Final Interpretive Plan

Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail

December 12, 2025

106GROUP
Connecting People + Place + Time

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PREFACE

FOLLOWING THE PATH

Nearly two centuries ago, in 1824, ʻIolani Liholiho, Kamehameha II, while traveling in Europe, offered a profound response to foreign monarchs who remarked on his brilliance as a leader:

“Na wai hoʻi ke ʻole o ke akamai, he alahele i maʻa i ka hele ʻia e oʻu mau mākua?”

Who indeed is without knowledge, having trodden the path worn by my ancestors?

In his response, Liholiho redirected the praise to his ancestors by likening their wisdom, intelligence, and his upbringing to that of a well-worn path. Of all the metaphors he could have chosen, he invoked the ala hele — something that can only be etched into the landscape through generational use. His words also conveyed the idea that wisdom and leadership are not created in any one individual nor in isolation. Rather, these qualities are inherited and nurtured along well-worn paths, carried forward by those who continue to walk them.

In the little over two centuries since Liholiho uttered those famous words, Hawaiʻi has undergone profound change. The trails and those who have advocated for their protection have, however, remained steadfast, fixed to a landscape as a testament to cultural resilience and continuity.

The preparation of this interpretive plan was, in many ways, a literal and figurative retracing of footsteps, following the ala hele worn smooth by preceding generations. As we prepared this plan, we chose to walk not as consultants or planners eager to meet project milestones, but as haumāna. Each community we engaged with became our kumu, teaching us through their voices, laughter, memories, and visions. We stepped away from the typical structures often used in planning and instead followed an approach, grounded in Hawaiian ways of learning, that includes pilina (relationship), hōʻihi, (respect), and hoʻolono (attentive listening).

Time and again, we were welcomed by kamaʻāina—those who know intimately the lands of their birth. They graciously invited us to pause, sit, and listen to the moʻolelo of their homelands. They shared with us their intimate recollections of ancestors who traversed the rugged landscapes of Hawaiʻi Island. They shared their stories of lifeways and practices shaped by their ʻāina. They reflected on the present state of the places they cherish and, most importantly, spoke of their visions for the future of the trails and the many storied sites along the vast corridor we know as the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail.

The Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail is a living thread that binds together moʻolelo of aliʻi and makaʻāinana, akua and kupua, past and present communities, delicate ecosystems, sacred and storied landscapes, and the tangible and intangible heritage of Hawaiʻi Island. Above all, it is part of a living culture, inseparable from the descendants and caretakers who continue to walk its paths with a deep desire to breathe life back into the trails, the resources, and the places to which they are connected. It also serves as a bridge of invitation for visitors and those who have made Hawaiʻi Island their home, providing them with opportunities to understand and walk in the presence of these histories.

It is in this spirit that this interpretive plan was crafted. It is both a framework and a living document, meant to honor the wisdom of those who came before, elevate the voices of those who steward the trails today, and inspire those who will walk these paths long after us. It is also intended to hold space for current and future trail stewards to articulate the stories and histories they desire to share.

To those who hosted our planners and consultants in your respective places and to those who shared your knowledge and visions with us, we are deeply grateful. This plan would not have been possible without your generosity, wisdom, and vision. Though we harken to the words left by Liholiho, may we continue to walk on the ancestral paths.

E mau ko kākou hele ma na ala i maʻa
i ka hele ʻia e ko kākou mau mākua.

May our journey continue on the paths
well-worn by the footsteps of our ancestors.

USE OF ʻŌLELO HAWAIʻI

Throughout the preparation of this plan, it was clear to the consulting and planning team that sometimes Hawaiian beliefs, ideas, and values are best expressed in their native language. As such, you will find Hawaiian words and phrases woven throughout this plan. As ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi (Hawaiian language) is recognized as an official language of the State of Hawaiʻi, its inclusion here reflects both legal recognition and cultural appropriateness.

Many Hawaiian concepts carry layers of meaning that cannot be fully captured through English translation alone. Many Hawaiian words and phrases encompass cultural understandings and relationships that extend far beyond their literal translations. By retaining these terms in their original language, we honor their full meaning and acknowledge that some knowledge is best transmitted in the language in which it was conceived.

The use of ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi in this plan also reflects the voices and perspectives of the many kamaʻāina, trail stewards, and communities who contributed to its development. During our community engagement process, participants frequently used Hawaiian terms, understanding that these words carried the most accurate and complete expression of their thoughts, experiences, and relationship to place. To translate these words and concepts into English would have diminished their meaning and disconnected them from their cultural context.

For readers who may be unfamiliar with ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi, we have provided English translations or explanations where appropriate. However, we encourage readers to sit with these Hawaiian terms, to consider their deeper meanings, and to recognize that understanding Hawaiian words and concepts is part of understanding the cultural landscape through which the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail passes.

The presence of ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi in this document is not ornamental—it is essential. These words represent living knowledge systems, ongoing relationships with place, and the continuation of Indigenous ways of knowing that have guided stewardship of these trails for generations. As you engage with this interpretive plan, we invite you to view the inclusion of ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi not as foreign words requiring translation, but as integral expressions of the cultural heritage that this trail embodies and continues to nurture.

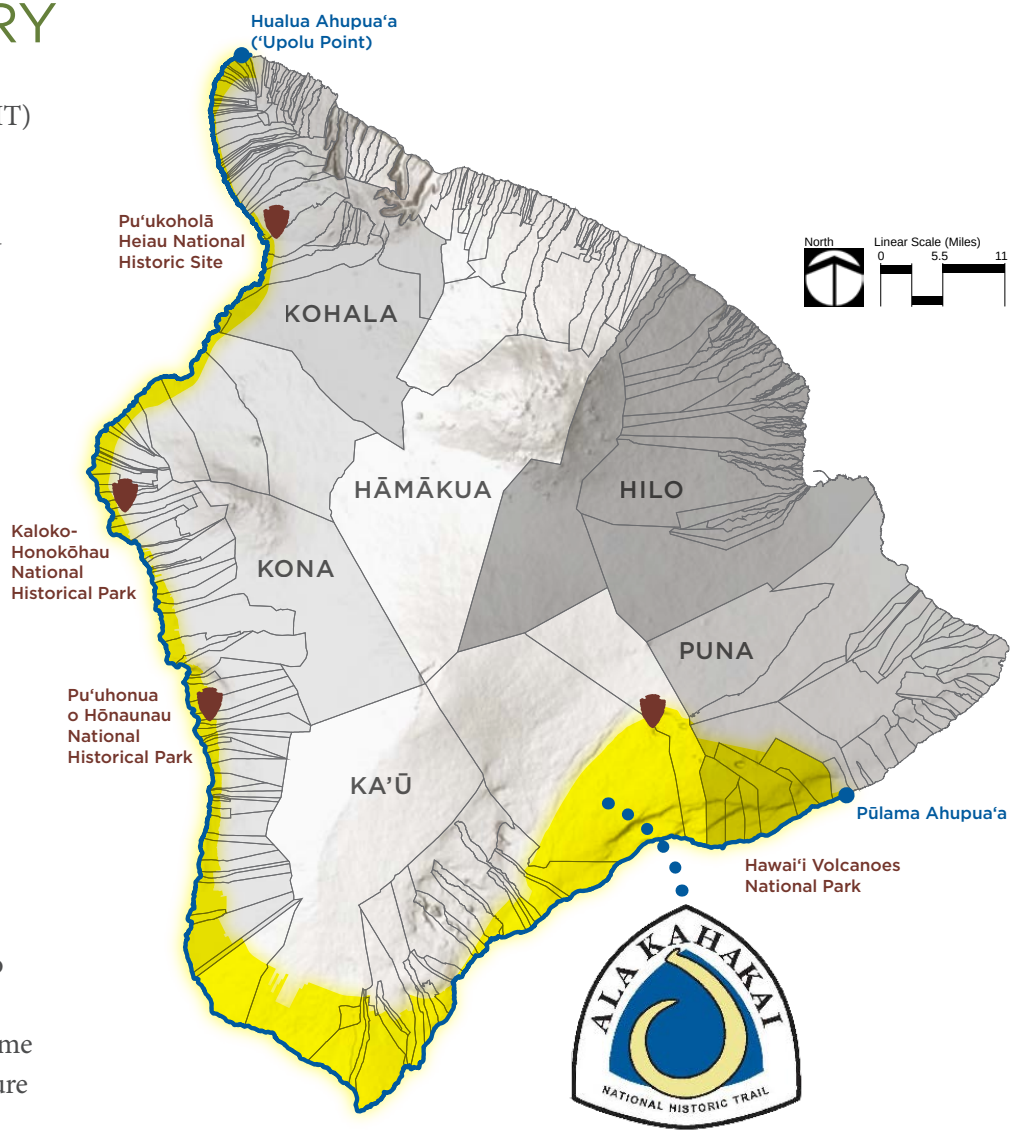
INTRODUCTION

TRAIL DESCRIPTION & HISTORY

The Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (Ala Kahakai or Ala Kahakai NHT) is a 175-mile corridor along the western and southern coasts of Hawai'i Island, encompassing a network of ancient, historic, and modern trails. It passes through four of Hawai'i Island's six moku: Kohala, Kona, Ka'ū, and Puna. The northern terminus is in the Hualua Ahupua'a at 'Upolu Point in Kohala. From there, the Trail stretches along the western and southern coasts, passing through Kona and Ka'ū, and extends into the eastern boundary of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park in Puna, where the eastern terminus lies in the ahupua'a of Pūlama.

The National Park Service (NPS) established the corridor as a National Historic Trail (NHT) in 2000 "to preserve, protect, interpret, reestablish as necessary, and maintain" this portion of Hawai'i Island's ancient and historic trail system. The Ala Kahakai NHT includes intact segments as well as those that have been built over. Even where segments have been "destroyed," the historic routes remain, and they are recognized as part of the trail system. Ala Kahakai is a modern Hawaiian name that means "trail by the sea."

Within the National Trails System, the NPS is responsible for trail-wide administration, while responsibility for management and care of specific segments lies with various government, private, and community entities along the corridor. Federal ownership of the Ala Kahakai NHT is limited to the approximately 17% that lies within the boundaries of the four national parks along the corridor. Nonfederally owned trail segments and sites become official components of the NHT through a trail certification process to ensure the protection and management of the trail's cultural and natural resources and the authenticity of interpretation.



The Ala Kahakai Trail Association was organized to partner with the NPS to facilitate and build capacity for ahupua'a community-based planning and co-management of trail sections along the corridor, in accordance with Hawaiian values and principles. Formed in 2006, this non-profit's purpose is to build partnerships with landowners, government agencies, and private entities to support the protection, preservation, and community co-stewardship of trail systems on Hawai'i Island and their associated natural and cultural resources.

Jurisdiction over Hawaiian Trails

While the Ala Kahakai is administered by the NPS, legal ownership of historic trails belongs to the State of Hawai'i. In October 1892, Queen Lili'uokalani signed what is known as the Highways Act of 1892. This Act, which persists into the present as HRS 264-1, determined that the ownership of all public highways and the land, real estate and property of the same, shall be in the Hawaiian Government in fee simple.

The Daily Bulletin.

HONOLULU, H. I., TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1892. PRICE 5 CENTS.

BY AUTHORITY.

AN ACT

DEFINING HIGHWAYS, AND DEFINING AND ESTABLISHING CERTAIN RIGHTS AND DUTIES IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

Be it Enacted by the Queen and the Legislature of the Hawaiian Kingdom:

THE HIGHWAYS ACT, 1892.

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited in all public proceedings as "The Highways Act, 1892."

DEFINITION OF PUBLIC HIGHWAY.

SECTION 2. All roads, alleys, streets, ways, lanes, courts, places, trails and bridges in the Hawaiian Islands, whether now or hereafter opened, laid out or built by the Government, or by private parties, and dedicated or abandoned to the public as a highway, are hereby declared to be public highways.

All public highways once established shall continue until abandoned by due process of law.

DEDICATION OF HIGHWAYS BY PRIVATE PERSONS.

SECTION 3. Any road, alley, street, way, lane, court, place, trail or bridge laid out, constructed, opened or maintained by individuals or corporations as a highway, may become a public highway by dedication or abandonment, or surrender thereof to general use by such individual or corporation; provided that the same shall be accepted or adopted by the Minister of Interior.

DEDICATION OR ABANDONMENT.

SECTION 4. Dedication or abandonment of any highway, mentioned in Section 3 of this Act, may be by deed or by a surrender or abandonment; such surrender or abandonment shall be taken to be when no act of ownership by the owner thereof has been exercised within five years.

OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC HIGHWAYS IN THE GOVERNMENT.

SECTION 5. The ownership of all public highways and the land, real estate and property of the same shall be in the Hawaiian Government in fee simple.

SUPERVISION OF HIGHWAYS IN MINISTER OF INTERIOR.

SECTION 6. All public highways are under the general supervision, charge and control of the Minister of Interior, and, except as otherwise provided by law, he is charged with the execution of all duties relative thereto, whether prescribed by this Act or otherwise.

IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE DITCHES CROSSING HIGHWAYS TO BE BRIDGED BY OWNER.

SECTION 7. All persons or corporations excavating or making or maintaining irrigation or drainage ditches, or ways across public highways, are required to bridge such ditches at such crossing, and maintain the same in good repair; and in case of neglect, after notice so to do, the road authorities may construct the same, or repair the same, and recover the whole costs and expense of the same, of such person or corporation, in an action at law. Such action may be brought in the name of the Minister of Interior, on behalf of the Hawaiian Government, and the respective road authorities, as the case may be, are authorized to institute such action.

RAILROADS, CANALS AND DITCHES CROSSING HIGHWAYS TO BE KEPT IN ORDER BY THE GOVERNMENT.

SECTION 8. Whenever highways are laid out to cross railroads, canals or ditches the road authorities must, at public expense and without delay, so prepare and guard such road, canal or ditch that the public may cross the same without danger.

GATES IN PUBLIC HIGHWAYS.

SECTION 9. The Minister of Interior, in his discretion, by the Minister of Interior, and the Minister of Interior may permit, in his discretion, the construction of a sidewalk on highways of twenty-five feet or less in width.

OWNER OR ABUTTOR TO CONSTRUCT AT HIS EXPENSE.

SECTION 11. All sidewalks shall be constructed and maintained at the expense of the adjoining owner or abuttor subject to the provisions of Section 12 of this Act.

SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION.

SECTION 12. After the establishment of the grades of streets in Honolulu, as by law prescribed, the said Minister may require the owners of the land adjoining any street, the grade of which has been established, to construct sidewalks in accordance with the grade of the street and to comply with the regulations regarding the material and construction of such sidewalks.

CONSTRUCTION BY OWNER.

SECTION 13. If any such owner, after receiving notice to construct a sidewalk, as provided in Section 12 hereof, shall neglect or refuse to comply with such direction for sixty days after notice, the Minister may proceed to construct such sidewalk at the expense of such owner, such expense shall be a lien on the property in front of which such sidewalk is constructed, and the Minister may recover the amount of such lien, and the expense and costs of the same, by action at law in assumpsit, or by any action allowed by law and equity, or that may be prescribed by statute.

TRESPASS OF SIDEWALKS.

SECTION 14. Any persons using a sidewalk constructed according to the provisions of this Act with mule, horse or team, or who shall drive a wagon, bicycle or other wheeled vehicle on such sidewalk without permission of the owner, shall be liable to the owner or occupant in the sum of five dollars for such trespass, and for all damages suffered thereby, to be recovered by such owner or occupant in an action of trespass.

TREE PLANTING.

SECTION 15. Any owner or occupant of land adjoining a public highway may plant trees in and along the said highway on the side contiguous to his land; they shall be set in regular rows, at a distance of at least twenty feet from each other, and so that they shall not interfere with the free passage of water in the gutters, and shall be subject to such regulations as may be, from time to time, made by the Minister of Interior.

TRESPASS TO TREES.

SECTION 16. Any person injuring the trees in front of the premises of any owner or occupant without permission of the owner or occupant shall be liable to the owner or occupant in the sum of five dollars for each tree so injured, to be recovered in an action of trespass; provided, that this shall not apply to the trimming and removal of trees by authority of proper officers of the Government for public purposes and uses.

MALICIOUS INJURY TO TREES A MISDEMEANOR.

SECTION 17. Whoever digs up, cuts down, or otherwise maliciously injures or destroys any shade or ornamental trees on any public highway, unless the same is deemed an obstruction by the Minister of Interior, or those acting under his authority, or by other persons by law duly authorized, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor.

MAPS AND RECORDS OF HIGHWAYS.

SECTION 18. The Minister of Interior is authorized and directed to prepare maps and diagrams of all public highways of the Kingdom, and certify to them, and copies of them, and to furnish to the respective road authorities certified copies of the same relating to those portions of the country controlled by the respective road authorities of the Kingdom; and all such maps and certified copies, and all records of the road authorities shall constitute and be the public records of public highways.

The Chief Clerk of the Department of Interior is authorized to sign such certificates.

MEASURING DISTANCES—MILE STONES.

DIRECTION BOARDS—GUIDE POSTS.

SECTION 21. In addition to the distance measurements, to be ascertained and maintained as by this Act provided, the Minister of Interior, or respective road authorities, under direction of said Minister, are likewise charged with the duty of erecting and maintaining, at all important cross or branch roads on public highways, guide posts, direction boards, or signs with suitable inscriptions indicating the direction of the nearest important points or places to which said cross or branch roads or public highways respectively lead.

STREET NAMES.

SECTION 22. Upon the corners of all streets in Honolulu, Hilo, Wailuku and Lahaina, the street names shall be placed in conspicuous positions, at least 3½ feet above the street grade.

