

Organizational Profile

Waimea Valley is a Native Hawaiian nonprofit organization formed in 2007 as Hi‘ipaka LLC for the purpose of preserving Waimea Valley, on the North Shore of the island of O‘ahu, along with its history and cultural features into perpetuity.

Our mission is to “Preserve and perpetuate the human, cultural, and natural resources of Waimea for generations through education and stewardship.” Our vision is “Waimea: A living *pu‘uhonua* (sanctuary) for and by *kānaka* (native people) for Hawai‘i and the world.” This mission was created by Native Hawaiians and members of the North Shore community when Hi‘ipaka first acquired the responsibility of caring for the Valley. The approving body was the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. The mission and vision are stated in our Strategic Plan that was first created in 2007 and has been updated along the way with the most revision taking place last year with a new six-year Strategic Plan for 2024 to 2029.

Our service area is the island of O‘ahu. Our main beneficiaries are Native Hawaiians because our *kuleana* (responsibility) is to preserve their culture and history that is present at Waimea Valley. (The estimated Native Hawaiian population is about 680,000.¹) We are open to the public and therefore serve residents (*kama‘aina* and *malihini*) and K-12 school groups from all over the island who come to the Valley to learn or attend cultural events, in addition to tourists who visit O‘ahu and include Waimea Valley in their activities. (Combined they represent about 400,000 guests per year.) North Shore residents, both Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, are particularly interested in Waimea Valley because they are protective of its history and cultural resources and want to see it preserved (estimated population 7,683²).

Our organization was created in 2007 when North Shore residents were concerned about a residential developer’s intention to convert the Valley to resort housing. They went to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to ask for help to preserve the Valley. As a result, the Trust for Public Land worked with the property owners – the City and County of Honolulu, State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources, and U.S. Army – to join with OHA in preserving the property. Title was transferred to OHA with a permanent conservation easement to preserve the property and its cultural and natural resource into perpetuity. OHA created Hi‘ipaka LLC as a nonprofit to take title to the property and accept stewardship responsibility. Today Waimea Valley is overseen by a board of LLC Managers who guides its executive director and 70 employees.

Since acquiring Waimea Valley in 2007, we have known there was extensive research performed by Uncle Rudy Mitchell beginning in the 1980s. Research was also conducted by the Bishop Museum and other scholars. Some architectural digs took place, and some cultural sites have been restored. There has always been a desire to make the historical and cultural information that was uncovered more available to the public. This year, finally, through our recent Strategic Planning process for 2024 to 2029, we are creating a Humanities research office to inventory all of the work that has been done, catalog it, and begin providing access to the public.

We have an ideal project director in Elizabeth Pu‘uloa, a humanities scholar who most recently managed the Mission Houses Museum in Honolulu before coming to Waimea Valley in late 2022. She will be assisted by our Cultural Programs Manager, Ka‘ula Diamond, who has a B.A. in Anthropology and is a Hawaiian cultural expert. We hope Alana Kanahale, Ph.D. candidate and Native Hawaiian scholar, will serve as a Student Support person with this project. This grant application is one of this unit’s first projects.

¹ Office of Hawaiian Affairs citing U.S. Census 2020 (Sept. 25, 2023).

² U.S. Census 2020.

Proposal Narrative

Project Justification

Our project will address Goal 3: Enhance the preservation and revitalization of Native Hawaiian culture. We will do this through Objective 3.2 to support the preservation of unique and specific value to Native Hawaiian communities, and also Objective 3.3 to support the sharing of content within and/or beyond Native Hawaiian communities.

The challenge we face is that Waimea Valley is rich with Hawaiian history and culture, but very few people know it. Waimea Valley is unique and culturally significant because it is the only fully intact *ahupua'a* (land division from the mountain to the sea) on O'ahu that is interpreted to the public through programs and exhibits.

