

REPORT PURPOSE:

Narrate the current situation and expand the public's understanding of Cultural Resource Management (CRM) and Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship (WKS)

Create a baseline of data and metrics to measure impact and growth

Serve as an advocacy document to influence decision making by government entities involved in CRM

Present a future vision of what an ideal WKS landscape in Hawai'i would look like, and how we can get there

Activate involvement from all stakeholders

Kūkaniloko - Photo: Huliauapa'a



Introduction

As our homeland, Hawai'i is the seat of our culture and history, and cannot be replicated at any other place on Earth. Especially significant in our unique homeland are wahi kūpuna, our ancestral spaces and places, where we maintain relationships to the past and foster our identity and well-being in the present. Wahi kūpuna, and advocating for their active and appropriate stewardship, is the primary focus of this report.

The term "wahi kūpuna" was first coined by Kēhau Abad, Halealoha Ayau, and Konia Freitas in the 1990s as a way to reassert Kanaka 'Ōiwi (Native Hawaiian) perspectives and related kuleana (rights, responsibilities) to what others referred to as simply, archaeological sites. From this time, it has been a term and concept that many have pushed to normalize and use when describing these special places of our ancestors. The Kali'uokapa'akai Collective utilizes "wahi kūpuna"--both an old and also new concept-- to contextualize these places from our kuana 'ike perspective to further assert our kuleana to mālama (care for) them.



'Anakala Fred Cachola at Kokoiki, Kohala
- Photo: Huliauapa'a

"For me to be who I am, I've got to maintain identity as a Hawaiian who has a connection to this place. There are places here that are not just places, they are special sites, that's why we call them wahi kūpuna."

-UNCLE FRED CACHOLA
(KC THINK TANK PRESENTATION 2019)

What are Wahi Kūpuna?

The health of our wahi kūpuna are directly linked to the health and well-being of our communities--in caring for our wahi kūpuna, we are ultimately caring for ourselves.

Wahi kūpuna, much like the term wahi pana (storied/legendary place), refers to a physical site, area, or landscape that is significant to Kānaka ʻŌiwi, past and present. While every place in Hawaiʻi could be considered special or significant, this term can broadly encompass ancestral landscapes where kūpuna (ancestors) repeatedly and purposefully interacted (lived, worked, played, sustained life from), but also places of purposeful non-use (wao akua or mountain summit realms). Often, these places provide evidence of kūpuna interactions via physical manipulation of the space such as burials, heiau (places for observation and ceremony), loʻi kalo (taro patches), loko iʻa (fishponds), ala loa (trails), kuahiwi (agricultural field systems), and ahu (shrines). Just as significantly, some wahi kūpuna contain no tangible evidence of human modification, but they are still connected to the ancestors through intangible evidence such as moʻokūʻauhau (genealogies), inoa ʻāina (place names), moʻolelo (stories), and mele (chants and songs).

In particular, wahi kūpuna hold special prominence for Kānaka ʻŌiwi, because of the longstanding relationships and interconnections Native Hawaiians have with these places. Wahi kūpuna are the tangible links to the past through which we maintain connections to previous generations, and perpetuate these connections for future generations. They shape our identity, and inform and inspire our living values, traditions, and practices. These spaces are imbued with mana (divine power) and meaning from generations of Native Hawaiians living in particular places and developing inseparable relationships with the land. Thus, an integral tenet of Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship (WKS) is recognizing the relationship between Native Hawaiians and place, because the people that have evolved with their environments are just as important as the places themselves.

“Wahi kūpuna are the repositories of our cultural mana, these are places where mana is transferred from place to kanaka from kanaka to place, from kūpuna to the next generation. These repositories are the stronghold of our culture and places where we can transmit that culture to the next generation. These are the places where we pass on the stories, the traditions, the practices, the wisdom of our ancestors. If not for these places where would we be and how can we transmit this knowledge. These are the places that provide for us, physically, emotionally, for our well-being; if not for these places then how would we be? These places contain over 1000 years of traditional knowledge of Hawaiian adaptation, Hawaiian innovation, and sustainable living in these islands.”