SECTION 23. Whoever maliciously removes or injures any mile board or mile stone, or guide board or guide posts, or any inscription on such, erected on any public highway, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor.

EXPENSES.

SECTION 24. All expenses incurred under or in consequence of the provisions of this Act, not otherwise herein provided for, shall be paid out of the road moneys of the respective districts.

VIOLATION OF REGULATIONS A MISDEMEANOR.

SECTION 25. Any person who shall violate any of the regulations or rules that may be promulgated by the Minister of Interior, under the provisions of this Act, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor.

PENALTY FOR MISDEMEANOR.

SECTION 26. Any person convicted of a misdemeanor under the provisions of this Act shall be punished by a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars.

DISTRICT COURT JURISDICTION.

SECTION 27. The several District Justices of the Kingdom shall have jurisdiction to try and determine all misdemeanors arising under this Act, and all complaints for violation of any of the provisions of this Act, and to impose any of the penalties herein prescribed.

SECTION 28. This Act shall take effect from and after the date of its approval.

Approved this 15th day of October, A. D. 1892.

LILIUOKALANI R.

By the Queen:

CHAS. T. GULICK,
Minister of the Interior.

Postal Savings Bank Notice.

Postal Savings Bank Notice.

IRRIGATION NOTICE.

NOTICE.

The Highways Act was published in *The Daily Bulletin* on October 25, 1892.

The definition of public highway includes all existing trails at the time or "hereafter opened, laid out or built by the Government, or by private parties, and dedicated or abandoned to the public as a highway, and hereby declared to be public highways." Furthermore, "All public highways once established shall continue until abandoned by due process of law."

Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) 264-1(b) furthers the intent of the Highways Act of 1892. It states:

> "All trails, and other nonvehicular rights-of-way by the Highways Act of 1892, or opened, laid out or built by the government or otherwise created or vested as nonvehicular public rights of way at any time hereafter, or in the future, are declared to be public trails. A public trail is under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Land and Natural Resources - unless it was created by or dedicated to a particular county, in which case it shall be under the jurisdiction of that county. All State trails once established shall continue until lawfully disposed of pursuant to Chapter 171, HRS."

Essentially, if the State can document the existence of a trail prior to 1892, and the feature has not been disposed of pursuant to HRS Chapter 171, the State, in particular the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), has legal ownership of the trail.

The Nā Ala Hele Trails and Access Program (NAH), within the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife, manages all trails and access ways deemed public by the Highways Act of 1892. NAH is mandated by the State to inventory all trails and access routes, encompassing both public and private lands and those under or outside of the DLNR's jurisdiction.

However, only a few of these trails are able to be designated as Nā Ala Hele Program Trails, due to legal status, safety concerns, sensitivity considerations, trail condition, limited resources, or need for further research. Those trails that are managed by NAH provide protected access to recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities.

One of NAH's closest partners is the non-profit organization E Mau Nā Ala Hele. These trail and access rights champions have been taking action to protect and perpetuate ancient and historic trails since before the NAH's inception. In the 1990s, E Mau Nā Ala Hele advocated for federal designation of the Ala Kahakai NHT. To this day, the group conducts research, stewardship, and public events to support Hawai'i Island trails.

Rights to Access Hawaiian Trails

Kānaka Maoli (Indigenous people of Hawai'i) have long built, used, and maintained trails to facilitate connection and exchange within and across ahupua'a via lateral and mauka (upland) to makai (coastal) routes. Ka po'e ali'i (chiefs) travelled and lived along these trails, as did nā akua (gods and goddesses) and po'e kūpua (supernatural beings). Trails and roads were vital circulation networks, linking people to resource zones used for gathering, worship, and cultural activity. These practices, in some areas, continue today.

Native Hawaiians hold distinct rights to engage in traditional and customary practices for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes. These rights are protected under Article XII, Section 7 of the Hawai'i State Constitution and HRS §§1-1 and 7-1. The ability to access and use trails is essential to the meaningful exercise of these rights, as one cannot practice them without the ability to reach necessary resources. Trail maintenance is also in itself a traditional and customary cultural practice. These legal protections support access to sacred sites, upland forests, and shoreline areas, including passage through public and private lands to reach culturally significant resources.[1]

In addition, the Kānāwai Māmalahoe, or the Law of the Splintered Paddle, memorializes and institutionalizes the public right of use of trails and access ways for all residents of Hawai'i. This law, enacted by King Kamehameha I in 1797, was a result of his transformative encounter with maka'āinana residing at Pāpa'i, a fishing village near the boundary of the Hilo and Puna districts.[2]

While on his campaign to unite the islands under his rule, Kamehameha I and his court were stationed near Kaipalaoa in Hilo, at which time they dedicated Kahale'iole'ole Heiau. To complete the dedication ceremonies, Kamehameha sailed east along the coast of Hilo searching for a human sacrifice. Spotting some fishermen near Pāpa'i, he leapt into the ocean to attack them. As he reached shore and began to chase them, his foot became lodged in a crack in the pāhoehoe. Seeing that Kamehameha was stuck, two fishermen turned back to the ali'i and began striking him with stones. As the assault was ongoing, a third fisherman appeared, carrying a large wooden paddle across his shoulders. The fisherman raised his paddle and with all his might, struck Kamehameha over the head, splintering the paddle and inflicting serious pain on the ali'i.

Barely escaping the attack, Kamehameha was escorted by his attendants to a nearby coconut-thatched house. Here they met an elderly man who shared his wisdom and advice. Years later, after his unification of the Hawaiian Islands, Kamehameha reflected on the words shared by the elderly man. He summoned the fishermen whom he had attacked and pardoned them and proclaimed the famous Kānāwai Māmalahoe in 1797.

King Kamehameha declared that within his unified aupuni, the innocent and defenseless shall be safe from unprovoked attack, even from their own chiefs. He pledged that from then on, the people of Hawai'i should move freely everywhere under his control, and feel safe on the roadway (trails). The law was written as follows:

> "E nā kanaka, e mālama 'oukou i ke akua a e mālama ho'i i kānaka nui a me kānaka iki; E hele ka 'elemakule, ka luahine, a me ke kama a moe i ke ala, 'a'ohe mea nānā e ho'opilikia. Hewa nō, make!"
>
> "O people, care for the god and care for great people and the small people; Let the elderly man, the elderly woman, and the child walk and sleep on the path, and let no one trouble or harm them. To do otherwise is worthy of death!"

The Kānāwai Māmalahoe was also included in the 1978 State Constitution, showing Hawai'i's concern for the safety and welfare of all of its people.

1 David M. Forman and Susan K. Serrano, *Ho'ohana Aku, A Ho'ōla Aku: A Legal Primer for Traditional and Customary Rights in Hawai'i*, Honolulu: Office of Hawaiian Affairs, n.d.

2 The following account of the Kānāwai Māmalahoe comes from: "Mamalahoe Kanawai—Ka Huikala Pu'uwai Alii no ka Pepehikanaka Kiekie," *Ka Leo o ka Lahui* II, no. 1395 (February 10, 1896).

Hawaiian Land Tenure & Trail Access

The legal protections based on the Highways Act of 1892 and the Kānāwai Māmalahoe are meant to ensure public access to the land along the various trails and roadways across the islands — including those of the Ala Kahakai corridor. In practice, these laws are not always followed or implemented.

Historical changes in land tenure and land use policies have significantly altered Native Hawaiian access to trails and gathering areas. The Māhele ʻĀina (1848–1855) was the first step that fundamentally transformed Hawaiʻi's traditional land tenure system into one modeled after Western private property ownership. As ʻāina was gradually absorbed into private holdings and developed for ranching and agricultural purposes, access to ancient trails, shorelines, water, and gathering areas became increasingly restricted. As native tenants were increasingly denied access to routes that had previously been communal, the need to protect traditional rights became urgent. This led to promulgation of the Highways Act by Queen Liliʻuokalani in 1892.

In some places, ancient trails were destroyed or repurposed into ranching or plantation roads, while in other areas they remained largely untouched or fell into disuse in favor of newer, straighter alignments. The introduction of livestock further eroded native vegetation and obliterated smaller footpaths once used for mauka-to-makai access.

Since the mid-20th century, subdivision development, highway construction, and the proliferation of residential and resort properties have compounded these historical losses. Trails that once connected communities and resource zones were paved over, gated, or redirected to accommodate urban infrastructure and private recreation.

Together, these historical and contemporary forces have not only limited Native Hawaiians' physical access to ancestral landscapes but also diminshed their ability to exercise traditional and customary practices tied to those places. Although Kingdom-era laws protecting Native Hawaiian rights to access land and resources for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes remained in place, they were often ignored, overlooked, or unenforced.

The Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s sparked renewed interest in and more public awareness of Native Hawaiian access rights, which led to greater advocacy and the creation of programs such as Nā Ala Hele (1988). This movement has strengthened the State's ongoing obligation to preserve access for cultural practice and the public good.

resorticahawaii.com

Gated resorts and developments hinder public access to some trail locations.

The Ala Kahakai Trail

The Ala Kahakai includes sections of the ancient alaloa (highway, main road, belt road around an island, a long road) and the historic Alanui Aupuni (Government Road), as well as other coastal alignments and mauka-to-makai trails. While some trail segments have formal names, others are named using localized nomenclature referencing geographic location, gradient, or topographic context, as well as a person's position relative to the trail. Examples include ala pi'i i uka (trail ascending to the uplands), ala pi'i mauna (trail ascending toward the mountain), and kaolo (descending trail).

Trail surfaces and construction methods vary widely, reflecting differences in local terrain, available building materials, and individual design choices, as well as changes in the island's economic and social systems. They include:

- Sandy beaches or grass pathways along the shoreline;
- 'A'ā and pāhoehoe lava and waterworn stepping stones;
- White coral placed intermittently to illuminate the pathway at night;
- Curb-lined trails with causeways and wider stone-paved trails to accomodate horses, donkeys, cattle, and horse-drawn carts; and
- Dirt and macadamized roads for travel by Jeep and early automobiles.

There are innumerable historic sites and culturally important landscapes and viewsheds along the Ala Kahakai. These include heiau, burial sites, shelter caves, petroglyphs, fishponds, freshwater springs, and salt collection areas. Many of these places are named and storied, carrying the ancestral knowledge of those who lived, worked, and sustained themselves in these areas—as well as those who continue to carry these traditions today.

The Ala Kahakai is also home to critical habitat for indigenous and endemic species of flora and fauna. These unique natural landscapes and coastal ecosystems are central to the reciprocal relationship between the Kānaka Maoli, 'āina, and all living and non-living beings of these places.

Traditionally, this relationship was maintained through the ahupua'a system of localized land management and stewardship, which ensured the sustainability of the land and its people. All communities took responsibility for the 'āina that sustained them by living the principle of mālama 'āina (caring for the land). The Ala Kahakai's history is inextricably linked with the development, function, disruption, and regeneration of the ahupua'a system.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

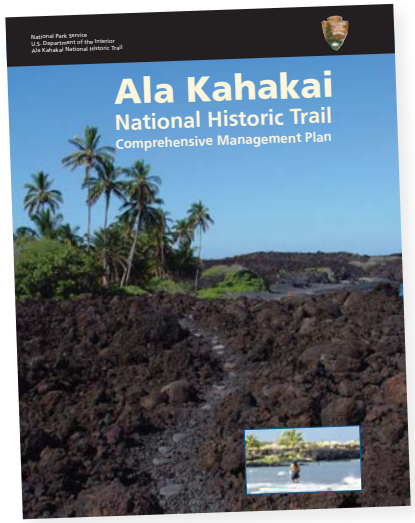
In May 2009, the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) was formally adopted as NPS policy. It provides a vision for the future and a management framework to guide decisions about trail development, use, and education. The NPS has worked to implement the CMP's recommendations since its adoption.

The CMP process included robust community consultation with lineal descendants, cultural knowledge keepers, and local residents. Following their guidance, the NPS has approached the development and management of the Ala Kahakai within a descendant-led, community and ahupua'a-based, trail system.

As described in the CMP, this system follows the traditional Hawaiian practice of land management and stewardship, grounded in "specific stewardship concepts and values embedded in the Hawaiian culture and expressed in words of the Hawaiian language." Those concepts are listed below.

The responsibility for management and care of nonfederal partner trail segments is generally defined by ahupua'a boundaries. The process for developing management agreements is required to include "kūpuna or other knowledgeable and concerned Native Hawaiians associated with a particular ahupua'a" and "kama'āina or persons with historic kinship with or knowledge of the land."

Community consultation during the planning process also shaped the development of foundational ideas to guide future development of the Ala Kahakai. These ideas are articulated in the CMP as statements of purpose and significance, a community vision for the future, and five interpretive themes.



'āina: the living earth

aloha: "sacred breath of life," love, passion

aloha 'āina: love of the land, reverence for all living things

ho'okipa: hospitality

ho'okupu: tribute as a sign of honor and respect, gift exchange

'ike: knowledge

kōkua: "pulling with the back," pitching in to help, volunteering

kuleana: responsibility, implied reciprocity

laulima: "many hands working together," cooperation

lōkahi: unity, balance, harmony

mahalo: gratitude, thanks

mālama: take care of, care for, preserve

mana'o'i'o: respect for nature

pono: balance, proper, right, just, fair, integrity

PROJECT PROCESS

This Interpretive Plan builds on the strong foundation laid by the 2009 CMP for the Ala Kahakai NHT. The interpretive planning team respects the culturally centered, community-based process that informed the CMP and recognizes the love and care that have guided its implementation. We honor that process and the people who contributed to it, while also building on it.

From January 21-25, 2025, an interpretive planning team with representatives from NAH, the NPS, PBR HAWAII, Hoaʻāina Heritage Services, and 106 Group participated in an initial site visit to inform development of the Interpretive Plan. During **Site Visit 1,** team members experienced and documented trail sites and segments from North Kohala to Kaʻū. They met, talked story, and learned from trail ʻohana representing various moku and ahupuaʻa. ʻOhana representatives included those with ancestral and family connections to the corridor, community knowledge keepers, and Ala Kahakai advocates, champions, and stewards.

The Ala Kahakai also told its own stories, speaking through its shapes, forms, colors, and materials, as well as smells, sounds, textures, and viewscapes. Team members learned from the earth, rock, water, plants, animals, sun, clouds, rain, wind, and sky.

Following Site Visit 1, the project team convened online for a **virtual planning workshop** on February 5, 2025. The outcomes of Site Visit 1 and the online workshop were documented in a **Trip Report (March 5, 2025).** On March 20, 2025, the project team hosted an **online community meeting** for Ala Kahakai stakeholders and stewards.

The interpretive planning team conducted a second site visit from May 27-29, 2025. **Site Visit 2** included **two community meetings** to gather formative input via workshop activities and group conversations. The team also visited additional trail segments and learned from knowledge keepers about sites and relationships along the corridor. Following Site Visit 2, planning team members held **virtual stakeholder meetings** with multiple land owners and land managers.

This Final Interpretive Plan incorporates feedback received in response to the Draft Plan (May 16, 2025) and Revised Draft Plan (September 5, 2025). The Revised Draft was circulated to community stakeholders for review.

Plan Implementation

This Interpretive Plan is designed to be adaptable rather than prescriptive. It combines guiding principles and recommendations with multiple options for how to implement them. It aligns with the NPS approach to management of the Ala Kahakai, which is decentralized, community-led, and ahupuaʻa-based.

The Implementation section of this Final Plan provides general recommendations and support for applying the Plan's interpretive framework and design guidance to the development of interpretive initiatives. The appendices provide additional guiding documents from NAH and the NPS.

INTERPRETIVE FOUNDATIONS

FOUNDATIONAL QUESTIONS

For any planning project, it is essential to build on a solid kahua (foundation). To set the kahua for the Ala Kahakai Interpretive Plan, the project team has asked a set of guiding questions, outlined below.

The answers to these questions have come in part from the 2009 CMP. They also have emerged from project team meetings and workshops and through consultation and conversation with community members.

Purpose, Vision & Goals	Why does the Ala Kahakai exist? Why should we interpret it?
Audiences	Who is the interpretation for?
Context & Conditions	Where do things currently stand?
Interpretive Messages	What is the interpretation about? What should interpretive experiences communicate?

PURPOSE, VISION & GOALS

Why does the Ala Kahakai exist?
Why should we interpret it?

Purpose of the Trail

As established in the 2009 CMP, the purpose of the Ala Kahakai NHT is:

> "To preserve, protect, reestablish as necessary, and maintain a substantial portion of the ancient coastal ala loa (long trail) and associated resources and values, along with linking trails on or parallel to the shoreline on Hawai'i Island; and
>
> To provide for a high quality experience, enjoyment, and education—guided by Native Hawaiian protocol and etiquette—while protecting the trail's natural and cultural heritage and respecting private and community interests."

Community Vision for the Trail

During the process of developing the 2009 CMP, the NPS invited communities located along the corridor to share their vision for its future. Collectively, they envisioned that the Ala Kahakai NHT will:

- Preserve ancient and historic trails within the corridor and tell the stories of those who use them;
- Provide access to practice traditional lifestyles and mālama 'āina (care for the land);
- Protect sacred sites, historic places, and natural areas;
- Become a living classroom for educating Hawai'i's people and visitors;
- Offer opportunities for community partnerships based on the ahupua'a concept of community self-reliance and resiliency;
- Create safe and well-kept places for spiritual, cultural, and recreational practices; and
- Unite local communities around common goals to preserve Hawai'i's culture and environment.

Interpretive Goals

Organizational goals state what the NPS and NAH seek to accomplish through implementation of the interpretive plan. **Visitor experience goals** express what kind of interpretive experiences people should be able to have and what they should take away with them as a result of their experiences.

