

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Legario “Hanky” Eharis

Legario “Hanky” Eharis was born and raised in Hāna, Maui. His parents both worked for the park. His father was part of an archaeological team in Kīpahulu, and his mother worked in the interpretation division. He would often visit the park as a child; however, his first involvement with Haleakalā National Park began when he was sixteen years old as a member of the Youth Conservation Corps of America. Soon after, he was hired as a seasonal worker. Over the years, Hanky has held many positions within the park including in the maintenance division, resource management, and as a member of the fence crew.



Hanky holding up a map of Haleakalā National Park.
Picture taken by Micah Mizukami, May 2021

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Legario “Hanky” Eharis (HE)
May 7, 2021
Kīpahulu, Maui
Interviewed by Alana Kanahele (AK)

- AK: Aloha. We are with the Haleakalā Oral History Project, we are talking to Park staff about their connections to this place, the work they’ve done throughout their years here. This interview is recorded, and it will be stored in the Haleakalā archive, as well UH Mānoa’s digital archive known as scholar space. You have the right to edit, redact, and delete anything you want after we finish the interview, we will send you a transcript of what you said. And then at that point you have the option to edit or delete anything. So, does that all sound okay to you?
- HE: Yeah, that sounds great. Was basically cleared by the administration here, I am fine with it. [Laughs]
- AK: Well I think just to start, wanted to ask some background questions. So, would you mind just stating your name?
- HE: Okay, my full name is Legario Eharis. I am a junior, took my name from my father. I was born and raised here in Hāna, and was fortunate enough to get into this Park system through my parents. My parents were also employees here in the past when the Parks first started this additional section of Haleakalā. My dad was part of the archeological team that had done the basic inventory of all the natural features and archeological sites that exist on the coastline of Kīpahulu here. My mom was also interpreter with basic staff, small staff way back then. Starting off the interpretive program.
- AK: People call you Hanky, yeah?
- HE: Yeah, my nickname—most common name—is Hanky or Hank. Sometimes Boy. (Laughs) There’s a few of us that is called Boy here.
- AK: When did you first get started with the Park? You said your parents worked here, when did you start, did you volunteer?
- HE: Okay, I started back I think I was like sixteen years old. Still in high school but Youth Conservation Corps came through in the Park here and I was fortunate enough to get hired on through that group called Youth Conservation Corps of America, YCC. Worked summer months, basically doing everything. Assisting all the programs that was here—interpretive hikes; I did resource management; I did feral animal control already on the smaller animals that existed—trapping mongoose, rats, cats—very small program very basic, and also the feral pigs in abundance.
- AK: Was that mainly out on this side?
- HE: A lot of it out here in this district, in Kīpahulu. And up in the higher lands here. Again it was no official program yet. But being from Hāna and having that type of background of

hunters and subsistence off the land with fishing and everything—I fell right into it, to do that type of work. It was good times doing it.

AK: Do you remember any of your first visits to the Kīpahulu district or into the crater? Your first time visiting Haleakalā National Park?

HE: Prior to that was only—I had never gone to the summit in the early seventies growing up as a kid. I always knew of this Kīpahulu area, which was still in the makings of being a National Park. My parents were here like I say, and I'd tag along with them sometime. Sometimes I was brought out for the day, learning through those times what was going on. All of the existing workers there were either an uncle or an aunt, basically all family here. Yeah, just hung out down here during the day while my parents worked. And that's how I learned of the area. And then slowly got to know of this other district which is basically Haleakalā, the Summit district. Eventually as the years went by we're going up to the Summit and getting into—through the hiring process—to do specific work down here in Kīpahulu. My first work was still on that program—was resources management. So with RM.

AK: How many seasons or summers did you do the Youth Conservation Corps?

HE: Youth Conservation was at least two summers—which was like six months kind of work. All of it was done here in Kīpahulu.

AK: Did you end up working for the Park again right after that or was there a little bit of a break?

HE: Soon after being here I was hired on as a seasonal worker. Again was a GS-04 position, along working with the maintenance division—which consisted of two person. Again they were my uncles. And a cousin, three of them. So they were doing all the maintenance. We again, starting to have infrastructure—we had bathrooms to clean, trash collection—the visitation was pretty, it was full at the time. There was a lot of people starting to come here already. And we were located on the bridge, 'Ohe'o, in front there. We resided in a little shack up in the trees there and everything was done out of that small baseyard. None of this was here, like now the existing base yard, none of it was in place yet. We were just based in the trees. Our parking lot was very minimal. A lot of our visitors were parking in the roads, we were tasked to make better accommodations for our visitors.

