

Nā mo'olelo o ka 'āina

STORIES OF THE LAND



THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND

CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE



Celebrating Three Decades of Conservation

In 1979, The Trust for Public Land completed its first project in Hawai‘i, growing Volcanoes National Park by almost 270 acres. In the years since, TPL’s work has expanded to every Hawaiian island, and land conserved in the state by TPL and its donors has surpassed 36,000 acres.

Working since 1999 from a dedicated state office in Honolulu, TPL has helped to establish local land trusts on Maui, Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i, Moloka‘i, and O‘ahu and to promote and pass \$177 million in new county and state conservation funding.

This brochure presents five stories about land that was saved—and lives that were changed—by TPL–Hawai‘i and its supporters. We hope these stories inspire you to join TPL’s cause of conserving the best of Hawai‘i while we still can.

THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND CONSERVES LAND
FOR PEOPLE TO ENJOY AS PARKS, GARDENS, AND
OTHER NATURAL PLACES, ENSURING LIVABLE
COMMUNITIES FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.



Hālawā Valley, Moloka‘i

A PARTNERSHIP WITH A LOCAL LAND TRUST PRESERVES A TRADITIONAL FOOD SOURCE AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN WAY OF LIFE

Two mud-stained *kalo* (taro) farmers sprawl on the grass and “talk story” between draughts of water. In a nearby patchwork of wetland terraces, pale-green leaves nod atop fat stalks as glassy *pinao* (dragonflies) swoop and hover over the barely moving water. Beside the farmers lies a wet pile of freshly harvested *kalo*, source of the nutritious, traditional, purple foodstuff called *poi*. This timeless pastoral scene from Hawai‘i’s past may also point toward its future, thanks to an effort by TPL and the local Hālawā Valley Land Trust to preserve these *kalo* fields for traditional agriculture. “Back in ancient times, there were over a thousand *lo‘i* (taro fields) that covered this valley floor,” says farmer G. Ross, a science teacher at a Hawaiian language immersion school who helped restore these fields to cultivation. “Now, we’re farming less than one percent of them. Not too many people like to do it anymore, getting all muddy and dirty and itchy. But as long as there’s a taro plant growing somewhere, Hawaiians have a source of food.”





Mōkōlea Point, Kauaʻi

A COMMUNITY EFFORT ENLARGES A WILDLIFE REFUGE AND LEADS TO A NEW LOCAL LAND TRUST

In 1977, an amateur naturalist named Gary Smith discovered a rare albatross nestling on the grassy hillside near Mōkōlea Point—“as fluffy as a baby turkey,” he says. The find provoked Smith to forge an effort with the community and TPL to save the wild 37-acre promontory from residential development. Smith, now 58, remembers when the sugar plantation owned Mōkōlea Point and all the land for miles around. After sugar production ended, *makai* (seaward) lands were developed with high-end homes. “It was like the old plantation was now farming millionaires,” Smith says. He urged the local community association to band together and seek help to keep the bulldozers from Mōkōlea Point. In 1985, when Congress established Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge nearby to help protect the area’s thousands of nesting seabirds, Mōkōlea Point was left endangered. Then in 1988, TPL purchased the point and nearby Crater Hill and added them to the refuge, doubling its size. Gary Smith’s work with TPL led to the creation of the Kauaʻi Public Land Trust to help protect other natural resources for the people of Kauaʻi.





MA'O Farm, O'ahu

GROWING FRESH PRODUCE, SELF-SUFFICIENCY, AND YOUNG LEADERS AT A COMMUNITY-RUN ORGANIC FARM

Maile Perreira, 20, sports a t-shirt that reads “Don’t Panic, Go Organic”—the uniform of the college interns who help run the nonprofit MA’O Organic Farm in rural Lualualei Valley. A food-security initiative of the Wai’anae Community Redevelopment Corporation, the farm has become O’ahu’s status brand for tasty greens while helping to rebuild a community. Much of Hawai’i’s produce is imported from the mainland at high cost, and the state’s farmers are an aging population, but MA’O Farm brings fresh local vegetables to local consumers through the efforts of young workers and dedicated volunteers. The farm also offers career direction and leadership training to O’ahu’s youth. The interns, most of them fresh out of Wai’anae’s rough-and-tumble high schools, work there three days a week while attending community college. In 2007–2008, The Trust for Public Land helped the farm expand beyond its original five acres by enabling it to purchase an 11-acre chicken farm next door. “With our new land, we’ll be able to quadruple sales in a short amount of time,” projects farm manager Gary Maunakea-Forth. Perreira, a leader among the interns, says that her favorite part of the work is “going to farmers’ markets and . . . talking to customers, telling them what the different things are.” And yes, she does want to be a farmer when she grows up.





Wao Kele O Puna, Hawai'i Island

ON HAWAI'I ISLAND, A PRICELESS RAINFOREST IS SET ASIDE FOR PLANTS, ANIMALS, AND THE HAWAIIANS WHO USE THEM IN TRADITIONAL WAYS

One day last September, a group of Hawaiians paid their first visit to a primeval forest they've long held sacred. Wao Kele O Puna spans 40 square miles on the sloping north flank of Kilauea volcano, near Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Eight-hundred-year-old 'ōhi'a lehua and fern forests alternate with more recent lava flows, and more than 100 native plants can be found there. Wao Kele was preserved from development in 2006, when The Trust for Public Land helped transfer 25,800 acres of this pristine lowland rainforest from the private Campbell Estate to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). Traditional uses of the land include hunting for pigs and gathering herbs for the practice of *lā'au lapa'au* (herbal healing). This was what brought the group of student practitioners to pay their respects—among them Julia Iosepha, the granddaughter of "Papa" Henry Auwae, who was a preeminent *kahuna lā'au lapa'au*, or priest of herbal medicine. A fellow student explains, "Papa used to gather in Wao Kele O Puna. He told us there was very potent *lā'au*, the most potent in the archipelago." The visitors note with excitement the important herbs near the forest entrance, and they end their tour with powerful feelings of hope and responsibility for the future of Wao Kele, now in Hawaiian hands. "It's a beautiful and mysterious place," whispers Iosepha. "There's so much we have to learn."



