

June 13, 2025

MEMO TO: KA'Ā-1(4) File

F R O M: Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Chair 
Kōmike Aloha 'Āina

SUBJECT: **TRANSMITTAL OF INFORMATIONAL DOCUMENT RELATING TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF 'ŌIWI RESOURCES STRATEGIC PLAN**
(KA'Ā-1(4))

The attached informational document pertains to Item 1(4) on the Committee's agenda.

ka'ā:ltr:001(4)afile01:kmatt

Attachment

MAUI COUNTY
'ŌIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ŌIWI
DEPARTMENT OF
'ŌIWI RESOURCES



STRATEGIC
PLAN

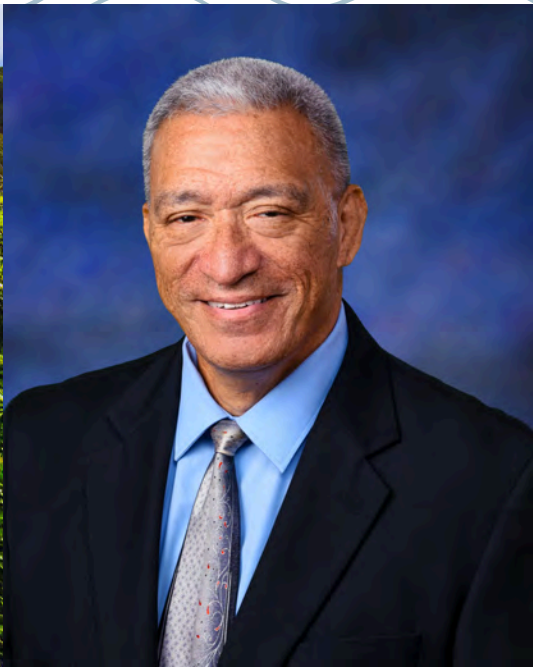
2025 - 2030

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02	Message from the Mayor	17	Divisions
04	Message from the Director	23	Staff
06	Executive Summary	25	Goals & Objectives
07	Department Overview	37	Budget
09	'Ōiwi Definition	39	Glossary of Terms
11	Mo'okū'auhau	40	Related Bills & Amendments



*'O ke kahua ma mua ma hope ke kūkulu. The foundation first, and then the building.
Learn all you can, then practice. - 'Ōlelo No'eau #2459 (Pukui, 1983)*



Aloha mai kākou,

It is with deep respect and hope for our collective future that I introduce the inaugural Strategic Plan for the County of Maui Department of 'Ōiwi Resources.

Established by a vote of the people of Maui Nui in November 2022, the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources reflects a powerful and long-overdue commitment to elevating the values, practices, and knowledge systems of Native Hawaiians within Maui County governance. As the first department of its kind in the state, it is a testament to the enduring will of our community to honor and integrate 'ōiwi wisdom into how we care for our land, our people, and our future.

Guided by the Revised Charter of the County of Maui, the Department is charged with responsibilities that reflect both cultural integrity and environmental stewardship—from protecting place names and advancing the Hawaiian language, to advising on natural resource management and promoting ecosystem restoration. These efforts are grounded in the belief that our ancestral knowledge is not just relevant—it is essential to building a sustainable and thriving Maui Nui.

This strategic plan sets a course for this important work. It outlines priorities, partnerships, and pathways that align with the County's broader vision of governance rooted in justice and sustainability. I extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the formation of this Department and this strategic plan—especially the community advocates who worked tirelessly to bring this vision to life.

Together, we take a step forward in restoring the balance between our past and our future, ensuring that the life of the land is truly perpetuated in righteousness.

Mahalo nui,

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
MAYOR, COUNTY OF MAUI





Aloha mai kākou,

It is with deep aloha that, as the Director of the County of Maui Department of 'Ōiwi Resources, I humbly present our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. This document serves as our guiding framework, rooted in 'ike kūpuna, shaped by the voices of our communities, and envisioned with the well-being of future generations.

Every enduring endeavor begins with a strong foundation. 'O ke kahua ma mua ma hope ke kūkulu - first the foundation then we build. For us, kahua is rooted in identity, values, and vision. It is where our kūpuna stood with purpose, where we stand with intention, and where our keiki will one day rise with pride.

This plan reflects our collective commitment to the people, 'āina, and cultural heritage of Maui Nui. More than a plan, it is a pathway. One that upholds the rights, responsibilities, and stewardship of 'ōiwi resources, ensuring their protection, resilience, and meaningful integration into the way we govern and grow together.

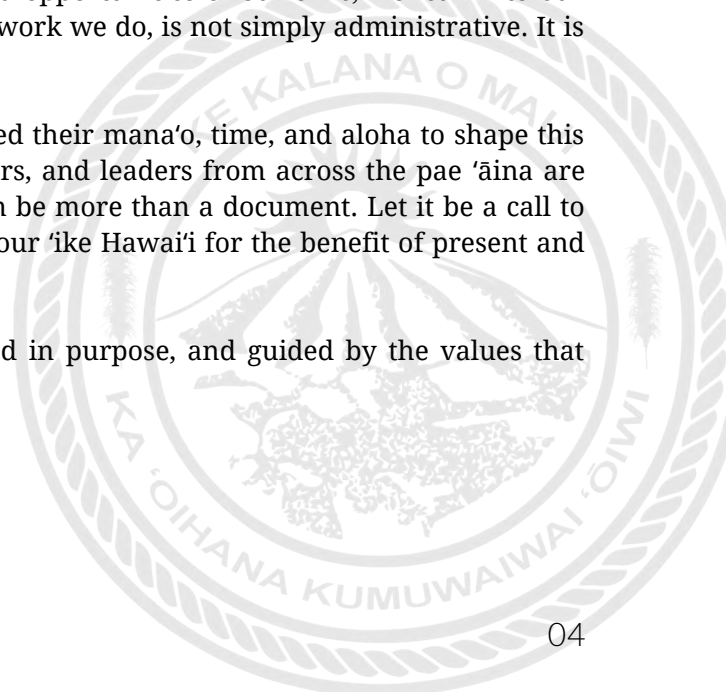
In this pivotal moment, we draw strength from our traditions. Kahua is not only our starting place, it is our place of healing. It is where we restore what has been lost, reconnect what has been severed, and ground ourselves in unity and purpose. As we face the challenges and opportunities of our time, we lean into our traditions with courage and clarity. This department, and the work we do, is not simply administrative. It is generational. It is spiritual. It is cultural.

I extend my heartfelt mahalo to all those who have contributed their mana'o, time, and aloha to shape this plan. The voices of community members, cultural practitioners, and leaders from across the pae 'āina are deeply woven into the vision and actions ahead. Let this plan be more than a document. Let it be a call to action—a collective movement to protect, uplift, and steward our 'ike Hawai'i for the benefit of present and future generations.

May we continue to walk forward, rooted in tradition, united in purpose, and guided by the values that define us as a people.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

KAPONO'AI MOLITAU
PO'O, 'ŌIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ŌIWI





“Aloha wale ia ‘āina ko kākou kahua
So much love for this country our foundation

Auē ka ‘ili‘ili e i ho‘opuehu ‘ia nei
Alas for the little pebbles being dispersed and scattered about

E paepae hou ‘ia ka pōhaku
Let rocks be set up again

I pa‘a maila ke kahua hale hou”
So a new house foundation be fixed

Ke Au Hawai‘i
Haku ‘ia e Larry Kauanoe Kimura

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Native Hawaiian ancestors believed, so too does the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources, that in order to build properly, one must first set forth a solid foundation.

'Āina or land is the foundation for the Hawaiian people.

