BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Walter Pu

Walter Pu was born in Hāna, Maui where his family has lived for seven generations. Growing up, Walter frequently visited the park. With over twenty years of service, Walter continues to serve as a park ranger in the Kīpahulu district. In addition to serving as a park ranger, Walter had the chance to work with a mentor, Tava, a canoe carver and navigator of the traditional Polynesian long-distance canoe Hōkūleʻa. Using traditional methods, Walter and Tava built the canoe underneath a traditional hale (building) near the visitor center, working on the project for nearly six months. You can view this canoe in the Kīpahulu Visitor Center.

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

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Walter Pu (WP)
May 7, 2021
Kīpahulu, Maui
Interviewed by Alana Kanahele (AK)

WP: All the way down to the highway. From up here, all the way down. I was dropped off by a helicopter there to check the fence line there several years ago, and I think Simeon came down to Manawainui or Healani and then Hank was over here, got dropped off over here and we all kind of walked down those areas to check the fence lines, yeah. That was quite an experience.

AK: You ready to start?

WP: Sure.

AK: Okay. 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?

WP: That sounds okay to me.

AK: Good, good. Well, I think to just start if we can just kind of do some basic background questions.

WP: Sure

AK: Would you mind telling me your name and where you're from?

WP: Okay. I'm Walter Pu. And I'm from Hāna, I live in Hāna now. I also spent a part of my youth on the island of Oahu, on the west side in the moku of Waiʻanae, and now in here since 1984. Did a couple stints in Hāna with Hotel Hāna Maui, as far as actual construction first. Built the remodel of the actual plantation buildings there. And then I also got into visitation and from that point— doing the tours for the hotel and also doing bellmanship for the hotel as well.

And I got really connected with the visitors, so there was an opportunity for me to come out here. And the first partnership of the Park that I worked for was Hawaiʻi Natural History Association. They're an outfit out of Hawaiʻi Volcanoes. And I was able to come out and apply for the position here in Kīpahulu. So, hence there was my journey started out here. In 1998 I worked for them for about eight years and it was a great, great

experience. Kind of brought me back to my own personal guidance and knowing who I am and where I come from. And especially in our koko—which is our bloodline. This is the roots of dad, and my grandfather, and my great grandfather, and my great greats there, they came from this area. So I was very fortunate—I don't know if it was a calling, but I was just sitting at home one day and I got the call. And here I am. You know?

After eight years with the Hawaii Natural History Association—which has taken me everywhere. I really thank them very much for the opportunity, it has taken me to a lot of the different moku on all these Islands—including Kahoʻolawe—I am now with the Park Service, in 2006. And I had always looked over at the other side of the line and said, "the Green & Grey, the Green & Grey, wow, someday that would be really cool to help and perpetuate the culture with this outfit and also how to preserve and take care of a very very precious resource here in Kīpahulu district. And this whole district including all East Maui. So here I am sixteen years later with them and eight years later with the Natural History Association. Here I am just about ready to close it up too. (Laughs)

AK: Can you talk a little bit about your family's connection to the Park? I know you mentioned. . .

WP: Yeah. Well, in ninety-eight when I started, I was very fortunate to have had an uncle working here from the early seventies actually. His name was Eddie Pu, older brother of my dad Daniel, and I had the privilege of working with him his last couple years here before he went to retire—actually went to work. He owned a flower farm. So he actually went to work. But I learned a lot from him about dealing and sharing with the visitors from the world actually. He was a very special man. Very spiritual man. Very humble man.

I don't know if you guys have heard his story a little bit, about him venturing and his trip around Maui— since the mid-seventies— which was actually a calling for him. Perhaps a calling for me, taking that job with the Natural History Association. Ended up in Wisconsin with his second wife Beverly going to visit family, and never made it to the house. He had this premonition of returning back to Maui, on the same flight he took to get to Chicago, and returned, and when he got back to Maui my other uncle—my dad's other brother, James Kimo Pu, was already there at the airport with his backpack.

And he started his journey from there. From the airport he started walking the island of Maui. So, I felt that with his journey by doing that is that he had a special thing going on. And I was very happy to be— and very proud to be part of that bloodline of his.

AK: Do you remember your first time visiting the Haleakalā National Park?

WP: Well my— let's see. Hmm. (Laughs) I don't quite remember. I was very young and I know it took us a long time to get there. I know we packed up an old Studebaker and we were traveling the road from here, from Hāna to the Mauna of Haleakalā. It felt like it

took almost a day and a half. (Laughs) The roads were plantation roads, you think they're bumpy now, they were really bumpy for the next sixty-four miles. But I remember stopping at streams where we would swim and have lunch, and actually had to fill the radiator up at one of the springs along the way. The car got hot. I do believe I was very young, around six years old or something like that. Seven years old. I remember being very cold. I wasn't interested in what was going on because I was very cold. And then as time went on, I was revisiting and revisiting and got to know the Mauna a lot better. Even on trips when we were being raised over on Oʻahu, our early years we always made it back for every spring, summer, winter— any kind of break we had was spent here and that's when we continued to go up to the Mauna.

AK: Both your parents are from Maui?

WP: No, my dad is from here, born and raised. So were his parents, grandparents, great grandparents, all the way back I think seven generations in this area. My mom is a Honolulu—drop in the big toe Hawaiian. She was brought up downtown. So see the difference right? From the jungles to the big city. My mom is on the Ferrera side. But had a lot of family out in the Makawao area, back in the early days, 1800s.

AK: Could you talk a little bit about, maybe the history of this area? Or maybe the ahupuaʻa of Kīpahulu in particular?

