

DRAFT
HAWAI'I COASTAL AND ESTUARINE
LAND CONSERVATION PLAN

September 2006



Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism



DRAFT

**HAWAI'I COASTAL AND ESTUARINE
LAND CONSERVATION PLAN**

Prepared for:

Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program
Office of Planning
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism

Prepared by:

Brian Szuster, Ph.D.
Graceson Ghen

Department of Geography
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
445 Saunders Hall, 2424 Maile Way
Honolulu, HI 96822

September 2006

A publication of the Hawai'i Office of Planning, State of Hawai'i, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism Pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Awards No. NA17OZ2333 and NA03NOS4190082.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This plan was developed with funds provided by the State of Hawai'i Office of Planning and from the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management in the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Development of the plan was administered by Scott Derrickson of the Office of Planning and the following individuals were responsible for the preparation of this document:

Dr. Brian Szuster (Principal Investigator)

Mr. Graceson Ghen (Graduate Research Assistant)

The authors of this plan would specifically like to thank the following members of the Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Group who generously provided their time and comments throughout the preparation and review of this document: Thorne Abbott, Dr. Gary Blaich, Dr. Dale Bonar, Sam Lemmo, Hannah Springer, Susan Miller, and Josh Stanbro. The University of Hawai'i Coastal Geology Group provided many of the digital photographs included in this report. Dr Mark Ridgley is also recognized for his input and comments on the development of the evaluation system for this project.

Citation

Szuster, B.W. and G. Ghen. (2006). Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan. Honolulu: Office of Planning, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, pp. 47.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 EXISTING CELCP PROJECTS IN HAWAI'I	4
3.0 IDENTIFICATION OF COASTAL AND ESTUARINE AREAS	8
4.0 RESOURCE VALUES TO BE PROTECTED	12
5.0 EXISTING SUPPORTIVE PLANS AND PROGRAMS	19
6.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN	32
7.0 GUIDANCE FOR PROJECT EVALUATION	39
8.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION	46
 APPENDIX A: COASTAL DATA RESOURCES	
 APPENDIX B: COUNTY AND COMMUNITY PLANS	
 APPENDIX C: HAWAI'I ADVISORY COMMITTEE	
 APPENDIX D: PUBLIC MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Coastal and estuarine areas in Hawai'i provide habitat for a diverse range of vegetation and wildlife, and contain numerous cultural, recreational, and historical resources that are valued by the Hawaiian community, local residents, and visitors. Coastal and estuarine areas are also highly favored for development and this has created a host of inter-connected problems including: land conversion, habitat loss, industrial-, residential- and agricultural-based pollution, erosion, and the over-exploitation of recreational areas. No point on the islands is more than 29 miles from shoreline and almost any land disturbing or development activity can affect the integrity of coastal and estuarine resources.

In recognition of the need to provide long-term protection for significant coastal and estuarine resources, Congress created the [*Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program*](#) (CELCP) in 2002. This initiative enables states to permanently protect coastal and estuarine lands by providing matching funds for community-based projects to acquire property from willing sellers either through fee simple purchase or through conservation easements. Lands acquired through the program are owned by the State or local agencies, and in this manner the *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program* shares similarities with the Federal Forest Legacy program in which Hawai'i has also been an active participant. Title or interests in properties purchased under the *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program* are held in perpetuity by the award recipient, and public access is insured in the absence of legitimate environmental protection or public safety concerns.

To date all CELCP awards have been congressionally-directed, but National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is attempting to transform the program into a competitive format that will allocate funding

based upon a set of uniform evaluation criteria commencing in fiscal year 2007. In order to qualify for competitive funding under the *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program*, individual coastal states must meet specific eligibility requirements as outlined in guidelines prepared by NOAA. The preparation of an approved state *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* is the initial action that must take place. These state plans identify priority conservation needs and provide clear guidance for the process of nominating local coastal land conservation projects to the national competition. The *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* is being developed by the Department of Geography at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in conjunction with the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program. A *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Group* (see Appendix C) has also been created to provide public input and direction during the preparation of the State plan.



Coastal Development in East Honolulu

State plans are intended to be concise documents that guide local participation in the national *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation*

Program. In keeping with guidelines developed by NOAA and the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, the Hawai'i plan will provide the following information:

- a definition of the geographic extent of coastal and estuarine areas within Hawai'i as defined for the purposes of the State plan;
- a description of the lands or values to be protected and the need for conservation through acquisition;
- a description of existing plans or programs that identify local conservation priorities and are supportive of the objectives of the *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program*;
- a list of State agencies or local agencies eligible to hold title to property acquired under the *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program*; and
- a description of public consultation and inter-agency coordination activities associated with the preparation of the state plan.

