

PRESS RELEASE: Public Presentation on the flora of Kalalau Valley

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Can we create an alternative future by protecting regions rich in biological diversity and still meet the needs of special-interest groups?

Perhaps, by carefully choosing relatively small yet dynamically diverse forest regions we can protect a greater percentage of Hawaii's unique biota. Learn more about Kauai's forest ecosystems, their conservation status, and the life forms that have evolved within them with Ken Wood, Director of Pelea Polynesia (Pelea) and Field Biologist with the National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG).

Biodiversity is the variety of life in all of it's multitudes on our planet Earth. Hawai`i is a biodiversity hotspot of global magnitude and is home to around 1,159 native flowering plants and 188 native ferns, 91% and 70% respectively of which can be found nowhere else on Earth (endemic). This degree of endemism is higher than any major island group and is significantly higher than the plant endemism found on continents. 95% of Hawai`i's 10,000 spectacularly peculiar insects are endemic.

Of the eight current high islands in the Hawaiian archipelago, Kaua'i represents the oldest inhabited island at 5.1 million years. The biologically diverse Kalalau Valley, situated on the older, northwestern flank of the island, is also its most floristically unique valley.

As a result of popular demand, the Kauai Native Plant Society (KNPS), Pelea and the NTBG, Science in the Garden Series will host a second presentation on the biodiversity of Kalalau Valley, to be given at the National Tropical Botanical Garden Headquarters in Kalaheo on Friday October 15th at 6:30 pm, after the Kauai Native Plant Society general meeting to be held at 5:30. The KNPS welcomes all those interested in native plants to attend the general meeting.

This presentation is free and open to the public. For more information call (808) 651-9926.

(info from a 23SEP2004 message to the KNPS-L@HAWAII.EDU from Michelle.Clark@hi.usda.gov)