***Ke Kukulu Ahu: Aha Moku Advisory Committee Strategic Plan***

***Integrating Traditional Hawaiian Resource Management and Best Practices into a Contemporary Framework***

***From the Foundation, We Build***

**Mai Ke Kahua E Kukulu Ai: Historical Foundation**

In the late 1990’s and early 2000’s, concern over the conditions of the ecosystem of the main Hawaiian Islands by Native Hawaiian resource practitioners reached a critical point. In the need to protect and sustain the lands and oceans of Hawaii which had been decimated in the steady push towards economic stability for the populace of the islands, the lands itself were rapidly declining from vibrant and thriving to steadily waning. It was clear that scientific methods, although successful to a degree was not enough to sustain the resource needs of the general population, and specifically could not maintain the resources as needed by the indigenous people of Hawaii, the kanaka maoli.

Native Hawaiian resource practitioners from each of the main Hawaiian Islands, although historically territorial, were concerned enough to gather to address the problem. This was historical in itself because although the Native Hawaiians were one culture, the different islands were autonomous in their island practices. Fundamentally, they did not share knowledge of the specific resource methodology as it was based on the geography of their districts and the resources they depended upon.

Apprehension among the kanaka maoli grew as government, in their eagerness to halt this resource decline, began to create more and more conservation districts, particularly in the near shore and ocean areas inadvertently, and effectively taking away subsistence fishing and gathering areas upon which Hawaiians depend.

***Ho’ohanohano I Na Kupuna Puwalu Series***

In 2006, the Native Hawaiian practitioners, in partnership with the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Council (Wespac), along with the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the Hawaii State Coastal Zone Management, the Hawaii Tourism Authority and the Kamehameha Schools convened the Ho’ohanohano I Na Kupuna Puwalu Series in order to enable Hawaiians and others to take a more active and supportive role in the management of their natural resources.

Gathering was the expert native Hawaiian cultural and traditional practitioners versed in lawai’a and mahiai, ocean and land ahupua’a methods. The focus of the series was taken from the meaning of its title – Ho’ohanohano I Na Kupuna – to honor and bring forth the wisdom of the kupuna and ancestors through the mana’o of current practitioners. Thus, to explore the empirical knowledge handed down from generation to generation on traditional fishing and agriculture methods so that the natural resources could continue to be protected through the inclusion of Hawaiian perspectives, as they have been for thousands of years.

From these Puwalu, or conferences, a *binding theme emerged*. In order to protect and revitalize the resources of Hawai’i, we would bring forth the successful traditional management practices of indigenous Hawaiians important to the State of Hawaii and to federal agencies. [[1]](#footnote-1)

Promoting the *ho’i hou*, or return to using ‘localized and indigenous’ management methodology of *all* resources at the first Puwalu became the catalyst for future Puwalu planning. The first vital task would be *developing and maintaining a process to uphold and continue Hawaiian and traditional land and ocean practices.* The ‘Aha Kiole community organizational model of pre-western contact Hawai’i was endorsed as a viable structure for moving the vision forward, especially since it was configured to reach out to all of the people through a communication network of identified moku (ancient Hawaiian land division areas).

After designating the ‘Aha Kiole structure as the suitable ‘*umeke* for the communication and exchange of information between moku and mokupuni, the vision of developing and maintaining the process of traditional Hawaiian best management practices continued. A Mission Statement that focused on these goals was ratified and followed.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Each subsequent Puwalu centered on themes relevant to reaching the goal of *malama’aina* through action and behavior consistent with traditional Hawaiian methodologies. [[3]](#footnote-3)

**Po Ka Maika’i, Holomua Ka Aku**

*(The Blessing to Move Forward)*

***Ka Pila 212* - *Act 212***

From the start of the ‘Aha Moku Initiative, there was a fundamental realization that changes would need to be made regarding public attitudes as well as current processes in how Hawai’i deals with its resources. Disseminating information, educating and locating experts to indoctrinate the public to return to a better way to care for the ‘aina would be one arm of the task toward making meaningful changes. The other arm concerned implementation of policy-affecting measures at the governmental level. Throughout the Puwalu Series, organizers and participants worked toward the goal of creating and refining a bill that would define and guide the way in which the ‘Aha Moku could bring forward traditional Hawaiian best practices that would stay true to traditional values yet be integrated with contemporary policies that regulate resource policies today.

