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**MEETING NOTES**

**DATE:** June 11, 2025  
**MEETING DATE:** May 27, 2025  
**LOCATION:** Kalaemanō Cultural Preserve, Ka'ūpūlehu  
**TEAM PRESENT:** Jackson Bauer, Nā Ala Hele  
Laurel Ainsworth, Nā Ala Hele  
Aric Arakaki, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail  
Rick Gmirkin, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail  
Catie Cullison, PBR HAWAI'I  
Makena Bassett, PBR HAWAI'I  
Julie Davis, 106 Group  
Lokelani Brandt, Hoa'āina Heritage Services

**DISTRIBUTION:** Distribution list and public  
**SUBJECT:** Ala Kahakai NHT Interpretive Plan Stakeholder Meeting

**Summary**

The project team hosted a stakeholder meeting at Kalaemanō Cultural Reserve to discuss the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Interpretive Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to connect with community stewards and persons with lineal or cultural ties to the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (AKNHT) corridor. Stakeholders were invited to share knowledge and provide guidance for the interpretive plan. During the meeting, the group:

- Explored what trails mean for our communities.
- Considered themes, messages, and stories to communicate about the trail corridor.
- Considered strategies for engaging people to respect, protect, preserve, and actively steward the trails; and
- Identified places that are/are not appropriate for different types of audiences to experience in the trail corridor.

The meeting included hands-on workshop activities as well as time for open sharing and personal connection.

**About the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Interpretive Plan**

The **Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Interpretive Plan** is a collaborative, community-informed initiative to guide how the stories and significance of the Ala Kahakai Trail are shared with the public. The goal is to produce a cooperative Interpretive Plan that thoughtfully integrates the missions, design standards, and visual identities of both the National Park Service's Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (AKNHT) and the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources' Nā Ala Hele (DLNR NAH) Trail and Access Program. The Plan will seek to honor the cultural heritage of the trail, support existing and future opportunities for stewardship, and offer respectful, educational, and

inclusive interpretive experiences that reflect the voices and values of the communities connected to this important cultural landscape. Central to this effort is meaningful engagement with knowledge holders—Native Hawaiian descendant families, cultural practitioners, and community partners—whose input will help shape what stories are told, how they are presented, as well help the team best understand areas of sensitivity (both topical and geographic).

### **Introduction and Presentation**

Lokelani welcomed the group and opened the meeting with a pule (prayer). Ku'ulei Keakealani followed the pule with a brief introduction to Ka'ūpūlehu and its history and cultural significance. The group then transitioned to the presentation (see attached), which is attached. Jackson opened the presentation with a brief overview of the project, and then handed off to Julie, who led the participants through the remainder of the presentation. After the presentation, Julie directed the group to visit and engage with the hands-on workshop activities at three stations spread out throughout the room.

### **Station Discussions**

The workshop stations provided an opportunity for the planning team to talk in depth with cultural and trail steward knowledge holders. Key takeaways are summarized below, followed by a station-by-station breakdown of prompting questions and responses.

### **Main Themes & Takeaways**

- The Trail is a living legacy: The Ala Kahakai is not just historic—it is a living cultural and ancestral path that connects people to 'āina, genealogy, and community identity.
- Storytelling requires kuleana: Stories tied to the trail come with responsibility. They must be told by the right people, with cultural accuracy, care, and respect for what should or should not be shared.
- Education through Hawaiian lenses: Interpretation should reflect Native Hawaiian values, ways of knowing, and oral traditions—teaching not just facts, but the deeper morals and responsibilities behind them.
- Respectful access & protection: Public access should be upheld through legal frameworks like the Highways Act of 1892, but with care to protect sacred sites, stay on the trail, and avoid harm.
- Personal reflection & stewardship: Visitors should engage with intention, asking “What is my kuleana here?” Stewardship is both physical (like pulling weeds) and cultural (caring for meaning and stories).
- Inclusive and authentic engagement: Interpretation must involve and be co-created with descendant families and local knowledge holders, and include diverse voices and stories, past and present.
- Accessible, thoughtful design: Interpretation should be easy to engage with (e.g. QR codes), while being sensitive to place and developed in collaboration with families and communities.