Many attempts have been made to diffuse Kanaka Maoli connection to 'āina and ancestral wisdom. Now is the time to reconstruct the stones of that unwavering foundation so that our people might stand again in the shelter of such wisdom. Such is the task that the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources bears – to continue to fortify the foundation that connects the people of Hawai'i to the knowledge systems of this place. In that spirit, the Department is pleased to put forth this strategic plan that lays forth the stones that will become the foundation of the work to come. A liveable document, this plan will evolve over time as is the nature of the work. While it will provide guidance and clear goals and objectives, the Department will be fluid to address new obstacles and opportunities as they arise.

The format of this strategic plan follows the **ancestral practice of building kahua** – first by laying the niho stones, the stones used to interlock the structure together. It then outlines the unu and 'ili'ili stones, the pebbles or smaller rocks that are used to fill the spaces. This foundational structure is built such that, should any stone be disturbed, they shift inward essentially strengthening the structure rather than weakening it. Similarly, this strategic plan outlines the Department's mission, core values, goals and milestone measures as elements of the Department's foundation, locked tightly together so that it might stand the test of time.

This strategic plan is tailored toward collaboration with all county departments as appropriate, integrating the Department's fiscal priorities and legislative responsibilities to ensure effective partnerships across Maui County.

Incorporated within these pages is direct input from the community, ensuring that the department's work aligns with the needs and priorities of the people. The County of Maui, on behalf of the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources, distributed an eleven-question survey to both County employees as well as the community at large. In-person and virtual interviews were also conducted, engaging community cultural practitioners, 'āina-based organizations, Maui County Council members, Department directors, state and federal stakeholders, and local business owners. Responses from those surveys and in-person interviews conducted have informed key areas of focus, including cultural stewardship, ecological sustainability, community empowerment, and responsible governance. Additionally, immediate and tangible steps have been outlined to demonstrate the department's real-life value to the community and address pressing concerns. The voice of the collective is key to carrying the kuleana of the Department and they are eager to strengthen the pilina between County entities and community members of Maui Nui.

While this strategic plan specifically addresses the work ahead for 2025-2030, the hope is to establish a plan that will serve as the firm foundation for many generations to come.



DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

KA PŌHAKU KIHI
PA‘A

THE SOLID
CORNERSTONE

—

‘ŌLELO NO‘EAU #1540

(PUKUI, 1983)



**Kū mai ka lā i Haneo‘o a pi‘i i
ka piko kaulana o Halemau‘u.
‘Auhea ‘oe e ka ‘Ōninipua
malu o‘u, eō mai ‘oe.**

The sun stands forth at Haneo‘o, climbing to the sacred center of Halemau‘u. Where are you, ‘Ōninipua rain, my quiet strength, answer my call.

The sun rises at the easternmost point of Maui Nui, Haneo‘o, and Maui’s shores are bathed in the glow of dawn. This new day represents a new beginning, a source of hope for its people and the land itself.

INTRODUCTION

This strategic plan serves as that kahua or foundation – the stones upon which the Department itself will stand.

Moving forward, this approach will empower Maui County to make informed decisions that protect and perpetuate its Indigenous resources, enhancing community well-being, cultural vitality, and environmental sustainability for the benefit of all residents.

In November 2022, Maui County residents voted to amend the Maui County Charter and voted in favor of establishing the Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources. Article 8, Chapter 21 of the Revised Charter of the County of Maui, as amended, establishes the Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources as of July 1, 2024.¹

As is outlined in the County charter, the Department will act in an advisory capacity to support the responsible stewardship of ‘ōiwi resources across Maui County. The Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources will also develop programming and establish initiatives that promote the care and protection of ‘ōiwi resources.

Simultaneously, the work will strengthen relationships between residents, visitors, community stakeholders, and the living traditions, language, practices and values of Hawaiian culture. In this way, the Department will support the County to infuse Hawaiian culture in every aspect of its work, including government and community responsibilities.

Following the establishment of the Department, renowned cultural expert and community leader Kapono‘ai Molitau was named the Department Director, along with Deputy Director Kekai Robinson, a revered educator and cultural practitioner. With these two leaders at the helm, the Department seeks to chart its path forward, carrying the kuleana with which it has been tasked.

The Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources was established to provide cultural stewardship, guidance, and advocacy for Maui County’s Indigenous resources. These resources include iwi, land, water, cultural practices, language, and the ancestral wisdom that connects Native Hawaiians to their land.

This strategic plan outlines the Department’s mission, core values, key initiatives, and action steps to ensure that ‘Ōiwi resources are protected, perpetuated, and integrated into the county’s decision-making processes.

¹ Article 8, Chapter 21 of the Revised Charter of the County of Maui (1983),

Lei ana 'Īao i ka 'ohu, nā
pali kapu o Kaka'e. 'Auhea
'oe e ka Uhiwai, ua nae iki ,
eō mai 'oe.

'Īao wears a lei of clouds, the
sacred cliffs of Kaka'e. Where
are you, Uhiwai thick with
fog, answer my call.



The water system of the Hawaiian islands is intricate and depends on various elements to ensure that water springs forth from the ground as a source of survival for Hawai'i's inhabitants. To wear a lei is a gift, and the lei woven with cloud forms is one that our mountains wear – a sign that our systems are in balance, that water is flowing, that we are rich in the resources we need to survive.

'ŌIWI RESOURCES

The work of this Department hinges upon defining what 'ōiwi resources are – what they have been and what they will be in the future. More than simply natural phenomena, they involve a knowledge base and an intricate relationship with those phenomena, all which have guided the lifestyle of Native Hawaiians for many generations. A task not taken lightly, the current members of the Department have used their subject matter expertise as well as their experience in the Department since its inception to define 'ōiwi resources.

The word 'ōiwi, meaning native, indigenous, or aboriginal is closely tied to kulāiwi, meaning homeland, both rooted in the word iwi (bones). As Mary Kawena Pukui states, iwi are sacred remnants of life, symbolizing deep ancestral ties: “Who will save the bones? Who will care for one in old age and in death?” (Pukui & Elbert, 1971). Thus, **'ōiwi reflects not just identity, but an enduring connection between people, land, and lineage.**

The terms Kanaka Maoli and Kanaka 'Ōiwi are interchangeable, both referring to a native born person of Hawai'i who is ethnically Hawaiian. Therefore, the role of iwi in the word 'ōiwi serves to connect the Hawaiian people to their ancestors, indicating a deep and fervent connection to them and even to the land itself.

Hawaiian belief centers on personified animism and the veneration of ancestors and chiefs, reflecting a deep connection to the natural world. Cultural and natural resources are inseparable, as culture arises directly from nature. Reflected in the 'ōlelo no'eau, “He ali'i ka 'āina, he kauā ke kanaka.” (The land is chief, and man is its servant) (Pukui, 1983).



Humanity is not the pinnacle of creation evidenced by the fact that in the Kumulipo, one of Hawai'i's greatest (pro)-creation chants, humanity does not appear until the ninth epoch out of a total of sixteen. This epic genealogy of life itself showcases the reciprocity and dualistic nature the Hawaiian religion holds. "Religion" is a loose translation of ho'omana, which in Hawaiian is both a noun and a verb. Rather than a system of worship, ho'omana means to recognize and ascribe mana, divine or spiritual power, to someone or something. It is not about giving power, but acknowledging the power that exists. To ho'omana is to honor, care for, and protect that inherent power in a person, place, or natural element.