-KAWIKA BURGESS (KC THINK TANK PRESENTATION 2019)

Piʻilanihale Heiau, Hāna, Maui - Photo: Huliauapaʻa



Cultural Resource Management vs. Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship

Cultural Resources Management (CRM) developed in the United States during the 1970s both as a concept and uniquely for-profit business sector enabling entities (e.g. institutions, agencies, developers) to navigate and meet federal historic preservation mandates. CRM is a growing, billion-dollar-per-year economic sector (2012 Cultural Heritage Partners Survey). Often triggered by development, CRM projects support historic preservation as defined by federal and state laws, processes, values, and officials.

During the 1970s, for-profit CRM as a sector was established in Hawai'i, based on the United States industry model. Presently, 27 permitted CRM firms employing over 200 archaeologists operate throughout the islands, primarily contracted by federal, military, state, and private development projects (<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/shpd/>).

The current profit and development-driven nature of CRM in Hawai'i has caused the field in general to be reactive rather than proactive; contributing to the lack of faith the Native Hawaiian community has in archaeology. While archaeology and CRM have historically held the decision-making authority over Hawai'i's wahi kūpuna, there has been a concerted effort to expand the realm of CRM and transform the practice to Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship.

Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship is uniquely different from Cultural Resource Management in two primary ways. First, the term wahi kūpuna suggests a genealogical or cultural transference of knowledge and responsibility with people who have and continue to have kuleana to a wahi kūpuna. Second, stewardship

conveys a sense of reciprocity to mālama or care for, as opposed to management, which evokes a relationship where humans are superior to the 'āina and wahi kūpuna.

Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship acknowledges the inter-relationship between nature and culture. Hawaiian cultural resources also include the natural environment which defines and supports people's knowledge, practices, beliefs, rights, and responsibilities in relationship to the 'āina. The concepts of mālama 'āina and aloha 'āina reflect the Hawaiian worldview of caring

for both natural and cultural landscapes as one and the same, as Native Hawaiians recognize the cultural significance and value of the natural world. Current historic preservation and laws focus on identifying only select aspects of the built environment, such as surface and subsurface archaeology and historic buildings. To fully recognize the significance of the entire cultural landscape in Hawai'i, a paradigm shift must occur within the CRM field. By incorporating stewardship methods that

reflect indigenous viewpoints, the integrated cultural landscape of Hawai'i can be better understood, valued, and utilized in CRM, and related fields such as environmental review and land-use planning.

Redirecting the role of CRM toward WKS can make this field more relevant and appropriate for the needs not only of Native Hawaiians, but all who care for Hawai'i and call it home. We have a collective kuleana to mālama wahi kūpuna through knowledge sharing, education, protection, stewardship, and restoration. Culturally appropriate and meaningful stewardship of Hawai'i's ancestral places helps to reconnect Hawai'i's people to our 'āina today.

“Stewardship, therefore, situates the rich histories and stories of the land and at the same time reinforces the inherent and genealogical relationship between kanaka and 'āina.”

(KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS WAHI KŪPUNA PAMPHLET 2015)

“In our practice, there is no separation between natural and cultural resources. All of the landscape is a cultural landscape because we have been a part of shaping it, responding to it, shaping it some more and perhaps reshaping it as we learn more about it. So culture is the lens we see the natural landscape through.”

- AUNTY HANNAH SPRINGER (KC THINK TANK PRESENTATION 2019)



'Anakē Hannah Springer atop Hualālai, Kona - Photo: Huliauapa'a

**The protection,
preservation,
and restoration of
wahi kūpuna
can contribute to
Hawai‘i’s overall
well-being by:**

Reestablishing connections that inspire, enrich, and nurture Hawai‘i’s people.

Protecting the places where Hawaiian practices can thrive, so Hawaiian culture can be perpetuated.

Using ancestral knowledge to strengthen Native Hawaiian and kama‘āina identities and values, community relationships and responsibilities, and how we plan for a more sustainable future for Hawai‘i.

