

Cultural Significance of Water in Hawai'i



**How, if any, has
cultural and/or
traditional
practices
influenced
water
management
and source
water plans in
your area?**

- **Kanaka – Native**
- **Kupuna – Ancestors**
- **‘Olelo No’eau – Words of Wisdom**
- **He huewai ola ke kanaka na Kane – Man is Kane’s living water gourd**

Cultural/Traditional Practices

- Equal Sharing of Clean, Flowing Water
- To be managed for present and future generations
- Wai – Fresh water integral role in ancient Hawaiian culture and life style
- Aina – Land
- Water and land belonged only to the gods and therefore could not be owned
- Ali'i – Chief
- Kāne – God of Water
- Kanaloa – God of Ocean



Cultural/Traditional Practices

- An essential source of life
- Aloha Aina – Love for the Land
- Aloha – Love
- Ho'ihi - Respect
- Laulima – Cooperation
- Malama – Stewardship
- Users took only what was absolutely necessary
- Expected to share the wai with others
- Waiwai word used in reference to abundance, prosperity or great wealth



Cultural/Traditional Practices

- **Mauka to Makai – Mountain to Ocean**
- **Kuleana – Privilege and Responsibility**
- **Kanawai – Hawaiian Law “Relating to Water”**
- **Ali‘i Nui - High Chief**
- **Mo‘i – Sovereign**
- **Akua – God**
- **Konohiki – Supervisor**
- **Lunawai – Water Steward or Ditch Rider**
- **Maka‘ainana – Commoner**
- **Wao Akua – Realm of the Gods**
- **Wao Kanaka – Realm of Man**



Cultural/Traditional Practices

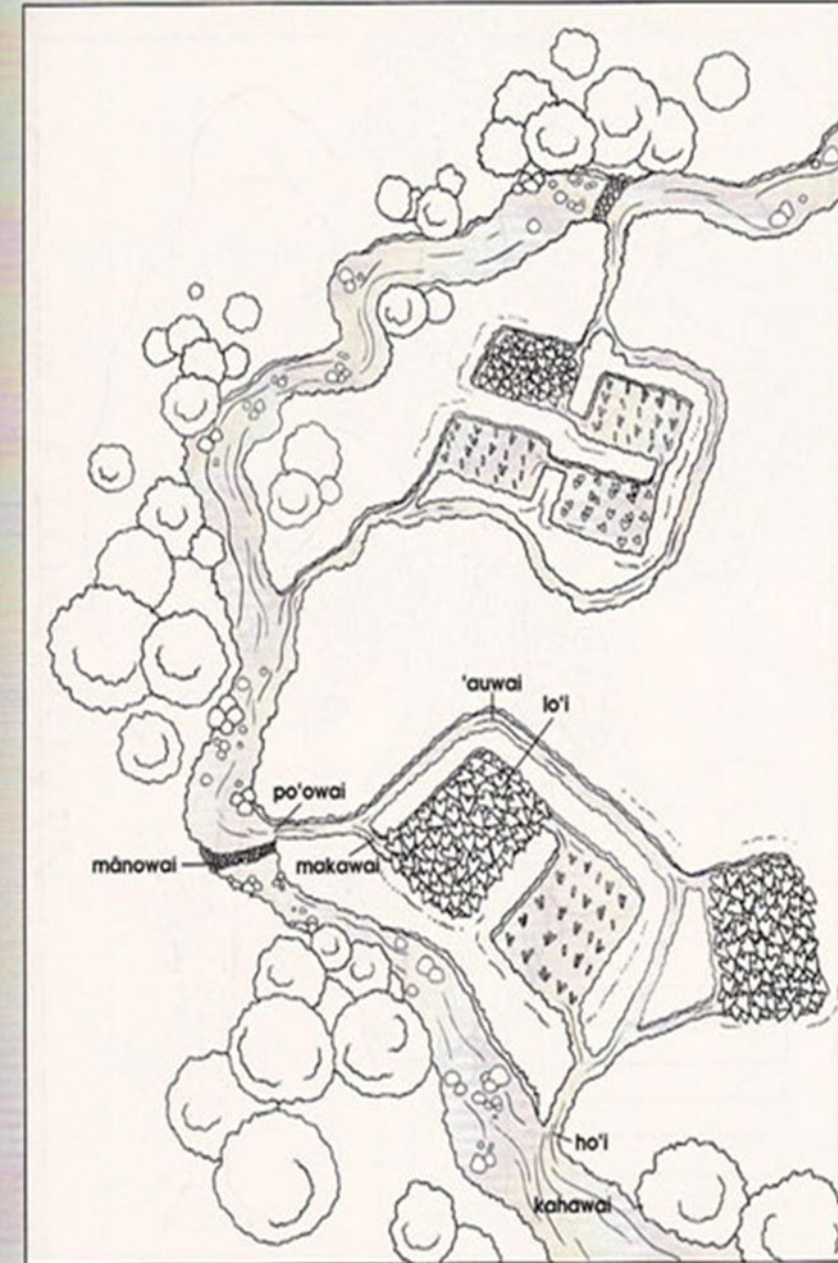
- Water Disputes were rare
- Ahupua'a – Land Divisions or Watershed
- Waipuna – Source Water
- Po'owai – Head Waters
- Kahawai – Streams
- Muliwai – Stream Mouth
- No bathing, farming or animal husbandry in the wao akua



