

Building Community Capacity in Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship

Since the disinterment of more than a thousand burials at Honokahua, Maui in the 1980s; the destruction of heiau to build the H-3 freeway in Kāneʻohe, Oʻahu in the 1990s; the construction of a luxury home on top of burials at Naue, Kauaʻi in the 2000s; and the continued push for development on our piko, Maunakea, today, there has been a growing community effort to defend Hawaiʻi's iwi kūpuna and wahi kūpuna. The groundwork laid by these first aloha ʻāina warriors who fought for the protection and preservation of our sacred sites has led to an increase of Kanaka ʻŌiwi kiaʻi (stewards), resource managers, cultural practitioners, historians and researchers, lawyers, planners, and others in important fields that are actively caring for our culture, ʻāina, and communities. However, there is still a need to build capacity and grow more leaders in these specialized fields that can bridge Hawaiian worldviews with western disciplines and serve as advocates for our communities.

In response to these needs, the Kaliʻuokapaʻakai Collective identified “building community support to steward wahi kūpuna” amongst the top priorities in caring for wahi kūpuna. A 2019 KC survey further identified “creating more resources to inform, educate, and support community driven stewardship efforts” and “increasing support and collaboration from government agencies and landowners” as the top two ways to build community capacity in WKS. These two identified Priority Themes, along with improving community consultation and engagement, are the central themes presented in this section on how to grow community capacity in WKS. Also of note, building community capacity is a priority identified throughout the four focus areas of this report, and specific ways to build capacity in those areas will be shared in the following sections.

Kiaʻi holding space at Puʻuhuluhulu, Maunakea - Photo: Huliauapaʻa



PRIORITY THEME

Improve Community Consultation and Engagement

Historically, the stewardship of and decisions regarding ‘āina and wahi kūpuna occurred at the community level (within ahupua‘a, ‘ili and ‘ohana), and Hawaiian resource management systems thrived. However, with the changes in governance and land ownership over the centuries, most communities and ‘ohana gradually lost access and authority to continue caring for the natural and cultural resources to which they were connected to.

However, in the past 30 years, community stewardship and governance of ‘āina across Hawai‘i have grown and is still growing to include caretaking by community groups, and non-profit organizations, as well as collaborations with landowners, conservation groups, and government agencies. With this surge and continued growth of kia‘i, it is essential to:

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of WKS efforts across Hawai‘i; and
2. Ensure that agencies such as the DLNR and SHPD have access to this information.

Currently, there is limited baseline data of which kia‘i group is doing what, where, and with whom. A comprehensive, up-to-date kia‘i database is imperative because it helps government agencies, land owners, and CRM firms know whom to consult and collaborate with when projects arise in given locations. It can also help other kia‘i who would like to do, or are doing, similar work in their own communities. The SHPD Archaeology Branch Chief Dr. Susan Lebo admits that SHPD “definitely would like to see more parties get engaged, cause right now it’s a limited number of people who are repeating participants, which means that some of the broader community might not be well-represented [in the Historic Preservation process].”

While the SHPD does have a consultation list of Native Hawaiian Organizations (www.doi.gov/hawaiian/nhol), they acknowledge it is outdated and many groups on the list no longer respond to requests for consultation. According to Sean Naleimaile, the SHPD Hawai‘i Island Archaeologist, “When people on the consultation list do not make a comment, it is actually treated as a comment. So Native Hawaiian consulting parties need to understand, and be better trained, to know that it is a big kuleana and their lack of action can affect the project outcomes.”

Building Community Capacity Priorities (KC Think Tank Survey 2019)

Creating more resources to inform, educate, and support community driven stewardship efforts

Support for more collaborations between communities, government agencies, and land owners

Increasing community and student training in wahi kūpuna stewardship topic areas

Decentralizing power and control, and creating roles for community-based stewards in CRM kuleana

