

# Palauea

## Palauea, Honua'ula, Maui

By Holly K. Coleman

Palauea is the name of an *ahupua'a* (land division) in the *moku* (district) of Honua'ula on the island of Maui. Many believe that Palauea and surrounding areas were focal points and ceremonial centers of the fishing communities of Honua'ula (Six, 2013). Today, a high concentration of archaeological and cultural sites can be found in the Palauea Cultural Preserve, which is one of the few undeveloped land parcels in an area surrounded by luxury residences and resorts. At least fourteen native plant species, including what is believed to be the largest natural stand of *maiapilo* (*Capparis sandwichiana*), and at least thirteen archaeological complexes have been identified within the preserve area (Donham, 2007).

In April 2013, the Dowling Corporation formally conveyed the Palauea Cultural Preserve to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA).

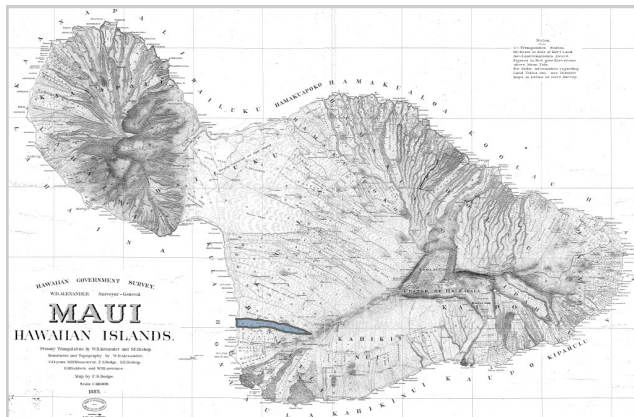
Palauea remains a vital cultural and historical resource for Native Hawaiians and the broader community. The goal of this Information Sheet is to explore some of the cultural and historical narratives of Palauea and the surrounding areas, particularly as OHA transitions into the role of caretaker of this place. This Information Sheet will also strengthen the agency's foundation of knowledge for this *wahi pana* (storied, legendary place).

Left: View of Molokini and Kaho'olawe from Palauea Heiau. Source: Shane Tegarden Photography for OHA, 2013.



Research Division  
Land, Culture, and History Section  
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## Traditional Land Divisions



Maui; outlined area is the *ahupua'a* of Palaeua. Source: Dodge, 1885.

One of the meanings of “palaeua” is lazy or listless (Pukui & Elbert, 1974). “Palaeua” is also the name of a variety of sweet potato (Clark, 2001). Palaeua is in Honua‘ula. The history of Palaeua is closely linked to the histories of Maui’s southern shores, including Lāhaina, Kula, Kahikinui, and Kaupō. In ancient times, Honua‘ula was one of seven *moku* of Maui Island. It included the south-eastern portion of the island of Maui from Keawakapu to Kanaloa point, near Keone‘ō‘io (La Perouse). Inland areas of Honua‘ula included parts of ‘Ulupalakua and Kanaio. The island of Kaho‘olawe was also considered a part of the *moku* of Honua‘ula. Today, Honua‘ula is in the Makawao district (De Naiea, 2007).