AK: Is that to clean cabins, or what was the maintenance work mainly?

HE: Maintenance work was building, setting in the trail systems around the features—the National Park—and slowly more and more we improved the trails going up to the higher waterfalls in the Park and the viewpoints and all of that was maintained to accommodate for the visitors trying to look at specific areas along the trail. Was a challenge. My dad guys—my uncles—were trying to put in those places and was part of the crew to help build those areas for visitors.

AK: What years was this?

HE: This was through like seventy-nine, eighty, eighty-one. The early, early eighty days. And, again the position as a maintenance worker was for about two seasons—almost two seasons, and then they came about with the RM program out here in Kīpahulu. RM on the

Summit was starting to start up and my old chief, Ron Nagata, he's the one that brought me on as a RM worker. Started off as a GS position, believe it was a GS-03 or 04 field worker, again continuing on with the feral animal program. I worked both districts at that time. . .

AK: Kīpahulu and the crater?

HE: Kīpahulu and the Summit Area. And at that time in the Summit Area was work in the crater area. In the upper---Manawainui, Kaupō Gap area, along those ridge lines and boundaries that encompasses the crater itself now-a-days.

AK: How big was the resource management team when you started?

HE: At that particular time the resource mangement team was two of us here, me and my cousin Dino Brown. The summit district was at least seven or eight folks that was doing specific jobs in resource management. Whenever Ron Nagata needed us for help and that we'd go and join up with him, do a one-week detail over on the Summit area and work on whatever project. A lot of it was fencing. I did a little bit of the endangered species management work—helping a friend of mine up in the Summit do petrel inventory—'u'au project that was done at the summit, finding a lot of the bird habitats and all of that. That was fun times. Again, getting a good look at how big this Park is, actually see the crater now. High summit areas, in relation to Kīpahulu it is a totally different environment, yeah? So us, me, being from Kīpahulu it was down on the coast, low land—so now you're dealing with elevation work which actually took a toll on us. We had to acclimate to being at that high elevation for a week, we slowly got the gear too. Ron Nagata had bought us a lot of gear to be comfortable, like jackets and rain gear—the appropriate clothing for working in the field at that high. Good experiences, you know?

AK: What was the—you said working on the fencing—what areas in particular?

HE: So my first fence project was actually up on Kuiki, which is the plains abouve the Manawainui waterfall area—that would be here on the upper Kaupō and Healani shelters, we were working on the very top of Kuiki which would overlook onto the Palikū cabin in the crater—within 7000, 8000 elevation—somewhere in there not too sure. It was high up. And that was my first fence project that I was involved with. We spent days—months—up in there building the whole fence through the Kaupō Gap area. At the same time there was another fencing project going on that was Summit crew was atually doing the initial building of the Kaupō Gap fence. So we were tying into them from that Summit area.

AK: What is the topography like in Kuiki?

HE: So it's. . .

AK: Or what were some of the challenges of putting in a fence over there?

HE: Steep. A lot of rocky areas, big and large rocky outcrops. We were staying right on the rim, the highest part of the land but on mauka to makai type building, so up high and distributing a lot of the fence material with a helicopter and us on the ground we are tasked to establish the route and start to build down to put in the fence. A lot of drilling, fence pounding, t-posts, in-line posts to secure it and make it a sound structure. And all

the time, again, we are going across major animal trails that, now we are coming in with the fence and blocking a lot of those areas where the animals traversed. While we were doing it the animals would just stare. Huge herds of goats wondering what's going on. Now we're---once some of that structure was being built, it was already being impacted because they had nowhere to go. They were either impacting our fence or now stuck in a forested area and impacted the resources even more.

AK: Can you talk about the actual fence design? What it looked like? Barbed wire?

HE: Yeah, the fence consisted of hog wire and t-posts. The hog wire was at least a forty-seven inch height wire, and each roll is like 280-300 pounds depending on the grade of wire we acquire and buy. And, there was tons of it. And then we had t-posts which was not the highest grade of t-posts like we have nowadays, but was suitable material at the time to work with. So t-posts, hog wire, and the nine-gauge tie wire which supported a lot of the angle bracing as this structure was built, to keep the fence intact. And, a lot of it was all manually. We had the helicopter support to drop in place down along the route that we had chosen. And we'd be camping up in that area and every morning we'd hike over to the work site and start building. So that meant rolling out the wire by hand, and building the fence.

