

**Photo:** [Water is glistens into the distance. Rocks are visible in the shallow parts of the water. The title panel appears.]

**[Video:** Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum presents the following audio interview with Keihei de Silva, "Water is a Gift of the Gods." The interview takes place in Kalua, where Keihei de Silva is with Halau Mohala 'Ilima. The audio interview is overlaid with photographs illustrating the landscape and events described by Keihei de Silva.]

**Photo:** [A valley sits between trees and mountains in the distance. Fog is visible near the mountaintops.]

Keihei Da Silva: Hawaiians  
We're master managers of water.  
And I can't even begin -- I am  
not that kind of expert.  
I am not that kind of

**[Photo:** Man stands in front of a creek with trees in the background. He is wearing a black colored t-shirt, faded black hat, and black brimmed glasses. His hands are embraced in front of him as he holds onto a book and smiles at the camera. He has a white beard, mustache, and gray hair.]

person who  
is able to speak that well about  
that management.  
But in our chant traditions,

**[Photo:** A valley has trees dispersed throughout it. Mountains border the backside of the valley.]

vai wai ola is the water of life.

**[Photo:** A white pipe guides water into a retaining area, where the water splashes into rocks.]

Water is life.  
There is no life without water.  
Water, not properly managed --  
Water is a gift of the gods.

**[Photo:** Water flows through rocks. Ferns and grasses are visible.]

Water, properly used, properly  
understood, properly managed, is  
what allows us to live.  
Our Taro, which is... our Kalo, which is

**[Photo:** Taro is grows in a marsh.]

our oldest  
brother, only lives because of  
the water and only can live if  
the water is properly cared for.  
And, so, well, there are three  
springs back here,

**[Photo:** Water flows between grass and a boulder.]

and they're  
still pure.  
We've had them tested several  
times, and they're still  
drinkable.  
And in the history of Kailua,  
those who lived down by the  
beach

**[Photo:** A Hawaiian gallinule sits in plants emerged in the water.]

and did not have access to  
freshwater all came here to get  
their water.  
So, you cannot not take care of  
water if you're that closely  
associated with it, if it is  
your lifeblood, if it is the  
thing that sustains you

**[Photo:** Young taro grows in water surrounded by grass.]

and all that is important to you.  
So, that's about the best pitch  
I can give.  
"Aia i hea ka wai a Kāne."  
"Where is the water of Kāne?" is  
the opening line of a chant that  
says,

**[Photo:** A mountaintop touches a foggy sky.]

"It is in the dark thunder  
clouds.  
It is in the rain that falls on



the forest.  
It is in the water that flows  
through the streams.  
It is the -- It pretty much  
replicates the precipitation  
cycle in chant that is so old  
that there could not have been  
any science teacher teaching it  
from a textbook to these  
Hawaiians.

[**Photo:** A small tree-frog sits in a water droplet  
within the leaves of a plant.]

They knew, by observation and by  
care, how all of this worked and  
how essential it was.  
One of the oppositions to the  
Kailua-Kawainui Master Plan

[**Photo:** A tree sits over a narrow creek.]

is  
that Hawaiians aren't, to manage water  
properly and that we need a long  
education process, maybe of 20  
years or more, in order for us  
to be

[**Photo:** A blue sign contains the following text:  
"Akia/The bark of the akia/ branches were  
smashed and/ used by lawai'a (fishermen)/ to  
sun reef fish./ *Wikostreomia oashuensis*/ Akia  
family/ endemic/ cordage, medicine, fish poison.]

taught by guess who --  
right? -- how water needs to be  
managed.

[**Photo:** A large taro plant sits in front of a  
running creek.]

And the thing is -- it's all the  
-- It's basically the  
precipitation cycle that we're  
supposed to understand.  
But the failure of that concept,  
in addition to it being a  
failure of respect

[**Photo:** Tree branches with green leaves.]

for our ability to manage this stuff, is the  
failure to recognize that in

Hawaiian thinking,  
man is not separate from that  
cycle and man needs to be  
involved and engaged

[**Photo:** A boulder frames the landscape of the  
valley to the left. Buildings are visible on the  
horizon.]

in that process, because he is familial  
to that whole process.  
And you take man out of it, and  
then what happens is -- you have  
Kawainui Marsh instead of  
Kawainui Fishpond.  
And what you have is a  
conservation community

[**Photo:** Plants are growing in a marsh.]

that  
wants to protect that and keep  
Hawaiians out of that, because,  
somehow, we might mismanage it.  
But that is the result of the  
loss of the Hawaiian people and  
the decimation of the people who  
knew how to take care of it.  
And now we have to deal with,

[**Photo:** a pathway lined with greenery extends  
into the back.]

with well-meaning conservationists  
that cannot understand that we  
are the stewards of this place  
and that we all need to be  
re-engaged in it.  
Not put a fence around it,

[**Photo:** A open valley is lined by mountains in  
the distance.]

not  
say, "This is nature.  
This is man.  
We got to keep man out of here,  
because, you know --" No.  
In Hawaiian, kanaka have to be  
involved in that process in  
order for it all to function.

[**Photo:** Smithsonian Anacostia Community  
Museum logo is placed on a black background.]

