



For Immediate Release
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1,363 Acres at Kaunāmano Conserved for Community Stewardship



NA‘ALEHU, HAWAI‘I ISLAND – [The Trust for Public Land](#), [Ala Kahakai Trail Association](#) (ATA), [County of Hawai‘i’s Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Program](#) (PONC), [State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources’ Legacy Land Conservation Program](#) (LLCP), and EWM Enterprises, LP, announced today the voluntary sale, acquisition, and protection of 1,363 acres known as Kaunāmano located in Ka‘ū Moku, Hawai‘i Island.

Kaunāmano means “where the multitudes are placed/settled” telling of the large ancient villages that thrived there. Protecting Kaunāmano preserves a vast cultural landscape with hundreds of cultural sites including its two villages at Pā‘ūla and Paukū, house sites, heiau (temples), iwi kūpuna (burials), petroglyphs, and extensive lava tube networks including the famous cave of Puhī‘ūla with its rock-lined anchialine pool teeming with ‘ōpae‘ūla (native shrimp).

"Puhī‘ūla cave in Kaunāmano, like so many other places in Ka‘ū, is very special to my ‘ohana. Many years ago, as a young girl, my great-grandmother, Mary Kawena Pukui, would go there to collect pa‘akai with her grandmother, Naliipoaimoku, or to get fish from a relative, Opupele. Years later, she wrote about this place that provided our ‘ohana with sustenance in mele, stories, and academic works. Now, I can go there with my children and we are still provided with pa‘akai, shelter and a place to connect with our kūpuna. I know they are smiling down at us knowing the coastline has been preserved," shared **Pelehonamea Harman, Stewardship Committee, Ala Kahakai Trail Association.**

The Trust for Public Land facilitated the acquisition and the community united in the effort to raise \$6.71 million in public funds to buy and protect the land and convey it to Ala Kahakai Trail Association for community and cultural stewardship. ATA is a Hawai'i island-based, Native Hawaiian non-profit whose mission is to support and guide a community-managed trail that honors those who came before and perpetuates traditions for those who follow – with protocols and respect for Hawai'i's past, present and future. ATA will work with the County to develop a community management plan for Kaunāmano and steward the land in close partnership with the Ka'ū community, descendants, and nonprofits.

“My mother, Luana Keanu was born in Na‘alehu and raised in Kaunāmano by her grandparents. With the closure of Ka'ū Agribusiness at the turn of the century, these coastal lands were sold to developers. Soon after, applications were submitted for large luxury style subdivisions. As a descendant of Kaunāmano, my family has worked desperately to protect our iwi kūpuna and kuleana lands for the past twenty years. Today our ‘ohana and kūpuna can finally be at peace, knowing these lands will never be developed,” said **Keoni Fox, Kaunāmano descendant, Director, Ala Kahakai Trail Association**. “ATA looks forward to working closely with Ka'ū families and the larger community to honor the legacy of our kūpuna, to mālama these lands that have been passed down to us and to preserve them for the next generation.”

The County of Hawai'i PONC Program contributed \$4.31 million, and the State LLCP contributed \$2.4 million toward the conservation purchase. The property is now encumbered by a perpetual conservation easement owned by the County of Hawai'i restricting the land to cultural, conservation, and agricultural uses, as well as a permanent deed restriction required by LLCP. “We're honored to play a small part in the community-driven acquisition of Kaunāmano in Ka'ū to help ensure the continued stewardship, conservation, cultural preservation, and community access of this special place for generations to come,” said **Mayor Mitch Roth**.

“We were humbled to work with the Ka'ū community, descendants, and Ala Kahakai Trail Association to protect Kaunāmano. We mahalo the County and the State for partnering with us in this effort, and extend special thanks to the landowner EWM Enterprises for its patience and generosity. The Ka'ū community fought long and hard for this vision, and under their stewardship we know Kaunāmano will flourish,” said **Reyna Ramolete Hayashi, Project Manager, The Trust for Public Land**.

“Preserving lands with significant archaeological features that also provide coastal trails for the community is of great importance and will benefit current and future generations. We are grateful to be a part of these efforts and will continue to support The Trust for Public Land over the years,” stated **Ernest Moody, EWM Enterprises, LP**, the seller of the land. “This is the sixth property EWM has conveyed to the County or State of Hawai'i, or other nonprofit entities for preservation,” said **Charles A Anderson, PB, Hawaii Pacific Brokers, LLC** who represented EWM Enterprises, LP in the sale.

Kaunāmano's protection conserved 3.3 miles of coastline and marine resources including a tidepool complex, coves, and sea caves. The nearshore area is home to migrating humpback whales, dolphins, endangered monk seals and Hawksbill turtles, threatened green sea turtles, and an abundance of fish, limu, and shellfish. The Ka'ū community can now forever rely on these diverse marine resources for subsistence fishing, gathering, and cultural practice.

