

MACZAC East Big Island Issues by Craig Severance

January 2014

December storm debris in Wailoa River Estuary

There are recurrent break-away rafts of vegetation that float down the Wailoa river under the bridge and out into the bay where they constitute a hazard to navigation. In the Late December rainstorm, a great deal of debris floated down, and entangled around the pier and mooring lines and boats moored above the bridge. Some logs also floated out along Banyan Peninsula.

No action came from DOBOR though the DOBOR harbor agent did say he was working with DOT to get the larger debris removed from the shore with their equipment.

Eventually a couple of boaters took action and towed material out into the bay at their own expense. Observers remarked that if the moored boaters were paying substantial mooring fees and insurance, then, the state should have cleaned up the problem.

Obviously, better communication is needed.

Long term simmering issues:

New Users in Hilo Bay and potential hazards:

Jetski, stand-up paddleboard, one man outrigger, Kayak, racing canoe and sailboat traffic have all dramatically increased in Hilo Bay in just the last 2-3 years. The risk of run-downs from ship, barge and powerboat traffic has dramatically increased, especially since canoes and kayaks are low to the water and run without lights (or other safety gear) at dawn and dusk. Fishermen, as the more traditional users have expressed frustration and a fear that accidents will happen. I can count up to 40+ one man canoes in the main shipping lanes on a regular basis. The new state rules for operator are only for powerboats, I believe. So user conflicts can be expected and accidents will happen! What are state liabilities?

Shorefishing access points.

Lai Ulua and other shorefishing access points along the Hamakua Coast continue to erode away. See Kanemoto article in Lawai'a:

http://issuu.com/lawaia/docs/lawaia_issue_4

Gentrification along that coast also reduces access. These access points have been an important source of subsistence and recreational access for local and plantation community folks for generations. This is not only an access right, but a safety issue.

ONCE UPON A LANDING

BY NEIL KANEMOTO

Scattered throughout the Big Island's rugged Hamakua coastline are battered concrete, stone and steel remnant structures called landings. These landings served the sugar plantations prior to the development of motor vehicles, highways and deep draft harbors. A hose which ran from the landing to ships and barges anchored offshore would transfer molasses from a holding tank from shore to the ship. Although labor intensive and archaic in its methods, it was the best way at the time for transferring such materials along the few low lying areas along this rugged coastline.

