

ML&P working to protect Honolua Bay for the benefit of everyone

VIEWPOINT by DAVID C. COLE

Sunday, April 15, 2007 9:21 AM

There are few places on Maui – and indeed in all of Hawaii – that are quite like Honolua Bay. It is an area of profound environmental and cultural significance.

Hokule'a's maiden voyage left from Honolua Bay on its historic passage to Tahiti in 1976. Two years later Maui Land & Pineapple Co. led efforts to dedicate

the bay as a marine conservation area to ensure its natural abundance would be available for generations to come.

The company has long allowed public access across privately owned lands so snorkelers, surfers, boaters, divers and others could enjoy Honolua Bay. What was once a manageable situation has, over time, grown to become unmanageable. This is an exceptional place that comes with exceptional kuleana.

Recently, ML&P announced conceptual plans for Lipoa Point overlooking Honolua Bay. These long-range plans resulted from 18 months of consulting with Hawaiian leaders, bay users and a wide range of community organizations such as Surfrider Foundation, Project Sea Link, Hawaii Wildlife Fund, the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, Local Action Strategy and others. Our desire is to keep Lipoa Point as open green space while impeding silty storm runoff that damages the reef. Our first and foremost goal is, and always has been, to save the bay.

Some people have asked why Lipoa Point can't just stay the way it is. That is simply not an option. Honolua Bay is at great risk. Every day this precious resource is harmed by careless beachgoers and others including vandals, drinkers and drug dealers who leave behind bottles, cans, rubbish, human waste, junk cars and appliances. Excessive runoff into the reef is caused by erosion from too many people walking up and down the bluff and dirt bikes and ATVs that scar the land. Sadly, many of today's visitors to Honolua Bay do not practice good environmental stewardship. The sheer number of people visiting the area today means that ML&P must act decisively now to stop the degradation of Honolua Bay and we will explore every option available to us.

As a Maui company that has been in business for nearly 100 years, and intends to be here for another century, ML&P is guided by the Hawaiian values of malama 'aina (care for the land), ho'ohanohano (distinction) and po'okela (excellence). Our first principle, to care for the land, acknowledges what our host culture has known for all time, that our health is directly related to the health of the land and sea. This is kuleana that we take very seriously.

As chairman of the Hawai'i Nature Conservancy, I have focused our environmental efforts on the preservation of nearshore marine environments. As chairman of ML&P, I have done the same by instituting our Makai Stewardship Program and dedicating company resources to care

for the health of both Honolua and Mokule'ia bays.

ML&P employees have long made the Honolua Bay area a top priority through regularly scheduled cleanup days. Our dedicated employees and generous community volunteers repeatedly give up their own free time to malama Honolua. They have removed acres of invasive plants and replanted native Hawaiian species to both beautify and protect the area. Our next cleanup day is slated for April 21, in honor of Earth Day. We invite everyone who wants to save Honolua Bay to join us for the unglamorous work of hauling out bottles, cans, trash and dumped appliances from the Lipoa Point area.

We all know that Honolua Bay is beloved by those who live on Maui and by those who visit. ML&P wants to harness that aloha for the benefit of the bay. Today I step forward to call upon the community to help us devise the very best plan to malama Honolua Bay.

We will begin this process with Hawaiian community leaders. We will build upon their wisdom to bring together an independent planning advisory panel. We seek out individuals experienced in planning, environmental preservation and cultural knowledge to help us plan the future of Honolua Bay. Bring your ideas, bring your aloha for this place; all reasonable options will be considered. If you would like to participate in this panel, or you want to volunteer for Lipoa Point Cleanup Day, please visit our Web site www.malamahonolua.com for more detailed information.

There is no question that any future plans for Honolua Bay can, and must, be created with great environmental sensitivity, wisdom and cultural understanding. While we work together toward the future, let's embrace the kuleana we have today.

David C. Cole is the chairman, president and CEO of Maui Land & Pineapple Co. Inc.

Copyright © 2005 **The Maui News**.