**Station 1:**

- **Question 1: What do you want people to learn, know, or understand about the trail corridor? Note if specific to certain audiences or groups**
  - Proper storytellers are vital to tell the true lesson & meaning behind mo'olelo
  - Learn the story but what do you do with it? What is your kuleana now?
  - Responsibility to the info./mo'olelo/genealogies—DISCERNMENT.
  - Hawaiian ways of knowing
  - Compensation for those who may participate in audio recordings etc.
  - Bite-sized info; QR codes
  - Avoid burials/heiau desecration at all costs
  - Highways Act (1892) = public access
  - Living trail
  - Family histories
  - History of the trails and people for our children + future
  - History of trail + the people who lived along the trail
  - How did the people use the trail on a daily basis
  - Working on trails as tax payment—work on trail for restitution
  - Real estate education/awareness/understanding of H.A.1892
  - Multigeneration education general population education of Highways Act
  - Inclusion of traditional oral expressions
  - Understanding the perspective of those who built and cared for the trail
  - “That was our peoples’ highway”
  - The trail is peoples’ lineage & family history
  - Significant pre- & post-contact sites along corridor
  - Trails were built according to environment and local expertise
  - Plants
    - Historic introductions
    - Traditional
  - Architectural differences—causeways
  - IP: co-authored w/ kanaka and/or descendants voice multiplicity
  - For some trail stewards and descendants, destruction of trails is experienced as personal harm & trauma
  - Trail corridor was used/part of paniolo history & recent history
  - Historic photos as education (QR code?)
  - Stewardship (pulling weeds & learn @ same time)
  - ‘Ohana history related to trails e.g., Parker, McCandless
  - Ka‘ohe
    - Sisal farm
  - Styles trail simple → complex
  - Different forms of communication
  - Monarchy & its relation to the trails & areas near trails
  - Environment influences the trails (geology/weather/vegetation/etc.)
  - Trails reflect the desires of the ali‘i & the needs of the time
  - Aloha ‘āina embodied & expressed by the kanaka maoli

- **Question 2: If you could tell people just one thing about the trail corridor, what would it be? Note if specific to a particular audience or group**
  - *\*Several participants noted that they could not express a single or most important concept, as the resource and associated history and present day life-ways are multi-layered and multi-dimensional*
  - Understand the independent nation state of Hawai‘i Kingdom of Hawai‘i
  - Highways Act of 1892 (Queen Liliuokalani)
  - NAH + AKNHT predates illegal overthrow & still exists legally
  - Align with kuleana of ka wā kahiko
  - Geological history
  - Mo‘olelo informs behavior; emphasize morals behind stories
  - Mamalahoe Kānāwai Freen access non restricted laws of history access
  - Access for everyone
  - Law of Splintered Paddle
  - Stewardship “pull-weeds”
  - Layers of history
  - As kanaka its our obligation to malama the trails
  - Stay on the trail!
  - Trails serviced peoples’ way of life & provided life for those who used it
  - To water, to burials, to sacred sites, to ‘ohana
  - “You use, you mālama”
  - That trails connect us to past, present, & future. Trails hold our ancestors to us today. Trails tell the places + mo‘olelo of the past

### **Station 2:**

- **Question 1: What information or stories could be shared with the general public that are connected to specific places along the trail corridor?**
  - Kuleana stories come with responsibility. They are precious gems that should be cared for, you need to be accountable for them.
  - How to learn about stories related to your own ahup. name means
  - Contemporary stories from all kinds of people transformed by the trails
  - Kong legends book = good source condensed version of longer stories
  - Kauleoii 2
    - Springs
    - Princess - later Queen (Emma) lived there—that’s why trail is wide
  - Waikāku‘u end of trail due to cholera (Uncle Roy Santana)
  - “Aloha” is about obligation & alignment
  - Families can share stories about places of the different wahi kupuna.
  - Ki‘ilae fissure that stopped @ trail
  - Ho‘okena earthquake & exodus church
  - Stories are traditional narratives that come with kuleana, responsibility. What will you do w/ the info?
  - Kealia Beach canoe landing missionary school
  - Kealia 2 Cpt. Cook triangulation

