

FACT SHEET: Maunawila Heiau Acquisition

The Hawaiian Islands Land Trust (HILT) used Legacy Land funds to purchase 9.08 acres containing Maunawila Heiau in Ko‘olauloa, Island of O‘ahu, to protect cultural resources at one of the sole remaining heiau in the Ko‘olauloa region.

Funding and partners:

The State of Hawai‘i Legacy Land Conservation Program provided \$650,000; the City and County of Honolulu Clean Water Natural Lands Fund provided \$650,000; the landowners provided a land value donation of \$180,000, and HILT provided acquisition costs and technical assistance.

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 and valuable cultural or archaeological resources as well as lands containing cultural or archaeological sites or resources that are in danger of theft or destruction.

The Maunawila Heiau is one of the few remaining heiau in the Ko‘olauloa region that remain partially intact, and it is recognized as a wahi pana (revered site) for Native Hawaiian cultural historians and practitioners. The family that formerly owned the property for several generations wanted to sell the land and conducted an investigation of the history of the Heiau, finding that that Maunawila may have been a heiau ho‘ōla (a healing heiau). The family then searched for a conservation buyer that would protect the property’s cultural resources for the public.



The City and County of Honolulu holds a perpetual conservation easement on the property and HILT holds and manages the land. HILT will continue its current work with community organizations to clear and steward the heiau and to provide access to the cultural sites. HILT is a local nonprofit organization, tax-exempt under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). HILT’s mission is to protect the lands that sustain us for current and future generations.