

**MINUTES  
FOR THE MEETING OF THE  
HAWAI‘I BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES**

DATE: July 6, 2022  
TIME: 2:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Leiopapa A Kamehameha Building  
Office of Planning and Sustainable Development  
235 S. Beretania Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

**AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order**

Ms. McEldowney called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

The following were in attendance:

**MEMBERS:** Holly McEldowney (Department of Land and Natural Resources) [remote]  
Niniau Kawaihae (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands) [remote]  
Keith Gutierrez (Office of Hawaiian Affairs) [remote]  
Arthur Buto for Mary Alice Evans (Office of Planning and Sustainable  
Development) [in-person]

**ABSENT:** Marques Marzan (Bishop Museum)  
Meyer Cummins (Land Survey Division)  
Kapā Oliveira (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa)

**GUESTS:** Michael Wahl (SHPD) [remote]  
Jenny Runyon (USGS) [remote]  
Bobby Camara [remote]  
Dr. Larry Kimura (UH) [remote]  
Mary Alice Evans (observing) [remote]  
Evan Lam [remote]  
Dr. John Smith (UH / ACUF) [remote]

**AGENDA ITEM 2: Review of Meeting Minutes for June 1, 2022**

**MOTION:** Ms. Kawaihae moved to approve the minutes of June 1, 2022; Mr. Gutierrez seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to approve the revised meeting minutes of June 1, 2022.*

**AGENDA ITEM 3: Public Comments**

- Two emails from Lamakū Mikahala Roy are included in meeting packet for members to review.

- Ms. Melia Lane-Kamahele forwarding several articles regarding the naming process and recent feature and place name decisions.
  - The draft of an article about feature names in national parks. The article talks about the origins of feature names in Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO) and other national parks in the context of colonialism and cultural appropriation. Mr. Buto highlighted all Hawai‘i-related sections and encouraged members to read the article. A publication by Kapā Oliveira is among the references cited. Jenny Runyon and Bobby Camara are both mentioned in the article.

Ms. Kawaihae noted that the charts show that HAVO did well relative to other parks in respecting traditional names.

- An article about renaming Mt. Doane to First Peoples Mountain, an example of changing an offensive name.
- A Civil Beat article about renaming Russian Fort Elizabeth on Kaua‘i to Pa‘ula‘ula. The renaming was the responsibility of the Board of Land and Natural Resources. Ms. Runyon stated that the HBGN doesn't need to send a name change to the USGS to update the GNIS.

**AGENDA ITEM 4:      Announcements**

None.

**AGENDA ITEM 5:      Briefing by the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) about their project to update the ahupua‘a layer on Maui**

Michael Wahl, GIS Specialist from the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) introduced himself and the project SHPD is undertaking to correct some of the ahupua‘a boundaries on Maui.

They want to develop an accepted research process to identify ahupua‘a and make evidence-based determinations of their boundaries. He’s trying to determine what factors should be considered and what resources should be consulted.

Several years ago, Mr. Wahl discussed the current data with Renee Louis who helped to create the current ahupua‘a layer when she was a consultant for OHA years ago. She said that they could not spend a lot of time in some areas; they gave it their best effort, but had to move on to other areas. An area of interest for Mr. Wahl is an ahupua‘a on Maui, Mohopilo in the Honua‘ula moku. He would like to better define the boundaries, but is having some difficulty understanding what documentation and maps should be used. Ms. McEldowney

noted that government land wasn't surveyed because there was no need to determine boundaries between areas, so ahupua'a may appear on maps labeled in a cluster.

SHPD has two STEM interns who will be researching the boundaries and names for this area of Mohopilo. They've looked at registered maps from the DAGS Survey Office and the Mahele documents, which sometimes mention ahupua'a. Once Hawai'i became a territory, in 19th century USGS began developing maps, but they are not 100% reliable. Mr. Wahl would also like to incorporate local knowledge, but is unsure if and how oral histories should be taken.

They are conducting a pilot project of five or six ahupua'a names that don't show up on any lists. They have some USGS maps from the 1950s or 1960s that SHPD used to map some sites that Bishop Museum did. They show some area names, but no boundaries. According to Dr. Kamana Beamer, in his guidance on appropriately researching ahupua'a, USGS maps are not reliable sources for ahupua'a.

A registered map from the State Survey Office shows Land Commission Award (LCA) boundaries. Mohopilo is a little area, and is tucked up in a corner rather than in middle. Another registered map shows the same area but no Mohopilo and Nau is in a different place. In yet another registered map, Nau is labeled Onau... is it a transposition error? The Kamehameha Schools (KS) website shows Nau and Mohopilo – Mr. Wahl contacted Todd Tulchin who may have the metadata for the data on the map.

