

**ANCIENT CULTURES
& WILD ENVIRONMENTS:
THE HAWAII PROJECT**

**Meeting Place: Hilo, Hawaii
(Time & location determined later)**

**January 4 - February 14, 2010
12 semester system units (equivalent to 18 quarter system units)
Program Fee \$2395 plus \$75 Application Fee**

Welcome to the Wildlands Studies Hawai'i project, a field study that takes place on one of the most incredible islands on Earth. During our six week project, team members will explore the unique natural environments of the Big Island of Hawaii, learn about the island's diverse cultural history and examine how contemporary environmental challenges must be faced with the spirit of 'lokahi' or balance.

Our team will explore the multiple facets of this beautiful island's ecosystems from shorelines and marine ecosystems, to lava deserts, lush rainforests and spectacular subalpine summits. Participants will conduct field work in the different eco-zones, and experience the rich diversity of Hawaii's varied landscapes. The threads of Hawaii's ancient culture will be interwoven into our fieldstudies, and as we progress across the island, we will gain a sense of what it was like to settle and live as a Hawaiian in the most remote island chain on the planet. We will visit cultural sites and ruins under threat from development, and experience first hand the impact of modern humans upon this island's fragile ecosystems and culture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The island of Hawaii, also known as the Big Island, or the "Orchid Isle", is the youngest and largest of the Hawaiian Islands. It boasts three active volcanoes, including Kilauea, the most active volcano on Earth. Kilauea is located in Volcanoes National Park, a sanctuary of volcanic and geologic phenomena, including active lava flows, ancient rainforests, deep craters, lava deserts, and remote beaches, all within the 20,000 acres of national park. Mauna Loa, Kilauea's larger neighbor to the northwest, is the largest active volcano on the globe. It soars to a height of nearly 14,000 feet, and last erupted in 1984. Hualalai, the Big Island's third active volcano, is located near Kona on the western side of the island, in the fastest growing area of the state, where its slopes are being assaulted by rampant development. Hawaii's two final volcanoes, Mauna Kea, the highest mountain in Hawaii at 13,796 ft, and Kohala, with its rugged coastline, offer an ecological bounty with deeply eroded valleys, and countless waterfalls. These five volcanoes make up the island of Hawaii and provide an environment rich with biodiversity, exotic wildlife and conservation challenges.

With its rich ecological and climatic diversity, the Big Island contains 11 of the world's 13 climatic zones, and boasts fabulous beaches, rugged cliff coastlines, lava deserts, tropical dry forests, tropical rainforests, and subalpine regions where it occasionally snows, an unsurpassed setting for our conservation and ecology studies. Much of the Big Island is remote, with population centers located along the coastline. The National Parks and backcountry areas host some of the world's rarest and unique plants and animals. Conversely, the leeward coastline of lava deserts face increasing demands from hotels, traffic and tourists. On our travels around the island, we will discuss strategies to balance Hawaii's urban and wildland communities in an effort to keep the island a paradise for all to enjoy.

PROGRAM GOALS & ACTIVITIES

A place of natural and rugged beauty, the Hawaiian islands provide an excellent classroom from which to understand island evolution and ecology. Violent geologic explosions, the creation of new land, indigineous and exotic flora and fauna, colonization, and rapid growth combine with millions of years of history to create Hawaii's current state. From the first human settlers, who began to change the shape of the Islands with their cultural practices and beliefs, and who lived in relative harmony with their natural surroundings, to the 'discovery' of Hawaii by the Western world and the rapid influx of people, plants, animals, diseases, and other organisms, the Island's evolution continues today and provides us with a first hand invitation to address contemporary problems including the rise of Hawaii as tourist mecca, a high cost of living, the displacement of indigenous peoples, and strain on the natural environment.