The development of the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* will provide a framework for identifying coastal and estuarine land conservation priorities, and will define the State's process for preparing, evaluating and ranking qualified proposals that will be forwarded to the annual national funding competition administered by NOAA.

2.0 EXISTING CELCP PROJECTS IN HAWAI'I

A number of coastal sites in the State of Hawai'i have recently been purchased for conservation purposes with the assistance of congressionally-directed CELCP funds. A brief description of these projects is provided below:

Waihe'e Coastal Dunes and Wetlands

The 250 acre Waihe'e Coastal Dunes and Wetlands Reserve on Maui's north shore contains over 24 acres of spring-fed wetland, 103 acres of dune ecosystem, over 7000 feet of marine shoreline, and more than 8 acres of riparian habitat that supports native birds and vegetation. At least six endangered species have been observed on the site including the Hawaiian Stilt and Coot, two endangered plants and two endangered insects.



Waihe'e Coastal Dunes and Wetlands Reserve

Nearly \$1 million in CELCP funds and \$1 million in USFW *Endangered Species Act* funds were combined with county, state and private contributions to purchase the site for \$4.8 million in 2003. The Maui Coastal Land Trust holds title to the property and is responsible for management and long-term stewardship. Maui County and the State of Hawai'i also hold conservation easements on the property to assure protection of the site and its resources in perpetuity.

Mū'olea Point

Maui County took possession of the 70-acre Mū'olea Point on January 18, 2005 and designated the site as a permanent conservation area. The property was valued at just over \$4 million and was purchased through a collaborative effort of federal, state and county governments and the local community. The Trust for Public Land negotiated with the previous owners to hold the parcel off the market until funds could be raised for the purchase, and this included a \$2 million grant from the CELCP in 2003. The parcel is bordered by Alaalaula Stream with native freshwater and estuarine species and contains Maui's last pure stand of Polynesian coconut palm. The shoreline of Mu'olea Point is a documented basking site for the rare Hawaiian Monk Seal and other parts of the property contain valuable historic, cultural and recreational resources. Located along the Hana Highway, Mu'olea Point is one of the few places that allows public access to the ocean along this section of steep and rugged coastline.

Pūpūkea-Paumalū Natural Area

The 20 year struggle to preserve the 1,129 acre Pūpūkea-Paumalū coastal property on Oahu's North Shore for conservation purposes is nearing completion. Through intensive collaboration and support from community and non-profit groups along with pledged funding from county, state and federal governments (including the US Army), an offer has been accepted by the landowners for the property which is valued at over \$10 million. The CELCP allocated \$2 million toward the total project cost in 2004 and a protective purchase is hoped to be completed by the end of 2006. Although Pūpūkea-Paumalū is located several hundred meters inland, its protection will preserve the water quality and the scenic beauty of world-famous coastal sites such as Sunset Beach, Rocky Point, Pipeline and Log Cabins. In addition, the purchase will protect native Hawaiian plants and cultural sites,

along with State water reserves and World War II historic resources that are also found on the property. Hiking and educational opportunities will continue to be available for both local residents and visitors.

Honu`apo Estuary

The 225-acre Honu'apo parcel located on the south shore of the Island of Hawai'i (valued at \$3.65 million) was purchased collaboratively by the Trust for Public Land and the State of Hawai'i in March 2006. The County of Hawai'i will ultimately hold and steward the property. Total CELCP funding granted for this purchase was \$1.4 million. Honu`apo's tide pools and fish ponds represent important nursery habitat for fish and provide shelter from rough seas to the Hawaiian Monk Seal and sea turtles. The site also contains habitat that supports native bird species such as the Pueo (Hawaiian owl) and wading birds such as the `Auku`u (black-crowned night heron).



Honu`apo Estuary

Aside from significant habitat and conservation values, preservation of the Honu`apo site also insures the protection of numerous cultural, historic, recreation and aesthetic values. The site was once a Hawaiian fishing village and is a favorite camping and fishing spot for local residents. Situated on a virtually uninhabited stretch of the Ka`ū coastline, the parcel supports open space and scenic vista goals of both Hawai'i County and State of Hawai'i.

Kīlauea Bay

CELCP funding of \$1.5 million was granted in 2005 to support the purchase of a \$3 million parcel at Kīlauea Bay on the north shore of Kaua`i. This 3-acre site is part of a long-term initiative known as the Kilauea Coastal Preservation and Restoration Project that is attempting to expand protected areas surrounding the 160-acre Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge. Lands acquired in areas surrounding the refuge will be transferred into local government ownership and managed cooperatively with government agencies and private groups such as the Kaua`i Public Land Trust. The Kīlauea Bay site contains habitat that supports endangered species such as the Loulu Palm, Hawaiian Hoary Bat, Koloa Duck, and the Hawaiian Moorhen. The property is located on the lower reaches of the Kīlauea River, and its acquisition insures the protection of the estuary from damage that could occur as a result of development on steep slopes that characterize portions of the site. Future restoration activities will address the presence of exotic species on the property and a re-vegetation program is planned utilizing native Hawaiian coastal and estuarine plants such as `ākia, `ilima, naupaka.



