



MEDIA CONTACTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Over 30 Acres of Maui Coastline Protected

The Hāna community and its supporters completed a key step in conserving more than 150 coastal acres

Hana, Maui, Dec. 16, 2021 – Hāna-based nonprofit community organization Ke Ao Hāli'i (Save Hāna Coast), in partnership with the State of Hawai'i, County of Maui, and Hawai'i Land Trust, announce the purchase and protection of more than 30 acres at Maka'ālae along Maui's Hāna coast. The protected lands complete the second phase of a four-phase plan that started in 2018 to purchase and permanently preserve 1.5 miles of coastline and open space south of Hāna town, from Hāmoa Beach to Waioka Pond and Waihonu Stream.

The Maka'ālae land is sacred (wahi pana) because of the Native Hawaiians that lived there, and the significant Hawaiian mythology and legends of the area. It includes historic sites from ancient times through the sugar plantation area, open space pastureland for prime cattle grazing, and a stunning coastline that is used by local families for subsistence food gathering and cultural practices.

Ke Ao Hāli'i purchased the 30 acres for just over \$3 million from Hana Ranch Partners, with the State Legacy Land Conservation Program contributing nearly \$1.6 million, and the County of Maui's Open Space Fund contributing \$1.5 million. The land is permanently protected with a conservation easement co-held by Hawai'i Land Trust (HILT) and the County of Maui.

"Mahalo Ke Akua for helping us find the way and blessing us with purchasing this 'āina, and giving a chance for the descendants and community to mālama this special place. Mahalo to the Hāna community, all our supporters, the State of Hawai'i, County of Maui, and Hawai'i Land Trust for protecting the land for future generations so our culture and way of life can be preserved," said John (Irish) O'Hara, a lineal descendant and resident of Maka'ālae and Vice-Chair for Ke Ao Hāli'i.

"The Dept. of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) is proud to support the Maka'ālae land acquisition and its connections with crucial, landscape-scale resource protection that is locally organized and broadly inclusive," said DLNR Chair Suzanne Case. "In our ongoing relationship with the management of these lands for public benefit, we look forward to working with Ke Ao Hāli'i to fulfill its kuleana, achieve its vision, and implement an access policy and a code of conduct, all to perpetuate the legacy of these lands, and all in partnership with Hawai'i Land Trust, Maui County, and Hāna families."

“This is a priceless holiday gift from Ke Ao Hāli‘i, Hawai‘i Land Trust, the State of Hawai‘i, and the County of Maui,” said Maui Mayor Mike Victorino. “It’s a gift for our community today and for generations to come. To preserve 30 acres on the Hāna coastline will ensure that one of Hawai‘i’s few remaining Hawaiian communities will be able to perpetuate traditional cultural practices for years to come.”

“This is a historic event for the Hāna community,” said Maui County Councilmember and Hāna resident Shane Sinenci. “This acquisition means that historic sites, ancient burials, important fishing grounds, and significant cultural history will remain in conservation, and in local hands, for the future children of Maui Nui, in perpetuity! We are grateful for the generous support of our public and private partners, our local communities, and Hana Ranch Partners, who came together to permanently protect these lands.”

“The conservation easements over these lands prohibit subdivision and development, allowing for the continuation of cultural practice, ranching, indigenous ocean food systems, and maintaining community access in perpetuity,” said Shae Kamaka‘ala, HILT’s Director of ‘Āina Protection. “We are grateful for the generous support of our public and private partners, our local communities, and Hana Ranch Partners, who came together to permanently protect these lands for generations to come.”

This effort builds on conservation work spanning nearly two decades. In 2002, HILT worked with landowner Hana Ranch Partners to permanently protect 46 acres fronting Pōhakuloa Bay at Maka‘ālae. This was HILT’s first conservation easement. In 2014, HILT acquired two conservation easements totaling 14 acres fronting Opau Bay at Maka‘ālae.

In 2018, families from the Hāna community came together to form Ke Ao Hāli‘i to protect the remaining properties from Mokae to Maka‘ālae.

Ke Ao Hāli‘i’s acquisitions started with the purchase of 27 acres at Mokae overlooking Hāmoa Beach in 2020, with support from the State Legacy Land Program and the County of Maui’s Open Space Program. The parcel, in an area known as Kaholaiki, includes historic burial grounds and cultural sites, and provides vital access for community subsistence. Similar to the newly acquired Maka‘ālae property, this Mokae parcel is permanently protected as undeveloped open space via a conservation easement co-held by HILT and the County of Maui.

With the second phase now complete, the third phase includes protecting 40 additional coastal acres at Mokae, located between the Mokae lands acquired in 2020 and the newly purchased Maka‘ālae lands. Ke Ao Hāli‘i and HILT are working to raise the remaining funds to complete the purchase in early 2022.

Upon completion of the third phase, Hana Ranch Partners has committed to donating the remaining parcels that were previously protected in conservation easements with Hawai‘i Land Trust to Ke Ao Hāli‘i, completing the acquisition and protection of all 152 acres of undeveloped lands makai of Hāna Highway from Haneo‘o Road to Waiohonu Stream. The land will be managed by Ke Ao Hāli‘i with help of the Hāna community and supporting partners through the implementation of a land management plan to enable community access and cultural, subsistence, agricultural and recreational uses, while preserving the conservation values of the land.

To learn more and contribute to this effort, visit savehanacoast.org/campaign.

For b-roll and images, click [here](#).

About Ke Ao Hāli‘i

Hāna-based nonprofit community organization Ke Ao Hāli‘i (Save Hāna Coast) was formed in 2018 to protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Hāna moku and the customary and traditional practices of Native Hawaiians of the region; to hold title to and own interests in real property or to hold easements; to preserve and manage the area’s natural, cultural, scenic, historic and marine resources for the benefit, education and enjoyment of our community and future generations. For more, visit savehanacoast.org.

About Hawai‘i Land Trust

Hawai‘i Land Trust (HILT) is a Hawai‘i 501(c)3 nonprofit and nationally-accredited land trust that protects and stewards the lands that sustain Hawai‘i, and teaches the next generation to do the same. Hawai‘i Land Trust has protected 21,680 acres across the islands through 7 land

purchases and 46 conservation easements. Hawai'i Land Trust prioritizes the protection of coastlines, cultural landscapes, and lands that grow food for Hawai'i's people. Visit HILT.org.

About the State Legacy Land Conservation Program

The Legacy Land Conservation Program (LLCP) provides grants to community organizations and government agencies that strive to purchase and protect land that shelters exceptional, unique, and endangered resources. With the support of the Legacy Land Conservation Commission, the Board of Land & Natural Resources, and the Hawai'i State Legislature, as of 2020 the partner network for Legacy Land Conservation has conserved 37 properties for the protection of over 21,500 acres of land having value as a resource to the State.

About the County of Maui Open Space Program

The Open Space, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, and Scenic Views Preservation Fund was established for the purpose of purchasing or otherwise acquiring lands or property entitlements for land conservation purposes in the County of Maui.

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