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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 11, 2025
3:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Room 224

H.B. 1422, H.D. 2
RELATING TO MOTOR CARRIERS

Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports H.B. 1422, H.D. 2**, which exempts non-profit community-based organizations providing transportation services from motor carrier regulations under certain circumstances.

The HDOT supports this measure as there is a shortage of drivers with commercial driver licenses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
465 S. KING STREET, #103
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Testimony of the Public Utilities Commission

To the
Senate Committee on
Transportation & Cultural and the Arts

March 11, 2025
3:00 p.m.

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee:

Measure: HB. No. 1422, H.D. 2
Title: RELATING TO MOTOR CARRIERS.

Position:

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") offers the following comments for consideration.

Comments:

The Commission appreciates the intent of this measure to exempt nonprofit and community-based organizations providing transportation services from motor carrier regulations under certain circumstances.

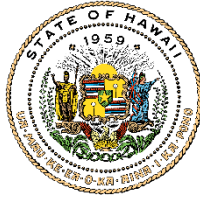
The Commission appreciates the amendments inserted by the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce clarifying the definitions for "community-based economic development", "community-based organization", and "community stakeholders." The clarifying language will assist the Commission in applying the exemption for these specific organizations.

The Commission respectfully requests to amend the effective date to January 1, 2026 to allow for any process or system updates.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA**

DIVISION OF STATE PARKS
P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson**

LATE

**Before the Senate Committee on
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

**Tuesday, March 11, 2025
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1422, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO MOTOR CARRIERS**

House Bill 1422, House Draft 2 proposes to exempt community-based organizations engaged in community-based economic development providing transportation services from the Motor Carrier Law under certain circumstances. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department)** supports the intent and offers comments - but defers to the Public Utilities Commission on substantive comments and any operational consequences.

Due to over-tourism, there is a critical need to develop alternative methods for transporting visitors in a manner that is less impactful to our local communities that are adjacent to stunning natural resources promoted and used as the backdrop of Hawai'i's tourism industry, including Hawai'i's iconic State Parks. This is especially true in rural locations that have been subjected to decades of over-tourism creating crowded roadside parking, traffic impediments, interference with County first responders attempting to gain vehicle access and precluding local residents, from accessing and enjoying these resources as well.

The model developed at Hā'ena State Park is mentioned in the bill – and this collaboration between State Parks, the nonprofit Hui Maka'āinana o Makana (Hui) and the shuttle service provided by the Hanalei Initiative, has proven to be a highly successful model of restoring an equitable balance of public access to an area that had been subjected to decades of over tourism. In addition to providing new revenue to support co-management, it now allows our residents to once again also enjoy the park and the adjacent Kē'e beach and Kalalau trail.

Across the island chain on the Big Island, State Parks is actively working with the nonprofit Hoala Kealakekua Nui (HKN) who is in the process of purchasing property that would make a very effective shuttle base to reduce visitor traffic along the rural Napo‘opo‘o road that leads down to the Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park. HKN, like the Hui, is comprised of lineal descendants and other community members and seek to add to their stewardship support for Kealakekua by providing ancillary transportation services in the future.

Another impacted area where this legislation may be of additional value is along the Hana Highway on Maui, a roadway and destination impacted by over tourism. While there is a robust commercial carrier industry servicing Maui – this bill may provide Maui nonprofits an incentive to also form plans to reduce the number of independent drivers and create shuttle services. In addition to alleviating traffic – the shuttles themselves become interpretive venues to educate the out-of-state visitor prior to their arrival to these natural and cultural landscapes. This not only alleviates the crowded parking and roadway situations – it can also lead to a more informed and culturally sensitive visitor.

Thank you for the opportunity to supports on this measure.

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NALANI BRUN, DIRECTOR



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Christina Kaser

Energy Coordinator, Office of Economic Development, County of Kaua'i

Before the

Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

March 11, 2025; 3:00 p.m.

Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference

In consideration of

House Bill 1422 HD2

Relating to Motor Carriers

Honorable Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee:

The County of Kaua'i is in **support** of House Bill 1422 HD2, which exempts non-profit community-based organizations providing transportation services from motor carrier regulations under certain circumstances.

The County greatly appreciates the efforts of Hanalei Initiative's North Shore Shuttle project, having successfully reduced traffic congestion between Princeville and Hā'ena, decreased visitor numbers at Hā'ena State Park and Ke'e Beach, eased tensions between residents and visitors, all while the Initiative has been able to subsequently substantially reinvest into the community.

Stakeholders are actively exploring ways to replicate and build on this model, and our next focus is developing the East Side's Coconut Marketplace Mobility Hub. While similar to the North Shore Shuttle in some ways, this hub prioritizes airport shuttle connections and further integrates a suite of transportation services for both visitors and local residents, located at a shopping center rather than a site on government-land where access can be more easily limited. Through public-private collaboration, the County developed the Coconut Marketplace Mobility Hub Plan which explored on-site and surrounding area infrastructure and wayfinding improvements, the development of an airport shuttle, multi-modal transportation options, management strategies, and a high level operational and implementation plan. The County worked with community, business leaders, the visitor industry, non-profit organizations, government officials, State and County stakeholders, and transportation experts to develop this plan. The next phase involves partners seeking funding for the hub's build out and implementation.

The County's and community's vision extends beyond these initial projects. Partners aim to establish a network of mobility hubs bridging communities island-wide, transforming how visitors and residents travel while reducing congestion as well as the strain on our existing highway and roadway infrastructure, and natural resources.

The model of regional non-profits operating hubs and shuttles allows for extremely localized engagement and decision-making, ensuring community led, operated, supported, and reinvested

transportation systems. Not only is Hanalei Initiative able to manage where its shuttle stops, but it is educating shuttle riders with messaging crafted by people from the North Shore, and guiding funding towards natural resource management and local food production on the North Shore. We see this as one clear way our residents can directly benefit from the visitor industry and start to approach the balance we seek in managing tourism. This model sets a precedent for sustainable transportation solutions across Kaua'i and Hawaii.

While shuttles may be a mix of contracted services and non-profit owned fleets, the latter should be treated differently under Hawaii State Law as there are clear distinctions in ownership from for-profit motor carriers to local non-profits, as evidently described above.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of House Bill 1422 HD2.

