



Contact:

Jean Souza, NOAA; 808-651-1457; [Jean.Souza@noaa.gov](mailto:Jean.Souza@noaa.gov)

Melissa Warrack, Kukui Grove Center; 808-977-8677; [Melissa.Warrack@am.jll.com](mailto:Melissa.Warrack@am.jll.com)

Chip Weiskotten, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation; 518-669-3936; [chip@marinesanctuary.org](mailto:chip@marinesanctuary.org)

## New Kauai ocean discovery facility due to open on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020

*Volunteer greeters are encouraged to apply*

**Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii — November 14, 2019** — A new Kauai facility to promote ocean discovery and community connections will open on Saturday, January 11, 2020, at Kukui Grove Center in Lihue. The new ocean discovery facility, managed by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, will be free admission and open to the public year-round. Attractions include exhibits, monthly lectures and a variety of activities for families, students and visitors.

“After working with the Kauai community and volunteers on outreach and education programs at various venues for decades, we are delighted to announce this upcoming public facility that will connect our educators and researchers with the people of Kauai on a regular basis, and Kauai with the world,” said **Allen Tom**, superintendent of NOAA’s Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.

**Kris Sarri**, CEO and President of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation said, “Hawaii’s marine environment is unique. Our ocean’s majestic giants find refuge in Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, which protect habitats and species found nowhere else on earth. This will be a place for Kauai residents and visitors to discover, explore and connect with these protected waters.”

With the opening of the ocean discovery facility, Kauai will join other ocean centers affiliated with NOAA and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation across the state, including Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument’s Mokuāpapa Discovery Center in Hilo and Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary’s Kihei Visitor Center on Maui.

“Kauai is uniquely positioned for such an ocean interpretive center, and we are privileged to help bring this project to fruition for our Kauai residents and visitors to enjoy,” said **David Sosner**, general manager of Kukui Grove Center.



“For the Kauai community, we see this as a year-round venue to foster connections to the ocean, our heritage, and each other,” said **Jean Souza**, program specialist with Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and the Pacific Islands Region. “We are now in the planning and preparation phase, seeking volunteers and resources to help make it the best it can be.”

Volunteer greeters are now being recruited to help staff the center. For more information and to sign up, contact Jean Souza at 808-651-1457 or [Jean.Souza@noaa.gov](mailto:Jean.Souza@noaa.gov).

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The [National Marine Sanctuary Foundation](http://marinesanctuary.org), established in 2000, is the national non-profit partner of the National Marine Sanctuary System. Working in close partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Foundation supports scientific research, promotes community stewardship of our environment, and fosters the next generation of ocean guardians. Through our work with national marine sanctuaries and monuments, we protect species, conserve ecosystems and preserve America’s maritime heritage. Visit us at [marinesanctuary.org](http://marinesanctuary.org).

[Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary](#) is administered by a partnership of NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the State of Hawai’i through the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR). The sanctuary works to protect humpback whales through research, education, conservation and stewardship. Join us on [Facebook](#).

[Kukui Grove Center](#) is Kauai’s largest lifestyle center destination with over 50 stores and restaurants centrally located in Lihue at this 50-acre tropically landscaped open-air shopping center. The Center features national retailers alongside local specialty shops and a unique blend of restaurants, activities and service providers to experience the island Kaua’i-style. With a brand-new children’s play area, renovated food court and numerous special events, Kukui Grove Center is known as a popular community gathering place welcoming all members of the ‘ohana (family). For directory and event calendar, visit [kukuigrovecenter.com](http://kukuigrovecenter.com).