Organizational Goals

Interpretation of the Ala Kahakai will:

- Facilitate experiences that protect the safety of trail users;
- Support the preservation, protection, and understanding of the cultural heritage and landscapes that are part of the corridor;
- Foster connections among Ala Kahakai ʻohana and facilitate partnerships between ʻohana and organizations with shared values and goals;
- Support stewardship and land management practices along the corridor that are rooted in the ahupuaʻa system;
- Facilitate the restoration of reciprocal relationships between people and ʻāina on Hawaiʻi Island; and
- Share knowledge from trail management and stewardship practices on Hawaiʻi Island with those seeking to preserve, protect, steward, and reconnect with trails on other islands.

Interpretive Experience Goals

All people who engage with Ala Kahakai interpretation will:

- Have a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the history, heritage, landscapes, and enduring cultural values that are connected to the Ala Kahakai;
- Realize the connections between the past, present, and future along Hawaiʻi's trails;
- Recognize that Hawaiians continue to live in an interdependent relationship with ʻāina along the corridor; and
- Feel moved to act in ways that respect, protect, and preserve Ala Kahakai landscapes by understanding and practicing kuleana.

Those with **ancestral, familial, or community relationships** to the Ala Kahakai will also:

- Be encouraged to connect, reconnect, and deepen their connections with the values and practices that maintain responsible relationships with āina;
- Find opportunities to connect and commune with each other; and
- Feel inspired to become active stewards of the Ala Kahakai and the sites and landscapes along the corridor.

AUDIENCES

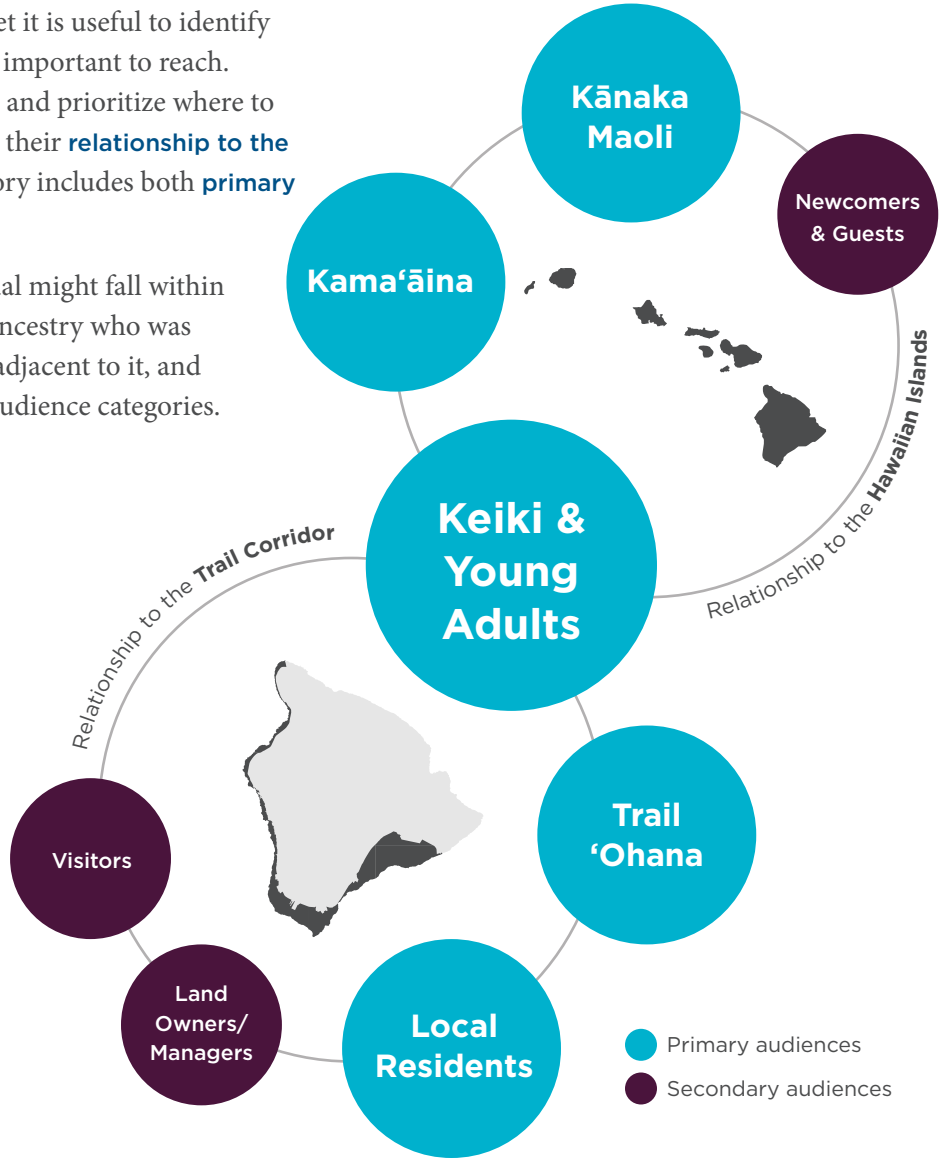
Who is the interpretation for?

Interpretive experiences should be accessible and meaningful for everyone. Yet it is useful to identify who is most likely to engage with those experiences as well as those it is most important to reach. This helps focus interpretive communication, tailor methods for delivering it, and prioritize where to devote time and resources. This Plan categorizes audiences in two ways: 1) by their **relationship to the Hawaiian Islands** and 2) by their **relationship to the Ala Kahakai**. Each category includes both **primary and secondary audiences** for trail interpretation.

Note that these **audience categories are not mutually exclusive**. An individual might fall within multiple categories. For example, a person of Native Hawaiian and Japanese ancestry who was born in Hawai‘i might currently live near a section of the corridor, own land adjacent to it, and use it to access fishing or gathering places. This person would be part of five audience categories.

Keiki & Young Adults

Children and young adults of Kānaka Maoli ancestry and kama‘āina youth who live near the Ala Kahakai are a critically important audience for interpretation. Interpretive experiences could deepen their relationship to ‘āina and strengthen their ties to their ‘ohana. As they grow older, keiki might become active stewards and advocates for trail landscapes and guardians of the ahupua‘a system. Young people’s ability and willingness to embrace their kuleana to mālama trails and ‘āina will determine whether these landscapes and the life that depends on them can thrive in the future.



Relationship to Hawai‘i

Primary Audiences

Kānaka Maoli

Kānaka Maoli are the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i. They are lineal descendants of the first people of these islands, whose lifeways and identity became inextricably intertwined with this place. This long history with the land has built a close relationship with trail landscapes and sites.

Since the early 1800s, Kānaka Maoli have suffered profound losses, including their sovereignty, access to the land and resources that sustained them, and the freedom to practice and perpetuate the full expression of their culture. These losses have fractured communities and disrupted the sharing of ancestral knowledge across generations. As a result, it has become difficult to maintain their responsible relationship with the land. This history and its consequences are reflected all along the Ala Kahakai.

In recent decades, Kānaka Maoli have worked to revitalize and reclaim their cultural knowledge, values, practices, and relationship to ʻāina. This work is expressed at sites along and connected to the Ala Kahakai corridor. It includes leadership of efforts to actively steward and manage trail sections according to the ahupuaʻa system. Trail interpretation can encourage and raise awareness of this work for cultural and environmental restoration.

Kamaʻāina

Kamaʻāina are long-time, island-born residents who are closely connected to Hawai‘i, regardless of their ancestry. They include Native Hawaiians, descendants of nineteenth and early twentieth century immigrants, and those of other diverse backgrounds who are deeply rooted in place.

Kamaʻāina can have complex historical, ancestral, and personal relationships to Hawai‘i. More than simply a marker of geographical birth or residence, the term also indicates a sense of relationship to the land that has sustained them—to ʻāina. Trail interpretation can support and strengthen that relationship.

Secondary Audiences

Newcomers & Guests

More recently arrived residents typically have much to learn about Hawaiian history, culture, heritage, and landscapes. Interpretation can provide opportunities to increase their understanding and deepen their connection to place. It also can encourage them to engage in more responsible, reciprocal relationships with ʻāina. For those who are visiting Hawaiʻi temporarily, interpretive messages and experiences can help them understand how to behave mindfully and respectfully, and be good guests.

Relationship to the Trail Corridor

Primary Audiences

Trail ʻOhana

The Ala Kahakai's extended families include Kānaka Maoli whose Indigenous lineage is tied to Hawaiʻi Island as well as all kamaʻāina with family members, ancestors, and/or land connections that are related to the Ala Kahakai. Trail ʻohana also include other people who have become advocates and stewards of the Ala Kahakai and those committed to practicing the cultural values and responsibilities required to care for its landscapes and communities. The interpretive planning process and this Plan are intended to support and strengthen the network of ʻohana.

Local Residents

Local residents live in close proximity to a section of the Ala Kahakai corridor. They may or may not currently be aware of the its existence or realize its significance. Interpretation can add to their knowledge of local landscapes, foster their understanding of Hawaiian cultural heritage, and deepen their sense of place.

Secondary Audiences

Land Owners & Managers

Land along and adjacent to Ala Kahakai alignments are owned and managed by a complex mix of entities. Besides individual resident landowners, they include developers, hotels and resorts, non-profit organizations, and county, state, and federal government agencies. Interpretation can educate land owners and managers about the Ala Kahakai's significance and the need to preserve and protect it. It can provide messaging and guidance for entities like hotels and resorts that share historical and cultural information with visitors.

Visitors

This category includes anyone who is a non-local visitor to a particular section of the Ala Kahakai NHT. They might be tourists or temporary or seasonal residents in the area. They might also be residents of Hawaiʻi with ancestral or family connections to other places.

Interpretation can help manage trail access; protect areas that are physically vulnerable, culturally sensitive, or otherwise should not be open to general public use; and educate visitors about why some areas are not open to the general public. Where visitors access trail sections, interpretation can invite them into respectful experiences that align with Hawaiian cultural values and local protocols.

CONTEXT & CONDITIONS

Where do things currently stand?

Good planning requires a clear-eyed assessment of current conditions along the Ala Kahakai corridor and the context in which it is being preserved and considered for interpretation. This section identifies the Ala Kahakai's most significant stakeholders: those who are deeply invested in what the Ala Kahakai is, what it becomes, and how it is experienced and interpreted. It also documents some of the challenges faced by trail administrators as well as the opportunities and resources they can draw from while working to implement this Interpretive Plan.

Stakeholders

- People with ancestral and family connections to the Ala Kahakai or other interconnected trails on the island
- Individuals, families, groups, and organizations that have been actively stewarding trail sections
- Individuals, families, groups, and organizations that have been caretaking and educating about the corridor's cultural sites and landscapes
- Individuals and organizations that have advocated and organized for trail access and protection (e.g., E Mau Nā Ala Hele and Ala Kahakai Trail Association)
- Land owners and managers along the corridor, including:
  - NPS
  - DLNR
  - DHHL
  - Ala Kahakai Trail Association
  - Hawai'i County
  - Kamehameha Schools
  - Trust for Public Land
  - Hawai'i Land Trust
  - Queen Lili'uokalani Trust
  - Resorts and hotels
  - Developers
  - Other large landowners
  - Non-profit organizations
  - Individual resident landowners

Challenges

Length and Variety

- The corridor is 175 miles long and passes through four moku and many ahupuaʻa.
- The people of each moku have a distinctive collective character, identity, and way of doing things.
- Each ahupuaʻa varies significantly in terms of landscape; trail construction and condition; awareness, access, and use; levels of stewardship; and family and community relationships.
- Trail names and other place names have changed over time and can vary by location, community usage, or family tradition.

Land Management & Access

- There are complex layers of land ownership and management that include corporate, non-profit, and government entities. Some sections run through resorts and subdivisions or cross other privately owned land.
- While the right of public access to trail routes, including shoreline sections, is granted by state law, it is not always possible to practice this right in all locations on the ground.
- In some places, actions by private landowners have obstructed trail access or undermined the integrity of historic and cultural sites in the corridor.
- Acts of trespassing and lack of respect for private property by some individuals undermines support for public access as well as Native Hawaiians' traditional and customary access rights in the corridor.
- Much of the corridor is currently not accessible because of legal status and/or physical condition. This makes it challenging for NAH to establish these routes as official NAH Program Trails. The NPS prefers not to direct trail users to segments that are not actively managed.
- Conditions in some locations create safety concerns for trail users.
- While building community capacity for trail management, there also is a need to foster community economic development in ways that generate revenue and incorporate inclusive decision-making systems.

Threats to Cultural Landscapes

- In some areas, unmanaged access, over-tourism, and/or disrespectful use damages or destabilizes trail sites and landscapes.
- Trail structures and sites remain vulnerable to damage or destruction by housing, hotel, and resort development.
- Trail landscapes, waterways, and plant and animal life are threatened by pollution, invasive species, storm events, lava flows, erosion, and the effects of climate change.
- Some landscapes have been adversely affected by uninformed past practices, e.g., the anchialine ponds, whose scarcity and fragility were not widely understood in the past.

Opportunities & Resources

Diversity & Distinctions

- The corridor's length and variability offers a rich diversity of landscapes and sensory experiences.
- The differences and transitions between the moku can be highlighted in interpretation and reflected in interpretive design.

History & Stories

- The Ala Kahakai is connected to and reflects the entire human history of Hawai'i Island.
- Significant historical events, developments, and people as well as ancient cultural myths and stories have direct connections to the Ala Kahakai.
- The Ala Kahakai reflects Hawaii's natural history and the history of human impacts on native forests and other landscapes over time.
- Events that occurred along the Ala Kahakai have historical and cultural significance that reaches across the Hawaiian islands.
- People have family stories that they are proud of and willing to share.
- Community members have deep personal and emotional connections to the Ala Kahakai and its history.

Trail Advocates, Stewards & Partnerships

- Descendants, families, community groups, and local residents along the corridor have been stewarding, protecting, and preserving knowledge about the Ala Kahakai for generations.
- NAH and the NPS have established a strong partnership grounded in a shared commitment to community-centered processes.
- The NPS has committed to an ahupua'a-based, hyper-localized approach to Ala Kahakai stewardship and management.
- A Memorandum of Understanding betwee the NPS, State of Hawai'i, and Hawai'i County to implement the Ala Kahakai CMP has fostered successful collaborations around trail protection and access.
- Public agencies such as county and state parks, national parks and NAH maintain and foster access to sections of the Ala Kahakai.
- Conservation, education, 'ohana, and other non-profit organizations are current or potential partners in stewarding and managing trail segments.
- Advocacy organizations like E Mau Nā Ala Hele have worked for decades to preserve trails, raise awareness, and increase access.
- The Ala Kahakai Trail Association partners with the NPS to support community-based trail planning, management, and stewardship and protects trail landscapes from development through land acquistion.
- Community partners and private landowners maintain sections of the corridor for public use, while individual advocates and stewards help to monitor and report on trail conditions and treatments.
- Advisory groups provide expertise and guidance to support trail preservation and access. They include the Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council, the Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Commission, and other advisory bodies.
- NAH volunteer and outreach programs engage with local communities, organizations, schools, and keiki to encourage the next generation of trail stewards and advocates.

INTERPRETIVE MESSAGES

What is the interpretation about?
What should interpretive experiences communicate?

Two levels of interpretive messages have emerged thus far from the foundational planning process: a "big idea" and a set of interpretive themes. Together, they provide essential focus for the content that will be created in later stages of exhibit and program development. As written here, these messages serve internal planning purposes. They may or may not be communicated directly in interpretive materials, or if they are, they might not be expressed in these exact words.

The **big idea** is the main message that interpretive experiences communicate, in whatever form they are experienced. It is the core concept that infuses everything. **Themes** are interpretive threads, spun from the main message, that weave throughout the visitor experience. Each theme might be expressed through a variety of methods—at locations along the corridor, in communities, in print, or online — and any experience might communicate multiple themes.

This Plan articulates **seven interpretive themes** for the Ala Kahakai NHT. Five of them build directly on the interpretive themes included in the 2009 CMP, developed through extensive community consultation. Additional themes emerged from the interpretive planning process in 2025.

Each interpretive theme is paired with an **audience invitation** for those who engage with interpretation. Each theme also is connected with a **statement of significance** that explains the Ala Kahakai's importance for understanding and preserving Hawaiian cultural heritage. Finally, for each theme there is a list of **suggested topics** for the interpretation to focus on.

Together, the themes, invitations, statements of significance, and topics articulate the core concepts that interpretive experiences will communicate to those who engage with them.

Big Idea

The Ala Kahakai embodies and perpetuates the enduring values and relationships embedded in the ahupua'a system while carrying the history and stories of the Hawaiian people.

Themes

Topics

Theme

The Trail is the Embodiment of an Enduring Culture.

Invitation

Connect with the enduring lifeways and values of the Hawaiian people.

I view trails as this really important indicator of how our kūpuna thought ... Today, we're trying to get back to these Hawaiian ways of thinking. – Lā Crivello

To be able to have access again ... it's freedom of my feet ... and freedom of the mind. – Boyd Bond

This place helps you to reach a maturity. It makes you think and makes you aware of who you are. – Māhealani Pai

Statement of Significance (2009 CMP)

"The Ala Kahakai Trail protects and provides access to natural, cultural, and recreational resources that together express the Native Hawaiian culture and way of life, past and present."