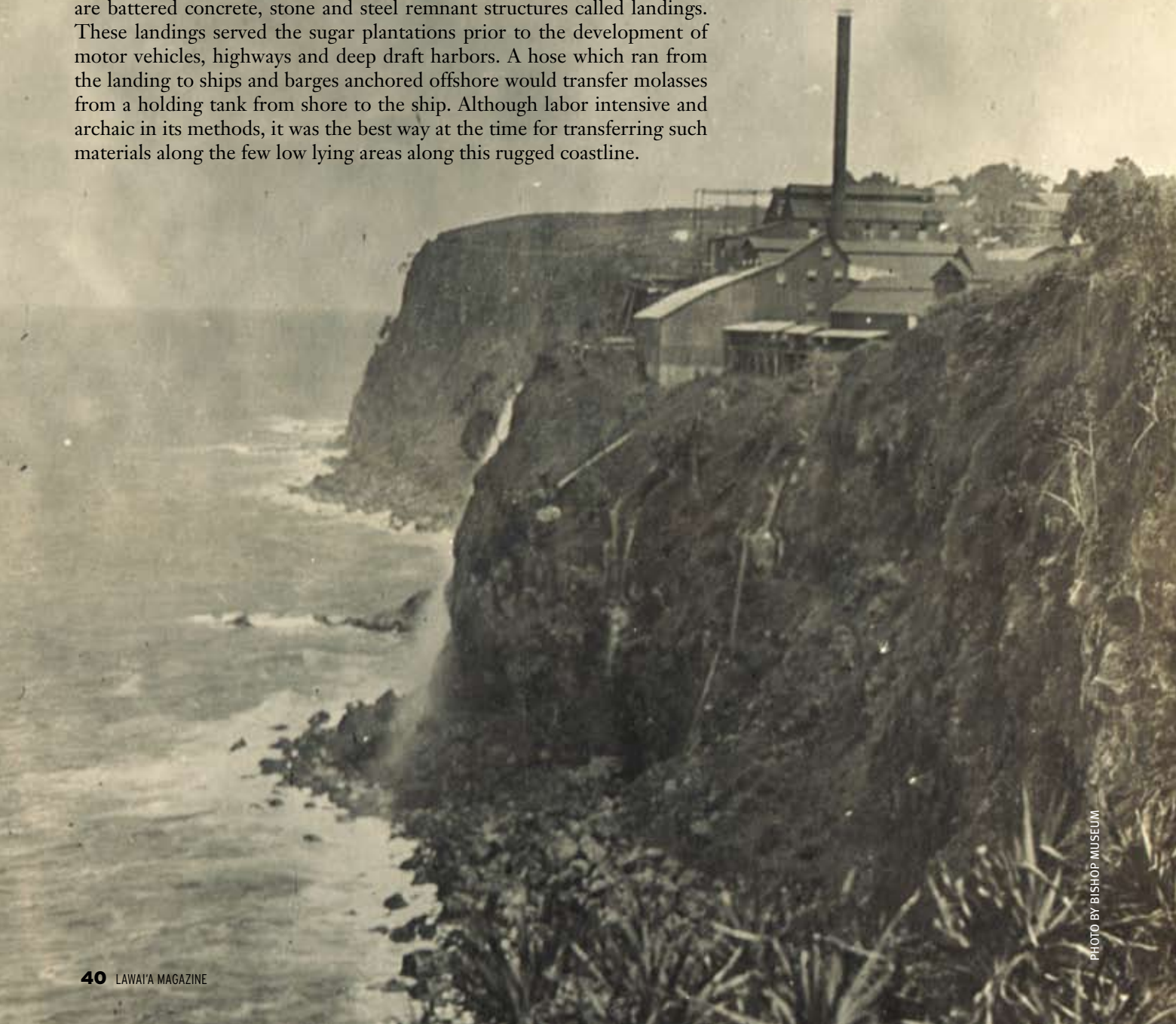


PHOTO BY BISHOP MUSEUM





As modern transportation and roadways developed, the landings were no longer needed but by no means forgotten. Local residents used these landings as an access point to the ocean for fishing, diving or picking opihi. Fishing along the rugged Hamakua coastline is limited and dangerous to begin with. In addition to the limited access due to high cliff terrain, local residents in the past have had to deal with heavy tradewinds making any shoreline activity impossible, winter swells that keep the landings covered with whitewater and washed out roads from the heavy Hamakua rains. Even after all of these obstacles, there was still the issue of landowners (first the sugar plantations, now private landowners/leaseholders) locking gates that allow access to the shoreline. An issue unfortunately for many local fishermen, divers and beachgoers, these issues are not just localized to this area but throughout the state as well.



Despite the hazards and difficulties, local residents and guests managed to carry on the Pa'auilo, Fire Landing, Spring Water, Kukio, Malanahai to name a few. Moi, oio, white papio, ulua and aholehole were the prized catches. In the 1970's, the Federal governments environmental protection laws toughened up and prevented the sugar plantations from dumping their wastewater into the ocean. As the once murky water started clearing up, divers started taking to the sea more frequently targeting big black kole, uhu, kumu, opihi and more.

WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE MOI?

The demise of the sugar plantations over the years not only hit the local communities hard financially with the sudden loss of jobs and income, but from a local fisherman's perspective, took a devastating effect on the resource as well. While it is true the discharge of muddy water and waste product had covered the





PHOTO BY BISHOP MUSEUM



limited reef area (unlike other islands in the state most of the big island coastline drops off into deeper waters quickly) the nutrient rich waste product and muddy water served as an incredible habitat for species such as moi, white papio and oio. One longtime resident states “once the plantation closed... Junk!”. So gone are the days where the mountains of hauna (stink) bagasse (pulp-like substance leftover from the sugar cane refining process) would pile up below the cliffs and provide an artificial landmass. This artificial platform was used by local fishermen to catch moi and white papio with their cane poles by the potato-sack full. Gone are the days of using earthworms as bait for moi and papio. Gone are the days of casting into your moi hole in hopes of catching a moi or two for dinner as the former moi house is now filled with species such as po’opa’a and hinalea! Even the small black “tobacco” eels that would frequently bite your hook and constantly tangle up your line are no longer present. It is speculated either they lost their food sources or dark bodies are now easy prey for the bands of omilu that patrol the now clear waters causing them to seek other habitat.

WHERE WE GOING FISH NOW?

