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Cultural Sustainability Planner

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1001 Bishop Street, Suite 650
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813-3484
Tel: (808) 521-5631
Fax: (808) 523-1402
E-mail: sysadmin@pbrhawaii.com

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MEETING NOTES

DATE: June 11, 2025
MEETING DATE: May 28, 2025
LOCATION: Nā'ālehu Community Center
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 Nā'ālehu Community Center 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 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). The group then transitioned to the presentation (Attachment A). Jackson opened the presentation with a brief overview of the project and an introduction to the project team, 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 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

- Place-based knowledge & guidance: The trail should be approached with humility and reverence. Access should be guided by kama'āina, cultural practitioners, and lineal descendants who understand the land, its stories, and its sensitivities.
- Respect and responsibility over access: The trail is not a public right for everyone, especially visitors. Respect for the 'āina and community must come first. Some areas are sacred or sensitive and should remain off-limits without proper guidance or protocol.
- Education rooted in culture: There is strong support for using the trail as an educational resource, especially for Hawaiian youth. Schools should integrate mo'olelo, stewardship, and cultural protocols into the curriculum to build deeper connections with place.
- Protection and preservation: Maintaining, protecting, and restoring the trail—and the sacred, natural, and cultural resources it connects—is a top priority. Preservation must outweigh tourism or commercial use.
- Access laws and kuleana lands: Legal rights to coastal and trail access should be upheld, especially for native Hawaiian families and those with kuleana lands. Enforcement of access laws is critical.
- Intergenerational vision: Planning for the trail's future must involve both kūpuna and keiki. The goal is to ensure future generations inherit a healthy, intact, culturally alive trail system embedded in daily life and values.
- Culturally appropriate infrastructure: In some places like Ka'ū, conventional signage is discouraged. Alternatives that align with local values and maintain the trail's integrity are preferred.

Station 1:

- **Question 1: What do you want people to learn, know, or understand about the trail corridor? Do you have a specific group or audience in mind?**
 - Replanting food plants/shade plants along trail
 - Signage prob wouldn't work in Ka'ū
 - Kahuku (Pohue) to Kananone (Lauhala) pond—no signage
 - If you don't know the place you don't belong
 - Punalu'u to Kamehame
 - Off limits
 - Sensitive emergency
 - Emergency
 - Arc sites
 - Guided by kama'āina
 - "Come w/ someone that knows"
- **Question 2: If you could tell people one thing about the trail corridor, what would it be? Do you have a specific group or audience in mind?**
 - Maintain & respect & reverence for people & place
 - Not a right (visitors)
 - Visit places in Ka'ū w/ kama'āina + lineal descendants

Station 2:

- **Question 1: What do trails mean to you, your family, or your community?**
 - Connection to place
 - Connection to 'ohana → those who have come before
 - Opportunity to educate keiki about their place/home
 - Places to educate keiki and all future generations
 - Natural, preserved, protected connection to place & people
 - Designated path protecting the landscape → stay on trail
 - Coastal access; Access to food sources
- **Question 2: What should guide us as we plan for the future of the Ala Kahakai Trail Corridor?**
 - Kupuna AND keiki
 - Hawaiian families and lineal descendants
 - Kuleana lands
 - Enforce access laws
 - Trails access ensures coastline access (law compliance)
 - Alka [notes recorded verbatim]
- **Question 3: What's your vision for the future of the Ala Kahakai Trail Corridor? What are your hopes & dreams for what it might become?**
 - Students' schools to train in mo'olelo/place based knowledge
 - Protocol welcoming people into a space

Ala Kahakai NHT Interpretive Plan Community Stakeholder Meeting
Meeting Notes
May 28, 2025 - Nā‘ālehu Community Center

- ‘Imi pono type programs to build mo‘olelo capacity
- Embedding school systems in connecting w/ these trails—that’s the dream.
- Start w/ youngest generation
- Intact maintained restored
- All areas connected to trails stay protected & preserved
- Maintain access
- Absolute protection for sacred sites—no go means no go
- Hawaiian immersion education
- Nā ‘A‘ali‘i Kū Makani o Ka‘ū—new public charter school soon to open
- Making trail stewardship part of school curriculum
 - Weed pulling
 - Trail maintenance
- Make it part of the lifestyle
- As little exploitation as possible

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.