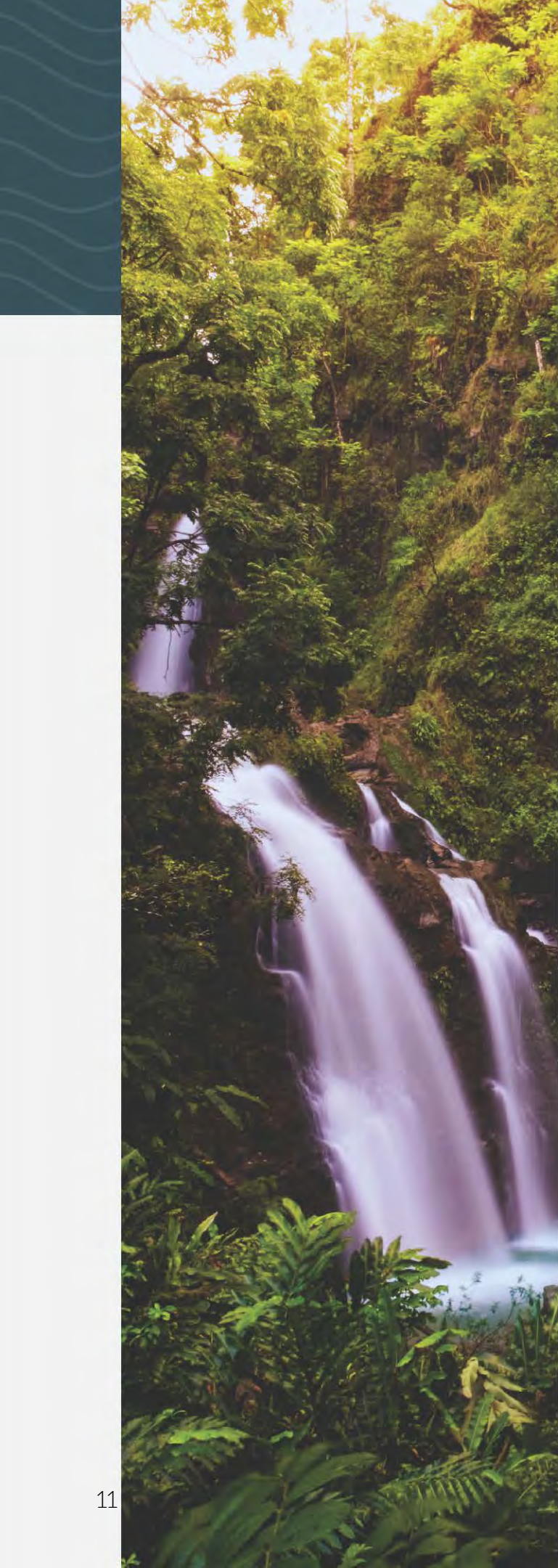
'Āina, when personified, is akua. These elements of 'āina are those which rule over and care for the people. This is the model which guided generations of ali'i from antiquity up until the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom on January 17th, 1893. What substantiated the chief was the people; i ali'i ke ali'i i ke kanaka, a chief is only a chief because of their people.

If the akua's responsibility is to take care of the people--from ali'i to kahuna and maka'āinana alike; this is what was modeled in ali'i political structures of power or mana, then similarly it was the job of the people to care for the akua, the natural elements that surround us. The same is true for human relationship with 'āina.

Although there is not currently a ruling class of chiefs in Hawai'i today, this model of reciprocity lives on as it guides the modern day Hawaiian worldview.

'Ōiwi resources encompass all elements of the universe observed, remembered, and cared for. From the lofty layers of the heavens, to the verdant lands and the depths of the ocean. Embodying the physical, spiritual and genealogical ties that sustain and define kanaka.

These are 'ōiwi resources.



MO'OKŪ'AUHAU

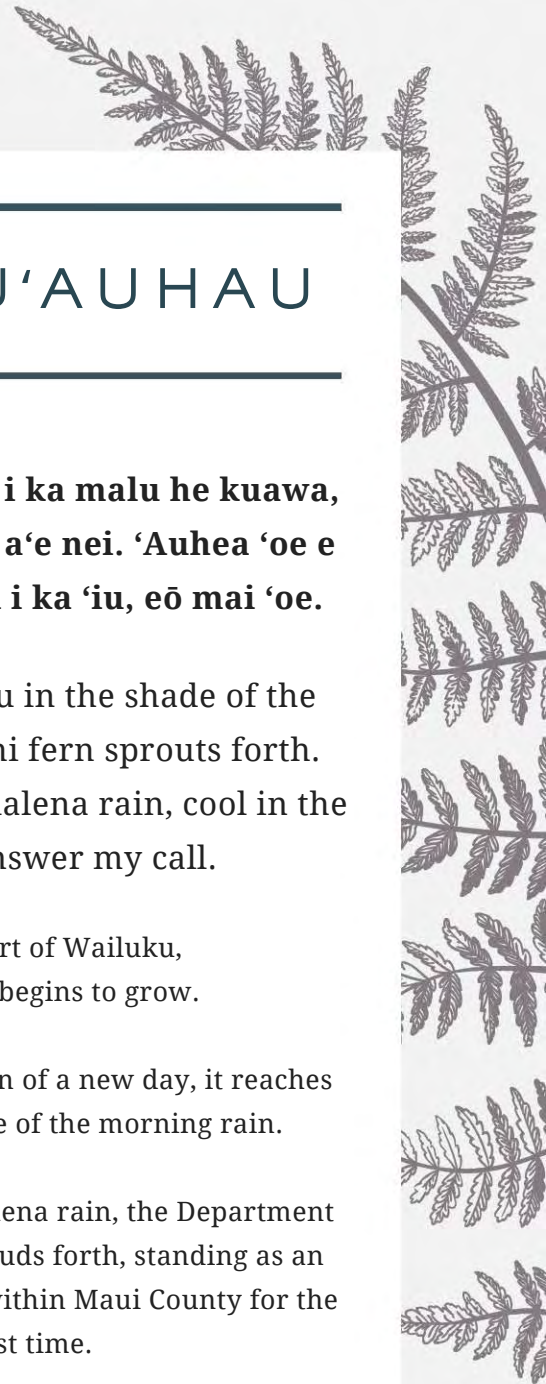
**Aia lā i Wailuku, i ka malu he kuawa,
ka pē'ahi e kupu a'e nei. 'Auhea 'oe e
ka 'Ulalena, 'olu i ka 'iu, eō mai 'oe.**

There at Wailuku in the shade of the
valleys, the pē'ahi fern sprouts forth.
Where are you, 'Ulalena rain, cool in the
upland, answer my call.

In the heart of Wailuku,
a new fern begins to grow.

Sparkling in the dawn of a new day, it reaches
for the sustenance of the morning rain.

Nurtured by the 'Ulalena rain, the Department
of 'Ōiwi Resources buds forth, standing as an
official department within Maui County for the
first time.



While the formal establishment of the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources makes it the first of its kind, it is important to acknowledge the groundwork that has already been laid by many generations of Hawaiians leading up to this point. Historically, the relationship between Native Hawaiians and government entities has been tenuous. Through the peaks and valleys of government initiatives, there have always been Native Hawaiians and allies standing up to advocate for iwi kupuna and 'ōiwi resources. Whether it be for equitable Hawaiian language education, responsible land use at Haleakalā, raising issues about water diversion and privatized water use or appropriate treatment of iwi kupuna at Honokahua, Native Hawaiians from diverse walks of life have found a way to speak up in an arena where their voice has often been limited.

The community has spoken voting in favor of standing up the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources. Revered Kumu Hula and Native Hawaiian community advocate Dr. Hōkūlani Holt sees this Department as the first step to bridging that gap that has existed between government and community for decades. **In this way, there is a sense of relief for those whose iwi are in and of this place, a sense of faith that new relationships can be developed between people, 'āina, and government procedures so that the culture and wisdom of Hawai'i will be considered first and as a pivotal foundation.** She acknowledges that 150 years of generational trauma cannot be healed right away, and that expectation should not sit solely on the shoulders of the Department's current administration. Instead, the Department should be seen as a door to that healing. It is a path forward to encourage any and all county departments to bear their kuleana of responsible stewardship, to bring the community to the table and sit together as members of Maui Nui.

