

040 Big Island Weekly | AUGUST 27, 2008

ACCELERATION FOR OUR SACRED LANDS

The 2nd Annual Mālama Puna'u u Cultural and Music Festival





Mālama Punalu`u

2008

This Labor Day Weekend thousands will come together to celebrate the beauty and spirit of one of the most sacred places in all of Hawai'i — Punalu'u Black Sand Beach, a thriving cultural treasure on the Ka'u Coast and the longest undeveloped shoreline in Hawai'i.

In 2007, the Mālama

Punalu'u Culture and Music Festival nearly doubled the population of the district of Ka'u and this year promises to be even bigger with megastars of Hawaiian music and hula coming together to show their support for the protection of these sacred lands.

Multi Na Hoku Hanohano Award Winner Amy Hanai'ali'i and two-time Grammy Winner Ledward Kaapana will join over 100 Hawaiian artists, musi-

cians and cultural practitioners for the 2nd Annual Mālama Punalu'u Festival in Na'alehu, this Saturday, August 30 (from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.) and Sunday, August 31 (from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.), with The Royal Court of the Hawai'i Island Festivals presiding.

Hula performances will include five wai'anae hula from Hawai'i Island as well as Halau I Ka Wekiukane — a halau from O'ahu that won best over-

all at the 2007 Merrie Monarch Festival.

Presented by Ka'u Preservation, the two-day event is free to all and intended for everyone, including families and children of all ages. Arrive early for the opening pu'e (prayer) that starts at 10 a.m. each day.

According to Jim Spielman, Event Chairman, "With the overwhelming success of last year's event that was attended by over 5,000 local residents

and visitors to Ka'u, this year's festival promises to be a must see event."

From the very best in hula and Hawaiian music to hands-on exhibits in the cultural arts and sustainable living practices, Spielman promises the event will "celebrate all that is Hawai'i in Ka'u and across our great state."

The festival will also dedicate an area for children, known as the 'keiki cultural activity tent, that will help perpetuate the Hawaiian culture by inspiring young people to continue native practices.

The official website for the event is: www.malamapunalu'u.org. For updates and more information call: Jim Spielman, 808-929-8334 or email: jim@kaupreservation.org.

Sponsors for this year's event include:

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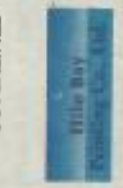
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Punalu'u: A sacred place

At this year's festival, a multi-media exhibit in the Na'alehu Community Center showcases the majesty and beauty of Punalu'u's sacred lands.

Depicted through projected images, scenes of Punalu'u and adjacent areas provide evidence of the shifts in use of the

area over time. Monumental architecture in the form of large heiau complexes (ritual centers) speak to the power of *ma ali'i* (the chiefs), the social stratification of Ka'u's ancient feudal society and the significance of the region for preserving traditional Hawaiian spiritual practices.

There are four pre-contact heiau within the immediate vicinity of Punalu'u.

To the south lies Ka'ie'ie. Thought to be a fishing shrine, the heiau was built on a prominent bluff overlooking the ocean to the south, what were once the Ninole fishponds to the west and Kōloa Bay to the east.

The heiau complexes of Lanipau and Imakakolou, heavily impacted by the construction of the Sea Mountain Resort golf course, have not fared as well. Once the largest of the four, what remains of Lanipau is in essence an island swallowed up by a sea of putting and driving greens. Imakakolou has all but van-

ished, under the recent wave of development.

The heiau complex that sits overlooking the ocean and Punalu'u Beach is referred to by many names including Halelau, Kané'ele'e; Mailekini or Punalu'u Nui. This heiau, likely extended to the edge of the cliff at Punalu'u Bay. Its westernmost boundary was destroyed to make way for the construction of a wharf/warehouse complex for

the sugar company in 1906. Identified as a heiau *luakini* (human sacrifice temple), a large table-like stone rests outside the southernmost wall and is known locally as Pohaku Mohai (sacrificial stone).