WP: Yeah. In the Park in particular, in this part in Kīpahulu they started off with some great people: my uncle Jack Lind and them in 1967, they did the survey of the valley. But obviously we know already that the ancient ka poe o Kahiko already was in there with their scientists and botanists and doing the same thing. When times were changing and they wanted to get a survey of the—not the non-pristine areas anymore—but mainly the pristine areas, what was left of the actual endemic plants, animals, and stream life that existed still on the islands. And this happened around the sixties, like I said sixty-seven I believe. Took an expedition of botanists and some scientists into the valley, to research these plants and stuff. They found out it was ninety percent, still, endemic to the Hawaiian Islands. Found nowhere else in the world. That's when they started the process of putting that imaginary gate of being the biological reserve. This area was—you can see it—from this point is actually going south already. We're sort of at the end of the rainforest and wrapping around to the drier side—areas of Kaupō, Kahiki Nui, and Kanaio. But this point north of us, it was most of the population pre-Cook time. Basically it's because of the water.

The water system was here, it's the number one resource, you can't go without it. You're on a rock in the middle of the ocean—water was their number one resource. And the water sheds were titled the wao akua. You won't see that too much on your ahupuaʻa maps, it was kind of like what it meant. If it's not there—out of site out of mind. And that was due to it being the watershed. So in the management sense of the ahupuaʻa, the konohiki, the chiefs, and the high kahunas—the masters of the trades, the skilled men—would get together and only allow certain activities up in that area. Because what you

don't want to do is disturb your number one resource, yeah? So the wai was always treated just as that. It was a god, it was a deity, it was the most precious thing to them. Higher than any chief or higher than any deity, was the wai. So this was a very populated area during that period.

AK: What is the name of the bay that we're sitting in front of right now?

WP: Just behind me here is known as Kukui Bay. Perhaps because of the kukui trees in the area, Kukui Bay. Well known for the kukui here and also for the hala—which is kind of a production kind of tree for the survival of the Polynesians, yeah? For the ancestors. So, all along the coast here from here north of us to Hāna you'll find hala groves a lot. And kukui.

AK: So when you started at the Park, can you talk maybe through some of the chronology of your time here? Starting as a volunteer or working with the archives?

WP: For me, I was just thrown right in. (Laughs) Well, it came natural for me because I did a lot of Hawaiiana stuff growing up in schools, even for the west side we were very involved with the cultural ambassadacy. And of course, you know, a lot of it going back to school back in the early sixties and being diverted mind-wise into what's going on at the time—geographically, economically, and you know of course there was Vietnam. So a lot of the histories in schools were kind of focused on what was going on then. But we always kept it in us as to—because our kūpuna hand down manaʻo from them is that we always—main thing we follow traditional values as well. Like the canoe paddling, the way we fish, and how we fish, and how we go holoholo. All those simple things, to people minor things, but those are the values that we followed and hence today we pass that on to our children and grandchildren right now.

But yeah, when I came in I already brought it with me and they liked it and they kept me here. (Laughs) And actually with the organization I was with earlier, I was able to—along with Hanky [Eharis] and some of the divisions here at the park and the mentoring of a canoe maker on the island of Hawaiʻi at one of our sister Parks which is Hōnaunau, Pu'uhonua O Hōnaunau. And there's this carver who worked for them for years and retired, and also first mate on the first Hōkūleʻa since it was built in the seventies. And he came over and we went up to the mountains here and got us a log and we built a canoe. Which sits in the Visitors Center now. So yeah, we keep the culture alive and we kind of share what this place was all about, sustainability mainly.

Walter's canoe underneath a traditional Hawaiian hale that was built specifically for the canoe's construction.

AK: What are some of the cultural practices that are still practiced here today? Still do canoe building?

WP: Yeah. You know, times have been changing for the last ten years or so, everybody got into technology and kind of moved on from working in the taro patch and pounding poi. Even for stuff like weaving baskets and mats and stuff like that, it kind of all went away. But we still have those special people that come and share with us. Pōhaku he comes and shares his hala weaving. The Linds out here, a family out here, they do a lot of the Kapahu Living Farm cultivation farming. Still practicing fishing skills out here. Very well known. There's a type of fishing that they do here in Hāna, and believe it or not, the fish is never sold. The fish is just given to the village like it was centuries ago, yeah? It's akule—akule fishing they surround the large schools out in Hāna Bay or the families down here have a place they do their fish surrounding, and also in the Keʻanae district they do the same thing. But the fish is gathered and the people in the community do come down to a certain spot and all help to take the fish out of the nets and they allowed to take a bag of fish home. Each child from each house. So you get eight kids, you get eight baskets of fish going home with you. They know how to prepare it and how to preserve it as well. So akule fishing is still practiced here, and I think that's probably the biggest cultural activity that's still going on until today.

AK: I think we're also really interested in kind of the—talk a little bit more about the Hawaiian history of the area? I know you mentioned they found some archeological stuff here as well?