AK: Can you talk about a typical work day or what it was like being out in the camp? Because you got dropped off by helicopter primarily, right?

HE: Yes. First of all, at that particular time our helicopter program was starting up. We'd gotten a good vendor to support our work and approved by the Office of Aircraft Services in Alaska. Ron Nagata was our main helicopter manager and he had a few crews that were trained up in doing helicopter work around the helicopters. So, they take us up into the field and bring our camp gear everything by sling loads. And we'd camp in spots—beautiful spots. Again, nobody in these areas or in the communities down lower had never seen these places, and we were fortunate enough. For me, I was in awe to see these places. You're in a native forest that is just—totally different from being down in the lowlands here. We have introduced species. Now, you're up in this elevated area and everything is native around you. It was nice to be there and camp out and cook your meals.

Our work day consisted of eight hours. So, seven and a half of that was hiking to the spot, doing the work, and coming back to camp. And then, then you cook your meals and everybody chips in on their dinners. And we camped out. Some days, some weeks was rainy. So you're dealing with rain and we're all into our own tents—find our own spots where we bedded down for the week. Come home, that's your little circle, your tent—dome tent. I can remember some of those times it was raining so hard and we'd peak through our little openings of our tent and the commissary or kitchen area is forty yards away. You're in your tent gearing up in your rain gear just to get there and do your stuff—cook your breakfast or whatever and prepare for the the next day's work you know? (Laughs) It was good fun. And cold—awe man. It was fun. Fun times.

AK: Was it about a week that you were out there usually?

HE: Those particular times it was a week at a time. So, Monday we'd be flown in, and on a Friday normally mid-day or mid-morning we'd get our heli-ops started to fly the crews

out to our base yard. Yeah, was challenging at times. Our helicopter program evolved from those earlier times of finding out a system where you can work safely under these hazardous conditions and be efficient as the program built up.

AK: Were there ever any major incidents when you were there?

HE: Oh—incidents involving the helicopter? I've been near a few—we call that near misses—that, again those were recorded by my supervisors in the field with me. But yeah, there were some hazardous times when you have so many things going on during the helicopter operation that one little thing goes wrong—especially in the landing zone area. Everything we've trained for, everybody's eyes and ears around that type of area. We are watching the environment, any loose items secured as best as your knowledge. And in some instances I've seen stuff get loose and you get pulled out into the road—everyone just hits the deck. You find your safe zone, safe spot and hope for the best. At least two incidences that I've been where that had happened. Luckily nobody got hurt, but it did compromise our aircraft. So, again, once everything was secured and safe we had to be flown out on another helicopter. A mechanic was flown in to check on these existing ship involved in the incident and secure it, and then we continued operations with the second ship or we were en route to being flown out from these remote areas doing fence work.

AK: How many people were on a crew at a time, when you were going out there in the camps?

HE: The crew on my first fence project was at least six or seven of us. There was three of us then from Kīpahulu. They were both my cousins, Dino Brown and Ana Brown. Brother and sister. And we joined up with this crew which was: Chris Alexander, Ron—the main supervisor, Linda Caudaughy, and two or three other folks were with their crew when we'd do the fence work up in Kuiki. Some fun times. And my first exposure to working in the back-country.

AK: What are some of your fondest memories from the camp. . .?

HE: Fun times, or best times I've had camping was after work. We'd get to explore on our own. We'd hike over to "The Edge". We call it The Edge, meaning the viewpoint where you can see more of the crater or something like that—you can view places. Normally you'd be down on the coastlines looking up to these mountains, now you're on the mountain looking down. Just sitting there watching the sunset and doing some feral animal eradication. Take your weapon out there and shoot animals and stuff like that. At the time it was okay to utilize the animals that we had shot and killed, and bring it back for meals and stuff.