HUI MAKĀ'ĀINANA O MAKANA



The Hui Maka'āinana o Makana is a non-profit organization dedicated to perpetuating and teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of natural and cultural resources in within the Hā'ena State Park.

To: Senate COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Date: 3:00 PM on Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Place: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

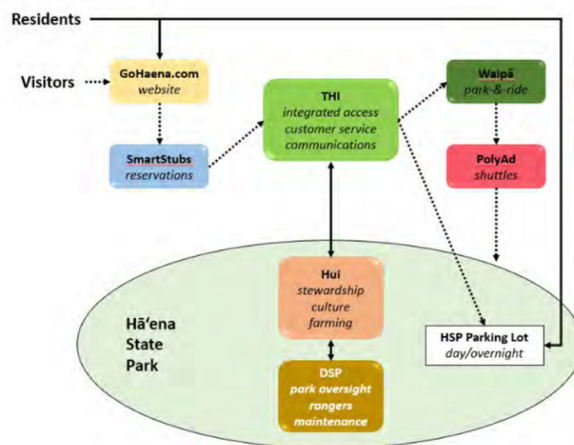
From: Chipper Wichman, Secretary
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

RE: Testimony in Support of HB1422 HD2

Dear Senator Chris Lee, Chair, Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair and members of the Committee:

I am writing today as a founding Director and current Secretary of the Board of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana (the Hui) a nonprofit established in 1999 to support the care and management of Hā'ena State Park (HSP). **The Hui is in strong support of HB 1422 HD2.**

Since HB 1422 was introduced in the House back in January, it has been through two hearings and the amendments reflected in HD2, which are before you today, effectively address the concerns brought forth by the PUC in the first hearing before the House Transportation Committee on Jan 31. What I want to emphasize today in my testimony today before the Senate Transportation Committee is that the fees we



charge for our community-operated shuttle service that brings visitors from Hanale to Hā'ena State Park (HSP) provide essential support for a complex management system that we operate to support HSP through our Revokable Use Permit with DLNR. The infographic shown here gives you a visual indication of the complex nature of this integrated system.

The Hui's *kuleana* is much more expansive than just operating a transportation service. Last year we experienced the PUC's automatic

rejection of our proposed rate increase because it was above the PUC's 10% per year cap. What the PUC is failing to realize in rejecting our rate increase is that we are not solely a transportation company – we are a community nonprofit working with other community nonprofits to address issues that impact the quality of life in our community as well as the health and wellbeing of our cultural landscape in Hā'ena State Park. As a community-based non-profit organization we don't have investors and deep pockets, all we have is a unique system that we have established to support our vision of a regenerative tourism model that supports our work to *mālama 'āina*.

Some background on how this came about. Over the past 20 years, the Hui has worked closely with the Division of State Parks to restore the ancient lo'i kalo system that exists in HSP and we played a leadership role in the 10-year long process of developing the Master Plan for Hā'ena State Park which was adopted by the Board of Land and Natural Resources in 2018. Since 2021, the Hui has held a revokable permit for the management of a reservation system for the collection of parking fees, entry fees and shuttle services and resource enhancement in Hā'ena State Park. We are able to do this by partnering with another community-based nonprofit organization called The Hanalei Initiative (THI).

Through a contract with the Hui, THI operates the ecommerce portal, reservation system, shuttle system, and collection of all entry and parking fees. Together the Hui and THI have created 35 full-time jobs for our community and we have transformed the Park back into a living cultural landscape where ancient cultivars of taro are being preserved while also providing food for our community – all of this has been done at no cost to the State of Hawaii.

The partnership we have created has done more than just improve Hā'ena State Park and create good jobs for our community. The shuttle system we have developed has significantly reduced the number of tourist cars driven on our narrow roads and made our communities safer and more multimodal friendly. While we have utilized Polynesian Adventures as a sub-contractor to operate 24-passanger shuttles from Hanalei to Hā'ena for the past three years, we are now looking ahead and hope to be able to operate our own fleet of smaller electric shuttles which will create more new jobs, reduce our carbon footprint, and make our narrow roads even safer for our community.

While I have made this sound very easy – it is far from that. We have had to adapt and evolve constantly over the past 3 years which is not easy for two community-based nonprofit organization that do not have investors or deep pockets. There have been many months when we have not realized net operating income due to rising costs to operate the system and unexpected challenges like shutting down for a month because of the norovirus outbreak in Kalalau valley last year.

The PUC regulation of our small shuttle system has created difficulty and limited our ability to adapt to the ever-changing cost environment we are living in. Furthermore, it had made it difficult to plan for the transformation of our model to an electric fleet of self-operated vans. As we look at justifying the capital costs projected for the transformation of our transportation model, we need the ability to adjust our shuttle ticket price so that our revenue can keep up with rising costs.

In closing, we ask for your support of HB1422 HD2. We are a living example of why community-based non-profit organizations that provide transportation services should be EXEMPT from the State's motor carrier regulations. Small shuttle systems like the one we operate, which greatly benefit our community should not be regulated by the PUC.

Me ke aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chipper Wichman", with a stylized, flowing script.

Chipper Wichman, Secretary
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

March 9, 2025

The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture & the Arts
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye and Members of the Committee:

My name is Joel Guy and I am the Executive Director of The Hanalei Initiative (THI). As mentioned in the testimony of Hui Makaainana O Makana (the Hui), THI is the Hui's subcontractor operating the integrated access system to Haena State Park.

Several years ago, community leaders, along with Speaker Nadine Nakamura, produced a playbook for the community-led management of state parks. ***The Transformation of Haena State Park*** was designed to help other communities facing the challenges of managing abused and overcrowded state parks in their communities. For your information, here is the link to the playbook, <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Haena-State-Park-Case-Study.pdf>.

I am attaching to my testimony Exhibit A, from the playbook which THI prepared to describe in detail the scope of its integrated access system operations to give this Committee insight as to why THI is requesting an exemption from the motor carrier law. Simply put, our rates are tied to the effective management of the integrated access system and management of the cultural resources of Haena State Park. Unlike a for-profit passenger motor carrier where profits go to owners, shareholders or investors, the revenues generated through the integrated access system are reinvested into the management of a public resource and within the community through community-based economic development, as defined in state law.