WP. Oh yeah. As far as history of this area in the centuries past, if you just look across the channel—Kohala coastline is only thirty miles from here. So the connection between them and here is pretty much our district. We are within Hāna, Kahikinui, Kaupō. We sort of connected with that island. So a lot of your last high chiefs came from the area but had very much connections with the chiefs over here. Take for instance one---we have the largest heiau pretty much in all of the archipelago and the Polynesian islands. It's known as Piʻilanihale, it's located just outside Hāna—or if you're coming into Hāna just before Hāna. And it's a place called Kahanu Gardens, Kahanu was one of the chiefs in the area. But it is the largest heiau and it's—from what I was told and I researched and heard through Aunty Pua as well—is that this place was very special in the ancient times. Where a lot of your Polynesian groups would gather. Like Samoa, Tonga, Aotearoa—the Māori's—being that they're a navigational group, the Polynesians, this heiau sits pretty high. There they'd gather and actually deal with the celestial part of their ceremonies. So, it goes pretty deep. It's a very beautiful place, it's the botanical gardens too. You have the high chiefs such as Piʻilani—at the time of Piʻilani high chief Maui and you had Umi, high chief on Big Island, and they never fought. You never find battles between these two guys for districts or probably for water, again. But because they were brother-in-laws, so they became Umi did his thing there and kept the culture rolling there and Piʻilani here became more like ingenuity. Being that the heiau that they built was such a great feat that they started to do the Piʻilani Highway and they went and start building the pathway. Which actually is where my uncle takes his walk.

AK: Are there any known heiau in Kīpahulu?

WP: Yeah, there's one right behind me right now. If you see on the hillside, the three palm trees that go up the hill—the furthest one up by itself is called Kanekauila **—** Kanekauila Heiau is lined up with ʻUpolu Point on Big Island—the heiau there. They're kind of navigational, very strong. Kanekauila being the lightning, yeah? And the moʻokini on the Big Island, that one is very powerful as well. These two heiau line directly uo with each other. You have luakini heiau out in Kaupō. Of course, Piʻilani Heiau—and of course they erected heiau to Lono too throughout—and the fishing shrines as well. Some petroglyphs in the area, covered up at this time. Kaupō, pictographs in that area as well and in our lands out there—the Park has aquired or was given to for presevation—Nuʻu. Nuʻu is a special place. You guys went through there this morning. Nuʻu was a place they called ʻPlenty Kiawe**.'** Meaning of course thereʻs a lot of kiawe trees in the area. Our Park boundary is there, and that's kind of where they are working on the, Rachel them are working on the archeological stuff.

AK: Could you talk a little bit about the educational programs that you do now, and a little bit about your work?

WP: Oh yeah, of course. That's kind of what we do, yeah? In our division, education and volunteer and interpretation. So we do alot of guided hikes in the area—of course due to the big year we all had internationally—a lot of things kind of fell apart and had to be put on the shelves for a while. And actually, this morning we were going through some outlines and that's where I was. And I am glad Hanky called me because I was on the computer trying to figure out the new outlines for the new wave of visitation. So we are going to be starting up our hikes and our pop-ups, we are going to be starting to do some small pop-ups around the Park at different times a day and of course once we get our Visitors Center open up again, we implimented a huge exhibit in our building back in the early 2000s. And if you get the chance maybe today you guys can come by and see all that—I'd be happy to take you guys around. But yeah, we do all of that.

We do outreach and try to get in the schools, we do job fairs and health fairs, we participated in the past. We do all the festivals here, especially the taro festival. We try to get an outfit there at the taro festival every year. That's a very big one for East Maui. Also we belong to this organization—Hank and I—Na Mamo O Muʻolea—which is our organization that we are trying to not preserve, but more or less maintain the health of the area for future generations and also our community—which is the ahupuaʻa of the Queen Liliʻuokalani and her brother David Kalākaua's parents. And so we are also invovled in that. So every year for the last ten years we out on what we call the limu festival. So we invite all these organizations from State: DLNR, DOFAW, and they come and bring their educational stuff and we have a huge educational tent for the kids. And the people can go by and get their stamps after they do these programs. And we have little craft fairs going on as well. And food. And music. Got to have them too. (Laughs)

AK: How have you noticed the educational programs change over time? Sounds like you guys have been really involved with the community, has that always been?

WP: Yeah, yeah—that's always been the case. But we are technology now, things are done differently. Things are like more—for us old timers—things are getting more sophisticated. A lot of it came from, like I said, the naʻauao and the knowledge passed down from the kūpuna. Now you can just google it, yeah? And go find it if you need it. But you're not reading it and not feeling it. You're just [makes sound of typing] you know and then you put it down on paper and then you move on. There's no kaona behind it, there's no mana behind it, yeah. So that's what I am seeing now. Even the way they want you to do things, especially in the Park Service, you're—I don't want to say cultural, every culture has their part of it, they're educational—but you know you're wokring under one blanket and that is the US government. So there is a guideline, yeah? That you have to follow. Even in interpretation or resource management. I don't know so much about facilities but they mostly budget, yeah? But for education it is changing too. You know they have you do outlines and they want you to do this whole outline and write out your program—where in the past it came from here (points to stomach) and from here (points to head)—the stories. How would you tell the story? And do it in steps.

So I tell them, "I apologize but Uncle no can one script." It's like being in one movie, where they want you to say this—this is how we should say it because we are following one guideline all the way to the top. And I get it, you know. I think when it comes down to cultures, you need to let them tell the story their way. That's the only true way, basically.

AK: Thank you. And can we talk a little bit about maybe some of the volunteer programs that go on in this area and maybe what they entail?