Increasing access and management

WAY FORWARD

Developing an Inventory of Wahi Kūpuna Stewards

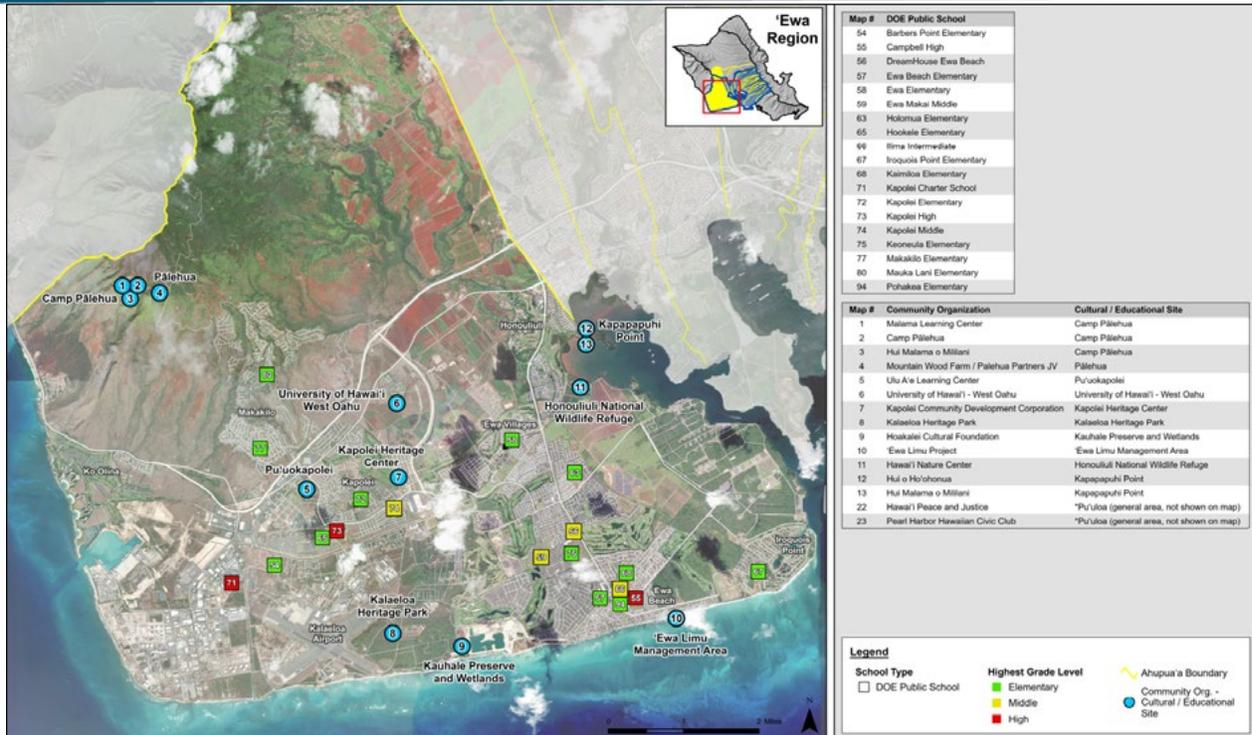
A multi-organizational effort should be undertaken to create a structured, systematic assessment to understand the depth, breadth, and demographics of current hui (community groups) involved in WKS efforts throughout Hawai'i. A similar effort has been carried out by the STEW-MAP initiative; however, while this effort supports individual volunteerism and engagement, the inventory that we're proposing would help to build collaborative relationships and connections between different organizations to further support WKS. From here, statewide goals and metrics can be developed to

paint a clearer picture of the current landscape and priority needs.

This assessment should highlight the different kinds of work these groups are doing from education to restoration, and the types of sites and resources they are tending. It should also illustrate key challenges and needs hui face, identify hui which may not be networked or supported by others, and assess gaps or places in need of WKS. This important data can offer pathways to help grow community kia'i and provide better stewardship of wahi kūpuna.

Example of community kia'i mapping from Nohopapa Hawai'i's 'Ewa 'Āina Inventory conducted for Kamehameha Schools - Photo: Nohopapa Hawai'i, LLC

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WAY FORWARD

Creating a Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship Advisory Council

To help facilitate communication and meaningful engagement between landowners, government agencies, and local communities, a neutral party can serve a facilitative role between the different stakeholders. This entity could be responsible for supporting the involvement of lineal and cultural descendants through the historic preservation process. In addition, it could help provide important cultural and historic information to project proponents at the outset of project development, and serve as a direct link with *kia'i* and *'ohana* to gather their

mana'o (thoughts, suggestions) in advance of projects and help disseminate this information to other appropriate parties.

Most importantly, if this party is established, it is imperative that it consists of community leaders with WKS expertise, be a separate entity independent of landowner influence, and have their role and authority formalized in the HRS Chapter 6E historic preservation rules.