Possible Topics to Interpret

- The cultural values, practices, and protocols that anchor Hawaiian people's relationship with ʻāina and each other and how they have been embedded and expressed within the ahupuaʻa system along this Trail Corridor
- How the disruption of that system has undermined Hawaiians' ability to maintain their responsible relationship with ʻāina
- How Hawaiians have worked to reclaim and revitalize their cultural values, practices, and relationship with ʻāina
- How ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi is embedded and expressed along the Ala Kahakai
- How the ahupuaʻa system continues to shape life on the island today
- The ways that Hawaiians are continuing to live and pass on their culture today
- Where and how Native Hawaiians can access places to practice their cultural values and traditions along the Ala Kahakai

Theme

The Trail Tells the Story of the Hawaiian People.

Invitation

Feel Hawaiian history and stories come alive as they are shared along the Ala Kahakai.

It is the history of my ʻohana in physical form. – Kaleo Paik

Every spot, every rock, every little inlet has a story. – Matt Clark

What happened to Hawaiʻi? Why are people not walking the trails now? – Abel Nazara

Statement of Significance (2009 CMP)

"Along the coastal ala loa events took place that are significant to Hawaiian history and culture."

Possible Topics to Interpret

- The significant historical events, developments, and people that have been connected to the Ala Kahakai over time
- The stories told by archaeological, historical, and cultural sites along the corridor
- The building and maintenance of the Ala Kahakai and how its construction and use evolved over time
- How to "read" trails for information revealed by their structure, alignment, and materials
- How changes in land tenure and use significantly altered Native Hawaiian access to trails, shorelines, and gathering areas, e.g.:
  - The Māhele ʻĀina (1848–1855)
  - The introduction of livestock and the development of ranches and sugar plantations
  - The construction of resorts, subdivisions, private properties, and modern highways
- The personal and family stories connected to the Ala Kahakai
- The importance of preserving and protecting places of historical and cultural significance

Theme

The Trail Connects Us to the People of the Past.

Invitation

Follow in the footsteps of the ka poʻe kahiko (people of old) along the Ala Kahakai.

I can understand what other eyes would have seen. – Lehua Alapai

[Trails are] the traced footsteps of my ancestors. – Kamuela Plunkett

We're always looking for clues: What did our ancestors leave for us? – Māhealani Pai

Statement of Significance (2009 CMP)

"The Ala Kahakai Trail contains the oldest and best remaining examples of the ancient ala loa, the major land route connecting the reaches of the coastal settlement zone of most ahupuaʻa on the island of Hawaiʻi. The ala loa was essential to the movement of early Hawaiians from place to place."

Possible Topics to Interpret

- How early Hawaiians lived within the ahupuaʻa system that structured their societies
- How and why early Hawaiians used the alaloa and other intersecting trails across the island
- How physical trails on the land are connected to water trails on the ocean, star trails in the sky, and the trails left by the ancestors through place names in the Hawaiian language
- The spiritual/mythic/metaphysical aspects of early Hawaiian belief systems and how/where they are connected to the Ala Kahakai
- The geneaological and ancestral ties that connect Hawaiians to the Ala Kahakai
- How being and moving along the Ala Kahakai connects Hawaiians to the ancestors
- Language, chants, music, songs and stories that evoke the ancestors at places along the corridor

Theme

The Trail Connects Us to Each Other.

Invitation

Discover how Hawai‘i’s trails bring people together.

Trails are relationships. – Ramsay Taum

The trails, they bring me back to my kūpuna. – Nicole Keaka Lui

They’re that vessel and that conduit to each other. – Lā Crivello

Statement of Significance (2009 CMP; shared with Theme 6)

“The Ala Kahakai Trail is a dynamic, living cultural resource reflecting the values of an island people and their continuing responsible relationship with their community, land, and ocean resources.”

Possible Topics to Interpret

- All the ways that trails are places for people to connect and commune: with community, family, ancestors, people of history and legend, human and non-human beings
- How trails continue to lead people to each other, as they always have
- The family memories, stories and songs that connect Kānaka Maoli, kama‘āina, and local residents to ‘āina along the Ala Kahakai
- The opportunities to make new memories through shared experiences along the corridor
- The power of sharing stories in community
- What the Ala Kahakai and its landscapes mean to people of different cultures and backgrounds
- How to build and strengthen relationships with ‘ohana and communities along the corridor

Theme

The Trail Connects Us to ʻĀina.

Invitation

Listen and learn as the land speaks its stories.

The ʻāina is the curriculum. – Māhealani Pai

The rock has spirit. – Nicole Keaka Lui

The coral is my ancestor.
She's my relative. – Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen

Statement of Significance (2009 CMP)

"The Ala Kahakai Trail passes through and provides opportunities to protect significant natural areas and ecosystems with indigenous and endemic species along its route."

Possible Topics to Interpret

- Learning how to live in responsible, reciprocal relationship with ʻāina and with all interconnected beings
- The waterways that are connected to the Ala Kahakai and how they have sustained life here
- The plant and animal life and the ecosystems that are indigenous and endemic to areas along the corridor
- How Hawaiians historically used and stewarded the land and resources along the corridor within the ahupuaʻa system
- How native ecosystems have been disrupted and damaged over time, with lasting consequences
- How people have worked to restore and protect ʻāina along the corridor and reestablish responsible relationships with it
- Exploring your relation to and responsibility for the land and beings along the Ala Kahakai; finding your place in the system of interdependent relationships here

Theme

The Trail Calls for Stewardship.

Invitation

Care for the Ala Kahakai and the people, places, and landscapes it connects.

Ka Wa Ma Mua, Ka Wa Ma Hope
(In working one learns) – ʻŌlelo Noʻeau

How can I contribute? How can I belong? – Māhealani Pai

For me the trails have continued to be an enduring priority to protect. – Debbie Chang

Statement of Significance (2009 CMP; shared with Theme 4)

"The Ala Kahakai Trail is a dynamic, living cultural resource reflecting the values of an island people and their continuing responsible relationship with their community, land, and ocean resources."

Possible Topics to Interpret

- The need to respect, protect, and preserve trail landscapes and cultural sites, including why some places are not open for public access
- Where and how to experience the Ala Kahakai in ways that respect, protect, and preserve Hawaiʻi's natural and cultural heritage
- Where and how local residents can become involved in protecting and restoring the landscapes along the corridor
- How advocates and stewards have worked to protect, preserve, restore, and ensure access to Hawaiian trails
- The need to inspire kuleana for the trails by the next generations
- How to become an active advocate, defender, and/or steward of the Ala Kahakai
- How to connect with and support trail and land stewards across ʻohana, ahupuaʻa, and organizations

Theme

The Trail Is Not a Museum.

Invitation

Use the Ala Kahakai to perpetuate Hawaiian values and regenerate sustainable communities.

Engage community to take on their kuleana. – Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen

Trails always have a beginning. Where it ends, still rides upon our shoulders. – Lily Anne Leolani Souza

Statement of Significance (New)

An ahupuaʻa-based trail management system promotes sustainable community development grounded in Hawaiian values and reciprocal relationship with ʻāina.

Possible Topics to Interpret

- How community-based management of the Ala Kahakai both supports and is supported by the regeneration and activation of the Hawaiian ahupuaʻa system
- How regeneration of the ahupuaʻa system is fostered by a commitment to values-driven, descendant-led, locally-controlled processes
- How trail management, stewardship, preservation, and interpretation can contribute to self-reliant, sustainable economies
- How use of and active connection with the Ala Kahakai supports the healing, health, well-being, and safety of people and ʻāina
- How Hawaiʻi Island's people and trails regenerate each other within a living, interdependent system
- The need to connect and collaborate across ʻohana, ahupuaʻa, organizations, and communities to manage and steward trail landscapes and cultural and natural resources

INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

ONE TRAIL, MANY ROUTES: A FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETATION

The previous section of this document laid the kahua for interpretive planning along the Ala Kahakai NHT. The next step is to build a framework for future interpretive development and implementation.

- **How and where will messages be communicated?**
- **How will interpretation be experienced? What forms will it take?**

These are the questions addressed by an interpretive framework. Typically a framework would attach messages to selected locations and identify methods for sharing them with certain audiences. The more circumscribed the space, the more focused, precise, and detailed the framework can be.

In this case, a one-size frame definitely will not fit all. This is generally true for NHT units within the NPS system, which require a more distributed approach to interpretation than a park or monument. The NPS and NAH commitment to community-based management of the Ala Kahakai requires an even more decentralized approach.

A wide variety of agencies, organizations, and other entities might use this document to develop and implement interpretive initiatives. They include:

- The National Park Service
- State of Hawai'i/ Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program
- County and local government agencies
- Private landowners and land managers
- Nonprofit organizations, community groups, and families
- Schools and other educational entities

To serve this range of users and support community-led development, this document offers **customizable options**, structured by **core guidelines and recommendations**. It provides a toolkit or a la carte menu for the development and implementation of interpretive initiatives along the Ala Kahakai. Together, the kahua and this flexible framework set trail-wide parameters while supporting a range of **hyper-local choices**.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These principles should guide the development of interpretive initiatives, regardless of who develops them or how they are experienced.

ʻĀina-Grounded & Restorative

All interpretive initiatives should be grounded in aloha ʻāina, fostering kuleana for the landscapes and waterscapes along the Ala Kahakai. Interpretation should work to restore reciprocal, responsible relationships between people and the land and sustainable, self-sufficient systems of living on Hawaiʻi Island. It should facilitate the protection and restoration of the ancient and historical trails and the cultural and natural heritage within the corridor.

Hawaiian-Centered & Inclusive

Trail interpretation should be centered in Hawaiian values, priorities, and perspectives. Content should incorporate ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi, particularly when expressing Hawaiian concepts and worldview. Where appropriate, content should include the stories of historical immigrants and others who are an integral part of Hawaiʻi Island's history as connected to the Ala Kahakai. Where the audiences for a given initiative include non-Hawaiians, interpretation should offer ways to connect to the story and the place.

Community-Based & Ahupuaʻa-Managed

This interpretive framework follows the example set by the NPS in its approach to management of the Ala Kahakai NHT. As laid out in the 2009 CMP, while responsible for overall trail administration, the NPS supports management of trail sections by descendent-led communities, generally defined by the ahupuaʻa system of land divisions, stewardship, and responsibility. The further planning, development, and implementation of interpretive initiatives should also be driven by descendant/kamaʻāina-led communities on an ahupuaʻa by ahupuaʻa basis.

Capacity-Building & (Re-)Generative

The processes of planning, developing, implementing, and managing interpretive initiatives should contribute to multi-faceted capacity building within local communities. They should foster knowledge and practices that support stewardship, management, and regeneration of ecological, cultural, and economic resources. Interpretive initiatives should generate paths to family and community stability. Where possible, they should offer employment, provide income, and help build transferrable job skills.

FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

The following pages outline the five core components of an interpretive framework for the Ala Kahakai.

1. Audiences **2. Locations** **3. Content** **4. Methods** **5. Design**

Each of these components includes multiple **options and variations**. They can be mixed, matched, and combined in different ways, depending on particular goals, local conditions, or other circumstances. Choosing from these options, the developers of an interpretive initiative can construct a custom framework that is built to purpose and adapted to their needs.

See the **Implementation** section of this document for examples and resources that support use of this interpretive framework.

1. Audiences

Questions to Consider

- Who do you want to engage or reach through a given interpretive initiative?
- Who do you seek to connect with the Ala Kahakai?

The answer for a given initiative might include any one or more of the audiences listed below.

AUDIENCE OPTIONS/VARIATIONS

- ○ Kānaka Maoli
- ○ Kamaʻāina
- ○ Trail ʻOhana
- ○ Longtime Residents
- ○ Newcomers
- ○ Visitors/Guests
- ○ Keiki, Youth, and Young Adults
- ○ Land Owners/Managers

See the **Foundations: Audiences** section for further definition of these audiences in relation to Ala Kahakai interpretation.

2. Locations

Questions to Consider

- Where will the interpretive initiative take place?
- Where will your audiences encounter interpretive messages or materials or have experiences?

The Ala Kahakai NHT encompasses complex layers of land ownership, management, and access. It varies widely in terms of environments, features, and physical conditions. Each of these variables affects the consideration of locations for interpretive experiences.

LOCATION OPTIONS/VARIATIONS

Along the Trail Corridor

- ◯ **NPS Site**
  - Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park
  - Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park
  - Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park
  - Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site
- ◯ **State/NAH-Managed Trail Section**
- ◯ **County-Managed Trail Section**
- ◯ **Restricted/Managed-Access Trail Section**
- ◯ **Public Shoreline Access Area**
- ◯ **Private Development**
  - This category includes hotels, resorts, and housing developments with public access easements.
- ◯ **Private Educational or Interpretive Site**
  - Examples include Kalaemanō Interpretive Center and Kamehameha Schools’ Kahalu‘u Ma Kai property in North Kona.

Outside the Trail Corridor

- ◯ **Nearby Community Public Space**
  - Possibilities include a community center, library, post office, park, or other indoor or outdoor public gathering place.
- ◯ **School Campus**
- ◯ **Online**

Variations in trailscapes, landscapes, and features, as well as conditions of land ownership, management, and access will determine what kinds of interpretive initiatives are appropriate for different locations along the corridor.

Privately managed sites like Kalaemanō Cultural Reserve are good locations for ʻāina-based education.

Already-developed public access areas could be good locations for interpretive signs.

3. Content

Questions to Consider

- What do you want to communicate through interpretive experiences or materials?
- What types of content do you want to share?

CONTENT OPTIONS/VARIATIONS

Interpretive Themes

The developers of an interpretive initiative might choose to focus on one or more of the themes presented in this Interpretive Plan:

1. **The Trail is the Embodiment of an Enduring Culture.**
2. **The Trail Tells the Story of the Hawaiian People.**
3. **The Trail Connects Us to the People of the Past.**
4. **The Trail Connects Us to Each Other.**
5. **The Trail Connects Us to ʻĀina.**
6. **The Trail Calls for Stewardship.**
7. **The Trail Is Not a Museum.**

See the **Foundations: Interpretive Messages** section of this document for more on the themes and corresponding potential topics.

Content Types

Each of these content types will express themes, communicate messages, share ideas, and engage and affect people in different ways. Some might be more appropriate for certain audiences, best implemented by particular groups, or better suited to specific locations.

Moʻolelo ʻĀina

A moʻolelo ʻāina interweaves natural and cultural history to tell a story of the relationship between people and place.

Place-Based Story

This category includes Hawaiian history and legends, family histories, personal memories, and stories of human and non-human beings connected to specific locations.

Resource-Specific Interpretation

Trail resources include historical sites, cultural resources, natural features, landscapes, waterscapes, and viewsheds.

Historical Context

Interpretation might share aspects of Hawaiian history that provide context for understanding trail resources or place-specific stories. It also might share the history of the ahupuaʻa system, Hawaiian trail networks, or the Ala Kahakai itself.

Cultural Grounding

Interpretive content might express Native Hawaiian concepts, values, or ways of thinking. An interpretive initiative might engage Kānaka Maoli in experiences that reconnect them with their language, ʻohana, kupuna, ahupuaʻa, or other aspect of their ancestral cultural heritage.

Ecological Knowledge

An interpretive initiative might share knowledge about how to maintain or restore the environment or teach people how to grow, tend, or gather plant and marine resources.

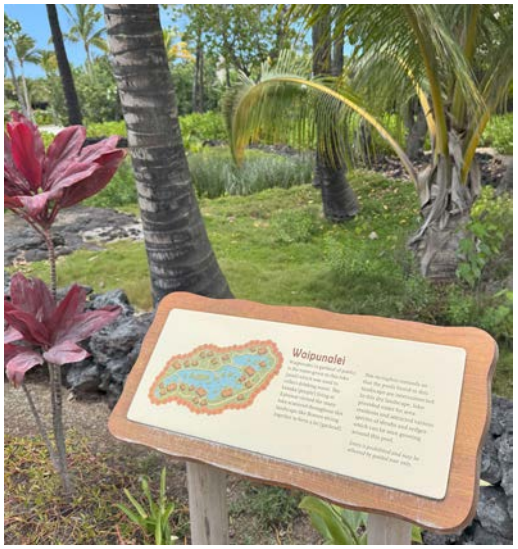
Behavioral Guidance

Content might focus on encouraging or discouraging certain behaviors to protect ʻāina, preserve resources, follow protocol, control access, or serve other purposes.

Call to Stewardship

Content might invite or encourage people to become active stewards of the Ala Kahakai, its associated resources, and/or the landscapes it passes through.

Place-based stories and Hawaiian history can be shared through huakaʻi hele (guided cultural-historical tours).



Site-specific signs can interpret natural and cultural resources while also guiding behavior.

Public access areas are good locations for behavioral guidance and safety information.

emaunaalahele.org/

The non-profit organization E Mau Nā Ala Hele calls people to stewardship on its website as well as through guided hikes, community work days, and other in-person, on-trail programs.

4. Methods

Questions to Consider

- How will you connect your audiences with the Ala Kahakai?
- How will you communicate messages and share content?
- What kinds of experiences do you want people to have?

Interpretive content can be shared and messages communicated through many creative methods and a variety of experiences and physical forms. This Plan recommends the methods outlined here as particularly well suited for interpretive initiatives related to the Ala Kahakai.

5. Design

Most of the methods recommended here would involve some level of graphic and/or structural design. Design choices should suit each initiative's unique combination of audience, location, content, and method.

See the **Design Guidance** and **Implementation** sections of this document for design guidelines and recommendations.

METHOD OPTIONS/VARIATIONS

Communing Along the Trail

Interpretation of the Ala Kahakai is not just about communicating messages. It is about fostering communion: with the trails, kūpuna, ʻohana, and ʻāina. The most powerful initiatives bring people together to share communal experiences while connecting with the land, water, rocks, plants, and animals.