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 Interpretive Plan

Community Stakeholder Meeting #2

May 27-28, 2025



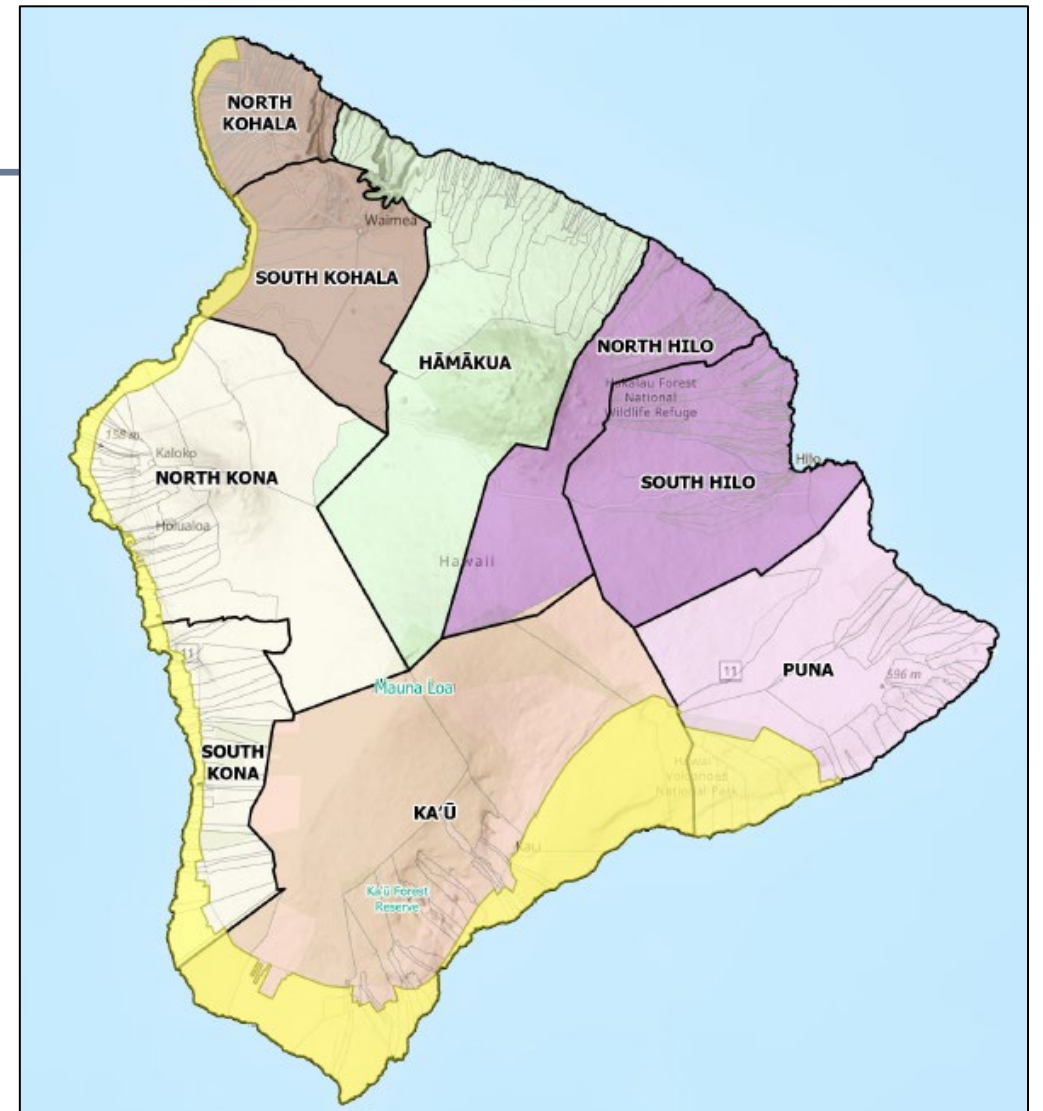
Aloha & Introductions

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 & mapping



Project Goal

*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

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



Agenda

- Engagement Stations
- Break
- Talk Story with Dinner
- Closing



Engagement Stations – Your thoughts will guide us.

Station 1: Messages & Audiences

Station 2: Your Trail Connections and Vision

Station 3: Trail Locations, Contexts & Conditions



Talk story



Big-Picture Questions

- 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



Next Engagement Points

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



Mahalo Nui

If you have any questions or comments,
please contact:

Jackson Bauer

jackson.m.bauer@hawaii.gov

Catie Cullison

ccullison@pbrhawaii.com

Lokelani Brandt

lbrandt@hoaainaheritage.com









