recreational use of the mountain, and astronomy research.

It places the focus of responsibility with the University of Hawaii at Hilo (UH-Hilo). The UH-Hilo Chancellor established the Office of Mauna Kea Management and the Board of Regents established the Mauna Kea Management Board in the fall of 2000. The Mauna Kea Management Board in turn formed Kahu Ku Mauna, a council comprised of Hawaiian cultural resource persons to serve as advisors.

The mission of the Office of Mauna Kea Management is to achieve harmony, balance and trust in the sustainable management and stewardship of Mauna Kea Science Reserve through community involvement and programs that protect, preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and recreational resources of Mauna Kea while providing a world-class center dedicated to education, research and astronomy.