PUʻU O MAHUKA HEIAU
STATE HISTORIC SITE

Puʻu o Mahuka Heiau was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1962 in recognition of its importance to Hawaiian culture and history. Also in 1962, the 4-acre property encompassing the heiau was placed under the jurisdiction of State Parks to preserve this significant site for future generations.

In the 1960s, the path through the heiau was created. Today, we ask that you observe the site from outside the walls and do not enter the site to avoid further damaging the walls and paving.

WAIMEA VALLEY

The land division or ahupuaʻa of Waimea was the major political and religious center of northern Oʻahu. Waimea Valley offered fertile agricultural lands, abundant fresh water, rich offshore marine resources, and good surfing and canoe landing sites. The aliʻi and kahuna sought areas such as Waimea to reside. To support this ruling center, the makaʻainana cultivated fields of kalo (taro) and sweet potato on the valley floor and fished in Waimea Bay. Housesites were scattered throughout the valley. At the valley mouth are 2 large heiau; Puʻu o Mahuka on the north and Kupopolo on the south. In the valley is Hale o Lono, a heiau dedicated to the god Lono. Religious ceremonies to Lono were held during the annual Makahiki season to promote fertility of the resources.

Soon after Western contact, the people left the taro fields to cut sandalwood in the upper valley. By the 1860s, the population was reduced by disease, floods, and famine.

STATE OF HAWAIʻI
Department of Land & Natural Resources
Division of State Parks

Special recognition is given to Nä Hoa o Puʻu o Mahuka, a community volunteer group and curators of Puʻu o Mahuka Heiau.

PRESERVE HAWAIʻI'S PAST FOR THE FUTURE
E mālama no kēia mua aku

Traditionally, food items were left as offerings at a heiau. Please do not wrap or move rocks and do not leave items such as coins, incense, or candles as they cause long-term damage.

Eʻemalama no kēia mua aku

Heiau artwork by Ipo Nihipali.
Situated on a ridge with a commanding view of Waimea Valley and the northern shoreline of O’ahu, this heiau had ties with the heiau at Wailua on Kaua’i. It is reported that signal fires at these heiau provided a visual communication between the islands.

In 1792, Capt. George Vancouver anchored his ship Daedalus off Waimea and sent a party onshore to collect water. A skirmish ensued with the Hawaiians and 3 of Vancouver’s men were killed. Some have suggested that these men were taken to Pu’u o Mahuka Heiau for sacrifice.

After the heiau was abandoned, circa 1819, the site may have been used for other purposes. Some have suggested that the middle enclosure was used for agriculture and the stone mounds are clearing and/or planting areas. Pineapple was cultivated around the heiau until the 1960s.

Archaeological research has indicated several changes in the heiau structure over time. Initially, the heiau consisted of the upper, mauka enclosure with a paved floor of basalt and coral boulders. At a later time, a paving of smaller stones known as ‘ili’ili was laid over the boulders.

In more recent times, rock has been taken from the walls which has reduced their height. The breaks in the walls appear to be recent. This leads one to wonder how the kähuna and ali’i entered the site.