

# North Kohala Rail Trail



*June 2025*



# Acknowledgments

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**This report owes its existence to Mike Isaacs (1943 - 2016), whose knowledge and energy got it moving on track.**

## **Kohala Lihikai**

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The National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and supports locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the United States. NPS-RTCA assists communities and public land managers in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors.

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# Document Purpose & Use

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This document explores the potential of having the very first railroad of Hawai'i converted into a trail for public use. While the railroad plays an important historical role in North Kohala, it is just one piece of a rich and vibrant past that has formed the communities of North Kohala into what they are today. The purpose of the report is to lay out historical and legal information pertaining to the railroad to qualify the trail as a public resource and provide the documentation that decision makers can use to move the project forward. It is also meant to serve as a resource and tool for the community so they have the information needed, should the community agree to open it up as a public trail.

Deeper historical and legal understanding of the railroad are essential to the preservation of the corridor. The laws and policies from the Kingdom of Hawai'i, the Territory, and the State present complexities that define public right-of-way (ROW), public roads, and infrastructure. Part of the purpose of this report is to understand the legal framework of the railroad ROW, and to determine if further work by the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Na Ala Hele Division is warranted to establish a formal public trail.

This document discusses major changes in land tenure and economic uses, population dynamics and changes, and how these changes relate to the concepts of public access and rights to traverse lands. It should be used to help identify and guide a process by which the community can come to an agreement on how they want to preserve the past, perpetuate lessons and stories, and be able to traverse the landscape unimpeded. While the main purpose is to explore the old railroad ROW and connect mauka-makai access trails for a public use, the report touches on the essential pieces of the past that define North Kohala. This report explores why it is so important to maintain access to the lands and tell stories from the past, while also building upon them with our future generations.



The North Kohala Hawaiian Railroad officially started in Māhukona Harbor (now Beach Park) and follows the coastline up and around to Niuli'i (See Figure 1). This was the very first railroad for the Hawaiian Kingdom and once operated as a passenger, government worker, freight, sugar cane, and mail carrier. It later operated exclusively for the sugar plantations. While popular opinion remembers the railroad as one exclusive to the shipping of sugar cane, the original alignment did not go to the sugar mills.

This report examines the intent of the Railroad Act and how the development of the railroad spurred change for North Kohala. The report also examines whether the railroad alignment falls under public jurisdiction as a trail and provides recommendations for further actions.

To best understand the public trails system in the Hawaiian Islands and how trails are selected and opened to the public, it is essential to understand pertinent laws that protect public access, trails, and roads. The Highways Act of 1892, approved by Queen Lili'uokalani, forms the basis of our public infrastructure. The Highways Act of 1892 determined that the ownership of all public highways, including the land, real estate, and property, is owned by the Hawaiian Government in fee simple ownership.

The definition of a public highway includes all existing trails at the time, or trails "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."

The Highways Act of 1892 is included in Chapter 264-1(b), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), further defining the intent of the Highways Act.

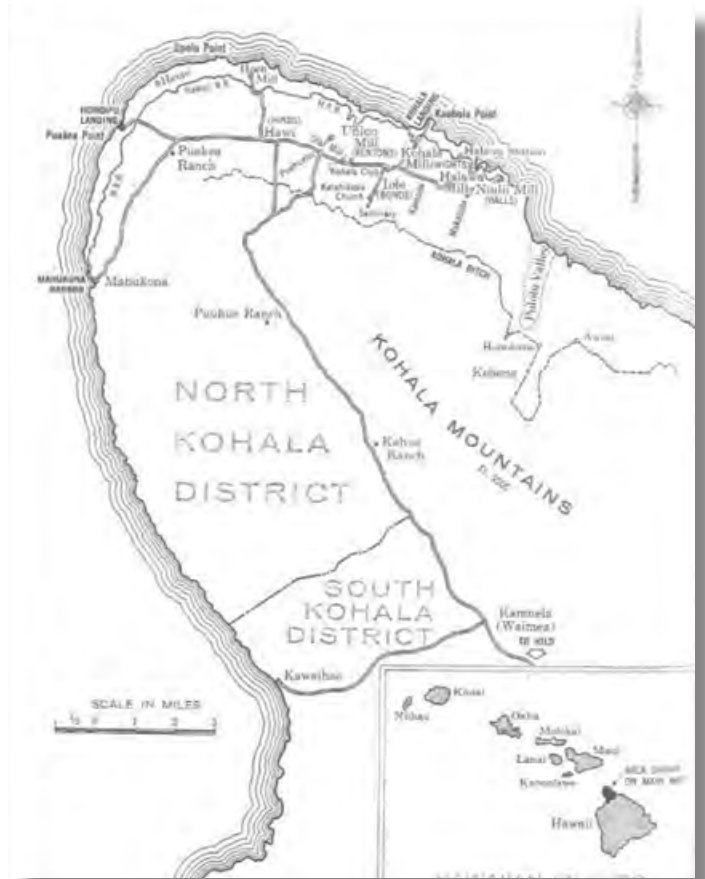


Figure 1: Sourced from North Kohala Community Development Plan, 2008

HRS 264 1(b) is included as found in the following paragraph:

*All trails, and other non-vehicular rights-of-way (ROW) in the State declared to be public ROW by the Highways Act of 1892, or opened, laid out, or built by the government or otherwise created or vested as non-vehicular public ROW 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.<sup>3</sup>*



## **This report will delve into greater detail about whether:**

1. The North Kohala Railroad alignment is considered a road under the definitions provided in the Highways Act of 1892.
2. The railroad alignment was commissioned by the Hawaiian Government.
3. The ROW has been lawfully disposed of pursuant to Chapter 171, HRS.
4. In areas where the ROW has been lawfully disposed of, what are the recommended next steps?
5. Can coastal access law and existing protected alignment supplement areas where this may happen?



*Figure 2 - View of the North Kohala Railroad Source: Hawaii State Archives*



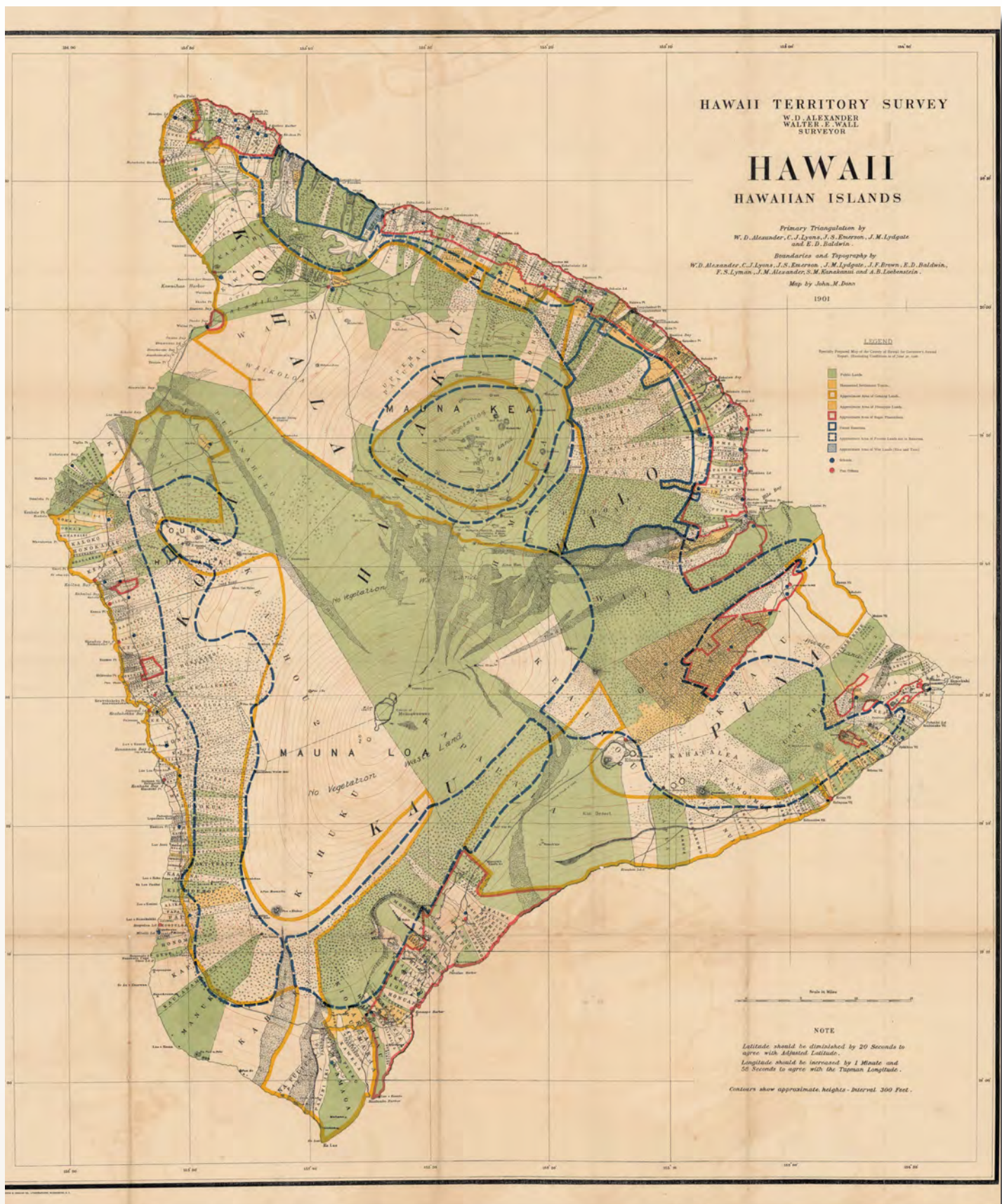


Figure 3: Hawaii Territory Survey - Defining the plantation areas



# Historical and Legal Overview

“An Act to Promote the Construction of Railways” was passed on August 1, 1878, and the North Kohala Hawaiian Railroad was the very first railroad approved in the Hawaiian Kingdom. This Act helped to fund and support the development of railroads across the islands. The Act was later changed by an amendment in August 1880 that clarified the “*rather loose arrangement of the Act’s Section 27 and 28*”<sup>4</sup> which related to the return of investment. The act was amended to

*“guarantee as subsidy of not more than two thousand five hundred dollars per mile of railroad actually constructed, equipped, and in complete running order, such completion to be evidenced by a certificate in writing of the Surveyor General, which certificate shall be filled in the office of said Minister.”*<sup>5</sup>

The other amendment that was made, Section 28 of Chapter 29, further outlines the use of public funds for the construction of the railroad. Thus, it states

*“...the Minister of Finance is hereby authorized and required to pay on the certificate of the Minister of the Interior to the corporation...such sums of money as may be ascertained to be due by virtue and authority of the preceding section but not in any case to exceed two thousand five hundred per mile of railroad constructed, out of any moneys which may at the time be in the Public Treasury not otherwise appropriated.”*<sup>6</sup> It documents further that if this amount should not be sufficient to cover the costs, then the Minister of Finance, with the consent of the king, may issue bonds with an interest rate of 7% annually. With these changes, the Act, as amended, was approved on August 13, 1880.

The Hawaiian Railroad Company formed on October 20, 1880, and was responsible for the narrow-gauge railroad that ran from Māhukona to Niuli'i. An act to support railroad planning and construction was originally introduced into the Hawai'i legislature in June 1878, but it wasn't until Samuel G. Wilder was appointed the new Minister of the Interior in 1878 that the charter for the Hawaii Railroad Company, from Māhukona to Niuli'i, was signed. Once King Kalākaua signed the charter, he deposed his whole cabinet, leaving Wilder free to proceed with his plans for the railroad.<sup>7</sup> should be considered a 'trail' under HRS 264-1(b).



Figure 4: Mahukona Harbor

Source: Hawaii State Archives



In the Map Section of this document (see pages 42-53), we will further examine the railroad ROW and determine if there were any legal changes to the railroad ROW that would not qualify it as a road.

Published figures for 1884 indicate that the railroad carried 20,000 tons of freight and 6,000 passengers that year. The Hawaiian railroad had no physical connection to any of the plantations it served and had no spur tracks to mills in its original alignment.<sup>8</sup> Public funds were used to construct the railroad. While the intent of Samuel G. Wilder was likely to further his own businesses as well as further the large agricultural plantations, the construction of the railroad was done as part of a government initiative and has the backing of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The Government Contract <sup>9</sup> provides a summary of the commitments, with some key components that underlie the full intent of the railroad.



*Figure 4: Train in Mahukona - North Kohala*

*Source: Hawaii State Archives*

The date is especially important when considering other Hawaiian Laws and Statutes that provide a legal basis for further inquiry into whether this alignment is eligible to become a trail for public use. The Contract is stated as follows:

## **HAWAIIAN RAILROAD COMPANY CONTRACT**

1st Corporation shall commence to construct a Railroad within one year from October 23, 1880. Gauge shall be not less than 30 inches. Worked by locomotive Steam Engine.

2nd Shall during continuance of the Charter carry all mail matter free of charge. Also all Sheriffs, Constables and Peace Officers when on Government Duty.

3rd Rolling stock subject at all time to the approval of the Minister of the Interior.

4th Average speed shall not be less than 5 nor more than 30 miles per hour.

5th Shall upon the request of the Minister of the Interior repair all rolling stock, stations and portions of the road as shall be designated defective.

6th Minister of the Interior, or persons whom he shall appoint permitted at all times the right to pass over and examine the road, and all buildings, rolling stock, stations &c.

7th Minister of the Interior to cause to be paid to said Corporation \$2500 per mile for each and every mile constructed, equipped and in complete running order upon certificate of the Surveyor General. No subsidy to be paid until at least 5 miles of the Railroad is complete.



The contract, issued prior to the Highways Act of 1892, set in motion the establishment of a railroad that would bring goods, services, people, government workers, and mail from Māhukona to Niuli'i. It was established through a Government Act, subsidized by the government, and referred to as a road. The last paragraph of the Act provides the use of the word 'road' as it relates to the railroad alignment or ROW:

*"the Government shall take over and purchase the road, rolling stock, land, appurtenances and shall pay"*<sup>10</sup>

The use of the railroad as a 'road' is also seen in other legal documents to describe the railroad ROW. In review of other railroads throughout the Kingdom, we see instances where government subsidies were authorized to fund the construction of railroads. Chapter CXI. An Act Granting a Franchise to Establish and Maintain a Lottery. Be it Enacted by the Queen and the Legislature of the Hawaiian Kingdom: ...

*"Section 4. Said sum shall be devoted to the uses and purposes hereinafter set forth, and the Minister of Finance is hereby authorized to pay the same as herein provided, as long as the same is received for said franchise. The Act further describes subsidy to pay for public resources, including:*

*Subsidy to be paid for the construction and maintenance of a railroad around the Island of Oahu... as well as Third: Subsidy to be paid for the construction and maintenance of a railroad from Hilo, Island of Hawai'i, through the Districts of Hilo and Hamakua, fifty thousand dollars per annum, to be paid during such period during which said railroad is kept in operation."*<sup>11</sup>

This points to the use of public funds for the construction and maintenance of the railroads. While it does not specifically call out the North Kohala Railroad, it provides another documentation of the use of public funds in the construction and maintenance of railroads.

In the Highways Act of 1892, Section 8 includes the responsibility of

*"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."*<sup>12</sup> This statement implies that the 'road' is referring to the Railroad.

History shows that the North Kohala Railroad was not constructed to transport sugar cane alone. It includes government use, was developed through an act, and included government funding. This supports the concept that the railroad was a government funded, government commissioned, and government used public facility. It is often reported as a 'road' under government contracts, acts, and laws, and it was built prior to 1892.

This indicates that it should be considered a 'trail' under HRS 264-1(b). In the Mapping Section of this document, we will further examine the railroad ROW and determine if there were any legal changes to the railroad ROW that would not qualify it as a road.



# Understanding Hawaiian Land Tenure Prior to 1778

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From 1778 to 1890, when the Hawaiian Railroad Company was formed, there were drastic changes in land tenure as well as economic, social, political, and religious norms. An overview of this time period is included in this report to show how these changes altered daily life in North Kohala, and how they relate to the importance of public access to significant cultural and historic sites. Prior to European contact in 1778, Hawaiians developed a complex and stable land tenure system. The eight main islands were divided into several separate chiefdoms, with an **ali'i 'ai moku** (district or island chief) or **mō'i** (high chief) controlling one island or section of an island and with a **kālaimoku** (counselor) to manage lands.<sup>13</sup> The ali'i 'ai moku also had an **'aha ali'i** (council of chiefs) for advice and guidance. Certain lands were reserved for the ali'i 'ai moku, and the remaining lands were given to the most loyal chiefs, relatives, or allies. In turn, the chiefs retained lands for themselves and distributed the rest to their followers. All lands were given subject to revocation at will. When conquest or death brought a new ali'i 'ai moku, lands would be redistributed according to the preference of the new high chief in consultation with the **kālaimoku** and **'aha ali'i**.

The ali'i 'ai moku was managed by ahupua'a, with an ahupua'a chief who was responsible for the production of the ahupua'a. The **ahupua'a** was the land unit that most closely related to the everyday life of the people. An ahupua'a could range in size from one hundred to thousands of acres. An ahupua'a typically "ran like a wedge from sea to mountains."<sup>14</sup>

An ali'i 'ai ahupua'a (ahupua'a chief), or sometimes a konohiki (land agent), administered the ahupua'a. An early Hawai'i case explained that the ahupua'a afforded to the chiefs and people, "a fishery residence at the

warm seaside, together with the products of the high lands, such as fuel, canoe timber, mountain birds, and the right-of-way to the same, and all the varied products of the intermediate land as might be suitable to the soil and climate of the different altitudes from sea soil to mountainside or top."<sup>15</sup>

Hawaiian society paralleled this land division pattern. There are many interpretations and differences of opinion in the freedom given to commoners; however, for the purposes of understanding land tenure, this document considers the following perspective, as presented by the University of Hawai'i, Richardson School of Law's publication, *Native Hawaiian Law: A Treatise*. At the top were the ali'i ài moku and kahuna nui (high priest), then the ali'i 'ai ahupua'a, then the ahupua'a konohiki, and finally the **maka'āinana** (people of the land).<sup>16</sup> The **maka'āinana** worked together under the direction of the chiefs and priests. Within the boundaries of the ahupua'a, the **maka'āinana** had the right to hunt, gather wild plants and herbs, fish offshore, and use parcels of land for **kalo** cultivation together with sufficient water for irrigation.<sup>17</sup>

**Maka'āinana** could freely trade and move within the ahupua'a; however, all of the activities were regulated by a very intricate system of rules designed to conserve natural resources and provide for all ahupua'a residents. This system of land tenure also gave the **maka'āinana** the power to move to another ahupua'a if they were ill-treated, which then poorly reflected the ability of an ahupua'a chief to make the land productive. This system was vastly different from what we have today and allows one to understand why the concept of private land ownership impacted not only the land tenure system, but also Hawaiian society and order.

Contact with the Europeans and the Americans brought radical changes. Kamehameha I, using Western arms and allies, brought all the islands, with the exception of Kauai, under his control. In 1810, Kamehameha gained the allegiance of Kauai's chief, Kaumuali'i, thus uniting all the islands under one rule.

Kamehameha I divided the lands among his chiefs in the customary way, and he also created another administrative level by appointing loyal chiefs to be governors on each of the islands.<sup>18</sup> Kamehameha's son Liholiho, serving as King Kamehameha II, created changes to society and land tenure. With the encouragement of Ka'ahumanu and his mother, the high chiefess Keōpūolani, Kamehameha II abandoned the kapu (religious restrictions) that included a prohibition on men and women eating together. By openly eating with Ka'ahumanu and Keōpūolani in an act known as the 'ai noa (free eating), Kamehameha II abandoned the traditional religion.<sup>19</sup>

From this point on, we see an influx of Europeans and Americans, new treaties, influences, and the Protestant Calvinist missionaries. Early commerce and trade were centered on active fur and sandalwood trades, as well as the whaling industry. When overharvesting collapsed the sandalwood trade and whaling stocks diminished, Europeans and Americans looked towards large-scale agricultural products. Pressure to change the traditional land tenure system intensified.