These experiences can foster intergenerational knowledge transfer and build cultural and economic capacity within communities along the Ala Kahakai. They can help restore sustainable, self-sufficient ways of living that are grounded in Hawaiian values and maintained through the ahupuaʻa system.

○ Huakaʻi Hele

Kamaʻāina-led, guided walks share place-based knowledge about landscapes and cultural heritage sites as well as Hawaiian history, stories, and values.

○ ʻĀina-Based Education

Keiki and youth can engage in place-based, experiential learning along the corridor through school and community-led programs that connect them with their cultural heritage and their kupuna.

○ Other Communal Trail Experiences

- Mālama ʻĀina Activities
- Trail or Resource Stewardship
- Talk Story Gatherings
- ʻOhana Social Gatherings
- ʻĀina-Based Subsistence Practices
- Indigenous Foodways
- Speaking ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi
- Other Cultural Expression (chants, songs, dance, storytelling)
- Sharing of ʻIke Kūpuna
- Practicing Protocol

Training, Networking & Capacity Building

Stewardship & Advocacy Training

Training programs could recruit, prepare, and empower trail advocates and stewards while also connecting and supporting ʻohana networks and creating opportunities to commune along the corridor. Training needs include:

- Monitoring, reporting, and maintaining trail conditions.
- Restoration and stewardship of land, water, flora, and fauna.
- Delivering educational programs on trail history, ecology, and natural and cultural resources.

Cultural/Community Capacity Building

Intentional capacity building could bolster a range of community-based, descendant/kamaʻāina-led initiatives. They include huakaʻi hele, ʻāina-based education and subsistence practices, restoration of food systems, cultural expression, and sharing of moʻolelo ʻāina, place-based stories, ecological knowledge, and cultural grounding experiences.

Hawaiian Trails Conference and/or Workshops

An annual Hawaiian Trails conference or smaller-scale workshops would provide venues for Hawaiʻi Island and inter-island training, networking, and capacity-building efforts.

emaunaalahele.org/

Training, networking, and capacity-building initiatives will help Ala Kahakai advocates and stewards support and encourage each other while preparing others to take up the work. They can also foster new generations of knowledge keepers and storytellers.

Physical Exhibits

Indoor Exhibits

Indoor exhibits can range from simple wall panels in a single room to extensive multi-media and immersive environments that occupy an entire building. In addition to audio-visual media, they can incorporate tactile elements and physical and digital interactive components, all of which make the experience more accessible. An indoor exhibit might be designed as a short-term pop-up experience or a medium-term temporary or long-term permanent attraction. Small traveling exhibits could move from place to place.

Outdoor Exhibits

Small markers might communicate a single focused message or provide practical information, such as navigational signs. Larger signs might interpret a specific resource, provide historical context, or communicate multiple messages. A concept design process could create a custom family of sign designs for the Ala Kahakai NHT.

A group of conceptually related signs might be organized along an interpretive trail. Signs might be combined with other physical forms in an interpretive node. A node could include works of art, landscaping, benches, walls, or other built features that communicate interpretive messages through design.

Exhibits don't need high-cost, high-maintenance technology to provide engaging experiences. An interactive map and compelling historical photos (left, center) evoke place-based knowledge and memories. A hands-on play feature (right) invites children to build relationships with native plants, illustrated by an Indigenous artist.

Small markers need few words to guide behavior and communicate values.

Interpretive trails can be constructed to protect resources while sharing information.

Interpretive signs can take a variety of forms, built from sustainable, site-appropriate materials. Focused topics and short text help limit their size and prevent signs from overwhelming the landscape. QR codes, printed brochures, and guided tours and programs allow interested people to learn more.

Other Methods

Art

Art can communicate messages, evoke emotions, and connect people with place, with or without words. A design motif or illustration might be incorporated into a graphic panel or an artwork might be combined with other forms as part of an interpretive exhibit. An artwork or art installation also might stand on its own, occupying its own space. An interpretive initiative could engage people in cultural craft making or the collaborative creation of a mural or other community art project.

Curriculum

Educational materials could be developed for school curriculum. They might teach students about trail history, landscapes, and cultural and historical sites. They could incorporate ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi and communicate Hawaiian values and concepts.

Printed Content

Printed materials like brochures or booklets still have their place in the digital age. Some people are not proficient with digital devices; others prefer to limit time spent on them. Not everyone has a mobile phone, personal computer, or reliable internet access. Cell service is limited in some locations. Some people prefer to read content or engage deeply with ideas in printed form. A chapbook, zine, letterpress print, custom card deck/game, or coloring book could be well-suited for certain audiences or events or incorporated into school curriculum.

Digital Content

Digital content can be included in physical exhibits, along or away from the Ala Kahakai corridor, delivered via audio or visual media components, or incorporated into school curriculum. It can be shared via a website, app, virtual exhibit, StoryMap, YouTube channel, or other social media platform.

Public Talks & Presentations

Scientists, researchers, educators, and community knowledge keepers can share information about the landscapes, flora, fauna, and cultural resources of the Ala Kahakai corridor. Presentations also can teach community members and visitors about the historical events and developments that are connected to particular trail segments. Other topics might include the history and significance of Hawaiian trails, the people who built and used them, and the ahupuaʻa system that ties them together.

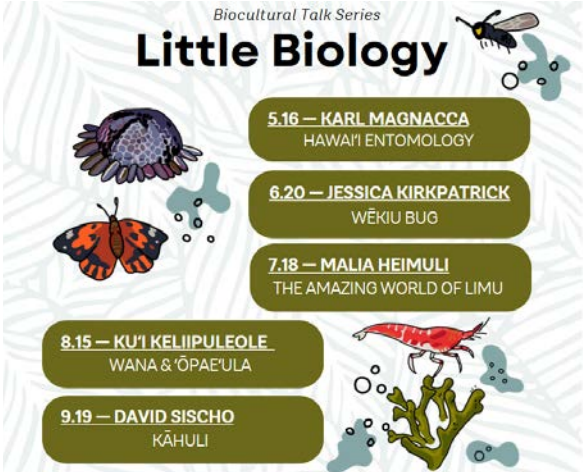
Public presentations on these subjects can be held at locations along the corridor or places connected to them via other trail networks or resource systems.

Cindy Davis

Indigenous art, language, and plant knowledge combine to evoke the Umonhon homeland in this exhibit on the Omaha reservation in Nebraska.

Leah Keller, kealakekua.org

KapuKapu ʻOhana commune and mālama ʻāina at Hikiau Heiau in partnership with Hoʻāla Kealakekua Nui.



waikoloadryforest.org

In 2025, the Waikōloa Dry Forest Initiative hosted a public Biocultural Talk Series and shared videos of the presentations on their YouTube channel and website.

treesforhonolulu.org

A culture-based card game could teach about the plants, animals, and values connected to the Ala Kahakai through Hawaiian language and art.

Sculpture and signage can work together to tell a story that connects people with place-based practices across time.

DESIGN GUIDANCE

INTERPRETIVE DESIGN

Creation of a fully formed design style is beyond the scope of this Interpretive Plan. Later phases of concept planning and design development could establish a visual "look and feel" for Ala Kahakai interpretation, select physical forms and materials, and establish approaches to design elements and templates. This chapter of the Interpretive Plan provides preliminary guidance to inform later phases of design work.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

These principles should guide development and implementation of interpretive design for the Ala Kahakai NHT.

1. Interpretive design should be **grounded in and guided by ʻāina.**
2. Interpretive text should incorporate **Hawaiian words and phrases**, written in consultation with language and culture knowledge keepers. Hawaiian words should not be set in italics or placed in parentheses, since ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi is not a foreign language; rather, it is the Indigenous language of this place.
3. Interpretation should be **accessible and inclusive** for all its intended audiences. Follow **universal design principles** where possible.
4. Consistent use of recurring design elements should contribute to a **cohesive visual experience** along the length of the physical trail as well as in print and online media.
5. Visual branding for the overall Ala Kahakai NHT should **integrate elements** from the National Park Service and the State of Hawaiʻi's Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program. At the same time, the Ala Kahakai NHT should have its own **distinctive graphic identity** that sets it apart.
6. Where interpretive forms are installed (e.g., signs, sculptures, seating, or other physical structures), they should **complement and integrate with the landscape** rather than dominating or distracting from the viewshed or ambience.
7. Materials and methods used to construct and install physical forms should be **as sustainable as possible.** Sustainability should be considered holistically, including environmental, human, and financial impacts. Where possible, use materials and installation methods that are resistant to vandalism and theft. Factor maintenance and replacement into planning for signs and other physical interpretation.

DESIGN INSPIRATION

Identifying sources of design inspiration helps build a meaningful and site-specific interpretive experience. It sparks stylistic ideas and informs design choices that let people know they are in the right spot, feel a part of the environment, and absorb intended messages.

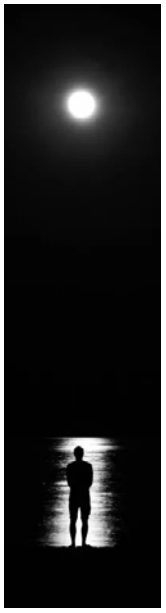
Through early planning phases and immersive site visits, the interpretive team has drawn inspiration from these sources:

- ʻĀina—the landscapes and waterways along the corridor and their unique qualities in particular locations;
- The plant and animal life that ʻāina sustains;
- The passion, intentionality, and storytelling of those deeply connected to the Ala Kahakai; and
- The energy of open spaces and vast connection between land and sky.

Design Words & Mood Board

This page represents the above inspirations through descriptive **design words** and a **mood board** of images. These tools begin to build a distinctive look and feel, which can be further developed in later phases of interpretive design.

Reflective



One Moment Please; ukposters.co.uk

Marshall Sharpe; huffpost.com

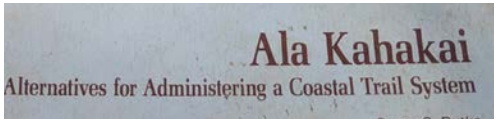
Vibrant

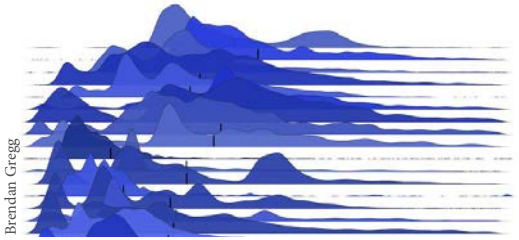
Optimistic

Connective

Jill Deveraux; art.com

birdfesthawaii.org





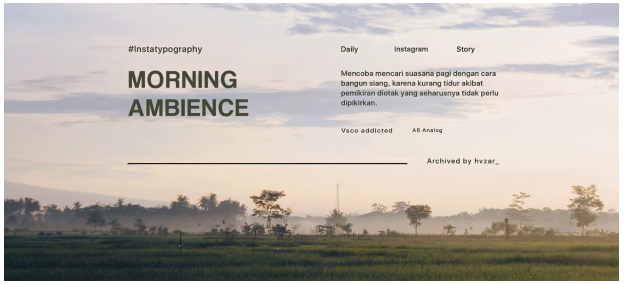
Brendan Gregg

Energetic

Earthen

Authentic

Expansive



Pinterest

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Using the design inspiration as a foundation, more formal design elements can be explored. This section offers guidance for a color palette, typography, graphic composition, and brand identity for Ala Kahakai interpretation.

Color Palette

Inspired by studying the color story of the moku the Ala Kahakai passes through (right), the palette shown below will help provide a cohesive interpretive experience, regardless of delivery method or location.

C: 36
M: 16
Y: 90
K: 0

C: 65
M: 34
Y: 0
K: 0

C: 2
M: 7
Y: 17
K: 0

C: 79
M: 66
Y: 57
K: 57

C: 28
M: 11
Y: 9
K: 0

C: 36
M: 70
Y: 82
K: 35

By combining colors in different ways, interpretive design can also reflect the distinctive landscapes and identities of the various moku. The following pages suggest how to apply the palette by moku (North Kohala, South Kohala, North Kona, South Kona, and Kaʻū/Puna). Each application varies by the **emphasis** of certain colors in the palette, with the **addition of secondary colors** that are unique to that moku.

Graphic design, forms, and materials can all draw from this palette. Different hues of each color can create variety and improve legibility, contrast, and other considerations.

North Kohala

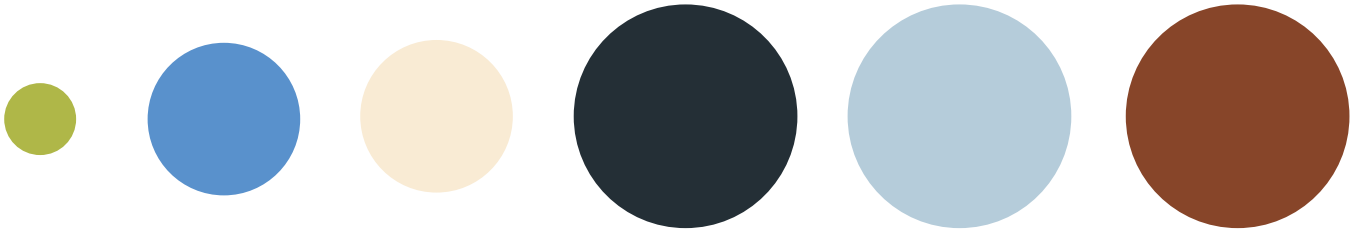
South Kohala

North Kona

South Kona

Kaʻū & Puna

North Kohala Emphasis



+

Secondary Colors

Application Guidance

- Emphasis: Lean more on the earthen colors of the palette (like dark red, pale blue, and rich black/brown).
- Secondary Colors: Introduce some saturation with a richer hue of green and/or blue.

C: 42 M: 41 Y: 76 K: 12

C: 67 M: 47 Y: 30 K:4

South Kohala Emphasis

+

Secondary Colors

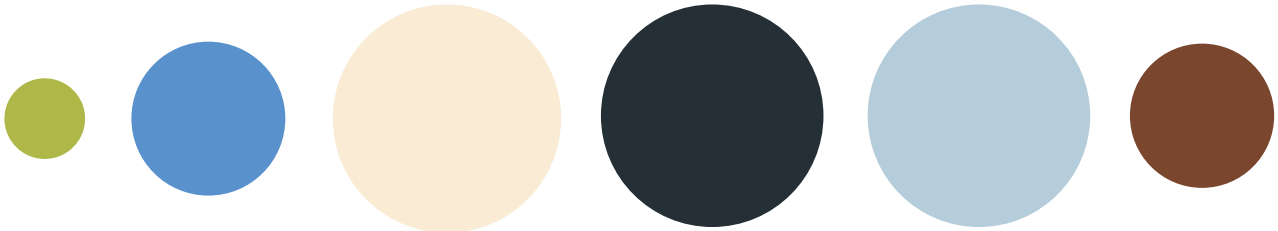
Application Guidance

- Emphasis: Lean more on the earthen colors of the palette (like dark red and rich black/brown), while keeping things lighter overall.
- Secondary colors: Introduce some saturation with a lighter blue and/or tint of orange.

C: 17 M: 36 Y: 50 K:0

C: 42 M: 3 Y: 15 K:0

North Kona Emphasis



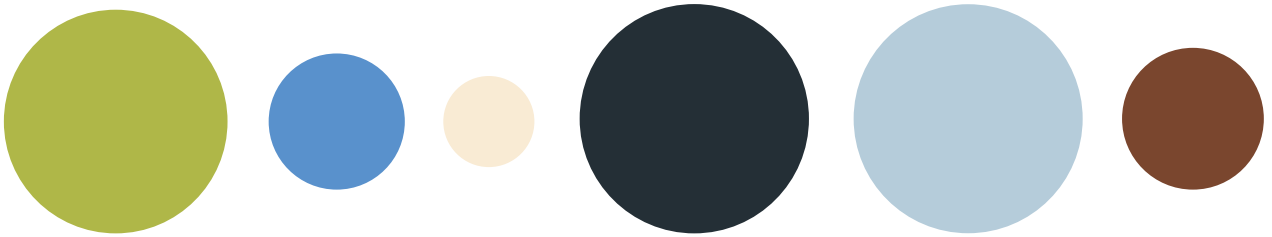
Secondary Colors

Application Guidance

- Emphasis: Lean more on the cool colors of the palette (like pale blue, beige, and brown) and play with the contrast between dark and light.
- Secondary Colors: Introduce more blue and a darker, richer brown.

C: 51 M: 66 Y: 70 K:53 C: 60 M: 15 Y: 4 K:0

South Kona Emphasis



+

Secondary Colors

Application Guidance

- Emphasis: Lean on the cool, saturated colors of the palette (like green, blue, and black).
- Secondary colors: Pops of peach or coral provides additional vibrancy and warmth.

C: 0 M: 59 Y: 47 K: 0

C: 1 M: 25 Y: 48 K:0

Ka‘ū & Puna Emphasis

Secondary Colors

Application Guidance

- Emphasis: Lean heavily on the blue and black in this palette.
- Secondary colors: The introduction of dark green or gray will reinforce the monochromatic feel.

C: 82 M: 38 Y: 90 K: 34 C: 67 M: 47 Y: 30 K:4

Typography

A typeface's personality, along with its legibility, letterforms, and weight, combine to effectively convey messaging. Taken together, these elements of typography lend continuity as a visitor moves through physical and virtual interpretive spaces.

Typography for the Ala Kahakai NHT should:

- Support the glyphs and diacritics found in the Hawaiian language. The NPS uses HFrutiger, a version of its standard Frutiger font, because it includes Hawaiian diacritics.
- Use a family of typefaces, where one is a display font and the other one or two are sans-serif or serif fonts (like HFrutiger). A display font is a big-personality font used for headers, subheads, and short, high-impact messages. Sans-serif and serif fonts are suitable for larger quantities of text.
- Use fonts that provide good contrast to one another while communicating the look and feel of the design inspiration.
- Be sized appropriately for viewing height.

