

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND PRESERVATION PLAN

Preliminary investigations were conducted of the Wai'ele property, in connection with recommendations to the PONC. These investigations indicate that the Wai'ele property contains numerous archaeological resources representing a wide range of cultural uses through time. The information supports the conclusion that this property is significant as an intact cultural landscape. An important archaeological complex is present that appears to be relatively undisturbed since the land was last occupied by the Native Hawaiian communities located at the villages of Ko'ae, Hale Pua'a, Wai'ele, Maka'a and Kahuwai. In addition, the plant community is still representative of the traditional cultural landscape that resulted from multiple generations of kua'aina stewardship (Donham 2018).

The first step in developing a comprehensive preservation program is to inventory (locate and describe) all cultural resources. The second step is to identify actual and potential impacts, and prioritize areas that are most at risk from these impacts, which could include destruction by feral animals, rubbish deposits by visitors and regular users, or degradation due to shoreline erosion and lack of general maintenance. Detailed site mapping and recordation are then conducted as the third step, beginning with the sites most at risk. Once this information is collected, more detailed plans can be developed for important sites or complexes to ensure that they receive appropriate protection and maintenance. A monitoring program will be established to ensure that all impacts (physical or cultural) are identified and their severity/frequency is fully understood. The monitoring plan is therefore an important part of the overall preservation plan.

The archaeological field and analytical operations described here will be under the direction of a qualified supervisory archaeologist who is recognized as a principal investigator by the SHPD, pursuant to Hawaii Administrative Rule (HAR) §13-281. A permit to conduct and supervise fieldwork will be obtained, pursuant to HAR §13-282. Cultural guidance and monitoring will be conducted by a descendant cultural practitioner who will be part of the MOP team for long-term management. The goal of the archaeological preservation program is to enlist and train a team of volunteers to assist in the field and record updating efforts. A training curriculum will be developed, using examples and lessons learned from previous volunteer and university field school programs that have been directed by the principal investigator. The curriculum will include training in technical skills as well as lectures and recommended readings to provide perspectives on the relationship between archaeological science and cultural values, appropriate behavior, and cultural protocols for work in or near certain sites or areas.

Discussion will be initiated with the UH-Hilo Department of Anthropology to determine how the program may be integrated to provide college credits to participants; and to provide internship opportunities to UH students. There is great potential to establish an on-going field school for both high school and college students, in addition to providing adults an opportunity to learn skills that could lead to employment. A goal is to develop a well-integrated preservation/cultural program that will qualify for grant funding once it is up and running.

Identification of Resources

The first level of archaeological site identification will be a reconnaissance level survey of the entire property. This will consist of a pedestrian walk-through to locate all evidence of human construction and modification. The location process will include assigning identification numbers to each location or cluster of features, taking photographs and collecting spatial data on site perimeters via GPS equipment. The GPS data will be downloaded to a mapping (GIS) platform that will allow multiple information layers to be displayed in customized maps. The acquisition of a mapping platform and user training is crucial to the effective planning and implementation of the management program.

During the site identification process, spatial GPS data will also be collected for significant plants and trees in the near vicinity of the archeological features. This will provide a more cohesive landscape model and also provide important information for the proper functional interpretation of sites. Consistent descriptive information for the identified sites and features will be recorded along with the site location data. A document presenting the findings will be prepared at the conclusion of the survey and submitted to the County of Hawai'i as well as the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD). GIS/GPS locational files will also be shared with these public agencies. State Inventory of Historic Places (SIHP) numbers will be assigned to sites and complexes in consultation with SHPD.

The goal is to complete the reconnaissance survey within the first year. Intensive mapping and recordation may be needed for certain sites while the reconnaissance is on-going, if threats are identified that need immediate attention. For example, unauthorized use of a coastal site may require protective actions or close monitoring. If such instances occur, the focus will shift to address a specific preservation need. This could potentially require more intensive recordation of the site and preparation of a site-specific preservation plan. The purpose of such a plan is to provide all stakeholders an opportunity to review any proposed actions and provide input before any protective actions occur.

An important element of the reconnaissance survey will be consultation with local descendants and long-time residents who have connections to the resources of Wai'ele. This process includes reaching out to identify all persons who can be consulted, and arrange to meet them at a location of their choice to discuss their recollections. Any discussions will be recorded only with the permission of the consulted party. Information collected will be written up and presented to the consulting parties for their review prior to publication in any report or public presentation.

Identification of Impacts and Detailed Recording

Recognition and assessment of impacts to archaeological features will be an on-going process, beginning with the collection of baseline data. Areas within the property that are at greatest risk will be identified and prioritized for detailed mapping and recordation. This information is crucial to the proper monitoring of site conditions through time. Photographs and maps of sites

provide a snapshot in time that becomes a point of comparison for anyone who comes into the program at a later date. In addition, detailed maps of sites are needed for the process of nomination to either the State or National Registers of Historic Properties. The placement of a site or district on the National Register allows access to an array of federal preservation grants that would otherwise not be available.