The Constitution of 1840, under Kamehameha III, formally declared that the land belonged to the chiefs and people with the king as trustee for all. The 1840 Constitution established a governmental structure for the kingdom, confirming the authority of the island governors, appointed by the king, and it created two bodies of legislative council, a judicial system, the kuhina nui (prime minister), and four other roles appointed by the House of Representatives.

The next big change came during the Māhele period, which started with the creation of the Land Commission.

The king would retain his private lands, subject only to the rights of the tenants, and the remaining land of the kingdom would be divided into thirds: one-third designated to the Hawaiian government, one-third to the chiefs and konohiki, and the final third to the native tenants.<sup>20</sup>

In 1848, the king held almost 2.5 million acres, or 60.3% of the total land, while the chiefs had received a total approximating 1.6 million acres.<sup>21</sup> The king divided his lands into two parts. The larger portion, about 1.5 million acres, he

*"set apart forever to the chiefs and people of the kingdom."*<sup>22</sup>

The legislative council then ratified and accepted the lands conveyed to the chiefs and people, declaring them to be

*"set apart as the lands of the Hawaiian government, subject always to the rights of tenants."*<sup>23</sup>



Figure 5: Hala and Naupaka in Niuli'i



These lands were designated as Government Lands. In 1862, a Boundary Commission was established to settle boundary questions regarding the ahupua'a and 'ili kūpono that had been awarded by name only.<sup>24</sup> The final action in the Māhele process was for the maka'āinana. The Kuleana Act of August 6, 1850 authorized the Land Commission to award fee-simple title to native tenants for their plots of land.<sup>25</sup>

Tenant farmers could apply for their own plots of land, called kuleana. A kuleana parcel could come from lands of the king, government, or chiefs. While the kuleana lands were generally among the richest and most fertile in the islands, there were a lot of restrictions. The kuleana could include only the land that a tenant had cultivated plus a house lot of not more than a quarter of an acre. The native tenant was required to pay for a survey of the land and bring two witnesses to testify to the tenant's right to the land. In the end, only 28,658 acres, much less than one percent of the total land, went to the maka'āinana through this process.

There were a lot of different reasons and theories as to why maka'āinana did not secure more kuleana parcels: this was a very different land tenure system; many did not understand or know about the law; some lacked money to pay for a survey; others felt that to claim land was an act of betrayal to the chiefs; still others feared reprisal from the chiefs.<sup>26</sup>

The 1850 Kuleana Act also protected the rights of tenants to gain access to the mountains and the sea and to gather certain materials. However, an early Hawai'i case *Oni v. Meek* (1958) held that the rights enumerated in the Kuleana Act were the full extent of native tenant rights within the ahupua'a. This meant that other traditional rights, such as the right to grow crops and pasture animals on unoccupied portions of the ahupua'a, were not allowed.



*Figure 6: Wahi Pana – Sacred Places in North Kohala*

In 1845 an act was created to authorize the sale of Government Lands, and within four years over twenty-seven thousand acres of land had been sold. In 1850, a second major piece of legislation permitted any resident of Hawai'i to own and convey land regardless of citizenship.

<sup>27</sup>

These changes created drastic changes to land ownership. When the Land Commission dissolved in 1855, approximately 1.6 million acres of land had been distributed to the chiefs or konohiki, another 1.5 million acres had been set aside as Government Lands, almost one million acres had been retained by the king, and only 28,658 acres had been claimed by the people. The fifty-year period after the Māhele brought the growth of large-scale plantation agriculture, especially sugar, and the steady loss of lands from Hawaiian control. The fifty-year period after the Māhele brought the growth of large-scale plantation agriculture, especially sugar, and the steady loss of lands from Hawaiian control. Professor Neil Levy describes the situation as follows:

*“With a permanent population of fewer than two thousand, Westerners took over most of Hawaii’s land in the next half-century and manipulated the economy for their own profit. They had already stripped the land of its only readily exploitable resource, sandalwood. After the Reciprocity Treaty of 1876, which allowed Hawaiian sugar to enter the United States duty-free, Western-owned sugar plantations dominated the Hawaiian economy. That the local population did not participate in this economy proved no obstacle; laborers were imported and by the turn of the century, Hawaiians were a minority in their own homeland.”* <sup>28</sup>

The construction and use of the Hawaiian Railroad is a product of this time period after the Great Māhele when sugar plantations dominated the land and economy. Preserving the railroad ROW as a trail provides an opportunity to present the history, not only from the perspective of the sugar plantation, but also how the land became dominated by the sugar plantations and changed North Kohala from the days of Kamehameha I, which is described further in this document.



Figure 7: Wahi Pana – State Historic Parks in North Kohala



# Government Changes and Annexation

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The Provisional Government under the protection of the U.S. pending annexation negotiations, landed American troops, and hoisted the American flag over Hawaii. As changes were affecting land use, ownership and economy, there were constant pressures from foreign interests, including those from the United States. In 1851, the legislature adopted a resolution to review the 1840 Constitution. A new constitution was then created, known as the 1852 Constitution. The 1852 Constitution gave the right to vote to male subjects over the age of twenty who were taxpayers and had resided in Hawai'i for more than a year. It made most of the acts of the king subject to approval of the Privy Council and kuhina nui. When Alexander Liholiho, Kamehameha IV, took the throne in 1855, he

*"felt that the Constitution of 1852 placed unacceptable limitations on his royal authority."*<sup>29</sup>

However, he was not able to adopt a different constitution. When Kapuaaiwa, Kamehameha V, became king in 1863, he refused to take an oath to maintain the constitution. A constitutional convention was convened, and Kamehameha V signed the Constitution of 1864, which reasserted the monarch's powers. William Lunalilo, Hawaii's first elected king, made no changes to the Constitution of 1864, although he did advocate for eliminating property qualifications for voters.

When King Lunalilo died within his first year of being elected, David Kalākaua and Queen Emma were considered the top runners to rule. Queen Emma demonstrated strong popular support; however, it appears that Kalākaua was able to solicit support among the planter-merchant elite and won the crown. A large crowd of pro-Emma partisans, upset at the decision, stormed the courthouse, and many of the Royal Hawaiian Police joined the demonstrators which provided a threat to the outnumbered business oligarchy.

Charles Bishop requested the commanders of

U.S. and British warships docked in Honolulu to land troops and crush the "*riotous mob*."<sup>30</sup> On command, 150 U.S. marines and British sailors landed and marched up Fort Street to the courthouse. This will not be the last time U.S. troops are called to action.

King Kalākaua, like King Lunalilo, supported an amendment to the constitution that abolished voter property qualifications, which was adopted. King Kalākaua went to the U.S. and spoke before a joint session of the U.S. Congress to request a commercial agreement with America to ensure material prosperity. Thus, the Treaty of Reciprocity was passed in 1876, further supporting the sugar plantation economy. In 1887, the treaty was renewed with a provision that granted the U.S. exclusive rights to enter Pu'uloa (Pearl Harbor). On July 6, 1887, King Kalākaua was forced to sign a new constitution for the Hawaiian Kingdom. The new constitution was created by a group of white businessmen, who called themselves the Hawaiian League. The Hawaiian League was supported by an armed militia called the Honolulu Rifles. King Kalākaua was forced to sign this new constitution under gunpoint, and thus is named the "*Bayonet Constitution*". The Bayonet Constitution stripped the powers of the monarchy and gave authority to the legislature. It gave the king ceremonial status, made his military powers subject to legislative control, and placed executive power in the hands of a cabinet appointed by him but subject to the legislature. In addition, it allowed only men of Hawaiian, American, and European ancestry who met certain financial requirements to vote.

In 1887, the Honolulu Star Bulletin noted,

*"Let it be remembered that the United States is not an aggressive nation. She has more territory than she can fully occupy for generations to come...She does not cross the seas to enlarge her possessions."*<sup>31</sup>

It was clear, though, that there were other influences at work. U.S. Secretary of State James Blaine had a different position, noting:

*“There is little doubt that were the Hawaiian Islands by annexation or distant protection a part of the territory of the Union, their fertile resources for the growth and raising of sugar would not only be controlled by American capital but so profitable a field of labor would attract thither from the United States willing workers. As purely American form of colonization in such a case would meet all the phases of the problem.”*<sup>32</sup>

In 1891, the U.S. enacted the McKinley tariff, which damaged Hawai‘i’s sugar industry. Some felt that the only way to guarantee the success of Hawaiian sugar was to become part of the U.S. Another influence on annexation was the threat perceived by the ruling business elite in response to the changing demographics of Hawaii. In 1890, Asians constituted 32% of the population of the islands. Those promoting annexation pointed to Japan’s recent military triumph over China as a threat of a foreign people controlling Hawai‘i. The death of King Kalākaua in 1891 brought Queen Lili‘uokalani to the throne, who was determined to preserve Hawaiian sovereignty.



Figure 9:  
Hawaiian Flag

On January 14, 1893, Queen Lili‘uokalani read a declaration announcing a new constitution. It asserted the power of the monarchy over the government and declared that all cabinet ministers would henceforth serve at her pleasure. It limited voting to Hawaiian-born or naturalized citizens and gave the queen authority to appoint nobles for life. After maintaining power through the Bayonet Constitution, this was seen as unacceptable to the business elite. That very same evening, L.A. Thurston, S.B. Dole, W.O. Smith, W.R. Castle, and F.W. Wunderburg gathered and proclaimed themselves a “Committee of Public Safety”. They met with Minister Stevens, who told them that the U.S. troops on board the Boston will be ready to land at any moment to prevent the destruction of American life and property.

The committee then organized around 100 haoles (foreigners), preparing them for the next steps. On January 16, 1893, Minister Stevens ordered the Boston’s assist “in preserving public order”.<sup>33</sup> That commander, Captain Wiltse, to land his troops to next morning, the Committee of Public Safety seized government buildings and proclaimed the dissolution of the monarchy and the establishment of the Republic of Hawaii. Minister Stevens immediately recognized the Provisional Government, even before Lili‘uokalani’s line of defense had surrendered. The queen eventually relinquished her authority to the United States, and on February 1, 1893, Minister Stevens placed the Provisional Government under the protection of the U.S. pending annexation negotiations, landed American troops, and hoisted the American flag over Hawaii.

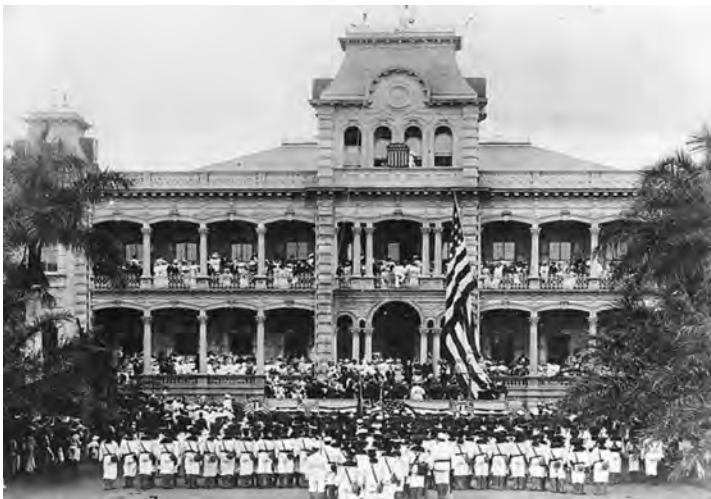


Figure 8 : The Illegal Overthrow and Occupation of the Palace

Source: Hawaii State Archives



President Harrison drew up an annexation treaty, but when U.S. government investigator James Blount was tasked to investigate the truth of the overthrow, he determined that *“the undoubted sentiment of the people is for the Queen, against the Provisional Government and against annexation.”*<sup>34</sup> President Cleveland, elected in 1892, was opposed to annexation. Martial law was enforced on the island, and the crown lands were opened for sale and lease, with the queen’s best lands sold to the plantations. A new constitution, modeled after the 1891 Mississippi Constitution, was created that denied the vote to anyone not literate in English. The new constitution also denied the vote to anyone who did not possess property worth at least \$200 (equivalent to \$6,091 in 2018)<sup>35</sup> and omitted such rights as the right to a trial by jury. In January 1895, an uncoordinated and poorly planned royalist revolt broke out, with surrender shortly after a couple of fights. Immediately after, U.S. troops staged highly visible training.

By 1897, two positions were in play in the U.S. Congress regarding annexation. The sugar-based elite in Hawai‘i was pro-annexation and able to influence supporters, including military men who saw Hawai‘i as a way to provide the U.S. with *“dominant power over the entire North Pacific”*<sup>36</sup> and who labelled opponents *“traitors to the race.”*<sup>37</sup> Business interests in foreign markets argued that annexation would allow for the opening of markets and give the U.S. command of the Pacific for trans-Pacific expansion. The opposition noted that there were no Hawaiians in favor of annexation, emphasizing respect for self-determination. However, in July 1898, supporters of annexationists in the U.S. Senate passed a resolution, the Newlands Resolution, which resulted in Hawai‘i being incorporated into the United States.



Figure 10: Kaimiloa: Kalākaua’s Naval Ship, 1887  
Source:: Hawaii State Archives

This report examines the history of the railroad and looks to the acts, policies, and laws that help support the case for transforming the old railroad ROW into a public trail. It is important to understand the various versions of the Hawaiian Constitution and the creation of specific laws and acts under these different influences. As this document showed, the Kingdom of Hawai‘i under King Kalākaua passed the Act to Promote Railroads in 1880, prior to the Bayonet Constitution. However, the Treaty of Reciprocity was passed in 1876, reflecting the needs of the sugar plantations and the business community. The Highways Act of 1892 was created by Queen Lili‘uokalani under the Bayonet Constitution, prior to the new constitution. This does not change the laws but does require consideration.

The North Kohala trail aims to provide the public with access across lands, access to the coast, access to the mountains, safe access for emergencies, and the general right to traverse the lands unimpeded. It opens up opportunities to tell these stories and history. It could facilitate discussion and the perpetuation of the stories of place. As noted earlier, this report is for the people of North Kohala. Thus, it is for the people to make these decisions.

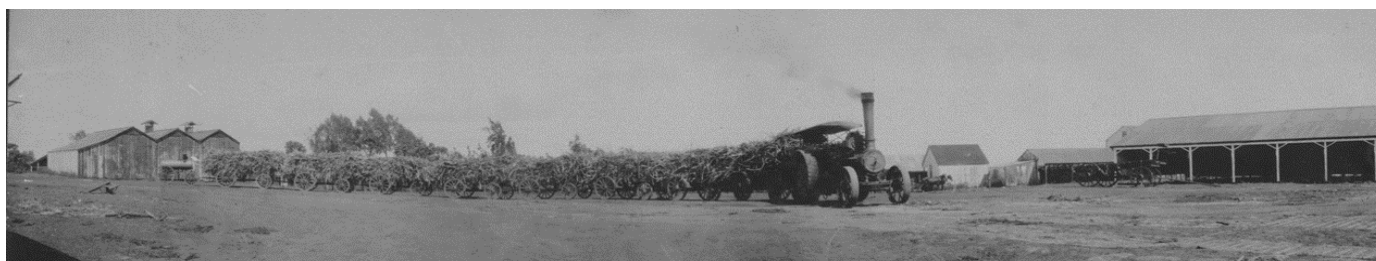


Figure 11: Hauling Cane  
Source: Hawaii State Archives

# The Public Trust Doctrine

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Under traditional Hawaiian land tenure principles, all lands and adjacent ocean areas were held in trust by the ali'i (chiefs), who directed the maka'āinana (people of the land) in the sustainable stewardship of the resources. As described in more detail above, after Western contact, laws were eventually introduced with respect to private land ownership. Another component that is important to understand about public access rights is how coastlines remain under the public trust doctrine and are held by the government as public resources.

This is important in areas where the railroad ROW may have been legally abandoned. The project could pursue one of two options: 1. Approaching landowners to request approval for the trail to continue through their property or 2. Bringing the trail to the coastline where public access is a right in areas where the trail passes through subdivisions or larger areas. The following information provides the justification for the latter approach.

In *King v. Oahu Railway & Land Co* (1899), the Hawai'i Supreme Court reaffirmed an ancient principle, the public trust doctrine, ruling that all lands under navigable waters are public lands held in trust by the government for public uses. In that case, the Hawaiian Kingdom had leased shoreline property around Honolulu harbor to defendant Oahu Railway and Land Company to develop and manage railroad and wharf facilities. Pursuant to the lease and the Railroad Act of 1878, the railway company became an agent of the government and had the authority to exercise eminent domain powers, such as the condemnation of lands. The lease also allowed the government to reclaim the land and any improvements after giving the railway company ninety days' notice.

The controversy happened when the Oahu Railway and Land Company wanted to reclaim the land to make extensive wharf improvements. Oahu Railway sought to condemn the land for railroad and wharf purposes and establish a perpetual right-of-way to sail and anchor its vessels. The question presented before the court was whether the government, through its lease, had relinquished its control over land under the navigable waters of Honolulu harbor to the extent that the railway company could condemn the submerged land despite the government's objections. The Court held that the government could not have relinquished control over the submerged land to the extent that the railway company could condemn it, due to the special nature of submerged lands.

The court ruled that the people of Hawai'i hold the absolute rights to all its navigable waters and the soils under them for their own common use. The lands under the navigable waters in and around the territory of the Hawaiian Government are held in trust for the public use of navigation. While this ruling may not directly address the land component of the railroad ROW, it does establish guidelines concerning shoreline boundaries and the public trust. Hawaiian courts have recognized public trust principles for shoreline areas above the low-water mark.

Although they have recognized the power of the Hawaiian Kingdom to grant lands down to the low-water mark, courts have held that absent specific language granting such lands, lands makai (seaward) of the high-water mark should typically remain reserved for public use. Hawai'i courts have also held that Hawaiian traditions and customs, along with public trust principles, establish public rights to shoreline areas makai of the high-water mark.



Based on a couple of cases, Ashford (1968) and *County of Hawai'i v. Sotomura* (Sotomura I) (1973), the Hawai'i Supreme Court recognized that it was the customary practice of the government survey office to have kama'āina witnesses point out shoreline boundaries to government surveyors, who would then record those boundaries. There was no evidence to indicate that Hawaiian shorelines in 1866 had been based on U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey publications. Thus, the court held that ancient tradition, custom, and usage established the shoreline boundaries between public beaches and private lands as the upper reaches of the wash of the waves, as evidenced by the edge of vegetation or debris line.

For the case of North Kohala, there is a Conservation Land Use District along the cliffs fronting the ocean. Together with the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail, there is public access along the coastline for a swath of land from the cliffs in most areas up until 'Upolu Point. There may be areas within this section that could be utilized as access points to connect portions of the old railroad line in cases where the railroad ROW has been legally abandoned. This will be further detailed out in the mapping analysis section of this report.

