

Casera Silva Kaua‘i marine 2nd Hanalei, Hā‘ena & Wainiha

Kaua‘i has always had a special place in my heart, especially the North side. Hā‘ena and Wainiha is a small community of people that consist of beautiful trails, waterfalls, and scenery that you’ll pass by when heading down to the “end of the road beach.” Not only is Hā‘ena the westernmost ahupua‘a of the Halele‘a district, but is also dominated by cliffs that are broken by a deep valley, Limahuli. Hā‘ena has one of the most famous sites of the legends Pele, Lohi‘au, Paoa and Hi‘iaka. Legends tell that these were real women who came to the island and the “myth makers" wrote stories about them.

During the Summer time, my family and I would pack our bags and travel from Kalāheo to Hanalei to spend our two months near the ocean at our ‘ohana’s beach house. I got to ask my father about his childhood and what he did in the Hā‘ena area while growing up. He’d started to explain that the Hanalei area “wasn’t developed as much as it is now. It had a few houses, was a lot of jungle, and had tons of big trees.” He’d also share that his “favorite memories were picking *opihī* and laying nets with my grandpa and my dad.” As for me, I'd always enjoy going down to Hā‘ena and swimming in some of my favorite beaches/spots (Cold Pond, Ke‘e, ‘Anini and Lumaha‘i Beach). Also, I was always able to invite some friends over, hop on my father's boat, and go see the Nāpali Coast and swim in some secret spots locals have in Nāpali. From this, you can clearly see that Hanalei definitely has my heart.

The Hanalei area may be great, but nowadays, the North shore has become overpopulated with tourists and rich family homes. There have been many changes since my childhood that have happened to Hanalei and Hā‘ena, and one of them is that instead of being able to drive all the way to the end of the road to swim, you must walk a one mile path (and many tourist pay a fine

to park their cars in the new parking lot). Sooner or later, I believe that Hanalei will come to a point where they'll need to only allow a certain amount of people to come and go into the bay. Not only this, but the Hā'ena and Hanalei area recently faced a great rainstorm in 2018 that damaged almost the whole Halele'a district and created many landslides along the ridges. Families in Hā'ena were stuck and the only way to have gotten out was through boats or ATV's. It was truly a devastating time for many Hanalei residents, but their bounce back was better than ever.

Although, there are tons of different plant life and species that are now populated in the Hanalei and Hā'ena area. If you didn't know, Hanalei is known for some of the best *poi* you'll ever eat. The "Hanalei Poi Company" is made from fresh taro grown straight from taro patches located in Hanalei and processed in their modern mill. Also, you can find native plants such as beach cabbage (*naupaka kahakai/Scaevola taccada*), screwpine (*hala/Pandanus tectorius*) and rare *kahelelani* shells (*Leptothyra verruca*) near the beach shore. You can also take a free tour at the Limahuli garden and preserve in Hā'ena where they share about rare and native plants, and also their famous breadfruit plant hey grow on the preserve.

According to a article that the DLNR wrote back in 2013, (*Friedlander, Alan, Goodell, Whitney, Schemmel, Eva, Stamoulis, Kosta, Marine ecological assessment of Hā'ena's reef habitats, Fisheries Ecology Research Lab (UH Mānoa), 25 November 2013*) fishes such as the *o'io* (bonefish), *uhu* (parrotfish), and *'omilu* (Bluefin Trevally) are found mostly in the Hā'ena habitat, for it is the best place to support these fish populations.

In the upcoming future, I believe that the Halele'a district will look completely different. My father had started to explain that "Hanalei town will most likely be overpopulated, and many

areas will be taken over by tourists and rich families.” I believe this to be true, but I do believe that many more native species and plants will continue to populate and increase in the upcoming future if we all work together to protect and take care of it. If I could do one thing to help change Hanalei and Hā‘ena in a positive way, I'd create community events where the members of not only the Halele‘a district, but the whole island would help clean up the area and teach the upcoming *keiki* about all the native species and plants. Not only cleaning up our *‘āina* will do the trick, but also showing *aloha* to everyone (including tourists) and being a helping hand to whoever needs it.