Photo: Holladay Photo, courtesy of Kua‘āina Ulu ‘Auamo



What’s at Stake?

Healthy and active pilina (relationships) with our wahi kūpuna enrich our communities, and as we mālama these ancestral places, we also care for ourselves. However, for more than half a century we have witnessed iwi kūpuna (ancestral remains), wahi kūpuna, wahi pana and koehana (material culture) altered and destroyed at an alarming rate. Economic development, tourism, and military advancement have driven land transformation in our islands, with little concern for the cultural dimensions of the ‘āina, its embedded history, and the descendants with connections to these places.

In Hawai‘i, the ongoing crisis in historic preservation and the CRM field has been left unaddressed for decades. Historic Preservation laws and regulations are in place, but there’s been a lack of support at the state (and federal) level to uphold their own standards and enforce their rules and laws or to manage information and resources responsibly and sensitively (National Park Service 2013; Mills and Kawelu 2013; Kawelu 2014).

The problems in CRM are systemic and have many layers, but a core issue is the limited role of Native Hawaiians and kama‘āina in determining the fate of our own resources and shaping the outcomes of development in our communities. People with pilina to the land have historically been underrepresented in this field, often being relegated to research informants or consultants in development mitigation and the compliance process. Meanwhile, others with little experience of Hawaiian history, culture, and language fill positions in this field. As a result, the general approach this field takes is not in line with the values, visions, and needs of the descendants that are directly connected to the Hawaiian heritage that CRM is tasked with “managing”. Thus, the role of wahi kūpuna stewards are key, as they have decision-making authority in determining the significance of wahi kūpuna and whether these sites are protected or destroyed.

Therefore, in order to build a system that aims to truly protect wahi kūpuna and empower community led stewardship, we need to re-conceptualize CRM by exploring culturally grounded and meaningful preservation practices where the integrity of the cultural and environmental health of a place and its people are interconnected. We need to increase the opportunities and abilities of Native Hawaiians to re-vitalize relationships with wahi kūpuna through direct management of policy, resources, and practices. And all those that care for our wahi kūpuna must come together as a collective to elevate our kuleana and integrate more of a holistic worldview into Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship for the betterment of all in Hawai‘i.



“There’s going to be massive changes to these places that give us our identity. As our natural world changes, it will inevitably disrupt our cultural practice and if we don’t have the benefit of our cultural practices and of our cultural resources then what happens? Will our future ancestors resemble us? Resemble our kūpuna? If we can’t grow kalo, are we still Hawaiian? What is it that makes us Hawaiian? If the things that we’ve relied upon that we think today makes us Hawai‘i, if they are somehow not available to us, how do we cope? How do we adapt? And how do we become familiar and resemble that which we cherish?”

-NEIL HANNAHS (KC THINK TANK PRESENTATION 2019)

Nā koa at Pu'ukohola Heiau - Photo: Kai Markell

Wahi Kūpuna continue to be severely threatened by development and a current system of laws and rules that are not working. Historic Preservation and the CRM industry have several overarching problems:

It is driven by profit, development, and compliance, as opposed to proactive stewardship, grounded in cultural values.

Current Hawai‘i compliance laws that are aimed to protect wahi kūpuna are bound in a western CRM model, which privileges the field of archaeology over Native Hawaiian descendants as its authority.

Wahi Kūpuna are disproportionately underfunded within the private and public sectors in Hawai‘i.

Wahi Kūpuna do not have the same equity and parity as natural resources and other environmental sectors.

Our Hui: An Interdisciplinary Community of Practice

The Kali'uokapa'akai Collective is made up of advocates, leaders, and change agents who represent many different fields and disciplines, but who all care about Hawai'i's wahi kūpuna. KC members represent Hawai'i's communities, government agencies, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, social enterprises, private sector firms, and Native Hawaiian serving institutions. We first came together in June 2017 to determine our collective values, express our intentions, and to formally establish a community of practice that aims to mālama our wahi kūpuna.

