

## Lā'au (Plants)

As you walk through Lapakahi, you will see plants which are sources of food, building materials, medicines, and various implements. Many of these plants were brought to Hawai'i on the Polynesian voyaging canoes and are called canoe plants. See how many of these plants you can find.



**Ma'oa.** The native cotton plant grows well in arid coastal areas. The seeds are covered by reddish-brown fibers that resemble cotton. It has a bright yellow flower and the leaves are used to make dyes. What you see in the park is a hybrid created to improve disease resistance and drought tolerance.



**Milo.** This is a popular shade tree planted around Hawaiian homes on the coast. It has heart-shaped leaves and yellow flowers that bloom throughout the year. The round fruit contains the woolly seeds. The wood is polished and made into bowls and canoe paddles.



**Hinahina kahakai.** Grows close to the ground on rocky surfaces. The leaves are grayish green with fine silky hairs. The tight rosettes of leaves contain small white fragrant flowers. The hinahina is used in lei-making and also has a medicinal value.



**Ilima.** Found on all islands, this low-growing shrub is common in coastal, dry areas. The small leaves can reflect the harsh sun and tolerate salt spray. 'Ilima flowers bloom year round. The buds and bark of the root have medicinal values.



**Niu (Coconut).** The niu is one of the most important plants brought on the canoes because of its many uses. The fronds are woven into baskets and mats while the nut is a source of food and drink. The husk fibers are spun into cordage and bowls are made from the inner shell.

## Marine Life Conservation District

The 146 acres offshore of Lapakahi were designated a Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD) in 1979 because of the rich diversity of coral and fish along this North Kohala coast. The boundary of the MLCD extends 500 feet from the shoreline and an abundance of coral and fishes are found near this boundary at a depth of about 60 to 80 feet. The Lapakahi shoreline is mostly rocky lava outcrops with a few coral rubble beaches.

Swimmers and snorkelers should stay within Koai'e Cove as strong currents exist just beyond the MLCD boundary. Always use caution in the ocean and do not touch or take any marine life, coral, or sand.

### COMMON FISH & CORAL AT LAPAKAHI



**Lauwiliwili nukunuku 'oi'oi**  
Forcepsfish

These butterflyfish are recognized by their long snouts used for probing crevices for small invertebrates. They can sometimes be seen swimming upside down on cave ceilings.



**Lau'i pala**  
Yellow Tang

One of the most iconic fish in Hawai'i, these brightly colored surgeonfish are seen as individuals or in schools. They graze on algae, including algae on the shell of the green sea turtle.



**Ko'a**  
Cauliflower Coral

This coral is found in high energy environments where it thrives due to its rugged skeletal structure. When a lava flow reaches the sea it is typically the first coral to colonize the new lava.

Photo Credit: William Walsh & Linda Preskitt

### USE CAUTION IN THE OCEAN!



**SHARP CORALS!**  
Corals are alive and fragile. Never step on coral as they will die.



**STRONG CURRENT!**  
You could be swept away from shore and could drown.



**DANGEROUS SHOREBREAK!**  
Waves break in shallow water. Serious injuries could occur, even in small surf.

## Ē Komo Mai

Come inside our village and experience life on this leeward coastline of Kohala. Let the beating of the waves against the shore and the feel of the wind blowing down the slopes, take you back in time.

You are discovering Lapakahi as the early settlers did more than 700 years ago. As they sailed into Koai'e Cove, they rejoiced at the opportunity to safely land their canoes. The rolling hills and gulches sheltered this cove from the strong Kohala wind. The sea was rich in food and the soil nurtured their crops. Black stone walls and golden thatched roofs soon appeared on the landscape. Smoke from cooking fires filled the air. Canoes sailed from the beach and returned laden with fish.



As the village prospered, the 'ohana (families) moved inland to grow their crops of kalo (taro) and 'uala (sweet potato). 'Ohana along the shore (makai) traded fish for kalo from the uplands (mauka). Pa'akai (salt from the sea) was taken mauka while olonā plants were brought makai to make nets and fishing line. A trail curbed with stones connected mauka and makai and

the people of Lapakahi travelled this trail exchanging the riches of the land and sea. This connection made Lapakahi a true ahupua'a (traditional mauka to makai land division).

Lapakahi was a place of the maka'āinana, the fishermen and farmers. They worked hard to sustain the resources and support their 'ohana. We will never know everything about these people of Lapakahi, but what they left behind gives us an insight into their daily lives.

