



News Release

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Archaeologists visit PTA

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POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii—This Army installation provides an exceptional opportunity to view geologic, archaeological, and natural resources, and what better way to showcase what is here than to have archaeologists see it first-hand.

Members of the Society for Hawaiian Archaeology (SHA), who were on the Big Island for the 2008 SHA Conference, visited PTA's Pu'u Koli and its adjacent landscape, one of three field trips held on October 17. The other two field trips were conducted at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and North Hilo.

"The visit is significant since this is the first time that the Society for Hawaiian Archaeology has included PTA as a tour location," said Bill Godby, PTA's archaeologist, and tour lead. "This gives archaeologists an opportunity to see archaeological features within a tremendous cultural landscape."

Sites at PTA are unique to the higher elevations of the Saddle Road area, according to Godby. PTA's cultural and natural resources programs are well

supported by the U.S. Army and a great effort is made in identifying and protecting resources by its more than 50 cultural and natural resources program employees.

“The archaeologists were able to see archaeological features that included rock shrines, a lithic quarry, petroglyphs, cave habitation sites and lava excavation areas - possibly used for capturing nesting birds,” said Godby.

“At the 7,000 feet altitude summit of Pu’u Koli, a pyroclastic cinder cone, archaeologists experienced breathtaking views of Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, and Hualalai, in addition to the many different lava that have originated from Mauna Loa as recently as 73 years ago,” he added. “There is also a large lava tube system that begins at Pu’u Koli and can be followed from its summit down its slopes.”

SHA members, from private contracting firms, universities, federal and state agencies, and people with an interest in Hawaiian archaeology, were impressed on what they learned at PTA.

“The tour was a great way to interpret what is going on at PTA,” said Rob Pacheco, owner, Hawaii Forests and Trails Tour Company. “The cultural and natural resources management here is really impressive. If we could be doing what you do here at a statewide level, it would solve a lot our problems.”

“I learned a lot about the landscape and was able to recognize sites that I would have just walked by and never seen before,” Pacheco added. “I was really impressed how much the Army has done for the cultural and natural resources here.”

Additional comments were made by two SHA members.

“I take note that the Army is doing what is right with all these resource management work,” said Randy Groza, archaeologist, Cultural Surveys Hawaii. “This work is pretty well received by us, and I’m glad that it is working here PTA.”

“I’ve developed a better appreciation of the land from this tour and getting answers to a lot of questions about land management,” said John Holson, archaeologist, Pacific Legacy, Inc.

Although the field trip ended, it was an important one for all who came to PTA.

“It was good to be at a place you’ve never been before, such as PTA,” said Rick Rogers, a maritime consultant. “It is fascinating for me to see 20 different forms of lava from an archaeological and geological stand point, and seeing the great panoramic cultural and natural sites at PTA.”