

V. Hōlua

The issue of a *hōlua* course on the Royal Vistas project site has been addressed in numerous archeological reports and studies over the decades, with NONE of the reports finding any evidence of a *hōlua* course on the property. In addition, area cultural consultants Kekoa Nazara; Curtis Tyler II, and Nicole Lui knew of no *hōlua* course on this property during consultations with archeologist Glenn Escott, M.A.

According to Pukui Elbert, "*kahua hōlua*" is defined as a "sledding course". Wikipedia defines "*kahua hōlua*" as the foundation of the course, made of rocks and built in a depression on the hillside. The foundation is covered with pack-in dirt and an outer layer of *pili* grass or *ko* flower tassels is laid on top. The courses are wide enough for a single sled and are not sloped at the bottom. A skilled rider can travel 150-200 yards on the course, reaching the flat portion.

"*Papa hōlua*" is a sled, about 12' long and 6 " wide, comprised of a pair of runners and superstructure which sits on cross-pieces that keep the runners apart. "*He'e hōlua*" is the sport of Hawaiian lava sledding, historically practiced by skilled riders and still practiced by a few to this day. In this discussion, we will use "*hōlua*" to refer to the sledding course, which seems to be the current common reference.

The first assertion that there was *hōlua* on the Royal Vista project was made by John Mark Powell, a project neighbor in Kona Vistas who is vehemently opposed to the Royal Vistas project. He had an email interchange with Tom Pohaku Stone in the summer of 2019 (see Exhibit A). Tom is a well-known practitioner of *he'e hōlua* (riding the sleds down the course) as well as a renowned maker of "*papa hōlua*" (the sled itself), with examples of his sleds being displayed around the world.

In the email chain, Tom talked about the relationship between the Hōlualoa slide and the many religious and royal complexes along the Kona coast. This appears to reference Kealakowa'a (see Section I) and the interconnectedness with the various royal centers, all located off the subject property (See Section I "Kealakowa'a"). Tom also states: "You are not going to find much in any library about that slide because I'm the person who did the study of that area." Mr. Powell then references "the intact portion of the *hōlua* at the Holualoa Inn" having two walls, and asks if the other *hōlua* have two walls? Tom Stone answers "Yes".

Tom Stone investigated this area as part of his May 2002 thesis: "The Reinstitution of a Traditional Hawaiian Practice: A Native Perspective of Ritualism Through the Performance of He'e Hōlua". On pages 116-117 (see Exhibit B) Tom Stone references the remnant portion at the Holualoa Inn as being a portion of the *hōlua* Slide, and expounds that he could not find any contemporary records of its origin, time of use or when it ceased to be used.

This information was all presented during our Environmental Assessment process and was summarized by Attorney Steven Strauss (attorney for Royal Vistas opponents Kona Vistas Association, John Mark Powell, David and Diane Blancett-Maddock, and others) in a letter dated 10-8-2020 (see Exhibit C), which includes the following: "According to an evaluation and analysis performed by Tom Pohaku Stone, substantial evidence exists that the land encompassed by the subject land parcels includes features of the *Hōlualoa* Slide, including rock walls that are inadequately described as agricultural walls in the archaeological studies offered in support of the draft Environmental Assessment." The Strauss letter offers as support for this position an Exhibit being a copy of the Holualoa Inn tourist facility's site map labeling the remnant trail as "Ancient *Hōlualoa* Trail" and another Exhibit being an aerial photo of the area showing the *hōlualoa* Slide going makai through the Holualoa Inn property to a *heiau*; then running

makai through the Royal Vistas project to another *heiau*. There are numerous problems with these assertions.

Problem One: The remnant on the Holualoa Inn property is NOT a slide/*hōlua*. Questions and assertions about this remnant were made for years, including by Goro Inaba, so Na Ala Hele commissioned an archeological study of said remnant. In June of 2004, a “Grant Road” archeological report was published for and accepted by Nā Ala Hele and DLNR by Robert Rechtman, Ph. D. (see Exhibit D). This report concluded that the “*hōlua* remnant” on the Holualoa Inn property is a portion of a rock wall-lined road built in the late 1890’s to provide pedestrian and horse access to adjoining land grant parcels. As of the 2004 report date, the road had not been used for decades. Therefore, the “*hōlua* remnant” referenced in the Holualoa Inn tourist map and used by Tom Stone; John Mark Powell; and attorney Steven Strauss to claim a *hōlua* runs through the Royal Vistas project is a “road remnant”, and NOT a “*hōlua* remnant”. The claim a *hōlua* runs through the Royal Vistas project is based on a false premise.