Composition

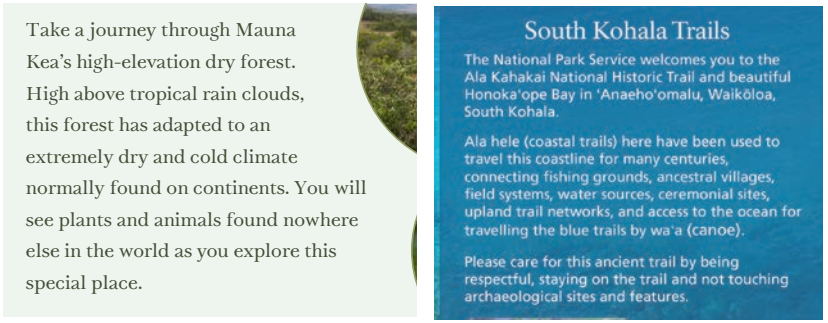
How components are placed, arranged, and treated stylistically could be a recognizable component of the Ala Kahakai's design identity. While on site, the interpretive planning team was struck by the energy created by open spaces and the urge to take the deepest of breaths within landscapes that opened their arms in welcome.

Compositionally, interpretive design for the Ala Kahakai NHT might:

- Make full use of negative space.
- Allow images to carry messages; avoid large blocks of text that could overwhelm the reader.
- Emphasize lateral lines more than vertical lines.

Examples of display fonts used on NAH and NPS signage: Banana Yeti (left) and Arvo (below).

Examples of sans-serif and serif fonts used by NAH and NPS for large quantities of text: Tryst (left) and Frutiger (right).



BRAND IDENTITY

The NPS and NAH seek to develop a graphic style for the Ala Kahakai NHT that incorporates elements of their organizational brands while also establishing a unique design identity. This process will extend beyond the completion of the Interpretive Plan. Yet it is helpful to begin thinking about how graphic design can contribute to the development of a distinctive visual identity for interpretation and other communication.

The table on the following pages outlines how selected design elements are currently used by the NPS and NAH. The right column offers recommendations on how those elements might be combined or adapted for the Ala Kahakai NHT.

DESIGN ELEMENT	NPS	NAH	ALA KAHAKAI NHT RECOMMENDATION
Logo Inclusion & Placement	Unit name and NPS logo in black band	Many logos and/or funding statements are often gathered in a band along the bottom of a panel.	Provide space and flexibility for inclusion of multiple logos, which might include the Ala Kahakai NHT, NPS, and NAH logos as well as other partner organizations and/or landowner or land manager entities. • Determine which are necessary case by case. • Group them together in proximity on the panel. • Standardize the location where they might exist on a panel. • Allow space within standard design templates for inclusion of additional logos where needed. Creation of a new logo that is specific to the Ala Kahakai NHT is another tool to reinforce branding as a whole. If the team would like to create one in the future, earmark plenty of time for development, ideation, and revision, as an initiative of that magnitude is no small feat.
Organization of Layout	Unigrid stystem	Use of a grid and subdivison of columns is evident.	• While grid systems help to organize information, consider breaking some of these rigid boxes to accommodate elements of design inspiration. • Reducing levels of graphic hierarchy will allow content to breathe and help define a distinctive design style.

DESIGN ELEMENT	NPS	NAH	ALA KAHAKAI NHT RECOMMENDATION
Map & Icon Style	NPS Wayside Exhibit Map Standards	Most popular map style appears to be photo-realistic. They do not overwhelm with information.	• Consider the purpose of the map: is it for orientation, for context of a larger area, for navigation? This can influence design. • Consider the base map style: is it a topographc export, real-life photos, an illustration? There is room to expand beyond simple line work. • NPS icons are well-known and user-friendly. It is recommended to use this icon set, as developing one's own icon set can be a lengthy process. Perhaps use them in softer colors as needed instead of the standard black. • To warn of trail hazards or dangers, use icons that are universally recognized across languages and cultures and accessible for non-readers.
Typography	NPS Rawlinson, Frutiger and HFrutiger, NPS Wayside Exhibit Typographic Standards	A mix of fonts are being used, with notable additon of a slab-serif font.	• We recommend HFrutiger, a variant of the Frutiger typeface, for body copy and captions. It includes Hawaiian diacritical marks, making it easier to incorporate ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi. • Consider using a unique, big-personality, display typeface for headers, subheads, and key messages.
Multilingual Interpretation	NPS Wayside Exhibit Typographic Standards	Current interpretation supports Hawaiian language and is integrated well with English.	• What is the order of languages in the hierarchy? Keep that consistent. • It is often helpful to treat the languages different stylistically so it is clear which language is which. • Teams should decide which amount of translation suits the goals of the project (translation of all content, only a select few phrases or words, only translation in certain locations, etc.). • Dual languages take up at least double the space of one, sometimes triple. Plan accordingly for designing interpretive graphics.
Editorial Style Guidelines	HFC Editorial Style Guide	TBD	• Follow the HFC Editorial Style Guide.
Accessibility	Follows the Programmatic Accessibility Guide	Some principles are in place.	• Follow the NPS Programatic Accessibility Guide and additional ADA guidance where appropriate.

IMPLEMENTATION

ROUTES TO IMPLEMENTATION

Unlike typical interpretive plans, this one will not be implemented by a single agency, institution, or organization. Instead, it has many potential end users, both known and unknown. The NPS and NAH will use it to guide future planning and development of interpretive initiatives. Other possible users include non-profit organizations, educational institutions, community and family groups, resorts, and other private landowners.

Given the decentralized nature of trail interpretation, there will be many routes to implementation. It will take a variety of forms, carried out at widely distributed locations along the Ala Kahakai corridor. This section provides general support for further planning and development of interpretive initiatives, regardless of who is developing them and where they are located.

What Is an Interpretive Initiative?

Interpretation is a form of focused, purposeful communication that **connects people with places** of cultural, historical, or natural heritage. It sparks, builds, develops, and deepens relationships between people and places through storytelling and multisensory experiences.

An interpretive initiative is any planned process, project, activity, event, space, structure, creation, or sustained undertaking that is intended to **share content** or **facilitate experiences** that connect people with a particular place. It might also **shape behavior** or **inspire action** that could affect that place or other related places.

Interpretive initiatives can take many forms. The following pages feature examples from along the Ala Kahakai—some that currently exist, some from the past, and some that might be implemented in the future. Each example incorporates various content types and employs multiple methods as outlined in the Interpretive Framework section of this Plan. This is just a small sampling of what is possible.

EXAMPLE INTERPRETIVE INITIATIVES

Present & Past Initiatives

Kalaemanō Cultural Reserve
North Kona

This 104-acre reserve was created to protect and encourage active stewardship of its natural and cultural resources. It includes a private interpretive center that focuses on ʻāina-based education, cultural grounding, and the sharing of ecological knowledge. A self-guided trailuses small signs and QR codes linking to digital content to provide resource-specific interpretation and historical context. The Reserve's website also shares moʻolelo ʻāina and cultural grounding, provides historical context and behavioral guidance, and issues a call to stewardship.

http://www.kalaemano.com

Ala Hele Papa, Kiʻi Pōhaku of Kaʻūpūlehu
Kona Village, North Kona

The Ala Hele Papa (boardwalk) was built in 1998 to allow visitors to view the Kiʻi Pōhaku (petroglyphs) of Kaʻūpūlehu without further damaging them. This initiative provides resource-specific interpretation, historical context, and behavioral guidance via trail signs, a printed brochure, guided tours, and the Kona Village website.

https://www.rosewoodhotels.com/en/kona-village/experiences/cultural-center

Hui Aloha Kīholo
North Kona

According to their website, this grassroots group came together in 2007 "with the intention to reconnect community in ways which support healthy interaction with place." Hui Aloha Kīholo has organized, trained, and empowered a community of volunteer stewards to actively monitor, maintain, and protect the cultural and natural landscape of Kīholo Bay. They educate community members and visitors about the site's cultural and natural resources and provide behaviorial guidance regarding how to respect and protect them, both on site and via their website.

Hui Aloha Kīholo's on-site and outreach programs also provide ʻāina-based education, foster subsistence practices, communicate ecological knowledge, and encourage intergenerational sharing of moʻolelo ʻāina and place-based stories. Outreach activities include visits to classrooms and presentations at community events and conferences.

https://www.huialohakiholo.org

huialohakiholo.org

Hoʻāla Kealakekua Nui
South Kona

This community-based nonprofit organization is dedicated to the restoration and stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of Kealakekua Bay, including Hikiau Heiau. Their on-site activities, outreach programs, and website provide resource-specific education, historical context, cultural grounding, and behavioral guidance.

Hoʻāla Kealakekua Nui shares ecological knowledge, place-based stories, and moʻolelo ʻāina. They also lead huakaʻi hele and train others to become active stewards and storytellers of this place.

https://kealakekua.org

Huakaʻi Lā Day Marchers
South Kona

This grassroots group of local residents and supporters are all about communing along the Ala Kahakai. They monitor, maintain, and steward a section of the corridor. They malama ʻāina and educate themselves and others about trail resources, history, and place-based stories through huakaʻi hele, at community events, and during regular social gatherings.

Hawaiʻi Volcanoes National Park
Kaʻū & Puna

The largest of four NPS units in the Ala Kahakai corridor, this park provides interpretation through outdoor and indoor exhibits, educational programs, printed and digital content, public talks and presentations, and events with opportunities to practice and share Hawaiian cultural expression. Interpretation is experienced in person and through an extensive website. It includes resource education, place-based stories, historical context, behaviorial guidance, and calls to stewardship.

https://www.nps.gov/havo

Youth Initiatives
South Kohala & North Kona

The April 2013 issue of the NPS newsletter "Ways of the Ancestors" (right) highlighted youth-focused initiatives happening along the Ala Kahakai NHT. These initiatives incorporated huakaʻi hele, moʻolelo ʻāina, oli, and place-based family stories. The ongoing Nā Peʻa canoe program provides grounding in Hawaiian traditions and demonstrates how the Ala Kahakai extends beyond land to include coastal waters and ocean trails.

NAH Youth Initiatives
Trail-Wide

Nā Ala Hele, the State of Hawaiʻi Trail & Access Program, develops outreach initiatives that connect people with places along the Ala Kahakai Corridor. Many of their existing and planned programs focus on engaging youth, such as:

- Education about the use, construction, and evolution of Hawaiian trails over time and the connections between trails and food systems;
- Sharing moʻolelo ʻāina and place-based stories related to specific locations;
- Participating in malama ʻāina activities; and
- Learning how to maintain, preserve, and actively steward the Ala Kahakai.

https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/recreation/nah/

Youth Programs
Kanu o ka `Āina huaka`i

Students view south Kohala coastline at Kaunaoa Bay.

Kanu o ka Aina New Century Public Charter School in Waimea on the island of Hawaii had an *Aloha `Āina* (love of the land) *huaka`i* (journey) along Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail.

The long, hot trek across shoreline trails on lava.

Their *huaka`i* led them on steps towards youth involvement and stewardship on Hawaii's only national trail. Their trek took them on a 26 mile hike from Kawaihae to Ka Lae Mano. During the trip, descendant members of host communities presented stories specific to each place where their families continue to live and steward the land and ocean as their ancestors did. These shared cultural and historical stories with future generations are part of the added educational value of the trail making it a 175 mile long "living classroom" in which students can experience education in the outdoor setting.

Youth Programs
Na Pe`a

Na Pe'a canoes waiting to come ashore.

The first day of the 2012 annual Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park's Children's Cultural Festival was more than the usual opening ceremonies for 260+ fourth graders. Three canoes followed the blue water ocean trails of Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail to arrive and join in the ceremony. Perhaps with this real visual, a child onshore would be inspired to someday want to travel on an ocean trail by canoe like ancestors of the past.

Rigging the canoe is part of the learning.

Two smaller opelu canoes were sailed by four young people from Kona who brought *ho`okupu* (gifts). An *oli* (chant) composed by one of the youth was presented when Kinikini, the larger canoe, was ready. Kinikini was carrying the *kupuna* (elders) – Dennis Hart, Ala Kahakai Trail Association; Fred Cachola, Makani Hou o Kaloko-Honokohau; Aric Arakaki, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail; and Kalani Nakoa, Nakoa Foundation.

This marked the official introduction of *Na Pe`a* (The Sails) Hawaiian canoe sailing program for youth. Na Pe`a (The Sails), a collaboration between Nakoa Foundation and Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail, brings together two components that represent and honor lifestyles of Hawaii. The future of this program could enable restoration of opelu fisheries and provide a means of transportation for shoreline trail management.

Envisioned Interpretive Initiatives

Community Meeting, Kaʻū

The selection of preferred interpretive methods will vary by organization, moku, and community. In many places in Kaʻū, signage is unwelcome and residents want to keep trail landscapes free from physical interventions. During a planning meeting at the Nāʻālehu Community Center in May 2025, community members expressed a preference for initiatives that go beyond signs or other physical forms.

Instead, workshop participants envisioned interpretation happening through intergenerational, communal, descendant/kamaʻāina-led experiences: practicing protocol, huakaʻi hele, ʻāina-based education and subsistence practices, and mālama ʻāina and stewardship activities. They emphasized the importance of school partnerships, youth programs, youth leadership, and cultural capacity building.

Participants also suggested that interpretive murals, other artwork, or signs could be located away from trail landscapes, in places where community members convene and/or tourists visit. Examples include a post office, community center, popular restaurant, or coffee shop.

Participants at the Kaʻū planning meeting were asked these questions:

What's your vision for the future of the Ala Kahakai Trail Corridor? What are your hopes and dreams for what it might become?

Responses from community members are documented below.

Community Meeting, North Kona

During a planning meeting at the Kalaemanō Interpretive Center in May 2025, community members emphasized the importance of family connections to specific trail sections and the ways that trails connect people to their ancestors. They valued opportunities to share ʻohana histories, place-based stories, and moʻolelo ʻāina. They also stressed that it matters who tells the stories and advised that families with connections to those places should decide what stories to share as well as when, where, how, and with whom to share them. Stories, they explained, come with kuleana, for both storytellers and listeners.

Community members at the North Kona meeting valued interpretive content that guides behavior toward taking responsibility and encourages active stewardship of trails, their cultural and natural resources, and their stories. As one person expressed, "Alignment with kuleana is aloha."

Meeting participants also want interpretive initiatives to provide historical context for the Ala Kahakai and the Hawaiian trail system. Important topics for them include the relationship between trails and the Kingdom of Hawaiʻi, Hawaiian monarchy, and aliʻi over time and historical events that affected trail construction. They also wanted people to know the legal basis for public access to trails and shorelines, for example the Law of the Splintered Paddle and the Highways Act of 1892.

Community members wanted opportunities for talk story gatherings and expressed interest in sharing historical photos. Some were open to sharing information through QR codes that link to online content. They saw a use for interpretive signs in some locations, though they stressed that decisions about signage should be made by ʻohana who are connected to and responsible for those places.

Participants at the North Kona planning meeting were asked this question:

If you could tell people just one thing about the Ala Kahakai Trail Corridor, what would it be?

Responses from community members are documented below.

USING THE INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

This Plan provides an Interpretive Framework to support development of interpretive initiatives along the Ala Kahakai NHT. The framework is a flexible tool that combines a set of core components with a variety of customizable options. The idea is to select options for each component that align with each other and best suit one's goals and particular circumstances.

To assist with further planning and implementation, **Appendix B** provides an **Interpretive Framework Worksheet**. The worksheet is designed to help users of this Plan make effective, sustainable choices that further their goals, serve their audiences, and communicate in ways that protect and preserve Ala Kahakai landscapes while fostering reciprocal relationships with ʻāina.

APPENDIX A:
SITE VISIT DOCUMENTATION

106GROUP
Connecting People + Place + Time

Ala Kahakai Interpretive Plan

Summary: Site Visit 1

From January 21-25, 2025, members of the Ala Kahakai interpretive planning team gathered on the Island of Hawai‘i to experience sections of the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail and meet with community members who are connected to the Trail corridor. Community representatives included people with ancestral, familial, and cultural relationships to the Trail corridor as well as Trail advocates, stewards, and caretakers.

Site Visit Participants

Project Team

The Ala Kahakai Interpretive Plan project brings together a large project team. The core project team, listed below in alphabetical order, includes individuals on the consultant and client teams. Those not present onsite are noted with an asterisk.

Catie Cullison, PBR Hawaii
Natalie Hanson, PBR Hawaii
Makena Bassett, PBR Hawaii
Ramsay Taum, PBR Hawaii
Lokelani Brandt, Hoa‘āina Heritage Services
Heather Hoagland, 106 Group
Julie Davis, 106 Group
Alyssa Rupp, 106 Group
Jackson Bauer, Nā Ala Hele Trails & Access Program
Laurel Ainsworth, Nā Ala Hele Trails & Access Program
Aric Arakaki, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
Analu Silva, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
AJ Alapai, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
Kawika Fortunato, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
* Richard Gmirkin, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
* Melia Lane-Kamahele, National Park Service
* Amanda Johnson, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail

Community Hosts

The project team met with many community members from around the island during the site visit. This list records all of these individuals by name. More details, including where and when the team met with them, are on the following pages.

Boyd Bond
Debbie Chang
Nicole Lui
Ku‘ulei Keakealani (not present)
Leina‘ala Lightner
Lehua Alapai
Roy Santana and members of Huaka‘i Lā
Māhealani Pai
Nohea Ka‘awa
Matt Clark

Site Visit Itinerary

The itinerary below documents where the team went and who they met on each day of the site visit.