As Deputy Director, Kekai Robinson puts it "We [kānaka] have always been here." There has always been a presence of Hawaiian wisdom and perspective provided by individuals advocating for 'ōiwi resources and recently the county has taken the step forward to strengthen its relationship with the knowledge of this land and its lifeways. **With the formalization of the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources and with this action plan, now is the time to build the capacity of the county to responsibly steward 'ōiwi resources, build deep connections with the community who also do this work, and uplift the plethora of ancestral wisdom present across Maui Nui.**



"ĀINA AND COMMUNITY GOES FAR BEYOND YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL NEEDS. THIS DEPARTMENT CAN HELP OTHERS TO RECOGNIZE THAT TOO."
- MAUI COMMUNITY MEMBER



MAUI COUNTY CHARTER

CHAPTER 21: DEPARTMENT OF 'ŌIWI RESOURCES

Section 8-21.1. Organization. There shall be a department of 'Ōiwi resources consisting of a director of 'Ōiwi resources and the necessary staff.

Section 8-21.2. Director of 'Ōiwi Resources.

- The director of 'Ōiwi resources shall be appointed by the mayor with the approval of the council and may be removed by the mayor.
- The director shall be experienced in Native Hawaiian cultural resource management, Native Hawaiian cultural practices in the county, and proficient in the Hawaiian language.
- The director must have had five years of experience in a leadership capacity.

Section 8-21.3. Powers, Duties, and Functions. The director of 'Ōiwi resources shall:

1. Be the administrative head of the department of 'Ōiwi resources.
2. Collaborate with the mayor, the executive branch, and the council to ensure proper management of 'Ōiwi resources throughout the county.
3. Design and implement programs to care for and develop 'Ōiwi resources.
4. Guide the county in the correct usage of the Hawaiian language, including place names, and the integration of Hawaiian language within county functions.
5. Promote healthy ecosystems through natural-cultural resource regeneration, protection, and sustainable utilization.
6. Advise state and federal agencies on all programs and projects that affect 'Ōiwi resources in the county.
7. Report to the mayor and council annually on the county's overall performance in meeting 'Ōiwi resources objectives and any issues that could be addressed by ordinance.
8. Perform other duties and functions as assigned by the mayor or managing director. (Amended July 1, 2024)

Section 8-8.3. Powers, Duties, and Functions. The planning director shall:

1. Be the administrative head of the department of planning.
2. Serve as the chief planning officer of the county and as the technical advisor to the mayor, council, and planning commissions on all planning and related matters.
3. Recommend revisions of the general plan at least every ten years to guide the development of the county, in collaboration with the director of 'Ōiwi resources.
4. Prepare, administer, and enforce long-range planning programs, in collaboration with the director of 'Ōiwi resources.
5. Prepare, administer, and enforce a cultural resource management plan, in collaboration with the director of 'Ōiwi resources.
6. Prepare, administer, and enforce zoning ordinances, zoning maps and regulations and any amendments or modifications thereto.
7. Review the lists of proposed capital improvements projects contemplated by the county and recommend the order of their priority to the mayor, in collaboration with the director of 'Ōiwi resources.
8. Perform such other duties and functions as shall be required by law or as shall be assigned by the mayor. (Amended July 1, 2024)

The initial paragraph of Section 8-8.4, effective July 1, 2024, shall read as follows:

Section 8-8.4. Planning Commissions.

- Each planning commission shall consist of nine members appointed by the mayor with the approval of the council.
- The members of each planning commission shall be residents of the island of the planning commission on which the member serves.
- The directors of the departments of 'Ōiwi resources, public works, environmental management, and water supply shall be non-voting ex-officio members of each commission. (Amended July 1, 2024)

Section 13-17. Bilingual Government.

- The county shall operate as a bilingual government and shall implement opportunities to promote inclusion of the Hawaiian language.
- Official writings of the county shall be prepared and made available in both official state languages, English and Hawaiian, as determined by ordinance.
- The county shall provide appropriate oral language services to any resident who orally communicates with its officers or employees in the Hawaiian language. (Amended July 1, 2024)

**Additional related bills and amendments in Appendix B*



Māla‘e Molokini i ka
‘ehukai, kai lana
mālie ‘o Kealaikahiki.
‘Auhea ‘oe e ka
Lanipa‘ina, eō mai ‘oe.

Molokini is calm in the
sea spray afloat on the
calm seas of
Kealaikahiki. Where
are you, Lanipa‘ina
rain, answer my call.

FRAMEWORK

The ocean does not divide us, it connects us. Kanaka Maoli ancestors for generations have relied upon the ocean as a source of food, have navigated the seas building communities and relationships. So, too, do the oceans of Maui Nui connect our islands and our spirits. With this in mind, the Department’s framework includes core elements that guide our processes in ways that uplift Maui Nui as a whole and as unique communities.



OUR MISSION

To uphold and advance the rights, responsibilities, and stewardship of ‘ōiwi resources, ensuring their protection, sustainability, and integration into governance and community practices for the benefit of present and future generations.

The mission of the Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources is to protect the cultural resources of Maui Nui, in order to **reinforce community connectivity with Hawaiian knowledge.**

Ho‘oniho ‘ia mai ke ala no ka pono o ke kumuwaiwai ‘ōiwi, i mau ai ka pilina ma waena o ko Hawai‘i a me ka ‘ike kupuna.

CORE VALUES

Our strategic direction is rooted in **KAHUA**, a values-based foundation that informs our decision-making, community engagement, and long-term stewardship. Each value contributes to how we prioritize, implement, and evaluate our work.

KULEANA

We are committed to upholding and advancing the rights, responsibilities, and stewardship of 'ōiwi resources. This value informs our policy development, resource management, and leadership approach to ensure accountability and long-term sustainability.

'A'APO

We actively listen and respond to the evolving needs of our community. 'A'apo guides our stakeholder engagement strategies, ensuring that our actions are rooted in responsiveness, empathy, and relevance.

HO'OMANAWANUI

We approach our journey with patience and perseverance. This principle reinforces a long-term perspective, supporting resilience in our planning, partnerships, and implementation efforts.

'U'INA

We strive for quick, intelligent, and decisive action. 'U'ina sharpens our operational agility, enabling us to adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities while maintaining clarity of purpose.

'AUAMO

We carry our kuleana with integrity and intention. 'Auamo ensures we stay grounded in our mission, embracing both the privilege and responsibility of our collective work.

These values are not static principles but living practices that shape the way we design, execute, and reflect on our strategic initiatives. They form the foundation—the *kahua*—upon which all of our work stands.

DIVISIONS

In order to organize the work of the Department, administrators articulated three pillars, establishing Departmental divisions. Under the direction of the Director and Deputy Director, these divisions will support the structure of the Department moving forward, including establishing positions, budget, and core priorities. The divisions are as follows:

KĪPUKA

'ŌIWI STRONGHOLDS

Safeguard and steward lands of concentrated natural and cultural importance to ensure enduring access to healthy natural resources and spaces where our community may thrive.



KUMUWAIOLA

'ŌIWI RESOURCES

Champion and preserve the life-giving, life-sustaining elements of the natural world by defending and amplifying the conditions essential to thriving eco-cultural landscapes and vital cultural resources.



PAI KA LEO

'ŌIWI VOICES

To empower and uplift native Hawaiian voices and reinvigorate the use of Hawaiian language in government and in our larger community in sincerity and fidelity to both official languages of Hawai'i – English and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.



KĪPUKA



Kīpuka Division - 'Ōiwi Strongholds

Hālau Lāhaina molale malu i ka 'ulu

A calm place in high seas; a deep place of sanctuary in a shoal; a clearing in the forest; a break in the clouds; an oasis in a lava bed that houses new growth.

