



**Date:** January 26, 2022  
**To:** Project Files  
**From:** Townscape, Inc.  
**Re:** Waikapuna Resources Management Plan – Community Meeting

**Meeting Attendees:** Meeting attendees were asked to sign-in via a Google Form. Only 38 participants signed-in, but 64 participants joined the meeting online or called in by phone. Participants from the consultant team included Sherri Hiraoka and Gabrielle Sham (Townscape, Inc.). County of Hawai'i staff (Maxine Cutler, Hamana Ventura, and Jean Campbell) also attended the meeting, and Kaleo Paik represented Ala Kahakai Trail Association (ATA).

This memo documents the virtual community meeting held on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 via Zoom for the Waikapuna Resources Management Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to provide background information on the management plan process and schedule and to gather mana'o about the important cultural and natural resources of Waikapuna and critical issues relating to the resources.

Gabrielle Sham started the meeting at 6:30 p.m. She provided a slideshow presentation that shared why the property was acquired for conservation, explained how ATA and the County are involved with Waikapuna, and the management plan schedule and process. Some key points included:

- The Waikapuna parcel encompasses 2,317 acres within the ahupua'a of Kāhīlipalīnui and Kāhīhipalī'iki.
- In December 2019, ATA, a non-profit organization, raised funds through the State Legacy Land Conservation Program (LLCP), the County's Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Fund (Preservation Fund), The Trust for Public Land, and private donors to acquire Waikapuna.
- The County holds a Conservation Easement over the property, which protects it from development. A Conservation Easement removes one or more development rights that are attached to a piece of land and permanently limits the uses of the lands.
- Waikapuna has been subject to the threat of development, especially after the closure of the plantation. There were proposed plans for a spaceport in this area in the late 1980s. Several years later, there were proposed plans for a commuter airport facility. The most recent proposed development consisted of a subdivision development with 22 lots.
- There were previous discussions with the State, County, and National Park Service to see if they would be interested in taking ownership of these lands, but at that time, these entities did not feel they had the capacity to oversee and manage these lands. In 2016, ATA was approached and asked if they would accept this kuleana of ownership.
- The State LLCP grant and County Conservation Easement require ATA to establish a land management plan that is consistent with the purposes of these programs.

- After the acquisition of Waikapuna in December 2019, ATA had to seek funding for the management plan. In late August 2021, Townscape, Inc. was contracted to help with the development of the management plan.
- Townscape's work has included reviewing past reports/studies and talk story with stakeholders to understand the resources of the place and areas of concern. Townscape will continue to talk story with stakeholders to start developing ideas for stewardship over the next six months and plans to share a draft plan with the community by the third quarter of this year and to finalize the management plan by late this year. Once it is finalized, ATA will work with the community and volunteers to implement the management plan.
- The management plan will need to address some of the following elements, which are also identified as being important and of interest to the State as part of the grant funding and to the County as part of the Conservation Easement agreement: the wahi pana and cultural landscape; marine and coastal resources; native and endangered bird species habitat; native and endangered plant species; ranching; and managed community access.
- Management Plan information will be made available on:
  - County's website:  
<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/weblink/Browse.aspx?startid=13770&dbid=1>
  - ATA's website: <http://www.alakahakaitrail.org>

Gabrielle then shared some of the **resources** that stakeholders have expressed as being important for Waikapuna based on consultations thus far:

- Overnight access
- Fishing and nearshore resources
- Sense of place/privacy
- Open space
- Cultural and historic sites
- Salt ponds
- Native plant habitat
- Sea caves and cliffs, native bird habitat
- Hiking
- Ranching
- Education and stewardship opportunities

Some **areas of concern** that stakeholders have shared include:

- Community access
- Fire risk
- Damage to cultural and historic sites
- Marine debris and trash
- Invasive plant and animal species
- Climate change
- Safety