Kīlauea Bay and Estuary

3.0 IDENTIFICATION OF COASTAL AND ESTUARINE AREAS

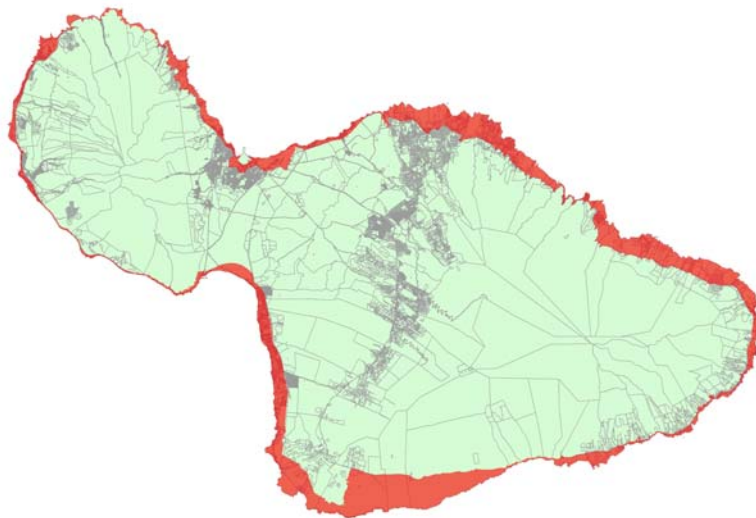
NOAA requires that the geographic extent of the coastal and estuarine areas included within the Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan be determined to provide a focus for assessing coastal conservation priorities within the State. Generally speaking the geographic scope of the State plan should be inclusive enough to provide a steady stream of high quality projects, but limits should be considered to insure that all proposed projects are competitive at the national level. This general objective is tempered by the fact that Hawai'i is rich in diverse coastal and estuarine habitats and includes 8 major islands, 124 minor islands, and 750 miles of coastline (4th longest in the United States).



Kihei Coast, Maui

A holistic definition of the plan geographic scope is supported by the fact that 100 percent of the State is designated as "coastal" by the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program (HCZMP). This is sensible since no point on land within the State is further than 29 miles from the sea, and virtually every land use activity has the potential to impact coastal ecosystems. However, more restricted definitions of the coastal zone also exist since the

implementation of the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program heavily depends on local government participation. The practicalities of county land use planning and permitting processes necessitated the creation of a more limited functional definition of the coastal zone. [Special Management Areas \(SMA\)](#) were incorporated into the *Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Act*. These zones extend a minimum of 100 yards inland from the shoreline, but can extend further depending upon local characteristics. SMA include all lands and waters beginning at the shoreline and extending inland (mauka) 100 yards. In practice, many SMA are bounded by the high water mark and the nearest landward State highway, but counties have in some cases extended the SMA boundary landward beyond the State minimum requirements. SMA do not include any areas seaward (makai) of the shoreline because of State jurisdiction in these waters.



Maui Special Management Areas

[Shoreline Setback Areas \(SSA\)](#) are a subset of the Special Management Areas created to provide supplementary protection to the Hawai'ian coastline. SSA range from 20 feet to 150 feet inland from the shoreline and represent areas where additional attention must be paid to the

potential impacts of development. In particular, negative environmental and social impacts on drainage, view planes, historic and cultural artifacts, coastal erosion and access must be avoided, minimized or mitigated.

With respect to defining the geographic scope of coastal and estuarine areas eligible for participation in the CELCP, both exclusive and inclusive options were considered by the University of Hawai'i authors of this plan and the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Group*. Special Management Areas provide a potentially useful exclusive definition since these coastal lands generally experience the greatest developmental pressure and also are the focus of the most intense land conservation concerns within the state. However, given that SMA are limited in extent and boundaries generally do not consider ecological factors or the extent of coastal habitat features, the use of this exclusive definition could create an inappropriate limitation on potential project sites.

Allowing all lands within the State to be eligible for consideration as project sites represents an inclusive approach to the scope of the Hawai'i plan. This "all-island" definition would support the original holistic intent of the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program and recognizes the intimate connection between shoreline environments and inland land uses within island ecosystems. The inclusive approach would also reinforce a growing interest in traditional [ahupua'a management](#) practices developed by the original Hawaiian inhabitants of the State. The ahupua'a concept is an ecosystem-based approach that shares certain similarities to watershed management within island environments. It stresses the connectivity of natural resources and human activities from the mountains to the sea, and emphasizes culturally relevant techniques for controlling human behavior as a key component of effective resource management. The ahupua'a concept is gaining increasing support within Hawai'i as a sustainable system of island management that might maintain the environmental integrity of upland and

coastal ecosystems while also supporting significant human populations. For these reasons the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Group* strongly supported an inclusive “all island” definition of the geographic scope of coastal and estuarine areas eligible for consideration in the State plan, but recognized that national program priorities that focus on shoreline environments must also be considered during the evaluation of project proposals.