Safeguarding and stewarding lands of concentrated natural and cultural importance to ensure enduring access to healthy natural resources and spaces where culture may thrive.

The Kipuka Division will oversee county properties of cultural significance, and help to protect burial sites and iwi kupuna across Maui Nui. With guidance from the community, this division will collaborate with partnering state and county agencies, namely the state Department of Land & Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Division, the County Planning Department and Department of Environmental Management to plan communities and public infrastructure with the protection of natural and cultural resources at the forefront.

Objectives:

- Lead Maui County planning and implementation of recovery and restoration of Moku'ula, Mokuhinia, Pākalā, and surrounding cultural community
- Investigate, assess, design, permit, construct, and maintain iwi kūpuna vaults
- Safeguard Native Hawaiian ancestral burials and burial sites
- Engage in conversations for cultural overlay maps for inclusion in current map frameworks
HICRIS/MAPPS/MEMA

Strategies:

- Implement programs for native cultural resources including Hawaiian language, place names, historical and archival materials, cultural sites, iwi and burial sites
- Collaborate with the Planning Director on revisions to the general plan and long-range planning programs
- An environmentally responsible and sustainable community
 - Well-planned public infrastructure
 - A prepared, safe, and livable county

KĪPUKA



KUMUWAIOLA

Kumuwaiola Division - 'Ōiwi Resources

He 'iwe ia 'ā he 'iwe ka moku.

A water course or stream; the source of life; the fountain of all creation.

Champion and preserve life-giving, life sustaining elements of the natural world by defending and amplifying the conditions essential to ecocultural landscapes and vital native cultural resources.

The Kumuwaiola Division will focus on the preservation of the natural resources, from land to sea. This division will work in partnership with 'āina organizations to design and implement programs and policies that protect healthy ecosystems.

Objectives:

- Actively engage in long-term planning to ensure effectiveness and viability of the department
- Perform countywide inventory of ōiwi resources ('āina, kai, wai, lani, iwi)
- Provide archaeological and cultural consulting to all county departments and divisions
- House and preserve artifacts from across Maui Nui, prioritizing artifacts from culturally-sensitive areas affected by emergency events or ongoing desecration
- Establish a cultural archaeological monitor certification program to provide a viable workforce to address these activities

Strategies:

- Design and implement programs to care for and develop 'ōiwi resources
- Promote healthy ecosystems through natural cultural resource regeneration, protection, and sustainable utilization



KUMUWAIOLA

PAI KA LEO



Pai Ka Leo Division - 'Ōiwi Voices

'O waha lau ali'i, 'o kāhi i waiho ai ka hua 'ōlelo.

To empower and uplift native voices; invigorate and engage in Hawaiian language.

To revive the use of Hawaiian language in government and in our community in sincerity and fidelity to both official languages of Hawai'i - English and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

The Pai Ka Leo Division will ensure Maui County is a bi-lingual organization. Through the authority and collaboration of the Office of the Mayor, this Division will guide the county on the accuracy and promotion of Hawaiian language, including place names. Further, it will work with cultural historians and community organizations to identify resources and opportunities to educate both government and the general public on the importance of cultural sensitivity, and encourage the use of 'Ōlelo Hawai in daily interaction.

Objectives:

- Support bilingual government initiatives in Maui County
- Provide additional Hawaiian culture and language resources to the general Maui community
- Provide county departments with general Hawaiian culture and language workshops in person and online
- Provide county departments with cultural sensitivity training specific to the treatment of ancestral burial remains and conduct in ancestral burial sites (MPD, FIRE, DEM, DPW, Parks, Planning, etc.)

Strategies:

- Identify potential resources and economic opportunities to support programs for native cultural resources including Hawaiian language, place names, historical and archival materials
- Increase educational and informational opportunities in Hawaiian language and culture for County employees and for residents
- Guide the county in the correct usage of the Hawaiian language, including place names, and the integration of Hawaiian language within County functions
- Ensure and uplift operations as a bilingual government in both English and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i
 - Create opportunities to promote inclusion of the Hawaiian language, history, and culture countywide as a residential lifestyle



'ŌHALAHALA, MOLOKA'I

SET TO BECOME THE FIRST LOKO KO'AKO'A
(CORAL FISHERY) IN ALL OF HAWAII



KEALAKA'IHONUA HEIAU, MAUI

KAPOHO IS A THRIVING COMMUNITY SPACE WHERE PRACTITIONERS ARE TAUGHT UHAU HUMU PŌHAKU, KŪKULU HALE, MĀLAMA 'ĀINA, HULIKOEHANA, AND MORE



KAPONO'AI MOLITAU

DIRECTOR

Kapono'ai Molitau was born on the island of O'ahu and raised traditionally with the cultural guidance of one of Hawai'i's leading authorities in hula and chant, his mākua hānai, the late Kumu Hula John Keola Lake. Kumu Kapono'ai is Kumu Hula of Hālau Nā Hanona Kūlike 'O Pī'ilani and has been teaching hula, oli, pule, loina Hawai'i, 'ōlelo Hawai'i, and haku mele over 20 years in Wailuku, Maui.



KEKAI ROBINSON

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Kahu Kekai Robinson is a Maui born native of Nā Wai 'Ehā with roots in Mākena, Kaupō, Hāna, Waihe'e and Pauoa. She is a practitioner of Hawaiian chant with Hālau Nā Hanona Kūlike 'O Pī'ilani and is an accomplished Native Hawaiian artist and educator who champions Hawaiian language and culture throughout the Maui community.

KE ALAKA'I KŪLANA

The people who carry out the work of this department are not merely individuals—they are vessels of ancestral wisdom, guided by the traditional knowledge that continues to shape and uplift the work that is to be done by this department.

'ŌIWI LEADERSHIP

The pua lehua, with its vibrant clusters of lihilihi blossoms, symbolizes the essential and interconnected roles of the department. Just as the lehua nourishes and supports life across the forest, the Administrative division anchors and sustains the organization through vital executive decisions and foundational leadership.



MAUI COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF 'ŌIWI RESOURCES



Deanna Thyssen
Private Secretary



Amirah Limayo
Grant Coordinator



Janet Six
Principal
Archaeologist



Layne Krause
GIS Analyst



Kāhealani Colleado
'Ōlelo Hawai'i Specialist



Kepa Revelle Aikala
'Ōlelo Hawai'i Specialist



Kaiea Medeiros
'Āina Advocate



GOALS,
OBJECTIVES
&
MILESTONE
MARKERS

KO LUNA PŌHAKU NO
KE KA‘A I LALO, ‘A‘OLE
HIKI I KO LALO PŌHAKU
KE KA‘A.

A STONE THAT IS BUILT
HIGH UP CAN ROLL DOWN,
BUT A STONE THAT IS DOWN
CANNOT ROLL UP.

—
‘ŌLELO NO‘EAU #1833

(PUKUI, 1983)

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MILESTONES

Kūpa‘a Lāna‘i Hale i ka la‘i, wai kahe o Maunalei. ‘Auhea ‘oe e ka ua Nāulu, ua lani pili, eō mai ‘oe.

Lāna‘i Hale stands majestic in the calm, the waters of Maunalei flow. Where are you Nāulu rains, with a sudden downpour, answer my call.



Wai is the Hawaiian word for water. When that word is reduplicated, waiwai, it generally refers to wealth. Ancestral wisdom says that those who had access to water were rich. For the Department, water sources like that at Maunalei on the island of Lāna‘i are significant—in spaces where water is hard to find, that does not mean it is nonexistent. The relationships created with those water sources are pivotal to the success of the community. When identifying goals, objectives and milestones for the Department, it is important to consider those relationships, envision what success looks like for these communities, and determine what action steps are necessary to achieve that success.