## Winds and Rains of Honua‘ula

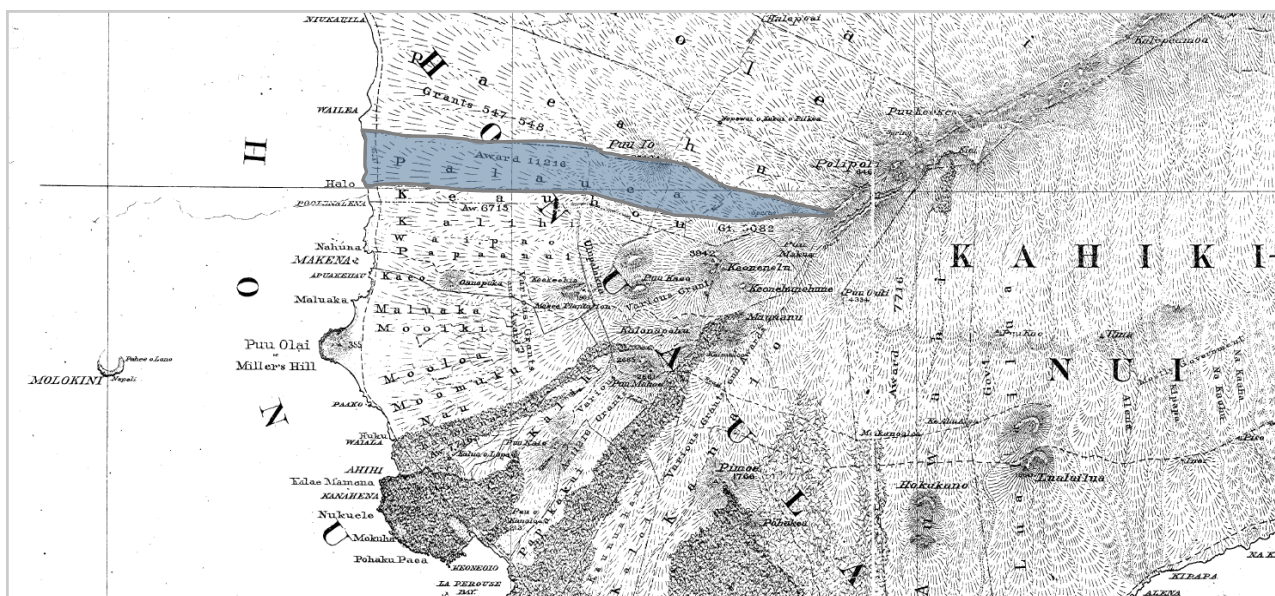
Honua‘ula was known as a dry land; indeed, Honua‘ula means “red land or earth” and may have also been named for a variety of sweet potato grown in the area as a staple food (Pukui & Elbert, 1974).

Few names of winds and rains of Honua‘ula are recorded. In a *mo‘olelo* recounted in the Hawaiian language newspaper *Ka Hoku o Hawaii*, the *kupua* (one who possesses supernatural powers) Kamiki engaged in a riddling contest with the *ali‘i* (chief) Kahuku. Kamiki offered the following lines:

*O ka ua hoelo a ka Ukiu i ka ulawena,  
o Honuaula ia, ilaila i make ai ka makani.*

Where the cold ‘Ukiu wind bears down,  
glowing red [driving the dust], is  
Honua‘ula, where the winds begin to die.  
(Translation by Maly, 2005).

Clouds and dew provided much of the moisture necessary for life in Honua‘ula; these were considered forms of the *akua* (god) Lono (Handy et al., 1991). One of the names recorded for a rain of ‘Ulupalakua was *Ua Pa‘ina* or “crackling rain” (Maly, 2005).



The area outlined in blue is the *ahupua'a* of Palaeua in the *moku* of Honua‘ula. Source: Dodge, 1885.





*L'astrolabe and La Boussole at anchor in Maui, Hawai'i: Voyage of Jean Francoise de Galaup La Perouse, 1787. Source: G. G. & Robinson, Musée de la Marine.*

## Selected Mo'olelo of Honua'ula

Inaina was a *mo'o* (water guardian) of Kaho'olawe who took the *ali'i* Lohiau as her lover while he lived in Ma'alaea, Maui. In jealousy, the goddess Pele fought with Inaina, turning her and her parents Hele and Kali into *pu'u* (hills). Inaina's tail became Pu'u Ola'i in Mākena and her head became Molokini (Fornander, 1918). Kamohoali'i scolded Pele for her rashness and proclaimed the *kānāwai inaina* to prevent people from saying or doing unkind things to others; this law was observed by the people of Honua'ula (Tau'ā & Kapahulehua, 2009).

In another famous *mo'olelo*, the *ali'i* Kiha-a-Pi'ilani fled to Moloka'i and then Lāna'i with his wife Kūmaka in order to escape the murderous intent of his brother Lono-a-Pi'ilani. Pursued by his brother's men, they eventually sought refuge in the uplands of Honua'ula at Ke'eke'e, where they lived with the help of resident farmers. Through these experiences, Kiha-a-Pi'ilani learned the hard work of the *maka'āinana* (general population) (Kamakau, 1992).