The detailed site recording phase will be conducted in conformance with HAR §13-275 and reports will be prepared at appropriate intervals to ensure that the information is shared with the SHPD. If there are actions within the property that require a County or State permit, an archaeological inventory survey (AIS) will be required of the area of potential effect prior to any ground alteration. Presently, there are no actions proposed that are in this category. However, if a project such as installation of fencing, an access driveway or parking area is proposed, an AIS will be required. This may or may not be conducted in-house, depending upon the size of the project area and timing of the permit application.

There will no doubt be instances where actions such as removal of invasive vegetation will occur in close proximity to archaeological features. It is important to have good information on these sites so that appropriate guidance can be provided for work in these areas. For example, ground disturbance relating to plant abatement may affect important undisturbed cultural deposits that are present, or impact free-standing walls. A monitoring program with both written guidelines and on-site training is the best way to ensure such impacts do not occur.

Coordination with all aspects of the management program will be practiced, making archaeological preservation and cultural awareness a component of these activities. Invasive plant eradication often has a beneficial effect on archaeological sites, because some plant growth actually destroys architectural features over time. The reconnaissance survey can therefore be of use in identifying sites that are in danger and alerting the management team so that the location can be prioritized for plant control. Areas prioritized by the botanical team will in turn be prioritized for detailed recording so that all efforts are coordinated.

Preservation Measures

The overall philosophy guiding this plan is that Wai'ele is a traditional cultural landscape; all intact elements of the landscape are important and contribute to the overall value of the area. All sites and features, regardless of their size or perceived function, will be preserved and protected. This approach will allow us to avoid compartmentalization of the archaeological record and assigning significance assessments to each site or feature. The landscape is an entity that is significant under multiple criteria and all sites are integral to that significance. Therefore, all sites will be preserved and protected.

Preservation of archaeological resources may take various forms, including: appropriate cultural use; avoidance; stabilization; restoration; reconstruction; and interpretation (Secretary of the Interior's Standards, National Park Service 2017).

Appropriate cultural use as a preservation measure at Wai'ele could occur at ceremonial sites, certain shoreline shelters, and perhaps within a selected agricultural complex. The decision regarding any cultural use of sites would only be made after considerable consultation and input from area descendants and long-time area residents. If this use is considered, a formal agreement will be crafted to ensure continued access and continued protection of the site, without intrusive modifications. It has long been argued that the best way to preserve a site is to use it for its intended purpose. This is certainly true of sites such as lo'i kalo, fishponds and trails. Using an agricultural site for its intended purpose (dryland taro, sweet potato, etc.) could be considered for selected areas that are in good condition and will not degrade rapidly with use. This type of use would also be considered appropriate cultural use, and is often the best way to teach traditional agricultural practices. In the event that a site is used for its intended purpose, its current condition will be documented and a formal agreement will be crafted with the users to ensure protection and preservation of the site with no intrusive modifications.

Most of the identified sites at Wai'ele will most likely fall under avoidance as the preferred preservation measure. This is also referred to as conservation in the HAR preservation regulations (§13-277). Avoidance/conservation is considered a passive preservation measure, whereby the site is left "as is" and it is protected from any direct actions that would affect its preservation. These actions might include motorized vehicles, heavy machinery, constant or intense foot traffic, occupation of a site for camping or other short-term purpose. General maintenance of surrounding vegetation is included in this type of preservation, so long as the site is not impacted by such work. Avoidance is a common preservation choice; however this option can lead to unintended negative consequences over time. In order for avoidance to work, the condition of the site must be monitored to ensure that it is indeed being preserved. New conditions could arise that might call for additional measures to be implemented.

Stabilization as a preservation measure refers to repairs made to a site in order to better ensure its preservation. When conducted, stabilization efforts should use materials from the site that were once present in the affected area; and construction techniques must match those present within the site. Examples of stabilization that frequently occur at preservation sites include the restacking of a tumbled section along a free-standing rock wall; recovery of fallen stones and their replacement along a trail embankment; and recovery and replacement of fallen stones along the face of an agricultural terrace. These actions tend to stop erosive trends at the site and do not adversely affect the character or appearance of the site. When used properly, stabilization is a beneficial effect. Before any stabilization work occurs at a selected site, its current condition will be documented, and the proposed actions presented in plan format so that all stakeholders can review and comment on the action before it occurs.