The following goals, objectives and milestones have been developed as a strategic framework to fulfill the mission of the Department. They incorporate the expertise and perspective of the current administration, the voice and concerns of the Maui Nui community as well as the guidance of the county charter under which the Department was formed. This framework sets forth the path that the Department will take to uphold its responsibility to the ‘ōiwi resources across all of Maui Nui. In doing so, it is important to remember that each community and district is unique in their needs as well as their approach to address those needs. Therefore, the Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources will develop strategies to address the following goals in ways that are most appropriate for those distinct communities.

As this Department is building its kahua from a Native Hawaiian perspective, the milestones for this strategic plan will be measured in terms of pilina or relationship building. In order to execute any of the Department’s work, the first step must be to establish and strengthen relationships. Whether they be relationships with ‘āina and ancestral wisdom, with communities, or with government agencies, these connections serve as more than the entry point through which goals can be accomplished. Healthy relationships are an integral part of a thriving Maui Nui and this focus on pilina will establish a strong foundation on which to build a resilient and resource driven future.

GOAL I:

LOINA HAWAI'I

PROTOCOLS FOR CULTURAL STEWARDSHIP

Reestablish 'ōiwi perspective and narrative in governance processes and 'ōiwi resource stewardship

- **How We Work Together**

- Establishing clear communication and collaboration among state, federal, county and community stakeholders
- Formalizing partnership agreements and managing expectations
- Establishing a set of values grounded in 'ike kupuna that guide County protocols and processes
- Utilizing ancestral technologies, traditional and primary sources as guides in process and decision making by establishing access to such sources (ie: mo'olelo, mele, maps, 'ike ku'una, etc)
- Ensuring 'Ōiwi representation in decision-making processes



- **Mālama Iwi Kūpuna Interventions**

- Developing/establishing strategies to mālama, protect and advocate for iwi kūpuna on County owned lands
- Developing a proactive resource tool for stakeholders and community organizations
- Identifying next steps for data collection and implementation
- Serve as a resource for the County permit review agencies to make the determination whether a project, “may affect historic property, aviation artifacts, or a burial site”
- Serve as a resource for SHPD and the Island Burial Councils in making determinations on “inadvertent discoveries” (only as a resource for consultation)



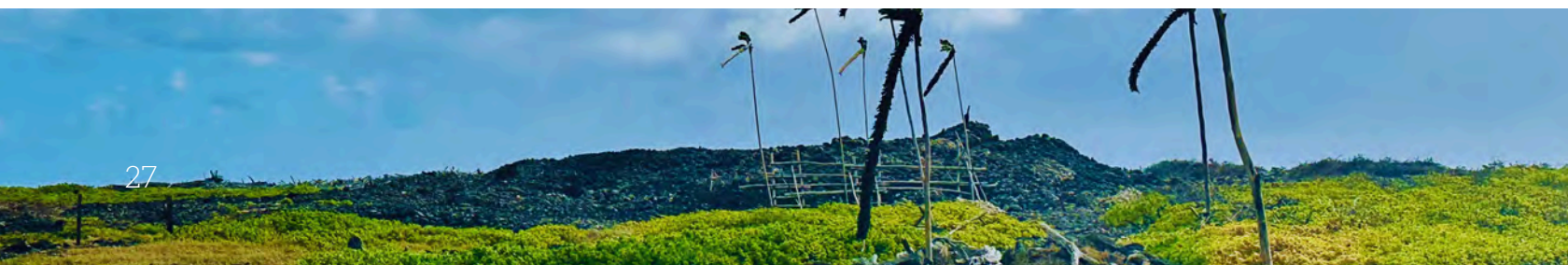
- **'Ōlelo Hawai'i as a Foundation**

- Place names: increasing awareness of and uplifting appropriate use of Hawaiian place names and the kaona and traditional knowledge that these place names hold
- Establishing support for appropriate use of 'ōlelo Hawai'i in government and in community
- Establishing collaborative protocols for establishing County documents from an 'ōlelo Hawai'i lens first rather than seeking English to Hawaiian translations
- Building capacity for 'Ōlelo Hawai'i in the County
 - **Prioritizing Indigenous perspective and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i world view**
 - Establishing 'ōlelo Hawai'i specialist positions in each Department with dedicated time to work in collaboration with one another to support government-specific lexicon
 - Sourcing 'ōlelo Hawai'i training for all County staff



- **Blessings & Pule as Foundational Practices**

- Defining how and when to incorporate these into cultural resource processes
- Establishing protocol for foundational cultural practices
- Empowering cultural leaders across Maui Nui to execute cultural protocol as appropriate





MILESTONE MARKERS:

- Strengthened pilina between county processes and an ‘āina worldview
 - Provide both archaeological and cultural consultation to all county departments and divisions
 - Support bilingual government initiatives in Maui County
 - Provide county departments with general Hawaiian culture and language workshops in-person and online
 - Create and staff ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i specialist positions for Maui County offices and various Departments
 - Provide county departments with cultural sensitivity training with specific focus on the treatment of ancestral burial sites, remains, and conduct in sacred spaces
- Strengthened pilina between county and ancestral burial sites
 - Develop a repository to house and preserve artifacts from culturally sensitive areas across Maui Nui, centering ‘ōiwi protocols and worldviews in collections management to ensure appropriate and respectful care, use, and access of cultural materials and objects
 - Create a culturally-sensitive digital database of artifacts housed within the Department site(s)
 - Safeguard ancestral burials and burial sites
 - Work with the Planning Department to update the 1984 cultural resource management plan
- Strengthened pilina across county departments
 - Define and design cross-department collaborative strategies to embed cultural practice and processes

KEY COLLABORATORS:

- Office of the Mayor
- State Historic Preservation Department
- Department of Management
- County Departments (Planning, Public Works)
- Cultural and Lineal Descendants
- Existing ‘āina organizations
- Cultural historians and practitioners

GOAL 2:

KŪKALA KAIĀULU

REGULAR COMMUNITY TOUCHPOINTS

Create systems of communication between the community and the Department



- **Newsletter and Website Updates**
 - Providing transparency and updates on initiatives



- **Social Media and Community Awareness**
 - Strengthening online engagement



- **Public Intake Form for Concerns & Consultations**
 - Streamlining feedback and reporting processes and request for services



- **Native Hawaiian Resources and 'Āina Organizations Network**
 - Creating a centralized directory for cultural stewardship





MILESTONE MARKERS:

- Strengthened pilina between county and community members
 - Create a community & County facing communications system
 - Compile 'āina-organization directory

KEY COLLABORATORS:

- Office of the Mayor
- Department of Management
- Existing 'āina organizations
- Cultural historians and practitioners

GOAL 3:

HE 'UMEKE KĀ'EO EDUCATION & COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Reconnect Maui Nui residents, visitors, and community stakeholders to cultural practices, language and values by providing opportunities to learn with and from cultural practitioners and experts



- **Hālau of 'Ōiwi Art**

- Providing a space for the community to participate in cultural learning
- Upholding cultural practices by highlighting community artists and practitioners



- **Hosting Community Events & Workshops**

- Aligning with Lāhui dates and county 'āina workdays
- Empowering the transmission of ancestral wisdom through learning opportunities for community



- **Championing Practitioner Conferences**

- Creating opportunities for training & knowledge-sharing
- Creating opportunities to support knowledge-bearers
- Establishing opportunities for the community to sit at the feet of loea (experts)



- **'Ōlelo Hawai'i & Archival Resources**

- Expanding access to 'ōlelo Hawai'i learning opportunities
- Compiling mo'olelo/resources & creating access points to 'ike Hawai'i resources for community



