

FACT SHEET: Kawa Bay Coastal Acquisition (Part 1)

The County of Hawaii purchased 234.293 acres of coastal land fronting Kawa Bay in Ka'ū, Island of Hawai'i, for the protection of wildlife habitat, cultural resources, ocean access, and coastal open space.

Funding and partners:

The State of Hawai'i Legacy Land Conservation Program provided \$1,214,750; the County of Hawai'i Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Fund provided \$711,719; The Trust for Public Land provided assistance in seeking grant funds.



Public benefits:

Under Hawaii Revised Statutes, section 173A-2.6, the Legacy Land Conservation Program is mandated to prioritize the protection of lands having exceptional value due to the presence of unique aesthetic resources, unique and valuable cultural or archaeological resources; or habitats for threatened or endangered species of flora, fauna, or aquatic resources.

The lands acquired by the County contain archeological remnants of a Native Hawaiian village, as well as heiau, burial sites, and other sacred sites that are used by lineal descendants. The property is also used for swimming, surfing, camping, and some subsistence practices.

The property contains a variety of natural resources. A wide zone of native vegetation occurs close to shore. Beaches provide active resting and nesting habitat for Green and Hawksbill Turtles. Two critically endangered seabirds, 'ua'u (Hawaiian Petrel) and 'ake'ake (Band-rumped Storm-petrel) regularly gather offshore at dusk and fly over the dark, undisturbed coastal areas to get to their mountain burrows. Freshwater springs and a stream-mouth estuary provide habitat for opae ula (anchialine shrimp) and auku'u (night heron).



The County manages the land as a county park under long-term management plans formed with community input. The County prioritizes the protection of the cultural and natural resources, while preserving appropriate public access to the cultural and coastal resources.