



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

LAURA H. THIELEN, CHAIRPERSON
Phone: (808) 587-0320
Fax: (808) 587-0390

For Immediate Release: November 6, 2009

DLNR HOLDS COMMUNITY SCOPING MEETING ON MASTER PLAN UPDATE FOR KEALAKEKUA BAY STATE HISTORICAL PARK

HONOLULU – The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of State Parks, invites the public to attend a scoping meeting on Saturday, November 14 on its update of a master plan to guide the long-term use and management of Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park.

The scoping meeting will be held at Konawaena Elementary School Cafeteria in Kealakekua, Hawai‘i, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Information can be found online at <http://beltcollins.com/kealakekua>

“We are continuing to seek the community’s assistance to better manage the multiple issues of traffic and parking, impacts of park use on the neighboring community, interpretation of the significant history of Kealakekua, and protection of the natural and cultural resources of the park,” said Laura H. Thielen, DLNR chairperson.

As the planning moves forward between now and 2011, there will be additional opportunities for public input on the plan and EIS.

The master plan will refine and expand the 1997 conceptual plan for the park by incorporating new and relevant information and considering new alternatives for park facilities, programs, interpretive concepts and park management. Belt Collins Hawai‘i is serving as the consultant to DLNR for the master plan update. DLNR’s contract with Belt Collins is for \$561,526 with planning funds appropriated by the Legislature in the previous biennium (FY07).

For more information about the community scoping meeting, contact Lisa Reinke at (808) 521-5361 or email <Kealakekua@beltcollins.com>

#

For more information news media may contact

Deborah Ward
DLNR Public information specialist



Hikiāu heiau at Nāpō'opo'o

Community input and collaboration will be integral to the planning process.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Kealakekua Bay, translated as the pathway of the gods, is one of the most significant cultural and historic places in Hawai'i. Settled more than 1,000 year ago, the bay offered a safe anchorage and an abundance of marine resources. Prominent historical events and individuals are associated with Kealakekua, most notably the selection of Kealakekua as one of the seven chiefly residences of Kona and the arrival and death of Captain James Cook. Kealakekua is also significant as a microcosm of Hawai'i's cultural history and the changes that occurred with Western contact. The sheltered bay was a favored stopping point for explorers, whalers, and trans-Pacific traders after Western contact and into the early 1800s. In 1973, the **Kealakekua Bay Historical District** was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

PARTNERSHIPS

The State values ongoing partnerships with community organizations. These partnerships enable DLNR to protect the natural and cultural resources at Kealakekua Bay now and in the future. DLNR partners with the following community organizations:

Hale Mua Cultural Group, works with State Parks on the maintenance, management, interpretation, documentation and monitoring of the historic properties at Ka'awaloa.

Mālama Pono Kealakekua, along with the larger community, have partnered in planning for Kealakekua Bay and the park. They have also undertaken landscaping improvements and assisted in erecting interpretive signs at Nāpō'opo'o Landing.

PROJECT SCHEDULE:



Join Us in Planning Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park!

CONTACTS & MORE INFORMATION

Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

Division of State Parks
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, HI 96809

Martha Yent

Interpretive Program Manager
Martha.E.Yent@hawaii.gov
P. 808-587-0287

There will be several opportunities for you to collaborate and provide your comments on park issues, alternatives, the Master Plan Update and the EIS. Check the project website for planning documents and announcements, sign up on the project mailing list to receive community meeting

announcements, or send your comments in writing or electronically via email to:

Lisa Reinke, AIA

Belt Collins Hawaii Ltd.
2153 N. King Street, Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96819
P. 808-521-5361

EMAIL

kealakekua@beltcollins.com

PROJECT WEBSITE

<http://beltcollins.com/kealakekua>

PARK WEBSITE AND BROCHURE

www.hawaiistateparks.org/parks/hawaii/Index.cfm?park_id=46

www.hawaiistateparks.org/parks/brochure_pdfs/hsp_kealakekua_bay_shp27.pdf

STATE PARKS PLANS AND REPORTS

www.hawaiistateparks.org/plans/index.cfm



Above: View from Ka'awaloa from Nāpō'opo'o, 1820 (Bingham). Below: View of Captain Cook Monument at Ka'awaloa.



Kealakekua Bay is one of Hawai'i's most significant historical and cultural places.

COMMUNITY MEETING

Saturday, November 14, 2009

1:30-3:30 P.M.

Konawaena Elementary School Cafeteria
Kealakekua, Hawai'i

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

November 2009

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of State Parks, is preparing a Master Plan Update to guide the long-term use and management of Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park. The update is needed to be able to better manage park visitors and resources. DLNR and the community have participated in numerous Kealakekua Bay planning sessions over the past 25 years and once again, we are calling for the community's assistance in shaping the future of the park.