WP: For sure. We do have a volunteer program. And that's the way to go. You know, if you want to get your foot in the door just the fisrt step, you got to go feel it first. You cannot think, "Oh I want that job or I want to do that." Just got to get your feet wet and get in the door. Volunteering is the first and foremost. And by the way, they pay volunteers now—they actually have programs where they have funding for volunteers. I guess our biggest one in the Park is actually people my age and older. And that's called the Friends of Haleakalā and when they come out and do work like that, because of their experiences, and the Methodist Church—the youngest person is like seventy-five—they come out and you have this centuries of experience. So they're here to work, and they put in the time, and they hike through the crater at that age. And I look at that and go, "Oh my gosh." And they show production, yeah? They clean the fence line, and you go back the next day and that fence line is clean. Where you got the children of today, the youth of today, sometimes going to be on their phones, calling mom because they miss home. So yeah I envy the old timer volunteer groups that do come. Things get done. (Laughs)

But you know, its what is in the budget, and it is what is happening up there in the top seat, what's going on. So it trickles down to everybody in all the Parks, all the small Parks—but bringing back groups or activities like the YCC, that's very important. That really gives them a hands-on learning experience. So YCC I hope they bring that back here. I think they are in a couple of years. But that is the time we have to wait, by then we lose a lot of the youth already. They use a lot of the youth in that kind of stuff. They don't want to work in the rain or walk that far—even for the kids that grew up here. That's evolution, it's changing—technology yeah? "Hmm, I want to stay in the crater for cold three days, I don't know?" That's why I say capture them now and use them, but that is what management at the higher end has to think about. I know it is a budget thing and everybody has got to show something, but if we are not thinking that we need this now, we got to get going. We got to get the youth going now or we will lose them. It is unfortunate, but that is how the wheel turns. The whole spectrum of working in the government.

AK: What are some student programs that you've worked on here and what age range do they tend to be?

WP: Yeah, I've had a lot of students come out with their youth summer programs. When they come to the Park basically Hanky will work with them and the plants. Intermediate to early high school age, yeah. And then we would take them on the hikes and also the

crater ones. That's why the programs they have now for the teenagers and the youths are mostly through our education specialist area in the Park, which is Honeygirl Duman, she kind of runs that division. And Kawai Domingo, she heads the volunteer programs in the Park. They seem to be—especially the KUPU—seems to be very successful here. We've been having interns over the last several years come in and work with us and work with the different divisions.

AK: Thank you.

WP: Yeah.

AK: We have a map here and we were wondering if you could share with us some of the features of Kīpahulu or some of the main areas.

WP: Oh yeah! That's pretty easy, the main area for the Park would be the Valley of course right? Of course even for Park personnel, you're hardly ever going to be able to see what is going on in there—unless you are able to shadow. Even for that kind of programs we are starting that as well. We are talking with our superiors and hoping that we can get three times a year to get in there and shadow. Maybe the botanist or the fence guys or the animal removal people—just shadow these guys and walk that walk.

For us here in intepretation, this is our area. This is the area where all your visitation comes to. This is what they come to hike—the Pīpīwai Stream up to Waimoku falls—and also Kūloa Point Trail. Maybe today, you don't see them now, but just take a little drive up the road and you will see two hundred to three hundred cars parked there. And that's where they're headed. In the past mainly of course, they were out here to jump into the pools. I'd say ninety percent of them did not care what this area was about, it was for swimming. So that's why the educational part on our part plays a big role. We are very happy now—our monitoring system is down and during the year of COVID and all that—it stopped people from entering these pools. But then again you think about it, that's education right? Now we can share with them like the natural species that call that area home, they're loving it. They're living their species life again. And you oʻoʻpu**,** ʻōpae**,** hīhīwi**—**there are still populations in these streams. So now that we're not disturbing them, they are able to live their lives and reproduce, and hopefully produce enough to start a new generation of their species—to keep their species going. Because when all this comes together and people will be entering back into this area, now you're talking lotions, you're talking stepping on different areas that you shouldn't be and disturbing a natural area.

AK: What are some of the important features or purposes of the Park in particular that you find?

WP: Special features?

AK: Yeah.

WP: Number one would be the staff that works here. Most of us are ʻohana and in Kīpahulu District—it is funny the Summit is more of geology and you have the observatories and stuff like that, and you have culture the adze quarries and the bird catchers on the slopes of Haleakalā, and you have the studies of observation of navigation. So that was the purpose of the mountain, it was used by the ancient people like classrooms to learn these things. And of course, the adze quarry was very important for tools and sustainability for making the canoes and their weapons—making the things that they needed to sustain themselves.

But for the this area, it was a big living area. And that's kind of why we are generational. We are sons of many generations from this area, all of us. So to operate down here—where the nucleus is—I'll say ninety nine point nine percent—to keep it running. Because this is not only home, this is our backyard. This is not the Park Service for us. This is where we work and what we take care of for our ocupation, but this is our home. Many of these guys actually born and raised here, this is their backyard, this was their play ground. The Pools of ʻOheʻo aka the Seven Sacred Pools, there wasn't a number on them—it was never the Pīpīwai Trail—it was a place of recreation and of family, a place of food and gathering. But also a place of learning, where your grandfather would talk about this certain plant. If you get hurt you take this plant, the sap and rub it on top here. It is all educational. This is all one big university. (Laughs)

AK: Are there certian areas of Kīpahulu or parts of Haleakalā National Park that you are especially connected to?

WP: I find especially connected to—I would have to say it all. Just connected to Haleakalā. Just the stories of it and I think the main one would be the legend of Maui. How he helped the people, helped his mom: captured the sun, slowed it down so they could sustain themselves basically. And that kind of got me. There's a cartoon thing on the oiwi channel that I sort of enjoy showing my grandson. He's only eighteen months and we sit there and watch this show, and hearing how he came over to Haleakalā because that's where he had to go slow the sun, kalā, because kalā was being mean. So there's all that, you know. This is where my dad's roots are from. But for all of us Mauians, it's the mauna—it's the mountain itself. A very special place.

AK: Are there any moʻolelo associated with this region that you can share with us?