## 'Ai Pua'a a Kūkeawe

The *'ōlelo no'eau* (wise saying) "'Ai pua'a a kūkeawe" is said of a person who is not satisfied with what he has and comes from a *mo'olelo* of Honua'ula (Pukui, 1986). The *kaukau ali'i* (lesser chief) Kūkeawe was an *'aikane* (favored companion) of the Maui *ali'i nui* (high chief) Kahekili. Kūkeawe was allowed to roast Kahekili's pigs in Kula, Maui as needed. Unfortunately, Kūkeawe also took pigs from the people of Kula, Honua'ula, Kahikinui, and Kaupō, robbing and plundering as he pleased. Unable to stand such chiefly oppression, the people of Kahikinui, Honua'ula, Wailuku, and Waihe'e organized under a man named 'Opu and fought the armies of Kūkeawe on the slopes of Haleakalā. Kūkeawe's army tried to retreat, but were blocked by forces led by Kawehena, Kaho'oluhina, and Kuheana. This uprising was called 'Aipua'a a Kūkeawe. Kūkeawe was killed for abusing the people and his body was propped up facing the sea at Palaea (Kamakau, 1992).

## Climate, Landscape, and Resources

Despite being known as a dry land, Honua'ula supported a considerable Native Hawaiian population. The upland forests provided construction materials, fibers, food, and medicine. The lower elevation landscape was covered by groves of *niu* (coconut), *kou* (*Cordia subcordata*), and *wiliwili* (*Erythrina sandwicensis*). Water sources and marshes were found along the coastline. Hawaiians may have eaten freshwater mollusks from the marshes, and they provided many other resources important for life. Indeed, the eastern and coastal portion of Honua'ula was thickly populated in ancient Hawai'i. Extensive trade between residents of the upland and the coast allowed for the exchange of fish and cultivated crops. Dryland *kalo* (taro) and especially 'uala (sweet potato) were staples of residents. The area was also known for *pa'akai* (salt), and dried 'akule (scad fish) (De Naie, 2007).

## Life and Activity in Honua'ula



House in Kaupō, Maui, 1915: Houses in Honua'ula may have been of a similar style. Source: R. J. Baker Collection, Hawaiian Historical Society.

As compared to other areas along the Kahikinui and Kaupō coastline, extensive fishing communities were centered around the abundant deep sea fishing grounds of Honua'ula (Handy et al. 1972). Well-used trails crisscrossed the landscape of Honua'ula, and may have been part of the famous trails constructed by Kiha-a-Pi'ilani. The *mo'olelo* of Lā'iekawai, Pīkoika'alalā and Puapualenalena suggest that Keone'ō'io in Honua'ula was a popular stopping point for *wa'a* (canoes) travelling between Hawai'i Island and Maui, and there are a number of famous canoe landings in the area. Honua'ula was also known as a place where chiefs resided (Maly, 2005).

## Haleakalā and Honua'ula



Haleakalā Crater, 1987. Source: Di Perna, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Honua'ula sits on the western slope of Haleakalā, a culturally and spiritually significant *wahi* (place) for the people of Maui.

It is estimated that Haleakalā last erupted between 1480 CE and 1600 CE at Kalua o Lapa near Mākena (USGS, 2003). Haleakalā is known to have erupted several times in the past 1,000 years (Kubota, 2008).

Haleakalā provided many of the resources necessary for life in ancient Hawai'i. For example, clouds would water forests and crops grown on its slopes by native residents; Hawaiians would watch cloud formations on Haleakalā to know when to plant and harvest (Maly, 2005). Archaeological evidence indicates these forests were used for bird catching and sandalwood collection. Adze quarry sites and a complex of sacred sites were located at the summit of Haleakalā (Mintmier, 2007).



Haleakalā Crater. Source: Williams, J. J. (n.d.: 1876 to 1926), Hawaiian Historical Society Historical Photograph Collection.



## History of Fishing in Honuaʻula

Maui has strong connections to fishing; many *moʻolelo* recount Hāna as the location of the first fishpond in Hawaiʻi, the earthly home of the prominent fish god Kūʻula, and the place where Kūʻula taught his son ʻAiʻai, prompting ʻAiʻai to travel across the Hawaiian Islands setting up *koʻa* and *kūʻula* (fishing markers and shrines) (Beckwith, 1970).