Having the grants in that area may not help with boundaries, but may help to identify where the ahupua'a and ili were located if they are referenced in the documents.

Mr. Wahl is also working with Zack Smith from OHA who's been working on their version of the ahupua'a layer.

Dr. Kimura recommends basic verification of the areas and the names – does it exist in the area where you're looking? He suggested the Papakilo database as a good reference (<https://papakilodatabase.com>). In it he found Mohopilo in the Mahele listing of places and there were eight entries in nūpepa ca. 1848 verifying the same place.

He also mentioned that the bird catchers were valuable resources and provided information about land markers for the ahupua'a. Ms. McEldowney confirmed that bird catchers provided oral testimony to the Boundary Commission that allowed boundary lines to be drawn. These testimonies were a reliable source for determining ahupua'a boundaries.

Dr. Kimura is wary of seeking historical place name information from people living today. In the past he's done a few oral histories of place names with Native Hawaiian speakers from those places. He listened to how the name was spoken to determine the spelling.

Mr. Camara asked that Mr. Wahl contact him after the meeting. Mr. Camara has been doing similar name research for 30+ years for the lands in HAVO and has faced the same challenges that Mr. Wahl has described.

Mr. Wahl would like to be able to defend naming decisions and to document the process of researching the names. He acknowledged that these administrative boundaries were just one of many ways of interacting with the land.

Mr. Gutierrez mentioned the Kīpuka database as another resource (<https://kipukadatabase.com>) and noted that Mr. Smith will be leaving OHA soon.

Mr. Buto asked that Mr. Wahl return to the Board to present the results of this research and to share the data layer updates. The methodology that is developed will be valuable to learn from and possibly apply to other place names.

**AGENDA ITEM 6: Briefing by Dr. John Smith about ACUF concerns about changing the name of Lō‘ihi Seamount**

Dr. Smith introduced himself. He is one of the voting members on the Advisory Committee on Undersea Features (ACUF) to the US BGN. They advise US BGN on naming seafloor features.

For their quarterly meeting in January, ACUF received HBGN’s proposal to rename Lō‘ihi Seamount to Kama‘ehuakanaloa and had an extended discussion. They tabled a vote on the matter until there could be an in-person discussion with HBGN to better understand the proposal. Dr. Smith presented notes and questions from that meeting for HBGN to consider. He will take back results from today’s discussion to ACUF which will hold its third quarterly meeting tomorrow.

They want to better understand the cultural and naming significance, because the name Lō‘ihi was established some time ago and it is a scientifically popular feature. Approximately 2,000 research papers have already been published, many of them since the 1980's. The original paper in 1955 by Kenneth Emery identified Lō‘ihi and four other seamounts and followed an earlier paper identifying seismic activity nearby – he noted that the geometry of the Hawai‘i Volcano Observatory (HVO) seismometers is lacking and that the recorded activity may have originated at this cluster of seamounts.

Dr. Smith has been based in Hawai‘i since 1986 when he came for graduate school. His advisor was Alexander Malahoff who was a noted Lō‘ihi researcher and leading advocate for research on Lō‘ihi Seamount. Dr. Smith has personally been involved in a number of dives and mapping projects in and around the seamounts.

Ms. Runyon noted that for longstanding names, the US BGN looks for a compelling reason to make a change to an indigenous name. At a meeting last year she had also pointed out that Lō‘ihi is outside of the State’s jurisdictional waters.

Pursuant to statute, HBGN’s authority only applies to features in the State. At the same time, HBGN’s naming decisions are binding on State agencies; the Board is only advisory to the US BGN.

Mr. Camara argued against the addition of “Seamount” to Lō‘ihi as counter to the efforts at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park (HAVO) to remove English descriptors from Hawaiian feature names.

**The “discussion point bullets:”**

- Mr. Camara understands that there is a large body of research on Lō‘ihi, but he cited the precedent of changing the long-established name of Mt. McKinley to Denali for which there may be a large body of published research. And he noted that HVO is already using Kama‘ehuakanaloa on its website, perhaps improperly.
- With respect to the third discussion bullet from Dr. Smith’s note, several years ago Mr. Camara had called Bishop Museum and asked if there was any correspondence between Mary Pukui or Martha Hoku and K.O. Emery or Gordon Macdonald regarding the name but was told that there was none.