Mokulua, Windward O`ahu

4.0 RESOURCE VALUES TO BE PROTECTED

The coastal and estuarine resource values discussed below reflect local conditions and priorities, but are also clearly guided by national program criteria established by Congress and NOAA. In general, the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* emphasizes the protection of shoreline areas threatened by development and conversion to a non-natural state. Priority is allotted to ecologically significant lands that can be effectively managed or protected, and in particular, projects that advance the goals, objectives and implementation of existing land conservation programs already operating within the State of Hawai'i (see Section 5.0). Every project proposal must document the presence and significance of one or more of the following five resource values, but conserving lands with significant ecological and conservation values is the clear priority of both the national CELCP and this Hawai'i plan. Cultural, recreational and aesthetic values are important and can provide significant secondary support for proposed projects, but proposals prepared under the Hawai'i plan must highlight conservation or ecological values to insure their competitiveness in the national selection process.

4.1 Ecological Values

Hawai'i's shoreline environments are subject to both terrestrial and marine influences and include dry, mesic and wet communities depending upon their location, elevation and orientation. Historically these areas have been subject to significant alteration by human activities and continue to be affected by land conversion as a result of residential construction, resort development and ongoing agricultural operations. Few undisturbed shorelines remain and in most cases it is difficult to imagine Hawai'i's coastal environment prior to human contact. Non-native species such as mangrove (*Bruguiera gymnorrhiza* and *Rhizophora mangle*), pickleweed (*Batis*

maritime), kiawe (*Prosopis alpacata*), ironwood (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) and koa haole (*Leucaena leucocephala*) dominate undeveloped coastal sites, and introduced plants, animals such as feral ungulates, rats, dogs, cats, and mongooses endanger native wildlife populations. The protection of threatened habitats and indigenous flora or fauna represents the core objective of the national CELCP, and numerous areas are potentially eligible to participate in the program given the large number of threatened or endangered species in Hawai'i and the significant amount of habitat loss.



Ka`ena Point, O`ahu

Coastal areas are natural ecotones and are typically rich in both species numbers and habitat diversity as a result of the interaction of land and sea environments. For the purposes of this plan, the principal habitats of concern in Hawai'i's coastal and estuarine environment are: shoreline, wetland and adjacent coastal upland areas. Each of these habitats provide a key contribution to the ecological integrity of the overall coastal environment, and "ecological significance" is determined by the quality of existing natural habitats, the diversity of species present, and the existence of threatened or endangered species. Any proposed project submitted to the

Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program for evaluation as a nominee to the CELCP national competition must include one or more of these habitats to be eligible.

Shoreline habitats in an undisturbed state were once common in Hawai'i but are now increasingly rare as a result of sustained development pressures. This category includes areas directly adjacent to the sea such as beach or dune communities and anchialine ponds where fresh and saltwater mix through underground connections. Sand beaches are increasingly threatened in all parts of Hawai'i as a result of resort, residential and recreational development, and human activities continue to impact the movement of sand and sustainability of shoreline habitats. Coastlines that possess natural vegetation such as naupaka kahakai (*Scaevola sericea*) and undisturbed dune vegetation are particularly rare. Retaining longer segments of undisturbed shoreline is essential to support long-term habitat viability and protect native coastal wildlife such as seabirds, migratory shorebirds, Hawaiian Monk seals and the green sea turtle.

Coastal wetland habitats in Hawai'i are diverse and many inter-tidal estuaries have been lost to agricultural development in the past and resort and residential development more recently. Sheltered coastal wetlands in Hawai'i support numerous unique plant and animal communities, and species dependent on Hawaiian estuaries are unusual in their ability to tolerate highly variable water quality conditions and significant sediment inputs. Upland freshwater wetlands in Hawai'i frequently grade into brackish estuarine systems and provide a mix of habitats that support native species such as the `ōpae `oeha'a (*Macrobrachium grandimanus*) which are estuarine-dependent for some portion of their lifecycle. Mullet, milkfish and nehu are locally important marine species that also rely on inter-tidal brackish areas, and coastal lagoons provide essential habitat for a wide range of shorebirds and other wetland fauna. Coastal wetlands provide prey

organisms for many marine species inhabiting coral reef and other offshore habitats, and their role in maintaining nearshore water quality is underappreciated. The buffering capacity of coastal wetlands protects coral reefs and other nearshore marine habitats from a variety of negative impacts such as sedimentation, turbidity, and freshwater inputs produced by heavy rains.