### Chat/Questions/Comments/Discussion:

- Real special place to be able to go with families and enjoy. How are we going to keep it like that?
- Are there opportunities to help with clearing and repairing the trails. Plastic beach is in this area. Who can I contact?
  - *Reach out to Ala Kahakai Trail Association. Contact info is on their website at [www.alakahakaitrail.org](http://www.alakahakaitrail.org)*
- Cultural and historic sites- Are there maps that mark them? Is there a way to put markers out? We go to a beach called Leipana. They have blocked the legal access saying that there are cultural sites. If they could mark them, that would preserve them better...through signage. This could be a learning experience for those of us who go there...what the significance of this place is.
- Native plant enclosures for reforestation. Is a fence line planned to be built on the boundary line in the future?
- Sometimes, prior to giving access, people could go on a volunteer trip first with a host to educate people to the place. Signage might expose sensitive areas that shouldn't be exposed. Certain places, signage might be ok, some places, not. Through volunteering, you can educate folks.
- There is a lot of talk and worry about if this place is for subsistence gathering...why is there a locked gate? But I think that the gate is good because it protects it. South Point is an example of a place that has been desecrated. Controlled access would keep the integrity and beauty of the place.
- The volunteer groups should include Kūpuna of these places who can educate people of the sacredness of these gathering areas.
- I've never been there although I was born and raised here. What is the current protocol for access?
  - *To request vehicular access, please contact ATA. Pedestrians can walk in from the south side along the coast.*
- Is there anything proposed at this time? It's a shame that we all can't drive down there but on the other hand, that's good. Is there a way to keep this for recreational and subsistence fishing and NOT for commercial use? There seems to be something set up now where you contact someone and that limits or regulates use, so that's good. Or something like free permits, limits on the number of vehicles per permit. The amount of people is a concern from a sanitation standpoint. There are no facilities down there and I don't think that we want a lot of facilities. Vehicle management seems like a good way to manage access. Limit to four vehicles seems reasonable. Permit system could be used to track people...even if it's free. Maybe no ATVs, dirtbikes, off-road vehicles. Just trucks.
- Ka'ū is so special it has its own lunar calendar. People who fish there use a konohiki system and gather according to what can be gathered according to this calendar.
- Kūpuna advisory groups would be helpful. Even with a lunar calendar, how do we protect these areas from all of the people and trucks that want to go down there and fish but don't know what's in season? We gather in certain areas because the species are more prevalent there and at that time. We gather 'ōkole but some people trample the areas where they spawn because they don't know. There are many other species that we can only get at certain times.

- Not every place...people are going to be willing to talk about it. Afraid that people will go and exploit. How to share Waikapuna with people but protect the resources?
- I've been going to Waikapuna over the last 50 years. Born and raised in Nā'ālehu. It's a small place, as far as the beach is concerned, so I favor limited access because it's easy to overrun this place. Overnight camping: no more than 3 vehicles at a time. There's no more room.
- Preference for local people to access during the week. My understanding is only weekends are allowed for camping. People who live in Nā'ālehu, Wai'ōhinu, Pāhala deserve some special preference. Especially those who are subsistence gatherers. Not sure how to do that.
- Once word gets out, there will be a lot of demand. South Point is overcrowded now - it never used to be like that. I'd hate Waikapuna to get like that. Control of access, not sure about those who hike in from Kamilo side, but there's some limitations to hiking so maybe not such a concern.
- Concerned about those collecting for commercial. There's a lot of 'opihi. Witnessed people who took ~300 pounds out in a weekend.
- Limit type of vehicles - need 4WD right now. Could use a regular car to get down but wouldn't get out. Would have to require 4WD.
- Concern: waste management. Easy to leave trash behind. If you bring it in, you should take it out. Bis Issue: sanitary waste. Could put a lua and dig a hole for facilities, but there's an issue with polluting the ground water. Army incinerates their waste. Is this possible here?
- Historic sites – use a website to identify them, or maybe signage. There are some sites that should be identified.
- Access road: right now the road goes through ranch land before you get to the beach, which is a good reason for locked gates. Are there any plans for the mauka areas? I have no objections to leaving it as ranch land as long as ranchers are ok with having people going through and the potential risk of cattle being affected. Road should be marked and certain sections should be improved. Road should be better maintained and marked.
- Website could be informative of the history and importance of the cultural aspect of this place. Certain areas are vulnerable to damage - identify them so people can be more cautious.
- I agree, put a bag limit for species.
- Thoughts on blocking access from the south side driving in?
- Not sure what the southern boundary is. Southern end should be blocked from vehicles. It would be hard to carry out hundreds of pounds of 'opihi without a vehicle. People have used large boulders to block access but I have seen them overcome by creative people who have figured out how to move them out of the way. Boulders could be a good start. If necessary, more serious barriers could be used.
- Mahalo NUI for his thoughtful comments. Very helpful!
- I agree that residents from that area, especially kūpuna, should have a prioritized right to the area.
- Many more boulders.
- With boulders, people tend to drive around them so we need to be mindful of where to put them because they may drive over native plants and cultural sites.
- Fire trucks might need to access the property in case of fire.

