

Hawaiian group wants Hamakua land sale nixed

Star-Bulletin staff

Ka Lahui Hawaii is calling for invalidation of the sale of lands used by Hamakua Sugar Co. on the Big Island and return of these lands to native Hawaiians.

In a news conference yesterday, the Hawaiian sovereignty group said that some Hamakua lands were withdrawn from last week's auction as a result of a Ka Lahui Hawaii request. But a lawyer involved in the land sale later said this was not the case.

Clara L. Kakalia, who chairs the organization's National Committee on Land and Natural Resources, read a statement at the statue of King Kamehameha on South King Street.

"Ka Lahui Hawaii . . . wants to ensure that full and proper title searches are conducted to protect Hawaiian trust lands," she said. The lands, "must be held in trust until they are to be transferred to our Hawaiian Nation.

"We are working with Hawaiian community groups to establish a land-trust-defense fund to protect Hawaiian ceded lands from being unlawfully sold, exchanged or disposed of by plantation operators,

the state of Hawaii or the the United States government."

Ceded lands are lands that were once part of the Hawaiian nation.

Paul Schraff, attorney for Western Farm Credit Bank which loaned money to Hamakua and is foreclosing on the mortgage, said a statement that one parcel was withdrawn from sale requires clarification.

The parcel had been involved in a separate lawsuit in which a settlement was reached in July, Schraff said.

"It was supposed to be deleted from a list of properties being auctioned." However, through an oversight it was not, he said.

A "fractional undivided interest" of 2.15 acres in a parcel that totaled 6.54 acres is all that was involved, he said.

"There was a separate quiet title action that was to determine basically where that interest was. The parties just decided they would have the parcel sold and split the proceeds. That's why that parcel was withdrawn from the auction."

Pulling this parcel from auction had nothing to do with any request from Ka Lahui, Schraff said.