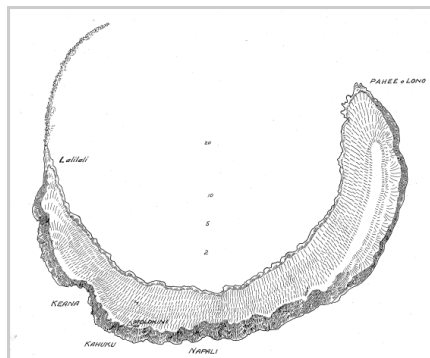
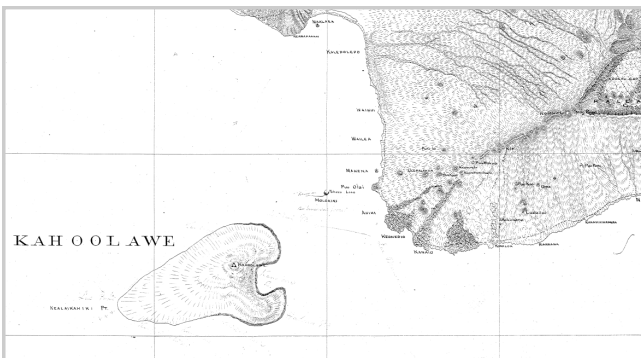
Honuaʻula is also strongly associated with fishing. Thriving fishing villages dotted the Honuaʻula coast-line; the area from Maʻalaea to Keoneʻōio was referred to as *Kai o ʻĀnehe* (Sterling, 1998). Honuaʻula was famous for its abundant nearshore and deep sea fisheries, as well as expert fishermen. Whole communities were dedicated fishermen; for example, residents of the Mākena area were known for *hukilau* (pulled nets or lines). One of the most comprehensive narratives about traditional fishing customs was written by Judge A. D. Kahāʻulelio for the Hawaiian language newspaper *Ku Okoa* in 1902; Kahāʻulelio was a fisherman from Lāhaina but had strong familial ties to Honuaʻula (Maly, 2005).



A Maui fisherman at Pāʻia Beach, 1912. Source: Baker, Van Dyke Collection, Kamehameha Schools Archives. Used with permission from Kamehameha Schools.

## Kahoʻolawe and Molokini: Historical Connections to Honuaʻula

Both Kahoʻolawe (also known as Kanaloa and Kohemālamalama) and Molokini were notable in ancient times for their abundant fishing grounds and were often considered a part of the traditional *moku* of Honuaʻula. Fishermen of Honuaʻula would travel to Hakioawa and other famed fishing locations on both islands. There was also an adze-mining quarry at Puʻu Mōiwi on Kahoʻolawe, and the island was used as a navigational training and spiritual center. Renowned caves of shark *akua* (gods), including Kamohoaliʻi, were found on Kahoʻolawe and Molokini (De Naie, 2007). Following World War II, both Kahoʻolawe and Molokini were used as sites for U.S. military weapons training, which included the use of heavy artillery such as bombs. After decades of activism and protests, the military transferred jurisdiction of Kahoʻolawe to the State of Hawaiʻi in 1994 at Palaeua. Today, it is managed by the Kahoʻolawe Island Reserve Commission for Native Hawaiian cultural, spiritual, and subsistence purposes (McGregor, 2007). Molokini is a seabird sanctuary.



Left: Kahoʻolawe in relation to Honuaʻula, Maui. Source: Wall, W. E. (1886).

Right: Molokini Island. Source: Wall, W. E. (1910).



Left: Fisherman with a canoe in Lāhaina, Maui. 1915. Source: Baker, Van Dyke Collection, Kamehameha Schools Archives. Used with permission from Kamehameha Schools.