WP: Well, there's a lot of stories you take from the Kumulipo yeah? We came from the dark into the light. So, it's interesting to know that people don't really see it unless you really sit down and research it or listen to the moʻolelos. It's the story of how things in the mountains are affiliated with the things in the ocean. Like the manta ray and then you got the birds yeah? You got the ʻuaʻu and then you get the manta rays; the ʻiʻiwi and then the fish with the pointy nose; the naupaka nakahakai—the shore naupaka—and then you go into the valley and there's the tree naupaka. And then you got this connection yeah, from mountain to sea. Very interesting. (Laughs)

AK: Could you maybe talk a little bit about Native Hawaiian relationships with this Park and cultural practices that have occurred, or are occurring, or people are practicing?

WP: Well, there's one thing on the Park side that we have done in the past and we are hoping to do again, is that we have done programs in the Park—cultural festivals things like that. Or cultural day, where we set up the areas for different types of cultural activites. Even ukulele lessons, having the visitors sit down and connect them with the ukulele and its history, poi pounding, we have the makahiki games and the visitors could get invovled. We have throw net demonstrations and we also had a net for them to try. So these are things that we were making the connection with the visitors yeah?

But the people that were doing it was from the community. But we also gave them an incentive too, yeah? We gave them a good finacial income for just this one day, couple hour projects. And that to me, was the connection to helping them to move along and also helping the Park to learn and for us to bridge that connection to the community—which is very important.

Let's face it: there are the dark side and the bright side too. When you're in a very deep cultural area it is very important to not do too much changes to the area. That goes for American Indians you know? You go deep into their backyard and walk gingerly. First thing to know is understand them and listen to them first. And from there things can sort of work out. But if you just walk in—it's like our culture. You don't just walk in—you knock, you take off your slippas, you cannot just go in somebody's house like that. That's already like, a bad sign. So basically it all comes down to that. It's how you approach the situation, yeah? So that is one way of patching up.

I think the biggest thing in all Parks is the hiring process, yeah? Because it's a big picture, the government way of doing it. And we get it, tax money goes into them and tax money is the people coming here—so it is opened up, I want to say continential US-wide. So then comes the competition part, "I no more degree." But you do have a degree. You have that koko. You have that manaʻo, you have that knowledge of the area. Passed down from your professors who are your kūpuna. To you and your children, yeah? I think that is the biggest thing right now, is getting in and hired.

AK: How do you see your relationship with the Park having changed since you first started coming here, growing up, and now—?

WP: I always felt, you don't want to see somebody owning your culture. Somebody in charge of your culture. But, you also got to look at it as at least this particular outfit is trrying to help preserve and reserve what is left of the past. And to try to, can't really change things, but can try to make it better. Especially the non-pristine areas, you know? It was all once endemic, one species every 3,500 years that would come here, but now you go 3,500 species a year almost that comes here and mold out a pristine forest or museum to plant your little sugar canes which was never good for you anyway. And now it's gone. So, we have to stop that process of ever doing that again. So that's why when lands go into conservation or preservation, it is a good thing. For that purpose, it cannot develop

anymore, the damage has to stop. But, the people or organization that is stwearding and taking care of it now, have to work with the people in the culture. Fishing rights, fishing rights, gathering rights. They still have that rights, they should have that rights. So, you got to have this collaboration working together. You got to have this balance. And I hope to see it soon for all the islands, for the State. Even for the State.

You got to remember now, this culture, they had a system. They had a system called the ahupua‘a system. And that system was a very strict system—I mean punishable even by death. That’s how strict it was. Not stopping you, acosting you, put you in jail, pay the fine and let you out so you go catch ten thousand menpachis again with your illegal nets. So, they had the system, you’re not doing that. Your whole generation going to be punished for this. Your next of kin, everybody. And that made you think about it. I can imagine it, right? Oh shoots, I don’t want my grandchildren them to be looking down as outcasts. So it was a very strict system. But they had to, because they were in the middle of nowhere on an island. So they had to have this organization and say, “Hey listen, this is what we are going to do.” We are going to cut up these pieces and this is where you’re going to sustain yourself. Forever. And the next generation, the next generation, for a hundred generations to come. That’s where you were from.

That all stopped when we had the newcomers, right? And you moved into each others places. “Oh I’ll take his opihi now. Oh they loaded over here, what you guys doing over there? Not your guys’ place.” Oh now it is! Because now it’s all one piece. It is everybody’s. Before it was just yours and just yours. And they were able to sustain themselves for fifteen hundred years, it worked. And all it took was two hundred years and we are out of fish, out of ‘opihi, we got land that’s no good because now the ground is all dirty because the sugar cane went away. Got to clean up that land before you can feed people again.

AK: What do you find as being your biggest contributions to the Park that you’ve made?

WP: I think my biggest contribution that I feel is that I am sharing the culture with the world and kind of making that connection with them. Because I know that the world has their own connection too. They from India, Europe, all the way to Czechoslovakia to Russia—I see them all. People from India they look at the plants and they recognize them. Like the java plum. They recognize the banyans, they say, “Wow.” Then we can make those connections. “What you guys use them for? Because over here we eat them and oh was good when we were young.”

And the old Indian man will turn around and say, “That is the best antioxidant for you.”

“Oh we didn’t know it was medicine! When we were kids it was just fruit.”

And guava and mangos and what have you—pineapples. Shoots growing up we thought pineapples was actually from Hawai‘i. Now we share with visitors now that pineapples are not from here.

The mongoose, there you go. “Oh is that endemic to here? Is that from here?”