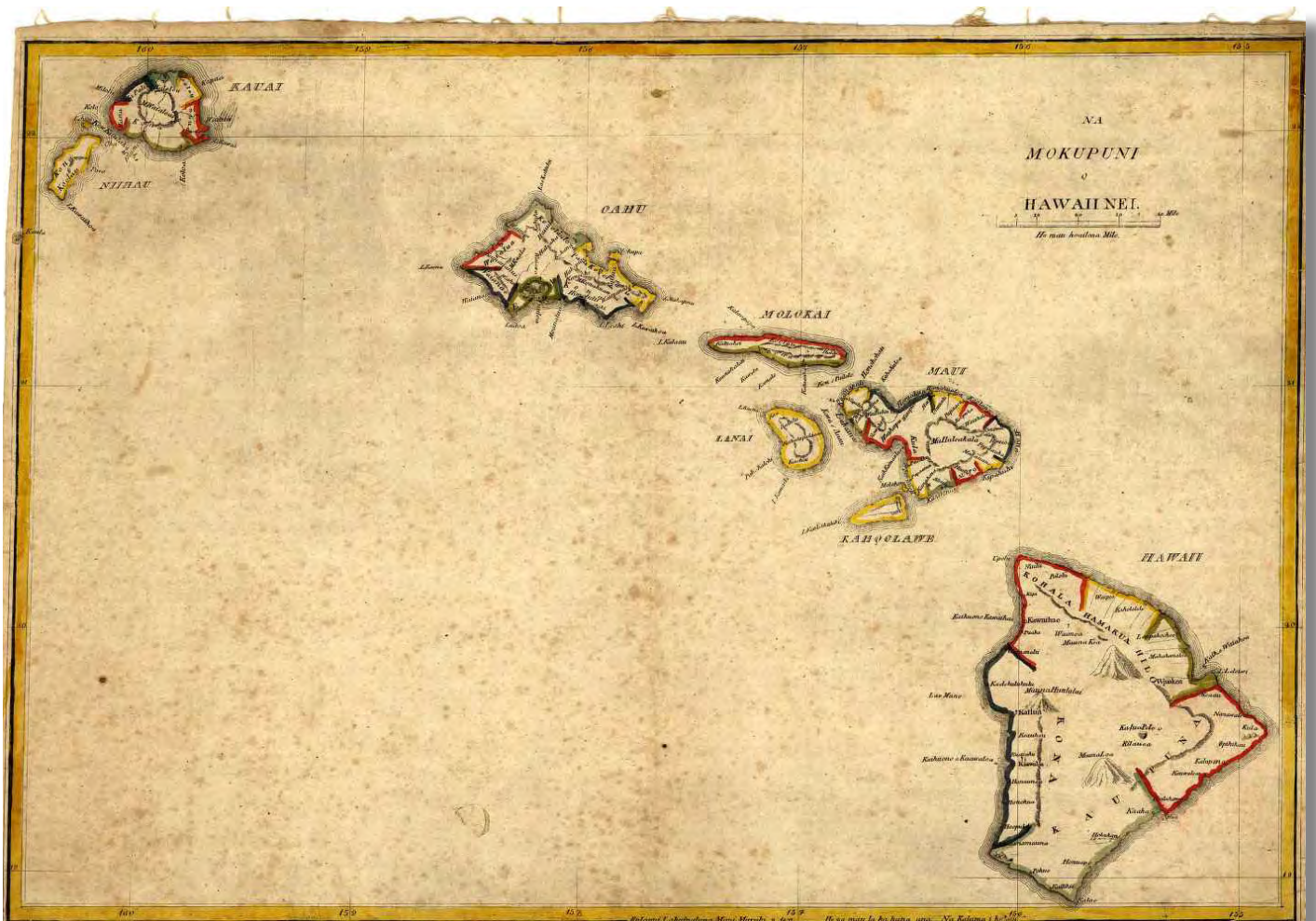


Figure 12: 1837 Map of the Kingdom of Hawaii

Source: *Hawaii Genealogy*

# King Kamehameha I: Importance of Place

This section brings us back to a time before and immediately after Western contact with the Hawaiian Islands. To understand the influential role that North Kohala had on the formation of the Hawaiian Kingdom, we will go into a brief description of King Kamehameha I, the important relationship with place, and the significance of the many resources and wahi pana (sacred lands) that exist throughout the area. This can be expanded to describe important cultural sites that the community wishes to protect and interpret.

There are many cultural sites found throughout North Kohala from villages, heiau, (Hawaiian Temple) to expansive agricultural irrigation and hundreds of acres called the Kohala Field System. As there are many sites, this report will touch on the history relating to Kamehameha I, his kula iwi (homeland), and some select areas that are becoming public lands through recent land purchases.

Kamehameha was said to be born near Kokoiki, toward the leeward side, close to the imposing and ancient Mo'okini Heiau. The year is not certain and was most likely sometime in the 1750s, approximately twenty years before the arrival of Captain James Cook. Kohala 'Āina <sup>38</sup> describes the birth of Kamehameha as follows: It was said that during the stormy night of Kamehameha's birth, there were many omens that led to suspicions that a leader was born. When one of the rival chiefs in Hilo heard of the birth, he remarked: *"Pinch off the tip of the young mulberry shoot."*<sup>39</sup> Concerned, the mother gave Kamehameha into the custody of Nae'ole, chief of Hālawā, to raise him away from the dangers of the court. A woman named Keaka helped Nae'ole. Isolated from parents, uncles, and nephews, left to his own company, will and mind, the young boy acquired the name Kamehameha, the lonely one.



Figure 13 - King Kamehameha I Statue

When Kamehameha was five years old, he joined his uncle Alapa'inui's court. When his father and uncle Alapa'inui died, another uncle, the general Kalani'opu'u, took the young Kamehameha under his wing in the district of Ka'u. Kalani'opu'u had Kamehameha trained by the best warrior known, Kekuhaupi'o from Ke'ei in South Kona. The young chief poured all his energy into learning the martial arts, preparing for the inevitable battles he wanted to win. Kamehameha returned to Hālawā with Kekuhaupi'o to practice his craft, the use of the many-pointed spear, in a district that he knew well.



More signs indicated that Kamehameha was heading for greatness. Some chiefs clung to him, eager to profit from his ascent. Others were planning his defeat. Kalani'opu'u reiterated his wish that, upon his death, his son Kiwala'o would rule. His nephew Kamehameha, he said, should look after the war god Kuka'ilimoku. Kamehameha responded by breaking a powerful kapu. After the conquest of the rebelling chief 'Imakakoloa in Puna, protocol required that Kiwala'o lead the sacrificial ceremonies. Instead, Kamehameha snagged the chief's body to offer it to Ku. The aged Kalani'opu'u understood that he could not stop his nephew. He ordered Kamehameha to prepare:

*"Return to your birthplace and take care of the chiefs and the commoners."*<sup>40</sup>

Kamehameha stayed for two years and lived in North Kohala at Hālawā during five separate periods of his life.<sup>41</sup> He tended taro patches, planted noni trees, and encouraged his people to share in the work. These were happy, abundant times for Hālawā, and Kamehameha's people became faithful, self-confident, and strong. Kamehameha became the leader of Hawai'i Island after a series of battles. While Kamehameha was living at Hālawā, Kekuhaupi'o came to bring the news of Kalani'opu'u's death and thus of an imminent war. Kamehameha fought with Kiwala'o and won. Between battles to subdue the island's chiefs to his reign, Kamehameha returned to his Kohala lands to continue agriculture. When Kamehameha was not in Hālawā, the warriors of Kahekili, the chief of Maui, plundered his beloved Hālawā lands and oppressed his people. Kamehameha and Kekuhaupi'o then returned to his homeland and defeated Kahekili in the Battle of Hapu'u, which lasted two days. They then rested in Hālawā before unifying the Hawaiian Island.

Hālawā was once one of Kohala's most prominent lands. King Kamehameha spent his early childhood years in this fertile land. He enjoyed the bountiful land and was known to surf Kapanāia and Kauhola Point and tend to his taro farms. At that time, Hālawā was densely populated. It had a promising chief and an abundance of food. The first missionary census in 1835 had Hālawā's residents numbered 214.

As time moved forward, Hālawā became home to a Catholic settlement under the leadership of Saint (Father) Damien de Veuster. Fields ideal for sugar cane attracted Kohala's second sugar mill, drawing both the crème de la crème of Hawai'i's haole socialites and dozens of impoverished Chinese immigrants, the first ethnic group of the laborers in Hawai'i. Today, Hālawā slumbers quietly through the changes in Kohala, its legendary and colorful past largely forgotten except for the stories.



Figure 14: Sign above Kapanāia Cove

In addition to Hālawā, there are numerous areas that showcase the activity of Kamehameha while he was living in Kohala, including the lands surrounding Kapanāia Bay. Within the land there is evidence of the earliest culture of Hawaiian settlement, including Kapalama Heiau, a canoe haul road built by Kamehameha, and nineteen other sites spanning prehistoric to historic. Kapalama Heiau is on Kaheo Point.

At the time of the Māhele, there were ten Land Court Award claims by nine claimants that were granted these parcels, all located within the ahupua'a of A'amakao. The Hawaiian Railroad also traversed this area, with physical remnants of the railroad trestle footings found across the stream. The current road down to the bay is likely from the construction of the railroad, perhaps built upon the ancient trail down to the bay.

The land in Kohala, and in particular the land of Kamehameha, was once full of native trees and gardens. The coastal areas had groves of hala, breadfruit, noni, milo, hau, kou, and kukui trees. Farmers (including Kamehameha) built elaborate auwai (water irrigation systems) from the streams that carried water to the deep soil plateau. The gulches were full of lo'i taro patches. Since 2009 a coalition of Kohala community groups and organizations have worked to preserve the lands of Kamehameha's kula iwi, his homeland, in and near Halawa.

Seven parcels of coastal lands totalling 284 acres covering four and a half miles of shoreline have been purchased through the County's Open Space Program or preserved in trust by non profits. The community is actively dedicated to restoring this natural setting. Access to this area, through the railroad ROW as well as mauka-makai access, is key to making this become a reality. This portion of land will be further analyzed in the mapping section of this report.



*Figure 15: Joe Carvalho and Ralph Galan of Kohala Lihikai restoring Red Hala*

*Photo Credit: Toni Withington*



# Change: Impacts from Religion and Disease

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With the removal of the kapu system and Hawaiian spiritual religion, there was a significant expansion of missionaries spreading Christianity throughout the islands. Missionaries played an influential role in the transitions in Hawai'i. There was also the transition from the Hawaiian land tenure system to a Western-based private land ownership system, which brought changes to the way of life as well as the economy. After traders and whalers arrived on the islands, Hawai'i began to transition into a cash economy. Once the sandalwood trade and whaling slowed, there was advancement into the large-scale agriculture economy. North Kohala had a presence of Protestant, Catholic, and Mormon missions in the early period, and some who came as missionaries stayed. These missionaries not only furthered the movement of Christianity, but also created economic opportunities in the form of powerful large agricultural enterprises, including sugar plantations.

The first missionaries arrived in the islands in 1820, several years after the removal of the kapu system. At least 8,000 people lived in Kohala at the time,<sup>42</sup> living with the abundance of ocean and land. It wasn't until 1837 that Kohala supported its first church, at Nunulu above Kapaau town. In 1839, Reverend Bliss established the foundation of the Iole Mission Station, what became known as the Bond Estate and is now undergoing repurposing as a Hawaiian education region, with 2,400 acres having been recently donated to the Hawaii Community Foundation.

In 1840, Minister Elias Bond and his wife Ellen came from Maine, built, and grew the mission and schools, and eventually established the Kohala Sugar Plantation. Elias Bond was exposed to the

*"royalty and nobles of the Sandwich Islands, as a result of the first group of missionaries who arrived in 1820."*<sup>43</sup>

He established a New England-style mission that created change and held influence in Kohala. The physical buildings are still present, as portions of the Estate were placed on the National and State Register of Historic Places in 1977 and 1978. Father Elias Bond<sup>44</sup> saw the changes in economics and tried to slow down the destructive speed with which Kohala shifted from traditional barter to new money. However, he had to concede that money had become the new standard and that his community was *"wretchedly poor."*<sup>45</sup> Those who could afford it fled Kohala to Lahaina and Honolulu where whalers and traders accelerated the new economy.

When the missionary's funding support from Boston ended, Bond felt he could not leave his flock, mission, and school, and so he sought to find ways to support the community. He attracted the support of his Mission friend Samuel Northup Castle. Together, they raised capital for the Kohala Sugar Company. Bond then entered the sugar business, known by some as the "Missionary Plantation", and by the early 1870's, the Kohala Sugar Plantation profited. Bond gave money back to schools and the Mission board.<sup>46</sup> Eleven years earlier, Castle had resigned from the Mission to start a business venture with another ex-missionary. Bond sold his land and bought stock in Kohala Sugar Company.

The sugar plantations and mills operated under their own set of rules and procedures. Some, such as Bond, insisted on strict plantation rules that kept his primary missionary purpose in the foreground. Others, such as D. Baldwin, the son of a Waimea-based missionary who used to visit Kohala prior to Bond, managed with a softer heart than other managers. As time passed and new managers were hired, the influence from the missionary values waned. James Wight was the first to become independent, separating himself from

his agreements with Bond to open Halawa Mill and Plantation in 1873.

Other haole (foreign) businessmen moved in, and new mills followed. Niuli'i Mill (1877), Union Mill (1874), Star Mill and Hāwī Mill (both 1881) opened.<sup>47</sup> Subsidiary plantations and independent entrepreneurs organized, growing and selling cane to nearby mills.

In addition to Protestant missions, Catholic Father Damien de Veuster served from March 1865 to 1873, when he left for Kalaupapa on Molokai to help the people who had contracted Hansen's disease (leprosy). He is now canonized as Saint Damien for his work. James Hawkins and John Stillman Woodbury were the first Mormons to arrive as missionaries. Brother Rice was sent to reopen mission efforts for the Mormon Church along with mainland Elders Nathan Tanner, Thomas Karren, and newly ordained Elder John W. Kahumoku, and they established their mission in Kohala. While the different ministries held strong to the belief of saving lives through conversion and increasing their members through conversion, the likely biggest reduction in the flock of each church was not one of economy or one of religion, but the diseases carried over.

Measles, whooping cough, dysentery, influenza, and smallpox spread death across the

islands. Samuel M. Kamakau, a Hawaiian historian, reported,

*"In September 1848, an American warship brought the disease known as measles to Hilo, Hawaii. It spread and carried away about a third of the population."*<sup>48</sup>

In 1949, M.A. Taff, Jr., then head of the Territorial Health Department's vital statistics office, stated that "the (1848-49) measles epidemic alone killed off one-quarter of the native population. By the end of the major epidemics, the Hawaiian population was decimated.

The 1850 census found 82,035 unmixed Hawaiians and 558 part Hawaiians, compared with 107,354 Hawaiians in 1836, and perhaps 300,000<sup>49</sup> in 1778."<sup>50</sup>

Many influences and changes came to North Kohala and the islands. Sugar plantations grew in prosperity in the Hawaiian Islands. On September 9, 1876, a reciprocal treaty was completed between the U.S. and the Kingdom of Hawai'i. Under the treaty, Hawaiian sugar entered the U.S. market duty free, in exchange for the U.S. to be allowed to develop "Pearl River Lagoon" on Oahu as a "cooling station and naval repair base."<sup>51</sup>

As the large-scale agricultural plantations grew in economy and influence, there was the need to move goods, services, and people to locations across the islands.

There was also the need for labor on these large agricultural plantations. The reduction in the Hawaiian population and the ability to bring in other labor brought changes in the population of North Kohala. With the influence of Samuel G. Wilder, the start of the Hawaiian Railroad Company began a trend that expanded across the islands to boost economic production and modernize the economy. Chinese laborers were brought in to build the railroads, and numerous immigrants from Asia and Europe were brought to work the sugar plantations.



Figure 16: Gathering Cane with Cattle Source: Lyman Museum



# The First Hawaiian Railroad

In the first week of March 1882, 11 miles of the Big Island's first railroad opened, connecting Hāwī to Māhukona, and bringing an isolated peninsula into the era of mechanized industry. Plantations no longer had to rely on bullock-drawn wagons or treacherous boat landings. Samuel Gardner Wilder, great uncle of manager J. Scott B. Pratt, worked with the Hawaiian Railroad Company to incorporate on July 5, 1880, with the goal of improving efficiency and profits in sugar transportation. Wilder also owned the inter-island steamship company that serviced Māhukona. Thus, it is apparent that the intent from Samuel G. Wilder was likely for the benefit of his own businesses; however, the railroad was nevertheless built as a government infrastructure project.

Plans for the Māhukona railroad had started in 1878, when a new treaty between the Hawaiian Kingdom, ruled by King Kalākaua, and the United States encouraged sugar exports. While Samuel Parker at Waimea-based Parker Ranch envisioned a Hilo-Hamakua connection, the owner of the Likelike and its steamer company, Samuel G. Wilder, proposed a cheaper Kohala route. Samuel G. Wilder, American by birth, formed a partnership with C.H. Lewers and formed Wilder & Co., which operated the Wilder Steamship Company. In 1878, he was part of a new cabinet and became the Minister of the Interior under King Kalākaua.

Privy Council		Card 1.
HAWAIIAN RAILROAD COMPANY.		Vol. Page
Re. granting the petition of E. F. Adams et. al. for a Charter for the above Company.	June 24, 1880	13 267
Relative to a draft of a Contract between the Minister of the Interior & the above Company, which was read & discussed.	Oct 28, 1880	13 293
Res. approving the granting a right of way to the above Company of the width of 25 feet through all Govt. lands between Mahukona & Harte Mill etc.	Nov 1, 1880	13 349

Figure 17: Privy Council

Source: Hawaii State Archives

In 1880, several businessmen in Honolulu, including his brother William C. Wilder, petitioned for a charter for the Hawaiian Railroad Company.

As Minister of the Interior, Samuel G. Wilder created and signed the charter, with King Kalākaua completing the amendment in August 1880. The day after the amendment was signed; King Kalākaua deposed his whole cabinet, including Wilder. Wilder was granted a Charter of Incorporation under the official name "The Hawaiian Railroad Company" in July 1880. Wilder was President of the company and his brother, William, was treasurer. Samuel G. Wilder then went to New York to purchase railroad equipment and cars and returned to Hawai'i in December 1880. He had lined up 100 Chinese workers for the railroad construction; however, they were quarantined on Oahu due to a devastating smallpox epidemic. There were 4,400 Chinese immigrants who were contracted to work at the sugar plantations and brought the smallpox with them to the islands.

Construction of the railroad was done primarily by the 100 Chinese laborers brought in by Samuel G. Wilder, with the addition of 20 supervisors. The construction of the railroad had its challenges. There were areas that needed blasting and gulches to traverse. It was reported in the local newspaper that the construction included

*"passing through a country full of boulders and rocks, necessitating constant blasting."*<sup>52</sup>

The thirty-six-inch narrow gauge line had to be anchored into bare lava, winding its way up and around steep gulches, navigating high trestles, and hugging coastal cliffs. For reasons he did not explain, Wilder placed railroad stations far below camps and sugar mills,

*"as remote from all community interests and lines of travel as the sagacious cane-field owners could compel it to go."*<sup>53</sup>

Construction changed Kohala's landscape, plowing fields that a Hawaiian farmer complained were

*"ruthlessly destroyed by the railroad overseers of S.G. Wilder. This act is equal to that of plain murder, because the livelihood of myself and my family is reduced to nothing, that is, my plants and that of my family are covered with dirt, the taro, banana, ti leaves, coffee, mango, orange, bamboo, and other plants. My property was filled with fruits, but these days it is reduced to naught."* <sup>54</sup>

The railroad was able to begin the process of shipping goods, services, and people with the opening of the line. The official opening of the railroad was not announced in any paper, but it is likely that it was officially opened in the Spring of 1882.

The first notable report on the progress is found in The Gazette on March 1, 1882 :

*"Island Locals – Hawaii – The rails of the Māhukona railway are laid for eleven miles, and already freight and passengers are being carried."* <sup>55</sup> The Gazette noted again in 1882, *"The first load of sugar carried by the railway was shipped per Likelike last week. There were one hundred tons from Union, Star and Hind's mills. Had the weather been more favorable, double the quantity would have been brought, but the roads in consequence of the heavy rain, rendered carting impossible."* <sup>56</sup>

Privy Council		Card 1.
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Re. granting the petition of E. P. Adams et. al. for a Charter for the above Company.	13	257
Relative to a draft of a Contract between the Minister of the Interior & the above Company, which was read & discussed.	13	293
Res. approving the granting a right of way to the above Company of the width of 25 feet through all Govt. lands between Mahukona & Harts Mill etc.	13	349

Figure 18: Privy Council

Source: Hawaii State Archives



Figure 19 North Kohala Railroad near Mahukona

Source: Hawaii State Archives



The Gazette, again in 1882, noted the continued work to be done: *"The difficulty now is gulches. These occur every quarter or half mile and the construction of bridges occupies considerable time."*<sup>57</sup> As the Saturday Press reported on March 18, 1882, *"The latest mania in Kohala is going to the station at Hāwī, below Hind's. On a fine day even the ladies may be seen winding their way to the attractive spot and returning in raptures about the whistle and bell, 'that keeps ringing all the time, just like a real train!' The Hawaiian Railroad is in operation, or rather that part of it which has been constructed, and is conveying sugar from one or two mills."*<sup>58</sup>

There were no direct sugar mill connections until long after 1900, when it changed names and ownership. As a consequence of the railroad not going to the mills, there was a challenge of loading sugar onto the trains. One plantation, Hō'ea Mill, hoisted their sugar up to the railroad with a gravity track to ease the hauling problem. Part of the reason for the alignment of the railroad, with its many curves, was to allow the shortest and easiest gulch crossings. While the rail was not connected to the sugar mills, it did still serve the purpose of moving goods and people. The railroad provided a new way for the sugar companies to get their sugar to port, which was also shipped through the shipping business of Samuel G. Wilder.