# LAPAKAHI STATE HISTORICAL PARK



North Kohala,  
Hawai'i Island



PARK HOURS: 8:00am to 4:00pm

No park entry after 3:30pm

Closed State Holidays



FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Dept. of Land & Natural Resources

Division of State Parks

(808) 327-4958 (Kona Parks Office)

(808) 961-9540 (Hilo District Office)

Website: [www.hawaii.stateparks.org](http://www.hawaii.stateparks.org)

The trail through Lapakahi village consists of 2 loops. Starting at the trailhead, the main 0.5-mile loop takes you to a canoe hālau, salt-making pans, and the major walled habitation complex along the shoreline of Koai'e Cove. Learn more about life at Lapakahi by continuing on the second 0.3-mile loop to the north.

- 1. Curbed Trail.** A stone-lined trail begins here and runs upslope. It links the mauka (upland) and makai (seaward) portions of the ahupua'a.
- 2. Burial Site.** This large rock-filled platform contains multiple burials.
- 3. House Site.** Originally built as a housesite, this site was abandoned in the early 1800s and later used as a burial site.
- 4. Hālau Wa'a.** A thatched roof covered this long, walled enclosure where the canoes were stored. The canoe landing is located nearby.

**5. Historic House.** This is a reconstructed housesite built with a bamboo frame and pili grass thatching. The house was occupied into the early 1900s.



**6. Ku'ula.** Whether his catch was large or small, the fisherman always gave a portion to the fishing god who lived in this stone. In return, he received fish in abundance.

**7. Well.** A well was dug to provide a dependable supply of water. The lowering of the water table in the late 1800s may be one reason the people left Lapakahi.

**8. Salt Making.** Sea water was poured into hollowed-out stones and the sun evaporated the water, leaving pa'akai (salt crystals). Salt was used to preserve fish and season food.



- Primary 0.5-mile Loop Trail
- Secondary 0.3-mile Loop Trail

**9. Hale (house).** These stacked rock walls are the remnants of a large residential complex that housed many 'ohana. The walls supported a pole frame structure and a roof of thatched pili grass.

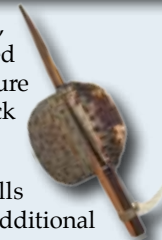


Hawaiian Historical Society

**10. Papamū.** The game of kōnane (checkers) is played on this stone board. Game pieces are black and white pebbles.



**11. Shoreline Fishing.** At Koai'e Cove, the fisherman launched and landed their canoes. They used the luhe'e lure made with a cowry shell and rock sinker to catch the he'e (octopus).



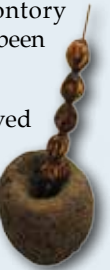
**12. Hālau Wa'a.** Only the rock walls remain from this structure where additional canoes were stored near the shore.

**13. Mua (Family heiau).** This religious site was where prayers and offerings were made by an 'ohana.

**14. Ko'a (fishing shrine).** Offerings were left at this site to ensure an abundance from the sea. It may have also served as a marker for fishermen to line up their fishing grounds with places on shore.

**15. Heiau.** This religious site with its impressive retaining wall is located on a promontory overlooking Koai'e Cove. The walls have been recently restored.

**16. Hale.** The floor of these houses are paved with 'ili'ili (rounded basalt pebbles) that would be covered by lauhala mats. In the wall is a waihona kukui (lamp stand). The oil from the kukui nut was burned in a stone bowl for light.



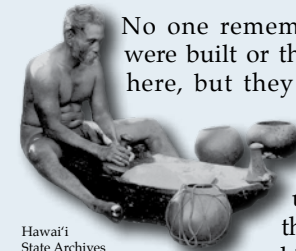
**17.** From this bluff, the fishermen watch the changing signs of the ocean. The presence and movement of every bird, fish, and marine mammal is important.



When schools of akule were spotted, nets were laid from the canoes to surround and catch the fish.

**18. Hale.** The scatter of marine shells on the floors of these houses are from past meals. A variety of shellfish complemented the diet of fish and poi.

**19. Rock Shelter.** At various times, rock shelters were used for habitation and protection from the wind and rain. The early settlers probably lived in such shelters before building their thatched hale.



Hawai'i State Archives

No one remembers when these walls were built or the people who first lived here, but they probably came for the abundance of the sea. As the population grew, people moved to the uplands to grow kalo (taro) that was pounded into poi and traded for fish.

Help preserve Hawai'i's past for the future.

*E mālama no kēia mua aku*

Follow in the footsteps of those who came before.

Enjoy your visit to Lapakahi, but please show respect and help us preserve this special place.



- Do not move rocks.
- Stay on the designated trail and do not short-cut.
- Do not climb or sit on the rock walls as they can collapse.