“This vision was set by many of our Ka'ū kūpuna that today, make up the soil of this ‘āina. Aunty Keolalani Hanoa, my ‘ohana and late mentor, once said, ‘One day we going own all of Ka'ū.’ It was her vision to protect the entire Ka'ū coast. She meant ‘own’ in that it is protected from development, allows for subsistence fishing and gathering, keeps it in the hands of our community to continue our traditional lifeways as kanaka ‘ōiwi o

Ka'ū. The time to implement community based management is now, otherwise our sacred spaces will continue to be mismanaged and desecrated. It's time to holomua kākou to figure out how we can 'auamo our kuleana to Kaunāmano together as one community, one 'ohana," shared **Nohealani Ka'awa, Kaunāmano descendant, Stewardship Committee, Ala Kahakai Trail Association.**

The property's protection will allow Kuahiwi Ranch to continue grazing cattle on the property. Kuahiwi Ranch is owned and operated by three generations of the Galimba family and specializes in local, free-range, grass-fed beef which contributes to Hawai'i's food security. "We are so excited that these lands will be preserved! Our family has been grazing cattle on this property for the last 17 years. We believe in the agricultural and open space value of these lands and are committed to working with the community and ATA to balance our grazing with the protection of the property's cultural and natural resources," said **Michelle Galimba, Kuahiwi Ranch.**

Kaunāmano's coastline and the Māniana Pali will provide protected habitat for native coastal plants and native seabirds like noio (black noddies) and koa'e kea (white tailed tropic birds) that nest along the cliffs.

"Kaunāmano protects native seabird habitat, and many other incredible natural and cultural resources along the coast and inland. We are thrilled that the Land Conservation Fund contributed to its preservation. The Legacy Land Conservation Program has helped protect some of Hawai'i's most cherished places for the past 16 years," said **Suzanne Case, Chair of the Dept. of Land and Natural Resources.**

The Ka'ū community has been working for decades to protect their beloved 80 mile coast to honor their kūpuna and empower future generations to perpetuate their culture and rural, subsistence lifestyle. The protection of Kaunāmano is one among several successful Ka'ū conservation projects over the years, including Honu'apo Fishpond and Kāwā Bay owned by the County of Hawai'i, Waikapuna conserved in 2019, and Kāwala, Manāka'a Fishing Village, and Honu'apo Ranch Lands which are owned by Kuahiwi Ranch and are now protected by privately funded conservation easements. All seven projects have conserved 6,199 acres, precious cultural landscapes, pasture land, and connect over 8.5 miles of the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail.

"Ka 'Ohana o Honu'apo Board members are thrilled to learn of the successful acquisition of Kaunāmano, which is a neighbor to Honu'apo. This is another addition to the greater vision of protecting the entire Ka'ū coastline from development. Big mahalo to the staff at The Trust for Public Land for helping to make this vision a reality," said **Megan Lamson, Ka 'Ohana o Honu'apo.**

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Photos of the Kaunāmano property can be [downloaded here](#)

About the County of Hawai‘i’s Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Fund

The Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Funds is used to acquire land or easements for public outdoor recreation and education, including mauka/makai access, historic or culturally important areas and sites, natural resource, significant habitat or eco-systems, forests, beaches, coastal areas, natural beautify, agricultural lands, and watersheds.

<https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/departments/finance/property-management/public-access-open-space-and-natural-resources-preservation-commission>

About the Legacy Land Conservation Program

The Legacy Land Conservation Program provides grants to community organizations and government agencies that strive to purchase and protect land that shelters exceptional, unique, threatened, and endangered resources. <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/ecosystems/llcp/>

About the Ala Kahakai Trail Association

The Ala Kahakai Trail Association (ATA) helps to connect the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (“Trail”) to the community and ensures that Hawaiian values and principles are acknowledged and practiced. We foster partnerships with the Trail and help guide the management and sustainment of the Trail. Our vision is that the Trail is a viable, appropriately-used and managed trail that follows the path of our ancestors – creating a bridge of understanding, respect and balance for all to use, protect, learn from and appreciate.

www.alakahakaitrail.org

About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. In Hawai‘i, The Trust for Public Land’s Aloha ‘Āina Program empowers communities to protect lands that perpetuate Native Hawaiian culture and returns these lands to Native Hawaiian organizations for community stewardship. Our Sustainable Hawai‘i Program protects lands that contribute to Hawai‘i’s freshwater and food self-sufficiency, with a vision of ‘āina momona, abundant lands that feed and nourish our people. www.tpl.org/hawaii

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