



Sept. 21, 2018

Contact: Cindy Harger

(307) 200-3286, Ext. 6

Images available on request

Internationally recognized slam poet to bring synergy among art, science & culture to Jackson

Storyteller Kealoha joins October WILD Fest lineup as Jackson Hole WILD's 2018 Visiting Artist

JACKSON, Wyo. – Inviting an internationally acclaimed slam poet to a science and nature festival might seem like an odd choice at first blush. But when that slam poet comes with a background in nuclear engineering at MIT, a perfect SAT math score and a thesis titled “Proliferation Issues in Association with the Transmutation and Stabilization of Plutonium,” the connection begins to make sense.



Jackson Hole WILD is delighted to announce its 2018 Visiting Artist, Kealoha, who will create and perform in Jackson for a week in early October. Kealoha brings his unique commingling of science, nature, art, culture and storytelling to the valley for WILD Fest, as well as for *TEDxJacksonHole: Metamorphosis* and an assortment of educational outreach programs in the community.

“Kealoha is, in a single word, inspiring,” said Cindy Harger, Jackson Hole WILD’s Community Partnerships and Events Director. “He connects with his audiences and students in ways that extend far beyond his poetry and storytelling. He embodies positivity and energy, and he has placed a focus in his life on helping youths express their unique voices.”

Kealoha is the first Poet Laureate of Hawaii and has performed throughout the world, from the White House to the ‘Iolani Palace, from Brazil to Switzerland. He was selected as a master artist for a National Endowment for the Arts program, he received a Community Inspiration Program grant from the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, and he was honored by the National Poetry Slam as a “National Poetry Slam Legend.” He also happens to be a break dancer, ‘ukulele player and surfer.

Kealoha will perform for more than 1,000 elementary and middle school students on Friday, Oct. 5, as part of the WILD Fest classrooms-only science festival day at the Jackson Hole Center for the Arts. On Saturday, Oct. 6, he will lead a workshop for Arapahoe Middle School students, who will be visiting Jackson for a WILD Fest cultural exchange program with TCSD’s Dual-

Language Immersion sixth-graders. The following week, he will also lead workshops for Teton County classes.

The general public will have an opportunity to see Kealoha speak and perform on Sunday, Oct. 7, when he takes to the Center for the Arts stage for *TEDxJacksonHole: Metamorphosis*.

Several organizational partners have contributed to making Kealoha's visit to Jackson Hole possible, including the **Center of Wonder, Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, WESTAF, National Endowment for the Arts, Wyoming Arts Council, pARTners** and **ThinkWY|Wyoming Humanities Council**.

Jackson Hole WILD sends its gratitude to other WILD Fest sponsors, including **more than 30 local and regional science exhibitors, Teton County School District #1, Fremont County School District #38, the Town of Jackson, 4JH, SpringHill Suites by Marriott, and the Jackson Hole Airport**.

"Jackson Hole WILD strives to connect people to the natural world and to each other," said Lisa Samford, Executive Director. "Through the Visiting Artists program, we are able to bring in gifted artists and scientists who can share their talents with the community in a meaningful way, amplifying those intrinsic connections. Kealoha bridges art and science, and his work with youths provides an ideal synergy for our Jackson-Arapahoe youth cultural exchange program."

In 2017, Jackson Hole WILD's Visiting Artist was Jenny "Zenka" Carden, a futurist who led Augmented Reality video production workshops for Jackson Hole adults, as well as public school youths in Teton County and Fremont County.

In 2016, the Holladay brothers, Ryan and Hays, created an augmented reality Musical Journey through R-Park. The interactive, site-specific music app is available for download to your phone by searching for "Site: R Park."

More Info Available

For more information on Kealoha, visit www.KealohaPoetry.com.

For the full WILD Fest schedule for Oct. 5 and 6, visit www.JHwild.org.

Tickets for *TEDxJacksonHole: Metamorphosis* are still available but are going fast and expected to sell out. Seats range from \$10-\$40 and are available through the Center box office, www.Jhcenterforthearts.org or (307) 733-4900.

###