Waimea Valley has a reconstructed *kauhale* (village) built on the original footprints of an authentic village that existed hundreds of years ago.¹ The *kauhale* consists of a *Hale Wa'a*, a canoe-building *hale* (structure); *Hale Kapa*, a *hale* to pound bark into cloth, mix natural color dyes, and stamp designs onto finished cloth; *Hale Ola* (house of health) to pound and blend medicinal herbs; *Hale Mua* (men's eating house); *Hale 'Aina* (women's eating house); and *Hale Noa* (family sleeping house). It also includes an *imu*, an outdoor cooking pit that serves as an underground oven when lined with rocks and covered with coconut fronds. Just outside the *kauhale* is *Hale Papa'a*, a farmer's storehouse, that sits above a *kalo* (taro) garden with several heirloom *kalo* varieties.

Other cultural sites include the Kū'ula Stones, a shrine dedicated to the god of fishermen, and Hale O Lono, a *heiau* (religious worship site) whose carbon dating indicates it was built as early as 1470 A.D.² There is a games site as well and *Hale Iwi* (house of bones) and several burial sites that are intentionally kept secret in order to protect the sanctity of the burials.³ Visitors will see ancient agricultural terraces with remnants of rock walls and formations still in place.⁴ The Valley is also a notable ethnobotanical landmark, which is intricately linked to its cultural importance.⁵

Habitation of Waimea Valley by Native Hawaiians is documented as early as 1090 A.D.⁶ Waimea was a thriving community where inhabitants applied the *ahupua'a* system of land management that included all the natural resources from *ma uka* (uplands) to *ma kai* (sea). A large population lived in the lower valley and uplands, with documentatin of traditional *hale* (houses), dryland and wetland *kalo* (taro) farming, fishing, burial practices, *kālai pōhaku* (stone carving), canoe-making, and Makahiki seasonal celebrations and games.⁷ They lived within a complex system of farming and fishing subsistence, prayer to various

¹ Margaret L.K. Luscomb and Kenneth R. Moore. Archaeological Survey of Lower Waimea Valley, Oahu (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1974).

² Stuver, M., G.W. Pearson and T. Brazunes. Radio carbon from feature Beta-24927 (Miami: Beta Analytic, Inc., 1986).

³ Luscomb (1974); J. Gilbert McAllister, Archaeology of Oahu (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1933), p. 144-151.

⁴ McAllister (1933); E.S.C. Handy, The Hawaiian Planter – Volume 1, Bishop Museum Bulletin 161 (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1940); Rudy Leikaimana Mitchell, Archaeological Test Pit of Waimea Falls Park Rockshelter, 50-OA-D7-47 Waimea, Oahu (On file: Waimea Valley, 1980).

⁵ McAllister (1933); Handy (1940); Waimea staff Josie Hoh, M.A., and Jerry Koko, Ph.D. (personal communication).

⁶ Takemoto (1974).

⁷ Ibid.

akua (gods), natural resource management, and the *kapu* system of religion. Many remnants of this lifestyle are in the Valley today. It is a live museum.

Waimea is also a significant location on O‘ahu where practitioners of the *kahuna* tradition (experts in maintaining and perpetuating wisdom) became advisors to *ali‘i* across Hawai‘i. Its Hale O Lono *heiau* is carbon dated to as early as 1470 A.D.⁸ Accounts of early governance at Waimea describe a system overseen by *kahuna nui* (main priests). As early as 945 A.D., Kamapua‘a, chief of O‘ahu, gave all lands containing the word “wai” to the *kahuna* (priest) class. Later chief Kahiki‘ula and his brothers redistributed the lands, specifically giving Waimea to the priestly class. Waimea became known as “The Valley of the Priests.” In 1090 A.D., Waimea *ahupua‘a* was awarded to famed and powerful *kahuna nui* Lonoawohi, who served four *mō‘ī* (rulers) during his lifetime. In 1650, Kaopulupulu, a highly skilled *kilolani* (astronomer) was appointed *kahuna nui*. When the warrior *ali‘i* Kahekili won the rule of O‘ahu in 1783, he appointed his high priest Kaleopu‘upu‘u to Waimea, who in turn appointed his son, Koi, a warrior priest in Kahekili’s army.⁹ Koi is believed to have used Pu‘u O Mahuka Heiau, which still sits toay on the east ridge above Waimea Valley. It was a place for animal and human sacrifice, and is the largest *heiau* on O‘ahu. Through transfers of power in the late 1700s, Waimea was given in perpetuity to the Pā‘ao class of *kahuna*, who were expert navigators. King Kamehameha appointed Puou as his first *kahuna nui* of Waimea. When Puou died, his son Hewahewa became *kahuna nui*. Hewahewa turned out to be the last reigning *kahuna nui* (high priest) at Waimea.¹⁰ He is buried at Waimea Valley.