But again, also exploring the forests. You see a lot of the native plants. I myself was really into it. I've noted down a lot of the plants that I had seen, for myself. Just seeing that is how I learned my plants in the field and the Native Hawaiian forests, just seeing it. More and more we've gone, the project expanded, and I got hired on through the Univeristy of Hawai'i Research Corporation [Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i, RCUH]—had hired on a crew. Same folks from the first fence work, theywere also hired on. So three of us in Kīpahulu and then eventually four of us. Can kind of hear that the staff here in Kīpahulu was slowly evolving, getting more workers. Especially in

my division, resource management. So we were hired on as RCUH workers. Eighty-one, eighty-two, eighty-three—throughout the mid-eighties—we were doing the initial start of work in Kīpahulu Valley here out of Kīpahulu. Working up in the natural area of Kīpahulu doing the first pig studies and eradication of the pigs in the forests here.

AK: Can you talk about some of the research resource management—things you were a part of out here in Kīpahulu, and maybe also some of the different zones—talked to different people and it sounds like Kīpahulu is kind of divided into thirds—referred to the area?

HE: So, my work here was primarily in Kīpahulu—the valley up here. Back, how I first saw it, I'll give a brief history on that. My counterpart Terry Lind, had taken us—me and my cousin Dino—had gone on an overnigher—a two night camp—up in the Kīpahulu Valley. So that was my first time of ever seeing this valley. And we actually hiked from here down in Kīpahulu, hiked in, and it took us two days but we got up to the 5,000 elevation up in the Valley. Again, seeing stuff that Terry Lind had initially created some of those main trails. So he'd show us, what he had seen prior to the Park being opened up to the addition in Haleakalā. So we hiked up to the 5,000 contour. The Kīpahulu Valley consists of two shelves—one is the upper and one is the lower. We entered in the upper shelf following Terry's old Fish and Wildlife transect trails. Got in and went up and it was kind of piggy in a sense—meaning there was a lot of activity, a lot of pigs. And so we were all game, we were young and we were just trucking and seeing these places. Again, a lot of it was native too. We were experiencing all of that. Thought that hike was never going to end, took us all day until the evening to reach 5,000.

I remember one particular area we called the “Dog Leg,” where it was sort of like the halfway point to a place called “Charlie,” which was at 5,000 elevation and Terry points out at a viewpoint of that particular area we still had to get to. Was still like another 1,100 feet in elevation to get to, but this is like—the farther you get up into Kīpahulu Valley its like crawling over logs and through trees and the 'uluhe belt was thick and we are hacking our way through with machetes. We are getting up to this what I called at the time, “The Black Hills.” Its just one black part of the forest, 1,000 feet away, and I thought, “Man, I hope I can make it.” (Chuckles).

So we're going and Terry of course knows this place already, and he's gone but there is an existing blue flag trail and we are just following flags. And once in a while we will catch up to him and before we know it we had actually—me and my cousin—had passed the camp. And we keep going and it gets thicker and more clutter the trail. And we are basically seeing pieces of blue flags and after a while I was like, “We got to check where Terry is.” And we call him and he's kind of laughing on the radio that we passed him. We are at least two hundred yards past the camp that we are supposed to be at that evening. It is getting dark and we have to bivouac back to where we he is located and find Charlie Camp.

AK: Can you show on the map where that area you are talking about. . .

HE: So, the Kīpahulu Valley is here, there is two shelves—pretty defined on the map here one upper and one lower. Both sides of the valley has two main rivers which is the Palikea

and on the south-side of the valley is the Koukouai. We were in the interior on the upper shelf and Charlie is way over here on the—basically here on the upper shelf of Kīpahulu Valley. And that was again, my first initial hike was doing that. After that more and more you get acclimated to knowing what is in there and how hard it gets. And then we started the pig project in Kīpahulu Valley itself. From what Terry had showed us, that knowledge again was useful when the pig project started we had gone in and knowing the trails we were kind the folks that were always questioned about where things was and how to get to these places. In the Kīpahulu Valley at that time there was four main camps, established by the US Fish and Wildlife and National Park survey days. So one camp was the Dog Leg, the Charlie—first camp was Bravo actually, then Charlie, the Delta, and the Alpha Camps of this valley itself. Alpha Camp is actually on the upper headwalls of the Kīpahulu Valley on the north side, which is part of the Kaumakani plaineze area. And that is the—Kaumakani is up on the upper slopes here, so it is the headwalls of the Kīpahulu Valley. Behind that Alpha Camp and the Kaumakani planeze is the Waiho‘i Valley, which is part of the Park boundary already. But being up there you can see all of that. Those are the four camps that we know of through Terry Lind and all of them.