Cultural/Traditional Practices

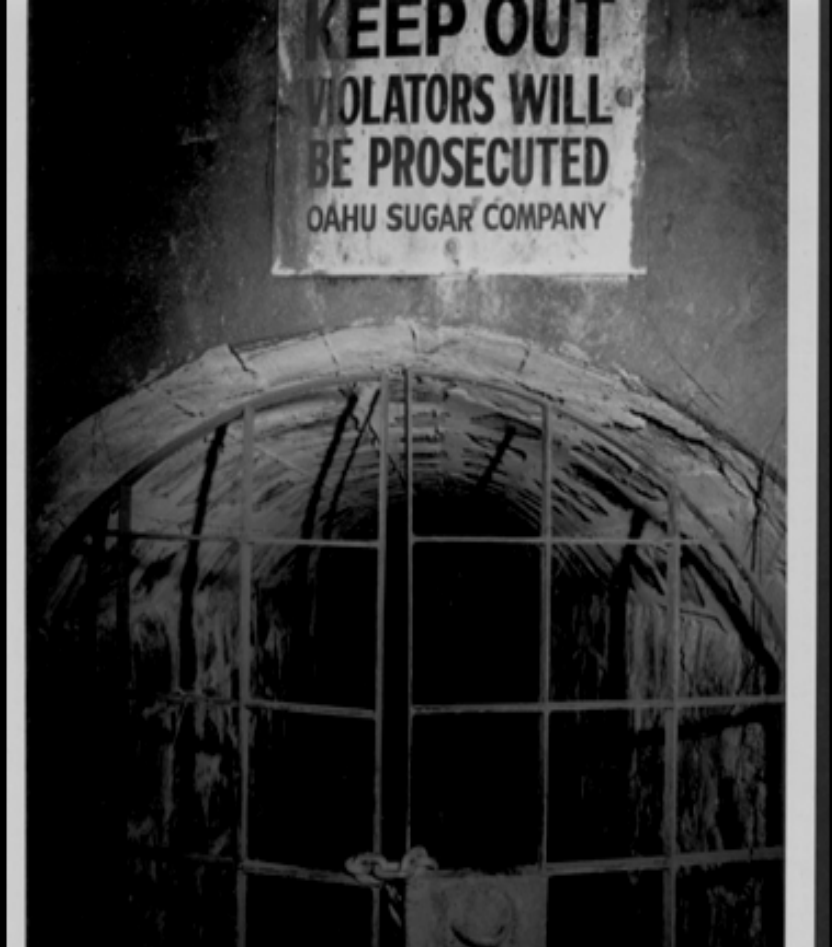
- Irrigation system developed to cultivate kalo and other food crops
- Building of `auwai, irrigation ditches or watercourses, required the labor and planning of a whole community
- Lo'i Kalo (Taro bed) – water flowed from the kahawai (stream) through the lo'i (bed) and back to the kahawai
- Loko 'ia (Fishponds) were created at the shoreline close to the muliwai (stream mouth)

Ka Lo'i



Western Impacts

- Starting in 1778 Sugar and Pineapple Plantations spread across Hawai'i
- Massive ditch systems created
- Moving water from wet Windward communities to arid Central and Leeward plains
- Water was quickly commodified a shift from the spiritual and cultural practices



Two Puerto Rican sugar workers wearing white shirts standing on a side of their luna, who is wearing boots, Hawaii, circa early 1900



Western Impacts

- 1848 Great Mahele Division of Land Occurred
- Water and land was divided and ownership took place
- Public trust principles recognized
- Agricultural plantations came to influence and control a large portion of Hawai'i's water resources
- 1973 Court Case McBryde vs. Robinson overturned all preceding cases



Water Law and Rights

- **1978 State Constitution**
 - Article XI Section 1 – All public natural resources are held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people
 - Article XI Section 7 – To protect, control, and regulate the use of Hawai'i's water resources
 - Public trust doctrine fundamental principle
- **Water Rights Priority**
 - Appurtenant
 - Native Hawaiian Rights
 - Riparian
 - Correlative



Today....

- Year 2020
- Collaborative Efforts “One Water, One People” Elevating the significance of wai
- Awareness, Communication and Partnerships are critical
- Creative Processes that balance the use, allocation, regulation and protection of our wai

Together we can.....



Mahalo!!



Ola I Ka Wai
Life Giving Water