Problem Two: As detailed in Section I: Kealakowa‘a, the ancient *hōlua* “Kealakowa‘a” has been located using public records and ran from the mountains above Hōlualoa town, through Hōlualoa town, and *makai* to the sea at Hōlualoa Bay. It did NOT run through the Royal Vistas project.

Problem Three: The Exhibit in attorney Strauss’ letter showing a *Hōlua* Slide running through the Royal Vistas project is fraudulent, it is unknown who prepared said Exhibit. The picture correctly identifies the Hōlualoa Inn property, but then shows the *Hōlua* Slide as running *makai* to an unnamed *heiau*. There is no *heiau* between Holualoa Inn and the Royal Vistas property, and the path identified as the Hōlualoa Slide is actually a road remnant, per above. The Exhibit then extends the non-existent “*Hōlua* Slide” *makai* across the Royal Vistas property to another *heiau* immediately *makai* of the Royal Vistas property. There is no *heiau* immediately *makai* of the Royal Vistas property.

Problem Four: *Hōlua* were constructed in a *mauka-makai* manner, therefore any *hōlua* on the Royal Vistas property would extend both above and below the Royal Vistas land. Numerous archeological reports on lands above and below the Royal Vistas property do NOT find any *hōlua* on said lands.

Property owner Kona Three commissioned a detailed report on the existing walls and the possibility of *Hōlua* on the property by archeologist Glenn Escott dated 11-10-2019 (see Exhibit E). This report detailed the findings of the investigation as well as the previous work done for Nā Ala Hele and confirmed there are no *hōlua* on the property.

In spite of all this evidence and numerous archeological reports, claims persist about a *hōlua* being on the property, made by the project opponents and then by Na Ala Hele’s Jackson Bauer and Trail Specialist Rick Gmirkin, who promoted the idea that *hōlua* were on the property either at the double-walled trail location or that the LCA 3660 boundary walls were *hōlua* remnants. These claims were of concern to the County of Hawai‘i Planning Department Cultural Resource Commission (CRC), and they expressed further desire to investigate said claims.

Kona Three retained archeologist Glenn Escott to do further research, and sought out a *hōlua* expert, which turned out to be somewhat difficult as it is a rarified field. Rick Gmirkin had mentioned Tom Stone and Keone Kalawe as being the leading experts in the field of *hōlua*. We were concerned about O‘ahu resident Tom Stone’s qualifications, as he had erroneously identified the road remnant at Holualoa Inn as a *hōlua* remnant. In addition, his reputation is as an expert in *he‘e hōlua* (riding the sled on *hōlua*) and making *papa hōlua* (the actual sleds), not in the design and construction of the *hōlua* courses themselves.

Keone Kalawe has a reputation as an architect and engineer for the actual *hōlua*, and has been professionally investigating *hōlua* since 1996. He is from the Big Island (40 generations) and has worked on finding; identifying; re-constructing; analyzing and helping preserve some 72 *hōlua* on the Big Island during his career. He has done work for Kamehameha Schools; Queen Lili'uokalani Trust; and DHHL. When the Hawaiians want to know about *hōlua*, this is the person they turn to. We retained him to do an investigation on the Royal Vistas property as to whether or not there were *hōlua* on it.

He and his team did an investigation and inspection on the property, and filed a written Report (see Exhibit F) as well as an oral presentation at the June 21, 2023 CRC meeting (see synopsis Exhibit G). Jackson Bauer and the CRC members were present at the June CRC meeting and had no questions when Keone asked if there were any. The report states that neither the double-walled trail nor the LCA 3660 boundary walls were *hōlua*, and explained the factors that led to his finding (no pavement; no burials; walls on both sides of the paths; no running path for entry; and no level ramp at bottom to stop the riders). The CRC Commissioners submitted a motion based on the evidence and inspections performed up to that date, but the meeting was adjourned prior to completing the vote on said motion.