AK: So there was fencing around Kīpahulu and then it looks like from the map there is also fencing that cut through?

HE: Yes.

AK: What was that? What was the reasoning for that?

HE: So again, after the pig project was initiated and we had all these camps being utilized by researchers from Hawaii Volcanoes and our staff here in Kīpahulu, then also the fence was, the preliminary fencing was scouted out and determined by our crew being in there. Under the guidance of Ron Nagata, we hiked in and sometimes hike in and sometime flown in to these places to find the route for these contour fences in Kīpahulu. Right now there's three contour fences in specific parts of the Kīpahulu Valley. One is the front tier of Kīpahulu Valley which is the Bravo Fence we call that. And the gauging station fence. Both is on the upper and lower shelves and that's considered our front fences protecting animals from the outside persay of the Kīpahulu area from moving up into the Valley itself.

The second fence was up in the Dog Leg, again on the upper shelf and the lower shelf we have this contour fence all the way through on both ends, tied into the best natural barriers that we knew of. A natural barrier meaning a cliff edge, a waterfall. So, what at the time on the ground determined by our crew to be the most sound areas that we know pigs wouldn't be getting around to move up in these units.

And then the third contour fence would be up at the Charlie and the Palikea fence, both of those were tied into the headwalls of the Kīpahulu Valley, both north and south both upper and lower shelves. This particular area at the 5,000 contour was the most challenging because you're in a more pristine area and the vegetation changes to a 'ōhi'a canopy but then under that is the floor vegetation which consisted of 'uluhe belt—we were calling it at the time, just like twenty-foot walls of this stuff that we are hacking through to determine the routes for these fences. And someday it was nice, it was so

mucky and swampy in these areas we were trucking in mud the whole day in these areas trying to determine routes and safe natural barriers. It was hard work traversing through this country. But then again, it was nice to be there and experience it. You learn a lot about the different zones in elevation, how quickly it can change, you know?

Again, the pigs were already recorded as far up as the back headwalls of Kīpahulu Valley, our most upper camp was West Camp. That's near the back headwalls of the Kīpahulu Valley, one ridge away from the Hāna Grass Land, and one ridge from Palikū and the crater itself. Out of the whole unit, I spent years—I would say years because I spent so many times up there—in West Camp. Just trying to track down animals at the time. During the pig projects we did telemetry work so radio collaring, trapping the animals in metal traps, and then putting radio collars on them and learning telemetry to track them in the forest and record these animals. The purpose of that was to find the population of animals existing in these areas. So that was one of the methods.

AK: Sounds like it. So where you were doing the telemetry with the pigs was more so on the northern side of the valley, that border?

HE: A lot of the telemetry was done throughout the whole valley, starting from the front here of the Bravo area. Right at Bravo there is a high peak we call Palikea—the high peak there—and that particular area was a telemetry spot because it was so high up. We could see upper shelf and lower shelf—all the way to Dog Leg—so we were tracking at a point, get our signals, move another two hundred meters down to another station down off that area, set up the gear again and get more waypoints—establish. And as we are going one of us is mapping and doing triangulation of those signals and pinpoint where these collared animals were. That's how we were able to find some of this population that was running all over the valley.

AK: Was Kīpahulu at all impacted by goats or mongoose, or was it primarily pigs?

HE: Up in the Kīpahulu Valley we also had mongoose found, as far up as I would say 6,000, 7,000 elevation in the valley. Even up above Charlie Camp, to Palikea, to West Camp. We were starting to see mongoose because we were in the field so much. Rats was found all the way up to Charlie. Some of those trails, as we were doing pig work and prior to that researchers had come in to do rat monitoring and inventory—so they'd be setting off these trails off of the main four trails in the valley. They were doing trails off of that to monitor for rats, and they've gotten a whole lot of them. A lot of rats being found in the Valley. A lot of them were, again, impacting our native bird population because of the contents found in the dead animals. So, now days that particular program for mongoose and rodents is still being continued but, they are a specialized crew: the endangered species monitoring crew that monitors with newer equipment. Starting to get on the smaller invasive animals.

AK: What are some of the programs today that resource management does?