During our Hawaii field program, team members will become acquainted with the region's diverse ecology and cultural history, participate in local conservation projects, and learn key field research skills designed to support the environmental sustainability of the islands. We will coordinate with local conservation groups, and discuss current wildland management challenges with local researchers. To best appreciate the complexity of the challenges in this unique island archipelago, the program will be divided into separate but related sections.

Natural History

The first section of our program will take place in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (HVNP). Geology is a central role in the birth of the islands, and our team will explore the Park's many interesting geologic phenomena, including active lava flow, giant craters, steam vents, and lava tubes. We will visit sites that the islanders refer to as the "home of Pele," the goddess of fire and creator of the Hawaiian Islands, where lava flows actively into the ocean. Here, Hawaiian mythology is interwoven in the ancient Hawaiians view of the islands' creation and we will view evidence by examining archeological remains in and around the Park. We will study and assess current Park management strategies and talk with park officials about conversation initiatives. Students will visit tropical jungle growing amongst young lava fields, lava tubes and other remarkable formations as a part of our island ecology study. During this initial segment of our program, team members will discuss how the land has shaped the Hawaiian people and culture, and how people have impacted the land. We will also explore the concept of "wild" land in a Hawaiian context.

Culture

One of our program goals is to examine the rich threads of Hawaiian culture that have been woven into everyday life on the Hawaiian Islands for over 2000 years. Most place names on the Islands are of Hawaiian religious or cultural origin, and many Hawaiian words are used in every day language. Still today, the concept of "Aloha" is not a cliché; it embodies the spirit of the Hawaiian culture and that spirit lives on in modern Hawaii. The Hawaiian culture is interesting to study because it has no written language; in the past, people memorized events and genealogy. Like many ancient indigenous cultures, the Hawaiians were observant, and often reverent of natural phenomena. It was not uncommon for certain taboos (kapu is the Polynesian word) to be followed at varying times of the year, depending on local availability of natural resources. The group will be introduced to Hawaii's cultural origins and deities, see how these beliefs shaped ancient Hawaii, and discover what beliefs live on today, as we examine temple sites and other cultural phenomena still visible on the Island's landscape.

Land Use

The third segment of our project will take us into an geologically older region of the Big Island, where rainforests dominate and agriculture has taken a hold over the past two centuries. Here we will visit and explore first hand deeply eroded valleys, abundant with fresh water, and home to centuries of farming. Participants will learn about “ahupua’a” (the traditional land division) and how the ahupua’a concept shaped the way of life for the ancient Hawaiians. We will visit the Waipio Valley, and possibly the remote Waimanu Valley where native Hawaiians farmed kalo (taro) - the most important staple crop of the Hawaiian culture. Waipio Valley is one of the most dramatic on the island and another great place to study the challenges of limited land use in an island ecosystem.

Marine Conservation

In our final section, we will explore leeward Hawaii and the districts of Kona, Kau, and Kohala. Much of our study will focus on reef ecology and current uses of marine resources. The Kona/South Kohala district is a popular tourist destination and we will experience first hand the human impact on the Island’s ecosystems. The leeward side provides a wonderful opportunity to discuss the importance of balancing the needs of nature with the requirements of Hawaii’s booming economy. We will study reef and coastal ecology, as well as examining important Hawaiian cultural sites, such as heiau’s (temple sites), ancient fishponds (ancient aquaculture) and petroglyph fields (ancient carvings). We will also visit south Kona with its plethora of coffee farms and study the use of permaculture. We will also conduct our fieldstudies in the famous Kealakekua Bay, home to a resident spinner dolphin population residing on this side of the island. Our final marine conservation fieldstudy will be an overnight at the local manta ray foraging area where we will examine the fascinating lifecycle of these graceful sea creatures.

Throughout the program, we will “give back” to the land that has offered us such rich opportunities for exploration. During each section, we will assist with conservation-related research and field work, such as species monitoring, habitat restoration and invasive species removal. We will meet scientists and staff from the Nature Conservancy, and participate in local conservation programs.