In 2007, Act 212 (SB 1853), A Bill for an Act Relating to Native Hawaiians that formulated these goals was signed into law by Governor Linda Lingle.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The Aha Moku System originated in ancient times, yet it contains a structure that can, in all likelihood, *best* support a community and cultural consultation process whereby localities are understood to be the most qualified to determine and maintain their own ecological well-being. Crafted in its original form by Hawaiian practitioners hoping to convey the unparalleled competence of ancient caretakers of the ‘aina, Act 212 captures the authentic manner in which the Aha Moku System was intended to function in order to be the most productive. However, there have been amendments to the original Act consisting of largely administrative additions that moved toward greater compatibility with the contemporary governmental framework.

**Ka Pila 288 – Act 288**

Resulting from the amendments to Act 212, yet keeping the intent, language and goals of the body, Act 288 additionally defined the Aha Moku System which requires its Advisory Committee to participate in coordinating, educating, advocating and reporting for its communities.

Act 288 (HB 2806) was signed into law on July 9, 2012 by Governor Neil Abercrombie and established the Aha Moku Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Act is “to formally recognize the aha moku system and to establish the aha moku advisory committee within the department of land and natural resources, which may serve in an advisory capacity to the chairperson of the board of land and natural resources.” The Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC) may advise on issues related to land and natural resources management through the Aha Moku System, a system of best practices that is based upon the indigenous resource management practices of moku (regional) boundaries, which acknowledges the natural contours of land, the specific resources located within those areas, and the methodology necessary to sustain resources and the community.

The Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC) may provide advice to the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources on the following:

1. Integrate indigenous resource management practices with western management practices in each moku;
2. Identify a comprehensive set of indigenous practices for natural resource management;
3. Foster the understanding and practical use of native Hawaiian resource knowledge, methodology, and expertise;
4. Sustain the State’s marine, land, cultural, agricultural, and natural resources;
5. Provide community education and foster cultural awareness on the benefits of the Aha Moku System;
6. Foster protection and conservation of the State’s natural resources; and
7. Develop an administrative structure that oversees the Aha Moku System.

Further, the committee shall submit an annual report in English and Hawaiian to the legislature and the chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular legislative session. The annual report shall include a list of all recommendations made by the committee and the resulting action taken by the department over the course of the prior year.