The most popular landing off of one of the sugar mills was also the most accessible. Affectionately known as the “Landing” by the locals, it was famous for the “moi pond” directly in front of it - a shallow boulder-strewn elevated shoal covered with whitewater, with a deep drop off surrounding it. Off the ledges in deeper water, the fishermen would cast for ulua, oio, white papio or taape. Although gates were often locked making access occasionally prohibited (someone making pilikia by stealing parts from the sugar mill, its vehicles or rustling an occasional cattle or two from the surrounding leased pasture areas) either the former plantation’s kindness or the volume of local residents complaining about access would allow the gates to be unlocked again.

The Landing unfortunately will not be with us for long. Years of pounding from the ferocious north winter swells has undermined its base and caused most of it to collapse into the moi hole. Local fishermen predict that the remaining section may not last another season of high surf. For these locals, it only means another lost fishing spot. “To fish this area effectively you need to be at a high point” says a Hamakua local who grew up fishing this coastline. “Once the landing is



gone, it would be nearly impossible to fish from the lower level due to the dangerous surf and surge. Even if you were fishing from a higher point farther back it would be difficult to bring up any fish at all from the pond over all the boulders." Further down the coastline he said, another favorite spot the locals called "Banana Gulch" slid into the ocean back in the early 90's.

Statewide local fishermen are losing more and more fishing grounds due to government agencies or private landowners blocking our access. In this case however, mother nature is the unfortunate culprit and soon will have eliminated access to one of our most cherished and productive fishing holes.

"MA, WE GOING DOWN THE LANDING?"

Only time will tell what level of access will be provided along the Hamakua coastline for fishing. After the last plantation folded, Bishop Estate scooped up the remains and sold off or sub-let much of these areas. While many areas are currently blocked off, the kindness and generosity of some of the current landowners or leaseholders still allow local fishermen access to their longtime grounds. Should they ever change their minds however, gone forever will be the days the words "Ma, we going down the landing..." will be spoken, only to be replaced by stories of "Once upon a time..."

January 2014

Rhoda Makaanani Libre shared the following hotspots on Kauai:

(voiced by our hanakaumaka pu'uhonua n westside na kupuna a me na opio a makaainana a kuleana maamau Ma kona moku o Kaua'i)

Current active problems:

- 1) fisheries n coral reef decimation
- 2) water diversion n leaf catchers that kill o'opu and all life in hanapepe river
- 3) catamarans, scuba divers, unmanaged n unaccountable commercial marine n shoreline n reef ventures - no accountability
(taking live shell s, lobsters, coral, wildlife ,rocks, sand, displacing native Hawaiian practices, unzoned shoreline n hiking tours, traversing n anchoring n illegal mooring in fisheries habitat, over shallow reefs n bays, destroying coral with anchors n artificial attachments, ruining vistas n pristine areas, polluting n interrupting fisheries habitat, n native Hawaiian practitioners n gathering...)
- 4) underground injection wells n pipes dumping directly to coastline
- 5) sand dumping on reefs n native endangered species habitat shoreline-state DOT
- 6) wana n marine biota kills -slow or no assistance from kauai division DAR-DOBOR
- 7) detrimental and ineffective policies n rules that encourage the decline of natural resources, violations of cultural protocol, poaching n unmanaged activities in unzoned areas that has negatively impacted our fish n shoreline stocks n integrity
- 8) great increases of salinity n turbidity in our rivers n estuaries due to water diversions, trash blockage, and government upper river area of work to levee n banks- bad management practices- community ignored
- 9) outdated n obsolete fines n penalties that cause foreign entrepreneurs to violate.n pay petty fines that is no cost to how much tax free pirate monies they make off of state n Hawaiian pristine n untouched resources
- 10) need appropriate rules, fines, n penalties
- 11) requesting designation of our cultural sanctuary to restore habitat n protect food supplies n nurseries
- 12) 7 noted species genocide in 4 dead spots - kona moku
- 13) entering sensitive fragile ahupua'a nurseries n spreading of invasive species n coral diseases by traversing commercial marine vehicles , unmanaged tours, n prospecting scientists without invitation or permission or division policy for community participation of their activities in culturally sensitive n fragile Hawaiian Eco system.. Highly inappropriate n hostile.
- 14) pesticide, herbicides, fertilizers, GMO chemicals n sewage dumping through air n water in sacred marine n estuaries n coral reef/fisheries habitat equating to no food or clean water.