Please *kokoi*: While visiting Hawaiian wahi pana or sacred spaces keep in mind that they are still cherished by the native people today. Treat them with the reverence due any sacred site — modern or ancient.





Punalu'u: Land of the honu

Punalu'u is home to many endangered and threatened animal, insect and plant species, including the i'o (Hawaiian hawk), the Hawaiian monk seal and the Hawaiian hoary bat.

Most famous to Punalu'u are the sacred sea turtles who live and nest at Punalu'u. They are one of the few species so ancient that they watched the dinosaurs evolve and become extinct.

Today, sea turtles at Punalu'u are threatened by increasing coastal development that causes habitat degradation and increases toxic runoff. They are also impacted by illegal hunting as well as incidental (or non-deliberate) catch in fishing gear and

marine debris. Ocean waste can prove deadly to sea turtles when they entangle the turtles or are mistaken for food and ingested.

Punalu'u is an important feeding ground for the honu (Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle) who live along the coves and beaches on the 80-mile long coast of Ka'u. Much of what we know about the population at Punalu'u has come from a 30-year study conducted by Dr. George H. Balazs, a marine biologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service that continues today. (Dr. Balazs will be honored at this year's festival with a special Founder's Award.)

Green sea turtles, *Chelonia*

mydas, get their name from the color of their body fat, which is green from the algae or limu they eat. Punalu'u's warm black sand beaches are one of the few places in the world where sea turtles bask in the sun. This phenomenon is believed to help the turtles avoid predation by tiger sharks and also serves to increase their body temperature and speed up their metabolism, as sea turtles are cold-blooded. When enjoying Punalu'u, please stay at least 20 feet from turtles that are basking and do not use flash photography.

Hawai'i's population of green sea turtles is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act, indicating that they may become endangered

in the near future. There were once several million green sea turtles worldwide. Today, scientists currently estimate that only 100 to 350 females nest each year in Hawai'i.

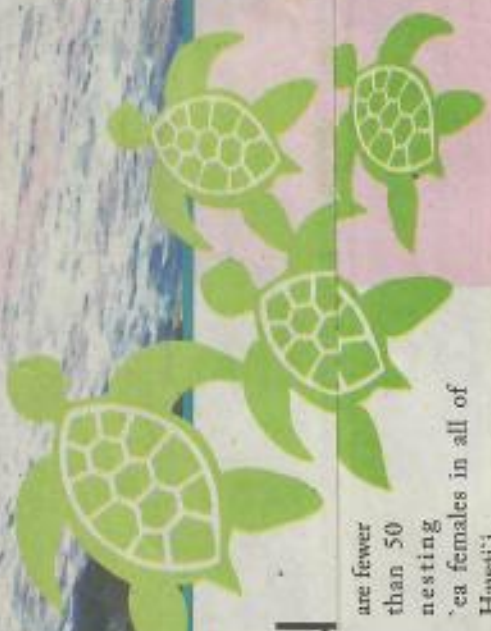
The honu 'ea (Hawaiian Hawksbill Turtle) is the only sea turtle that nests on the beaches of Punalu'u and Nihoa cove. The 'ea is critically endangered and every nesting site is important to its survival. Every year from approximately June through December a few female hawksbill return to the remote black sand beaches at Punalu'u to nest. Although a female may lay hundreds of eggs in one season, only 1 percent actually survive to become reproducing adults. Today there

are fewer than 50 nesting 'ea females in all of Hawai'i.

Once out of the nest, the hatchlings find their way to the ocean, by heading towards the brightest horizon. Thus, artificial lights on nesting beaches can mean death to the young turtles as they may confuse them and cause them to lose their way. The young turtles remain at sea and do not come ashore until at least one year later.

Extinction threatens this extremely rare sea turtle that is listed as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

All content for this special feature on the Malama Punalu'u Culture and Music Festival, including the photos and copy, were provided by Ka'u Preservation. The group wants to acknowledge Peter Anderson for his photography and Kuha'o Zane for his design work.