"No it's too far to swim, I don't know how he'd have gotten here in the past." (Laughs)

But no, the mongoose was also brought in by the plantation owners to eradicate the rodents. But they never saw each other because the (aoli/rats) was by night and the mongoose was by day so it never really worked. So there we go. Starting to step on our own toes, not doing it right. And having these organizations like DOFAW and the Park Service—can you put this back together again? Can try. But now we got to put boundaries for sections like that. People didn't know boundaries for the ahupua'a, ahu, which is the pig's head carved in certain districts. So you wouldn't go in there, unless you were asked to go in.

AK: Is it possible to see the ahu in this area?

WP: Not really. Those are pretty much gone. There might be ahus on the coastline somewhere that might be preserved because like I said, out of sight, out of mind. Nobody really bothered with it. Should try to do research on it. It is like in the Park, we are not even sure how old the housing structures are because I don't think anybody cared in the past to know. All they wanted was to raise their cane and cattle. So no one really took surveys—the old time archeologists like Emerson and those guys, Patrick Kirch. They're kind of new. But if we are talking early 1800s and late 1900s, the guys that would have drawn up would be Cook's voyage and the explorers that came after him.

AK: Are there any specific plants or animals in the Park that are special to you?

WP: For our particular area, no longer pristine anymore. So if you wanted to sit down and just watch an 'elepaio jump on the branches, that's not going to happen. To me one of the greatest things is to see the pu'eo in the area every now and again. The day owl. It is a good feeling to see one of those. And for me on the hikes, I always like to look in the stream and if I see the 'o'opu, that's a particular species that I share with the visitors that are in my group. They are surviving it, and they can run for the hills basically if their environment is getting bombarded by suntan lotions and people and just junk. So they go back upstream. But they have to go through their process of spawning. And then get themselves up the waterfalls. That's why I like to work with DLNR and DOFAW and those guys, Skippy Hau them. Because Skippy when he comes to our festivals he brings these images on his computer of the migration of, you know, 'o'opu going up the waterfalls. And it is so great to see all these tadpole looking things going back home. So those are fantastic things to see. Because they come from hundreds of years ago. They've been here long before man, you know? How did you get here? How did you evolve? So those are the special things.

Over in the Wai'anae Mountains, it is incredible there in that area—natural area—was the pūpū the tree snails. The colorful ones still surviving up in those mountain ranges. That's another thing yeah. We don't get to see those here because they are pretty much all in the valleys tucked away. You got the happy faced spider, that's a pretty cool species still in our valleys. What I don't see anymore but do see on the Big Island is the 'io, the Hawaiian hawk. Thinking of all the species that was here before man, that's what strikes

me. But every now and then one of the birds like the laughing thrush, I go on these walks and here these birds just chirping away talking to me and I say, "Okay, he's from China." (Laughs)

AK: Can you describe maybe two or three particular special moments you've had in the Park or in Kīpahulu District?

WP: Oh, yeah. Well, the most special moment for me was working on the canoe. Yeah. Working on that canoe was a big thing in my life. It helped me to sort of generate me to move forward because you got to keep paddling. It represents that we each have to keep paddling, sooner or later we will get to our destination. Don't stop. If you stop then the next person has to work harder. Not only going up and having the time of our lives---and it was hard work. Walking up miles to look for the log and going by these beautiful trees and my mentor is like, "Okay, let's keep going."

And I am just over it already. Like, "Come on Tava, this is a nice one right here."

We get to our third or fourth day up there and I walk by this old tree laying on the ground. Looks like it get bugged—koa beetles—looked like they were going through the process when this thing fell. So I walk by this log and looking at these two big koa trees—beautiful koa trees—thinking "Wow, so which one of you going to be our canoe?"

And I hear, "This one." He's tapping with his koʻokoʻo—his walking stick. I hear "tap tap tap."

Huh?

"This will be the waʻa."

I turn around and it is that old log that fell on the ground. I went, "you got to be kidding me, are you serious?" in my mind; you don't tell the kumu—the kahuna waʻa—you don't do that. But I'm like, "Are you serious? I walk three days past all these beautiful koa and it's this one, this is it?" Like this table, all rotten.

And he goes, "This one, right here." (Knocks on table three times) "Waʻa. Waʻa o Kīpahulu." Because he's Marqueses, yeah? Marqueses was the first arrivals to the islands. So he has so much stories to share with me. But he told me, "This one."

I went, "Oh—" And I hung my head down.

He goes, "Is something wrong?"

"Oh no Tava, this one here."

He said, "I know, you think this is dead because it is laying down, but this tree will get life in the canoe."

And I just started to perk up. "Okay, let's do this."

And we started to, you know, semi do the hull, semi leave the bumpers on. And had different divisions, so some guys from Hanky's them crew would go up and huki this thing down the mountain traditionally. No helicopters or all this fancy stuff. We are going to do this thing traditionally. So we pull that thing down ravines, over hills, over mountains. And the guys in front of us are cutting down guavas, which are invasives, so we were helping the forests at the same time. Cutting down these invasive trees and using them as logs for rolling this thing down. (Laughs)

And then we brought it down, we had it over here the log. It is a small one, a small fishing canoe. But we had the log over there and then after hours (mimics chain saw sounds) started doing the chainsaws and then we built a small waʻa—hale waʻa in front of the Visitors Center. Now we are going to get into educational and interpretation. Now we are going to do demostrations. So now we are going to have this log sitting in there and we are going to start kālai this log, with adzes. And at the same time, share with the visitors what we are doing. So that was kind of the biggest thing.

In 2001 I lost my wife. Heart failure. So that's what inspired me, because I had to raise the three children. So that's what inspired me to keep going. Just like the canoe—keeping paddling, we are going to get there. So, I kept going on this canoe—kepy working it and working it. And then when it was over we had this big ʻawa ceramony and we had people come by—dignitaries I forget who, mayors, and whatever people in the government—and we dedicated the canoe. So I call it Kame Aloha –I named it after her, this canoe. And from that day on it is sitting there in the building.

