

Project Ka'eo: Executive Summary

The modern Maui resort community known today as Makena has a rich history to offer to the people of Hawaii and beyond. In former times, the scenic coastal area was composed of at least four adjoining traditional land divisions (*ahupua'a*): Papa'anui, Ka'eo, Mo'oloa, and Onau.

Project Ka'eo takes its name from the traditional ahupua'a at the center of modern day Makena and Ulupalakua. Ka'eo is part of the larger district of Honua'ula, in southeast Maui. Ka'eo and Honua'ula are ancient places, connected to a growing body of legends and historical events. The lands of Ka'eo and Honua'ula were visited by seafaring Polynesian explorers before the voyages of Lief Erickson, Marco Polo and the great fleets of Europe ventured forth. Settlements of *kanaka maoli* were established in Ka'eo and Honua'ula before the Crusaders set off for the Holy Land, or the Ming Dynasty began in China.

Project Ka'eo is a research effort, supported by a grant from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and matching funds from Maui Tomorrow Foundation, Inc to enrich the knowledge of present and future generations. Project Ka'eo has endeavored to link information available through archaeological and biological studies, historical and archival research and interviews with knowledgeable community members, to offer a more complete view of Makena's historical and cultural significance over the last millennium.

The Ka'eo Landscape

The lands of Ka'eo presented many desirable features in ancient times. They were blessed with coastal springs, marshes and fishponds as well as sea salt collection and drying areas. Winds and currents were favorable, harbors well sheltered and fishing and shoreline gathering were excellent. Nearby forests provided materials for housing, tools, medicine and canoe building. Large planting areas with sandy loam soil were established early in the second millennium. Ka'eo's people were watched over by venerable spirit guardians such as the mo'o goddess Pu'uoinaina and the shark guardian Kamohoali'i.

The lands of southeastern Maui, were once much wetter, had more springs and ponds and supported abundant forests at lower elevations between AD 1300 and 1800. This is the conclusion of paleo-environmental studies conducted (1997) in the districts of Kula and Kahikinui. The lands of Ka'eo and its neighboring ahupua'a have undergone dramatic shifts in vegetation over the past millennium. Even so, biologically viable sections of the original dryland forest and the culturally important plants they contain still flourish. With this knowledge in mind, paleo-environmental studies would be a vital component of any planning process for the undeveloped lands of modern day Makena. Such studies are needed to determine past native vegetation patterns and the extent and location of former marshlands.

Over the past 30 years, numerous studies of the archaeological, historical and biological resources of Makena have been conducted to meet permitting requirements for golf course, resort and home construction. A number of these studies have concluded that the traditional land division of Ka'eo was likely the most densely populated and farmed region of coastal South Maui.

Past planning documents and policies show a community interest and intention to value South Maui's past, particularly in the Makena/Ka'eo area. In spite of this, records show that the majority of archaeological reviews done throughout the historically significant Ka'eo ahupua'a appear to have been hurried, fragmented or unsupported by adequate archival or ethnological research. This report suggests that it is time to take a new approach.

Ancient Ka'eo

Pre-contact cultural remains in Ka'eo demonstrate the probable existence of several coastal and inland villages. Three of the four villages below have not been formally researched:

- 1.) Makena Complex- shoreline makai of Makena Rd between Pu'u Ola'i and Maluaka Bay
- 2.) Keawala'i Church-Kalani heiau and surrounding site clusters-possible chiefly compound
- 3.) Mo'oiki heiau complex, and around 50 additional sites surrounding the heiau that were last mapped in 1978. Possibly associated with ancient fishponds or marshlands
- 4.) A large agricultural village about half-a mile inland of Pu'u Ola'i, discovered in 1994

Each of these villages show evidence of ceremonial sites, agricultural areas, gathering from both shorelines and forests; the creation of tools and implements for fishing, farming and community life and other traditional cultural practices.

