



United States Department of the Interior



National Park Service
Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
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October 25, 2023

Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, HI

Subject: Request the Board of Land and Natural Resources Approve the Final Master Plan for Kealahou Bay State Historical Park, Kealahou, South Kona, Island of Hawai'i., Tax Map Keys: (3) 8-1-007:050; 8-1-010:001; 8-1-011:001, 003, 004-010, 012-014, and 016; 8-2-004:001-002, 008-010, and 015.

Aloha Chairperson Chang and Board Members:

'Ano'ai ke aloha. Mahalo for permitting the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail to submit testimony regarding the request for the Board of Land and Natural Resources Approval of the Final Master Plan for Kealahou Bay State Historical Park. The Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail was established in 2000 to preserve, protect, and interpret traditional Native Hawaiian culture and natural resources. It encompasses a corridor that is approximately 175 miles long, traversing through the Kealahou Bay State Historical Park.

The Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail **supports the approval of the Final Master Plan for Kealahou Bay State Historical Park.**

The Kealahou Bay Master Plan will encourage community-based planning and cooperative resource management initiatives, the sharing and perpetuation of descendant-led traditional knowledge, and the influence of place-based Heritage:

- The Kealahou Bay Master Plan has gone through several revisions, and from 2019 to the present discussions between Hawaii State Parks and Community Stakeholders included a community-based plan called the Kealahou Bay Community Action Plan (CAP), the formulation of the Kealahou Bay Cultural Advisory 'Ohana - a descendant-led cultural advisory council, the recognition and inclusion of traditional knowledge as the foundation for stewardship, and avenues to address commercial and marketing narratives that supports the co-management and protection of the natural and cultural resources.

The Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail has been an active agency, participating in the development and implementation of the Kealahou Community Action Plan (CAP).

- Kealakekua Bay is a wahi pana (storied place) and its history is significant to the people of Hawai'i.

Based on oral history and anthropological study, we know that Kealakekua Bay welcomed foreigners as early as the 1400s when the Dutch arrived, the 1500s when the Spaniards arrived, and the 1700s when the English arrived. Before that, the people of the great Pacific had migrated throughout the Pacific Ocean from the North, South, East, and West – and they were not separated by anthropological terminologies that are sometimes confused with ethnicities such as Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. Despite all the traveling and welcoming the Kealakekua Bay has done, it remains a wahi kapu – a sacred place. Today, the generational/lineal families, current residents, cultural practitioners, and ho'a'aina (volunteers) of Kealakekua Bay continue to host malihini, and the Master Plan allows the State to facilitate collaborative efforts to include residents, cultural practitioners, subject matter experts, and enforcement agents to address “how the Park and the community can balance cultural practices within public visitation” (pp. 3-20, Master Plan).

- Throughout the document, the Master Plan supports Federal, State, and International policies that outline and uphold environmental and heritage initiatives. The inclusion of the Kealakekua Bay CAP into the Master Plan, then allows the Master Plan to recognize that:
 - The Paoakalani Declaration provides for intellectual property rights to indigenous knowledge and practices, also upheld by various State and Federal Constitutional provisions.
 - The CAP also gives rise to elevating Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK), and
 - It is consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- These avenues provide a legal foundation to properly execute community-based co-stewardship and allow for subject-matter experts to work alongside cultural practitioners, and community volunteers to develop policies that apply to Kealakekua Bay.
- UNDRIP – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was supported by the United States of America when President Obama announced it on Dec. 16, 2010. The Master Plan is aligned with the UNDRIP which provides guiding principles for the state to develop place-based stewardship that includes place-based traditional knowledge.
- UNDRIP affirms the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples and gives international recognition to the collective human rights of Indigenous peoples, including treaty rights, land rights, and most importantly in this case of the Master Plan, the right to self-determination. How our cultural and natural sources are governed shall be community-based to include traditional knowledge. The Declaration further calls for the maintenance and protection of Native cultures, languages, and identities. The Master Plan shall invest in provisions of community-based stewardship derived from traditional knowledge.

- The Master Plan’s overall goal is to “reveal Hawai‘i’s history and preserve significant historic sites and natural resources for future generations” and to “share Kealahou within the context of Hawaiian history and perpetuate cultural traditions and values to create a sense of place in Kona” (page 1-15, Final Master Plan, Sept. 2023). This directly aligns with Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail’s driving vision. This vision, formally outlined in the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan¹, which was released in May of 2009 and informed by specialized input and community consultation collected from public meetings over six years, 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” (p. 4), 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” (p. 4). As well, the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail currently has a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (2019) with the Department of Land and Natural Resources and County of Hawaii, through which it can successfully coordinate the implementation of the vision and goals outlined in the Comprehensive Management Plan.
- The Master Plan started in 2009 and included plans stemming back to 1985; some of which needed to be revised due to recent laws addressing Native Hawaiians.

Additionally, The Master Plan describes the long-range plan for the park and key management actions and interpretive program strategies. Although envisioned as long-range, the plan is expected to be flexible and revisited as situations change.

- The Master Plan explains how the management of the park is set up to provide opportunities and address challenges for those opportunities.
- The Master Plan’s focus is on perpetuating the natural and cultural resources associated with Kealahou Bay and the surrounding wahi pana.

Mahalo for allowing us to express our support for this endearing place.