They say, "You ever use it?"

I say, "Well we cured it, we didn't go riding in it." We built it for the display, had to be a certain size yeah.

But in Hāna, working with another canoe kālai waʻa—a master builder from Tahiti Fafa—and Hanky knows him well. He also too passed away already. He was here too to do racing canoes for the community, like Kīhei and Lahaina—all these clubs. Even the Hāna kids in the Hāna Canoe Club went up and got a real log. Now it was like a racing thing. And these are things are beautiful. They call it the Te Tāne There's a book we have in the Visitors Center, sort of a children's book on the story of the making of Te Tāne. I should have done one like that with the story of our canoe, not a story book or anything because these guys they sell them. But had something we could put in the archives about the making of this canoe. I know a lot of people took information, a lot of pictures—that wasn't really my department, moreso getting this canoe done. So even today, in our interpretation—in our division—that's our values, our core values. We had this picture of the canoe with all this in it the face of it is all the core values and then on the paddles is how to get there. Yeah. So that is what we go by now in our division. They took my ideas.

AK: How long did it take to complete the canoe for the Visitors Center?

WP: Oh my. Usually something like that would be very quick if you did the modern tools. But we did it as a project for the visitation, so maybe six months. We couldn't keep Tava for all that time he had to fly back and forth. This man was amazing. He refurbished all the big kiʻi at Hōnaunau, all the hales and canoes. Cool guy. He retired. He was a shipmate. First man on board on the Hōkūleʻa since it sailed. He was nineteen years old when he went over on the first voyage. So him and the navigator, Mau, they were actually the youngest on that first voyage. I worked on that canoe on Oʻahu back in ʻ74 and I also sailed on that canoe interisland before it went down to Tahiti. Yeah. I was stateside already—seventy-five I grabbed my surfboard and my duffle bag and said I had to go see what's out there. That's kind of how I was able to actually work with visitors. Because I lived with them and I undestood them. Yeah? I stayed in their realm for several years and then I came home. So when they came I already know what was coming. So that made it kind of easier. If you are fresh out of school so you don't know the dynamics of where they're from: Spanish, Indian, European—I was in it. I don't know if I was sent there to do it. It was part of my journey; I went there and I came back and this is where I am working with them again.

AK: Full circle.

WP: Full circle, exactly.

AK: What are some of the future directions you'd like to see for the Park?

WP: Well, definitely would like to see more interaction more of the community involvement. I still want to see everything gel. For future generations. I like to see if they can stay home and work in their backyards. Or go out and get more manaʻo and come back and share it. And be able to share it from your backyard, your perspective. I think everybody deserves to work, but if you are going to do Parks in certain areas, you can also have the—don't want to use the term outsiders because they are not, they are educators too, they all want to learn—we can share that with them. "Now you work with me and you're from California or New York, I can share this with you. I know you make more than me, but we don't want to go there." (Laughs)

AK: In your time in Kīpahulu have you found any old Hawaiian walking paths or trails in this area?

WP: Old ones?

AK: Yeah.

WP: They kind of all are. We are walking the same paths as the ancestors. It is unfortunate that—when those eras came about: you had the Polynesian era—and you still do but then that era is gone; then you had the plantation era came—played a big role here; then you had the cattle industry. So a lot of these places were altered already. You don't see them anymore because they got trampled by cattle or they got cut down to grow sugar cane, stones were removed to use for ditches—stuff like that.

So the picture of the ahupua‘a exhibit in the building—if allowed I can I can share with you in the building, not sure how my lead is going to feel about people walking in because of social distancing—but very interesting place. But yeah, so that’s pretty much gone. Semi-around throughout the Hawaiian Islands. I guess Big Island is the closest that would be intact. Perhaps Ni‘ihau and Kaua‘i has intact taro patches and pathways and stuff. Maui was, but Maui seems to be moving alot of the stuff. Cattle ranches, this is the thing we think of cattle ranches in these areas—it is not to keep the cattle in, it’s more like to keep the people out. Because now you have your wealthy buying up fifty acres of land and fencing it. And now you no longer have that gathering opportunity to go mauka to makai. So that’s one of the things—that’s another thing.

But ancient stuff, yeah. Buried deep. I hope they are preserved. Many of them probably are in these valleys that are still intact. Not sure if Hanky shared, but in the Kīpahulu Valley where the people are in there working and stuff there are remnants and caves of flightless birds, the bones. Him and I worked with the archeologists on the adze quarry in the crater. On the slopes of the crater there are those shelters and where you see the half made adze stones that were actually chipping and staying there in the cold. So, those are things that we get to enjoy seeing the past is by getting out there.

Here in Hāna we still do the Aloha Week parade, we still honor the ali‘i. We actually don’t go out and get characters, we usually get family to be the court for that particular year or particular occassion. We have brought back in the past the Nakoa, the organization, the Lua warriors, and we had one of the lagest in the state of Hawai‘i at that time. With women involved. Like I said we still do the Aloha Week which is very honorable for us. For the eyes of the outside world it is like a parade. For us, it is our culture. So we take it seriously.

Other then that, the Kaupō side tends to have remnants of the past. Because they rarely touch Kaupō. Here already the plantation was here and the cattle industry. And I am sure the old, old timers got some secrets [laughs] but we will keep it with them. If they want to share it they will share it. A lot of times it’s out of sight out of mind.

AK: We were told by another Park staff member that there was a heiau out on this side, but I guess a cemetery is built over it?