THI's shuttle underpins a financially viable community economic ecosystem where;

- The integrated access system employs over 30 north shore residents by THI
- Sustains the Hui and its stewardship and cultural activities in the park, employing 6 Hui employees
- Supports a dozen local businesses and nonprofits, creating the means to malama not only this significant wahi pana but other vulnerable areas in the moku

Furthermore, the PUC regulates rate increases and decreases through a process called the zone of reasonableness where a regulated motor carrier can only increase or decrease its fare within a 10% margin per year. Anything exceeding that margin is automatically rejected with no timely appeal process. The rates for THI's integrated access system has to consider not only transportation costs but a number of other factors related to the effective management of Haena State Park. An unbending regulatory process could jeopardize the financial stability and sustainability of the integrated access system and the goal of adaptive resource management.

With regard to the PUC's expressed concern about community-based organizations having an unfair competitive advantage over other passenger motor carriers, the emergence of community-based organizations to address long standing resource management challenges is complex and simply cannot be solved by a passenger motor carrier alone. However, this does not preclude a for profit passenger motor carrier from participating in a state or county approved plan. Neither can the for profit motor carrier be exempt from PUC regulation. THI did issue a request for

proposal at the onset of its management contract and received only one response from a motor carrier. Currently, THI does have an agreement, and truly appreciates its partnership, with Polynesian Adventures to provide transport for a portion of its shuttle services. In the future, THI would be, as a best practice to ensure cost-effective services, inclined to issue an RFP to meet future shuttle needs.

From our community's collective experience, solutions must engage multiple public and private partnerships and give opportunities for reinvestment in impacted communities. The opportunities for other passenger motor carriers to participate really is dependent on the best solutions outlined in a state or county approved plan to move forward.

The PUC also expressed concerns about its ability to make the determination that an entity is a community-based organization working under an approved state or county plan. We believe this can be and has been addressed in the House Draft 2 by putting the responsibility on the approving state or county agency to notify the PUC that the conditions for the exemption has been met and, although not overtly stated, the exemption can be revoked upon the termination of a contract or permit by the agency's responsibility to notify the PUC of the change in status.

Thank you for the opportunity to share The Hanalei Initiative's support and justification for House Bill 1422, House Draft 2.

With respect,



Joel Guy

Executive Director



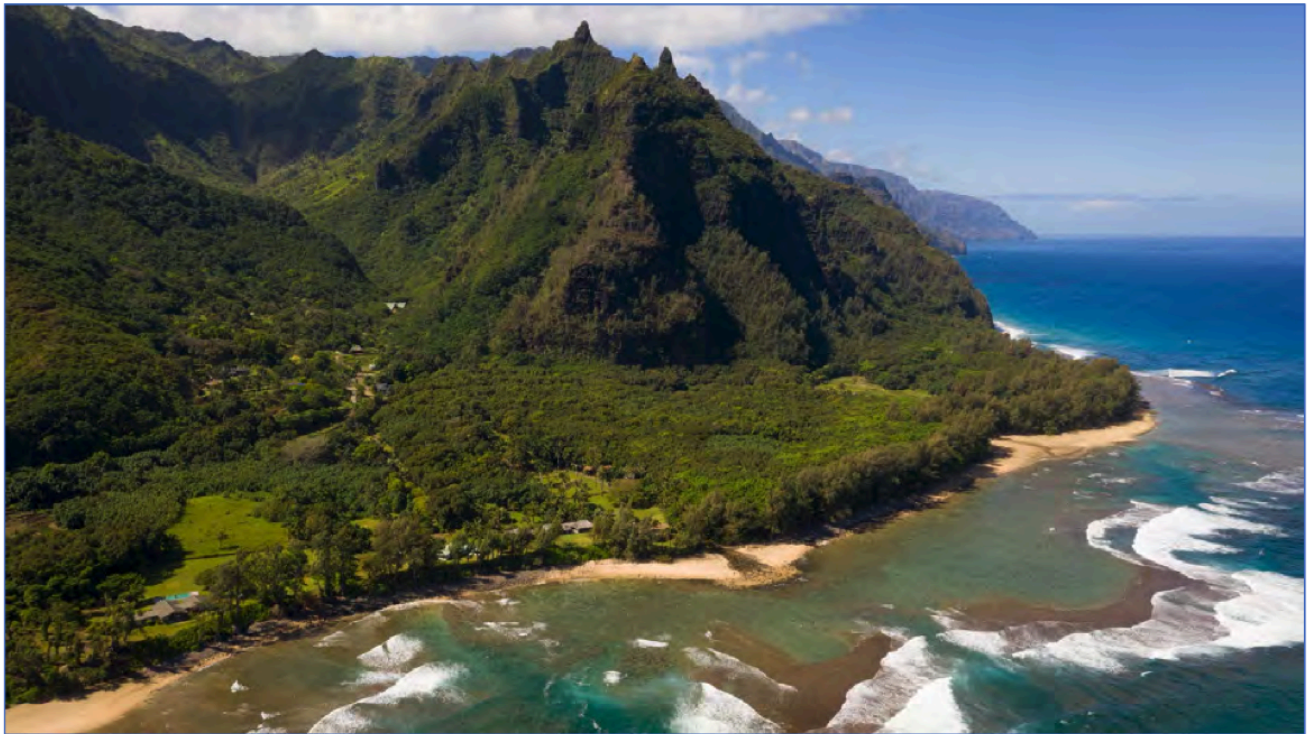
www.hanaleiinitiative.org

(808) 635-2074

Exhibit A

Hā'ena State Park
Integrated Access System

First Year in Review
July 2021 – June 2022



Prepared by: The Hanalei Initiative
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HSP Integrated Access System – Year 1

Guided By Shared Values & Vision

He aliʻi ka ʻāina; he kauwa ke kanaka.

Land is a chief; man its servant.

ʻŌlelo Noʻeau

“It has always been the desire of Hui Makaʻāinana o Makana and our community to protect Hāʻena for generations to come. This is our ancestral home, and it is our kuleana to care for this sacred place.