Kawainui Marsh, Windward O`ahu

Adjacent coastal upland habitats have not been exposed to the same level of development pressure as shorelines in Hawai'i, but these areas are also considered prime development sites. From an ecological perspective, adjacent uplands play both a direct and an indirect role in coastal conservation. Upland areas directly support a wide range of coastal flora and fauna, and also act as buffer zones that protect shoreline and wetland habitats. Intact upland riparian habitats can also limit the production of non-point source pollutants that can severely degrade coastal water quality. Quite simply, healthy shorelines and wetlands require healthy adjacent uplands, and this concept is at the core of the ahupua'a resource management system. Although adjacent upland habitats are relatively less

threatened by development in the State of Hawai'i, intact areas can be considered as potential project sites on the basis of the important role these lands play as buffer zones protecting shoreline or wetland communities.

4.2 Conservation Values

A consideration of conservation values is important because limited funds are available for land acquisition and protection efforts must be concentrated on areas with the highest values. In a general sense, conservation value relates to the potential of any individual coastal land parcel to protect biodiversity as an individual entity or in combination with adjoining conservation lands such as natural area reserves, national parks, State parks, local protected areas or marine protected areas (MPA). The conservation significance of proposed projects can be determined by characterizing of sites as undisturbed habitat, core habitat, buffer zones, or in terms of connectivity to other important habitats.

Relatively few larger stretches of **undisturbed habitat** in coastal areas remain in Hawai'i, and these lands possess substantial conservation significance for the purposes of the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*. Lands that represent **core habitats** for rare or endangered coastal fauna such as native seabirds, sea turtles, Hawaiian Monk seal or vegetation communities such as the coastal dry shrublands are a priority as a result of the immediate need to protect these areas. Coastal lands situated immediately adjacent to undisturbed or core habitats can serve as **buffer zones**. Although buffer zones represent lower conservation values than undisturbed or core habitats, ecological benefits associated with these areas include providing a physical barrier to encroachment on core habitats, providing protection from storm damage, reducing edge effects, and improving the protection of highly mobile or migratory species. Upland buffer zones can provide benefits from a water quality perspective as limiting

the input of pollutants to freshwater streams can positively impact coastal waters. Lands that provide **connectivity** to existing protected areas in shoreline or adjacent coastal areas also possess conservation significance. Improving connectivity can reduce habitat fragmentation and therefore enhance the preservation of biodiversity within the coastal environment.

4.3 Cultural Values

Although cultural values are not the focus of land conservation proposals developed under the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*, sites associated with pre-contact Hawai'i and the Hawaiian kingdom are commonly found in coastal areas and the preservation of these resources is extremely important to native and non-native Hawaiian communities. Traditional and customary practices of Native Hawaiians are specifically enumerated and protected under the Hawai'i State Constitution (Article 12, Section 7). Cultural values may include, but are not limited to, lands used by native Hawaiians for traditional practices such as hula, areas for medicinal gathering, religious or spiritual sites, landscape features, and areas used for traditional gathering activities. The preservation of Hawaiian cultural values is certainly compatible with the ecological conservation objectives of the CELCP, and the protection of these resources by fee simple purchase or through conservation easements can only enhance the overall potential of any proposed conservation site. Given this broad compatibility of ecological and cultural conservation goals within coastal areas of Hawai'i, the CELCP may provide opportunities to support the development of uniquely Hawaiian approaches to coastal conservation.



4.4 Recreational Values

Coastal lands that are solely or primarily used for active recreation are not eligible for funding under the *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program*, but certain recreational activities are compatible and can continue if these do not compromise conservation or ecological values. For example, lands adjacent to existing marine recreation areas could be protected while ensuring continued access to water-based recreational activities such as outrigger canoeing, kayaking, surfing, scuba diving or snorkeling. Low-impact non-consumptive land-based recreational activities such as beach use, hiking, picnicking or birding could also be viewed as compatible with CELCP objectives and provide additional support for a proposed conservation site.



4.5 Aesthetic Values

Protecting open space and scenic vistas is an important objective of the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*, and the preservation of aesthetically pleasing coastlines is important to the Hawaiian economy which is highly dependent upon tourism. Hawai'i is justifiably famous for its scenic coastal corridors, and the aesthetic qualities of its coastline has created a desirable tourist destination. Although aesthetic values are of secondary concern to the national CELCP, almost any undeveloped coastal site in the State of Hawai'i will also possess important visual or aesthetic qualities. Aesthetic values can, therefore, play a highly supportive role when building the case for proposed conservation projects.