Restoration is used as a preservation measure for sites that have obvious recent modifications that detract from the setting, character and integrity of the site. In these cases, the recent modifications are removed and any altered features are restored to their original fabric and appearance. An example of restoration might be the removal of tarps, metal poles, rubbish and other recent materials from a traditional enclosure. Construction of a traditional thatched roof, if deemed appropriate through consultation, would also be considered reconstruction, in that

the historic character of the site is restored. If removal of modern trappings and/or possible traditional reconstruction is indicated at Wai'ele, a complete record will be maintained of the materials removed and materials introduced, with before and after photographs. Consultation will also occur prior to initiation of the proposed actions to ensure proper cultural input and monitoring as needed.

Reconstruction is defined by the Secretary of the Interior as “the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site...for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location” (U.S. Dept. of Interior 2017). Reconstruction is often used to replace sections of historic trails or free-standing walls that have eroded away or have been otherwise destroyed. In these cases, new materials must be brought in; however they must be similar to the missing material and the new sections must be built to blend with the existing portions of the site. Reconstruction of trail sections is implemented when the trail is still in use and the missing sections pose a safety risk to users. Wall sections are sometimes reconstructed when the wall serves as a barrier to keep out feral animals or vehicles. In these cases, the reconstruction allows for a continued use of the site for its intended purpose. If portions of any site are considered for reconstruction, consultation will occur, followed by full documentation of the current conditions and preparation of a detailed reconstruction plan to be circulated for stakeholder review prior to implementation.

Interpretation as a preservation measure consists primarily of installing educational signage near a site or at a central location within the preserved area. For example an interpretive kiosk is often installed at the trail head of a historic trail; or small signs are placed at various features to explain their use and importance in traditional cultural use. It is premature to propose any signage for Wai'ele at this time. Educational signage may be deemed appropriate at a site that is being actively vandalized, if monitoring does not mitigate the problem. After completion of the reconnaissance survey and more intensive site work, interpretive options may come up in consultation. If the community wishes to see some level of interpretation, a plan showing proposed text, materials and locations of signs will be circulated and a final interpretive plan will be compiled for review by SHPD prior to implementation.

Site Monitoring

The monitoring program will consist of archaeological and cultural components, with full interaction among natural resource specialists, in the event monitoring of activities by plant experts is warranted. Archaeological monitoring will include periodic site visits throughout the Wai'ele property as well as project-specific monitoring. Cultural monitoring will be conducted of any and all activities, as deemed appropriate by the cultural specialist/practitioner who is working with the management team.

Periodic archaeological monitoring is a necessary component of any preservation plan. In this context, monitoring consists of visiting all sites or site complexes on a regular basis and recording any changes that may have occurred at the site since the last visit. Annual visits are planned for those sites located in areas away from identified high traffic areas or areas of high

feral animal use. Bimonthly or semi-annual visits are planned for sites in areas that have ongoing activities or are close to the shoreline. Standard forms will be used to ensure that all monitors collect consistent information when visiting sites or site areas. This information will be added to the file for each site and will be collated into monitoring reports, to be compiled every two to three years.

Archaeological monitoring will also occur in conjunction with other activities that have the potential to directly or indirectly impact archaeological sites. As noted above, all activities will be coordinated so that the team archaeologist can interact with persons working near or around sites. It is expected that the need for monitoring of certain actions will decrease as team members become aware of potential impacts and avoid such practices. If certain sites are selected for cultural use, periodic monitoring will occur to ensure that such uses are following agreed-upon practices and that the affected sites are not being impacted.

As noted above, a cultural practitioner/specialist will be part of the management team as a cultural monitor. The cultural monitor may accompany archaeological team members at any time, such as during reconnaissance activities, periodic site checks, or during site mapping and recording. This person will be responsible for maintaining records of monitored activities and guiding participants in appropriate protocols before and after conducting work in certain areas.

Budget Considerations

Costs to the County of Hawai'i associated with the above plan will be in conformance with the allowable uses for PONC maintenance. It is anticipated that costs for archaeological survey will cover materials, tools, and possibly software for the integration of GPS data. Field activities are proposed to be voluntary, unless there is a need to complete a full AIS for a specified area within a short period of time. On-going preservation monitoring of the area sites for damage control and safeguarding in perpetuity may require some monetary resources to ensure a continued presence. Additional funds may be requested for completion of any written reports or documents that have short deadlines. These factors are presently unknown; budgetary requests will therefore be presented when the plan is finalized, after the property has been acquired by the County.

References

Donham, Theresa K.

2018 Historic, Cultural and Archaeological Resources: The Wai'ele Parcel, Located in Halepua'a Ahupua'a, Puna District (TMK 3-1-4-3-003 and 037). Attachment to the Suggestion Form for Lands and/or Property Entitlements for Acquisition, submitted to the County of Hawai'i Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation Commission (PONC).

U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Technical Preservation Services

2017 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Washington, D.C.