Presley Wann, President of Hui Makaʻāinana O Makana

“...the heart of it is the desire of the community to protect the wahi pana and wahi kapu (culturally significant areas) of Hāʻena, along with its natural and scenic resources, for the generations yet to come. It is an ancestral home and dynamic community resource... The idea is to accommodate local demand, complement shuttle volume, and minimize parking impacts outside of the park.”

~ Hāʻena State Park Master Plan Executive Summary

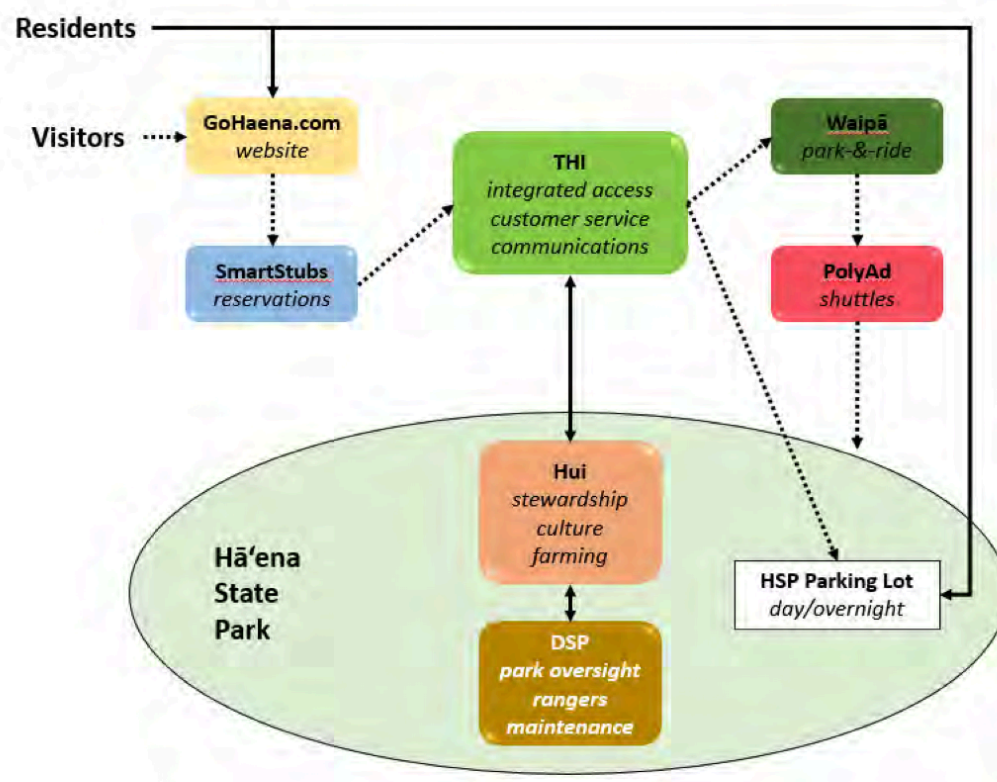
The Hanalei Initiative (THI) Board of Directors and staff wish to express their steadfast support and commitment to the intentions and envisioned goals of the Hāʻena State Park Master Plan in operating the Hāʻena State Park Integrated Access System.

As Hāʻena State Park may be viewed as the exemplar for adaptive resource management, the purpose of this overview of the past year’s operation of the park access system is to share information, and also to ask: how we can do even better as we seek continuous improvement to nurture ʻāina momona, to strive for a place that is healthy and prosperous.



Integrated Park Access - Key Partnerships and Structure

HSP Integrated Access System strategies were developed using Adaptive Management principles. The interconnected system structure is shown in the diagram below, which illustrates the typical visitor's access pathway (dotted line).



GoHaena.com

To integrate all access pathways, The Hanalei Initiative (THI) and SmartStubs partnered to make substantial changes to the reservation processes and redesign the GoHaena.com website to create a centralized reservations and information gateway. The customized website is the system's face to the world and the "front door" to a state park visit. Every reservation is placed through the website, and the reservation schedules guide the daily operations of the system. The website also provides a platform for broader awareness and support of system partners and the community's efforts.

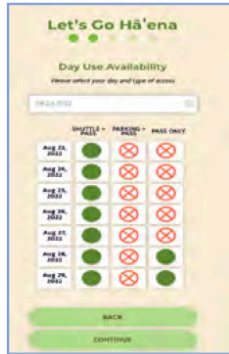
SmartStubs

This company created the backbone reservation system and combined the ordering processes from THI with the web designs from Wasabi Designs, Inc. to deliver an integrated GoHaena.com online portal. The reservation system only accepts credit cards online and QR coded tickets are scanned and logged. The system can track and report out data and metrics in great detail - from reservations to operations to financials. SmartStubs participated in the original Kauai North Shore Shuttle (KNSS) online system in 2019 and continues to adapt their core product to THI's changing needs.

HSP Integrated Access System – Year 1

Integrated Park Access – Key First Year Outcomes

HSP Integrated Access System Year 1 Highlights



Complete re-design and launch of gohaena.com and QR code:

- Centralized user portal manages thousands of reservations and hundreds of secure financial transactions every day.
- Clearly communicates a unified set of policies for all access options, guidance and tips to help customers make the most out of a state park visit.
- Links to State Parks websites for information on all area parks and camping permits.



Development of a customer survey suite

- Feedback is key to understanding the visitor experience, and opportunities to improve or enhance operations.
- Surveys have a significant 10% user response rate.
- The vast majority of respondents consistently rank their park visit a 4 or 5 out of 5 and reflect that the number of others on the trail or beach seemed about right.



Increased and stabilized shuttle ridership

- Began with 264 riders per day, now over 400.
- Reduced vehicles traveling from Waipā to Hā'ena, initially 100 cars daily, now almost 200 per day (well over 50,000 cars annually).
- Onboard audio recording provides cultural information to riders.
- Waipā signage and storyboards also educate riders pre-visit.

Free shuttle service for residents between Hā'ena and Hanalei

- Shuttles heading back to Hanalei in the mornings provide an alternative way to get to school and work.
- Shuttles also offer afternoon rides back to Wainiha / Hā'ena.
- THI hopes to increase free community ridership in 2022.