Each team member will discover the Island of Hawaii through field studies, research, seminars, discussions, and readings. **No prior field experience is required to participate. All field methods and data gathering techniques will be taught in Hawaii.** What is required is a positive attitude, a curiosity of the natural environment, tolerance to others, and a good sense of humor. By the end of the program, team members will have obtained new field study experience, gained a better understanding of Hawaii’s ecological challenges, and discussed many of the universal issues we face while trying to conserve the earth’s wildlands in the face of progress and development.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

Students will receive 12 semester units (18 quarter units) awarded through California State University Monterey Bay Extended Education. While students usually encounter no difficulties in transferring credit to their home campus, applicants should check with their advisors prior to enrolling. Our staff will be happy to explain the program in further detail to the applicant’s advisor, if necessary.

The Hawaii field studies program gives credit in three courses:

- ENVS 370, Environmental Wildlands Studies (4 semester system units)
- ENVS 371, Environmental Field Survey (4 units)
- ENVS 372, Wildlands Environment and Culture (4 units)

Letter grades are based upon the breadth of our endeavors. Personal success will follow from active daily participation in the living and learning community, an open inquiring mind, hard work, and thoughtful attention to formal assignments. Participants will be evaluated according to the following criteria: 1) Assigned field exercises; 2) Written examinations; 3) Individual and group projects; 4) Daily entries in field journal; and 5) Required reading and writing assignments during the program.

Team members are expected to conduct themselves in a mature and responsible manner. Wildlands Studies reserves the right to require any student to withdraw from the program if their conduct is detrimental to or incompatible with the interests, safety, or welfare of any course participants.

TEAM LOGISTICS

Team members are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from Hilo, HI. We recommend traveling to Hilo the day before the program begins and staying overnight at a hotel somewhere in the area. Within Hawaii we will use vans for transportation. **It is essential that all your gear fit into your backpack, and that you are able to carry all of your gear on your back.** We will be camping and hiking during the entire trip, so keep your gear light! A detailed gear list and recommended hostels will be sent after enrollment in our Logistics letter.

Please think of the study areas described above as a 'menu' rather than a fixed schedule. Experience indicates that weather conditions, lava flows, and bureaucratic considerations may affect our plans. Wildlands Studies has put together an innovative program in Hawaii, and team members need to be flexible, patient, and prepared to adapt to unexpected situations. Being flexible allows us to take advantage of unique opportunities that spontaneously arise during our journeys, and often produce some of the program's most memorable moments.

PROJECT COSTS

Program Fee:	\$2395 plus \$75 Application Fee due November 1, 2009 Enrollment on a space-available basis after the fee due date until the program is full.
Estimated Airfare:	\$800 (as of February 2009)
Estimated in-country Expenses:	\$1500 per person share of ground transportation/fuel; readers; campsite/cabin/Park fees; field activities fees and fieldwork expenses.
Food & Personal Money:	\$350-\$450 (while this will vary with each individual, expenses can be kept low by pre-planning & limits on personal spending)



Wildlands Studies

www.wildlandsstudies.com

wildlands@wildlandsstudies.com

PO Box 3403, Santa Cruz, CA 95063

T/F +1.831.477.9955

Students should inquire at the financial aid office of their home campus regarding the use of their loans or grants for this course. CSU Monterey Bay Extended Education/ Wildlands Studies are not responsible for non-refundable airline or other tickets or payments or any similar penalties that may be incurred as a result of any course cancellation or changes.

PRE-PROGRAM MAILING

Detailed information regarding transportation, pre-program reading materials, maps, gear/food, meeting plans, group expenses payment and medical recommendations will be sent to all team members in a logistics letter after they have enrolled on the project.

PROJECT LEADER

Stephanie Olsen is a Marine Wildlife Biologist specializing in marine conservation. She has taught, studied and worked in many Pacific Rim countries including Western Canada, Hawaii, Alaska and Thailand.