

KAUNĀMANO Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship Plan

Developing a Resource Management Plan to Steward Ancestral Places

Protecting Kaunāmano

Kaunāmano is an ahupuaʻa (land division) in the district of Kaʻū. After the closure of Kaʻū Agribusiness in 1996, the makai lands were sold to a developer who proposed a 47-lot subdivision. In 2021, coastal Kaunāmano was saved from the threat of development through the work of the Kaʻū community, along with the Ala Kahakai Trail Association (ATA) and The Trust for Public Lands (TPL), who secured a State Legacy Land Conservation Program Grant Award. This award, along with funding from the County of Hawaiʻi's Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Commission (PONC) allowed for the purchase of a large portion of coastal Kaunāmano. As a result, 1,363 acres of intact bio-cultural landscape makai (seaward) of Highway 11, the Kaʻū Scenic Byway, is now preserved in perpetuity under a conservation easement held by the County.



A **conservation easement** is a tool, often coupled with public funds from the State's Land Legacy or the County PONC programs, which cedes development rights in order to protect important biological, cultural, and geographical resources. In the case of Kaunāmano it is a significant storied place in Hawaiian traditions, a bio-cultural landscape with incredibly well-preserved resources including two ancient Hawaiian villages (Pāʻula and Paukū), one which was inhabited into the 1920s with its archaeological features predominantly intact. Within Kaunāmano makai are caves that provide a unique anchialine habitat for native ʻopae, and over 3-miles of remote rocky coastline, home to a diversity of native plants, fish, marine mammals, sea and shore birds, and coastal marine life.

Hawaiʻi County PONC funds can support the following goals at Kaunāmano

- Preservation of historic or culturally important land areas & sites;
- Protection of natural resources, including buffer zones;
- Preservation of forests, beaches, coastal areas, natural beauty & agricultural lands;
- Protection of watershed lands to preserve water quality & water supply; &
- Public outdoor recreation & education, including access to beaches & mountains.

Part of the Ala Kahakai Trail Association's conservation commitment to Kaunāmano is developing a Stewardship Plan for this important bio-cultural landscape.

Nohopapa Hawaiʻi is working with ATA to develop the Kaunāmano Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship Plan in collaboration with community input and cultural-historical research to inform recommendations and considerations for the sustained protection and continued stewardship of Kaunāmano makai.

TIMELINE Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship Plan

January - March 2024



Background Research,
Synthesis, & Analysis

April - July 2024



Community Outreach,
Consultation, & Interviews

August - November 2024



Final Consultee Approvals, Integration of
Background. Research, Community Manaʻo, &
Recommendations in Final Report




Legend

-  Kaunāmano
-  County of Hawai'i
-  Ahupua'a Bdry.
-  State of Hawai'i
-  Contour Line 100 ft

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

0 0.25 0.5 1 Kilometers

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