- **Multidisciplinary Workforce**

- Establishing diverse workforce and career pathways in various industries through an 'ōiwi lens
- Train and certify cultural and archaeological professionals (in consultation with SHA and SHPD)
- Develop social service programs rooted in 'Ōiwi healing psychologies and practices
 - Develop outreach programs in tandem with training/certifying an 'Ōiwi-based social workforce





MILESTONE MARKERS:

- Strengthened pilina between community and cultural wisdom access points
 - Staff and maintain Hālau of ‘Ōiwi Art as a center for community engagement in cultural practices
 - Identify, host and facilitate various community education opportunities
 - Provide additional Hawaiian culture and language resources to the general Maui Nui community
 - Support development of internship, workforce and career pathway opportunities
 - Provide cultural education for additional Maui based organizations (Maui Police Department, Lifeguards)
 - Creating opportunities for ‘āina based work

KEY COLLABORATORS:

- Office of the Mayor
- Existing ‘āina organizations
- Native Hawaiian organizations
- Cultural historians and practitioners
- ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i practitioners
- Office of Economic Development
- Department of Education
- University of Hawai‘i Maui College

GOAL 4:

KAHE WAI OLA GRANT & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Create grant and funding opportunities and strategic partnerships with the purpose of preserving and stewarding the ‘ōiwi resources of Maui County



- **Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources as a Funding Hub**

- Establishing county-based grant opportunities for practitioners & ‘āina organizations
- Contracting practitioner/‘āina org/‘ike Hawai‘i subject matter experts to deliver objectives
- Identifying grant opportunities to expand financial support for cultural preservation



- **Developing Strategic Partnerships**

- Ensuring long-term sustainability of initiatives
- Seeking out collaborative opportunities across Maui Nui communities and with state and federal stakeholders
- Acquire federal, state and philanthropic funding sources



- **Creating an ‘Ōiwi Resources Non-Profit Arm/Endowment**

- Providing an additional financial resource avenue for initiatives
 - Establishing assistance and subsidy programs for displaced families





MILESTONE MARKERS:

- Strengthened pilina between community and economic development opportunities
 - Create a directory of cultural subject matter experts for County contracting
 - Begin to investigate county-based and grant-based funding opportunities for cultural preservation and stewardship

KEY COLLABORATORS:

- Office of the Mayor
- Department of Management
- Department of Finance
- Native Hawaiian Legislative Hui
- Existing 'āina organizations
- County Council
- State legislators
- Federal and congressional partners

GOAL 5: HE ALI'Ī KA 'ĀINA 'ĀINA SERVANTSHIP

Establish processes for natural resource advocacy, responsible land servanthship and resource restoration



- **Wahi Pana**

- Establishing processes for zoning county lands as wahi pana (protected spaces)
- Guiding responsible land usage for wahi pana zoned areas and their caretakers
- Establish pathways to leverage and uplift 'ōiwi residents, kūpuna and migrant families through 'āina severantship programs



- **Sacred Source Advocacy (Wai - 'Āina - Kai)**

- Collaborating with established land restoration efforts across departments and with community organizations (including but not limited to: wai, kai, 'āina initiatives)
- Establishing processes for responsible 'āina/wai/kai servanthship across Maui Nui
- Partnering with and uplifting 'āina organizations already carrying servanthship work
- Building capacity for responsible servanthship practices across County departments
- Creation of an 'āina-centric economy and workforce
 - 'Ai pono soverienqty (in consultation with the Department of Agriculture)





MILESTONE MARKERS:

- Strengthened pilina between the County and wahi pana
 - Outline processes for responsible ‘āina/wai/kai servanthip
 - Planning and implementation of recovery and restoration of Moku‘ula, Pākalā, Mokuhinia and the Lāhaina royal complex
 - Engaging in master plan creation for the Lāhaina royal complex
 - Begin process to zone county lands as wahi pana with appropriate guidance
 - Actively engage in long-term planning to ensure effectiveness and viability of the department

KEY COLLABORATORS:

- Office of the Mayor
- Department of Management
- Department of Parks & Recreation
- Department of Planning
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Water Supply
- Department of Agriculture
- Existing ‘āina-based organizations
- Kūpuna Council
- Commission on Water Resource Management
- DLNR

DEPARTMENT BUDGET

Malia paha he iki unu, pa‘a ka pōhaku nui ‘a‘ole e ka‘a. Perhaps it is the small stone that can keep the big rock from rolling down. - ‘Ōlelo No‘eau #2125 (Pukui, 1983)

Niniu Moloka‘i pule o‘o, poahi Lāna‘i o Kaululā‘au, ‘ohu‘ohu Pa‘upa‘u hiehie lā. ‘Auhea ‘oe e ka ua Nahua o nā moku, eō mai ‘oe.

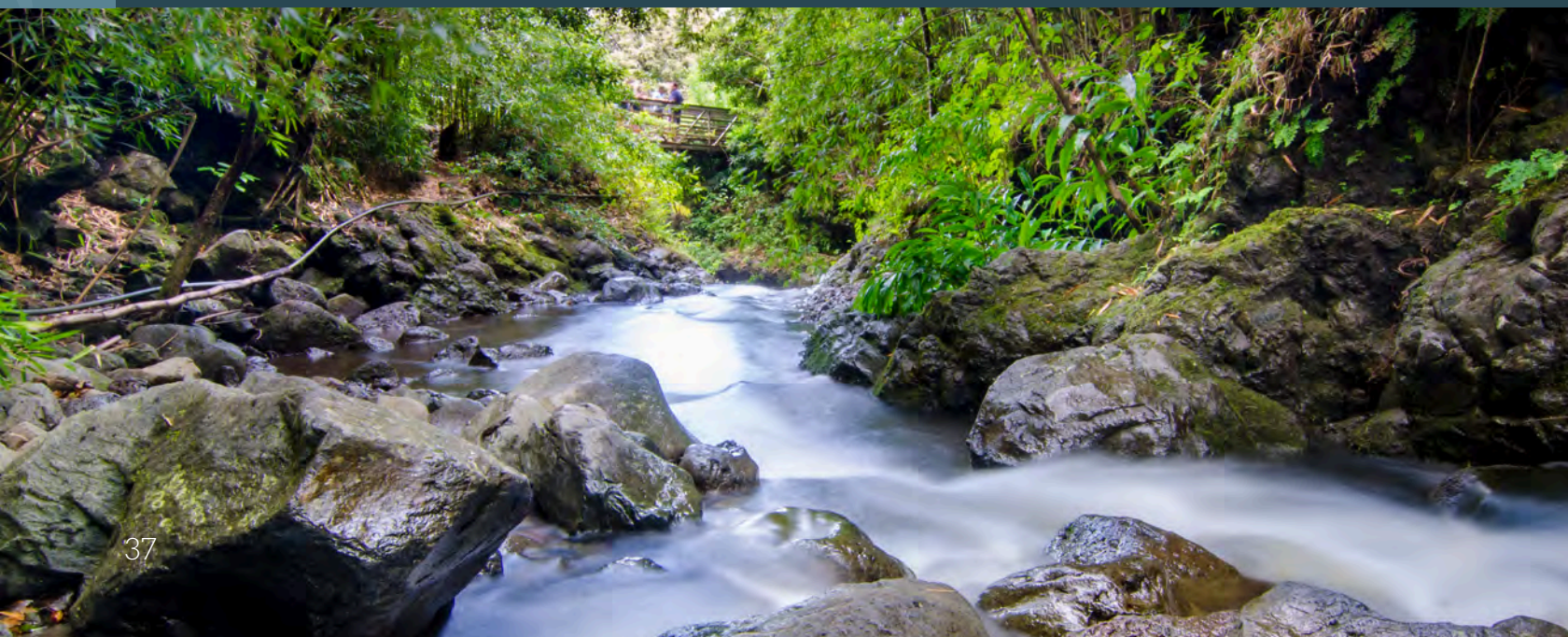
Moloka‘i of the strong prayer revolves, Lāna‘i of Kaululā‘au spins, Pa‘upa‘u in its beauty stands bedecked. Where are you, Nahua rain of the three islands, answer my call.