No real explanation was ever disclosed as to why the railroad didn't connect to the mills.<sup>59</sup> There are some publications that claim it was always created for the sole purpose of sugar; however, this can be debated based on the records of government needs, modernization, and passengers. One opinion stated,

*"Quite probably it was one of economy, for the line literally hugged the coast to avoid cuts and fills. Following the contour of the terrain rather than a straight line... the road in many sections was a simple continuation of curves."*<sup>60</sup>

Again, as a matter of economics to avoid expensive bridges across the gulches, the railroad ran up a gulch to the point where it could be crossed with a relatively low trestle. As a result, the line amounted to *"19 7/8 miles for a true distance about 15 miles, from Māhukona to Niulii."*<sup>61</sup>



Figure 20: Kohala Sugar Mill

Source: Lyman Museum

At least two railroad workers were killed. A German in the employ of the Hawaiian Railroad Company fell between the cars and was instantly killed.<sup>62</sup> Engines rolled over a hair-width away from the cliffs or on narrow trestles high above solid ground. Frightened cattle and pigs ran head on into the train. Despite these challenges, few questioned the safety and advantages of the railroad, and Wilder continued adding tracks.

On January 13, 1883, Wilder's railroad reached the Niuli'i turnaround at Kohala's most eastern plantation. It was nearly twenty miles, almost five miles longer than a straight shot from Māhukona to Niuli'i. Its trestles crossed seventeen gulches, one of them eighty-four feet high, one 560 feet long. The train wound around twenty-five sharp curves. It included a primitive telephone system that connected the stations.

King Kalākaua came to Mahukona Harbor on the Navezdnik on May 6, 1883.<sup>63</sup> The King and his party were brought ashore with a royal salute by the ship's guns, and they brought with them the larger-than-life size bronze statue of King Kamehameha I.

Privy Council		Card 1.
HAWAIIAN RAILROAD COMPANY.,		Vol. Page
Re. granting the petition of E. P. Adams et. al. for a Charter for the above Company.	13	257
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Res. approving the granting a right of way to the above Company of the width of 25 feet through all Govt. lands between Mahukona & Harts Mill etc.	13	349

Figure 21 Privy Council

Source: Hawaii State Archives

King Kalākaua's visit to unveil the once-lost statue of King Kamehameha at Kapa'au in May 1883 turned into the Hawaiian Railroad's grand ceremonial ride. From then on, the teak passenger cars from London in which he and his entourage had traveled were named the Kalākaua Cars. Plantations loading sugar paid \$2.50 per 2,000 lbs. (one ton) of sugar, regardless of distance – the reason John Hind refused to participate. Productivity and revenues soared. Kohala entered its greatest prosperity to date. In 1884, it produced 10,000 tons of sugar and took in more than \$40,000 in profits. The railroad carried 20,000 tons of freight and 6,000 passengers. That year, three locomotives hauled twenty-eight small freight cars, five flat cars and six passenger cars. In 1885 Kohala Sugar Company soared in productivity to five times its earlier reports.

When Wilder died of a stroke in 1888, it was discovered that all the stock shares had been accumulated by Wilder, who effectively owned the whole company. As a result, the company fell to his estate and immediate family. The plantations had always thought they owned stock as co-owners and felt that they had been cheated. The deceit was part of a painful transition time for the railroad. As discoveries about Wilder's business practices undermined confidence, the Railroad's income decreased slowly and steadily.

In 1896, the Hawaiian Railroad Company decided to dis-incorporate and re incorporate under a new name with a clean slate. Thus, in January 1897, the Hawaii Railway Company Ltd. emerged. It was still under control of the Wilder estate and family; therefore, the overhaul had little effect. From 1897 until 1899, four sugar firms, Kohala Sugar Co., Union Mill Co., Halawa Mill & Plantation Co., and the Niuli'i Plantation Co., began buying the railroad stock. They continued its operation under the name of the Hawaii Railroad Company.

In 1899, Hawaii Railway Company stockholders approached Honolulu business factor Theo Davies & Co. With its help, four of Kohala's five sugar companies bought out the suffering railway,

*"thus ensuring for the future favorable rates for sugar, coal and other freight."*<sup>64</sup>

The Hāwī Mill continued its independence and did not join as it continued to haul cane to Honoipu landing by road. The railroad went through a period of loss until 1912, when the railroad surrendered control to another factor, Castle and Cooke. Robert Hall, in late February 1912 reported:

*"Communication from Mr. Davies re Railway: New directorate in Honolulu: amended bylaws, etc. Castle and Cooke now has control."*<sup>65</sup>



Figure 22: Train near Mahukona

Source: Lyman Museum



Castle and Cooke immediately returned to negotiations with John Hind at Hāwī Mill. Hind abandoned Honoipu landing in exchange for 45% ownership in the railway and a position as president. Including Hāwī Mill meant significantly more business and income for the ailing railway. Another locomotive, the Hawaii, joined the tracks. With further improvements, the railway recovered. In 1915, it managed to pay a dividend to its stockholders totaling \$10,000. In 1884, the sugar plantations produced 10,000 tons of sugar and took in more than \$40,000 in profits. The railroad carried 20,000 tons of freight and 6,000 passengers. That year, three locomotives hauled twenty-eight small freight cars, five flat cars and six passenger cars. In 1885 Kohala Sugar Company soared in productivity to five times its earlier reports.

Water was always a key component to the success of agriculture in North Kohala. The construction of the Kohala Ditch had a significant impact on the sugar plantations:

*"After the Kohala Ditch opened in 1906, abundant water flowed from deep in the giant valleys and cane yields nearly doubled across Kohala's fields. Crops were healthier. Fresh-cut cane could 'flume down' to mills situated below."*<sup>66</sup>

More automobiles were now in the district, which meant that passenger revenue had dropped to a negligible \$178.20 for the whole year, amounting to one or two people each week.

Passenger transport was eventually phased out. Over the next years, three of the locomotives converted from coal to oil. In 1918, the railway gained permission from the Public Utilities Commission to increase the rates for freight. The additional money allowed for relocation of bridges, as well as the scrapping and replacing of engines. The railway ran with a certain stability at last.

The four plantations merged into the Kohala Sugar Co., and in 1937 the railroad was completely absorbed by that company. The Railway Company was a component of the business consolidation of the plantations. The consolidation became known as the Kohala Sugar Company in 1937. Improvements continued as the Kohala Sugar Company laid spur tracks to the mills and their corresponding fields.<sup>67</sup> This marked the first physical connection of the railroad to the sugar cane operations. railroad to the sugar cane operations.

It was then re-incorporated that same year as Māhukona Terminals Ltd. Manager Pratt, grandnephew to Samuel G. Wilder, improved the railroad system to meet the needs of the plantations. He ordered additional spurs and expansions, such as new cane cars, locomotives, additional portable track, and a permanent track at Āinakea that would connect the train to the Kohala Mill in Halaula.<sup>68</sup>



Figure 23: Mahukona Harbor  
Source: Hawaii State Archives



Figure 24: Old flumes and Cane  
Source: Hawaii State Archives

The idea was to have the railroad accessible to the plantations for easier haul by the railroad, and use of flumes and trucks for cane that was located mauka of the train tracks.

*"The key to the new payout is the extension of the Hawaii Railroad Company's main line to bisect all the principal cane areas... After the track is laid, all the harvested cane below the railroad will be brought in by trains, while the above the track will be hauled by truck or flumes."*<sup>69</sup>

In 1939, a part of the so-called "lower rail line" from Niulii to Star Mill junction was abandoned, and cane haul by truck was increased to a total of two thirds of the sugar crop. The new operational format lasted less than a decade, because the railroad's terminus at Māhukona was useless after its port was closed by the Navy during World War II out of fears of attack on vessels in the small harbor.



Kohala Sugar Company decided to convert to truck hauling entirely, one of the first in the Islands to do so. On October 29, 1945, the entire railroad from the end of the cane fields to the mill ceased to operate when the mill was shut down at the end of that season.<sup>70</sup>

*Figures 24: Hauling sugar with horses*

*Source: Hawaii State Archives*



*Figure 25:  
Hauling with  
trucks Source:  
[https://www.  
flickr.com/  
photos/inter-  
islandlicopters](https://www.flickr.com/photos/inter-<br/>islandlicopters)*



# Sugar Plantations and Population Changes

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As the railroad brought new economy to the sugar plantations, changes to the population occurred. Kohala slowly emerged as a powerful economic force, drawing men and women from all over the world. Its infrastructure kept pace. As described earlier, Samuel G. Wilder, owner of the inter-island steamship company whose ships came to various landings in South and North Kohala, developed The Hawaiian Railroad Company. His trains were rolling by the early 1880s, packed with sugar. As discussed earlier in the section describing the development of the railroad, while it wasn't only for sugar plantations, it certainly changed the economy and ability for the sugar companies to get their product out to market. Train stations were equipped with a telephone line. There was plenty of work in Kohala and a need for workers to hoe, strip, cut, carry, and plant cane. As the number of Hawaiians diminished, planters recruited workers from China. By 1880, Kohala Sugar Company employed 250 laborers, eighty of them Chinese. The plantations sought to balance ethnic ratios, hoping to prevent organized majorities. The plantations started to supplement their work force in small numbers with South Pacific Islanders and, to a greater extent, with Europeans.

Hundreds of immigrants had to be shipped into Kohala. More people meant the need for increased services. For example, John Bond was taking on more than his original flock, and, although he clashed with management, he worked without pause to provide schools, teachers, and ministers. Despite hardships and injustices among island plantations, the district of Kohala gained a reputation for its slightly more humanitarian approach. Laborers left other plantations to come and work in Kohala:

*"The quarters on this plantation are noticeable for their neatness, comfort, and home-life appearance unlike the quarters I have seen elsewhere... there are flower and vegetable gardens about the plan, wooden houses, some ten by twelve feet."* <sup>71</sup>

The diversity of immigrants who worked at the sugar plantations varied depending on the plantation; however, the Halawa Mill and Plantation is used to demonstrate the general immigration trends in North Kohala and throughout the islands. The records from the Halawa Mill and Plantation included recruitment from 1873 to 1929. Labor for plantations began with Chinese Immigrants in 1873, Portuguese from 1877 to 1886, South Pacific Islanders from 1877 to 1885, Northern European from 1878 through 1885, Japanese in 1885, Okinawan in 1885, Puerto Rican from 1900 to 1901, and Korean in 1902. After the Philippine Islands fell under the reign of the US, a new group of laborers became available, and this time they seemed ideal. Filipinos were technically considered nationals, so they didn't have to adhere to immigration laws. They were poor and in desperate need of work. The Filipino men came without family, aiming to return to their homelands with money in their pockets.

Englishmen came to subtropical Hawai'i with their traditions and routines, from gin and tonics and high teas to playing polo and honoring the queen. One of Kohala's main agents, Theo Davies, came from Liverpool. In the late 1800s, the English formed the largest haole group in Kohala. They built the Kohala Club as a gathering place, keeping the British culture alive. Extensive English-style gardens surrounded the buildings. Only paying members were allowed, and only men were members. King Kalākaua himself visited the popular Kohala Club.

As more people found the means to leave the camps, shop owners settled into their stores, and three main communities emerged: Niuli'i-Makapala, Kapa'au, and Hāwī. A regular bus service, two nine-passenger vehicles, connected the towns to the outermost mills at ten cents between stations: "One dollar full round trip Hāwī to Niuli'i" <sup>73</sup>

On Saturday nights, the bus added extra service to connect with Tom Nahiwa's Moving Picture Entertainments. Kapa'au, with its central location between mills and camps, became an ideal hub for new business. Its most interesting days were starting. Shoppers came from Union Mill, Star Mill, and Kohala Sugar Company. Each store gained its own loyal clientele. Deliveries to camps declined and then disappeared.

In the 1920s, a new affluence brought in cars, from impractical but grandiose Fords to beat-up pickup trucks. The Kohala mountain road between Kohala and Waimea was so bad that most of the cars drove only within a radius of 5-10 miles.<sup>73</sup> The railroad ran close to town. Merchants' supplies depended on the port at Māhukona and transport by train. Store owners rushed weekly to the train stations packed to the rim with their merchandise. However, one bad storm or shipwreck could cancel the delivery of fresh or new goods. Steamer days were huge events. Occasionally merchants traveled to Honolulu to discover new products from abroad. In 1931, Hāwī Mill officially became part of the Kohala Sugar Company due to the Hind Estate being divided equally among seven children, who decided to sell.

90% of the Hāwī Mill workers got bonuses. Hāwī Mill and Plantation Company, created under Robert Hind and managed by his son John Hind, expanded to run without Honolulu investors. Alone, Hind raised the value of Hāwī Mill to well above \$3 million, opened the Kohala Ditch, bought Puakea Plantation in the name of Hāwī Mill, created the Homestead Plantation to manage the independent farmers, and made Hāwī Mill 45% owner of the railway.

Over the years, each plantation treated its laborers as it saw fit. A lack of telephones and reliable transportation prevented any form of supervision. But as Hawai'i moved towards annexation and ultimately statehood, American standards came to influence immigration laws and employer-employee relationships. New government officials demanded better conditions. Early pressures to change labor practices did not affect isolated Kohala too much. The Gazette wrote,

*"While some have been making history, others have been making sugar. New Japanese workers fiercely resisted abuse and organized resistance was in the air."*<sup>74</sup>



Figure 26: Historic Building in Kapa'au



Kohala's employers, like those of other plantations, tried to bridge the gap with higher wages and some entertaining activities. A happy work force might not go on strike. To avert a major change, they offered organized picnics, a gym, a new recreational area, official Christmas parties, and movies. At one time there were five movie theaters in Kohala. Unions did eventually come into the picture, with strikes and agreements in the end. WWII loosened the rigid hierarchy of Kohala Sugar Company. Māhukona Harbor closed at the outbreak of the war. The railroad that used to carry sugar, freight, and passengers to the harbor lay abandoned.

Thousands of miles away, President Roosevelt signed a bill allowing unions to fight for workers' rights. The Democratic Party in Hawai'i rapidly gained control. During the war, no one had time or energy to work on labor issues. However, when peace returned, ethnic labor groups returned full force to their concerns, this time uniting plantation workers of all backgrounds. The first strike was in 1946 and lasted 69 days. Gradually, mobility increased, and mechanization left more time for leisure. The mechanization of sugar resulted in the reduction of hard labor needs.

In 1937, 2,400 employees were needed to run the mill. In 1949, it was reduced to 800 employees and in 1964, it was further reduced to 660 employees. Sugar remained the main economic force in Kohala until 1971, when the U.S. subsidization of sugar prices ended, and Castle and Cooke decided then to halt production at Kohala in 1975: *"The difficult decision to halt production at Kohala was reached after thorough studies indicated the futility of making the operation even reasonably profitable."*<sup>75</sup> Governor John Burns responded by establishing a 12-member Task Force to identify and support potential new businesses in Kohala. Castle and Cooke noted that it would not abandon Kohala's employees and that *"The Kohala phase-out will be gradual and the company will assist the 516 employees there in finding new employment."*<sup>76</sup>

Because Kohala was reached only by a narrow Kohala Mountain Road, over which the sugar had to be hauled by truck to Kawaihae Harbor for shipping, the State began planning a coastal road to the harbor in the early 1960s. Akoni Pule (1906–1971), the State legislator who represented North Kohala from 1947 to 1965, pushed for a safer alternative to Kohala Mountain Road and secondary access to the towns of Hāwī and Kapa'au.



Figure 27: Remnants of the old Railroad Bed

He was also instrumental in providing the necessary state and federal funds to complete construction. The new road was dedicated in his honor in July 1973.

By 1975, four Task Force-sponsored businesses labored to grow and created jobs: Kohala Plastics Industries, a manufacturer of drip irrigation components; Orchids Pacifica; Hawaii Biogenics, a feedlot corn-growing operation independent of Kohala's earlier attempt; and Kohala Nursery. The Kohala Sugar Mill closed in 1975. The company kept 201 employees to shut operations down.

Kohala Nursery was the only start-up to survive from the Task Force. Lawrence Rockefeller's new Mauna Kea Beach Hotel employed 625 people, and more than half commuted from Kohala. The Task Force enterprises provided short opportunities and did encourage residents to remain in North Kohala. The sugar company also moved the houses in the field labor camps to newly created lots in Kapa'a and Hawi, selling them to families that chose to stay at a low price. Kamehameha Park was improved to include tennis courts, a swimming pool, and a gymnasium.

It was an effort to instill new life and pride:

*"Kohala learned to consider its past as an asset for an unexpected new industry, tourism. Visitors, Kohala discovered, love the history of plantation towns. Visitors, indeed, started to fill the brand-new resorts in Kona and South Kohala, providing jobs."*<sup>77</sup>

During this time in the 1970's, a group of Kohala community members researched and published Kohala Keia: collected expressions of a community. Kohala Keia is a product of Kohala people with Larry K. Stephenson as the copyright in December 1977. This document presented life for the local community and an effort to preserve some of these stories, traditions, and ways of life for future generations.

Additional stories of the plantation and railroad days can be found in A Storyteller's Story: Kindy Sproat of North Kohala. Both of these resources provide more insight into the daily lives, the changes that came with new populations of people from different countries, the use of the Hawaiian language, traditions, agricultural practices, and the development of Pidgin to communicate. Life has continued on as time passed, and we find these stories a way to remember and tell the stories of life as it were, from the perspectives of those who lived it.



Figure 28: Remnants of the old Railroad Bed



# Federal, State and Local Planning

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This next section focuses on the present day, and the proposals that have been set within the planning documents for North Kohala and the Island of Hawaii.

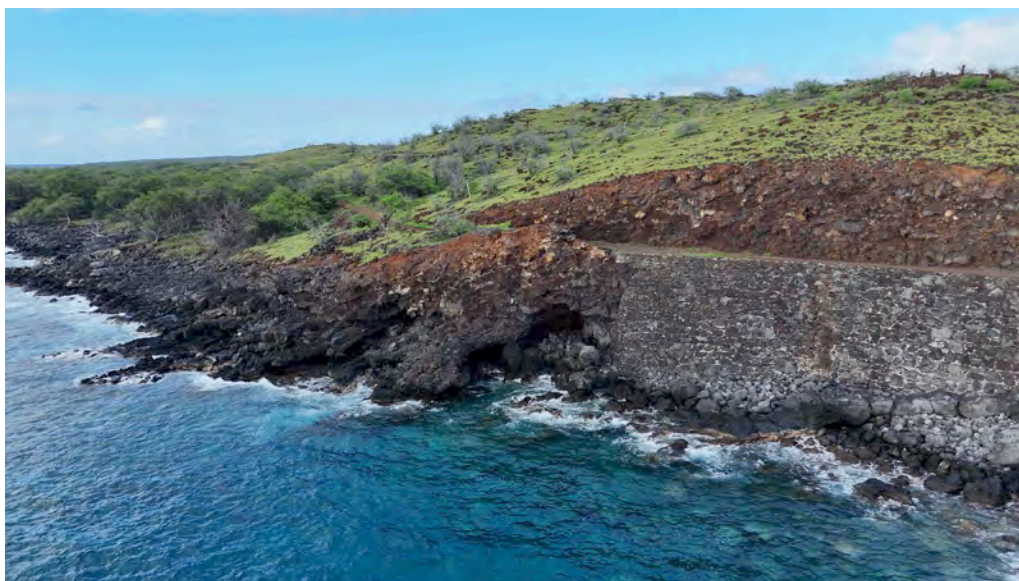


# Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail

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The Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (NHT) was established in 2005 with the statement of purpose:

- To preserve, protect, reestablish as necessary, and maintain a substantial portion of the ancient coastal ala loa (long coastal trail) and associated resources and values, along with linking trails on or parallel to the shoreline on Hawai'i Island.
- 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 interest.
- As a result of community engagement with the development of the CMP, there was a strong community vision that is important to consider. Communities along the route of the trail, which includes a portion of the railroad ROW, expressed their desire for the Ala Kahakai NHT to:
  1. Preserve ancient and historic trails within the corridor and tell the stories of those who use them
  2. Provide access to practice traditional lifestyles and mālama 'āina (care for the land)
  3. Protect sacred sites, historic places, and natural areas
  4. Become a living classroom for educating Hawai'i's people and visitors.
  5. Offer opportunities for community partnerships based on the ahupua'a concept.
  6. Create safe and well-kept places for spiritual, cultural, and recreational practices.
  7. Unite local communities around common goals to preserve Hawai'i's culture and environment.