Only a limited amount of reliable radio-carbon dating has been done in the lands of the Ka'eo study area. Although almost 1,000 archaeological features have been recorded in Ka'eo as of 2007, fewer than 40 of these have had testing done. Based upon the information available, use dates for the ancient village sites span the years between AD 1000 and 1800, with highest date concentration between AD 1400-1600.

Ka'eo's Post-Contact History

After western contact, Ka'eo was the home to the first Christian Church established in southeast Maui. Keawakapu/Keawala'i Church and school (c. 1825) served as the "mother church" of Honua'ula into the twentieth century and continues to have a congregation active in community life. During the Kingdom days of Kamehameha I and his successors, the lands of Ka'eo were claimed by many, although deforestation during the sandalwood trade adversely impacted the area's rainfall patterns. During the same early years of the 19th

century, introduced diseases took a heavy toll on the native Hawaiian population, and the name “Makena” (from *Kumakena*- a dirge of mourning or lament) is said to commemorate gatherings at the landing of the same name to mourn family members lost to foreign disease.

The great *mahele*, or division of lands saw the traditional *ahupua'a* of Ka'eo claimed both by native Hawaiian families and an American businessman. The ahupua'a's 1000 acres were split between a local konohiki (land manager) Mahoe, and American entrepreneur Linton Torbert, who founded what would later become Ulupalakua Ranch.

While deforestation, privatization of land, introduction of new plants, animals and diseases changed the lives of Makena's traditional inhabitants; the forces of Hawaii's new plantation economy were shaping Makena's future. The lands of Ka'eo and the bustling port of Makena landing were the centerpiece of Capt. James Makee's famed Rose Ranch from the 1850's to 1880's. The Ranch, which at first grew sugar cane and diverse crops to serve the mainland export trade, eventually concentrated its activities on cattle ranching. Makena was Maui's second busiest seaport up until the late 1880's and the Rose Ranch was a center of employment, commerce and social life for visiting dignitaries and local residents alike.

Territorial Days in Ka'eo

Makena and nearby Kaho'olawe were far from the rising tides of commerce that swept central Maui and Honolulu after the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in the 1890's. In the new Territorial era, Raymond Ranch (Rose Ranch) in Ulupalakua continued to be the region's largest landowner and employer. By 1923 the ranch had a new name, Ulupalakua Ranch, as the Baldwin family, of sugar plantation fame, assumed ownership. Ulupalakua Ranch partnered with cattleman Angus MacPhee in a plan to restore the pasturelands of Kaho'olawe Island for cattle grazing. Around the same era, the first archaeological researchers visited Honua'ula and documented the Kalani heiau and a few other sites around Pu'u Ola'i and Makena Bay. By 1935, Ulupalakua ranch owned the majority of lands in Ka'eo and the surrounding ahupua'a. By the late 1950's the ranch began selling off the first of those lands for the future resort development of Wailea.

The years of WWII saw Makena turn into a military training area, with the majority of local population displaced. The Island of Kaho'olawe, a sacred place in ancient Honua'ula, was commandeered by the US military as a bombing target and remained so for nearly half a century after the war had ended.

Resort Era in Ka'eo

By the early 1970's, the lands of Ka'eo were sold to Japanese investors for Makena Resort hotel, condos and golf course development. Thousands of acres of land were given resort designation in the area's first community planning effort (Kihei Civic Development Plan, 1971.) The Civic Plan emphasized the need to preserve Makena's quiet rural pace of life

and historic sites. However, nearly 8,000 luxury units were proposed for Makena Resort. Local residents did not see the promises of the plan reflected in the actions of Makena's new landowners. Strong community opposition, led by many traditional Makena families, arose when the resort sought permission to close Old Makena Road. Some families supported resort development, however, because it would bring better roads, sewage and water systems.

At the same time, a popular movement developed to return the island of Kaho'olawe to the Hawaiian people. Both these efforts, and the campaign to protect the unspoiled beaches surrounding Pu'u Ola'i, engaged citizens for many years. Legal actions challenging the road closure resulted in settlements that guaranteed a broad public right-of-way, additional public parkland and beach access.