Sincerely,

Aric Arakaki
 Superintendent, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
 (808) 217-0307
 Aric_Arakaki@nps.gov



¹Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail. (2009). *Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan*. National Park Service, Department of the Interior.
https://www.nps.gov/alka/learn/management/upload/ALKA_CMP_low-resolution.pdf

October 23, 2023

Mendy Dant
President
Fair Wind Cruises
Kona Sunrise Charters, aka Hula Kai Cruises
Keauhou Bay, Kona Hawaii

Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, HI

RE: Requesting the Board approve the Final Master Plan for Kealakekua Bay
State Historical Park, South Kona, Island of Hawai'i.

Aloha Chair Dawn Chang, and Board Members,

My family and I own and operate Fair Wind Cruises and Hula Kai Cruises, home port of Keauhou Bay and have gone daily to Kealakekua Bay since 1971 and with the first BLNR approved permit since 1990. We have participated in the community discussions over the decades with the various plans. This time around the descendant led, community-based Kealakekua CAP has a significant role and is well placed for the state to adopt into this final master plan. The importance and complexity of this place has to be embraced and respected from well before pre-arrival of Captain Cook which can be achieved due to the involvement of Kealakekua Bay Cultural Advisory 'Ohana and the non-profit Ho'ala Kealakekua Nui, who has included every type of involved and committed user to become a participant in the care for this place.

Over these past 4 decades our family and committed employees have seen a considerable decline of corals, octopus, yellow tangs, moorish idols, trumpet fish, eels, parrot fish and it is heartbreaking. The warmer ocean water, pollution, and people trampling the coral are killing the fish habitat. Without the coral reefs fewer herbivores have food and the fish will disappear from our bay. The longer we do not have a cohesive state mandated plan the worse the health of the bay will become. Time is of the essence.

The approval of this 444 -page Master Plan is necessary for protecting, preserving and acknowledging the ecological, cultural, and historical importance. This plan refers to previous plans data, as well as looking to the state 2050 sustainability plan, and the state's Aloha Challenge proposals. Now we need implementation of this master plan so that State Parks and the Community Stakeholders can work to meet these goals.

Mahalo for allowing me to express my support for this endearing place and the people who are devoted to protect it.

Mahalo nui loa,

Mendy Dant and Fair Wind Ohana

From: [Scott Neish](#)
To: [DLNR.BLNR.Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Kealakekua Bay Master Plan
Date: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 11:01:30 AM

I strongly support the Master Plan. The bay needs a master plan sooner not later.
Implementation of the Community Action Plan will be much more effective with the plan in place.
Scott Neish
82-5821 Napoopoo Rd
Captain Cook

Sent from my iPad

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
In Support of Agenda Item E-1, "Request the Board of Land and Natural Resources
Approve the Final Master Plan for Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park, Kealakekua,
South Kona, Island of Hawai'i, Tax Map Keys: (3) 8-1-007:050; 8-1-010:001; 8-1-011:001,
003, 004-010, 012-014, and 016; 8-2-004:001-002, 008-010, and 015."**

**Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources
October 27, 2023, 9:15 AM
Kalanimoku Building, 1151 Punchbowl St., Room 132 and via Teleconference**

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) of Hawai'i and Palmyra strongly **supports** the Kealakekua community and the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources' (DLNR) Division of State Parks (DSP) Final Master Plan (Master Plan) for Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park. **We ask the Board to approve the Final Master Plan for Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park.**

The proposed Master Plan aims to "balance the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resources as well as the preservation of cultural traditions, practices and lifestyle with visitation and appropriate recreational use of the Bay." We support these goals and ensuring that the local community is at the forefront of determining how to manage the Park.

Kealakekua Bay is a wahi pana (a significant storied place), which holds great importance to the history of the Hawaiian people and continues to be cherished today. Due to the abundance of its marine resources, Kealakekua Bay supported thriving communities for centuries under the konohiki system of management, which was system, an adaptive, self-sustaining and holistic method of land and resource stewardship that administered and enforced kapu (taboo, prohibition) and kānāwai (law, code, rule).

The community today has been actively engaged in determining the future of Kealakekua Bay, drafting a Community Action Plan (CAP) to focus on establishing community capacity for co-management of natural and cultural resources with the county, state and federal government agencies and building diverse partnerships among stakeholders and rights-holders with the interest, expertise, and resources to collectively address challenges. The DSP's proposed Final Master Plan includes community-based planning, is descendant-led, includes traditional knowledge, and focuses on place-based heritage. The Final Master Plan includes the CAP, which is important step in community co-management.

As noted in the Master Plan, the coral reef habitats and marine habitats in the Bay support an abundance and diversity of invertebrates, including mollusks, echinoderms, and crustaceans.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Founders: Samuel A. Cooke Herbert C. Cornuelle

Over one hundred species of fish have been observed, concentrated in the shallow inshore portions of the Bay. Their abundance, in terms of weight per acre, was among the highest recorded in Hawai'i. Additionally, there is also a school of resident spinner dolphins or nai'a present at the Bay. The Bay provides one of the few available resting areas for nai'a on the island of Hawai'i. These and many other natural resources will see support through the implementation of the Master Plan.

TNC is honored to have assisted in the drafting of the CAP. We look forward to continue working with community and the State in conservation and management of the Kealahou Bay State Historical Park. **We ask that the Board support and approve the DSP Final Master Plan.**

Mahalo for your support and stewardship of Hawai'i's natural resources.



Rebecca Most
Hawai'i Island Marine Program Director
The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i and Palmyra
rmost@tnc.org

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i and Palmyra is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll and has supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We manage 40,000 acres in 13 nature preserves in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We forge partnerships with government, private parties, and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and for the many benefits they provide to people.