*Figure 29: Remains of Railroad Features near Mahukona County Park*



# Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail

When a national trail is designated under the NPS System, it includes the significance of the site and the rationale as to why this is so important to preserve and protect. The significance statement identifies that the Ala Kahakai NHT 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 ahupua'a on the island of Hawai'i.

The trail will preserve, protect and interpret "preserved and walkable remnants or the preserved alignment of ancient and historic trails, and sites, features or places of significance situated along or connected by those remnants or along the alignment." As such, it seems that there is a connection to the trail from 'Upolu Point to Māhukona, where it could be interpreted as an important part of Hawaiian history and representative of the influence and change it brought to the communities of North Kohala.



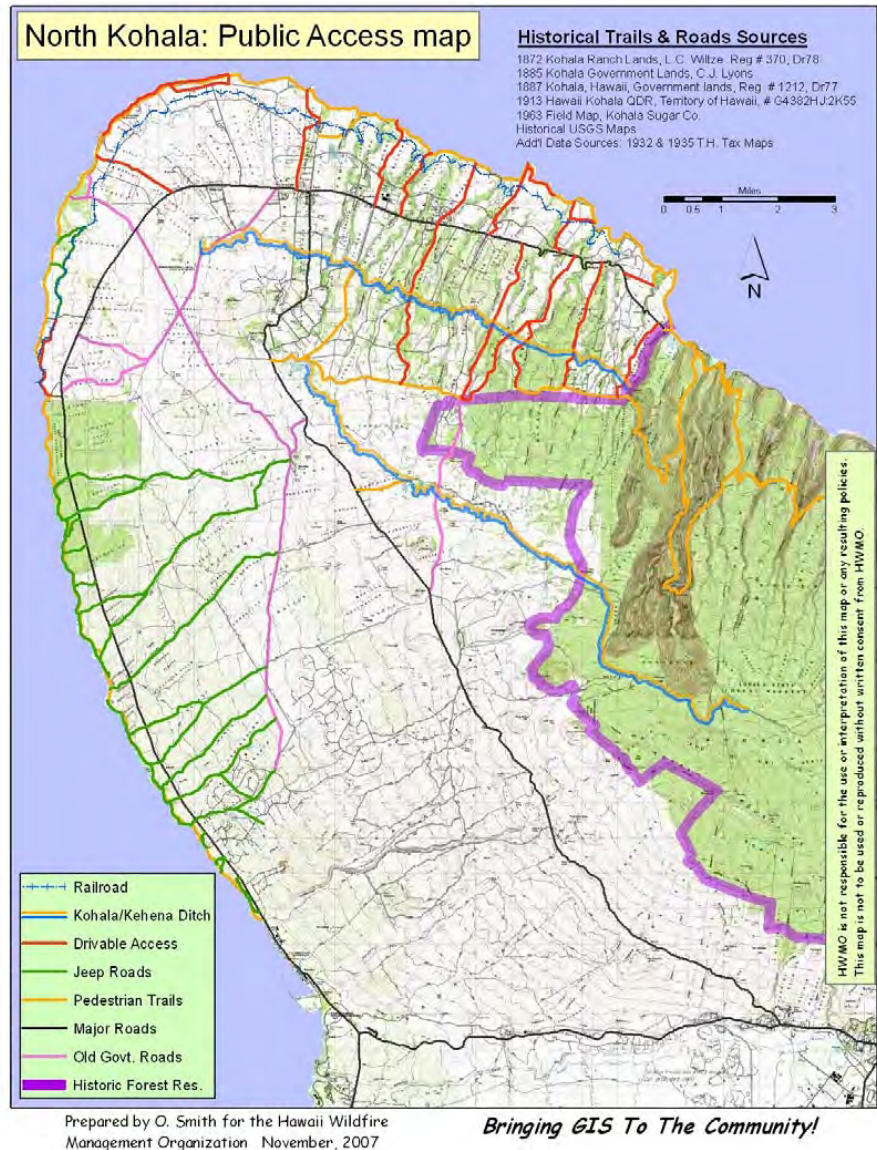
*Figure 30: ki'i pōhaku (petroglyphs) at Waikoloa*



# Hawai'i Island General Plan

The County of Hawai'i has a General Plan that provides overall guidance to the development of Hawai'i Island. It considers the needs of the entire island, providing general growth strategies to direct future opportunities related to land use, zoning amendments, and capital expenditures. The General Plan "strives to position Hawai'i Island for economic progress while preserving the environment and strengthening community foundations."

The first Hawai'i County General Plan provided for a ten year review process. The information used in this report is from the 2005 Hawaii County General Plan. A new Draft update to the Hawaii County General Plan completed public review in April 2024. The Community Development Plans (CDP) translates the broad General Plan goals, policies, and standards into plans that can be implemented within specific community



areas. The North Kohala CDP includes the North Kohala District of Hawai'i Island, bordered by South Kohala to the south, and Hamakua District to the east. The ocean defines the region's north and west borders.

The CPD addresses each element found within the General Plan, and generally includes a combination of land-use amendments, policies, budget, public-private partnership development, and community-based implementation of activities listed in the plan. The current North Kohala CDP was written and adopted unanimously after a two-year process by a Steering Committee of volunteer community members. It was passed by the County Council and signed by the Mayor on November 5, 2008. It was adopted as Ordinance 08-151 through Chapter 16, section 16-2, Hawai'i County Code 1983 (2005 Edition, as amended).



# North Kohala Community Development Plan

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For North Kohala, the overall GOAL of the North Kohala Community Development Plan (CDP) is

*“To manage the future growth of the district in a manner that is consistent with the Kohala lifestyle and ideals of being a rural community with a strong cultural heritage, an agricultural base, and a small-town feel.”*

The CDP provides a framework for the community. The North Kohala Community Access Group (NKCAG), formed through the CDP process as one of several focus groups, has been working consistently to implement the recommendations within the CDP. The group has met once a month for over fifteen years under the chairmanship of Ted Matsuda. It provides updates, discusses issues and concerns, and takes action. Under the guidance of the NKCAG, more than nine and a half miles of coastal trails and several mauka-makai vehicular access roads have been added to the district’s inventory. Each community in Hawai’i County establishes their own vision and goal as a part of their plan.

This plan addresses the community’s strong desire to implement the recommendations on trails and access within the CDP. Because of this, it is important to keep the key planning implications related to Kohala’s natural and cultural resources in mind while addressing implementation. The ones that are relevant to this plan are as follows:

## Cultural Sites and Landscapes

“Important cultural sites and landscapes, including the entire Kohala coastline and the mauka kula lands, should be protected.”



Figure 31: State Park Signage along coastal trail

# North Kohala Community Development Plan

The old railroad alignment traverses through numerous areas that contain important cultural sites and landscapes, and could offer protection and care, by community who have ties to the land or can be stewards of these important sites.

## Coastal (Makai) Resources

*“Kohala’s pristine coastline and abundance of marine life should be protected from development and be accessible to residents.”*

The overall plan looks at pedestrian access along the coastline, with mauka-makai access integrated into the overall plan. Access to the coastline and marine resources is a key component of this plan.



Figure 32: Tide Pools



Figure 33: Coastal Trail along cliffside



# Open Space

*“The district’s large open spaces should be preserved.”*

*“Acquire coastal lands that should be preserved as open space.”*

There has been significant progress on the protection of large open spaces along the coastline and in key areas. Through actions of Kohala community groups 1,197 acres of coastal land has been preserved in open space since 2008, either by government purchase or transfer of interest to non-profits or land trusts. This involved the raising of \$51.3 million and also donations from various non-profit organizations and individuals. This preserves 16 miles of the leeward coast in open space and four and a half miles of the northern coast, the Kula Iwi o Kamehameha. Another 1,954 acres have been nominated for preservation through the County’s Open Space Fund priority list. The Community Development Plan also supports the continued protection of these special places for public access, stewardship, and use.



Figure 34: Old Road to Hoesa

## Vulnerability to Natural Hazards

*“Emergency preparedness should be a priority.”*

One of the key components of a resilient, connected community is to be prepared for natural hazards when they do occur. The North Kohala community has seen past natural disasters, including a massive 2006 earthquake, and there are efforts to establish Pratt Road as an emergency access road. This plan supports this intention and will look for opportunities to facilitate emergency access. The community has organized an active volunteer CERT team to address emergencies. In addition, the mauka-makai access trails are key in this overall plan. Fires are another hazard that have been increasing, especially along the leeward coast during drought and high wind conditions. Coordination among land managers and the community will help to address fuel loads, increase green strips and protections in the right locations, and will help to increase understanding of best practices to avoid fire outbreaks.

# Trails

In addition to these principals, the trails listed in this plan mirror the CPD, which includes trails and roads that are/were traditional or have been in existence for many years. The only exceptions are newly created easements identified by the County as public access with permit requirements in subdivisions or developments. The trails and accesses listed here are based on community desires and recommendations; they are not necessarily the access ways that have been negotiated by the County Planning Department in their permit requirements.

In 2021, a group of community leaders called on the Planning Department to change the setup of Kohala's Action Committee (AC) to foster greater and wider representation of members for the community. A letter was submitted with 13 signatures that outlined problems and solutions to the current state. The CDP is scheduled to be revised by the County, but the community has already restructured its own program to include an overall Advisory Group and eight subgroups relating to the various goals of the NKCDP. The nine-member Advisory Group has met monthly since August 2022. The subgroups also meet monthly and report to the Advisory Group. The change has been expected to

***“reenergize the AC with experienced and dynamic members of the community and allow them to pass along their accumulated wisdom and experience to new members who wish to become community servants and leaders themselves.”***



Figure 35: Hiking the coastal trail near Mahukona



# Preserved Lands & Progress on the CDP

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The CDP includes a coastal trail, mauka-makai trails, an emergency access road, and the old railroad right-of-way (ROW). The following provide a status of the public lands and access as of the writing of this document (April 2024). There has been tremendous progress in securing public lands along the coastline, as described in the CDP. There has been successful preservation of coastal properties along the South and North Kohala corridor. Kaupaloa (64 acres with a private land owner dedicated to conservation), Kaiholena North with 263 acres and 6 parcels owned by the County and Ala Kahakai Trail Association, Pao'o, 11 acres of County land, Lamaloloa, 35 acres Owned by the National Park Service, Lapakahi State Historical Park with 17 acres, and Mahukona, with 642 acres preserved for public purchase with government and donor funding by the Hawaii Land Trust and renamed Kohala Navigation and Ecological Complex. Altogether, the community has played an active part in the preservation of almost 1,200 acres of coastal land from development and raised \$51.3 million for the purchases.

The following information summarizes the current status (August 2024) of the coastal lands depicted in the map to the next page.

## **Honoipu**

Once a part of the Coast Guard Loran Station, this land includes part of Old Coast Guard Road and the parking lot at the Na Ala Hele coastal trailhead. It has been on the County Open Space Priority List since 2018. Transfer of ownership of the upper road from the federal government is pending.

## **Puakea Trail**

The State was granted ownership of a trail corridor along the cliff top by the State Land Board as a result of action brought by Kohala residents. The trail is administered by the Na Ala Hele trail program. Erosion of the cliff means the trail needs to be realigned.

## **Kukuipahu**

Because of outstanding historic sites and recreational use, this land is singled out by the North Kohala Community Development Plan (NKCDP) for preservation. It has been on the County Open Space Priority List for purchase annually since 2007. Talks have been ongoing with Parker Ranch for conservation of the makai portion.

## **Lapakahi**

The 17 acres, known locally as Tabrah's, were purchased in 2011 with State Legacy Land Preservation Funds (LLPF) and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) grant with the help of The Trust for Public Lands. It is now part of Lapakahi State Historical Park.

## **Mahukona**

Purchase by the Hawaii Island Land Trust (HILT) of 642 acres of land was completed in December 2023. Mahukona is Kohala's primary ocean recreation area and home to hundreds of historic sites including a famous navigational heiau. Once zoned for resort development, the NKCDP in 2008 called for public purchase of the land, which had been on the County Open Space Priority List since 2006. Funds were raised from federal, state, county, and private sources.

## **Lamaloloa**

Once slated for resort development, this 35-acre parcel was recently purchased by the National Park Service. It has appeared on the County Open Space Priority List annually since 2014.

## **Pao'o**

Home to a popular surf break and many historic sites, the 10.6-acre parcel was the focus of several legal battles to prevent construction of large vacation homes. It was finally purchased in 2010 with matching funds from the County Open Space Fund and the State LLPF. The County holds title.

## Kaiholena North

In the 1980s the land division of Kaiholena was rezoned for resort and golf course. In 2000 it was subdivided into six parcels. All parcels were for public purchase in the NKCDP and listed annually on the County Open Space Priority List for many years. The first three lots totaling 151 acres were purchased outright by the County Open Space Fund in 2010. The land is highly significant, both culturally and historically.

## Kaiholena Central

The next two parcels, totaling 77 acres, were purchased in 2013 with two thirds of the price coming from the State LLPF and the rest from the County Open Space Fund. The County holds title to the land. Kohala Lihikai is the current steward of both the Kaiholena and Pao'o parcels

## Kaiholena South

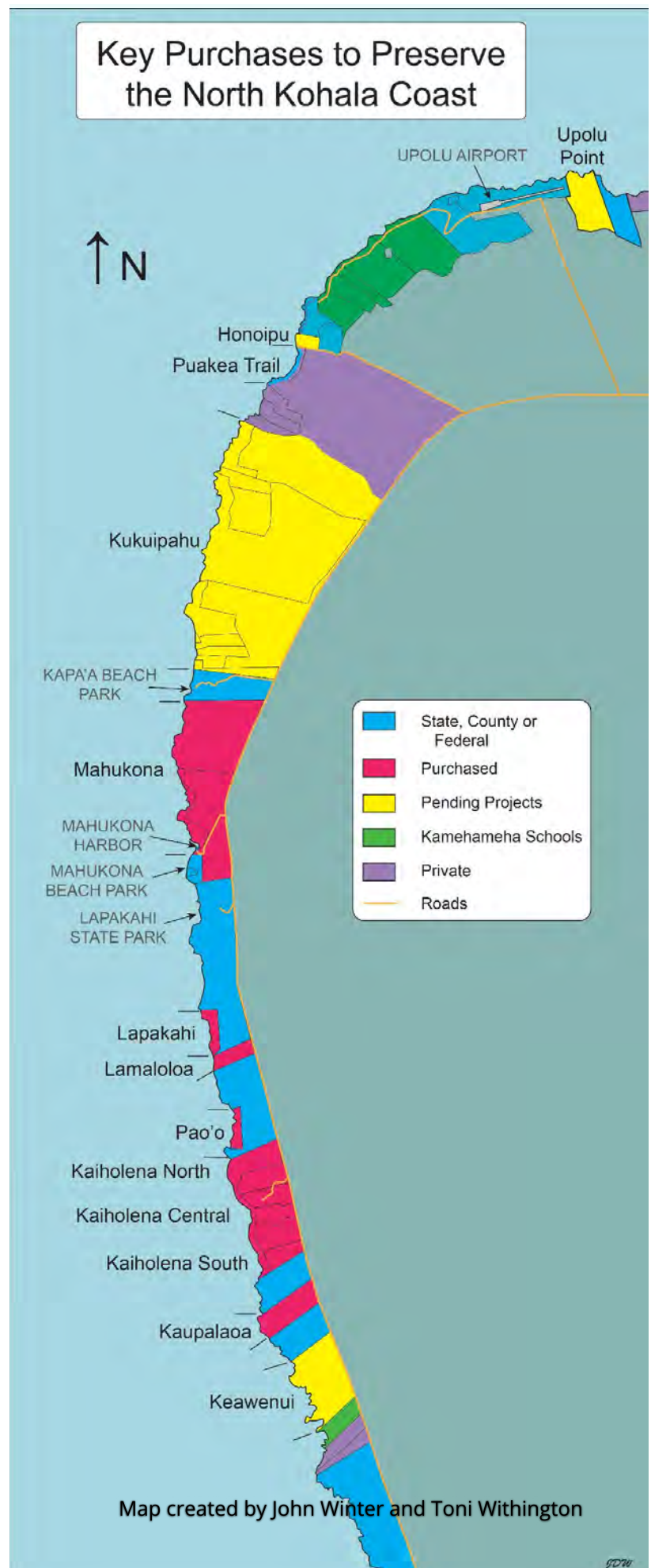
The last 35-acre parcel was purchased in 2015 with funds primarily from the State LLPF. The rest was raised by the Ala Kahakai Trail Association, which holds the title. Several private donors were joined by Hawaii Land Trust (HILT), which holds a conservation easement on the land.

## Kaupalaoa

Another site once designated for resort development, this 64-acre parcel was first named to the Open Space Priority List in 2018. It was purchased by the North Kohala Land Trust in 2021,

## Keawenui

This popular fishing and former camping site has been listed every year on the County's Open Space Priority List since 2010. Privately owned, it is known to have pre-Western contact historic sites and old fishing villages.





The coastal access trail is listed as “a trail that starts at the beach in Pololū Valley and follows the coastline of the district to Kawaihae. ” Since the CDP groups were formed, the Access Group has been meeting monthly to report on progress on the CDP. The following trails and public lands are discussed every month at the Community Access Group meetings, and the following provides the status at the time of this writing (August 2024)

## Pololu Lookout

This area is beyond the extent of the old railroad ROW but is an important connection to public trails and access to the coastline. This trail has gained popularity with visitors, leading to conflicts between users and the current lack of infrastructure to support the trail’s popularity, such as water, restrooms, and cell service. There is an existing county highway that ends at a paved lookout and parking area. This links the trail to and from the bottom of Pololū Valley to the coastline trail along the cliff tops toward Akoakoa Point. The Pololū Valley trail is administered by Na Ala Hele, the state trail system.

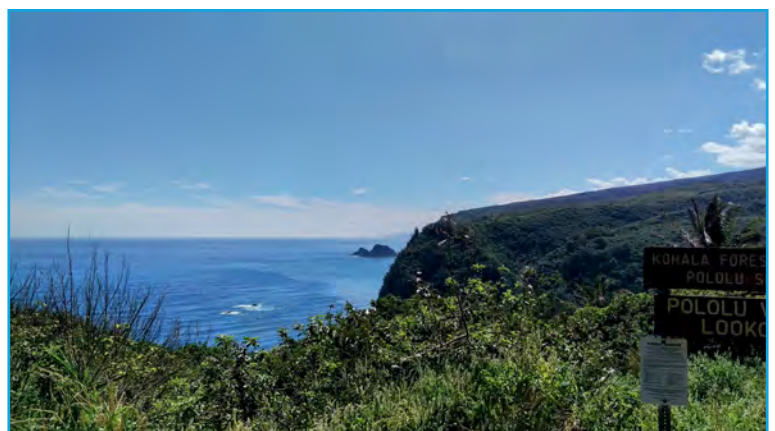
There have been issues related to parking and unsafe conditions with the increasing number of visitors to this spot. There has been community-based assistance with a program of docents that are assisting in the management of visitors to the area. The Pololū Ohana and community have been working to protect this area and efforts require working with landowners near the trail. Options are being explored to address preservation options that will provide a lookout at Pololū and protection of the valley floor. The state has initiated plans to purchase the listed land that would allow for improved access and protect the valley floor from being negatively impacted by users.