5.0 EXISTING SUPPORTIVE PLANS AND PROGRAMS

NOAA guidelines for the CELCP require State plans to "...make use of work that has already been done". With this directive in mind, the following information identifies existing national, State and local initiatives that share conservation objectives with the national program. The project proposal development process envisioned for the Hawai'i plan recognizes that a significant amount of effort that has already been dedicated to identifying priority conservation sites within the State of Hawai'i, and the following national, State, county and private initiatives represent potential partner programs or sources of information. This list is not intended to identify every plan or program associated with land conservation in the State of Hawai'i, but to outline key activities and possible relationships with existing conservation programs that are supportive of CELCP objectives. The following list provides a brief description of each plan or program and how these could potentially interact with the Hawai'i plan for the purpose of project site selection and proposal development.

5.1 Federal Government Plans and Programs

[United States Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program](#)

The mission of the United States Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Coastal Program is to identify "important coastal resource problems and solutions and develop partnerships for on-the-ground conservation in high priority coastal areas". The Coastal Program focuses its efforts in bays, estuaries and watersheds to conserve fish, wildlife and their habitats to support healthy coastal ecosystems. The program is guided by four goals: 1) serving coastal communities by providing assessment and planning tools to identify priority habitats that should be protected and restored; 2) conserving pristine coastal habitats through the support of locally-initiated conservation efforts; 3) restoring degraded coastal wetland, upland, and stream habitats by

working with partners to implement on-the-ground projects; and 4) focusing resources through conservation alliances that leverage the financial and technical resources of our partners and multiply the impact of the taxpayer's dollar. The USFWS Coastal Program focus on identifying priority habitats and creating partnerships for conservation purposes is consistent with the objectives of the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*, and existing USFWS Coastal Program projects may provide important information and partnerships for proposed Hawai'i conservation projects.

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program

The *Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act* established the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (NCWCGP) to acquire, restore and enhance wetlands in the coastal United States and the Trust Territories. This program is active in Hawai'i and has helped to protect or conserve several key wetland habitats within the State. The program shares similar conservation goals with the CELCP, and coastal wetland projects submitted under the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* should identify unprotected areas identified as high priorities sites by the NCWCGP or lands adjacent to existing NCWCGP projects.

Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program

The Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCR) is administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as a sub-account of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program. The primary focus of the program is to preserve, protect and restore wildlife through habitat management, population management, surveys, research, and public education. Administration at the State level is through the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources and its relation to the CELCP will be discussed in the section on State Government Plans and Programs.

Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is a federal program in partnership with state governments that supports local efforts to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands. Designed to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands, the FLP is an entirely voluntary program that focuses on the acquisition of whole or partial interest in property to maximize public benefits. The FLP assists states in the development and implementation of forest conservation plans. It encourages and supports the acquisition of conservation easements and other agreements that control land use without necessarily removing the property from private ownership. Most FLP conservation easements restrict development or require sustainable forestry practices to protect forest values. Although the FLP mainly focuses on upland areas, it does identify several coastal forest sites with significant conservation potential. These areas could potentially represent key habitat acquisitions or function as buffer zones that provide important habitat for certain species and limits downstream impacts on existing shoreline or estuarine conservation areas.



Nāpali Coast, Kauaʻi

5.2 State Government Plans and Programs

5.2.1 [Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program](#)

As lead agency for the purposes of the Hawai'i CELCP (see Section 6.1) the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program is responsible for both administration and integration of this plan with the objectives of Hawai'i's *Coastal Zone Management Act* and other existing coastal projects. Current initiatives that may interact with the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* include the Waianae Ecological Characterization Project, Coastal Hazards Initiatives, and the Ocean Resource Management Plan which are described below. The program also maintains the [Hawai'i Statewide GIS Program](#) that provides free online data and a simple mapping tool for viewing environmental, land use, zoning, and other socio-economic data for each county in the State of Hawai'i (see Appendix A).

[Waianae Ecological Characterization](#)

The Waianae Ecological Characterization is a groundbreaking attempt at managing cumulative and secondary environmental effects by creating a modern form of the ahupua'a land management system. This management approach seeks to enhance the effectiveness of the existing coastal zone program by administering management activities at the community level. The ahupua'a approach is broadly similar to watershed management in that it utilizes an ecological unit that encompasses an entire island watershed from mountains to the sea, but it also includes cultural and administrative components that are unique to Hawai'i. The HCZMP recognizes that ahupua'a management can increase public involvement in local watershed issues and provide communities with the opportunity to play a larger role in their own natural resource planning and management. As the concept develops and is applied to other ahupua'a, the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land*

Conservation Plan may represent a valuable partner for communities attempting to conserve coastal lands within their ahupua'a.