Save Punalu`u: Save Hawai`i Save Hawai`i: Save the world

Why are so many working so hard to protect a remote black sand beach on one of the more remote islands in the world? For most, it is simply the right thing to do. In a time when many of the Earth's sacred places are being paved over and lost forever, the moral imperative to protect what remains ultimately rests with those who know these places best. Among all the

doing inspired many to get involved. The summer educational program she started, "Kukulu Kumuhana o Ka'u" for kumali'i (students), that are seven to 17 years old continues at Punalu`u and is now in its 18th year. Founded in 1990 by Keola, the program allows students to learn about their history, culture, customs, traditions, protocols and the protection of the environment: mauka (mountains) to makai, immersing students in traditional Hawaiian Teaching "Hands on Experiencing." The graduates of this Summer's program will be leading the opening pule (prayer) at this year's Malama Punalu`u festival.

The latest effort to turn Punalu`u's sacred lands into resort and housing development for the wealthy became one of the biggest island news stories of 2007. The developer promised opportunity to a community still yearning for local jobs after the closing of the Pahala Sugar Plantation in 1997. His plan called for over 1,200 homes, two resorts and a two-acre shopping center at Punalu`u.

A grassroots effort sprang up in opposition and caught the developer off-guard. Ranchers, fishermen, educators and even realtors joined conservationists, eventually forming a majority that viewed the proposal with distrust. Although the developer claimed he could protect the natural and cultural resources of Punalu`u while building his luxury hotels, subdivision and

were those who understood that the area targeted for development included marked ancestral grave sites and endangered species habitat.

After months of deliberation, during which surveys, petitions and hundreds of hours of testimony were delivered, the Hawai`i County Council, led by Ka'u County Councilman Bob Jacobson, passed the historic resolution #169-07 that called for the county to work towards purchasing 150 acres deemed critical to the conservation effort. The measure identified this land along the shore as a place to be preserved and managed by the local community.

Then in June of 2008, the developer officially canceled plans for the ill-fated resort and returned to Beverly Hills.

Today the vision of Punalu`u as a living classroom and cultural resource is becoming realized through the efforts of many in the Ka'u community as a new non-profit organization is being formed to create a management plan for Punalu`u.

The future of these sacred lands looks better but it remains uncertain as long as Resolution 169-07 goes unimplemented. You can help protect Punalu`u forever by contacting your council member, the mayor, governor and other public officials and asking them to work together to make this dream a reality. Together we can save Punalu`u before the fog clears and another developer comes ashore. For more information -

Did you know?

- The Hawaiian Monk Seal, one of the most endangered animals in the world calls Punalu`u home.
- That Punalu`u was the original landfall of Polynesians over two thousand years ago.
- Over 30,000 people visit Punalu`u every month.
- Thousands of school children visit Punalu`u each year to learn about Hawaii's rich culture and environment.
- Punalu`u is the only beach park in all of Ka`u and one of the only black sand beaches in the world that is easily accessible.
- That the Ka`u Coast is the longest undeveloped coastline in the world.
- The County Park at Punalu`u is not owned by the county.
- That Punalu`u is currently for sale and could be bought by another developer.
- You can make a difference by action now.

things special about this natural treasure, count the people who love it.

Locals will tell you Punalu'u is their "icebox," the natural storage system they depend on for food. Tourists will tell you they just love the true Hawaiian feeling and beauty of the place. Children will tell you it is the fresh water spring fed pools along its shores. Cultural practitioners will tell you it is a source of knowledge and experience it for yourself.

Witness the sun rising over the ancient temples that still guard Punalu'u, its warm glow bathing the worn stones in a golden light, and you will be transformed. Understand that the honu hauling out on the black sand beaches have been doing so for eons and become a unifying force in the web of life.

The battle to save Punalu'u is an epic tale that spans decades of effort on the part of those touched by the sacredness of the land. Pele Hanoa's family has called Punalu'u home for over a century. She is one of several local kūpuna who have worked tirelessly to save it and in 2007, Governor Linda Lingle proclaimed September 1 Pele Hanoa Day in honor of her work.