## Niuli'i-Waikama Road

There is an existing unpaved road from Hawi- Niuli'i Road/Akoni Pule Highway at Niuli'i to the top of Waikama Gulch. There is pedestrian access on an existing trail along the western rim of the gulch to the coastal trail. In 2016, the owners donated the 48 acres of land to The Kohala Center (TKC), a Waimea-based non-profit dedicated to land stewardship, conservation of native species, and educational activities.



*Figure 37 & 38 Pololu Trail Access has been overrun with visitors with little infrastructure for support*







The Kohala Center owns and stewards coastal lands from Keokea Beach Park to the Railroad Turnaround. This includes an important hala grove (as seen above on Figures 39 & 40)

This land includes habitat between Kēōkea Beach Park and Neue Bay that was listed as high on the County's Open Space Priority list for six years. This land includes the old railroad turnaround and defines the end of the line for the railroad. TKC has been working with local community leaders and cultural practitioners to assess best uses and practices for this important land.

The area has served as an important gathering place, in the past for trade among the many ahupua'a, as a recreational park during the Sugar Plantation time, and now as a place for hala practitioners, students, and community. It continues to provide essential cultural resources through the ancient hala groves, coastal resources, and other plants and animals. There are future opportunities for responsible stewardship and use of the area in the future.



## Pratt Road

Currently seen as a potential emergency access road. There have been several community-led clean up days to begin to clear the unused portions of the road. The road does include private property.

While it could be an emergency access road, there are some issues concerning use due to the private nature of the road. Also, there is one break in the roadway at Walaohia Gulch where the causeway has been destroyed by flooding.

Figure 41: Pratt Road near Kapanaia Bay



## Kēōkea County Park Road

An existing paved government road leading through Niuli'i to Kēōkea Beach Park. This is existing and will continue to be public access.



Figure 42: Kēōkea Beach Park



Figure 43: Road to Kapanāia Bay

## Kapanaia Bay Road

This is an important mauka-makai vehicular access point that ends at a premier fishing and gathering area for Kohala. There are remnants of trails and rope ladders that extend down the sides of the cliff to the reef shelf. This was once known for its limu kohu gathering. At the time of Kamehameha I, surfing was a popular sport in the bay – it still is. Fishing and gathering were, and continue to be, an important activity to preserve. When the Kohala Sugar Plantation shut down, this access was nearly lost. Land was privatized by fences and gates which prompted the Native Hawaiian organization Hui Mamalahoa to legally fight for access.

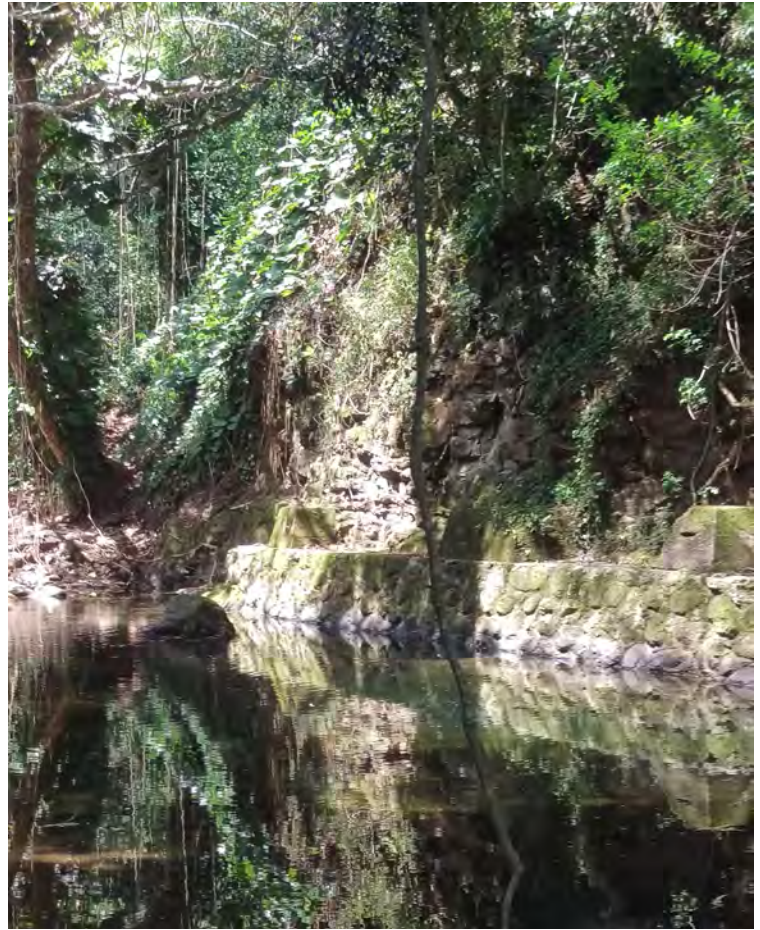
As a result, a court-ordered vehicle access on an unpaved road to Kapanai'a and Hapu'u bays was provided for public use and access . It also included pedestrian access along the cliff shoreline. The shoreline public access trail between Hapu'u and Kapanāia Bays was formalized in a Grant of Public Access Easement to the County of Hawai'i in February 2013.



## Kapanaia

The County of Hawaii through its Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Conservation (PONC) program purchased four parcels of land, some with funding help from the State Legacy Land Preservation Fund. These include 93.5 acres encompassing Kapanaia Bay, Kapalama Heiau, and most of Walaohia Gulch.

This area hosts important cultural and historic resources, including heiau, Kamehameha's canoe launch, and recreational sites including portions of the railroad ROW. In addition, two parcels totaling 42.5 acres between Hapu'u and Kapanaia were purchased.



*Figure 44: Stream into Kapanaia Bay with stone remnants*



*Figure 45: Kapanaia Bay Figures adjacent include Hale O Ka'ili Heiau and portions of the coastal trail*



## Hapu'u

The County of Hawai'i purchased the first 22 acres using PONC funding in March 2018. This land includes a very popular fishing site and home of Hale O Ka'ili Heiau, said to have been built by Kamehameha. The Hale O Ka'ili Heiau is in public hands; however, there needs to be a management plan to better inform the public and to keep people from destroying the site. Kohala Lihikai has been active in native plant and trail restoration and stewardship of the area. Local high school students have been assisting in the stewardship efforts.



## Halelua

This is a mile and a quarter long stretch of coast that includes the remnants of O'hau Heiau and portions of Halawa Gluch and cove. This 50.3-acre parcel was purchased through the county's PONC program in 2023.



## Kauhola Lighthouse Road

There has been an existing federal right-of-way since 1912. This access is the subject of Subdivisions 7776 & 7776-A. In 2012 the Trust for Public Land helped the community raise funds, partly from the Legacy Land Conservation Program, to purchase 28 acres of land on the point. Title of the land is held by the community non-profit Maika'i Kamakani O Kohala for the people of Kohala.



## 'Āinakea Road

An existing paved County road through 'Āinakea subdivision that extends into a gated private unpaved road makai in 'Āinakea ahupua'a. There currently is no access into the private road. However, Grants of Public Access Easement (GOE) were made in 2014 and 2015 creating trails along the coast.





## Pahoa Beach

The County issuedd a Grant of Easement (GOE) and needs enforcement action. This has been difficult for the approved public access agreement.

## 'Upolu East

Although public access was required by the subdivision, the community and county could not reach a plan for public access for many years. In 2024, with the consent of the owner, nomination to the PONC priority list was made in July the property was named on the list.

The PONC commission made their field visit to the site in March 2024. If the lands are purchased and put into public hands, this will enhance public access.



*Figure 50: Gated road*



*Figure 51 & 52 Show portions of 'Upolu*





## 'Upolu Airport Restoration

Under an agreement with the State Airports Division Kohala Lihikai in 2013 took over maintenance of the mile-long coastal trail and has undertaken many projects with students of Kohala Middle and High School for projects in erosion control, signage and replanting of native species. The property does have old road cobbles and likely a number of roads, based on the cobbles found.

## Honoipu

The Department of the Interior, along with the support of the Kohala community, has been encouraging the county to take over ownership of the upper Old Coast Guard Road to the former Loran station. A stalemate exists. The lower portion and the parking lot at the ocean are privately owned. The owners of the 17 acres on the shore have renovated several Coast Guard housing units and maintain a public trail along the shore. They are willing to turn the roadway and parking lot over to the county, but only after the transfer of the upper road is complete.

## Pali Akamoa

State Na Ala Hele is working with the neighboring community association and starting the process to resurvey and repair the trail along the coast. The State will have to re-survey the trail location, part of which eroded after the 2006 earthquake. The trail alignment will be located to a safer location inland. This is the historical site of the Honoipu Landing, once controlled by the Hind family. There may be opportunities to work with the community association to allow for the trail to follow the coast in this location and avoid the gated community. The current landowner has not been cooperating with State Na Ala Hele to address the trail issues. The trail remains closed due to safety reasons which includes access to a popular fishing area.

## Kukuipahu

This is a large swath of land that is currently owned by Parker Ranch and contains the alignment of the railroad. Access to this property to investigate has not been granted; however, there may be opportunities in the near future. The land is subject to subdivision condition requiring public access, coastal and mauka-makai, when the property is developed or changed.



*Figures 53-55 (this page) show evidence of a historic road with cobbles embedded in the road*





# Mauka-Makai Trails

Roads from the Community Development Plan that will be including in the mapping analysis.

## Maluhia Road

Vehicular public access is provided on an unpaved, private road required by SMA Use Permit No. 417 and Special Permit No. 1117. This is for a retreat on agricultural land and the mandated access is on Maluhia Road. Access to the ocean is restricted to a half-mile walking distance. A public access trail exists along the shoreline of the property.

## Hāwī Road

A vehicular public access extends from the makai end of Hāwī Road, a County paved road, to the rim of Kumakua Gulch. There is pedestrian access to Pahoia Beach. Access is provided and listed with Subdivision 7640, Mohammadi. This permits pedestrian access from Hāwī Road to Pāhoa Beach with no lateral trail, even though it was a condition of the subdivision. The owners are under enforcement review by the County. Vehicular access needs to be extended to shoreline.



*Figure 56 & 57 Gated, restricted access*



*Figure 58 Pointing towards a gulch along the railroad alignment*



## Ho'ea Road

A vehicular public access extending from the makai end of Ho'ea Road, a paved County Road, to the ocean via a private unpaved road. Current road is gated at the end with no ocean access.



*Figure 59 Private Road*

## 'Upolu Road

A paved government road that extends to the airport on the coast. Vehicle access on an unpaved road westward to the road between the ahupua'a of 'Upolu and Honoipu (Old Coast Guard Road), including the Mo'okini Heiau and Kamehameha Birthplace, is not complete. A portion of this road is granted as vehicular lateral access by Subdivision 2000-209. However, there are significant issues that are still in play.



*Figure 60 Road traveling towards Mo'okini Heiau*



## Old Coast Guard Road

A paved federal right-of-way to the former Coast Guard Loran station exists, with issues relating to public access. The Community Access Group is working to have the upper road released from the Department of the Interior to the County. A parking lot exists at the shoreline on the private land at Honoipu. Vehicular access travels northeast along the old railroad right-of-way, a government highway prior to 1892 Mauka Kohala Hideaways LLC and the Department of Hawaiian Homeland property. Pedestrian access travels makai to the coastal road at both the Mo'okini Heiau and Kamehameha Birthplace on existing trails in Pu'uepa ahupua'a granted by Subdivision 2000-209. This is currently gated.

The County of Hawai'i Planning Department provided a letter with the subject: Mo'okini Area Public Access, October 6, 2008. This letter details concerns from the Planning Department to DLNR Chair, Mr. Chris Kanazawa, CEO of Parker Ranch, Mr. Neil Hannahs, Director of the Land Assets Division, Kamehameha Schools, Ms. Momi Lum, Mo'okini Foundation, and Duane Kanuha, Kohala Preserve Conservation Trust LLC. The letter concerns various public access and easement issues in North Kohala in the vicinity of the "Old Coast Guard Road", the Mo'okini Heiau, and the birthplace of Kamehameha the Great. These will be further investigated and presented in the Mapping section of this report.





## Old Coast Guard Road

The Na ala Hele program abstractor did a memorandum on the Old Coast Guard Road, but it did not include certain parcels that appear to be public highway under the Highways Act of 1892. The memo included the following statement: "The Coast Guard Road is essential for public access to the shoreline in this area. It has been freely used by the public for decades. The Na Ala Hele program has a shoreline trail which begins at the Makai end of the Coast Guard Road, within TMK No 5-6-1:74 owned by the State of Hawai'i and continues along the shoreline south makai of the Puakea Bay Ranch subdivision. This was established as part of CDUP HA-2625, based on the assumption that there was public vehicular access to this point via the Coast Guard Road."

The access from Coast Guard Road to Mo'okini Heiau and the Kamehameha Birth Site is still being determined. In 2001, Surety Kohala was consolidating and re-subdividing property in this area and elsewhere in Kohala. The County of Hawai'i Planning Department, acting on their authority, required that Surety provide public access in the subdivisions. Surety Kohala appealed to the County Board of Appeals. The County and Surety eventually entered into a Settlement Agreement, which includes an agreement to grant a 20' wide easement for vehicular access over the old railroad right-of-way from the Coast Guard Road to the Mo'okini Heiau and the birthplace of Kamehameha the Great (to the extent that the railroad ROW crossed property owned by Surety Kohala).

The Settlement Agreement also included vehicular access to the Mo'okini Heiau and the Kamehameha -Birth Site from the railroad ROW, pedestrian access to the sea from the Mo'okini Heiau and Kamehameha the Birthplace and reaffirmed public access along the shoreline. It also contained a vehicular access from the railroad ROW mauka to TMK No 5-5-5"03, the Mo'okini Laukini Heiau, Inc. property. Old Coast Guard Road is in the process of being transferred over from Federal property to the County of Hawaii. This has been in process for several years. It is anticipated that the County will accept the road.



*Figure 63 Memorial for Puerto Ricans*



## Kapa'a Park Road

An existing paved County Road to the County Park.



Figure 64 Kapa'a Park

## Kukuipahu (Parker Ranch Subdivision)

Vehicular access on an existing paved road in the Subdivisions 7520, 7521 and 7526 or alongside the property was identified in the CDP. Vehicular access for the public was granted as a condition of the above subdivisions but has not been provided. This site has outstanding historic and recreational use and was singled out by the CDP for preservation. It has been on the County Open Space Priority List for purchase eleven times since 2007 and public purchase of the land is called for in the NKCDP.



Figure 65 Gated Entrance



## Kapa'anui (Māhukona Resort)

The CDP calls for public purchase of the 435 Acres, which has also been on the County Open Space Priority List of eleven years. The 435 acres, plus 207 acres mauka of the highway, were purchased by Hawaii Land Trust in December 2023. As the Mahukona Navigation and Ecological Complex it will be preserved for the people of Kohala and the Na Kalai Wa'a canoe voyaging group. It is Kohala's primary ocean recreation area and home to hundreds of historic sites. The old railroad ROW traverses through the property and allows for scenic access to the coastline and historic sites. The existing public access is court-ordered over the existing Jeep Road on the railroad bed.



*Figure 66-71 Images of old Railroad Depot, Mahukona Harbor, and parts of the railroad alignment trail*

## Mahukona

There is existing vehicular access on the paved government road to the harbor and Māhukona County Park. Hui Mamalahoa, a Kohala native Hawaiian organization, successfully fought for and achieved the existing public lateral vehicular access over the existing jeep road on the railroad bed (Third Circuit Court Civil # 89-268 (June 4, 1990) Civil #5467 (June 22, 1989), and Civil #5469 (April 14, 1981). Mahukona is Kohala's primary ocean recreation area and home to hundreds of historic sites including a famous navigational heiau. Once zoned for resort development, the NKCDP in 2008 called for public purchase of the land, which has been on the County Open Space Priority List since 2006. Funds have been raised from federal, state, county, and private sources.





# North Kohala Trail Map

## Segment Details

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This section of the report includes details on the railroad ROW and looks at the legal status of the trail. It will look at current land ownership, easements, and any legal removal of the railroad ROW from public road or trail opportunities. The railroad ROW will be broken into components to better analyze the opportunities. They are broken into segments, as follows:

1. Māhukona
2. Kukuipahu
3. Puakea/Honoipu
4. 'Upolu
5. Hō'ea-'Upolu to Paho Beach
6. Paho
7. Honomakau
8. 'Āinakea
9. Kauhola to Hapu'u
10. Kapanaia to Niuli'i
11. Niuli'i