He imagines that Emery’s and/or Macdonald’s consultation with Bishop Museum might’ve been to describe the features in English (long, pointy, bumpy, shallow, and deep) with Pukui and Hoku providing Hawaiian translations of those descriptions (Lō‘ihi, Wini, ‘Apu‘upu‘u, Papa‘u, and Hohonu, respectively). There wasn’t an emphasis then on researching names; the names were simply given.

- He agrees that Lō‘ihi was named specifically for its elongated shape.

**The “whereas bullets:”**

- Mr. Camara acknowledges that Kama‘ehuakanaloa is a generic name for a submarine volcano. It is possible that the Hawaiians understood that the volcanism of the Hawaiian Islands ran older to younger in a northwest to southeast direction and that there might be underwater volcano somewhere “out there.” Kama‘ehu is the red-headed child of Kanaloa; Kanaloa is the elemental whose kuleana is the ocean. When the volcano rises above the surface of the ocean, it will receive a new name. Kama‘ehuakanaloa refers to a submarine volcano.
- The chant does go back to at least 1862 and of course could not specifically be describing that particular volcano. Nor was it describing a coastal volcanic cone or lava flowing into the sea. There are other terms for those and those are visible.

- He acknowledges that Lō‘ihi is not in the State’s waters, but Kama‘ehuakanaloa is a proposed name.

### **The “questions:”**

- He doesn’t know if the name is already in use for any other feature.
- He feels strongly that attaching the descriptor ‘Seamount’ does spoil the name intention. It’s an English word descriptor for a Hawaiian name (whether it’s Lō‘ihi or Kama‘ehuakanaloa).
- Lō‘ihi is not disrespectful or inappropriate, but in this time when Native Hawaiian culture and cultural practices are being elevated, attention should be paid to naming practices and honoring and respecting this place. Rather than naming the seamounts for their physical characteristics translated to Hawaiian, instead honor the cultural naming practices.

Mr. Camara is strongly in favor of the name change and following standard practice putting Lō‘ihi in parentheses, which is what HVO is currently doing (though it may not be strictly correct).

Dr. Smith asked if there is an intention to consider renaming the other seamounts that were in Emery’s paper and other undersea features, including in Papahānaumokuākea, or if Lō‘ihi is special because of its active nature.

Mr. Camara answered that Lō‘ihi is in a category by itself because of its active nature. In Papahānaumokuākea there was a renaming recently, but that is out of his area of familiarity.

Dr. Smith noted that there were some recent dives at the Lili‘uokalani Seamount chain, but it is unlikely that it has anything to do with Hawai‘i.

Dr. Smith asked about some of the naming efforts in HAVO. Mr. Camara worked there for 30 years and retired 10 years ago. Several feature names have been changed recently – Kīlauea Caldera to Kaluapele, Waldron Ledge to Kūpina‘i Pali, Steaming Flats to Kūkamāhuākea, Uēkahuna Bluff to Uēkahuna, Halema‘uma‘u Crater to Halema‘uma‘u, Thurston Lava Tube to Nāhuku.

Mr. Camara and Dr. Smith have also talked about Pūhāhonu and Ōnūiki and Ōnūnui. The ending of first paragraph “around Pele’s Pit Crater” made Mr. Camara uneasy. Dr. Smith thinks that it is an unofficial name and is not in the database.

Mr. Camara emphasized that naming is an important practice.

Ms. McEldowney recommended discussing this further at the next HBGN meeting when more members are present. Dr. Smith will provide a summary of today's discussion at tomorrow's ACUF meeting. The ACUF meetings are not public; minutes are taken but are summarized.

**AGENDA ITEM 7: Discussion and decision on Kūkahau'ula**

The Board has discussed for several months and is supportive of restoring Kūkahau'ula as the name for the summit area of Mauna Kea. Ms. McEldowney will complete the Name Change Application form with assistance from Dr. Kimura and Mr. Camara.

**MOTION:** Ms. Kawaihae moved that the Board restore the traditional name, Kūkahau'ula as the new feature name for the summit area of Mauna Kea. Mr. Gutierrez seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to approve a new feature name, Kūkahau'ula for the summit area of Mauna Kea.*

**AGENDA ITEM 8: Discussion and decision on selected place names on the Island of Hawai'i**

Ms. Kawaihae suggested deferring this item until next month's meeting when more Board members will be present.

**MOTION:** Mr. Buto moved to defer this item to the next meeting. Ms. Kawaihae seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to defer discussion of these place names until next month.*

**AGENDA ITEM 7: Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Ms. Kawaihae moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Gutierrez seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.*

Ms. McEldowney adjourned the meeting at 3:56 p.m.