At the July 21, 2023 CRC meeting, project opponents David Blancett Maddock and his team were allowed to introduce Tom Stone as a “lineal descendant”, and Tom proceeded to testify about himself and *hōlua*. He explained that although his family name is now Stone, it was Mahihelalina until 1862, and that this family included the *ali'i nui* of Kohala district on the Big Island many years ago. On the other side of his lineage is the Kahanu family from Ka'ū.

He talked about Puapua'a Ahupua'a having three *ili*, and how they were all part of Lanihau Ahupua'a. He explained how the Kona Field System (KFS) was a grid of rock walls, and that they were designed to move water from upland to lower land. There was a trail system to allow maintenance of the walls and water system, and people lived there to provide such maintenance. He stated he is against the Royal Vistas project, and this is the first time he has been asked to testify about a project. To the best of our knowledge, he has never been on the property, observed the walls, or inspected the sites.

As to the presence of a *hōlua* slide on the property, he postulated that just because there is not one there now, that doesn't mean there might not have been one there long ago. He said the slide in this area is long gone (not true, much of Kealakowa'a remains intact), and referenced the Keauhou slide. He said the original purpose of the slide was as a logging road, but over time it developed into more of a religious and cultural feature involving the sport of sliding on sleds. For every great slide, there was a smaller one connected, plus a *heiau*. All of these features are in Lanihau Ahupua'a (which is not where the project is). He talked about doing his thesis and said he is not an expert, but rather a native seeking knowledge.

Tom said he is not in favor of development, specifically of this project but also in Kona altogether. He feels that all development in Kailua-Kona should be stopped. He asked the CRC to not support Kona Three LLC's request for a ten-year extension on their Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

Based in part on Tom Stone's testimony, the project being identified as a PONC site, and based on the project opponent's vociferous objection to the project, the CRC voted to amend its previously proposed motion language and instead voted to recommend preservation of the entire 68-acre site, and encouraged Kona Three to work with PONC to sell the land to PONC. The County Corporation Counsel objected to the PONC recommendation, and this portion of the motion was deleted.

The PONC recommendation comes from an action taken by project opponents in attempting to get the property purchased by the County Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation Commission. This PONC Commission is charged with buying land from willing sellers to preserve cultural and archeologically important lands on Hawai'i island. Project opponents submitted our property without authorization or consent, knowing that we are not willing sellers and using fraudulent claims and Exhibits to influence PONC's decision to buy the property. Even using fraudulent claims and Exhibits, it took the opponents four submittals over four years to get the property on the PONC list. It was the lowest score recorded for a PONC property (the higher the score, the more valuable the property is using cultural, natural resource, and archeological metrics). See Section VI PONC for more details on this matter.

At this point, Kona Three has gone to great lengths investigating whether or not there are *hōlua* on the property. We have performed many, many archeological reports and hired the world's leading expert on *hōlua* during our investigations. We have documented scientifically and professionally that there are no *hōlua* on the property. In spite of all these reports and evidence, mainly non-Hawaiian project opponents continue to insist there are *hōlua* on the property, slandering professional experts in their field because they do not agree with the project opponent's wishes. Their Hawaiian consultant Tom Stone, who is NOT a lineal descendent as defined by DLNR per HAR 13-300-2, never says there are *hōlua* on the property in his writing or testimony, merely that there might have been. Given that he has never been on the property, he appears confused as to its location (Lanihau Ahupua'a, where he believes it is, is more than 2.5 miles north of the property); and his previous mistaken identification of a roadway remnant as a *hōlua* remnant, this is not too surprising. This is a classic case of "If enough people say something untrue enough times and loudly enough, it becomes true."

There are no *hōlua* on the Royal Vistas property.

V. Holua Exhibits

- Exhibit A Emails Powell-Stone
- Exhibit B Stone Reference Holualoa holua
- Exhibit C Attorney Strauss Correspondence
- Exhibit D Holualoa Grant Road Archeological Study
- Exhibit E Holua Wall Sites Study
- Exhibit F Kalawe Report on Holua Slides
- Exhibit G Kalawe Oral Report on Holua Slides