Both the Aha Moku System and Act 288 promote a shared objective of integrating Hawaiian ‘ike (knowledge) and encouraging community-based management that points to a two-fold process that is systemic rather than separate: The AMAC may advise the DLNR in matters pertaining to Hawaiian resource knowledge (by law) *and* The AMAC po’o will engage their communities as active participants in matters related to resource health, and promoting Hawaiian knowledge and practices through education (by ‘Aha Moku system requirements). This essential two-fold process requires an involvement by the AMAC po’o in both the state DLNR as well as the individual island community organizational venues.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Two-pronged Strategy for Success**  **Implementing Community-Based Hawaiian Management of State Resources** | | |
| **Source** | **Aha Moku System Requirements** | **Act 288 Requirements** |
| Leadership Duties | AMAC Kiole  Increases understanding of DLNR Administrative Rules   * Increases understanding of DLNR divisions, strategic plan * Participates in DLNR events and promotes community building * Coordinates and conducts island consultations with moku Po’o and others so that all have same understanding of each resource * Promotes Hawaiian Traditional practices and knowledge for resource sustainability * Reports and discusses problem-solving strategies for island resource issues * Establishes programs and projects aimed at increasing awareness of responsible stewardship * Ensures that Administrative Rules, Title 13, are compatible with Native Hawaiian resource ecosystem values and methodologies | AMAC Kiole   * Integrate indigenous resource management with western management practices in each moku; * Identify indigenous practices for natural resource management; * Foster understanding of NH resource knowledge, methodology, expertise; * Sustains State natural resources; * Provide education and cultural awareness on moku system; * May advise DLNR regarding indigenous peoples’ methodology for resource management * Consults with AMAC board, executive director and DLNR/BLNR * Submits annual report to the Chair of the BLNR and to the Legislature |
| Outcome | A stronger rapport between DLNR, Hawaiian communities and the general public can be achieved when common understanding is reached. The gap between western science (under which DLNR operates) and Hawaiian science (under which Native Hawaiian resource practitioners operate), through the Aha Moku System, must be bridged.  Communities can become participants in the management of their local ecosystems. They may relieve some of the burden of state concerns in their areas by taking responsibility as citizens, and through education may affect change with more conscientious behaviors. | The DLNR will have not only a communication network at hand for better interaction regarding community issues, but it will have as well a knowledge source of traditional Hawaiian best practices as alternatives for handling current resource issues that are problematic or ineffective.  The Native Hawaiian values on natural and cultural resource will become embedded into the fabric of state policy. |

**Diagram for AMAC Kiole Responsibilities**

DLNR/BLNR

Legislature

Moku and ‘Ahupua’a

Community Collaboration

**Aha Moku Advisory Council Po'o**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organize**  **Create a framework for community consultation** | **Share**  **Connect Knowledge to Community and General Public** | **Educate**  **Create Learning Opportunities** | **Integrate**  **Bridge Current Western and Traditional Best Practices** |

**Aha Moku - E Paepae I Na Pohaku**

**(The Gathering of the Stones)**

The ‘Aha Moku began from an ancient Moloka’i system used on all islands dating from the 9th century as translated from oral histories. Called the ‘Aha Kiole, this land/ocean resource management system helped each island community maintain its resources through a community consultation process. The konohiki and experts in various disciplines of natural resource knowledge convened regularly in order to assess and deal with needs of the ecosystem. The Puwalu series brought the ancient system to light as a format for contemporary practitioners to revitalize their practices with an emphasis on regaining depleted resources, restoring unproductive areas, and enlightening the next generation of caretakers.

This restoration generated at the Puwalu evolved into the adoption and implementation of a modified Aha Moku structure starting from the Lepo Popolo (‘ahupua’a and moku residents- the people) to ‘Ahupua’a and Moku leaders, and finally, the Mokupuni leadership. This organizational structure became the catalyst for determining how to proceed with these new (but ancient) guidelines for communication with the people themselves. The ‘Aha Moku system will provide a system for people to assess and monitor their own areas, relearn successful techniques for insuring a steady supply of resources and caring for the ‘aina, and it also gives the people a “place to go” with their concerns. Additionally, it has given rise to a more effective way of being heard- as a collective rather than individual voice.

While the basic structure remains as *people to moku leaders to island Po’o*, each island has a unique demographic that requires different handling. Some of the more populated islands are finding the need to seek established Hawaiian organizations through which they can more effectively function. In terms of internal organization, the ‘Aha Moku system follows each islands lead, and does not limit the approach to a firm set of rules. ***This flexibility of meeting individual island needs for a workable arrangement is the heart of the ‘Aha Moku system***. The goal of each island is to determine a reliable network through which communication can occur and better practices can be advocated.