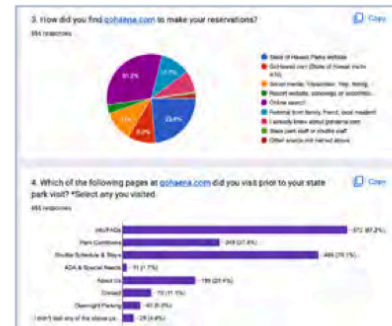


Shuttle underpins a financially viable community economic ecosystem.

- Access System employs over 20 north shore residents.
- Sustains the Hui and its stewardship / cultural activities in the park.
- Also supports a dozen local businesses and nonprofits, creating the means to better mālama this wahi pana.

Coordinated “Know Before You Go” campaign

- Worked with Kauai Visitor Bureau, industry partners and developed a radio campaign to inform both visitors and residents about the new access rules, to encourage compliance.
- Regular monitoring of online visitor forums indicates that social norms are developing that encourage compliance peer to peer.
- THI is developing a new “road conditions / etiquette” website to support the community’s efforts to manage visitor impacts.



Returning park visitors are overwhelmingly supportive of the new park management system

Before the slides on the highway I had driven down intending to show friends the beautiful area, however the tourists and autos were backed up and parked a mile back from roads end. I swore then I would never go down again ... I was THRILLED to learn that the state was making the changes so deeply needed to control the overuse of the beautiful island of Kauai.

Really appreciate the improvements in parking, landscaping and preservation.

So glad they have improved the whole experience by limiting the numbers of visitors. Much better than in the past.

I was there also about 10 years ago and it was a nightmare....parked about a mile away (literally) and walked in through packs of cars. Traffic was horrendous! This time the experience was fantastic - easy to drive in, chat with the attendant, and park. I had no trouble purchasing passes either.

I visited the park prior to the flooding. Seeing all the hard work that was done to mark access limited to passes and shuttles is heartwarming. It protects the land and gives tourists the chances to stay on paths. I couldn't believe how much it changed. The efficiency of the process and the people working being organized was awesome....we had a very difficult and challenging hike, worth all the aches. Ha'ena area is one of the most beautiful spots I've ever seen and should be preserved as it is now. Many other parks on the mainland need the shuttle service, well done.

HSP Integrated Access System – Year 1

THI

The Hanalei Initiative is the day-to-day manager of the HSP Integrated Access System. THI attendants check in visitors at the park-&-ride (to board the shuttle) and at the park's entrance gate (for those arriving by car or on foot). Attendants at the park's shuttle hale also greet park visitors and organize return rides from the park. THI's communications staff monitor and respond to customer inquiries and needs while also collecting feedback on the visitor experience with THI's post-visit survey suite. THI monitors visitor access demand and manages capacities to ensure consistent resident access, stable shuttle system operations and overall access management in alignment with the park's master plan.

Waipā

Nonprofit Waipā Foundation provides THI with a license to use the site of the Waipā Park & Ride, which is conveniently located just outside Hanalei town, approximately 25 minutes away from HSP. THI began partnering with Waipā in the original 2019 KNSS system and was thankful to re-launch from that same location in 2021. As pandemic concerns faded and tourism rebounded, shuttle capacity also expanded, almost doubling parking needs at Waipā. Fortunately, Waipā Foundation was able to graciously accommodate the system's increased parking needs. System site fees support Waipā Foundation's stewardship work, cultural activities and programming, all greatly valued by the north shore community.

PolyAd

Polynesian Adventures LLC was the only fully qualified operator on island able to provide comprehensive shuttle service for the original KNSS in 2019 until shuttle operations were suspended upon the arrival of COVID-19 in 2020. Since shuttle service re-launched as part of the Integrated Access system in July/2021, PolyAd has maintained reliable shuttle operations and also doubled the number of shuttles it provides, even with the same type of ongoing staffing challenges that have also plagued so many island businesses post-pandemic.

HSP Parking Lot

The HSP Parking Lot was developed by DSP after the 2018 floods to accommodate up to 100 cars serving both day-use and overnight visitors as well as residents. Resident use varies mainly by day-of-week and holidays, while visitor use varies week-by-week seasonally. A stable shuttle system is imperative to enable the HSP daily usage targets as the HSP Parking Lot alone does not have capacity to do so, nor does it generate sufficient revenue for critical park reinvestment. A key element of the Integrated Access System is adjusting parking lot availability to address demand fluctuations and to work in concert with the shuttle system to deliver on park visitation targets and financial sustainability of the system.

Hui

Hui Maka'āinana o Makana held a Curatorship Agreement for HSP for the past 20 years, and is a trusted partner of DSP as the primary place-based entity caretaking the cultural resources and farming lo'i kalo using traditional infrastructure. The Hui advocated for a transition from the agreement to a 1-year revocable permit (RP) to enable the Hui to oversee the cultural landscape of the park and implement the trial HSP Integrated Access System (which was subcontracted to THI due to its previous shuttle management experience). The first year success has led to another 1-year RP in 2022; pending continued success, the expectation is that the permit will transition into a longer term lease or agreement.

DSP

The Division of State Parks is ultimately responsible for HSP as a whole. A community-led, government-supported concept for local nonprofits managing certain aspects of a state park is an entirely new model that DSP's leadership and insights on adaptive management sanctioned as a pilot project. With the successes thus far, HSP could become a template for not only managing other state parks across Hawai'i, but improving the overall economic base and community place-based engagement, ultimately resulting in a better resident and visitor park visit experience.

This new Integrated Access System would not be possible without centralized local management of daily operations and the participation and expertise each of these entities provides toward supporting the system.



Adaptive Management – Continuous Improvement

“The primary management concept implemented at the park is adaptive management [which] the Department of the Interior describes... as ‘an iterative learning process producing improved understanding and improved management over time. ...It is not a ‘trial and error’ process,... but rather a means to more effective decisions and enhanced benefits.’”