## Fishponds and Fishing Sites

In addition to deep-sea and nearshore fisheries, residents of Honuaʻula were well-supplied with fish by a network of productive and famous *loko iʻa* (fishponds) on the coast. The *akua* Kāne and Kanaloa built a fishpond known as Kanaloa at Lua-lailua-kai in Honuaʻula (Naimu, 1865; Beckwith, 1970). While residing in Honuaʻula, the Hawaiʻi Island chief Kauholanuimahu built a fishpond at Keoneʻōiʻo (Fornander, 1919). It was known to be very large and stocked with *ʻamaʻama* (mullet), *awa* (milkfish) and *ʻōʻio* (bonefish). There was a fishpond at Maonakala; today, several fishponds are located in the ʻĀhihi Kīnaʻu Natural Area Reserve. There was a fishpond at ʻĀpuakēhau, and fishponds that stretched across the bays at Mākena and ʻĀhihi. A fishpond near Kihei was known both as Ka Lepolepo and Koʻieʻie (Tauʻā & Kapahulehua, 2009).

### Selected fishing grounds of Honuaʻula

Pahua	Hiu
Keahua	Kalawa
Pohakuula	Kiele
Papuaa	Koahau
Na-ia-a-Kamahalu	Na-ia-a-Kamalii

Hawaiian Collection K.8, Hawaiian Ethnological Notes in Sterling, 1998.

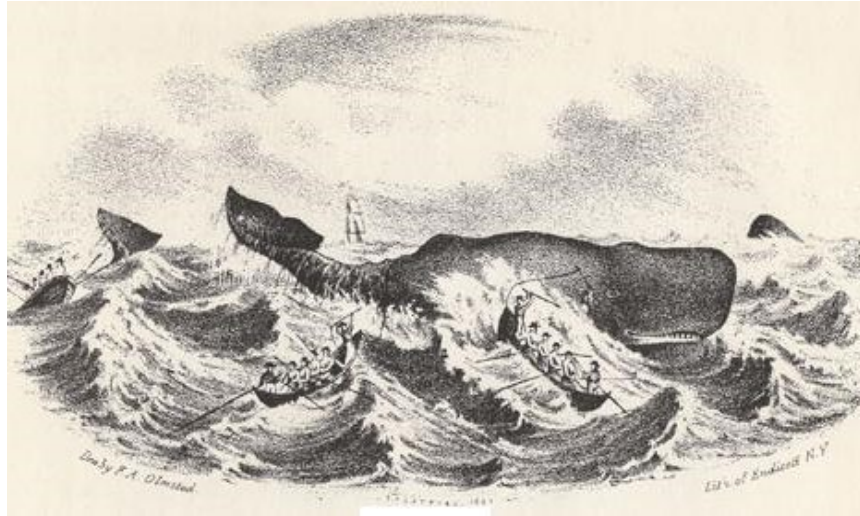
## Sharks

*Kamaʻāina* of Honuaʻula (especially of Mākena and Keoneʻōiʻo) were culturally and spiritually connected to the many sharks of the area. In particular, family groups maintained special relationships to certain sharks that were known as *manō kanaka* (sharks of the people) and were worshipped and cared for as *ʻaumakua* (family gods) (Maly, 2005). These sharks often had human *kahu* (caretakers) among residents of Honuaʻula.

Kaʻalamikihau was one such shark god (Beckwith 1917; Sterling, 1998). The benevolent *akua* Kaneikokala had a shark form and was known to swim in the waters of Honuaʻula, Kahikinui, and Koʻolau of Maui. He would provide aid to swimmers and those whose canoes had overturned at sea (Tauʻā & Kapahulehua, 2009; Kamakau, 1870). The famous shark god Kamohoaliʻi (the elder brother of the goddess Pelehonuamea) is associated with a sacred underwater cave in the base of Puʻu Olaʻi in Mākena and with sacred cave shelters on Kahoʻolawe and Molo-kini; he was also known as a guardian shark of Honuaʻula (Thrum, 1922).

## Maui History

The island of Maui and its communities have always played important roles in the history of Hawai'i. This role was crystalized during the rapid social, political, and economic changes of the early nineteenth century. A traditional seat of power for the *ali'i*, Lāhaina became a center of activity during the early years of the monarchy period. Increased foreign trade and the growth of the whaling industry cemented the importance of Lāhaina as a port.



An engraving made during a whaling voyage. Source: Olmsted, 1841.