Very little of this history is known to Native Hawaiians, scholars, or anyone in general. We have much of the documentation by way of archaeological digs, scholarly research, and Traditional Cultural Places (TCP) studies in our Library. Although we have had a Library for more than 10 years, it has been used mostly by staff and primarily as a place to store research documents and manuscripts. Our goal with this project is to make the information in our Library accessible to Native Hawaiians, scholars, and others who would want to learn about it. Last year when the International Indigenous Librarians Forum (IILF) held their once-every-four-years international gathering at Waimea Valley, the Native Hawaiian scholars who were present told us that this information needs to be made known. We agree.

The target group for our project is Native Hawaiians, Native Hawaiian scholars, other scholars, and the people of Hawai‘i. We want to share this information with them so they can know the historical and cultural significance of Waimea and perhaps other valleys in Hawai‘i whose history and culture have been lost.

Native Hawaiians have been involved in the planning for this project in that several are on our staff and many live in the North Shore community. They have made recommendations over the years that we share the significance of Waimea. Our recent Strategic Planning process for the next six years, from 2024 to 2029, included *mana‘o* from Native Hawaiians and North Shore residents (about 2,000 total responses). Scholars who attended the IILF conference (200 attendees) last year also made these recommendations.

Native Hawaiians are the ultimate beneficiaries of this project in that their history and culture will be shared with them and their *‘ohana* (family), which can create pride now in their cultural identity and passed on to their *keiki* (children) and future generations. The estimated population of Native Hawaiians in the U.S. is about 680,000.¹¹

⁸ Stuiver, M., G.W. Pearson, and T. Braziunes. Reference Beta-24927, Beta Analytic Lab, Inc. (Florida, 1986).

⁹ Kennedy, Joseph, Elena Kouneski, and Mina Ellison. “Waimea Valley Oahu: A Cultural and Archaeological Assessment, Haleiwa, Hawaii” (On file: Waimea Valley, 2005), p. 9.

¹⁰ Takemoto (1974); R.S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, Vol. 1, 1778-1854 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980).

¹¹ Office of Hawaiian Affairs citing U.S. Census 2020 (Sept. 25, 2023).

The project will also benefit resident (*kama'aina* and *malihini*) and K-12 school groups from all over the island who come to the Valley to learn or attend cultural events, in addition to tourists who visit O'ahu and include Waimea Valley in their activities. By cataloguing our Library resources and making them available on a digital platform, they can learn more before and after their visit. Combined they represent about 400,000 guests per year.

Project Work Plan

Our Work Plan begins with purchasing glass-enclosed shelving for our original manuscripts. We have shelving in our Library now, but because we are in a valley filled with vegetation, flora, and fauna, it is a challenge to keep insects out entirely, even with 24-7 air conditioning and humidity control. A glass-enclosed case will help to protect original manuscripts.

We will recruit a Student Support person and already have a candidate in mind who is currently working on her Ph.D.

The first key project will be to inventory and catalog all of the studies, research papers, archaeological reports, and other documents in our collection. We will identify and select an appropriate catalog numbering system.

Then we will take photos from various angles of the 56 artifacts that have been found in the Valley. These will eventually be posted on our website as a digital product but in the early months they will be used to train our Cultural programs staff so they learn first-hand what kind of information and resources are available for the Valley and establish a basis for information they can share with K-12 student groups and other visitors.