HE: In resource management there is still a lot of—my position now is with the Feral Animal Removal Management (FARM) so I deal with a lot of the fencing construction, maintenance, and also feral animal removal still. We also have the vegetation management, they deal a lot with the invasive plants that has encroached Kīpahulu

Valley. And then you have the inventory & monitoring—folks that continue to monitor the trends of whether it is native or invasive—plant species and how that is progressing. And then we have endangered species management. Which continues to do the smaller animal eradication and stuff.

AK: Are there any kind of educational or outreach programs for people out here? For the local population out here in Kīpahulu?

HE: Our educational program---our interpretive staff out here in Kīpahulu do small little talks on the environment and stuff. Once in a great while we've gotten asked—especially our crew—to take our program to take it to the little community school and to do talks there to inspire the younger generation about what is going on in the National Park System. In particular my job, I get a lot of questions because it is a small town and a lot of the community is hunter fisherman related. I get a lot of questions from the younger generation about my job and how they can get into a job where you get to go out in the field and see animals and do all that type of work. So we take it there, we show those slide shows of our work. Basically consists of not only feral animal stuff but visitation, natural environmental processes, connection between mauka and lower lands and out into the sea—what is the ahupua'a concept in relation to man and mauka resources and the lower resources. Good educational information. I think it is important that our community knows about it. We've gotten good results, I believe because we got more funding to support that and our staffing increases because of that. Educational—we get funding to have workers come to assist is with that type of work.

AK: Are there any kind of volunteer trips out here?

HE: Volunteer? We have a volunteer crew with the kūpuna program in Haleakalā—which consists of a lot of kūpuna within the islands. They will come and support our work out here in Kīpahulu. A lot of it would be the archeological restoration and stabilization type work. Assist with the infrastructure—buildings and grounds. Working with the Friends of Haleakalā—a nonprofit group that comes and helps us with the archeological work, clearing a lot of the sites here in Kīpahulu.

AK: Sounds like it is pretty extensive.

HE: It is a growing process having these volunteer programs, so we also have through the volunteer program folks even from the mainland, groups that have come here in the past doing the same work. This particular building here is our bunk house that supports a lot of those volunteers. They come here and camp out for the weekend or week and do work in Kīpahulu.

AK: How do you feel your relationship with the park has changed over the time since coming here as a little kid and youth conservation?

HE: Aw shoot. It has grown. My relationship has grown, with the Park itself. Just learned so much, first of all I never thought I would be doing this type of work. But I was fortunate enough because I had the experience from living here and knowing fishing, hunting, and all of that. Now a days the experience has only grown. I am fortunate enough to pass it on now to my grandkids—the work that I have done and spark an interest in them to one day maybe they can be doing this. Seeing the Park grow into what we are now---a lot of the

older staff, friends, coworkers have gone and retired and all of that but I try to include them in my knowledge passed on to the now-generation. What I've learned. Pretty good experience. I think I been here since—on my fifth or sixth superintendent running this Park. All in all it is good times.

AK: Are there certain places in the Park you feel most connected to?

HE: I like working up in the Kīpahulu Valley—my most memorable areas would be the back headwalls of Kīpahulu Valley up in West Camp. There is a particular spot up in this pu'u or hill where we can see all the way through the whole valley back to here—the coastline of Kīpahulu—on a clear day. In particular this very spot is connected to the old district manager, who resides there now a days. He was buried there¹ because he loved it so much, like us. His last wishes was to be put there, on this particular hill in the valley. His name is Kimo Cabatbat He was one of my first district managers out here in Kīpahulu, he was an awesome counterpart in Kīpahulu and our staff here. So being up there—just the remoteness of it—I wish my parents could see it, all of that.

AK: Could you maybe talk about two or three special moments you have had in the Park? I guess as a worker or maybe with your family?

HE: Oh shoot—What is that again? [Laughs]

AK: Could you maybe talk about two or three special moments you have had in the Park? I guess as a worker or maybe with your family?

HE: Special moments here in the Park would be just being here with my parents. It was all new. Seeing this particular area, even down on the coastline, my parents working in the field and I was able to go tag along with them. There was no set rules about an employee bringing their kids here during the work day—you just came along and it was fine. Stay out of harms way or whatever and just be here and experience it all. And later on it was like, gearing up to fly into the remote areas—that's real special. Like an adventure. Yeah, we going to be here for one week or two weeks, we are ready. I get all my food and all my stuff, it is going to be an expedition, you know? Into these places. Those are special times. We didn't have cell phones, it was so basic then. No care in the world except do your work, what you are tasked to do, follow your boss' instructions, build the fence, see the forest, see the wild animals out there, just be a part of that.