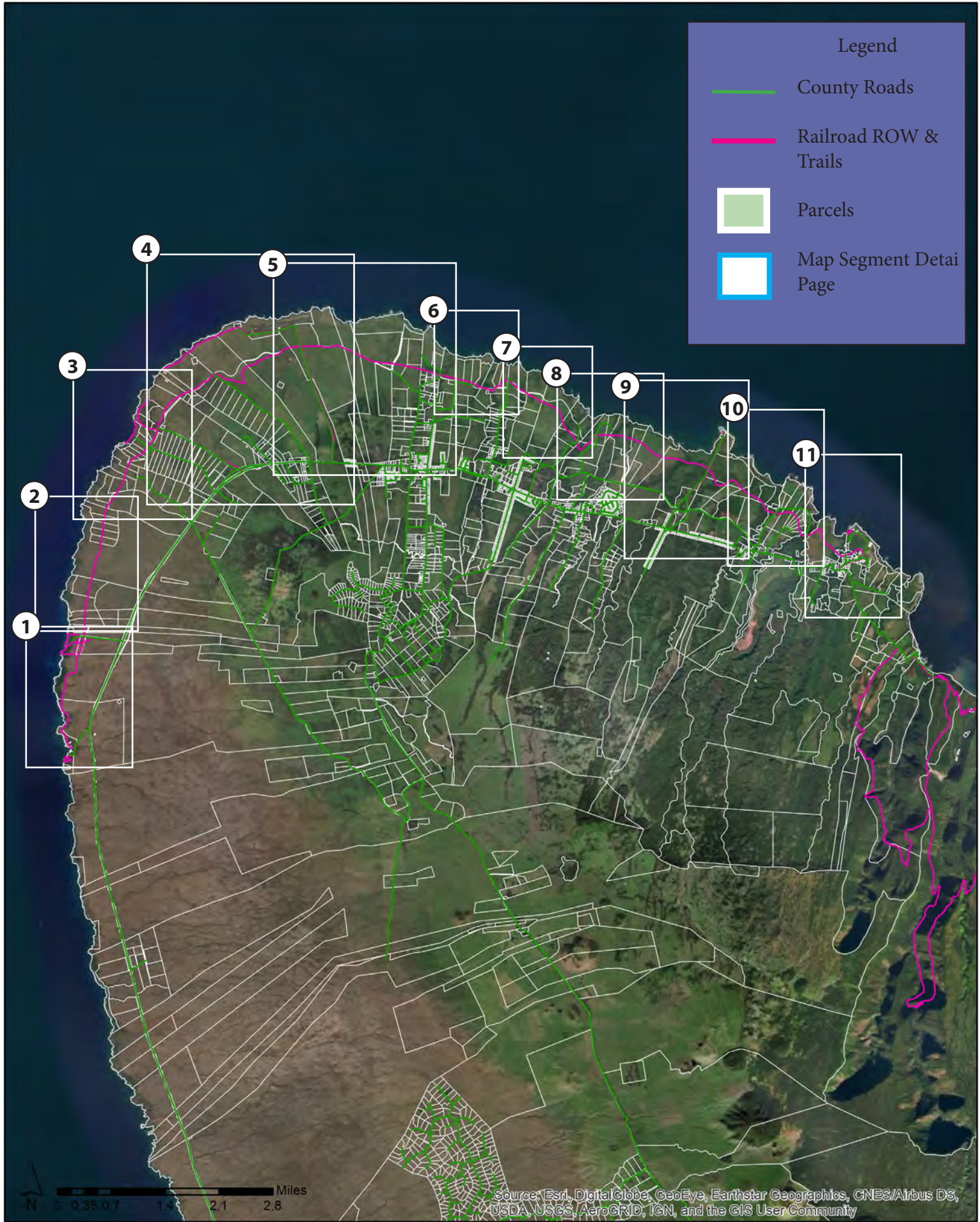
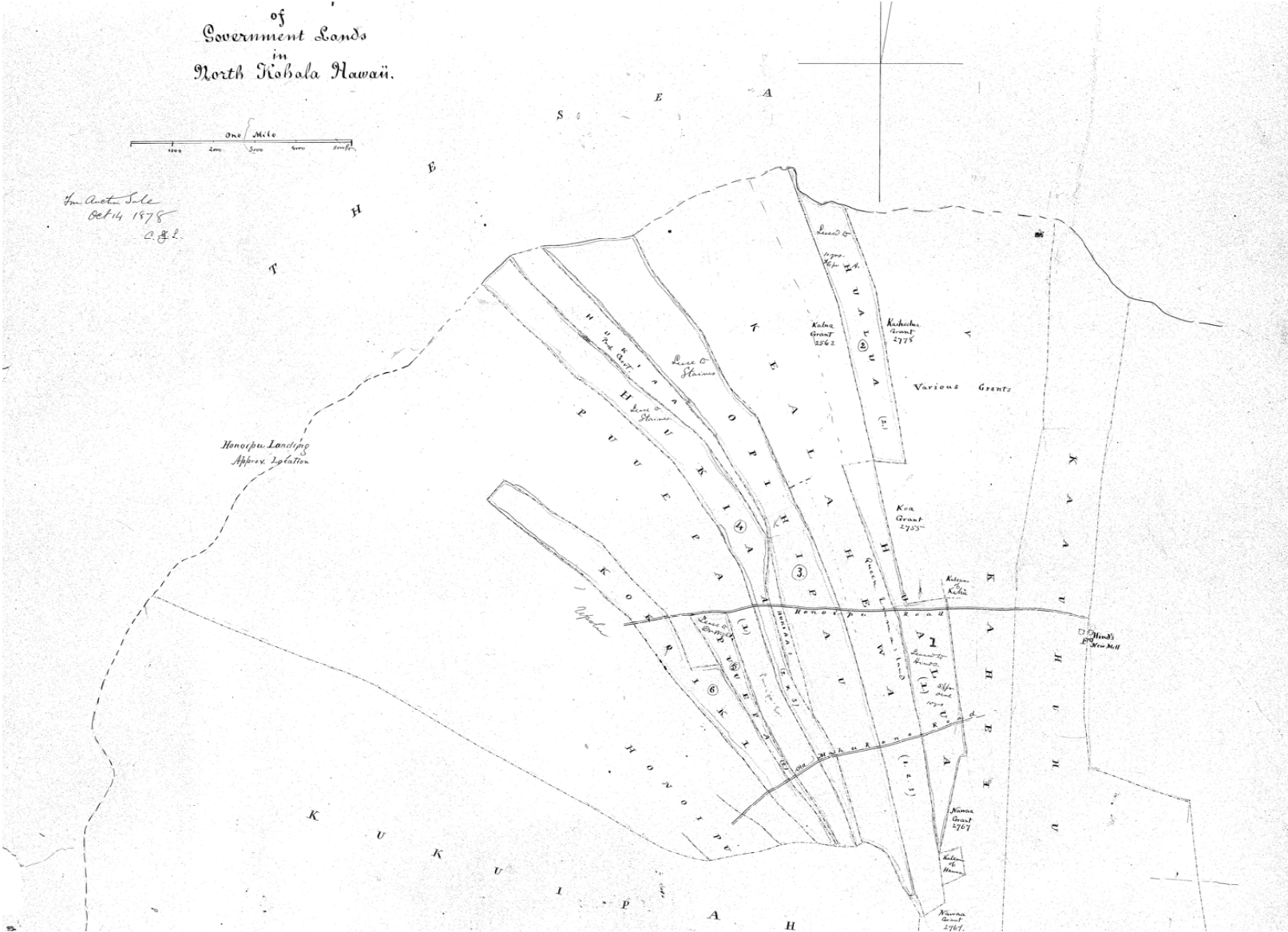
*Figure 72 Railroad Alignment, Mahukona*



# North Kohala Segments

## Project Information

The following provides information on parcel numbers, property ownership, legal access information, and a summary of identified opportunities and issues. The segments are broken up to allow for analysis and ease of viewing. More detailed information, such as instrument number, official legal documents, real estate information, and notes, is provided in the text of this report. The property ownership information reflects the time in which this report was drafted and may be updated as properties change hands. This report will be used as a means to determine the next steps and strategies necessary to transform the concept of the North Kohala Rail Trail into a reality.





# Māhukona - Segment 1

## Property Information

- ① TMK 57003003000, preserved, Hawaii Island Land Trust
- ② TMK 570020110000, preserved, Hawaii Island Land Trust
- ③ TMK 560010370000, State of Hawaii.

## Opportunities

- Hawaiʻi Land Trust worked with the Kohala community, Nā Kālai Wa’a, and County, State and Federal partners to purchase Mahukona’s 642 acres, providing permanent protection (Property 1 & 2).
- Mahukona Navigational & Ecological Complex was the historic training ground for traditional Hawaiian navigators, has 175 ancient cultural sites including Ko’a Heiau Holomoana, and abundant ocean and bays.
- Initial stewardship priorities include the restoration of native habitat with a focus on climate resiliency, renovation of the historic rail station as a Cultural Education Center, Repair of the water tank and infrastructure, develop educational trail and signage, host volunteer work days and educational hikes, perpetuate traditional Hawaiian navigation practices, and hire two dedicated Mahukona Stewards and Educators.
- Hui Mamalanoa, a Kohala native Hawaiian organization successfully achieved the existing public access over the jeep trail on the RR ROW. It is gated at Mahukona, allowing only pedestrians to use the trail.
- Property 1 and 2 includes a floating shoreline vehicular/railway easement along the old railway parallel to and mauka of the shoreline, subject to relocation with approval by the State of Hawaii.
- Mahukona Beach Park is an important park for the community. There have been requests, for over 10 years, to improve the pavilion and the facilities as a CIP project. The community has formed a friend’s group to assist the County with improvements. Opportunities include future water, bathrooms, and basic shelter. This effort is being coordinated with HILT, as adjacent land owners.
- The exisiting trail is flat and has opportunities for wayfinding, interpretation, and observations of both the land and sea.
- Remnants of the rail tiles present in some locations.
- Mahukona Beach Park has a small boat ramp and access for swimmers.

## Issues/Possibilities

- The current zoning for Properties 1 and 2 and changing from Resort to a new designation. The new designation may require additional rules.
- Initial stewardship priorities include the renovation of the historic rail station as a Cultural Education Center. The center could include information about the historic rail station, the impact of the railroad on this land, and the rail trail.
- Current plans do not include information about the existing trail that follows the old railroad ROW. The trail across the property along the old railroad ROW could facilitate volunteer work days and educational hikes.



Rail trail along the coast



Swimmers at Mahukona Beach Park



Condemned park pavilion



Remnants of old rail tiles





# Kukuipahu - Segment 2

## Property Information

All of the properties within this section are owned by Kukuipahu Makai LLC. It is also known as Parker Ranch subdivision and has been identified in the CDP as an outstanding property for preservation. In 2019, Kukuipahu Makai LLC went through foreclosure and was auctioned off. Parker Ranch is the new land owner, there may be opportunities to hike the area and to work with the new land owners on the trail concept.

While the community believes it should be preserved, per the CDP, this has been a property intended to be consolidated, subdivided and used as a residential development. Vehicular access on an existing paved road in the Subdivisions 7520, 7521 and 7526 or alongside the property was identified in the CDP. Within the public records found, there are declarations for public access (Document No 2002-082864), which states:

“A perpetual, non-exclusive, ten foot wide easement for pedestrian public access purposes over, upon, across and through Lot 21, as shown on the map. Accordingly, in order to assure that public pedestrian access is provided within the property to and along designated shoreline access areas or mountain areas, as applicable, the Declarant and the County hereby agree to be bound by, and to encumber portions of the property by redecoration of this easement.”

This access is for pedestrian access only, and includes a mauka-makai connection from the highway, and then along the coastline. The legal map shows the coastline easement and the RR ROW , however the RR ROW is not marked as public in this stretch.

This area along the coast has a number of sensitive sites. There is an old village site, Haena, that has a lot of in tact house sites, village, and there are sites throughout the coast line. This is a sensitive area and the State Historic Preservation Division would need to be involved.

## Opportunities

- This has a flat area that traverses the coastline. There are opportunities for the trail within the Ala Kahakai NHT corridor. If the actual railroad ROW is not permitted through this area, there is still access through as part of the Ala Kahakai National Historical Trail.
- There appears to be trail easements within the properties; however, more research will need to be done to determine the locations and the public access rights to these areas.
- The properties within this corridor have one owner, Parker Ranch, potentially making negotiations easier.
- There is an access road to the ocean at Kapaa Park, a County of Hawaii park. This park provides parking and access to the trail.
- The site has outstanding historic and recreation use and was singled out by the CDP for preservation. It has been on the County Open Space Priority List for purchase eleven times since 2007.
- Access is identified in the CDP.

## Issues

- Access onto and through the land to assess the condition has not been granted.
- Drone footage here would be helpful to include to better understand the land. The first photo on this page shows the railroad ROW on an elevated berm of the ROW.
- Negotiations with landowner have been challenging, as the property was subject to foreclosure. There may be new opportunities to discuss access with the new owners.
- Vehicular access on an existing paved road in the Subdivisions 7520, 7521, and 7526 or alongside the property was identified in the CDP. Vehicular access for the public was not provided in the above subdivisions, but should have been.
- Archaeological work will have to be done before trail and access are located.



Existing raised railroad bed



Existing trail



Kapaa Park





# Puakea/Honoipu - Segment 3

## Property Information

- 1
- TMK 56001108000, privately owned. Buildings and a pool on property. The RR ROW has been shown on this property and the State Historic Preservation Division instructed that no more breaches to this alignment be made.
- 2
- TMK 56001109000, privately owned, no buildings. Parcel includes 2004-210755 that provides an easement for utility and access on the property.
- 3
- TMK 560011100000, privately owned. No buildings present. Property includes a 50-foot wide equestrian easement .
- 4
- TMK 560020160000, privately owned. A building and pool on site, built in 1988.
- 5
- TMK 56002017000, privately owned. No buildings present.
- 6
- TMK 560020180000, no owner listed, no building, in agriculture.
- 7
- TMK 560020190000, privately owned. House with a pool on site. Property includes an 8-foot wide pedestrian easement .
- 8
- TMK 560020200000, privately owned. No structures or permits.
- 9
- TMK 560020210000, privately owned. Property crosses Puakea Bay Drive, no buildings present.
- 10
- TMK 560020220000, privately owned. No buildings present.
- 11
- TMK 56002023000, privately owned. RR ROW crosses near the cul-de-sac. Buildings, barn, and a pool present on site.
- 12
- TMK 560010740000, privately owned. Large vacation home, close to cliff, violated a number of regulations. Public access along the coast is required, however, the 2006 earth quake damaged the public access trail, and it has been inaccessible ever since. The state is actively trying to re-negotiate a safer trail in this area.



Gated community - no public access



Closed Na Ala Hele Coastal Trail



Homeowner Association Park



Old Honoipu Harbor Landing

## Opportunities

- The RR ROW currently goes through a number of parcels that contain homes. Public access along the coastline is a requirement of the subdivision. A possible alternative to the trail through private property is to use the existing public coastal trail.
- The RR ROW cuts across one road, Puakea Bay Drive, and avoids the other access roads within the Puakea Bay subdivision.
- In the area where the RR ROW has been legally removed, there is a public access trail along the shoreline.
- There is a 50-foot equestrian easement. It would be good to approach the property owners in this area to see what the status is of the easement, if there are plans, and if there is any interest in equestrian use along the trail.
- The “Old Railroad Right-of-Way” is called out on maps in some of the parcels.
- There is access to the coastal trails through Old Coast Guard Road. The coastal public trail could be an alternative in this area. The old Honoipu to Hoea Road could be the public access trail to Kamehameha’s birth site and Mo’okini Heiau. At the airport, the trail could revert back to the original RR ROW.
- The coastal trail provides access to important fishing sites. There is a park for the homeowners association that shows a remnant of the old railroad, and overlooks Honoipu Landing, where sugar was transported for the Hawi Mill before John Hind joined the railroad operations.

## Issues

- This area is a gated community with luxury homes. There will need to be negotiations should the trail follow its original alignment.
- The RR ROW shows up in some parcels, but not consistently through the properties. There is an easement for coastal linear access, which offers solutions to continue the trail through this area.
- There have been some ‘breaches’ of the railroad bed through development actions.
- The public coastal trail is currently closed due to safety concerns following the 2006 earthquake. There are opportunities to fix this trail and allow public access through this area.
- There are access issues to Kamehameha’s birth site and Mo’okini Heiau on the current access road, using Old Coast Guard Road. Alternative route could be explored that would use the existing Honoipu to Hoea Road as a trail through this area, requiring action from the State Na Ala Hele and working with the current landowners.





# 'Upolu - Segment 4

## Property Information

- 1 TMK 560010260000, privately owned. Small parcel adjacent to the Old Coast Guard Road, house on site.
- 2 TMK 560010560000, federally owned property, related to the antenna site.
- 3 TMK 560010280000, privately owned, leased, in agricultural.
- 4 TMK 55050040000, privately owned, leased, agricultural. There are two Grant of Easement Instruments 11-17659 on 10/26/2011 and 03-130627 in 6/26/2003
- 5 TMK 55005005000, privately owned, leased, agricultural. Two Grant of Easement Instruments 11-17659 on 10/26/2011 and 3/24/2008 (same Instrument #)
- 6 TMK 550050170000 , privately owned, leased, agricultural.
- 7 TMK 550050100000, privately owned, leased, agricultural.
- 8 TMK 550060030000, privately owned, agricultural, no buildings.
- 9 TMK 550060320000, privately owned, agricultural, building present. RR ROW is a small sliver of land that is touched on south side of the road.
- 10 TMK 550070400000, privately owned, agricultural land, wind turbines. Grant of easement12/19/2017 (no instrument number)
- 11 TMK 550070020000 Privately owned, two grants of easements issued for the property.



## Opportunities

- Within the Upolu Airport Property, there is a proposed 20-foot wide vehicular easement for public access, as well as a proposed parking easement and coastal pedestrian trail for public access. This is not within the RR ROW, but does provide a destination to the coast and access to sites. Discussions have been on-going, and may need to be re-initiated to ensure that there is action on this matter.
- The State Na Ala Hele program abstractor has done a memorandum on the Old Coast Guard Road, but it did not include certain parcels that do appear to be in public access/Highways Act of 1892. The Coast Guard Road is essential for vehicular access.
- Pedestrian access from the RR ROW to the sites (Mo'okini Heiau area and Kamehameha I birth site) exists, and this could be a destination with interpretive opportunities.
- The RR ROW is shown on a number of maps, through Bishop Estate lands.
- State DLNR Historic Preservation Division has documented the old RR ROW as a feature to be preserved, and has provided direction to keep it preserved.
- There is agriculture and wind farms throughout this segment. This may be seen as a compatible use and be supported, if the proposal and protections of private property are put into place.
- Location of the easement from old maps appears to be close to property lines and existing roads or driveways. Alignment with these could make placement of the trail easier.

## Issues

- While there is a proposed easement (see above) for vehicles and parking, there has been no action. In 2001, Surety Kohala and the County came to an agreement which includes an agreement to grant a 20' wide easement for vehicular access over the RR ROW from the Coast Guard Road to the Mo'okini Heiau and the birth place of Kamehameha I. The agreement also included vehicular access to the Mo'okini Heiau and the birth site from the RR ROW, pedestrian access to the sea from the Mo'okini Heiau and birth site, and reaffirmed public access along the shoreline. However, this has not been executed.
- Access to Mo'okini Area has been discussed, and there is a letter that details concerns with the State, County, Kamehameha Schools (Bishop Estate), Ms. Momi Lum, Mo'okini Foundation, Duane Kanuha, and Kohala Preserve Conservation Trust LLC. The discussions are around access to Mo'okini Heiau and Kamehameha I birth site. The State, through State Parks, has management of the sites. There is a dispute between the county, the state, and other parties on management, as the sites hold very sensitive historic sites. Both can be reached via a dirt road, however, access and improvements have not been resolved.
- There is a need to sensitively manage the cultural and historic sites and enhance protection and awareness.
- Wind farms and agricultural use may have some push backs related to safety.

## Legend

- Rail ROW/Trails
- Other Trails
- County Roads
- Parcel Outlines
- Possible Alternative Trails





# Hō‘ea - Segment 5

## Property Information

- 1

TMK 550060100000 Privately owned, new rum distillery with a tasting room at the Waikoloa Resort.
- 2

TMK 550070020000 Privately owned, two grants of easements issued for the property.
- 3

TMK 550070090000 State of Hawaii owned, leased in agriculture
- 4

TMK 5507040000, privately owned, in agricultural, wind farm.
- 5

TMK 5507008000, State of Hawaii owned, leased.
- 6

TMK 5507010000, privately owned, leased, tenants in severalty. Grant of easement Instrument # 02-193432 from 10/29/2002.
- 7

TMK 55007035000, privately owned. Several permits for dwelling units, barn that changed to a dwelling, solar, off grid windmill. Property is at the end of Hoesa Makai Road and there is what looks like an easement to the coastal TMK property that the RR ROW would cross.
- 8

TMK 55070340000, privately owned, adjacent to Hoesa Makai Road, agricultural.
- 9

TMK 55008010000, privately owned. Condo Master Non-Taxable Parcel. TMK 5500801000001 lists apartment deeds (3) and 550080100002 with farm dwelling and two apartment deeds listed as owners with separate parcel number info. RR ROW may be on property or the boundary.
- 10

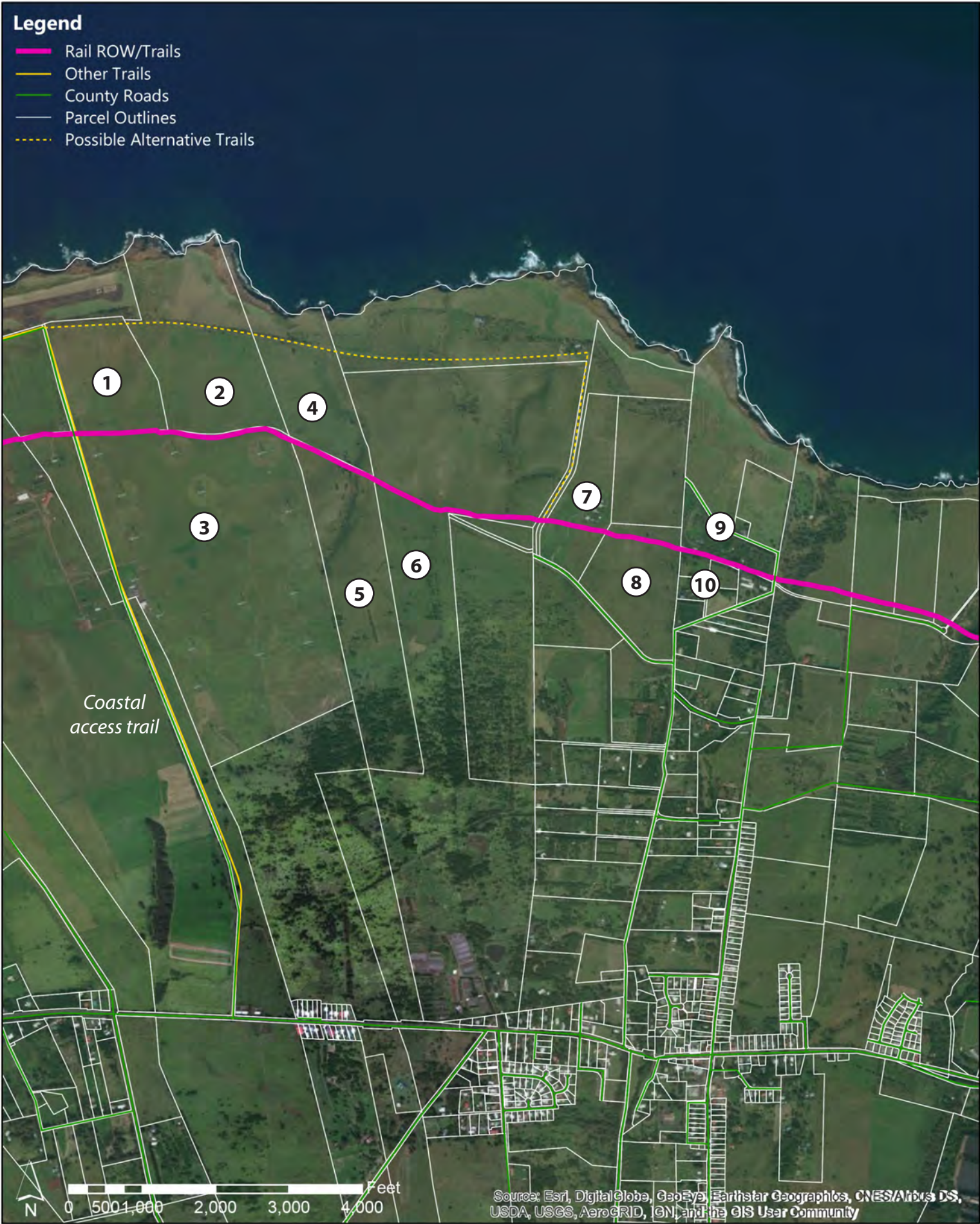
TMK 55008008000, privately owned. Property has a house constructed in 1982 and may contain small portion of RR ROW.