Our next key step will be to make a list of Native Hawaiian scholars and research institutions that we would like to talk to about the collection. We will seek their input on the best ways to provide access to our collection. We will also ask Native Hawaiian organizations who are not researchers or scholars *per se* but would want to know what is available. We will then develop a formal Plan to share the collection based on the input we received.

In Year 2, we will begin implementing the Plan to make the collection accessible. Even though the Plan is not yet developed, we know there are certain things we will definitely do. For example, we will make the collection accessible online at our website and through other indigenous databases such as the Papakilo Database. The photos that were taken earlier of artifacts will be posted as well as photos and information of the many written reports and studies that were done over the years. We will invite continual feedback from the scholarly community and the Native Hawaiian community. We will use their *mana'o* (thoughts, suggestions) to constantly tweak our work so we are responsive to the needs of the Hawaiian community and scholars in terms of accessing historical, cultural, and scholarly information.

In the last few months of the project we will review the possibilities of publication (hard copy) of materials written in the 1980s and ways to disseminate it online.

The risks to the project are that staff would become unavailable to work with us. If that were the case, we would quickly move to replace departing staff with other staff members on board who have expressed an interest in this work. Another possible risk is loss of original information sources. We have the artifacts in a secure location, and we have multiple copies of most of the manuscripts and other written reports. We will digitize them through this project to help eliminate the possibility of those losses occurring.

This project will be planned, implemented, and managed by Elizabeth Po'olua, a humanities scholar on our staff who is also the Director of Training. She has a Master's degree in museum collections and previously was a manager at the Mission Houses Museum in Honolulu before coming to Waimea Valley in late 2022.

Elizabeth will be assisted by Cultural Programs Manager Ka'ula Diamond, who is a Hawaiian cultural expert. She has managed our Cultural programs for more than 10 years. She has extensive knowledge of Hawaiian artifacts, *'oli* (chant), hula, *'olelo* (Hawaiian language), *mo'olelo* (stories), and hale-building and restoration. She manages our Cultural programs staff and our community artisans and cultural practitioners.

Andrew Pezzulo is a media specialist on our staff who is an expert with film, digital media, social media, photography, and story-telling. He has a Bachelor's degree in media production and worked for 10 years in filming and editing with Hawai'i Five-O and Magnum P.I.

We hope to recruit Alana Kanahale, Ph.D. candidate, as a Student Support person. In addition to her Ph.D. work, she has extensive knowledge in *hula* and indigenous ways of managing natural resources.

We are requesting two years to carry out this project. The financial resources requested from IMLS are \$75,000 per year for each year. The personnel will be Elizabeth and Ka'ula mentioned above as well as a media technician and specialist on our staff (Andrew Pezzulo) and a Student Support person that we hope to recruit (Alana Kanahale, Ph.D. candidate).

For existing resources, we have a Library structure that is about 40' x 40' with full air conditioning and humidity control. We have a collection of 56 artifacts that is stored in another locked, secure location. We have about 100 manuscripts of research and documentation collected since the 1980s. We have reserve funding to cover the other costs of this project for staff and supplies that would not be funded by this grant. One of our regular partners on all of our research projects is Christopher M. Monahan, Ph.D., a historical and cultural researcher who has led several projects at Waimea Valley.

At the end of our project, we will share our findings and lessons learned with the Native Hawaiian scholars, community members, and others who gave us feedback and suggestions on how to provide accessibility to the wealth of information we have. We are willing to share it with other IMLS grantees at designated meetings.

Project Results

Our project's intended results are that the information sources we have will be inventoried, cataloged, and shared across the board with the Native Hawaiian community, Hawaiian scholars, other scholars, and the public in general. This will address the challenge of people not knowing the historical and cultural significance of Waimea Valley.

As a result of this project, the knowledge of our target groups will be significantly increased. As with most knowledge gained, we hope it will instill appreciation for Native Hawaiian history and culture. Their value for Native Hawaiians as people will grow. Their value for indigenous knowledge of indigenous people all over the world may grow. We hope it will instill pride in Native Hawaiians for the many generations of wisdom that came before them.

