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For Immediate Release

OFFICE OF MAUNAKEA MANAGEMENT HONORED WITH CULTURE & HERITAGE AWARD FOR PRESERVATION INITIATIVES

Hilo, Hawaii (June 30, 2017) — Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce honored the Office of Maunakea Management (OMKM) with its 2017 Pualu Award for Culture and Heritage. This award recognizes organizations that exhibit through their actions practices that promote island traditions and preserve our multi-cultural heritage.

“The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce bestowed our Culture & Heritage Award to the Office of Maunakea Management for its implementation of a Long-Term Historic Property Monitoring Plan for the University of Hawaii Management Areas on Maunakea. The plan specifically enhances cultural stewardship on Maunakea and preserves our island’s cultural heritage. We were not only impressed with OMKM’s preservation initiatives and actions, but also with its collaboration with the community,” said Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Wendy Laros.

The Office of Maunakea Management was established in 2000 to provide dedicated Hawaii Island community-based management of the natural, cultural and scientific resources on nearly 12,000 acres of University of Hawaii managed lands on Maunakea. OMKM’s mission is to “achieve harmony, balance and trust in the sustainable management and stewardship of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve through community involvement and programs that protect, preserve and enhance the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of Maunakea while providing a world-class center dedicated to education, research and astronomy.”

Achieving balanced stewardship is especially challenging given the wide-ranging environmental, cultural, research and community interests. Over the years OMKM initiated and continues to execute management programs to protect and preserve the unique cultural resources under the University of Hawaii's care.

The Long Term Historic Property Monitoring Plan was prepared and approved by the State Historic Preservation Division. This plan is in fulfillment of the Cultural Resources Management Plan's action step to systematically monitor the condition of over 260 historic properties containing about 1,000 archaeological features located in the Mauna Kea Science Reserve, Maunakea Access Road Corridor and the Mid-Level Facilities at Halepōhaku. Significant historic properties are vulnerable to intentional and unintentional human impact as well as damage from natural erosion, biological invasions, weather and geological events including earthquakes. The plan assists OMKM with monitoring and documenting historic properties in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Division, and the development of measures to mitigate possible adverse impacts to preserve and protect historic properties for future generations.

The preparation of the Long Term Historic Property Monitoring Plan and implementation of regular annual monitoring without a statutory requirement, demonstrates the Office of Maunakea Management's commitment to stewardship and best practices in cultural resource understanding, protection and preservation.

OMKM was also recognized last year by the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce for its environmental stewardship programs with a Pualu Award for Environmental Awareness. The Historic Hawaii Foundation's 2017 Preservation Commendation Award, Hawaii's highest recognition of preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and interpretation of the state's architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage, was presented to the Office of Maunakea Management last month.

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About 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. 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.