

KA'A AHUPUA'A (LANA'I)

"IT IS IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO SUCH A BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN RETURN FOR VERY LITTLE FOR OUR COMMUNITY."

-ROBIN KAYE

WHAT IS IT?

The landscape of the 20,000-acre Ka'a Ahupua'a on the west side of Lāna'i is unspoiled and mostly uncharted, with little known about the cultural sites that pepper the area. However, the cultural importance of the area is undeniable: A limited 2011 survey identified 294 cultural features, such as ceremonial sites, petroglyphs, heiau and burial locations. The ahupua'a also serves an important community purpose, providing food to local subsistence hunters and fishers.

WHAT THREATENS IT?

Historic preservation and the pursuit of alternative energy are both well-intentioned movements in society. However, not everyone agrees that both can happen in the Ka'a Ahupua'a.



PHOTOS: COURTESY ROBIN KAYE

UPDATES

A LOOK BACK AT PAST ENDANGERED PLACES

In 2008, landowner Castle & Cooke Resorts LLC was permitted to build a 170-turbine, 400-megawatt wind farm in the ahupua'a. Community group Friends of Lāna'i is against the project. "It is irreparable damage to such a beautiful place in return for very little for our community," says Robin Kaye. The construction of the turbines, roads and power facilities would significantly alter the landscape, and all of the power generated would go to O'ahu. The only benefit to Lāna'i would be a handful of permanent jobs, he says.

In 2009, after public input, the Public Utilities Commission decided to reexamine the project and separate the wind farm from the undersea cable that would shuttle the energy from Lāna'i to O'ahu, which started the whole EIS process again for the Lāna'i wind project. Harry Saunders, executive vice president of Castle & Cooke, says that, as of now, the revised proposal is to build a 200-megawatt wind farm with a 6,000-acre, 56-turbine array.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

There are still opportunities to strike a balance between the competing interests of historic preservation and sourcing alternative energy, though it doesn't seem that the project will be stopped altogether.

"We listen to community concerns," says Saunders, pointing to previous projects on Lāna'i. "We've built hotels on lands that had cultural sensitivities, and cut portions out to preserve [these] areas." The company has publicly promised to give access to sportsman and visitors and touts a more comprehensive cultural survey in the works, a survey, he says, that would never have been done if not for this project.

There are still five or six years left in the EIS process, including several periods during which the project will be open to public comment. "I believe public input can have an impact on public policy," says Kaye. "Public education and political will can stop this."

'EWA FIELD ('EWA, O'AHU)

In 2008, we profiled 'Ewa Field, the historic World War II airfield which—at that point—had been partially transferred into the hands of private developers.

There's room for cautious optimism: No massive box stores have moved in. We also learned that fewer than half of the historic revetments, still under the Navy's control, are being adaptively reused by the Barbers Point Riding Club as horse stables.

"They've actually been in use here since 1960," says Valerie Van der Veer, who runs the site militarystables.com and boards horses at the 'Ewa revetments. "So far, we've been left untouched." But the lease for the club expired in June of this year and was only extended for another year.

PHOTO: VICTORIA WISEMAN

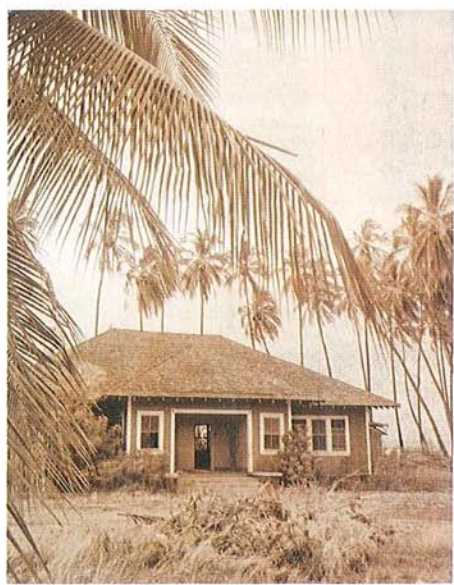


PHOTO: RICHARD COOKE III

KALANIANA'OLE HALL (KALAMA'ULA, MOLOKA'I)

The slow road to restoring this Moloka'i meeting hall, first taken up by the Moloka'i Enterprise Community in 2003, was finally completed in early 2010, and the hall is being used as a community center once again.

PIONEER MILL SMOKESTACK (LAHAINA, MAUI)

In 2010, the Lahaina Restoration Foundation, with a 20-year lease for the smokestack in hand, completed its restoration. They made an interesting discovery, too. The date 1860, painted on the exterior of the smokestack, was carved into the structure as 1928. Eighteen-sixty was the year the Pioneer Mill Sugar Co. was founded, so the smokestack was repainted to reflect that original, painted date.

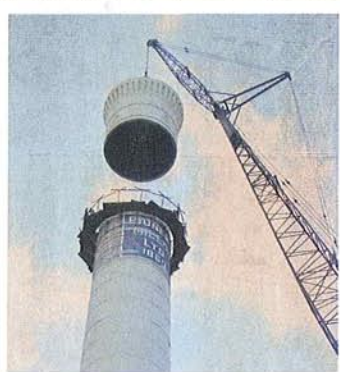


PHOTO: COURTESY LAHAINA RESTORATION FOUNDATION

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