## Depopulation

By the mid 1800s, systemic social, economic, and political shifts were changing Hawai'i. The introduction and spread of highly infectious diseases decimated the Native Hawaiian population, which was devastating in areas like Lāhaina that were the centers of trade and whaling (Bushnell, 1993). Many young Native Hawaiian men were leaving Kula, Honua'ula, and Makawao to become part of whaling crews. The loss of Native Hawaiian population in areas like Honua'ula led to changes in traditional land tenure, knowledge transmission, as well as practice of culture.



Right: Fishermen near Lāhaina, Maui. 1908. Source: Baker, Van Dyke Collection, Kamehameha Schools Archives. Used with permission from Kamehameha Schools.

## Maui Landscapes

In ancient times, the forest zone of Honua'ula extended further down the mountain slopes (Handy et al., 1991). Sugar and ranching activities in the area during the mid 1800s led to deforestation, affecting the watershed and rain patterns. Although famines had been recorded in Honua'ula before, droughts exacerbated these hardships (Naleipuleho, 1836).

The introduction of Euro-American commerce would decrease traditional farming, fishing, and subsistence living among Native Hawaiians in Honua'ula. In the late 1840s, Honua'ula began producing Irish potatoes for the booming population in California during the gold rush years (Maly, 2005).



## Sugar in Honua'ula: 1845–1856

The privatization of land that occurred during the Māhele and during the second half of the nineteenth century led to acquisition of large expanses of land in Honua'ula and other parts of Maui by foreigners for intensive sugar and ranching. This eventually resulted in the displacement of Native Hawaiian families. The American businessman Linton Torbert acquired lands in Honua'ula and 'Ulupalakua and cultivated them between 1845–1856. As in other parts of Hawai'i, the sugar industry on Maui began to import foreign labor to work on the plantations in the region.



Left: Cane trash before burning, Maui, n. d. Source: American Environmental Photographs, Library of Congress.

Right: Female worker, Maui, 1915. Source: Baker, Van Dyke Collection, Kamehameha Schools Archives. Used with permission from Kamehameha Schools.

## Ranching 1850s–1920s

In 1856, the American whaling captain James Makee purchased Torbert's lands. Although he kept growing sugar on the lands into the 1880s, Makee ultimately expanded ranching efforts, which became known as Rose Ranch. In order to ship his goods, Torbert had built a landing at Mākena Bay in 1850. After Makee purchased Torbert's lands, the landing became known as Makee Landing and was one of the busiest landings on Maui's leeward side (Maly, 2005). Mākena became a hub of transportation and shipping. Ranching led to the growth of the *paniolo* (cowboy) cultures of Makawao, 'Ulupalakua, and Honua'ula.



Top: Branding calves on Sam Baldwin Ranch in Maui, 1923. Source: Baker, Van Dyke Collection, Kamehameha Schools Archives. Used with permission from Kamehameha Schools.

In 1901, Rose Ranch was deeded to Phoebe Raymond, Makee's daughter-in-law, and her husband; it became Raymond Ranch until 1922. In 1922, the ranch was purchased by Frank Baldwin and renamed 'Ulupalakua Ranch (1922–1963) (De Naiea, 2007).



## Development

Although sugar and ranching did much to alter the landscapes of Honua‘ūla, intensive development during the second half of the 1900s would obliterate many remaining cultural sites (including countless *ko‘a*, fishing shrines, trails, *heiau*, etc.), severely limit community access to these sites, and alter the population of Honua‘ūla.

During World War II, coastline areas in Honua‘ūla (especially Mākena), were used by the U.S. military for training exercises. Many residents were forced to leave their homes and some families were never able to return (De Naie, 2007).

By the late 1950's, 'Ulupalakua Ranch began selling its lands for the construction of the Wailea Resort. Coastal lands were re-designated for resort development in the 1970s. Between 1970 and 1990, lands were acquired by the Japanese resort and transportation developer Seibu Hawai'i. Soaring land prices and taxes forced many families in the area to sell their lands, which were then developed into luxury homes or condominiums (De Naie, 2007).

Archaeological surveys conducted for resort development identified high concentrations of cultural and spiritual sites in Honua‘ūla. Areas with the highest concentrations of known archaeological sites are in the Keauhou/Palauea and Kanahena/Kalihi areas. Significant complexes remain at Palauea, Mākena, and Mā‘onakala Village at Kanahena (Donham, 2007).