Mū'olea Point, Maui

MARINE RESOURCES—THE "ICEBOX" THAT HAS SUSTAINED HAWAIIANS FOR GENERATIONS—COME UNDER THE CARE OF A LOCAL COMMUNITY

Land, sea, and a sense of community reaching back into history meet at Mū'olea Point on the rugged East Maui coastline. Along the craggy shore, crystal-clear inlets are fed by the constant surge of a reefless sea; just inland, tumbled rock walls wander off into the underbrush. From the windswept point, past a shimmering thicket of coconut trees (thought to have been planted by Polynesian settlers a millennium ago), you can see across the 'Alenuihāhā Channel to Hawai'i Island—a view once enjoyed by King David Kalākaua, who maintained a summer retreat here. Until recently, the point's 73 acres were privately owned but used for fishing and recreation by local families. In 2005, with assistance from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the County of Maui, and the federal government, The Trust for Public Land purchased the land from a developer and conveyed it to the county for preservation. The County and Nā Mamo o Mū'olea (a community group) are working in partnership to steward the land. At the group's September 2005 board meeting—attended by residents whose roots in the area go back generations—board members discussed a two-year plan to manage the fishery and reduce threats to this important subsistence resource. To them, this project wasn't about abstract conservation on paper but the substance of their lives and traditions. As board member Terry Pō'aipuni put it, "There's a line of *kuleana*, of responsibility, here that we have to recognize, so we'll always have our icebox."



Timeline

- 1979** TPL completes first Hawai'i project, adding 268 acres to Volcanoes National Park, Hawai'i Island
- 1988** TPL expands Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge, Kaua'i by 130 acres
- 1996** Protection of 77 acres by TPL creates Waiāhole Beach Park, O'ahu
- 1997** The National Tropical Botanical Gardens, Limahuli Gardens, Kaua'i, adds 2 acres with TPL's help
- 1998** First TPL Hawai'i office opens in Honolulu
- TPL adds 1,475 acres of Ka'āpahu Ahupua'a (watershed) to Haleakalā National Park, Maui
- TPL conveys 2 acres of *lo'i* (taro fields) to Hālawā Valley Land Trust, Moloka'i
- 1999** TPL conveys another 2 acres of *lo'i* (taro fields) to Hālawā Valley Land Trust, Moloka'i
- 2000** TPL launches its Hawai'i Land Conservation Grant Program to build the capacity of local land-conservation partners, including Maui Coastal Land Trust, Kaua'i Public Land Trust, North Shore Community Land Trust, and Hawai'i Island Land Trust
- 2001** TPL protects 40 acres at Lumaha'i Beach, Kaua'i
- 2002** TPL spearheads establishment of Maui and Kaua'i county open space funds
- 2003** TPL conveys 7.5 acres to Ka'ala Cultural Learning Center, Wai'anae, O'ahu
- 2005** TPL conveys 73 acres at Mū'olea Point, Hāna, Maui to Maui County
- State Legacy Lands Conservation Fund established thanks to TPL leadership
- 2006** TPL adds 225 acres at Honu'apo Fishpond, Ka'ū, Hawai'i Island to existing county park
- Office of Hawaiian Affairs acquires 1,875 acres at Waimea Valley, O'ahu, with TPL help
- TPL acquires 25,856 acres at Wao Kele O Puna, Hawai'i Island for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs
- TPL conveys 890 acres in Puna, Hawai'i Island to Ka Lau Ona One o Puna
- TPL expands Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historic Park (City of Refuge), South Kona, Hawai'i Island, by 238 acres
- Hawai'i Island and Honolulu City and County open space funds established thanks to TPL leadership
- 2007** TPL adds 3,716 acres at Moanalua Valley, O'ahu to state forest reserve
- TPL protects 1,129 acres at Pūpūkea-Paumalū, North Shore, O'ahu
- TPL spearheads creation of the O'ahu Land Trust
- 2009** TPL facilitates acquisition of 11 acres for MA'O Farm, Wai'anae, O'ahu



Please Help

As these stories make clear, the success of TPL's land conservation work in Hawai'i can be measured in more than acres of land conserved. Our work together reaffirms and strengthens that special relationship that we all feel toward the islands' landscapes. Won't you help us improve the lives of all Hawai'i residents and visitors by conserving land for people across the Aloha State?

For more information or to make a donation call 808.524.8560 or email hawaii@tpl.org.

This brochure is made possible due to the generous support of The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation. TPL is grateful to the Foundation for its ongoing commitment to the Hawaiian Islands Program and our efforts to protect Hawai'i's most precious places.

THE
TRUST
for
PUBLIC
LAND



HAWAII

The Trust *for* Public Land
212 Merchant Street, Suite 320
Honolulu, HI 96813

808.524.8560
hawaii@tpl.org

www.tpl.org/hawaii



Wao Kele O Puna, bottom photo: G. Brad Lewis
All other photos: Arna Photography



Printed in the U.S. on recycled paper containing 100% post-consumer waste.

© 2009 The Trust for Public Land