## Opportunities

- There is a big chunk of agricultural land with windmills and open space; this may be compatible with a hiking trail.
- There is a rum distillery on land near the airport adjoining the RR easement, which could be a supporter and possibly a destination for people hiking on the trail. If the alternative trail was pursued, this may be an opportunity to work with the business.
- The land is still mostly flat; this is the last segment before many of the major gulches.
- There are still relatively few landowners with dwelling units, which may make it feasible to have the trail without a big conflict.
- There are a few areas where the ROW may need to be verified on the ground. For properties that appear to border the RR ROW, there is the possibility of working with the landowners on either side to allow passage through.
- Location of the easement from old maps appears to be close to property lines and existing roads or driveways. Alignment with these could make placement of the trail easier.
- Vehicular public access has been called for by the community, but is not in place yet.
- The access on Hawi Road was a condition of Subdivision 7640, however the owners are under enforcement proceedings with the County. The public access should be extended to Pahoeh Beach, with a lateral trail.

## Issues

- The RR ROW may need to be assessed on the ground as there may be some areas where it is unclear.
- Access to determine on the ground conditions is difficult in this area.
- Condo lands appear to have mainland investors, would ideally need to find a local contact to help assist with negotiations.





# Pahoa - Segment 6

## Property Information

- 1
- TMK 550080600000, privately owned Condo Master non-taxable parcel. Property includes the gulch, bordered by Hoesa Road. On the ground, there appears to be a trail or road easement that traverses the slope on the side of the road.
- 2
- TMK 550080600001, both agriculture (20 acres) and conservation designation (almost 4 acres). It is Unit 1 Lipoa Gulch Condo Map 1352. Parcel 55080600002 is also in agriculture (15 acres) and conservation (almost 2 acres). The property line ends where Uli Road makes a right turn.
- 3
- TMK 550080130000, privately owned, agricultural land, 9 buildings, adjacent to Uli Road.
- 4
- TMK 550806400000, privately owned, agricultural land. No apparent buildings, adjacent to Uli Road.
- 5
- TMK 550080650000, privately owned, agricultural land. Grant of easement, instrument number 03-138213. Last parcel on Uli Road before another gulch.
- 6
- TMK 550080660000, privately owned. Property includes a gulch and the corner is at the end of Uli Road. Buildings/houses present. Mapping changes, Grant of Easement (Instrument # 03-138213) and Quitclaim Deed 03-119257.
- 7
- TMK 540080540000, privately owned, agricultural.
- 8
- TMK 540080450000, privately owned, agricultural, includes a gulch. Contains some storage structures, mapping change in 2003, 2004, and 2006.
- 9
- TMK 540080530000, privately owned, agricultural. No apparent buildings, RR ROW alignment moves Makai to include these last two parcels.
- 10
- TMK 540080360000, privately owned, agricultural. Coastal property that abuts the end of Honomakau Road. Grant of easements and mapping changes (02-235477 and 02-235476).



RR ROW access off of this road

## Opportunities

- There are 2 property owners who own multiple parcels. There is a mixture of some development and agriculture on their properties.
- There are areas that can be accessed from a road, which may help to better assess conditions and allow for an alternative route in some cases.
- There appears to be a service road in association with the RR ROW alignment, this may be useful for working within the gulch.
- The landowners may see a benefit of having the trail through this area.
- There is not a lot of housing development and larger lots.
- This segment is close to Hawi, which is a popular destination for visitors and locals alike.
- Location of the easement from old maps appears to be close to property lines and existing roads or driveways. Alignment with these could make placement of the trail easier.
- There is a vehicular public access extending from the makai end of Hawi Road. The County paved road ends, with permitted pedestrian access to Pahoa Beach.

## Issues

- There are gulches that need to be crossed in this area. The RR ROW used a trestle, making legal access to the land in the gulches more challenging.
- There are a number of mainland owners, which may prove to be challenging to meet with.



Community mural





# Honomakau - Segment 7

## Property Information

- 1 TMK 540080390000, privately owned, agricultural. Narrow, curved, linear parcel, appears to be a roadway easement.
- 2 TMK 540080370000, privately owned, agricultural, windmills and structures present. Grant of easements (02-235591, 02-235477).
- 3 TMK 540080710000, privately owned, agricultural. On the Mauka side of the curved linear parcel, no buildings present.
- 4 TMK 540080420000, privately owned, agricultural, no buildings. Curved, linear parcel.
- 5 TMK 540080430000, privately owned, adjacent to the curved linear parcel, agricultural, no buildings.
- 6 TMK 540090080000, privately owned, agricultural. No buildings, large parcel, no gulches, appears flat.



Blocked access to the coast



Agricultural lands

## Opportunities

- Large parcels owned by one owner could make negotiations for a trail easier in this section.
- Most of the properties are in agriculture and/or have windmills.
- There appears to be a road ROW through this segment, unsure of its relation to the RR ROW, this should be investigated further.
- The trail alignment could follow the road easement (linear parcel #4) and follow the curved property line closer to the shoreline. This could ease property owner concerns.
- Location of the easement from old maps appears to be close to property lines and existing roads or driveways. Alignment with these could make placement of the trail easier.
- A lateral trail was a condition of the subdivision, but has not been created.

## Issues

- A single owner of many parcels in this segment requires skillful negotiations.
- There would need to be stewards of the trail in this area to avoid potential issues with squatting or illegal use of the land.
- The access on Hawi Road was a condition of Subdivision 7640, however the owners are under enforcement proceedings with the County. The public access should be extended to Pahoehoe Beach, with a lateral trail.



Historic map





# ‘Āinakea - Segment 8

## Property Information

- 1
- TMK 54009013000 , privately owned, agricultural property with a small dwelling unit. Has a gulch and the RR ROW goes through the bottom corner part of parcel where it traverses the gulch.
- 2
- TMK 540090120000, privately owned, agricultural property with a small dwelling unit. RR ROW enters parcel on the other side of the gulch, crosses Lokahi Road and goes through another gulch on the adjacent parcel.
- 3
- TMK 540090190000, privately owned, agricultural. RR ROW heads crosses gulch and heads Makai. Does not cross Honopueo Road on this property, heads up and across the road on the Makai property.
- 4
- TMK 540090200000, privately owned, agricultural, abuts Honopueo Road.
- 5
- TMK 540090010000 , privately owned, agricultural, abuts Honopueo Road.
- 6
- TMK 540090250000, privately owned, agricultural, has building.
- 7
- TMK 540090280000 privately owned, in agriculture.
- 8
- TMK 530060290000, privately owned, agricultural. Has 2 small gulches on it that the RR ROW crosses.
- 9
- TMK 530060300000, privately owned, agricultural, dwelling on property.
- 10
- TMK 530060270000, privately owned, agricultural. Grant of Easement 62620848.

## Opportunities

- There are existing mauka-makai roads that go through this area, making assessments from the road a possibility.
- There are no private homes on the parcels near where the RR ROW traverses, making it potentially more compatible.
- The properties do have agriculture uses, which may make a trail compatible.
- This area is close to the community and visitor destinations, making a trail attractive for use.
- Properties 4,6,7,8,9 are subject to Grant of Public Access (pedestrian) Easement (GOE) along the shore.
- Lots 1,2,4 are subject to vehicular GOE to shoreline with parking lot on un-numbered parcel makai.
- Previously granted coastal trail is dangerous along the cliff edge, moving the trail to the railroad easement could provide a safer location.
- The eastern green access road is not public, but a private driveway. The CDP shows the extension of the subdivision road in Ainakea as the recommended M-M vehicle access.

## Issues

- There are a number of gulches in this segment, requiring creative solutions for the trail through the area.
- Agricultural uses and fencing could be an issue, more research and on the ground investigation is be needed.
- Stewardship of the trail in this area would need to be addressed as many of the land owners have addresses on the mainland.



Bond Memorial Public Library



Challenging gulch area



RR ROW crosses this street at curve



King Kamehameha I statue





# Kauhola to Hapu’u - Segment 9

## Property Information

- 1 TMK 530060230000, privately owned, large property, agricultural, gulch.
- 2 TMK 530070470000, privately owned with agricultural structures present on site. Has segment of the RR ROW, then goes onto the mauka property, then back on to this property. It is adjacent to Old Halaula Mill Road.
- 3 TMK 530070490000, privately owned, agricultural.
- 4 TMK 530070420000, privately owned, agricultural.
- 5 TMK 530070410000, privately owned, agricultural. Property looks like it is in the mauka corner, and crosses into the other property where the gulch begins.
- 6 TMK 53007043000, privately owned, agricultural, with permits for electrical, plumbing, and facilities for workers. It looks like the RR ROW crosses this property where the gulch is.
- 7 TMK 530070010000, privately owned, agricultural. Grant of easement 6/2016, Instrument # 60190738. Property is on the other side of the gulch.
- 8 TMK 530070100000, in Agriculture with a grant of easement from 2016.



Kapanai'a Bay access



Hale O Ka'ili Heiau

## Opportunities

- There is pedestrian access along the cliff shoreline. The shoreline public access trail between Hapu’u and Kapanai'a Bays is formalized in a Grant of Public Access Easement to the County of Hawaii in February 2013, and between Kauhola Point and Hapu’u Bay in 2018.
- There are interpretive opportunities throughout this area. At the time of Kamehameha I, surfing was a popular sport in the bay. Fishing and gathering were, and continue to be, an important activity to preserve.
- When the Kohala Sugar Plantation shut down, this access was nearly lost. Land was privatized by fences and gates which prompted the Native Hawaiian organization Hui Mamalahoa to legally fight for access. As a result, a court-ordered vehicle access, on an unpaved road, to Kapanai’a and Hapu’u bays was provided for public use and access (Civil HA-5464 Kohala Corporation v. Ahoi, 1982).
- There is a historical site, Hale O Ka’ili Heiau, being managed by a local community group.
- The Hapu’u to Kapanai'a coastal properties have been purchased for conservation. A local Kapanai'a family will be stewarding the land. There will be opportunities for the trail once the purchase has been complete.
- There is an existing culvert that crosses the gulch. This is a public access way and believed to be the RR ROW.

## Issues

- The access road can only be used by 4 Wheel Drive vehicles.
- There is little parking or ease of entry to the area.
- There are issues related to illegal squatting in some areas along this stretch.
- There are issues of care and stewardship of the sites. It is important for awareness and stewardship.



Fishing and gathering spot





# Kapanaia to Niuli'i - Segment 10

## Property Information

- 1 TMK 530070210000, privately owned, agricultural property with one dwelling.
- 2 TMK 530070320000
- 3 TMK 530070240000
- 4 TMK 530070350000, privately owned, agricultural, with Grant of Easement (05-124186). Property is mauka of Kapanaia Bay Road.
- 5 TMK 530070250000, end of property abuts Kapanaia Bay Road
- 6 TMK 530070230000, existing road and culvert across the gulch in this location.
- 7 TMK 520070250000
- 8 TMK 530070270000
- 9 TMK 530070260000
- 10 TMK 520070240000
- 11 TMK 520070270000
- 12 TMK 520070040000, privately owned, Kapanaia gulch area, recently approved for public purchase. Access through this property will not be an issue as it will be open to the public.
- 13 TMK 520010140000, privately owned, large property. May be negotiable for a trail.

## Opportunities

- There are lots of interpretive opportunities within this segment.
- There are many recreational opportunities within this segment, Kapanaia Bay is already a popular camping and recreation spot.
- Community knowledge says that the railroad easement is along the lateral section of Kapanaia Road. Placing it there would eliminate crossing private land.
- The approval to purchase some of the properties for public use reflects the importance of the site for many reasons.
- The Hapu'u to Kapanaia coastal properties have been purchased for conservation. A local Kapanaia family will be stewarding the land. There will be opportunities for the trail once the purchase has been complete.
- This is the center of the Kula Iwi O Kamehameha (Kamehameha's homeland), a critical element in the history of the Hawaiian Islands.
- Kapanaia Bay Road – This is an important mauka-makai access point that ends at a premier fishing and gathering area for Kohala. There are remnants of trails and rope ladders that extend down the sides of the cliff to the reef shelf. This was once known for its limu kohu gathering.
- The railroad terminal is accessed by the public Keokea Park Road.

## Issues

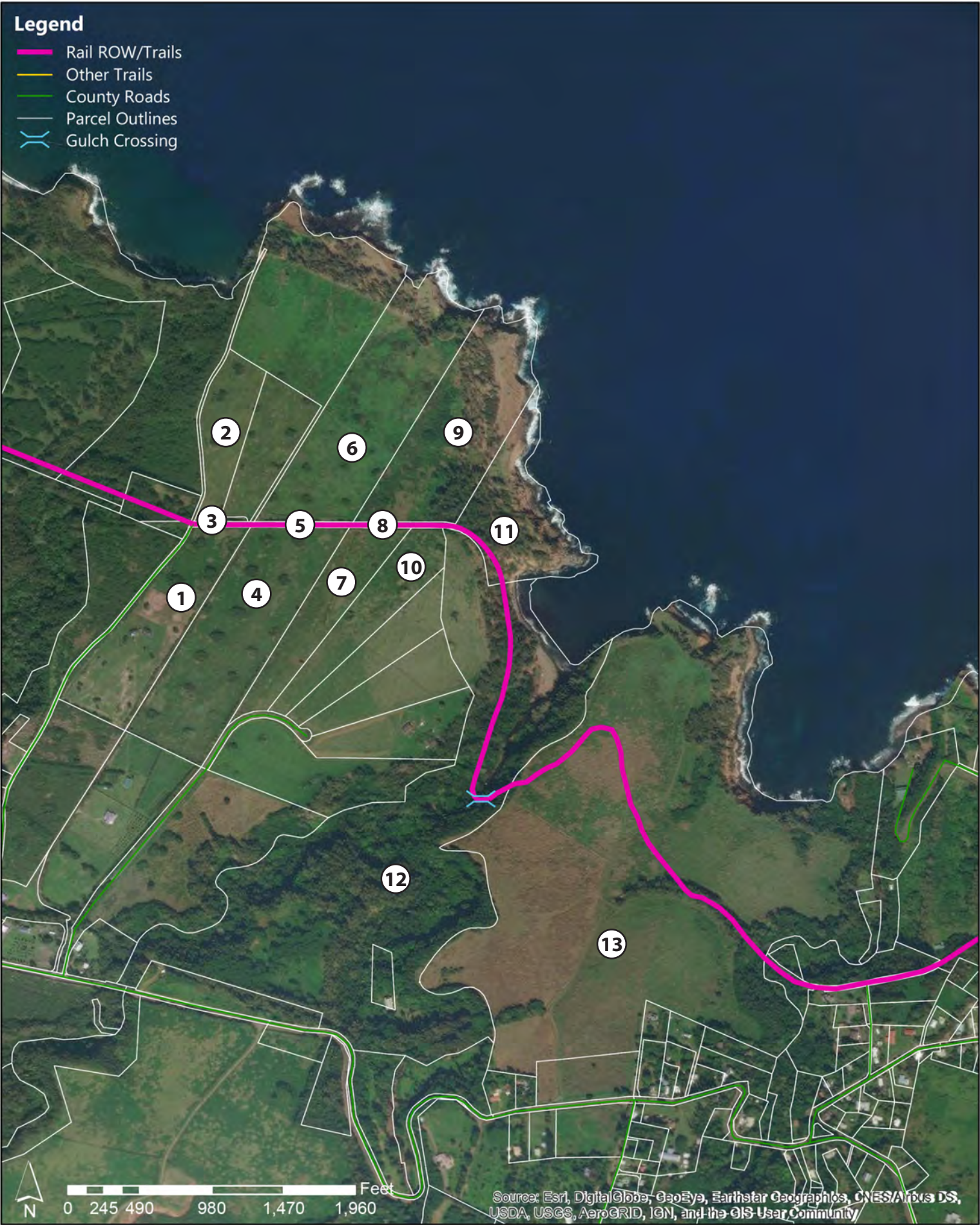
- The RR ROW goes through agricultural land, and then adjacent to some residential properties near the end of the RR ROW. This may need to be adjusted so that it is seen as a benefit, and not a burden on the residential properties.
- There are gulches within this area that will need to be examined for a trail through and back up the other side of the gulch.
- Illegal use of the area for squatters or other use would need to be examined.



Ropes for access



Existing trestle footing





# Segment 11 - Niuli'i

## Property Information

- 1

TMK 520090430000, privately owned, odd shaped, small property.
- 2

TMK 520090400000
- 3

TMK 520090160000, privately owned, residential zoning with dwellings.
- 4

TMK 520090380000
- 5

TMK 520090080000 , privately owned, residential zoning, no buildings.
- 6

TMK 520010150000, privately owned, agricultural.
- 7

TMK 520090320000, privately owned, last real property in segment, looks like it follows the road and ends below, where Bus Stop Road meets up with the road to the park, past Old Railroad Road. To avoid disturbance to this property owner, the trail would avoid this property and end on parcel #8.
- 8

TMK 520010200000, owned by Kohala Center. This property is in preservation, and the old RR Turn-Around is located on the property. The Kohala Center is interested in working with the community to develop the property to meet the needs of the community. There is access to the coast, and a trail into Pololu Valley.

## Opportunities

- This is the last segment of the RR ROW, and offers interpretive opportunities at the end of the line, if the community would like to pursue.
- It appears that the ROW near properties 1-5 is on an existing easement. This could facilitate public ROW and allow the trail to continue through this area without disrupting private property.
- Kēōkea Beach Park, a popular county park, is located close to the rail trail and would be accessible via a public road.
- The land where the RR ROW ends is owned by The Kohala Center. This coastal property includes the railroad turn-around, the Mill, and many cultural and historic sites and uses. TKC is exploring best management and use of the ancient hala groves, sugar cane fields, sugar mill, and rail road turn around.

## Issues

- There are a number of smaller properties, so there will need to be sensitivity to be sure that the residences are not disturbed by the trail.
- There should be negotiations and discussions with all the property owners in this area to help to envision what Property 8 may be for the community.
- There will need to be careful consideration of commercial operations and the use of the trail.



Near Keokea Beach Park Photo



Old Railroad Way Road



Enjoying Keokea Beach Park Photo





# Endnotes

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