

From: [Susan Forbes](#)
To: [WPCtestimony](#)
Subject: Testimony for Windward Planning Commission Hearing
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 10:55:14 AM
Attachments: [Testimony for the Windward Planning Commission re.pdf](#)

Aloha,
Attached is my testimony related to the final draft of the General Plan 2045.
In gratitude,
Susan Forbes

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March 10, 2025

Windward Planning Commission, Hawaii County
Aupuni Center 101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3
Hi, Hawai'i 96720

RE: Testimony on Hawaii County General Plan 2045, Final Recommended Draft

Dear Chair Daniele, Vice Chair Perrin, and members of the Windward Planning Commission,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

I have lived in Hawaii for the past 57 years and in Hakalau for the past 14 years.

My focus is Hakalau Point, parcels 29002079 and 81. In 2015, I submitted a suggestion form to the County to acquire Hakalau Point under the Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Commission (PONC). While a priority on the County's acquisition list, negotiations with the owner failed. I was an active participant in hearings of the Hamakua Community Plan.

I'm testifying because of the inconsistency in the Final Recommended Draft General Plan 2045 and the HCDP adopted by ordinance in 2018, which was the result of significant community input and controversy during the HCDP process which lasted 9 years. My testimony summarizes the uniqueness of the site in terms of the historical, cultural and scenic significance. In addition, I've raised some practical issues related to safety within the community.

Hakalau Point (and Hakalau Valley) played a major role in Hawaiian history. King Kamehameha defeated Maui warriors in Hakalau, an important step in the unification of the islands. (Attached is the 2015 PONC testimony of Kehaulani Lum delineating the details.)

Hakalau Point and the mill area by the Bay were the hub of sugar production for over 100 years. The Point was a work site. The sugar industry is significant because of the contributions of its workers, immigrants from many cultures, and the values which enrich Hawaii today: Engage in collective effort. Look out for each other. Honor hard work. Show respect for those who came before us. Aloha and Mālama `Aina. This history enriches all of us. There are stories to tell and lessons to be learned from understanding the cultural and historical significance of the area.



*Hakalau Up Camp, Down Camp, **Hakalau Point** and Hakalau Bay, circa 1944-1945.
Photo courtesy of Akiko Masuda*

Conservation area along the cliffs and the availability of a recreational area are important. If we are serious about preserving the cultural, historical and environmental significance, a majority of Hakalau Point should be preserved for open/conservation/recreation.

Safety issues do exist and are worth mentioning. This is a quiet residential neighborhood, although there are tourists who come to walk down to Hakalau Bay. Take a look at the setting in the Google Earth image from 2023. There is one road in and out of this section of Hakalau, i.e., Old Mamalahoa Highway. This poses a problem during an emergency, i.e., hurricanes, fires, etc. The road down to Hakalau Bay is currently blocked off and the park has been closed since 2017. It will remain closed while the Hakalau Bridge on Highway 19 is repaired/restored. This process will go on for years.



Hakalau Point is scenic...from the highway, from walking around the neighborhood, from the Bay or ocean. The scenic beauty is also worth preserving.



Thank you for your service to the County and the people who live here.

In gratitude,
Susan Forbes

Hakalau Point, 9-10-15, courtesy of Susan Forbes

September 8, 2015

TO: Commissioners of the Hawai'i County Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation Commission

FROM: Kehaulani Lum

Aloha!

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to present my concerns regarding the cultural and historically important lands of Hakalau Point.

My name is Kehaulani Lum, and I am a lineal descendant of Kapou, the son of a Konohiki of Hakalau-nui and recipient of a Mahele grant in Wailea, which our `ohana stewards today. I wholeheartedly support your consideration of this opportunity to improve public access, open space and cultural, historic and natural resource preservation.

Hakalau-nui carries the name of a ruling chief, who was the kaulana nui (administrator of land) of the area and a revered `ōlohe, a master fighter. The `ōlohe of this area were renown for their prowess, and the ancient spiritual art of lua, from self-defense to healing, was practiced and taught here.

In the Mahele, the lands encompassing Hakalau-nui, Hilo Palikū, were given by the King to Mikahela Kekau`ōnohi, the granddaughter of King Kamehameha. She held them until her death, when her estate entered into probate and was ultimately ordered by the Court to be sold, rather than to be retained by her heir. Hakalau-nui, thus, slipped away from their ancient purposes and entered into the holdings of foreign commerce.

Along with the lands went the memories of a significant ancient battle which took place on these very shores between King Kamehameha's armies and the warriors of Kahekili of Mau'i.

It is widely known today that Kamehameha, who thereupon confirmed the prophecy that he would be a great warrior king, lifted the historic Naha Stone, which sits outside of the Hilo Public Library. Less is known, however, of the circumstances that precipitated his act.

The Reverend Stephen L. Desha, who published a series on Kamehameha Paiea and his great warrior, Kekūhaupi'o, in his weekly Hawaiian language newspaper Ka Hoku o Hawaii, wonderfully captured the story in the 1920s. Desha writes:

“After the passage of seven *anahulu* periods during which time Kamehameha arranged his battle divisions, he asked Kekūhaupi`o to accompany him to Hilo Palikū...Chief Kamehameha’s great canoe was prepared and he took his warriors with him, a very wise act, because during this journey they were attacked by some Maui people.

This was a great canoe which Kamehameha had prepared, and it carried almost two hundred men on one double canoe. There were also some swift sailing canoes, each canoe being able to carry fifty men with ease.

Kamehameha and his warriors left Kohala, followed by Kekūhaupi`o and some warrior chiefs of Kohala. They sailed easily to land at Hakalau where Kamehameha and Kekūhaupi`o and their people were entertained by Chiefess Keakealani of Hilo; Princess Likoa; and Kahipa, the daughter of Chief K ānekoa of Hāmākua. She was living at Hakalau with her female *hoahānau* in those days. This visit by High Chief Kamehameha was a cause for joyous entertainment by these high chiefesses of Hilo and Hāmākua...

When Kamehameha arrived with his people at Hakalau, Kahahawai was staying in the upland forest of Hakalau, making a canoe for his lord, Kahekili of Maui. With him at that time was Kaihe, the “black [tattoo] of Kahekili,” one of Kahekili’s very great favorites, who was a famous warrior against Kahekili’s men.”

Desha depicts in great detail the great battle which ensued here between Kamehameha’s army and the warriors of Kahekili, revealing that it was the seminal event which led to the young chief being called to test his strength, and lineage, on the Naha stone. “On hearing of Kamehameha’s victory in this battle with the Maui people, Chief Keawemauhili sighed, and said: “This is perhaps the bravery which shall achieve the conquest of these islands.”

This victorious fight led other chiefs to announce to Keawemauhili, “Indeed, your words at the time of this young chief’s birth were really correct, that this was the appropriate time to pinch the tip of the mulberry. Now at this time, the branch is hardened, and the tip of the mulberry cannot be pinched off. Alas for us in the future. Perhaps the bitter fruits of the actions of this young chief will come, for here in the dust of morning [youth] that one’s extraordinary deeds are already apparent.”

Like Kamehameha’s later battle at Nu`uanu Pali, which helped seal his victory on the island of O`ahu, his battle at Hakalau-nui was a pivotal moment in his ascension and led to his greatest achievement, the establishing of peace, through the unification of the islands of Hawai`i.

Here is the historic story of Hakalau-nui which I believe truly makes this space extremely worthy of protection. Mahalo nui loa for your sincere consideration.

Aloha, Kehaulani Lum