Photo: Scott Kanda, courtesy of Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo



PRIORITY THEME

Enhancing Collaborative Management

Many of the Hawaiian community's long-standing issues with land owners, the government, and developers stem from a lack of genuine relationships and trust the community has with these entities. At the core of the issue is that Native Hawaiians want a stronger voice and authority of how their *'āina* and *wahi kūpuna* are managed, cared for, and used. Collaborative Management--the sharing of management authority by multiple parties, across and between sectors including communities, government and other entities such as landowners or nonprofit organizations with Hawaiian practitioners (*Āina Summit Report 2019:19*)--is one way to address these issues.

Currently, there are various forms of co-management/stewardship agreements, such as Curatorship Agreements, Memorandums of Agreements (MOA), Right of Entrees (ROE), and Cooperative Agreements

that are utilized by different land-owners and stakeholders to facilitate community-based access and management of *wahi kūpuna*. However, these agreements are limited and many in the KC believe they are ineffectual because:

- There remains a historical lack of trust between community groups and government agencies/landowners that needs to be addressed and properly healed
- Agreements do not provide clear roles and responsibilities for the community *hui* verses the government agencies/landowners, thus confusion and misunderstandings frequently occur
- The existing models do not fit every community and place and need to take into account place-based and community-based needs

Forms of Community Stewardship Agreements with Various Land Owners

(Data presented is from 2020)

Kamehameha Schools (KS) Community Investing Agreements:

42 Agreements across all major islands except for Ni‘ihau and Kaho‘olawe.

KS ‘Āina Ulu MOAs:

18 Community-based organizations and 5 caretaker collaborations have formalized agreements (leases, licenses or right of entry of varying terms) and 1-2 year MOAs with KS that provide funding in support of education and stewardship activities on KS lands.

State Park Agreements:

10 Community organizations have formal volunteer agreements (5 years) with the DLNR/State Parks to provide volunteer maintenance, interpretation, and restoration for “Cultural Sites” on State lands.

Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Rights of Entry (ROE) Agreements:

2 ROE agreements (Hawaiian Civic Club of Wahiawā at Kūkaniloko, O‘ahu & Maui Campus Hawaiian Studies Depart. at Palauea Cultural Preserve, Maui).

Department of Hawaiian Homelands:

6 License agreements and 6 right-of-entry agreements that allow community associations to access ‘āina for stewardship purposes and caretaking activities.

National Park Service Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Cooperative Agreements:

2 Cooperative Agreements with community organizations (Hui Aloha Kiholo and Nakoa Foundation).

WAY FORWARD

Creating New Strategies to Support Community Stewardship Agreements

Innovative strategies need to be created to better enhance co-management of ‘āina and wahi kūpuna. Such strategies could include:

- Landowners providing more avenues and opportunities for community stewardship agreements
- Adapting the templates of existing successful collaborations as models to be used by other organizations
- Simplifying or streamlining stewardship agreements to apply to all public and private lands
- Legally recognizing pathways to WKS

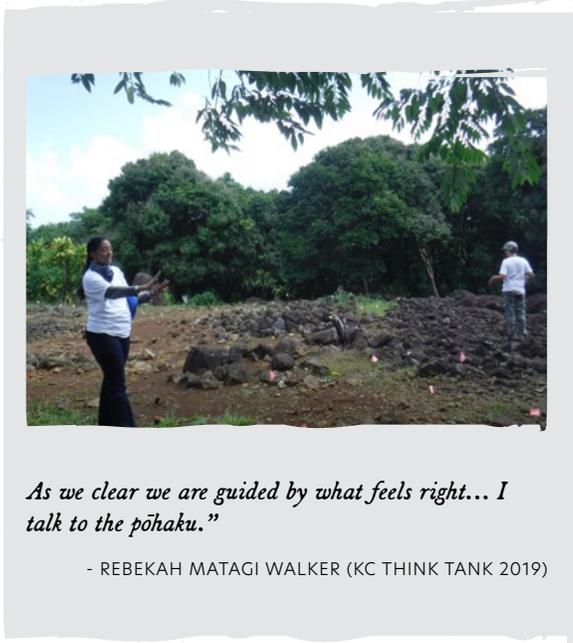
At the 2018 ‘Āina Summit, the topic of enhancing collaborative management was discussed as one of the six core areas of pressing need in Hawai‘i. The ‘Āina Summit called for crafting a common application for community-based traditional and customary stewardship that could “facilitate a common pool of stewardship insurance; while making it easier for communities and agency staff to facilitate community-based traditional and customary stewardship of lands in Hawai‘i” (‘Āina Summit Report 2019:35). A common application or general template would not only benefit community organizations, but also would help private landowners and government entities navigate the process of establishing meaningful community-based stewardship agreements. In addition, it would provide needed protections to address liability issues that tend to prevent landowners in establishing these agreements in the first place.