It is said that the three islands of Maui Nui share a rain—the Nahua rain. As the Department plans action steps forward to advocate for ‘ōiwi resources, it is important to acknowledge this shared water source. All benefit from the clouds that collect on the mountain tops and the rain that travels from place to place. Similarly, all of Maui Nui is represented in the Department’s work to steward these ‘ōiwi resources.

To ensure the completion of the Department’s goals and objectives, it is requesting a 30% funding increase in its Fiscal Year 26 budget, primarily due to the added specialist positions in the areas of outreach and education, culture, language and archaeology.

As the Department begins to take shape with adequate staffing, it will start to implement action steps in Phase I of the Strategic Plan while allocating funding for a Strategic Plan Phase II. Other significant funding allocations include material and labor costs associated with the construction of Iwi Kupuna vaults and burials sites, funding for a conservation program for county lands of significant cultural importance, and funding to host a countywide Makahiki games and other cultural sensitivity trainings for departments and employees across Maui County.

Please see Appendix B for FY 2025-26 budget proposal.





STRATEGIC PLAN CURATED BY
KAREY KAPOI LLC, A MAUI-
BASED FIRM DEDICATED TO
BRIDGING ORGANIZATIONS AND
COMMUNITIES THROUGH VALUES
DRIVEN STRATEGY AND
MEANINGFUL CONNECTION

DESIGNED BY ALL I SEE IS ART

CONCLUSION

Aia i Ku'unala e kau maila 'o Hina, hi'olani i ka poli o ke kama. 'Auhea 'oe e ka Nāulu, eō mai 'oe

There at Ku'unala Hina sleeps nestled in the bosom of her child. Where are you, Nāulu rain, answer my call.

Throughout this document, many—but not all—of the water sources across Maui Nui have been visited. Those sources named and unnamed are integral parts of the system that makes Maui Nui special. From the rising of the sun in the east to the setting of the sun in the west, the 'ōiwi resources of all Maui Nui are lovingly cared for by this Department.

The Department of 'Ōiwi Resources stands to protect, preserve, and create the appropriate environment for growth - preserving the knowledge from generations long gone, protecting space for the grandchildren seven generations in the future, and honoring the wisdom that flows through them all. With this strategic plan, the stones set here will create a foundation that strikes a harmonious balance between the natural and the human world.

The County of Maui now bears the important responsibility of having established the Department of 'Ōiwi Resources, the first of its kind across the archipelago of Hawai'i. In the spirit of this kuleana, the Department undertakes these first steps of setting forth its steadfast foundation so that future generations might build hale upon it. Found within those hale will be the processes, knowledge bases and value systems that empower responsible stewardship of 'ōiwi resources. For 'āina to thrive, the community must also be healthy, informed by the ancestral wisdom of the native peoples of Hawai'i. This symbiotic, not extractive, relationship between 'āina and kānaka relies on a commitment to that which has come before, that which we experience today, and that which is still to come. May we move forward as a community, as future ancestors, with the aloha that our 'ōiwi resources and our people deserve.

APPENDIX A:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

‘āina: land

‘āina organization: an organization whose mission includes stewardship of and education about ‘āina

akua: natural phenomena observed and ascribed divine power; often translated to mean “God/god/goddess”

ali‘i: chief, chiefess, ruler, monarch

DO‘ŌR: Department of ‘Ōiwi Resources

iwi: bones

iwi kupuna: ancestral bones

‘ike kupuna/‘ike ku‘una: ancestral wisdom or practices

‘ili‘ili: pebbles or small stones

‘ōiwi: native or Indigenous

‘ōiwi resources: natural and knowledge-based resources including but not limited to: land, water, cultural practices, language, and the ancestral wisdom that connects Native Hawaiians to their land and culture

‘ōlelo Hawai‘i: Hawaiian language, the native language of Hawai‘i

‘ōlelo no‘eau: wise saying or proverb

unu stones: smaller stones or pebbles used as fillers to strengthen a stone structure

hale: house or building

ho‘okupu: ceremonial gift-giving as a sign of honor and respect; to pay such tribute

ho‘omana: to ascribe mana or power/energy; to place in authority; to worship

kahua: foundation

kahuna: priest; expert in any profession

kānaka: people, human kind

Kanaka ‘Ōiwi: native born person of Hawai‘i who is ethnically Hawaiian

Kanaka Maoli: native born person of Hawai‘i who is ethnically Hawaiian

kuleana: responsibility

kulāiwi: native land, homeland, native; ancestral land, the place where one’s ancestors’ bones are buried

kupuna: ancestor

lāhui: generally, the Hawaiian people or collective of Native Hawaiians

loea: a person of great skill, a master practitioner

maka‘āinana: commoner, populace, people in general; citizen, subject

mana: supernatural or divine power; authority

maoli: native, Indigenous

mālama: to take care of, care for

mo‘okū‘auhau: origin

mo‘olelo: story (of any genre) or history

mele: song

niho stones: larger stones set and used to interlock a stone structure together

Pele: recognized goddess of the volcano; pele (lowercase) is the term for lava and magma itself

pilina: relationship, connection

pō: night, darkness, obscurity; realm of the gods; figuratively–subconscious; refers to the Kumulipo, a Native Hawaiian cosmogonic genealogy from which all life was created

wai: water; to flow like water, fluid

wahi pana: legendary or sacred place, a place of importance

**Definitions within this appendix are provided for the purposes of this document, based on the entries of the 1986 Pukui/Elbert Hawaiian Dictionary or Mamaka Kaiāo as applicable. The Hawaiian language is very complex and layered, often using imagery and kaona or hidden meanings, and does not have a one-to-one relationship with the English language. Translations are only equivalencies, and the act of translation can diminish the vastness of those layers of meaning. This glossary is meant to support the reader in understanding the intention of this text which uplifts the Hawaiian language in context and often will utilize Hawaiian words where an English equivalent might not paint the same picture.*

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ORDINANCE #5710

BILL #139 (2024):

Amending The Fiscal Year 2025 Budget For The Department Of 'Ōiwi Resources, 'Ōiwi Resources Program, Salaries

<https://www.mauicounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/149918/Ord-5710?bidId=>

ORDINANCE #5670

BILL #86 (2024):

Amending Chapter 3.38, Maui County Code, Relating to Administration Of The Hawaiian Cultural Restoration Revolving Fund

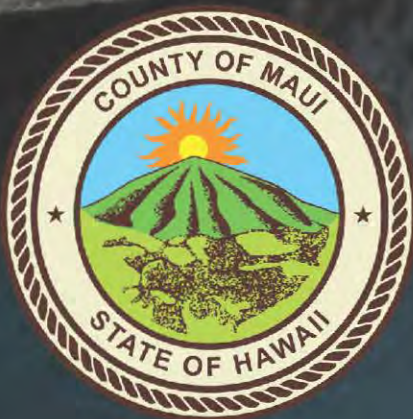
<https://www.mauicounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/147372/Ord-5670>

'ŌIWI RESOURCES - COUNCIL ADOPTED BUDGET FY 2025

<https://www.mauicounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/149058/050-15b-Oiwi-Resources>

'ŌIWI RESOURCES - DEPARTMENTAL JURISDICTION & ORG CHART

<https://www.mauicounty.gov/2810/Department-of-Oiwi-Resources>



808-270-1719



OIWI@MAUICOUNTY.GOV



WWW.MAUCOUNTY.GOV