Those who honor Hanoa also remember her daughter Keolalani (July, 1960-March, 2006). The younger Hanoa founded Ka'u Preservation in 2004. She dedicated the rest of her life to saving Punalu'u and in so

shopping centers, the promises seemed empty to most. Especially disbelieving

tion about how you can help go to: www.savepunaluu.org.

How to get to the festival



To Kona

Map to Naalehu

county officials to protect Punalu'u forever.

Mālama Punalu`u schedule of events

Saturday August 30th



- Hula Halau O Kawananiakoa
- Kekuhi Kanahele
- Diana Aki
- Halau O Po`Ohala
- Darlene Ahuna and Friends
- Manoa DNA
- Kanaka Pila
- Eddie Kamae/Mike Kaawa/Analu Aina
- The men of Halau I Ka Wekiu
- Mahalo Mai Ka Honu`ea Award Presentation to Dr. George Balazs
- Founder's Award and Tribute to Uncle George Na`ope
- Brudda Smitty with Eddie Kamae
- SuGah Daddy & Friends Jam session 6:30 pm-7:30 pm

- **Master of Ceremonies: Skylark Rossetti and Tommy Kahikina Ching**
- **Sound by Pepe Romero**
- **Stage and Lighting by Henry Makizuru**
- **Electric by Jim Anderson**

Sunday August 31st



- Kukulū Kumuhana Pule
- Eddie Kamae/Mike Kaawa/Analu Aina
- Halau O Kahikilaulani
- Ledward Kaapana
- Halau Kukulū Malamalama O Kona
- Darren Bonitez
- The Band Ka`u
- The men of Halau I Ka Wekiu
- Punalu`u Boys
- Amy Hanalali`i Gilliom & Friends
- Closing Ceremony with Amy Hanalali`i Gilliom and Halau I Ka Wekiu



- Floral Designs by Chuck Harter
- Stage Banners by Aaron Miyasato
- Event Producer & Planner Iwalani Kalima



Festival gives a boost to Ka'ū economy

Back in the day, Ka'ū was one of many towns that sprang up to serve the sugar industry in Hawai'i. Since the local plantation closed at the end of the 20th Century, many residents throughout the district have had to make long commutes to more populated areas to find work. While some still seek a single replacement for the plantation based economy, others look to educational programs and cultural events as economic engines better suited to the district's rural way of life.

Jim Spielman is chairman for the

Mālama Punalu'u Music and Cultural Festival. He says the event was designed with economic benefit to the community in mind and describes it as a way "to aid the people of Ka'ū who are uniting to create a sustainable economic future that creates jobs while protecting the cultural and natural resources."

Indeed, the festival has become an example of one of the many ways the community can come together to create a sense of pride by celebrating the Hawaiian traditions that make Ka'ū,

Ka'ū — all this while preserving it at the same time.

"By creating new opportunities like this, we are showing students graduating from Ka'ū High School the potential for a bright, productive life in Ka'ū and a reason to stay in the community or return after college," states Spielman.

2007 was the opening year for the event and businesses throughout the district got direct proof of the concept in action. Last year, the festival attracted several thousand people who

spent money purchasing gas, groceries and meals. One of the main service stations in Ng'ālehu (where the event was held), ran out of gas, leaving its owner to proclaim that weekend as the busiest three-day period he ever had.

Estimates have put the influx of capital at over \$70,000 into local businesses and organizations. This includes more than \$9,000 in housing and \$7,000 in food expenses for the entertainers and event staff alone.

In 2008, with an increased attendance, the festival is likely to have an

even greater positive impact on the Ka'ū economy. Along with money spent during the festival, long term benefits could come from return visits by those who enjoyed their stay and want to get to know the people and place even better.

Perhaps more important is the potential for the festival's success to inspire others to get creative. If interest from outside developers has proven one thing, it's that the district has plenty to offer.