Several products will result from our project:

1. Written inventory and catalog of all the research and documentation that has taken place at Waimea Valley.
2. Training binder with extensive information on Waimea Valley's 56 artifacts for Cultural department staff to use when teaching K-12 student groups or working with *kama'aina* and other visitors who come to Waimea Valley.
3. Digital file posted online of the 56 artifacts found in the Valley.
4. Digital file posted online of the list of research and documentation materials at Waimea Valley.

Although the Plan to make the information accessible will be developed with the help of the Native Hawaiian community and scholars, in addition to what they recommend, we can make the collection accessible by sharing information at events such as fairs and festivals, Native Hawaiian conventions, civic club meetings, and homestead association meetings.

The benefit of our project will be sustained beyond the conclusion of this grant because it will be institutionalized in our staff structure whereby the media staff will be in place to post and update digital files and our scholarly staff will in place to uncover new information or research that can be added to the body of work. Also, this work is now part of our Strategic Plan for 2024 to 2029. It is a priority at the top of the minds of our Board members and executive team.

Work Plan: Schedule of Completion – Year 1

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Purchase glass-enclosed shelving for original documents	X											
Recruit candidate for Student Support	X											
Make a list of all documents (studies, research papers, architectural digs, etc)	X	X	X									
Identify catalog numbering system & organize collection accordingly			X	X								
Take/collect photos of 56 artifacts (from various angles) & write descriptions for each			X	X								
Lay out photos & descriptions for 3-ring binder					X							
Reproduce 5 sets of binders (3 for Library, 2 for Cultural staff training & use)					X							
Develop training materials for Cultural staff					X							
Conduct Cultural staff training						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Make a list of NH scholars and research institutions to contact about the collection					X							
Contact Native Hawaiian scholars & research institutions (by phone or email)					X	X	X					
Meet with scholars to seek their input on best ways to provide access to the collection (in person, by phone, via Zoom)					X	X	X					
Meet with NH organizations to describe the collection and seek their input on best ways to provide access to collection (group meetings)						X	X					
Create plan to share the collection based on input from Native Hawaiian scholars & community								X	X			
Create space in Library for researchers to use; determine days & hours for access												
Begin implementing the plan to share the collection										X	X	X

Digital Products Plan

We will create two digital products during this project.

The first digital product is an online catalog with photos and descriptions of 56 artifacts that have been found in Waimea Valley. Many of them were found during the 1980s when several architectural digs took place and several scholars, including “native scholars” with cultural knowledge, walked extensively throughout the Valley and identified remains of housing sites, architectural walls, and burial sites. Some of this was documented by the Bishop Museum and other individual scholars. We will take photographs of each artifact from many angles and describe the artifacts in terms of size, material, and weight. This online catalog will allow scholars and other students anywhere in the world to see what has been found at Waimea Valley.

The second digital product we will produce is an online catalog of the reports and research conducted since the 1980s. In addition to the research mentioned above, we also had more recent archaeological studies and Traditional Cultural Places (TCP) studies performed. We will share all the reports and research online.

Of course, issues relating to permissions are of concern. We want to make all information available. But for cultural protective reasons, specific burial sites will not be identified. Some of our contemporary reports have recommended that certain information be held back from distribution because of potential misuse by poachers and others engaging in illegal activity. We will follow those recommendations.

We will seek the latest information about protecting indigenous intellectual property while still making research accessible. We understand there are considerable property rights concerns over Indigenous Knowledge. With this project, we plan to learn more starting in Year 2 with at least two months of focus on this topic so we can learn and make the best decisions about sharing indigenous information online. We are also considering upload of Waimea Valley information to the Papakilo Database and other similar repositories, and we will seek their advice as well as *mana 'o* (thoughts and advice) from OHA and contemporary Native Hawaiian scholars on the best directions to take.

Our digital products will be sustainable after this project grant because we have permanent staff positions in our media department to maintain our website and digital platforms. Our Library humanities staff will update the content if new information were to become available, and they will have our media staff make the updates online on a regular basis. Because they are in-house staff and their focus is on sharing information on a daily basis, they will be able to update our content very quickly.