ARRIVAL DAY Tuesday, January 21, 2025		**ATTENDEES**
	Consultant team arrive in Kona Purchase any materials needed for stay	
5pm-7pm	Consultant team meet up to review agenda, roles, emergency info, etc. -'Umeke's Fish Market Bar & Grill - 74-5599 Pawai Pl, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740 - Reservation at 5 PM Prep makana for hosts	Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
DAY 1 – Kohala & N. Kona Wednesday, January 22, 2025		
9am-11:00am	Meet Boyd Bond Location: 'Upolu Airport • Enter on Upolu Airport Road • Drive down road until you reach old airport • Meet in gravel lot near airport	Jackson, Laurel Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay,
11:15am-12:15pm	Mahukona Lunch	Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
1:00pm-2:30pm	Meet Debbie Chang Location: Mauna Lani Beach Hotel, Holoholokai Beach Park and Petroglyph Field • Enter Mauna Lani Resort main entrance • Take first right at roundabout on N. Kanikū Drive • Turn Right just before the entrance to Fairmont Orchid on to Holoholokai Beach Park Road • Public Parking available at the end of Holoholokai Beach Park Road	Jackson, Laurel Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
4:00pm-5:00pm	Meet Nicole Lui Location: Kaloko Fishpond • Enter Ala Nui Kaloko (a gravel road located across the Kaloko Industrial Area) from Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway • Drive west (makai) on gravel road until you reach the parking area near the fishpond.	~~Jackson, Laurel~~ Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
DAY 2 – N. Kona Thursday, January 23, 2025		
9:00am-11:00am	Meet Ku'ulei Keakealani (unable to attend, but group walked Government Road and Ala Loa trail sections) Location: Keahualono, Waikōloa Meeting Location: 'Anaeho'omalu Beach Parking Lot • Enter Waikoloa Beach Drive Road • Go past the Queen's Market Place Shopping Center • Turn left on Ku'uali'i Place and head towards public parking for 'Anaeho'omalu Beach • Park in gravel area just past the utility box on the left side of the road	Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay, Jaime
11:30am-1:00pm	Meet Aunty Leina'ala Lightner Location: Kalaemanō Meeting Location: Entrance to Hualalai Four Seasons Resort & Golf Course (side of road)	Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay, Jaime

	• Access is through Hualalai Resort • Enter Kaʻupulehu Drive • Take immediate first right onto Kalaemano Drive, continue until you reach the guard shack • Once you pass guard shack, take the next right on Kalaemano Drive until you reach the education/interpretive center parking lot	
1:00pm	Lunch	Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
2:00pm-3:30pm	Lehua Alapai from Nā ʻŌiwi Location: Kapalaoa Meeting Location: Gravel shoulder on the makai (west) side of the road just north of the Puʻuanahulu Landfill Road • Access is through an unmarked road off Queen Kaʻahumanu Highway just north of Puʻuanahulu Landfill Road • Plan A: See if AKNHT can get access to use easement and we carpool to site on van and with Lehua. Rick checking to see if they still have access. Will get back to Loke. Plan B: Park at highway and walk down to site if we cannot get access	Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay, Jaime
DAY 3 – S. Kona Friday, January 24, 2025		
9:00am-11:00am	Meet Roy Santana and four other members of Huakaʻi Lā Meeting Location: Hōnaunau Post Office • Caravan down through Kiʻilae Estates Subdivision	Jackson, Laurel Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
12am	Lunch: Trail Head at Kiʻilae Estates	Jackson, Laurel Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
2:00-3:30pm	Meet Māhealani Pai Location: Kahaluʻu Makai • Located just south of Kahaluʻu Beach Park • Enter on the north side entrance.	Jackson, Laurel Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
DAY 4 – Kaʻū Saturday, January 25, 2025		
9:00am-11am	Meet Nohea Kaʻawa, Matt Clark Location: Punaluʻu Beach Park	Jackson, Laurel Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
12:00am	Lunch	Jackson, Laurel Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie, Ramsay
1:00pm	Debrief session	Jackson, Laurel Heather, Julie, Alyssa Lokelani, Makena, Natalie, Catie

Site Visit Questions

Before the site visit, the project team established a list of questions, below, that guided conversations with community hosts. The questions weren't asked explicitly. Rather, they shaped the organic conversations the team had with those they met, emphasizing and coalescing what the team hoped to talk about.

Central Questions

- What do you want us to know about this land/place?
- Why does this place matter?
- What's your vision for this part of the trail corridor in the future?
- How do we want to care for this place going forward?
- How can interpretation support the caretaking and help realize the vision?

Historical/Cultural Geography

- Historically how would people have related to this place? What would have happened here?
- What other places is this one connected to – historically, culturally, ecologically – and how?
- Who is connected to this land/place and how? – both human and more-than-human beings
- What stories are connected to this place?

Access & Use

- Which places are/aren't appropriate for tourists or the general public to visit?
- Which places are especially ecologically or culturally sensitive?

Visitor Experience

- What messages do you want to communicate about this place to people who come here?
- What stories do you want to share with people who come here?
- What shouldn't be shared with tourists or the general public?
- What do you want people to do, sense, feel when they come here? What do you want them to learn/know?

Community Engagement Process

- Who do you represent/speak for?
- Who else should be consulted about what happens here?
- Would it be useful/appropriate to form a community advisory group/steering committee for this project? What kind of group should it be and what role should it play?

Ala Kahakai Interpretive Plan
Itinerary: Site Visit 2
May 27-29, 2025

DAY 1 TUESDAY, MAY 27 NORTH KONA/ KOHALA	
11:30 AM -1:00 PM	**Site Visit #1- Kahuwai, Kaʻūpulehu (Kona Village Resort property)**
2:30 PM	Pick Up Food at Broke Da Mouth Grinds
3 PM - 4 PM	Set up for Community Meeting at Kalaemanō
4 PM - 7 PM	Community Meeting #1 at Kalaemanō Interpretive Center

DAY 2 WEDNESDAY, MAY 28 SOUTH KONA/ KAʻŪ	
9:00 AM-12:00 PM	**Site Visit #2- Hikiau Heiau,Kealakekua, South Kona with Shane Akoni-Nelson and Tanya Souza Lizama from Hoʻāla Kealakekua Nui.**
1:00 PM -2:15 PM	Drive to Nāʻalehu Community Center
3 PM - 4 PM	Set up for Community Meeting
4 PM	Pick up food at Hana Hou Restaurant
4 PM - 7 PM	Community Meeting #2 at Naʻalehu Community Center

DAY 3 THURSDAY MAY 29 KAʻŪ	
6:30 AM - 12 PM	**Site Visit #3 Punaluʻu to Honuʻapo Hike with Kaʻū Johnston-Kitazawa and Kiko Johnston-Kitazawa.** Hike is about 4-miles long Meet at Punaluʻu Beach Park at 6:30am

APPENDIX B: INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK WORKSHEET

Ala Kahakai NHT Interpretive Plan

Interpretive Framework Worksheet

Introduction

This worksheet supports use of the Interpretive Framework included in the Interpretive Plan for the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail. It is designed to further development of interpretive initiatives along the Ala Kahakai corridor.

The Interpretive Framework is a flexible tool that combines a set of core components with a variety of customizable options. The idea is to select options for each component that align with each other and best suit one's purposes and particular circumstances.

Order of Operations

The worksheet moves you through a series of steps in a deliberate order. It can be tempting to skip steps—to jump right to methods for example, imagining how you want to engage people before you've clearly identified who those people are or what exactly you want to communicate. But it is recommended to **work through each step in the order provided**. Complete the section for that step before moving to the next one.

Groundwork: **Purpose**

See the Interpretive Plan for reference*: **Interpretive Framework > Principles
Interpretive Foundations > Purpose, Vision & Goals

Organizational Purpose

If you are planning your interpretive initiative as part of an agency, institution, or organization, your purpose begins with your **organizational identity statements**. Compile whatever statements you have from the list below. These are your collective touchstone; review them and reconnect with them. Whatever initiative you develop should align with and further them.

- ☐ Vision
- ☐ Mission
- ☐ Values, Principles, and/or Commitments
- ☐ Strategic Goals & Objectives (from your Strategic Plan)
- ☐ Other Organizational Statements

Purpose of the Initiative

Questions to Answer

- What motivated you to plan this interpretive initiative?
- What are your **goals** for the initiative? What do you hope it will do or bring into being?
- How well do the Guiding Principles in the Interpretive Framework align with your motivations and goals? If they are not aligned:
  - Can you shift your goals to align with the Guiding Principles?
  - Or would something other than an interpretive initiative better meet your goals?
- If you do develop an interpretive initiative, how do you want people to be **affected** by it?
  - What do you want them to *sense*? (see, hear, smell, taste, touch?)
  - What do you want them to *do*?
  - What do you want them to *feel*?
  - What do you want them to *learn*, *know* or *understand*?
  - How do you want to influence people's *behavior*? What kinds of *actions* do you hope they might be inspired or encouraged to take?

Framework Component 1: **Audiences**

See the Interpretive Plan for reference*: **Interpretive Foundations > Audiences

Questions to Answer

- Who are the **primary audiences** for your planned interpretive initiative? Who is most important for you to reach?
- Who are your **secondary audiences**? Who else would you like to reach? Who else might show up?

Framework Component 2: **Content**

See the Interpretive Plan for reference*: **Interpretive Framework > Framework Components > Content
Interpretive Foundations > Interpretive Messages

Considerations

As you answer the questions for this component, consider the audiences you identified for Component 1. Choose content that best serves your primary audiences while also accomodating your secondary audiences.

Before choosing your content, review the purposes you articulated in the Groundwork section. Make content choices that best suit your purposes. *After* completing this section for Component 2, review your purposes again. Do your content choices align with your purposes? If not, reconsider your choices.

Interpretive Messages

Questions to Answer

- What **main idea** do you *most* want to communicate through your interpretive initiative? See if you can express it in 1-2 sentences.
- Which of the **interpretive themes** in the Interpretive Plan do you want your initiative to communicate?
- For each selected theme, which of the possible **topics to interpret** do you want to focus on? Are there other topics you want to include?

Content Types

Questions to Answer

- Which of the content types in the Interpretive Framework are *best suited* to expressing your chosen interpretive messages to your audiences?
    - If you've identified multiple audiences, match each audience to the content type(s) that are best suited for it.
- Which of the suggested content types are *you* the best situated to create? Which are most appropriate for *you* to share?
- Are there **partners** you might collaborate with to create or share the content that would serve your audiences and purposes?
- Who or what should **guide or lead** you as you develop interpretive content to share?

Framework Component 3: **Location**

See the Interpretive Plan for reference*: **Interpretive Framework > Framework Components > Locations
Interpretive Foundations > Context & Conditions

Considerations

Your circumstances will determine where this step fits in your planning process and how much flexibility you have. Regardless of circumstances, work to align your purposes, audiences, content and location so they suit and support each other.

If your location is not predetermined:

- You can move to Component 4 and select your methods first, then choose a location that is appropriate to your methods.

If you're working with a specific location that cannot be changed:

- Your location's conditions should determine the methods you select for Component 4 and shape your design choices for Component 5.

Questions to Answer

- What are the **limitations** of your location as a site for interpretive content or experiences? What **challenges** does it pose?
- What are your location's **strengths** as the site for interpretive content or experiences? What **opportunities** does it provide?
- Who **owns**, **administers**, and/or **manages** the land and property at your location? Who are the key **stakeholders** invested in what happens there? How does this affect what you can do there and what the process should be? Who are the key decision makers and how do you need to work with them?
- What are the conditions or requirements of **access**, **safety**, and **security** at your location?
- Are there **cultural or natural resources** at your location that are sensitive, vulnerable, or endangered? What is required to protect and preserve them?

Framework Component 4: **Methods**

See the Interpretive Plan for reference*: **Interpretive Framework > Framework Components > Methods
Interpretive Framework: Guiding Principles

Considerations

As you answer the questions for this component, consider the audiences you identified for Component 1. Choose methods that best serve your primary audiences while also accomodating your secondary audiences.

Before choosing your methods, review the purposes you articulated in the Groundwork section. Make method choices that best suit your purposes. *After* completing this section for Component 2, review your purposes again. Do your method choices align with your purposes? If not, reconsider your choices.

Questions to Answer

- Which of the methods in the Interpretive Framework are *best suited* to sharing your chosen content (interpretive messages and content types) with your audiences?
- Which methods are *most appropriate* to the location(s) where your initiative will be implemented?
- Which of the suggested methods are *you* the best situated to develop? Which are most appropriate for *you* to implement?
- Are there **partners** you might collaborate with to implement methods that suit your content, audiences, and purposes?
- Who or what should **guide or lead** you in this process?
- How can the Guiding Principles in the Interpretive Framework apply to your interpretive methods? How can your methods be:
    - ʻĀina-grounded & restorative?
    - Hawaiian-centered & inclusive?
    - Community-based & ahupuaʻa-managed?
    - Capacity-building & regenerative?

Framework Component 5: **Design**

See the Interpretive Plan for reference*: **Interpretive Framework: Guiding Principles
Design Guidance

Considerations

This step should come last in your planning process. Rather than existing for its own sake, interpretive design should serve the purposes of your initiative, communicate your chosen messages to your particular audiences, and align with your methods and location.

Design can communicate through more than just words. Color, composition, images, graphics, art, sound, movement, physical forms, and physical space all can carry content and express interpretive messages.

Questions to Answer

- How can the Guiding Principles in the Interpretive Framework apply to your design process? How can you make design development and implementation be:
  - ʻĀina-grounded & restorative?
  - Hawaiian-centered & inclusive?
  - Community-based & ahupuaʻa-managed?
  - Capacity-building & regenerative?

APPENDIX C: ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL DESIGN STANDARDS

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NPS Accessibility Guidelines

www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/accessibility.htm

The document linked above outlines all accessibility standards used by the NPS. It is available for download at the link above. Topics of note include:

- Mobility considerations like circulation space and protruding objects
- Touchable and tactile exhibits
- Lighting
- Graphic design best practices like type size and color contrast
- Map design
- Alternative content formats

Harpers Ferry Center for Media Services

www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/index.htm

The resource linked above is the comprehensive guide to developing interpretive media according to NPS guidelines. Topics of note include:

- Accessibility
- Digital media
- Wayside exhibits
- Graphic identity and style guides
- Using art and history collections
- Cartography

UNIVERSAL DESIGN RESOURCES

Definition of Universal Design

According to the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, "Universal Design ... is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it.

... If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates digital and built environments, services and systems that meet peoples' needs."

https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design

Principles of Universal Design

https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design/the-7-principles

The resource linked above explains the principles of universal design that were developed at North Carolina State University in 1997. The principles are also summarized and illustrated on the following page.

The Principles of Universal Design

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

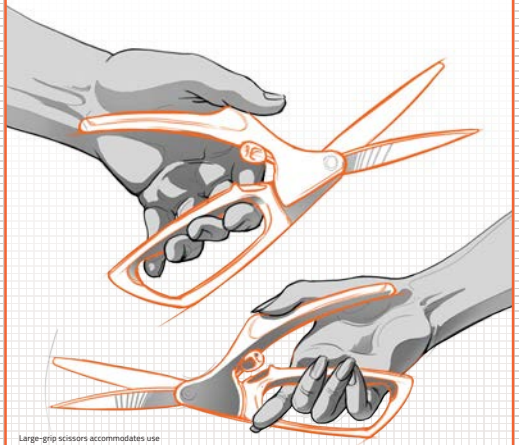
Powered door with sensors is convenient for all shoppers, especially if hands are full.

1 Equitable Use

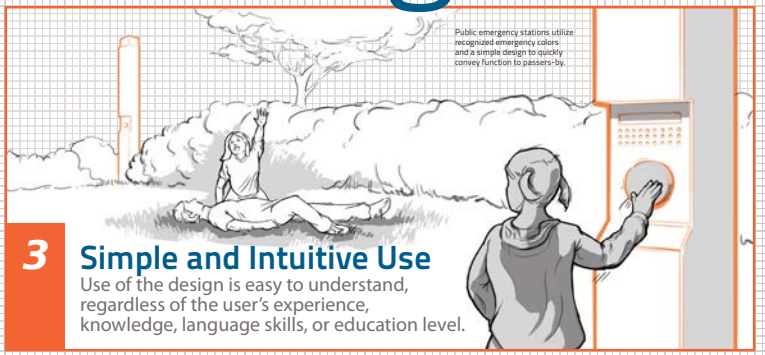
The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

2 Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.



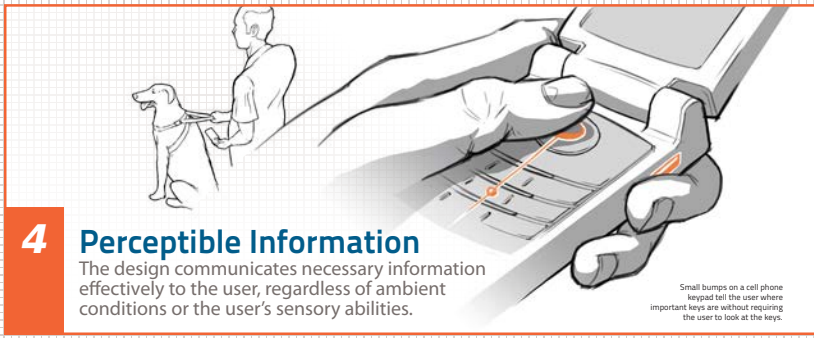
Large-grip scissors accommodates use with either hand and allows alternation between the two in highly repetitive tasks.