- You used to only be able to go down there through the ranch. Local people knew about this so it was never a problem. The problem now is all of the stipulations, when you go to the ranch to sign in, every weekend is full. Being a resident of Ka'ū, I was raised down there, my kids were raised down there and now my grandkids are raised down there. This is our resource, a private resource. We knew this was coming when they did the 10-year shut down of the Kona beaches...all of the outsiders are coming into this place and are taking away what we hold special: Waikapuna, Kamilo, Leipana.
- Fire risk is not a fire problem. It is retaliation and that's the scary part.
- Locals used to go down on weekdays because we're following the lunar calendar; that's when we need to go down there. Ka'ū people are not selling commercial, these are our resources. We constantly hear the government say go back to your resources. The Ka'ū community always knew how to hunt and fish to survive. We live too far from Kona or Hilo to go shop. It's the outsiders who are coming in and abusing the place. We know where things are and the rules and how to respect the place and we teach our kids and grandkids. We don't go down just to put it on social media. We know what to get there and when. We take our kids there to practice because it's safe. We have people doing education with the kids. The ones who are taking over this place have no clue how to manage because they did not grow up here. They don't hunt or fish. We never had this problem before. If we see that the conditions are good, we want to be able to go down. Because South Point is so damaged, locals don't go there anymore. Waikapuna is special because it's not bothered by those people who don't respect the place. We share with the kūpuna and those who can't get down there. This is what Ka'ū is. Outsiders are exploiting the place - 4-wheelers are coming in from Kamilo. Rainbow Fest - we're dealing with all of these situations. It was never like this, not being able to go down there for months. We only pick for home use.
- Back in the day, if the conditions were good, we would go down after work to fish, but we came out early because we had to work the next day. When you exploit it and let everybody in, that's when the local families cannot get in and now we can't go on the weekdays. We're told that the only openings are months away. It was never like this.
- The beach is too small to have a lot of people. Human waste - big problem. People think that they can just leave it there because they're not coming back any time soon. Ka'alu'alu Bay – the local name is toilet paper beach. Waikapuna is so special because we locals can enjoy and not worry about things like what was happening in Kona with things like Hepatitis B.
- We want vehicle access on the cliff side for safety. When you fish on the pali and you fall in the water, you have to come up over there. I saved a lot of people who fell in the water and had no clue about the conditions.
- Kaiolena - open the gate and let the locals go hunt. We are a multi-cultural community. The closed gate is why it's overrun with pigs.
- I'm sick and tired of people from outside coming in and telling us what to do. All of this came about because of the house at Honu'apo and Kāwā. We've dealt with a lot of people but never had this problem with getting in. It's everyone who is uneducated about this place that's the problem.
- The ranchers coming in was the best thing that happened because the fences and gates were locked for generations. The cattle eat the grass, but that's what the chiefs knew...the cattle keep the grass low by grazing and prevent fires. In other places, they got rid of the goats, then the grass grew and fires started. Then everyone wanted to bring the goats back.

- As for blocking the road from Kamilo–, we need to be aware of the high tide mark. Yes, there are Hawaiian Trails, but if you know Hawaiian trails, you'd be foolish to camp on the trail. We know this.
- When Kona shut down their areas and got developed. That's why people came here to fish.
- A lot of people at these meetings are not talkers. I'm most worried about the young men who are listening and hearing that they cannot go hunt or fish. When you take away hunting and fishing from our young people, that's how they save money and feed their families and share with other families.
- Education - let kids sign up with Nohea, John Ropogle, The Nature Conservancy. Great education. Summer programs. Mauka to makai. Those are the kinds of programs we need. Respect. It's all we ask.
- Who are the kūpuna now? They all passed away. What I learned now is that I am the kūpuna because I need to take care of my grandkids. I need to teach.
- Make it like Kalapana, for the locals, residents only. I agree, when locals like go...no more.
- One of the prime grazing grounds with salt air also.
- There should be preference given to Ka'ū people. I support.
- He said it all! His words are what we all from Ka'ū feel!
- I agree with everyone who supports Ka'ū residents having preference to Waikapuna over outsiders!
- Ka'ū people should always have access; it's their Piko.
- Aloha! Mahalo for the mana'o! Much appreciated!
- Mahalo nui loa!
- So informative!! Thanks to everyone for their contribution and to all the work people are doing!

The meeting ended approximately at 7:55 p.m.