Archaeological Review in Ka'eo

A series of under-funded and rushed archaeological reviews began on Makena Resort Land in 1974. The first survey team covered 71 acres a day and but only mapped around 250 features. Many of these were not reliably relocated again. A review of these studies is summarized in the analyses provided by archaeologist Theresa Donham, in Appendix I of this report.

Thirty years after the process of archaeological review began, there is much yet to be discovered about the lands of Ka'eo. The full scope of Ka'eo's ancient agricultural land use is just beginning to be known. The first major agricultural village to be documented in the Ka'eo study area was not actually discovered until 1985, a decade and eight studies after initial archaeological reviews began in 1974. The second major agricultural village was documented as isolated features for two decades, until a 1994 study mapped the entire 227 features of the two-acre site. Very few of the hundreds of agricultural features discovered in Ka'eo have been carbon-dated. Those few that have show use between AD 1400-1800, but surrounding habitation areas often date earlier.

Ka'eo traditionally had the highest consistent rainfall in the Honua'ula and Kula districts, and therefore, was the area's likely population center, according to cultural studies from the 1990's. Archaeological evidence and old maps suggest that inland marsh areas may have once existed in the lands surrounding Pu'u Ola'i cinder cone. Some may have been adapted for use as fishponds or other aquaculture activities. Several smaller wetlands/fishponds still remain in the coastal portions of this same area.

Project Ka'eo posed a number of questions regarding these inland marshes to help guide future research. Scores of cultural remains and rich cultural deposits associated with a possible mua or men's house were mapped during a brief 1978 archaeological survey of the area surrounding the possible marshlands. A few features were carbon-dated between AD 1300-1700. Were these remains part of an ancient village site that used the marshes for food and fiber? Was the heiau complex of Mo'oiki the spiritual center of this village? What happened to various habitation and ceremonial sites around the heiau, that were

recommended for preservation or further research in 1978? Do these sites and other features of the ancient village still exist?

The lands where these cultural sites were mapped are not currently developed. They have not been referred to in any subsequent archaeological review over the last 30 years. No additional studies of the lands surrounding Mo'oiki heiau have been published. Project Ka'eo proposes this area as worthy of research for protection as a cultural landscape. Housing development is currently being requested for the same lands (c. 50-acres.) A complete archaeological survey of the area, using modern technology, is recommended as the first step to guide decision-making.

The lands of Ka'eo entered a new phase in 2007. 1,800-acres of Makena Resort land came under new ownership. Around 1,400 of these acres are now being proposed for more luxury development, to be designed with a minimized "eco-footprint." Around 500 acres or more of this land has never had any archeological or biological review. This includes sectors which are believed to have substantial native dryland forest remnants.

Paleo-environmental analysis (researching long past biological conditions by microscopic analysis of pollen, seeds, thin charcoal slices and other biological residues from an area) has not yet been done on any Makena lands. In order to understand Ka'eo's ancient history it is necessary to know more about its food resources: fishponds, marshes and agricultural areas through the use of 21st century tools. These areas must be evaluated for potential habitat preservation as part of Ka'eo's cultural landscape.

Research Questions: the Need for Modern Studies of Ancient Ka'eo

When Project Ka'eo first began research in 2005, one aim was to better uncover the history of the ancient fishing village remains designated as the "Makena Complex" in 1973. During the succeeding years, several private developments have eliminated the majority of Makena Complex sites between the shore and Makena Road. Undeveloped lands still remain just inland of the Makena Complex, and these deserve careful archaeological review and scholarly research, especially for subsurface remains.

Project Ka'eo also recommends further research be conducted in the lands surrounding Keawala'i church and Kalani heiau. Growing evidence suggests this as a center of Ka'eo village life, from AD 1000 to 1900, as well as modern times. A rich collection of subsurface cultural remains, spanning a millennium, was found on Keawala'i church grounds during a 1998 archaeological review. The variety and type of artifacts indicated probable use of the area by "high status individuals," such as a chief or chiefess. This has led at least one researcher to suggest that this area was part of a chiefly compound in earlier times.