[](http://www.clker.com/clipart-generic-group-symbol.html)Ahupua’a Level[](http://www.clker.com/clipart-generic-group-symbol.html)

Ke Ala Lepo Popolo: Mana’o of the People



Moku Representative Level

Ke Ala Paepae Honua ‘Ahai Moku

Moku Representative meets with ahupua’a residents and brings moku information, needs and concerns to and from Aha Moku



Department of Land and Natural Resources

And

Hawaii State Legislature

‘Aha Moku Advisory Committee Level

Ke Ala Moku:

* Made up of Chair and Vice Chair, Island Po’o and Executive Director
* Liaison for Moku Concerns and Process Implementation
* Advisory to the DLNR on issues related to Natural Resources
* Communication with the Hawaii State Legislators

**E Pa’a Maila Ke Kahua, Lokahi Ka Na Lahui**

**(Strengthen the Foundation, Unite the Nation)**

Island communities have begun to establish their moku councils and leadership. The various islands have discerned their own operational configurations such as meeting venues, meeting style and conduct, decision-making, and so forth- internal matters are best handled with what works for the island community. But the basic ‘Aha Moku communication structure throughout the state of Hawai’i remains as Lepo Popolo (people) - Ahupua’a- Moku- Island-State.

At the level of operation that oversees statewide business, however, there are matters that would be most prudently handled systematically or in the same way statewide- to promote efficiency, to gain validity, and to signify accord. ***Lokahi*** *is the hallmark of the Aha Moku Advisory Council’s Strategic plan because its meaning indicates a pulling together to work for a common cause.*

While each island may have individual internal operations, effective interaction with state and county agencies and the DLNR for sharing information, for example, would require procedures that link the island councils as a group seeking a common goal. A common issue reporting form for all mokupuni would ease the process of translation by the DLNR and contain only agency-related information, rather than a collection of fragmented and unrelated reports.

The wisdom of *Lokahi* as a tool for organization is evident in other areas as well. Unity of purpose in AMAC goal-related programs and projects, collaboration with other Hawaiian agencies, and educational plans would demonstrate a consistency of operation among the many communities. [[5]](#footnote-5)

**Aha Moku Advisory Committee – Ke Ahi Pio’ole**

**(Strategic Plan – The Eternal Flame Continues)**

Presented is a matrix of the significant focus areas needed to implement a successful community conservation effort. It lists first the mandatory areas listed in Act 288 and represents the AMAC strategic plan of action that is designed to complement the advisory role we have to the DLNR. We wish to execute both roles competently and effectively, and to co-exist as a bridge that can integrate traditional Hawaiian resource management and Best Practices into the contemporary state framework of management.