To promote future collaborations, increase awareness on issues surrounding CRM and WKS, and in efforts to grow capacity and resources for wahi kūpuna stewards, KC members prioritized our efforts around the following four Focus Areas that will be highlighted in separate sections in this report:



1. Building Community Capacity in Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship
2. Knowledge Cultivation and Stewardship
3. Restoring Wahi Kūpuna
4. Mālama Iwi Kūpuna

Each focus area in this report includes information on:

- » The current landscape/status
- » Priority themes
- » Ways forward to address these priority themes
- » Bright spots highlighting relevant case studies
- » Calls to Action

KC Report Needs & Goals

Early on, the KC realized that a more complete understanding of the current state of CRM in Hawai'i was needed in order to address how to improve the system. It was agreed that a critical first initiative of the KC would be to compile foundational CRM/WKS data in a holistic document from a Kanaka 'Ōiwi perspective. This report will serve as a guiding document to steer the KC along a new ala loa (path) over the next few years. This report also aims to present complex data in a simple and clear manner to bring awareness to specific WKS issues and highlight ways

that individuals, organizations, professionals, and others can take action towards greater stewardship of our wahi kūpuna.

It should also be noted that this document serves as a high-level overview of the current priority areas identified by the KC. Many more interconnected challenges and solutions must be addressed, but for this initial foray, the KC top four priority Focus Areas were selected for further research and presentation here.

Data Gathering Methods

Data compiled for this report includes: KC working materials (meeting notes, surveys), presentations and breakout session notes from the 2019 KC Think Tank, publicly available quantitative data (e.g. Island Burial Council agendas and minutes, firms permitted under SHPD, Federal and State historic preservation laws and rules, etc.), and relevant articles and reports listed in our references section.

In April 2019, over 100 participants from 15 different sectors participated in a 2-day Think Tank to discuss a range of challenges, opportunities, and solutions for WKS in Hawai'i. During this gathering, real-time data was compiled through topic area panels, facilitated breakout discussions, and live surveys. Participants shared, documented, evaluated, and prioritized existing and new information, knowledge, and practices regarding WKS. From here, the KC created working groups to carry on the Think Tank discussions and brainstorm how to implement the proposed action items. Much was accomplished at this first Think Tank and the KC hopes to hold these types of "conferences with kuleana" every two to three years to continue to tackle systems change in CRM.

One of the primary sources of information for this report is qualitative data gathered from the multiple meetings, interviews, webinars, and email communications with knowledgeable topic area experts, cultural practitioners, and wahi kūpuna stewards over the past three years. This important mana'ō, that has not been systematically documented before, is the foundation of this report, providing generational and place-based knowledge to inform our actions and recommendations from a Kanaka 'Ōiwi perspective.

An important caveat in our data collection was the limited accessibility to and quantity of CRM and other relevant data. While staff at the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) have been working to make more data accessible to the general public, a great deal of legacy data, including reports, correspondence, and Geographic Information System (GIS) data, remain inaccessible to the general public, and data on the financial and market impact of CRM in Hawai'i is non-existent.

Despite these challenges, we believe the information gathered remains extremely valuable, in part because of the difficulty in compiling dispersed sources of information. Nonetheless, we better understand the interrelated issues that WKS is facing, which helps us create informed solutions and meaningful actions to holomua, or move forward, on this ala loa.

Sectors represented at the 2019 KC Think Tank



Priority Next Steps after the Think Tank (KC Think Tank Survey 2019)

Best management practices and recommendations regarding such topics as wahi kūpuna restoration, protection of iwi kūpuna, WKS research

Inventory to connect community members to organizations, initiatives, and resources to assist in wahi kūpuna stewardship efforts

Training workshops to address community and industry needs

Create working groups to further and/or complete the key outcomes and products that the Think Tank generates

Collective research agenda that identifies priority WKS research questions or projects to pursue

Code of Conduct or Communique (collective statement) about the importance of Hawaiian wahi kūpuna stewardship that is endorsed by the Kali'uoapa'akai Collective and its partners

KC hālōwai, 2018 - Photo: Huliauopa'a