The Master Plan will refine and expand the 1997 Conceptual Plan for the park by incorporating new and relevant information and considering new alternatives for park facilities, programs, interpretive concepts and park management.

The Master Plan update will reflect the Department of Land and Natural Resources' (DLNR's) guiding principles for the historical park:

- **Preserve the cultural landscape and historic resources of this very significant historical place,**
- **Protect the marine resources of Kealakekua Bay,**
- **Promote the scenic value and natural park setting, and**
- **Accommodate outdoor recreation in a manner that does not impact or degrade the natural and cultural values and resources.**

The Master Plan will not include detailed facility designs nor will it guarantee funding, but it will serve as a phasing plan to guide the State with the implementation of park programs, management, and development. Before improvements can be made at the park, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) must be completed to assess the impacts of proposed actions in the plan on the environment and on the economic and social welfare and cultural practices of the community and State.



PARK MISSION AND GOALS

Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park reveals Hawai'i's history and preserves significant historic sites and natural resources for future generations. Interpretive programming within the park will place Kealakekua within the larger context of Hawaiian history and the cultural-historical sites in Kona. The historical park will accommodate recreational opportunities that are compatible with natural or cultural resources within park boundaries and the MLCDD.

MANAGEMENT

Five primary divisions of the DLNR manage the lands, waters, and facilities and enforce rules and regulations at Kealakekua Bay:

The Division of State Parks manages the land-based natural and cultural resources and the recreational activities in the park.

The Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) oversees the marine resources and fishing activities in the bay, a Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD).

The Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR) manages Nāpō'opo'o Landing and the recreational activities in the bay, including boating, snorkeling, and diving.

Na Ala Hele, the State Trail and Access Program within the **Division of Forestry and Wildlife**, manages trail activities for both public and commercial recreational activities.

The Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) has enforcement authority within the park, the MLCDD, Nāpō'opo'o Landing and trails under the Na Ala Hele program.



Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park is located in the South Kona District of Hawai'i Island. The 216-acre park is situated along the shoreline on the western slope of Mauna Loa, embracing Kealakekua Bay on its north, east and southern shores. The impressive 600-foot-high Pali Kapu o Keōua, a sheer cliff face, towers over the bay.

The dramatic topography of the site divides the park into three planning and management areas: **Nāpō'opo'o**, **Ka'awaloa**, and **Pali Kapu Ō Keoua (the pali)**. The Nāpō'opo'o section, portions of which were previously a County park, is reached by paved residential roads and is the most heavily used; the shoreline areas of the Ka'awaloa section are heavily visited by kayakers and snorkelers; Ka'awaloa Flat is reached by unpaved roads or trails and by boat; and the pali, the least used park area, is only accessible by an overgrown trail, partially located on private property.

As the largest sheltered natural bay on the island of Hawai'i, 1.5 miles in length and 1 mile in width, Kealakekua Bay has been an important anchorage for canoes and ships throughout its history. The bay was designated a **Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD)** in 1969 to protect and preserve the rich diversity of its marine life. Kealakekua Bay's waters are nearly pristine, and the bay is one of the most popular ocean recreation areas on the island. It is visited daily by commercial snorkeling and diving tours, primarily from Keauhou and Kailua, and is also a popular location for kayakers who paddle across the bay from Nāpō'opo'o Landing to Ka'awaloa Cove. Although the bay is not under State Park's management jurisdiction and technically not part of the park, it is an essential resource for interpreting and managing the park resources and history.



Existing trail and rock walls at Ka'awaloa



View from Nāpō'opo'o Beach to Ka'awaloa.



Early Ka'awaloa Road

Issues and Opportunities Identified By Past Planning Efforts

The following issues have been identified in the past and will be addressed by the current planning effort. The planning team welcomes new input from the community on these and other issues which may be relevant today.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND FACILITIES

ISSUE: Visitation and recreation use continues to increase at Kealakekua Bay.

What types of visitor experiences, activities and facilities should be available in different sections of the park for a diverse group of park users? How can the park accommodate different audiences?

It is estimated that 115,000 visitors came to Kealakekua Bay in 2007, 85% from out of state. Most visitors take part in ocean recreation, arriving via commercial boat tours and rental cars. There are no restrooms, trash receptacles or park facilities at Ka'awaloa.

What types of commercial activities, concessions or fees are appropriate or necessary for the park? How do commercial activities impact the park's historical setting and cultural values?

Commercial ocean recreation has the potential to impact the historical setting and cultural values of both the park and the bay. In separate efforts, DLNR is addressing ocean recreation issues through the Kealakekua Stewardship Area Management Plan, working with commercial tour companies, and modifying permits, rules and regulations.