| **No.** | **Act 288** | **Function** | **Description** | **Resources**  **Tools** | **Implementation**  **Timeframe** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Integrate indigenous resource management practices with western management practices in each moku | 1. Revitalize Traditions | Important and known practices shared so that people become aware of the time-honored *Lawena* of resource management, showcasing methods, traditions, practitioners, *wahi pana*, and important traditional gathering areas | magazine articles  newspaper articles  calendars  TV, DVDs  educational pamphlets  curriculum  student interns | Begin September 2013  On-going |
| 2 | Identify a comprehensive set of indigenous practices for natural resource management | 1. Unify Traditional Moku   Statewide | Create a set of cohesive attributes statewide for divisions, expectations, *kanawai,* regarding resource management in the state and county plans.  Definition of the collective and larger standards at a statewide level that will demonstrate a unified and organized approach, from which individual community and island structures can be modified | Hawaii County Plan  Maui County Plan  City & County of Honolulu Plan  Kauai County Plan  DLNR, Admin Rules  Legislature | Begin July 2013  Complete by June 2014 |
| 3 | Foster understanding and practical use of NH resource knowledge, methodology and expertise | F. Publicize Successes  Work with establishments | Successful outcomes of island efforts are made visible. Result is that DLNR, state, public, and agencies/organizations are aware of the positive impact to resource protection and cultural preservation.  Attend community meetings. | Website  Social Media  Media  Reports | Begin in September 2013 |
| 4 | Sustain state’s marine, land, cultural, agricultural, natural resources | C. Unify Process for Reporting Issues | Create an integrated process for reporting issues for all islands to result in a uniform format at the state level demonstrating an organized channel from which information is presented to the DLNR. And BLNR. | Reporting form | July 2013 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5 | Provide community education; foster cultural awareness on benefits of the Aha Moku System | H. Educate the Next Generation, general public, community groups | As Hawaiians, one of the most important duties we have is to pass on to our children the Kuleana of perpetuating cultural practices and fostering an innate responsibility to care for the ‘aina. Meet with educational leaders to explain the importance of site-specific resource management.  Meet with community groups and leaders to explain the Aha Moku System | Create curriculum for schools that include state (common core) standards.  Create informative media (video, web site, interactive dvd)  mele, oli, hula  training in practices  Moon calendar  Leadership training | Begin October 2013, Continue in FY 2014/15 |
| 6 | Foster protection and conservation of the State’s natural resources | 1. Work with DLNR Hawaiian Groups, Environment & Conservation, | Recognition and support of DLNR is gained by fostering collaborative interactions related to resource management concerns.  Support and collaboration from existing Hawaiian organizations and others on Aha Moku System | DLNR Divisions,  Hui Malama ‘o Mo’omomi Resource Management Plan,  Hawaiian Civic Clubs  Neighborhood Boards | Begin in October 2013 after 2013 Mokupuni meetings are held (August) |
| 7 | Develop an administrative structure that oversees the aha moku system | 1. Create Protocol for Advisory Group, Aha Moku Councils, Ahupua’a   Solidify the organization of the Island Aha Moku Councils. | A clear and definitive set of protocols (process) is created underscoring the importance of our intent to represent an authoritative and knowledgeable body of resource management experts based on traditional Aha Kiole principles.  Re-organization of moku and ahupua’a councils that are site specific  Organization of general public into ahupua’a/moku communities | Code of conduct  Purpose and Focus  Mission Statement/ Vision Statement/ Objectives: Traditions: Pule, Oli,  Decision-making Process | Island Moku/Mokupuni meetings: July, August, September 2013 |
| 1. Budget | Development of a **5**-year budget projection that will encompass the needs of the AMAC and the individual islands to ensure success in its mandates and permanence within the state system; | Identification of and research on the needs of the individual islands and AMAC organizational needs | July 2013 |
| 1. Annual Puwalu | Organize and implement an annual Puwalu, prior to the submittal of the legislative report. Construction of the Puwalu must be open to the public. | Collaboration with other agencies, organizations | September 2013 |
|  |  | 1. Administrative Rules | Standardize Native Hawaiian practices specific to each island (general) and study where these practices are impacted by Title 13, Administrative Rules for the Dept. of Land and Natural Resources | Title 13  Hawaii Revised Statutes | Begin in July 2013  On-going |

1. This theme was being realized as an essential element of responsible stewardship at the national level as indicated in fisheries management edicts provided by the Mangnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act (MSFCMA). Recognition by Congress that fisheries management needed to become decentralized, and would better served by people local to the areas was one important new step in response to the problem of resource depletion. The other step that would spearhead the movement toward better fisheries management in the State of Hawai’i was the call to form cooperative partnerships with indigenous people. *“Of particular concern during the MSFCMA Reauthorization will be cooperative management of marine fisheries (i.e. partnership with the federal government in establishing policy and determining management goals, which they believe fosters economic vitality, environmental health, and rational management of natural resources.”* Maguson-Stevens Fisher-Conservation Management Reauthorization 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mission Statement of 2006: To incorporate appropriate native Hawaiian knowledge and protocols for the preservation, cultivation, and management of all native Hawaiian natural and cultural resources for future generations. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Puwalu Ekahi: Lae’ula (Experts),**August 15-17, 2006, Convention Center, Honolulu:* Perpetuate and preserve the generational knowledge of indigenous practitioners through the continuation of the konohiki management, the kapu system, and the restoration of the aha moku and the ahupua’a management system.