BRIGHT SPOT

Protecting Wahi Kūpuna Through Collaborative Partnerships: Maunawila Heiau Complex

The stewardship of the 9.08 acre Maunawila Heiau Complex in Hau'ula is a true collaborative effort, with six organizations contributing to the Maunawila Steering Committee: the McGregor 'Ohana (former land owners), Hawaiian Islands Land Trust (HILT), OASES, Ko'olauloa Hawaiian Civic Club, Hau'ula Community Association, Brigham Young University (BYU), and Hau'ula Elementary School. In 2011 community and student groups began the removal of trash and clearing of overgrown vegetation. These efforts continue to be led by HILT and supported by the Hau'ula Community Association and the Ko'olauloa Hawaiian Civic Club.

The property was eventually purchased in 2014 by the HILT with a combination of private funds and grants from the City and County of Honolulu - Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund and the State of Hawai'i - Legacy Land Conservation Program. These partnerships have fostered community engagement and interactions with thousands of guests from around the world. Today students from Hau'ula Elementary, Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Hau'ula, BYU-Hawai'i and Windward Community College are consistent volunteers in maintaining the wahi kūpuna on the property. The Heiau and surrounding wahi kūpuna are now a treasured part of Hau'ula that many can experience and mālama.



Volunteers clearing overgrowth at Maunawila Heiau, O'ahu - Photo: Rebekah Walker



PRIORITY THEME

Empowering Communities to Engage in the Process

If you open the newspaper on any given day, there's likely an article about a community group resisting against some form of development in the islands (e.g. the Thirty Meter Telescope on Maunakea or wind turbines in Kahuku). One of the primary issues behind this reactive stance is because many people feel so separated from the process, and don't know what to do or how to get involved until the construction equipment is ready to roll through their 'āina. Most of the time the community's involvement is limited to superficial consultation about and not management of their wahi kūpuna. This situation leads many to become reactive to issues rather than proactive in their approach.

WAY FORWARD

Creating WKS Resources and Training

One way to address this issue is to create and offer more resources, training opportunities, and tools to inform and educate engaged community members (including students) in WKS-related topics. When surveyed in 2019, members of the KC considered this the most pressing priority to help build community capacity in WKS.

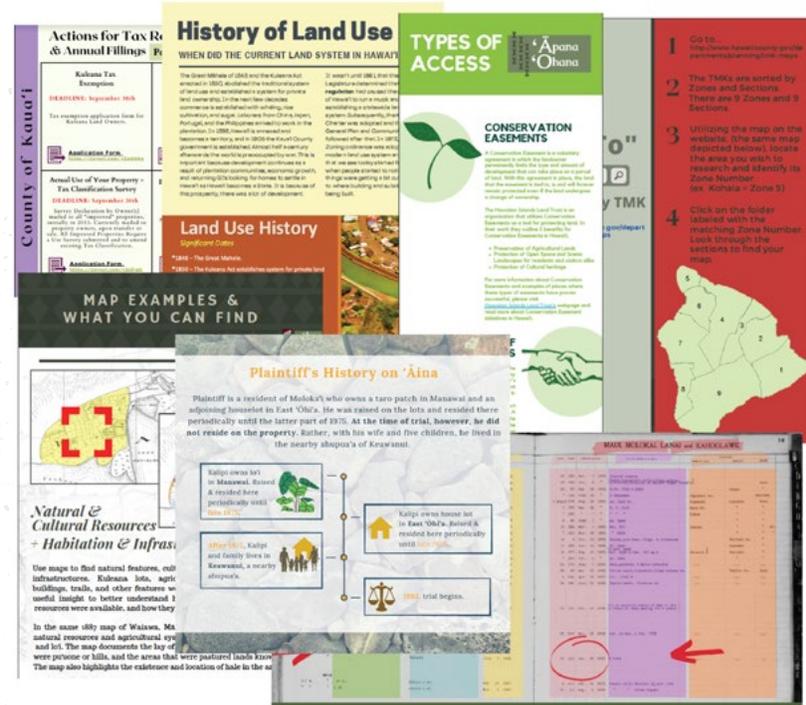
As a direct result of this priority, the KC has been working with a number of Native Hawaiian organizations to create more resources to inform, educate, and support community driven stewardship efforts. In 2019-2020 Huliuaupā'a, with the support of a number of KC members, held virtual workshops with participants from across the pae'āina (Note- workshops were initially planned as in-person gatherings but had to shift due to the COVID-19 pandemic). We partnered with Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (KUA) and OHA to hold 15 virtual workshops for a total of 1,439 community participant hours. Topics for these workshops stemmed directly from KC priority areas including caring for iwi kūpuna, protecting kuleana and 'ohana heir lands, and general WKS training in methods such as ethnohistorical research, historical maps, Māhele research, and community ethnography.