****Williams et al, 2009, quoted in Hā‘ena State Park Master Plan***

THI – along with every partner in the system - continues to focus on adaptive management as a core principle for continuous improvement and success. Being a new system, there have been ample opportunities to identify, prioritize and implement new processes, process improvements, metrics, feedback mechanisms, and a host of other changes. Three of the primary areas THI have focused on this year are Communications, Operations, and Management.

Communications

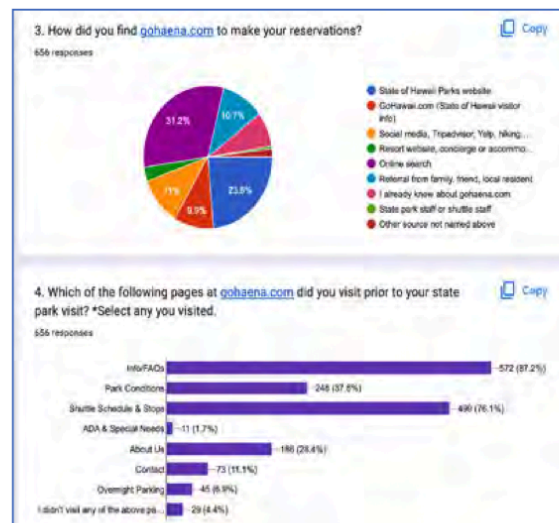
THI has developed comprehensive communications focused on outreach, customer relations, and compliance efforts.

Outreach – Know Before You Go

The park access system, by design, restricts the number of park visitors which means that not everyone who wishes to visit the park will be able to do so in the manner in which they might prefer. THI has prioritized advocacy and engagement to increase awareness and build social norms that encourage widespread support for restricted access to the park.

Highlights:

- **Online** - Access fees and rules changed in July 2021. THI swept external websites and requested changes to outdated or inaccurate information. THI’s team regularly monitors popular social media pages and visitor/hiker forums. The team is encouraged to observe residents AND VISITORS stepping up in online venues to educate others on acceptable behavior. Awareness of norms will be the system’s best defense against non-compliance.
- **Resident awareness** - THI facilitated an HTA offer to produce a social media campaign for the Hui targeted toward local audiences. The short video features Hui President Presley Wann and THI President Mina Morita sharing a glimpse of the Hui’s longstanding and visionary leadership in the park’s adaptive management strategies.
- **On the ground** - THI has prioritized signage to ensure good information and engagement. Sign planning started with Waipa Park & Ride design/installations, and THI is now focused on the park entrance and park boundaries in consultation with State Parks and Hui leadership. Interpretive signs along the boardwalk are an important Year-2 priority to better communicate the Hui’s work and the park’s cultural and natural resources.



HSP Integrated Access System – Year 1

Customer Relations

Initial system operations in the summer of 2021 were challenged not only by statewide COVID concerns, but also by the twice daily, multiple-hour highway closures necessitated by ongoing response to the Hanalei Hill landslide (March/2021). While making their park reservations, about 10% of visitors missed 4 different website warnings about the daily road closures which prompted the need for customer accommodations and engagement. THI's staff leaned into the issues, gathered insights and carried a resolve of adaptation and flexibility through the year with the following insights:

- **Compassion for customers.** Standby options were set to accommodate those who miss or cannot make their shuttle, reducing disappointment and frustration. Shuttle ticket holders unfailingly appreciate staff efforts.
- **Easy cancellation.** Reservations routinely sell out 2-3 weeks in advance, but posted cancellation windows offer new opportunities for last minute visitors hoping to visit the park. Easing the cancellation terms also virtually eliminated purchase disputes, and reduced staff workload while still maintaining full inventory sales.
- **Invite feedback.** THI consistently uses customer and community feedback to make system improvements. Refining website content and helping visitors to better help themselves reduces staff time and encourages safer, more aware and appropriate behaviors and, hopefully, a more enjoyable visit. In response to feedback on initial survey responses in spring/2022, THI's launched a new shuttle schedule summer/2022 which added 3 hours of afternoon pick-ups.

Building a strong communications department to make information more easily understood, accessible, transparent, and accurate.

Compliance

- THI began beach boundary monitoring in April/2022 to establish a baseline understanding of non-compliance. While expectations were uncertain, less than 1% of daily park visitors were observed circumventing access rules. When reservations began to sell out more than 3 weeks in advance in early June, THI implemented another round of monitoring and was encouraged that even during high demand, observed non-compliance remained below 1%.
- "Entry only" reservation customers are strongly discouraged from inappropriately parking elsewhere in Hā'ena, but anecdotal observations suggest it still happens. To limit abuse, entry only sales are a small fraction of the total park access allotment. The option is intended primarily for residents with visiting friends and family, or for visitors who are staying within walking or biking distance to the park. These types of customers are not always able to purchase passes because reservations sell out within hours upon release. To address this, THI developed a local pickup option for this allocation modeled after State Park's camping permit local pickup system.
- Many vehicles that arrive at the park entrance (also the end of the highway, rural route 560) simply turn around without entering the park. Electronic data contracted by THI suggests that a sizable chunk of the "turn arounds" end up at Lumaha'i beach, one of Hawaii's deadliest beaches (due to drownings). Limited available parking at Lumaha'i and congestion at other beach parking between Hā'ena and Hanalei may also contribute to poor choices. THI is advocating for a "lifeguarded beaches only" safety campaign and gate staff try to suggest safer alternatives.

HSP Integrated Access System – Year 1

Operations

THI prioritizes hiring from the North Shore community and especially those with longstanding familial ties. Starting in July/2021, the staff from the park's previous parking contractor were hired and onboarded along with THI employees who were brought back from pandemic induced layoff. Access system staff work out of 3 primary locations: Waipā Park & Ride, HSP Gate House / Entrance Gate, and HSP Shuttle Hale while management and administrative staff work out of THI's Hanalei office. In the first year, internal communications focused on articulating and working towards the same goals and ensuring actions reflect the right priorities for place, culture, resources, staff, community and visitors. Knowledge of place is key to remembering what has been achieved and why these solutions must succeed.

THI has prioritized investment in nurturing staff capabilities through customer service training and computer literacy. Programming conducted by Ka'ala Souza had 100% percent staff participation and focused on customer engagement, use of de-escalation tactics, how to show empathy, be kind, and use knowledge of place to inform visitors.