View of Pu'u Ola'i and Kaho'olawe from Palauea. Source: Shane Tegarden Photography for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

### Timeline of Palauea (1940s to Present)

1940s	U.S. military uses lands in Mākena for military training
1950	'Ulupalakua Ranch begins selling land-holdings in Honua'ūla
1969	Palauea and associated sites are recognized as archaeologically important
1970-1990	Large parcels of lands in Honua'ūla are acquired by Seibu Hawai'i for resort development
March 1999	Palauea Cultural Preserve established
April 2013	Palauea Cultural Preserve transferred to OHA

### Community Activism

Several groups, including State Park at Mākena, People to Save Mākena, Hui Alanui o Mākena, and others, would protest development of the area and advocate for the preservation of natural and cultural resources (Tengan, 2013; De Naiea, 2007). As a result of decades of activism, the 'Āhihi Kina'u Natural Area Reserve and the Mākena Pu'u 'Olai State Park were established, which has also helped to preserve public access to significant areas along the coast (De Naiea, 2007). Community activism for preservation of natural and cultural resources continues today.

## The Palauea Cultural Preserve



Palauea Heiau. Source: Shane Tegarden Photography (2013) for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Palauea Heiau Complex was recognized in 1969 as an archaeological preserve because of the significance and concentration of sites (McGregor, 2013). The 1998 Kīhei Mākena Community Plan established the Palauea Cultural Preserve which included the Palauea Heiau Complex and the Palauea Landing Complex. The Preserve comprises 20.75 acres of land (Donham, 2007). In June 2007, 1,800 acres of land were purchased by investors and the developer Everett Dowling for luxury residential development; this purchase included the Palauea lands (Kubota, 2000). Sub-division and development of the lands surrounding Palauea for luxury residences was allowed in exchange for creation of the Cultural Preserve. In addition, 0.5% of the revenues generated by sales of the surrounding seventeen lots are set aside for the Palauea Cultural Preserve Fund. To date, the fund has generated more than \$230,000. As caretaker of the preserve, Dowling formed partnerships with the University of Hawai'i Maui College allowing students and others to visit Palauea for archaeological field schools and cultural practices.

### Stewardship of Palauea

Proper care and stewardship of Palauea remains a priority of the community and OHA. Long-term, *pono* (proper, balanced) solutions to these challenges are being explored for implementation. Community meetings for the creation of a long-range management plan for Palauea were held in the spring of 2013. OHA is partnering with the Hawaiian Studies Department of UH Maui College to create a culturally-appropriate management plan for the preserve. Community-articulated concerns include (but are not limited to) access, implementation of preservation plans, and historic site status (Six, 2013).



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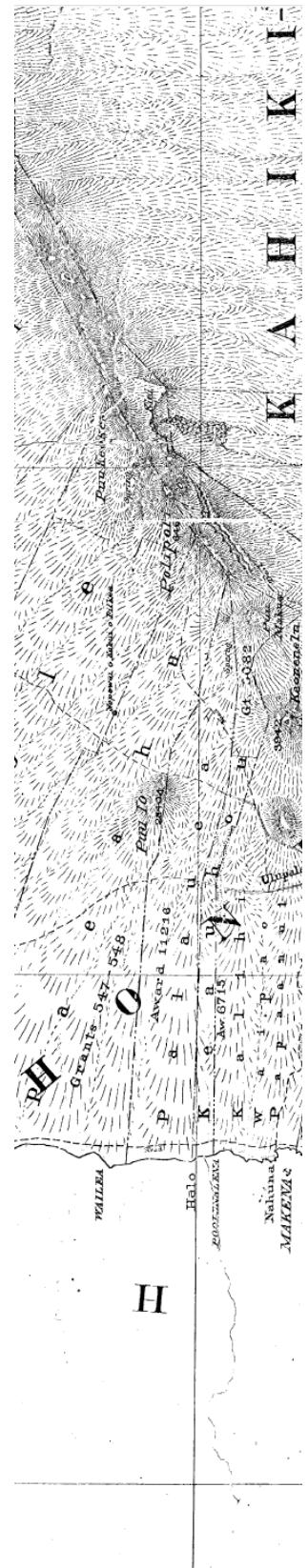
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