

Dr. Samuel M. ‘Ohukani‘ōhi‘a Gon, III
Senior Scientist and Cultural Advisor
The Nature Conservancy of Hawai‘i

Part of the Conservancy staff for the past 20 years, Dr. Gon has brought his expertise to the organization in a variety of capacities. As the Ecologist for the Hawai‘i Natural Heritage Program of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai‘i from 1986 - 1999, Dr. Gon conducted biological inventories and produced biological reports and management recommendations for The Conservancy, our partner federal, state, and local agencies, and for private organizations. As the coordinator for the Hawai‘i Natural Heritage Program from 1992 to 1994, Dr. Gon managed a staff of 15 and an annual budget of over \$1 million. As Director of Science he guided the science behind the vision and operations of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai‘i. In his current role as Senior Scientist and Cultural Advisor, Dr. Gon maintains his science guidance, and adds his cultural expertise to enhance the mission of The Conservancy.

Dr. Gon has 30 years of experience in Hawaiian ecology. This experience includes biological inventories and research, field ecology, entomology, arachnology, ethology, natural community classification, and database management. He also has extensive knowledge of Hawaiian culture, history, and language. Dr. Gon is instrumental in many facets of the Conservancy’s work. His knowledge of Hawaiian culture and history are an important asset when working with local communities. As an excellent public speaker, Dr. Gon often lends his knowledge to conservation agencies, community groups, donors, and important visitors. Over the years, Dr. Gon has worked with private, state, and federal cooperators on a variety of conservation and land management projects, including landscape-scale conservation partnerships and ecoregional planning for island ecosystems in Hawai‘i, Palau, Pohnpei, the Philippines, Jamaica, and the Galapagos Islands.

Dr. Gon is an active member of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai‘i and an Advisory Committee member for the ‘Ōhi‘a Project (Hawaiian natural history curriculum development). Additionally, Dr. Gon serves as a Hawaiian natural history and culture consultant for the Moanalua Gardens Foundation, sits on the steering committee of the ‘Ahahui Mālama i ka Lōkahi (Hawaiians for the preservation of native ecosystems), and on the Restoration Advisory Group for the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission. He has served on panels of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs on the topic of traditional management of natural resources, and sits on the Hawaiian leadership committee advising the Hawai‘i Life Sciences Consortium. Dr. Gon serves on the Board of Trustees for the Native Hawaiian Culture and Arts Program (NHCAP), and as an at-large member of the Hawai‘i State Board of Land and Natural Resources.

For over ten years Dr. Gon has been studying oli (traditional Hawaiian chant) and hula with Kumu John Keolamaka‘āinana Lake, a master of Hawaiian religion and cultural protocols; training that culminated in his *‘uniki* (traditional rite of passage) in February 2003 as a *kahuna kākalaleo*, practitioner of Hawaiian chant and protocol. Dr. Gon strives to blend the richness of unique Hawaiian ecosystems with the equally rich culture that developed here.

Dr. Gon received his bachelor’s degree in Zoology at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. He then went on to receive his masters in Zoology and doctorate in Animal Behavior at the University of California, Davis. He holds an affiliate faculty post with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Hawai‘i.

Among his hobbies, Sam lists paleontology (especially trilobites), educational website design, carnivorous plants, lapidary (especially opals and other stones with optical qualities), and traditional Hawaiian arts and crafts. He invites you to visit his award-winning trilobite website: <http://www.trilobites.info>

Dr. Gon lives in Honolulu, Hawai‘i with his wife Sheri, and his two sons, Aaron and Ethan.