THI's staff faced many challenges this year, some very unexpected. These included:

- **Ran an effective integrated access system during the COVID-19 pandemic** despite staffing shortages, having to provide protective supplies and establish protocols, enforcing TSA mask requirements, and managing compliance with the state's testing/vaccination requirements for subcontractors.
- **Illness and serious health scares.** 7 staff members - half our operations crew - fell ill over a span of 6 weeks which included a stroke and a heart attack, besides COVID-19. All available staff worked together to maintain operations.
- **Interactions with aloha.** Every day, THI attendants welcome state park visitors, educate the public, and communicate state park access rules firmly and kindly. THI strives to employ individuals who have a great work ethic, who believe in the access system solution, and who want to be a part of the amazing team that works together to implement the community's strategies. HSP Entrance Attendants, in particular, professionally communicate the park's access rules to those who arrive at the park unaware and are often disappointed. Hundreds a day, of not just visitors, but residents without proper identification or with guests too. The stress and even occasional abuse that attendants undergo to protect this wahi pana requires patience and special skills.

Numerous meetings with HSP partner organizations have resulted in several system wide improvements. THI provides walkie-talkies to THI staff, DSP HSP rangers, County lifeguards and Hui staff to improve onsite park communications. The rangers report they feel safer and more comfortable moving around the park because they are always in direct contact with all the other workers in the park. Additionally, the communication between DSP and THI in anticipating and responding to inclement weather and deteriorating trail conditions due to high stream flow has helped in providing timely information to system attendants and enabled real time decisions to keep park visitors safe. THI has also provided its HSP attendants with a satellite phone to ensure reliable communication since there is typically no cell service to, from, and within the park. This has strengthened emergency preparedness and daily operations too.

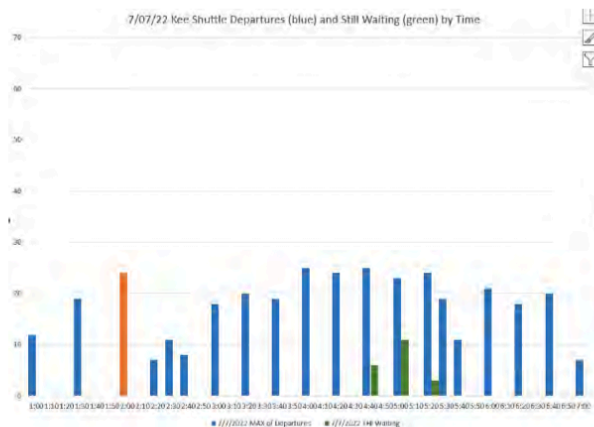
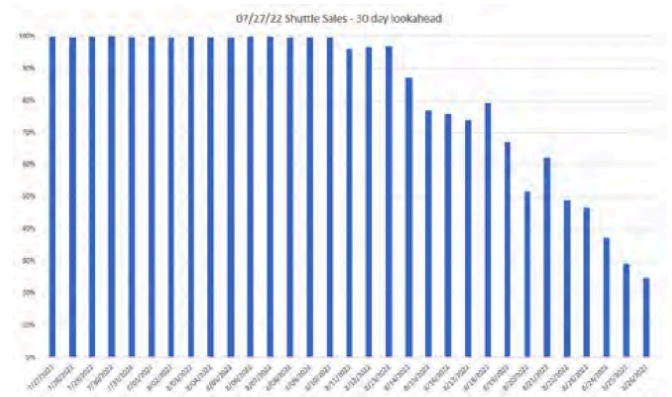
As local residents who care deeply for this wahi pana, THI staff lead by example and go beyond their regular job duties. Staff regularly put in discretionary effort to help weed and clean up access system sites, pick up garbage, assist the Hui with its efforts, monitor Limahuli stream use, and demonstrate a sense of personal kuleana to the state park and surrounding areas. Most staff consider the opportunity to be a part of this endeavor as a privilege and blessing, and the THI team is strongly motivated to strive to do what is in the best interest of the park, community, and partnerships.

HSP Integrated Access System – Year 1

Management

Throughout the first year, the management team embraced the adaptive management practice of data driven reflection and refinement of operations. Through consistent monitoring, collection and analysis of data points, key improvements were made to the reservation website, allocation ratios for shuttle and parking, parking accommodations for overnight camping permit holders, operational response to weather and trail closures, and other issues to improve the park visitor experience and collaboration between various system partners and stakeholders.

THI developed and uses a Shuttle Lookahead demand forecasting system in which the next 30 days of shuttle reservations are graphed and analyzed regularly to understand upcoming park demand and maintain a historical record for reference and future capacity planning purposes.



Cognizant of transit system norms through our shuttle management experience from 2019, THI also developed a Wait Time analysis tool to assess the variability in when visitors depart the park each afternoon and actual wait times that visitors experience. The tool helped to set appropriate overall shuttle use, schedules, and afternoon departure capacities to support an excellent customer experience.

THI has developed protocols for inclement weather and various potential emergency response situations. The weather protocols have been refined with real-world experience since their inception with the 2019 shuttle operations. These protocols prioritize safety, include tested communications pathways, and provide multiple entities with the ability to cancel operations and/or close some or all elements of park access. Protocols have been developed in conjunction with all key Integrated Access System partners and stakeholders.

Governance is a key part of maintaining the Integrated Access System's processes and effective coordination. THI maintains a regular schedule of internal and inter-agency meetings to facilitate adaptive management and continuous improvement.

Acknowledgments

THI wishes to mahalo Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana for demonstrating early visionary and persistent leadership in its long and steadfast efforts to malama Hā‘ena, and THI is especially thankful for the opportunity to join the Hui in operating the park access system. THI welcomes and will continue to look forward to the Hui’s guidance, leadership, alliance, and partnership as this journey continues in the years to come.

THI also acknowledges that in addition to the Hui’s past labors, many hands help the access system to run smoothly every single day. To those listed below and others, both residents and visitors, who have provided help, insights and feedback, THI’s board and staff extend a heartfelt mahalo.