ISSUE: Interpretation is limited.

How should the park sites and area history be interpreted? How can the park present the layers of time, history and stories? Should the interpretive themes extend beyond the park boundaries?

RESOURCE PROTECTION

ISSUE: The park's many significant historic and cultural resources are at risk from uncontrolled access via trail and kayak landings at Ka'awaloa, and from limited management and park personnel.

Until all these resources are identified and protected, are there other ways for the visitor to experience various park sections and its history? Should park areas be restricted because of cultural sensitivity?

ISSUE: Pollution, soil erosion, and runoff may impact the bay's resources.

Although DLNR's Stewardship Plan addresses some of these issues, how can the park plan for the viability of its natural resources, scenic views, and marine life in the bay?

MANAGEMENT

ISSUE: State funding constraints have limited park maintenance, staffing and enforcement.

How can the park provide needed management and enforcement to expand resource stewardship?

ISSUE: More substantial partnering is needed for park management and enforcement.

How can productive partnerships be strengthened and developed with community organizations, educators, historical societies, landowners, county and federal agencies?

One State Parks caretaker is assigned to Nāpō'opo'o, but there is no official park presence, interpretive program, visitor service areas or full-time park security. Caretaker groups and volunteers have assisted periodically, but more support is needed. More visitors have resulted in more littering, abuse of historic sites, prohibited fishing in the MLCDD, and disrespectful conduct and conflicts with the community. Relying on the State's limited enforcement supplemented by Neighborhood Watch and self-enforcement by commercial operators has not been enough to halt destructive activities.

ACCESS AND PARKING

ISSUE: Park access is limited.

What areas of the park should be accessible? What modes of transportation should be allowed? Are there other historic trails in the area that should be tied into the park trail system?

The Nāpō'opo'o area is the only park section accessible by visitors arriving by car via paved County roads. Other than one park sign at the end of the road, there are no signs directing visitors to the park, orienting them to park facilities or trails.

To access Ka'awaloa, most visitors launch kayaks from Nāpō'opo'o Landing and paddle across the bay, on their own or on a guided tour. Visitors also hike down Ka'awaloa Road and occasionally 4-wheel drive and ATV vehicles and horseback tours travel on trails to Ka'awaloa. The pali is rarely visited as the trail access is not maintained. Although a stunning overlook of the bay, the pali is a sacred place with Hawaiian burial sites.

ISSUE: Residents are disturbed by park visitors arriving at the Nāpō'opo'o section of the park on the narrow County roads.

The community is concerned about the traffic on roads, pedestrian safety, noise, parking, and any increase in auto or bus traffic to the park.

ISSUE: Parking is insufficient.

How can parking be improved? Will parking improvements restrict local residents' use of the park?

Parking occurs at the end of Nāpō'opo'o Beach Road. There are no marked stalls or bus parking stalls, but the turnaround accommodates about 20 cars (one ADA accessible stall). Parking at Nāpō'opo'o Landing is limited to another 20 cars which fill quickly as kayaking from the Landing has increased. Overflow parking occurs on the narrow residential roads. At the Ka'awaloa Road trailhead near Māmalahoa Highway, hikers park along the dirt shoulder of Nāpō'opo'o Road.

SAFETY

ISSUE: Remote, steep terrain, hazardous ocean conditions and natural disasters may pose safety risks to park visitors.

Should access be restricted or discouraged in any areas of the park because of safety concerns?

Safety concerns may disrupt park use in the future and will affect where facilities and circulation paths may be located. Rockfall hazards from the 2006 earthquake resulted in temporary park closure and establishment of no-entry zones in the bay. There are no lifeguards at the State Park to respond to water safety incidents and emergency evacuation from Ka'awaloa is challenging due to the road condition.

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND COORDINATION

ISSUE: There are no buffers between Nāpō'opo'o village and the historical park.

How can park planning respect the small residential community of Nāpō'opo'o, in which the park is located? How can the park function as both a statewide and neighborhood resource?

Traffic congestion, street parking, limited infrastructure, desecration of historic sites, illegal activities, disrespectful behavior, invasion of privacy and an increasing number of visitors to the park and bay are potential areas of conflict for the residents of this long-standing, peaceful community.

How can the park planning address park-related activities that occur outside of the park?

Nāpō'opo'o Landing is a DOBOR facility where visitors park and launch kayaks. The Landing is in need of structural and safety improvements, active management and parking relief. There is no longer a Landing attendant provided by the Kayak Alliance of the Islands (KAI) to assist kayakers, monitor pier use, and educate users on the MLCDD and the bay's historical significance.