- **Question 2: What do you want people to be able to do or experience along the trail corridor? I want...**
  - Who?
    - Trail should only be accessed if they have an obligation/kuleana on that trail & “right reasons”; alignment w/kuleana is aloha
    - Keiki
  - To do or experience what?
    - Mālama/Respect
    - Intentions of the trail—why is the trail there?
    - To establish info/interpretive hubs
    - Learn → authentically
      - Place, person, part
    - Experience = what you feel- that’s what matters
    - Stop and reflect → “what is my kuleana in this place?” → on this trail
    - Signage
      - Sensitive/protected places
      - Safety/conditions
    - Native ways of place
    - Learn values of place before going on ‘āina
    - Limited signage where families can be involved in creation
    - An expression of aloha ‘āina from kanaka maoli
    - The trail from a Hawaiian-lifeways perspective based on input from kanaka
    - Stories of place
    - Work days that tourists & public could join
    - Call to action → volunteer opportunity
    - Connection to ‘āina
    - Connection to kupuna
      - Building trails
    - History/culture
      - What it was used [for]
      - Why it was used
    - Power of respect
    - Understand the frame of mind of those who first walked the trails
    - Path to involvement → establish volunteer coordination
    - Signage informed by ‘ohana—not in all places
    - ‘Āina-based education in their home ahupua‘a
    - The interpretive plan
  - Where along the trail?
    - Some places along the trail should not be accessible. Not totally “open” to all (for example if trail leads to burials)

**Station 3:** This station asked for location based comments and/or concerns in regards to the Interpretive Plan. In respect of these location/based comments and potential sensitive information, we will not share the maps and location-specific comments with the public.

- **Comments:**

- “All of the corridor is threatened and endangered”
- Questions pertaining to where people should access and/or who is appropriate at certain locations are best answered by the ‘ohana of that place
- “I don’t feel qualified” (to answer this question)
- Having a map or resource that documents the locations that are open/access points would be useful for trail enthusiasts (on island visitors)
- Signs for the public are most effective at locations that are easy to get to
- Access, when the shoreline trail is washed out, forced to walk in the ‘ā‘ā on private property. What comes of the trail at these places?
- How will the Interpretive Plan work with other public access plans, different jurisdictions/agencies?
- My dream is that the plan embodies kanaka maoli expertise
- Lineal descendants should co-author sections of the plane where they have kuleana
- Reach out to QLT

*This is our understanding of the topics discussed and the conclusions reached. Please give PBR HAWAII written notification of any errors or omissions within seven calendar days. Otherwise, this report will be deemed an accurate record and directive.*