   *Puwalu ‘Elua: Ke Kumu Ike Hawai’i (Educators), November 8-9, 2006, Pacific Beach Hotel, Honolulu:* Focus on the values and the spiritual connection between natural resources and native Hawaiians: the ahupua’a concept; generational knowledge; the importance of place names and mo’olelo; seasonal closures and lunar calendars; the Northwest Hawaiian Islands; konohiki connections; marine protected areas and upena (nets). Place-based kapu, limu and pu’uhonua concepts to be developed as an educational framework to integrate this knowledge into curricula for all public, private, charter and Hawaiian immersion schools in Hawaii.

   *Puwalu ‘Ekolu: Lawena Aupuni (Policymakers), December 19-20, 2006, Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu:* Agreed upon those statutes, ordinances, and a framework for community consultation using the Hawaiian perspective and traditional methods such as the ahupua’a management system is needed. Establish the Aha Moku System.

   *Puwalu ‘Eha: Kukulu Ka Upena (Building the Structure*) *April 10-11, 2007, Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu:* Its goal was to structure the Aha Moku, flesh out its components and identify key resource issues that specifically affect individual moku. Further, ahupua’a listed in existing governmental survey maps were updated with previously undocumented ahupua’a boundaries commonly known to Hawaiian practitioners and their ‘ohana, but never before put in writing.

   *Puwalu ‘Elima: E Ho’oni I Nā Kai ‘Ewalu! E Ho’āle Ka Lepo Pōpolo! (Stir up the Eight Seas! Rise up the Makaainana!)October 31 – November 1, 2007, Pagoda Hotel, Honolulu:* Its goal was to solidify the Hawaiian methods for ecosystem sustainability, prepare for community outreach and begin the process for the Aha Moku Systems.

   *Ho’o Lei Ia Pae’Aina (Throw the net to bring everyone together in Hawai’i), November 19-20, 2011, Pagoda Hotel, Honolulu:* Its goal was to complete the process to integrate Native Hawaiian traditional best practices in natural resource management into the fabric of Hawaii State regulatory policy and to render recommendations for a consultation process through the restored Aha Moku System, a system dating back to the 9th century prior to the arrival of Paoa. The Ho’o Lei Ia Pae’Aina was the culmination of separate puwalu held throughout the summer of 2010 on the eight main Hawaiian islands. At each of the individual island puwalu, lawaia (fishermen), mahiai (farmers), environmentalists, educators, organizations, agencies and members of the general public participated in discussions that focused on the management of natural and cultural resources in Hawaii. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Act 212, Signed into Law by Governor Linda Lingle on May 9, 2007.

   Report Title: *‘Aha Moku Councils*

   Description: *Establishes an ‘aha kiole advisory committee to provide a framework on the formation of an ‘aha moku council commission that shall serve as in an advisory capacity on all matters regarding the management of the State's natural resources. Appropriates funds for the advisory committee to carry out its duties.*

   “The purpose of this Act is to initiate the process to create a system of best practices that is based upon the indigenous resource management practices of moku (regional) boundaries, which acknowledges the natural contours of the land, the specific resources located within those areas, and the methodology necessary to sustain resources and the community. The ‘aha moku council system will foster understanding and practical use of knowledge, including native Hawaiian methodology and expertise, to assure responsible stewardship and awareness of the interconnectedness of the clouds, forests, valleys, land, streams, fishpond, and sea. The council system will include use of community expertise and establish programs and projects that improve communication, education, provide training on stewardship issues throughout the region (moku), and increase education.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In a study of 12 different Native American Resource Advisory Councils from various areas of the United States and Canada, they all contained common initiatives related to work carried out by the Councils themselves. They all worked toward accomplishing the unifying themes of education, community help programs, and most evidently- reclaiming environmental health using indigenous practices. Lokahi was at the forefront of these efforts, most especially because interest was an essential element for the success of their programs. We hope to emulate their success stories [↑](#footnote-ref-5)