Coastal Hazards

Hawai'i's coastlines are threatened by a range of hazards ranging from erosion to lava inundation to tsunamis to subsidence, and hurricanes. Shoreline erosion is particularly relevant to the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* as this process could affect land purchased under the program over time. A series of special investigations have been prepared under the auspices of the HCZMP including the O`ahu Shoreline Study, Kaua`i Shoreline Erosion Management Study, Hawai'i Shoreline Erosion Management Study, Erosion Management Program Recommendations for Hawai'i, and Aerial Photograph Analysis of Coastal Erosion on the Islands of Kaua`i, Moloka`i, Lāna`i, Maui and Hawai'i. These reports provide information on beach management alternatives, critical erosion locations, and erosion trends that could be highly useful for proponents developing CELCP proposals in shoreline locations.

Ocean Resource Management Plan

The Hawai'i Ocean Resource Management Plan (ORMP) sets forth guiding principles and recommendations for achieving comprehensive and integrated ocean and coastal resources management. An update to the ORMP is currently underway (2006-2007) and will include recommendations for a new governance structure, a comprehensive management system, and a series of policies and implementing actions for ten resource sectors including coastal lands. The ORMP update will relate to the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* by providing State-wide guidance on the use of ocean and coastal resources and proponents should be aware of ORMP priorities.

5.2.2 Department of Land and Natural Resources

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) is responsible for the management of public and conservation lands in the State of Hawai'i. Given this responsibility the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* could potentially interact with numerous existing conservation programs administered by this department. A brief discussion of several important DLNR initiatives is provided below.

Natural Area Partnership Program

The Natural Area Partnership Program (NAPP) was established in 1991 by the State of Hawai'i Legislature and the Governor. It authorizes the DLNR to "provide State funds for the management of private lands dedicated to conservation". Lands and waters that qualify for the program include areas with intact native Hawaiian ecosystems, essential habitat for endangered species, and Conservation District lands within the State's protective (P) sub-zone land use designation. The NAPP can provide cost-sharing support for a wide range of management activities to protect, restore or enhance significant native natural resources, and significant potential exists to integrate this program with the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* to maximize overall conservation benefits within the State.

Hawai'i Natural Area Reserve System

The Natural Area Reserves System (NARS) is administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife. The reserve system is based on the concept of protecting ecosystems, not just single species, and includes a diverse array of habitats including marine and coastal environments, lava flows, tropical rainforests, and alpine deserts. Management and control of non-native plants and animals that threaten natural biota in the reserves is a priority of the NARS. As with the

Natural Areas Partnership Program, the integration of the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* and NARS objectives could maximize overall conservation benefits and a strong linkage between the two programs is encouraged. In particular, lands adjacent to existing NARS could provide valuable buffer areas for these significant ecological reserve areas.

Hawai'i Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy

The recently completed Hawai'i Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) can play a collaborative role with the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*. This document was prepared as a condition of State participation in the USFWS Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program and was completed in October 2005. This strategy provides a thorough review of current wildlife and habitat conservation issues in the State of Hawai'i and provides an exhaustive review of existing conservation agencies and programs. The CWCS also provides a valuable inventory of animal species in greatest conservation need and their associated habitats for all the major Hawaiian islands. Additionally the CWCS identifies land areas on each island that are not protected, but are considered to possess high conservation potential. This comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy represents a critical data source for CELCP project proponents who should refer to this information during the proposal preparation stage. Proponents that build upon the complimentary nature of the CWCS and the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* will produce proposals that focus on protecting high quality coastal habitat and the threatened species that depend upon these areas.

Hawai'i Statewide Aquatic Wildlife Conservation Strategy

The Hawai'i Statewide Aquatic Wildlife Conservation Strategy (SAWCS) is based on the CWCS and was jointly developed by the Division of Forestry

and Wildlife and the Division of Aquatic Resources. The purpose of the program is to develop a comprehensive planning process for aquatic resource managers that recognizes the unique needs of Hawai'i's aquatic species. CELCP proposals that recognize and attempt to integrate with both the SWAWCS and the CWCS will maximize conservation benefits and insure that nearshore aquatic species and ecosystems are protected.

Watershed Partnership Program

Watershed partnerships are voluntary alliances of public and private landowners in Hawai'i committed to the common goal of protecting larger forested areas for water recharge and other values. Eight watershed partnerships have been established covering more than 200,000 acres and others are in the works. Existing watershed partnerships include: East and West Maui, Ko`olau on O`ahu, Lāna`i Hale and East Moloka`i, Leeward Haleakalā, `Ōla`a Kīlauea, and Kaua`i. Other projects have focused on alien species control and fencing, but these partnerships have been allocated limited funding at this point in time. Although the Watershed Partnership Program mainly focuses on upland (Mauka) areas, this program is linked to coastal lands through management of Streamside Management Zones (SMZs). Conservation of riparian lands and vegetation is critical to the long-term preservation of coastal ecosystems receiving runoff from upland areas. In cases where upland management is key to the maintenance of coastal environmental quality, a linkage between the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan* and the Watershed Partnership Program could take the form of a proposal to protect riparian buffer zones.