# Ala Kahakai NHT Interpretive Plan

**Community Stakeholder Meeting #2**

May 27-28, 2025



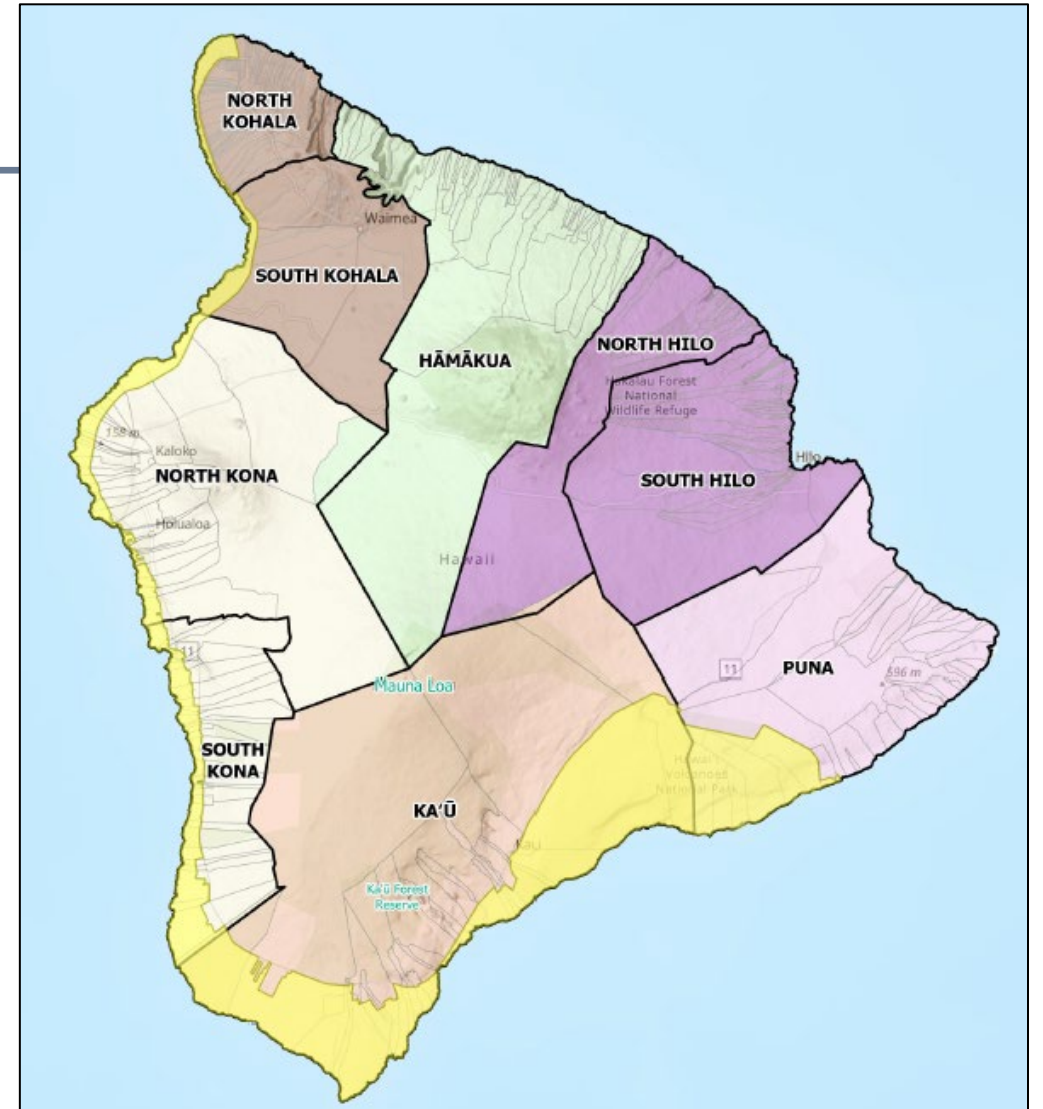
# Introductions

## Project Team

- Nā Ala Hele (State of Hawai'i Trails and Access Program)
- National Park Service (Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail)
- Consultants
  - PBR HAWAII & Associates, Inc.
  - Hoa'āina Heritage Services, LLC
  - 106 Group

## Community Participants

- Introductory questions & map



# Project Goal

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*Produce a cooperative **interpretive plan** for the Ala Kahakai Trail corridor using detailed input from community stakeholders.*

*The plan should blend NPS Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail and DLNR Nā Ala Hele standards, missions, design motifs, and plans.*



# What is an Interpretive Plan?

An interpretive plan is...

...a document.

...a collaborative process.

...a collection of ideas,  
recommendations & guidelines  
for future implementation.



# Purpose of This Interpretive Plan

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- Connection and reconnection
- Caretaking and stewardship
- Protection, preservation & respect
- Encouragement & inspiration



# Agenda

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- Engagement Stations (60 min)
- Break (10 min)
- Talk Story with Dinner (30 min)
- Closing (10 min)



# Engagement Stations

\*Try to visit at least 3

Station 1: Themes, Topics & Stories

Station 2: Messages, Methods & Experiences

Station 3: Trail Locations, Contexts & Conditions



# Big-Picture Questions

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- What does the Ala Kahakai Trail corridor mean to you, your family, or your community?
- What should guide us as we do this work?
- Is there anything else you want to share or want us to know?



# Next Steps



# Project Schedule

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# Next Engagement Points

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- August 2025: Draft Plan distributed for community review
- Soliciting stakeholder meeting after plan released
- December 2025: Gather in person to share & celebrate Final Plan + invite community input for next project phase



# Mahalo Nui

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If you have any questions or comments,  
please contact:

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