The SHPD has also noted the importance of providing resources and training to the public and has offered to run training classes for interested organizations and communities.

Additionally, there also needs to be a strategic effort to develop more Native Hawaiian and kama'āina specialists in the fields of archaeology, osteology, museum curatorship, planning, and historic preservation, as well as professional

In contemporary land development, the larger community has not been a part of the environmental planning and historic preservation process because they lack the time, money, resources, and the necessary project-related information to fully understand or engage with effectiveness. Commitment to this kuleana requires a lot of time spent reading reports, attending consultation meetings, visiting project areas, and potentially spending time in litigation. And without fair compensation for their time and expertise, it is extremely difficult for community members to meaningfully engage in the process.

development opportunities to get them into these careers. OHA has recently made it a strategic priority to support these efforts as well. In their 2020 Strategic Plan they now have a strategy that supports "strengthened and elevated cultural resource management practices" and a "broadened cadre of cultural resource managers" (Minutes of the OHA Board of Trustees, Sept. 17, 2020).



Community resources created by Huliuaupā'a for the 'Apana 'Ōhāna workshop series - Photo: Huliuaupā'a

BRIGHT SPOT

Training the Next Generation of Wahi Kūpuna Stewards

One program that has spent the past 11 years developing emerging professionals in WKS and simultaneously building community capacity is the Wahi Kūpuna Internship Program (WKIP). The WKIP is a ‘āina, cultural, and community based internship that was created by Nohopapa Hawai‘i and Huliaupa‘a and funded by Kamehameha Schools in 2010 to increase the number of Native Hawaiians and kama‘āina in Hawai‘i’s wahi kūpuna fields as a way to transform the industry and its practices. It follows a logic model that in order to improve the condition of Hawai‘i’s communities and their relationship to wahi kūpuna, a critical mass of home grown wahi kūpuna stewards must be developed. Interns are provided cultural and technical mentoring, professional and leadership development, educational support, and ‘āina field experiences. The program seeks to cultivate the next generation of wahi kūpuna stewards by providing a learning environment that integrates Kanaka ‘Ōiwi culture and Western sciences; where interns are encouraged to respect, appreciate, and utilize their cultural values and practices while conducting WKS projects.

In 2015, the WKIP partnered with the non-profit organization huiMAU in Hāmākua Hikina, Hawai‘i. According to huiMAU Executive Director, No‘eau Peralto, “The WKIP was an important catalyst for change in our community. On a practical level, the work conducted during the WKIP laid the foundation for our organization to engage more deeply in the stewardship of our wahi kūpuna. With no prior archeological

work done in our area, the surveys and ethnohistoric research conducted at our wahi were critical to building our organization’s capacity to steward this wahi kūpuna long-term. On a broader scale, the overall WKIP experience opened our na‘au to seeing further, looking deeper, beyond what the eyes can see today, to unveil the essence of places that inspired our kūpuna to construct sacred spaces within them. This WKIP, was about looking past the physical structures to see the wahi, the ‘āina, the kai, the lani, to try to understand the cultural context in which our kūpuna shaped their landscapes, and to find ourselves in that continuum to rebirth those living sacred landscapes in our own context today.”

“The WKIP has been THE driving force behind the increased numbers of kanaka in the field of heritage management in Hawai‘i. There is no other program that has explicitly focused on, and dedicated resources to, the recruitment and training of kanaka and kama‘āina in stewardship. Through its development of curriculum tailored to place-based learning and community interests, the WKIP is able to show students the importance and relevance of CRM. In this program students practice the community-based approaches they learn about in their academic programs, making tangible connections to the ‘āina and kūpuna.”

-DR. KATHY KAWELU, UH HILO ANTHROPOLOGY PROFESSOR AND WKIP ACADEMIC PARTNER

2018 WKIP Hō‘ike, Hōnaunau, Kona - Photo: Huliaupa‘a



WKIP Student Statistics (2010 - 2020)

100% Native Hawaiian or kama‘āina participants

59 haumāna from 5 Hawaiian Islands

19 currently pursuing their A.A. or B.A.

25 graduated with their B.A.

16 graduated with their M.A.

2 currently pursuing their Ph.D.