Agency Partners

State of Hawai‘i Department of
Land and Natural Resources
Hawai‘i State Parks
Hawai‘i Dept. of Transportation
Hawai‘i Tourism Authority
County of Kaua‘i (Admin, Parks,
Ocean Safety, Police, Fire)
Kaua‘i Visitor Bureau

Access System Partners:

Hui Maka‘āinana o Makana
Limahuli Garden, NTBG
Waipā Foundation
Polynesian Adventures LLC
Hanalei Colony Resort
Wainiha Country Market
Chantal Mentzer, CPA
SmartStubs

Other Supporters:

Hā‘ena / Wainiha communities
Ka‘ala Souza
Max Blue Desantis
Pacific Radio Group
Wasabi Design, Inc.

Rep. Nadine Nakamura
and all of our elected officials
who have expressed consistent
support

*And with deep appreciation and gratitude to our incredible staff
who are asked to work with aloha, rain or shine, every single day of the year.
Thank you for making it all work!*

And with great sadness we bid aloha ‘oe to two beloved keiki hānau o ka ‘āina who worked to bring the vision of this wahi pana to a reality.



Carlos Andrade



Vena Chandler



Kealakekua Bay, South Kona, Hawai'i

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT
FOR HOUSE BILL 1422 HD2
RELATING TO MOTOR CARRIERS**

Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and The Arts
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 11, 2025

3:00 PM

Room 224

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the Committee,

Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui (HKN) is a Native Hawaiian-driven 501(c)3 nonprofit committed to implementing traditional methods of environmental stewardship, education, and cultural preservation at the wahi pana of Kealakekua Bay for the benefit of all, including future generations. Our organization is updating our Adopt-a-Park agreement with the Division of State Parks (DSP) and continues to build capacity and support to manage Kealakekua Bay. Further, we actively engage with the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) in the stewardship of its Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD), established in 1967 and implemented in 1969. Since then, the Kealakekua MLCD has only seen a massive decline in marine life for fifty-five years and increased human use. Our community came together and developed the Kealakekua Bay Community Action Plan (The CAP), which, after forty years of attempts, the Board of Land and Natural Resources voted unanimously to include in the Final Master Plan for Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park. On page 2 of the CAP, you will find a Code of Conduct (see Appendix A below). We believe implementing such codes is unique and separates community-based commercial ventures from others.

Kealakekua Bay welcomes visitors from six different entry points. The Ka'awaloa Trail, Hikiau heiau, Nāpo'opo'o Wharf, Manini Beach Road shoreline, Kahauloa Bay (kayak tours), and boat tours from Keauhou and Honokohau harbors, and Kailua pier. In 2024, Kealakekua Bay received over 53,000 visitors from the trail alone and 700,000 visitors annually to the unmanaged Kealakekua Bay State Park in a rural fishing village in South Kona. We recognize and continue our kuleana to place-based stewardship. We take pride in working towards resilient, sustainable avenues such as a shuttle service to manage human use capacity and provide a unique experience in regenerative tourism that integrates localized cultural practices and implements a code of conduct. More recently, our collaboration with State Parks extended to Hui Maka'āinana o Makana (The Hui) and The Hanalei Initiative over at Ha'ena on Kaua'i.

HB1422 HD2 exempts community-based organizations engaged in community-based economic development from providing transportation services under the Motor Carrier Law under certain

circumstances. In the DLNR Chair's previous testimony to this bill, she mentioned how Ha'ena State Park is a model for other State Parks, such as Kealahou Bay State Historical Park, and would benefit as part of regenerative tourism and community-based stewardship. HKN intends to start its shuttle service, with the support of the community and State Parks, to support our community-based stewardship of Kealahou Bay's natural and cultural resources, especially the human use capacity. This measure is written broadly so other non-profits working with state and county agencies to address community "hot spots" in a similar way could seek an exemption. HKN works closely with State Parks, The Ha'ena Initiative, and The Hui to implement a comparable model at Kealahou Bay State Historical Park. This bill will directly benefit the Kealahou Bay community.

Please support HB1422 HD2.

‘O wau ‘iho nō,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shane Palacat-Nelsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "P".

Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelsen
President


Appendix A

Kealakekua Bay Community Action Plan

KEALAKEKUA BAY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

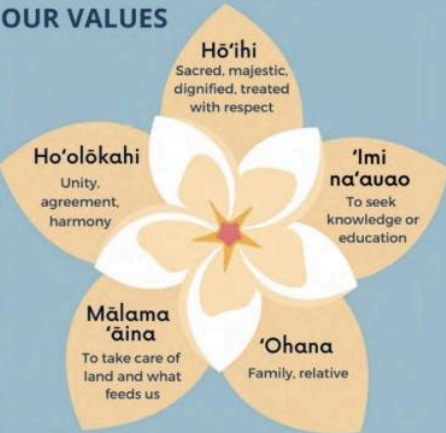
OUR VISION

Kealakekua Bay is a living, spiritual place. It is a vibrant ecosystem interwoven with traditional knowledge and practices, honored and cultivated through understanding and reverence of this wahi pana (sacred place).







FOCUS AREA

OUR VALUES



- Hō'ihi**
Sacred, majestic, dignified, treated with respect
- Ho'olōkahi**
Unity, agreement, harmony
- 'Imi na'auao**
To seek knowledge or education
- 'Ōhana**
Family, relative
- Mālama 'āina**
To take care of land and what feeds us

CODE OF CONDUCT

 <p>Pono Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be respectful of village residents and private property• Be observant (kilo)• Tread lightly• Quiet hours 5 pm - 8 am• Relationship building with visitors• Compliance of the rules on signage	 <p>'Āina Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treat this sacred place with reverence• Keep distance from wildlife• Coral is a living animal - Please float above and don't step on it• Safety first - When in doubt, don't go out• Bring plenty of water• Pack out what you pack in
 <p>Spiritual and Cultural Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show respect and reverence for cultural and archeological sites and their practitioners• Stay on trails• Refrain from entering archeological and spiritual areas	 <p>Lawai'a Pono (fishing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harvest for the table, not the freezer• Share your catch• Respect traditional fishing practices• Respect local fishing rules

For a full version of the Kealakekua Bay CAP, follow the link:
<https://kealakekua.org/community-action-plan/>