WP: That is Kanekauila, same one.

AK: Can you talk a little bit about that heiau?

WP: Like I said, I don’t know too much. It’s a navigational one they believe, and when Lawrence Rockefeller dedicated the lands over to the Park we were involved in the ceremony for the place. It is part of the cemetery because the Catholic Church is not too far from it. I don’t know who’d have been the kahuna for that particular heiau or what was done on it, but I don’t think it was a sacrificial heiau like the luakini heiaus in Kaupō and Wailuku area. It could have been just a connection of travel because of this channel.

Maybe they had a connection like airport to airport. You see my torch, you see mine—so that's the direction I got to follow so I know I get there.

But to me, a lot of these points, like us here Kūloa Point—long points—they probably were house sites where that person or persons were the keeper of the lights and they probably had torches on the ends that points like street lights so they were able to navigate that channel at night. This is a bad channel, a rough channel—one of the roughest in the world on a regular day. Except for time of war: turn off the lights. (Laughs)

When they had battles, and they did. You had Kahekili on Maui, some believe that he was Kamehameha's real dad. You had Kalaniopuʻu, which is his uncle who tried to take over Maui several times via coming through Hāna. Maui warriors were just too much for him and then the third time Kamehameha came over. Actually his brother was living over here in Kīpahulu area amongst the people and the Kahekili was on the other side. We are so isolated out here, like another island, the main part of the island is where your civilization is and everything is going on. But, Kamehameha's younger brother was living this end, so when Kahekili them came over to battle his uncle Kalaniopuʻu in Hāna, they hid him. The Kīpahulu people hid him because he was a good chief to them. Even though he could've just said, "Hey he's over here," they didn't. So they hid him from the Maui warriors, from their own chiefs. So, when Kamehameha did come over and conquer Maui he swore not to harm anybody in Kīpahulu because the good deed they done to his brother. Then he went into Hāna and further into the rest of Maui to conquer it. By then he had the bullswans yeah, he had John Young and he had another guy with him—Charles Davis. They had cannons yeah. That's when he came over the third time. That's when he was starting to unite.

Speaking of united, in his court, part of the building of Puʻukoholā was his memorable starting of unification. So his kahuna suggested, to built this heiau as the beginning of unifiying the islands. That particular kuhuna is the Hewahewa, that's our line. So we carry that honorably the Hewahewa line, the kahuna line—my dad's side. The Hawaiians out here are all cousins all relatives.

AK: Thank you for sharing.

WP: Yeah.

AK: I don't really have any more questions, do you have any other histories or stories that you'd like to share?

WP: I just want to thank you guys and at first I was didn't want to do too much politics stuff. I like to share the culture with the world, I like to share so they know all about where they are at. And perhaps it will help them to act differently. Youʻre not going to get them all. All the time I am dealing with irrate visitors, because the all American dollar that they spent to get here so they want to be treated this way. You going to be treated this way

here, because we are about education. We are not going for confrontation, we are education.

But I thank you for doing this and I hope it works for you and it has been a pleasure. I feel pono about it. I look at Hanky this morning and I just give him a heads up and [laughs] if he pono I pono. And actually something like this is great if you can get the kūpuna to share. Kūpunas get all the story.

My grandma was a lei maker—bird feathers. So, my dad them when they were children they also learned the trade of bird catching. And how to protect them as well, how to clean them up and let them go. She was also a master weaver of lau hala. So, when she passed she had all these rolls of lau hala mats in the house. And then before anything could take place, the families would come and take these things. To me they were like artifcats. "How come we all come take grandma's stuff?"

"They're going to take care of it."

Shouldn't take it until you can take care of it yourself. A special canoe paddle, kapa beaters, these are stuff the ancients had touched—they got plenty mana inside.

So, it's been a pleasure, Alana. Glad I did this, hope you guys enjoy the rest of your stay on Maui and I wish you guys well. Especially good health and safety. Look around you, your surrounding and watch yourselves. Watch where you walk.

You know my uncle when he walked the islands, he nevre stayed at people's homes that he knew—everybody knew him—he never stayed at any beaches. He never stayed any place comfortable. He slept in old cemeteries and old burial grounds with old kūpuna. He slept in valleys where they buried chiefly kūpuna. He slept in river beds. Used to tell him, "Oh uncle, sleep in the graveyard, aren't you scared?"

"Why be scared? They already sleeping. And I feel more protected. If I sleep on the beach then guys will jump me and steal my money and beat me up."

And it is true. His last trip, his ending one—he was confronted by a young man in Kīhei area and they were going to confront him and he told them who he was and—when he speaks you start to feel the humbleness. He don't need a weapon, he kind of talk you down from it.

Then he went to the next house that he knew the family and they said, "Hey Uncle Eddie, hele mai, hele mai" So he has some coffee and continue his journey, has some doughnuts and stuff and Lord behold the boy that comes out of the house, "Come meet your uncle, come meet Uncle Eddie."

He comes outside and looks, and it was the boy that was with the bunch of guys that was going to confront him. Because they didn't know who he was, they were just young. The boy stopped in his track. Hi s tutu that was talking to uncle already knew, she felt it already. (In angry tutu voice) "Pilau pilikia keiki, heleaku."

He had to go apologize. That's how it works, that he discouraged them, he was very special. But that's why it is good when you do this kine stuff to incorporate the kūpuna, if you guys can. Because they are the last of the information—the last of them. That's why we always try to sit down with tutu man and tutu lady. But they are leaving us fast now. We are going to be it. But for their generation and their manaʻo from their parents goes deeper, deeper stuff. Some will not share.

Okay. Is it a wrap. (Laughs) Alright!