And of course, coming home and sharing what your experience was. My parents at that time were really happy to see me home again and sharing to them where I been. They are born and raised here, they are in their sixties and seventies and they did not see these places, but I am able to share with them. And along with all my friends down here. They see us, “Oh Boy, you going to fly again? Oh you guys so lucky, how you get that kind of job?”

¹ A Special Use Permit is required to scatter ashes within Haleakalā National Park. Haleakalā National Park must abide by the terms outlined in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 2.62(b), which states in part: "the scattering of human ashes from cremation is prohibited, except pursuant to the terms and conditions of a permit, or in designated areas according to conditions which may be established by the Superintendent."

Just took a chance at it and was fortunate enough to say, “I do, we going, I get this job now to protect the native forest.” It’s all just highlights of my time. Good experiences.

AK: Looking back, what do you see as your biggest contributions to the Park?

HE: I would say my contribution to this Park is being able to fence off this whole boundary. That is a huge accomplishment to me, because I was a part of it, all of this—this whole crater—I was a part of this fence building. Establishing routes in the early days. Now days, the newer units down in Nakula, these are all the south fences—still we are finalizing our building here in the Nakula section. But the entire route of this—Kīpahulu boundaries, north and south boundaries of the crater—I was part of building these fences. I cannot say more. That is my main accomplishment.

Just recently the other night, I stay talking to my grandson about this, you know? He is old enough to understand. He say, “Oh wow.”

“Just got to keep growing up faster and you can maybe tag along with me one day, one last time. To see these places.”

AK: What are some of the future directions you would like to see happen here in Kīpahulu? What are some of the priorities for this area?

HE: To continue my particular work, my division resources management—to have that program still be in Kīpahulu. Again, saying that is to continue maintaining all this work in the Kīpahulu Valley and the Kīpahulu front country. And also the south boundary of Haleakalā National Park. Build up on the staffing needed to do this work. Bring up new ideas, now days the technology has grown as far as inventory and monitoring—maintain that. Have a sound fence to protect a lot of the resources. Build up on our interpretive program to give the visitor—because our visitor volume is huge. We have got so much more impacted, our trail systems and infrastructure now is getting highly impacted by the visitation here in Kīpahulu. We need to upkeep on our supportive staffing to maintain all these programs and kuleana—take care of this place, always. Our challenge is going to be first off, the visitation—how to manage that more better.

AK: Any final stories or anything you’d like to share, with the map or anything you would like to talk about before we close?

HE: Oh—shoots—again it was a great time to work this whole National Park. To me, if it wasn’t for the fences, a lot of the internal projects—vegetation management, endangered species—it would be more challenging if we didn’t put in fences to stop the ingress of feral animals that were highly impacting our resources. So doing that work to stop it was a good accomplishment and I hope it carries on in the future, I hope so. I am pretty sure it will continue, having the right people in there.

It takes a certain type of person to do this work. It was not all easy, there was some struggles. Seen a lot of staffing come and go—some had thought they had it in them to do this type of work and they did not last. There was a core few though. Now my particular job there are six of us. Two of us here in Kīpahulu district and four in the summit—to do this field work. Important to have protection of the resources by putting in the fences, That’s it fun times.

- AK: Thank you thank you. I am done with questions, anything else you'd like to include.
- HE: Okay, that was it, in a nutshell basically it. Again, privileged to get hired on and all that. The old time bosses had trusted our knowledge. Trusted our knowledge was amazing, what you think you know about---then over the years, they were asking us, "Where is that?" You know? They took upon our knowledge to do their research, the best way and the safest way and all of that. That continues—I still always get questions about certain things and glad to help folks further their experiences. That's about it.
- AK: Thank you for your time and we know you got to get back to work. We will type up the transcript—do you prefer hard copy or digital copy?
- HE: Both, alright?
- AK: We will make a note to send you one.
- HE: Okay.
- AK: Anything you want to add, subtract, edit you can.
- HE: Thank you for having me and I hope I done well. (Laughs)
- AK: Did great! Feel free to keep the map.
- HE: Okay. Mahalo.