Public emergency stations utilize recognized emergency colors and a simple design to quickly convey function to passers-by.

3 Simple and Intuitive Use

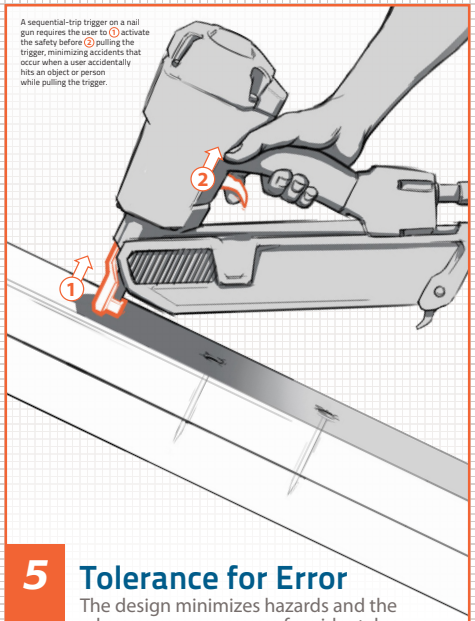
Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or education level.



Small bumps on a cell phone keypad tell the user where important keys are without requiring the user to look at the keys.

4 Perceptible Information

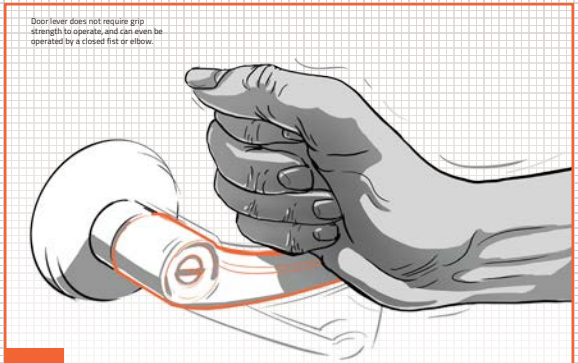
The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.



A sequential-trip trigger on a nail gun requires the user to ① activate the safety before ② pulling the trigger, minimizing accidents that occur when a user accidentally hits an object or person while pulling the trigger.

5 Tolerance for Error

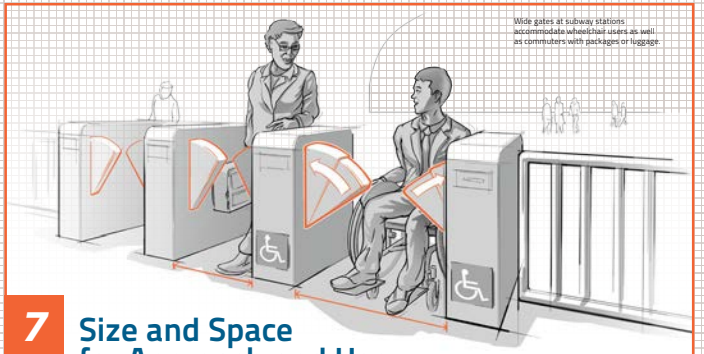
The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.



Door lever does not require grip strength to operate, and can even be operated by a closed fist or elbow.

6 Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.



Wide gates at subway stations accommodate wheelchair users as well as commuters with packages or luggage.

7 Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Center for Universal Design at NC State

Web: design.ncsu.edu/cud

E-mail: cud@ncsu.edu

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APPENDIX D: TREATMENT OF HISTORIC HAWAIIAN TRAILS

Hawaii Island Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Hawaiian Trails (Version 4/1/2020)

HAWAI`I ISLAND GUIDELINES FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC HAWAIIAN TRAILS (SUBJECT TO REVISION)

(ADOPTED BY NĀ ALA HELE'S HAWAI`I ISLAND ADVISORY COUNCIL ON MAY 10, 2005. REVISIONS APPROVED ON MAY 23 and NOVEMBER 14, 2012, JANUARY 16, 2013, and April 1, 2020. PHOTOS UPDATED ON JANUARY 20, 2012 and March 22, 2020)

PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES**: The Nā Ala Hele Hawai`i Island Advisory Council recognizes the need to establish guidelines for consistent treatment of historic Hawaiian trails when developments occur adjacent to them (see Appendix A: "Ancient, Historic, and Old Government Trails and Roads in Hawaii: A Summary of Pertinent Law."). Many historic Hawaiian trails are owned in fee simple by the State of Hawai`i. While each situation poses unique circumstances and every case requires individual consideration, certain guiding principles can be agreed-upon. It is hoped that these guidelines will help with NAH Council decision-making and take some of the guess work out of the process for the Council, developers, State and County agencies and the public.* ***This is a working document that is subject to revision, as we find ways to improve upon it. Please check with the Nā Ala Hele Hawai`i Island program to make sure you are using the most current version.

If the Historic Hawaiian Trail Is Under State Jurisdiction, Consultation with the Nā Ala Hele Hawai`i Island Advisory Council Is Highly Recommended

The Hawai`i Statewide Trail and Access System, known as Nā Ala Hele (NAH), is part of the Department of Land & Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife. The program is required to establish advisory councils to solicit advice and assistance in the implementation of the statewide trail and access system. For more information on NAH, visit their website at https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/recreation/.

The Assessments of Trail Values by Nā Ala Hele's Hawai`i Island Program, Archaeologists, & State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) Can Differ

Archaeological surveys and recommendations for site treatments are reviewed and approved by SHPD. SHPD's assessment of the value of a historic trail is based on its physical condition, archaeological integrity, and cultural significance. A trail's archaeological value (and SHPD's preservation recommendation) is influenced by its present-day state of preservation and whether it is an integral part of a larger complex that is to be preserved.

Hawai`i Island's NAH assessment of the value of a historic trail involves more than its current physical condition. In its assessment of trail values, NAH also considers these factors:

1. evidence that the trail historically existed by examining archaeological reports, historic maps, historic accounts, early surveyors' notes, land deeds, boundary testimonies, and/or cultural impact assessments,
2. whether the trail potentially connects to other trails to form more lengthy routes, and
3. the public purpose served in preserving the trail.

NAH may also recommend "land banking" of trails deemed to have public value when resources are lacking to open them to public use.

Trail Relocation and/or Destruction

It is the Hawai`i Island NAH Advisory Council's (hereinafter "Council") policy that no relocation or destruction of historic trails be approved. Any such decision is done on a case-by-case basis, and many factors must be considered. Assessment of the trail's values (see previous section) is done, and council members may visit the subject area as part of decision-making. Council meetings are open to the public, and public opinion re: trail relocation and/or destruction is considered. Cultural experts, the State's Department of the Attorney General, and NAH's abstractor may need to be consulted. If the development project is receiving federal funds, a Section 106 assessment is required to fully assess and mitigate the development's potential impacts on historic and cultural sites (See Relevant Laws on the last page of this document). Planners, landowners and/or developers are encouraged to contact the Council early in the planning process. This can prevent misunderstandings, premature expenditures, and potentially costly delays.

Trail Restoration, Buffers, and Maintenance

Trail Erosion

When the trail is located in an area vulnerable to potential erosion, provisions for trail relocation in the event of trail erosion should be included in all trail-related agreements and approvals. This is to ensure that the negotiated trail will be usable forever. Water diversion techniques, i.e. waterbars, may need to be employed if water runoff is occurring or potential for soil erosion is present. Information on "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) to prevent or correct erosion problems is available through Nā Ala Hele.

The trail has been seriously eroded by wave action, and encroaching vegetation makes walking precarious. →
Photo taken at Waiulua Bay in Waikoloa Resort.

← Hikers are using the relocated trail. The original trail has been eroding away.

Photo taken between Waikoloa and Mauna Lani Resorts.

Trail Width

Trail widths vary. There are no standard widths. Sometimes widths are apparent through direct trail observation and archaeological studies. Trail widths can change over time if their use transitioned from

walking purposes to other modes of transportation, i.e., horseback, carts, etc. Sometimes widths are specified in land deeds, historic maps, or in County permit documents when trail easements are required.

🏵 Buffer Widths

Buffer widths vary. There are no standard widths. The council recommends widths of a minimum of thirty -feet, as measured from the trail's outside edges. This also applies to relocated and restored trails. Buffer widths are determined on a case-by-case basis and consideration is given to the archaeological integrity of the subject trail, view planes, surrounding environment, land uses, land ownership, and nearby natural and cultural features. The Council should be consulted early in the planning process to prevent misunderstandings, premature expenditures, and potentially costly delays.

When buffer widths are too narrow, the experience of "walking in the footsteps" of those who created the trails is lost.

Photo taken in Hualālai Resort where buffers are not being cleared, and thorny bougainvillea is allowed to grow into the trail.

Many present-day Hawaiians can trace their ancestors to villagers who relied upon these trails for their daily survival. Excessively narrow buffers take away from the authenticity of the experience, and damage the feeling of open space and broad landscape in which the trails belong. Adequate buffers and appropriate buffer treatments are essential to the historic trail experience.

Photo taken in Hualālai Resort. Historic trail is being smothered by poorly controlled vegetation.

Photo taken in 49 Black Sand Beach Subdivision in Mauna Lani Resort. Natal plum plants within the narrow buffer are thorny and spreading into the trail.

These examples help to illustrate why it is recommended that no landscaping be done within trail buffers. The trail itself should be kept clear of vegetation.

Photo taken in Kohala Waterfront Subdivision

Photo taken in `Ōuli, South Kohala

Past buffer widths have been shown to be inadequate. The Council's revised buffer width is hereby increased to a minimum of thirty-feet, as measured from the trail's outside edges.

Photo taken in Waikoloa Resort. Trail is the Alanui Aupuni (government road)– built circa. 1860s-1870s. The orange flagging denotes what a thirty-foot wide buffer looks like.

Photo taken in Waikoloa Resort. Orange arrows point to orange flagging denoting the 30-foot wide buffers.

Buffer Treatments

Whether in its original historic condition or a realigned/restored historic trail, no construction should be allowed within the buffers (including utilities, foundations, rock walls of any height, and swimming pools), and the natural, existing terrain and grade should be maintained throughout the buffers. Roads should not be located within trail buffers, unless a breach is approved.

It is recommended that no landscaping be done within trail buffers. Choosing native plants naturally growing in the area, or known to have historically grown there, is the most practical approach, requiring minimal watering and special care. Be careful not to plant noxious weeds that are naturally occurring, such as fountain grass. Thorny and poisonous plants (i.e., bougainvillea and oleander) should also be avoided. Avoid plants that could become invasive, i.e., extensive root systems, exotic ground covers, or prolific seed producers. Certain plants can pose a safety hazard or result in undue maintenance requirements, such as plants that drop large leaves and/or fruits (e.g., coconuts). Avoid plants that are likely to lean or encroach into the trail's buffer. Only hand-clearing within the buffers should be permitted at any time. Responsibility for the maintenance of the breaches and buffers should be clearly detailed in formal agreements.

Laying hazardous obstructions within the trail tread and buffers, no matter how temporary, is an obviously unwise practice.

Photo taken in Hualālai Resort

Breaches

The number and width of breaches should be minimized. The original location of the trail should be restored within the breach, using materials that mimic the historic trail surface. In this manner the breached section will be connected to the original trail on either side. Review of planned breaches by the Council is recommended. Planners and developers are encouraged to request time on Council agendas for that purpose. Additionally, since many historic and ancient trails are still owned by the State of Hawai`i (see Appendix A), easements for the purpose of breaching trails may need to be purchased through the Board of Land and

Natural Resources. Again, consulting with NAH early will prevent misunderstandings, premature expenditures, and potentially costly delays.

← This is the recommended breach surface treatment. It resembles the authentic historic surface while enabling road use.

Photo taken in Waikoloa Resort

← The reddish, smooth cobblestone appearance of this surface treatment is artificial and does not resemble any historic Hawaiian trail surface.

Photo taken in Waikoloa Resort

<u>Treatments Outside of Buffers</u>

Surroundings immediately adjacent to trail buffers greatly influence the trail experience. When trails are near the shoreline, structures (including walls and fences) *ma kai* (seaward) of the trails are discouraged to protect view planes and the historic ambiance. In some locations the natural lava "skin" may be the best choice if earth moving equipment has not already damaged the natural lava surface.

Plant surveys done prior to the area's development can help to identify naturally occurring plants, including plants that were historically in the area. Council members may be able to suggest resource people and sources for native plant materials.

֍ Adjacent Historic, Cultural & Natural Sites and Interpretive Signs

Opening a trail to public use can potentially impact sensitive historic, cultural and natural sites adjacent to the trail. State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) will often require preservation plans showing how potential impacts of public use will be mitigated. In addition impacts to native Hawaiian customary and traditional rights and practices, and the alleviation of those impacts need to be addressed in trail management.

Burials require special protection. Hawai`i Island's Burial Council (through SHPD) should be consulted for guidance. Certain cultural and natural sites may need to be closed to the public. It is recommended that those concerns be brought to the Council for recommendations and referrals.

It is essential to educate people about the significance of and proper behavior around trails and sensitive sites nearby. Signage can be effective in this regard. Interpretive signage planned for trails and adjacent sites should be reviewed by the Council and SHPD if historic sites are present.

Photo taken in 49 Black Sand Beach Subdivision

Property pins (especially if set in concrete) that denote parcel boundaries, impact the aesthetic appearance, diminish the integrity of historic sites, and are a potential safety hazard. It is recommended (and is allowed under contemporary surveying practices) to place an offset "witness post," at a nominal distance away from the actual boundary corner and indicate on the official survey map record, the distance and angle that the actual corner is located, away from the offset "witness post." This practice meets the legal requirements of identifying the property corner, as well as protecting the integrity of the historic site."

Spray paint used to mark a property boundary in the historic trail's kerbing. This is defacing of a historic site in a National Park. →

Photo taken in Kauleolī, South Kona

Signage should be maintained, attractive and not confusing. Check if standardized signage has been adopted for the particular area.

Photo taken in Hualālai Resort

Signage clutter should be avoided.

Photo taken at `Ōhai`ula Beach

Consolidated signage on one sign post is recommended.

Photo taken at Paniau in Puakō

Public Access Management

Historic Hawaiian trails are a special case because traditionally those trails were in use 24 hours/day. The Council supports continuing that practice for historic trails and routes that (1) are connected to a public road or other historic trails or (2) lead to or follow the shoreline. The Council recognizes that situations may arise in which control of public access is necessary. NAH can assist with balancing security, resource protection, etc. concerns with community access needs.

How to Contact the Hawai`i Island NAH Program and NAH Advisory Council

The Division of Forestry and Wildlife - Nā Ala Hele office can be reached at (808) 974-4221. This contact can connect you to whoever is the current chairperson of the NAH Advisory Council. You can request to be on the agenda for the Council's public meetings.

Links to Relevant Laws

- HRS Chapter 198D is the law that governs the Nā Ala Hele Program. It was first established in 1988.
https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol03_Ch0121-0200D/HRS0198D/

- HRS Chapter 6E is Hawai`i's Historic Preservation Law.
https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol01_Ch0001-0042F/HRS0006E/

- "Ancient, Historic, and Old Government Trails and Roads in Hawaii: A Summary of Pertinent Law"
https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/recreation/files/2013/09/Highways-Act-Summary.pdf

- For more information on Section 106 Reviews see:
36 CFR PART 800 – PROTECTION OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES: Section 106 Reviews:
https://www.achp.gov/protecting-historic-properties/section-106-process/introduction-section-106

APPENDIX A

Ancient, Historic, and Old Government Trails and Roads in Hawaii
A Summary of Pertinent Law

Hawaii, unlike any other State in the U.S., was originally a sovereign nation - a kingdom. There were certain preexisting laws that were passed on and incorporated into what became laws of the U.S. Territory, and then ultimately, of the State. In relation to trails, the following two citations describe the legal tools used by the Na Ala Hele Program to identify and possibly claim public ownership of specific features:

The Highways Act of 1892

In October of 1892, Queen Liliuokalani approved law that determined that the ownership of all public highways and the land, real estate and property of the same, shall be in the Hawaiian Government in fee simple. The definition of public highway includes all existing trails at the time "or hereafter opened, laid out or built by the Government, or by private parties, and dedicated or abandoned to the public as a highway, are hereby declared to be public highways." Furthermore, "All public highways once established shall continue until abandoned by due process of law".

Chapter 264-1(b), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS)

The following HRS furthers the intent of the Highways Act:

All trails, and other nonvehicular rights-of-way in the State declared to be public rights-of-way by the Highways Act of 1892, or opened, laid out, or built by the government or otherwise created or vested as nonvehicular public rights of way at any time hereafter, or in the future, are declared to be public trails. A public trail is under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Land and Natural Resources - unless it was created by or dedicated to a particular county, in which case it shall be under the jurisdiction of that county. All State trails once established shall continue until lawfully disposed of pursuant to Chapter 171, HRS.

What this means

If the State can document the existence of a trail prior to 1892, and the feature has not been disposed of pursuant to Chapter 171, the State may claim the trail. This applies even if the trail does not currently exist on the ground physically - in many instances trail sections have been destroyed over time due to various land uses or natural process. While a landowner may not adversely possess State land, the burden of proof is upon the State to document ownership. This can be adverse to adjacent private landowners, and may create the necessity for legal action.

Prior to promotion for public use, a necessary (and sometimes costly) step is to reconcile the historic documentation with an on-the-ground metes and bounds survey.

It is imperative to confirm that the identified trail is the same alignment that was originally in existence prior to 1892. Trail routes can migrate over time for numerous reasons, creating legal challenges to the application of the laws cited above. Other necessary steps include the creation of a cultural survey and management plan, and then establishing a trail restoration, maintenance and signage program.