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## **HAWAII FOREST & TRAIL EXPANDS TOUR OPERATIONS TO HILO**

**HILO, HAWAII** – (December 12, 2014) ~ Hawaii Forest & Trail founders Rob and Cindy Pacheco are blazing new trails with unique Heritage and Adventure tours based out of Hilo.

“We’ve been tracking Hilo’s visitor marketplace and perceive increased demand for our guided experiences. Major capital investments in renovating hotel accommodations and direct United Airlines flight service have added to Hilo’s economic vibrancy. Hilo’s authenticity and its unique nexus of culture and nature makes for an excellent match with Hawaii Forest & Trail tours,” explained Rob Pacheco.

After researching Hilo visitor demographics and engaging with visitor industry leaders, Hawaii Forest & Trail made the decision to expand its 21-year operation and headquarter their Hilo tour operation together with Big Island Trading Company.

Hilo Operations Supervisor Kea Keolanui has come aboard along with a new fleet of tour vehicles and interpretive guides who are training to meet Hawaii Forest & Trail’s tour standards. Hawaii Forest & Trail guides have strong backgrounds in biology, geology, Hawaiian history and extensive natural field experience. At Hawaii Forest & Trail, it’s not enough for guides to “know things,” they must have a real passion for Hawaii’s natural world and enthusiasm for sharing it with others.

Hawaii Forest & Trail tours are guided experiences that lead to memorable journeys. Over the past two decades, Hawaii Forest & Trail has developed long-term partnerships with private landowners to provide access to places with wild and, previously inaccessible, ecosystems. Hawaii Forest & Trail is one of the few tour companies allowed access to private lands and controlled access to state and federal wildlife refuges.

### **New Hilo Tour Offerings Begin December 15**

The new Hawaii Forest & Trail tour offerings in Hilo launch December 15 and can be booked online at [hawaiiforest.com](http://hawaiiforest.com).

[Hilo Tropical Wonders](#)

This small-group tour explores the heritage of Hilo town through its sugar plantation history, rivers, waterfalls, and farm fresh treats. Guests learn about Hilo's rich history; enjoy breathtaking views and venture through Kaumana to discover contemporary Hawaiian agriculture on a private tour through the 1,000-acre OK Farms overlooking Rainbow Falls.

### Maunakea Voyage

This exclusive daytime journey to Maunakea offers an exciting partnership with Imiloa Astronomy Center for special access to a private planetarium show before the astronomy center opens to the public. Guests will experience the Hawaiian night sky and learn how Polynesian explorers navigated the Pacific through star navigation. An all-day adventure to the world's tallest mountain includes lunch before traversing to the revered summit of Maunakea where guests will view ancient cultural sites, learn about the flightless Wekiu bug and even take a peek inside Keck, the world's largest optical telescope.

### Discover Volcano Country

The rugged landscape of Kau, home to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, historic farming plantations and the famous black sand beach at Punaluu are the stars of this guided tour experience. Following a tour of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, coffee sampling is on the menu in the burgeoning new coffee region of Kau, where guests will embark on a private tour of Kau Coffee Mill before travelling along backroads to the famous black sand beach to view sea turtles basking on the shore.

### **Hawaii Forest & Trail Beginnings**

A little over two decades ago, Rob Pacheco, who had worked as a naturalist on the US mainland, recognized that most residents and visitors were seeing Hawaii's beautiful scenery, yet they were coming and going with little knowledge of Hawaii's natural history. Pacheco decided to combine his passion with a vision: to share Hawaii's natural history with others and to help conserve Hawaii's endangered environment through education. This vision fit the growing worldwide interest in eco-tourism and 21 years ago Hawaii Forest & Trail opened to rave reviews.

From their initial rainforest bird walk, Rob and Cindy Pacheco have expanded nature and adventure offerings to include exploring in and around Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, stargazing on Maunakea, waterfall walks and hikes and specialized birding excursions. In 2011, the Pachecos founded Kohala Zipline in North Kohala, the only canopy tree-to-tree zipline on Hawaii Island.

The company firmly believes that "conservation begins with education." Hawaii Forest & Trail sponsors free field trips for island students and they participate in tree plantings and other community service and volunteer workday

projects throughout the year.

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#### About Hawaii Forest & Trail

Hawaii Forest & Trail has been exploring Hawaii since 1993. The company's mission is to deliver guests an excellent, safe and fun learning experience, to support island communities and resources through philanthropy, sustainable business practices and a conservation ethic, and to provide a healthy, profitable, and rewarding environment for their company ohana. On each and every one of their adventures, Hawaii Forest & Trail shares the splendor of Hawai'i as part of their vision to inspire a deep connection with our natural world. Visit Hawaii-Forest.com.

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This document does not include diacritical markings for Hawaiian words because not all computers are able to reproduce these markings or true fonts in normal text.