Other factors support this premise. The sheltered canoe landing fronting the church grounds was known as "*Keawakapu*," connoting a landing place for those of "kapu" or high rank. The church looks out over the remains of 'Apuakehau fishpond. Most ponds are associated with chiefly families. *Kalani heiau* and the nearby *Hale o Papa* (woman's heiau) are located

on land across the road from the church. Historical and legendary accounts, only recently translated, refer to an ancient chief who ruled Honua'ula from Makena. Historians also credit 15th century chief Kauhola (great-grandfather of the legendary warrior chief Umi) and 18th century high Chiefess Kalola (sister of Maui Chief Kahekili) as exercising rule in Honua'ula. Other influential ali'i are believed to have lived and ruled in Ka'eo.

Folk historian Inez MacPhee Ashdown, whose family lived in the region, credited Kauhola with the construction of two heiau and a "sacred coconut grove" in the area just east and south of Keawala'i Church. The two heiau described by Ashdown in 1970 were dismissed by some as legends, but both have now been identified and had some study. Coincidentally, each has features dating to the era of Chief Kauhola. Will further research discover remains of the 15th century royal coconut grove, ulumaika field and the village where priests and royal retainers lived and worked, surrounding the heiau? These were all described by Ashdown and may very well have existed. The lands around Kalani heiau are currently planned for a shopping center and condos. Most were last surveyed for cultural sites in 1979. This heart of Ka'eo's spiritual heritage also deserves careful study as a potential cultural landscape.

Improving Cultural Preservation and Educational Efforts in Ka'eo

Project Ka'eo suggests that a new model of cultural review, evaluation and preservation should be adopted for this extremely significant and heavily visited region. The current approach in the Ka'eo lands is to set aside a few chosen cultural sites as representative of the entire cultural landscape which once surrounded them. These sites are often selected by paid consultants, on the basis of their convenience to proposed development plans, rather than any connection to the area's long-term history or native families. In order to transition from this limited strategy to one that will fulfill the vision that launched the modern Makena community, a new approach is needed. The emerging concept of cultural resource preservation planning based upon a Cultural Landscape model offers just that option.

Some significant cultural sites have, unfortunately, been destroyed in by past development projects in Makena. Still, the remaining sites of Ka'eo are worthwhile and numerous. They hold stories that are yet to be told. Ka'eo, like Kaho'olawe, and many other places of great significance, have important pieces of information about their past remaining to be revealed. If the diverse sites and features can be preserved and re-linked into a larger picture, a cultural landscape, they have a chance to reveal those stories to generations that follow. For this to happen, four important recommendations must be pursued:

Land use management actions and decisions need to support the idea of an ahupua'a-based cultural landscape preservation area.

Management of this cultural landscape needs to be a community effort guided by a broad base of community members and Hawaiian cultural practitioners, involving multi-generations in both research and maintenance of these legacy sites.

Further studies are needed, utilizing the best technology has to offer, to give a true picture of the area and its past. These would include paleo-environmental review, updated mapping, and archival and ethnographic studies;

Land-use decisions must be based on a broader view of site significance, a view based upon a cultural landscape perspective. The importance of the historic era (post-1778) in Makena must also be preserved or a significant portion of Maui's history will be lost.

As J. Mikilani Ho states in her essay on Preservation Issues, A Vision of the Future:

“It may be difficult for some to see ‘just another pile of rocks ‘ as a Hawaiian sacred place. They are more than remnants of the distant past; they are enduring reminders of Hawaiian identity, a rich heritage left by kupuna. Preservation of pre-contact sites assures future generations of Hawaiians the tangible presence of their own history, one that can be experienced as an immediate reality, rather than as an abstraction in book. Ideally, more than the physical edifice remains; its spirit and vitality continue living as well” (Pana O’ahu, 1999, Introduction: xxix)