5.2.3 Hawai'i Legacy Lands Act

Act 156 (Legacy Lands Act) was passed by the Hawai'i State Legislature in 2005 and establishes a permanent, dedicated funding source for land conservation and the preservation of open space and scenic

resources in Hawai'i. Specific projects eligible for funding can include: coastal preservation, parks, habitat protection, watershed protection, flood prevention, cultural preservation and agricultural production. The State's conveyance tax will provide funding of the program's annual budget (approximately \$36 million) with ten percent being directed into a Legacy Lands Fund. This fund will be administered by the State DLNR and lands will be acquired on the basis of recommendations from a State advisory group. Twenty-five percent of the program's annual budget (\$9 million per year) will be allocated to the Natural Area Reserve Fund to assist the Natural Area Reserve System in managing and protecting critical habitat, endangered species and valuable cultural resources on publicly owned and ceded lands. The Legacy Lands Fund represents a potential source of matching funds for conservation proposals developed under the CELCP, and could also support long-term management activities on lands acquired under the program.

5.3 County Government Plans and Programs

County General Plans are developed by each of Hawai'i's four counties to guide local land use decisions, to communicate local land development and conservation objectives, and manage development concerns. Given the focus on individual properties within proposals prepared under the CELCP, community plans developed by each county to address local planning issues are likely to be of more relevance. Both the General Plans and Community Development Plans are potentially useful sources of information concerning land ownership and zoning for project proponents, and links to these documents in each of Hawai'i's four counties are located in Appendix B.

County governments in the State of Hawai'i have also created several specific natural resource preservation programs that are of particular relevance to the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*. The

[Kaua'i Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation Fund Commission](#) is responsible for preparing an annual report and recommendations for Kaua'i Council that guides the use of county funds for the acquisition of lands or interest in lands with important conservation attributes. A similar program is also in place on the Island of Hawai'i where the [Hawai'i County Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation Commission](#) is responsible for developing a prioritized list of lands worthy of preservation. Maui County has taken a slightly different path to administering their Open Space, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, and Scenic Views Preservation Fund. Maui County has worked closely with local private conservation groups on identifying coastal conservation objectives and successfully completing several smaller coastal conservation projects in recent years. The county is also taking a similar approach on larger future initiatives such as the [Pali-to-Puamana Coastal Parkway](#). The City and County of Honolulu has developed a proposed charter amendment in 2006 to set aside one-half percent of real property tax revenues on an annual basis to protect coastal areas, watersheds, drinking water sources, native forests, agricultural lands, parks and recreation areas, open space, cultural and historic sites. The protection of significant scenic values, natural areas and public access to shoreline areas on the island of O'ahu is also guided by the preparation of local [Sustainable Communities Plans](#). All of the initiatives described above provide valuable community input on local land conservation priorities and represent potential sources of local matching funds for property acquisitions proposals developed under the CELCP.

5.4 Private Conservation Organizations

Private organizations are extremely active on conservation projects within Hawai'i and frequently play a pivotal role in the acquisition and management of coastal conservation sites. For this reason a list of private

conservation groups that have been active in coastal land conservation or have participated in recent CELCP funded projects is provided below.

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is one of the largest and most active conservation organizations in the country. The Hawai'i Chapter's mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life in the state by protecting the lands and waters needed to survive. TNC Hawai'i has worked together with its members and conservation partners to help protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i. TNC Hawai'i is currently working on projects on all of the state's major islands, and provides public outreach services and volunteer opportunities throughout the state.

The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national, nonprofit organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural areas, and other natural places to ensure livable communities for generations to come. TPL has been instrumental in establishing many new conservation areas in Hawai'i, including CELCP funded projects such as Honu'apo on the island of Hawai'i, Mū'olea Point on Maui, and the Pūpūkea-Paumalū site on O'ahu. TPL has also provided important financial support for holding properties off the market while State, county and private funds are raised for purchase.

Maui Coastal Land Trust

The Maui Coastal Land Trust's mission is to acquire, preserve, and protect coastal lands in Maui Nui (the islands comprising Maui County) for the integrity of the natural environment and the enjoyment of current and future generations. The organization has been instrumental in establishing

important coastal conservation projects including the CELCP funded Waihe'e Coastal Dunes and Wetlands Reserve.

Kaua'i Public Land Trust

The Kaua'i Public Land Trust (KPLT) was founded in 1988 and actively pursues conservation goals on the island of Kaua'i through purchases, conservation easements, or outright gifts. KPLT has been successful in securing lands for long term conservation purposes and has recently participated in the CELCP funded Kīlauea Bay property. The parcel was secured through a public-private sector partnership for addition to the adjacent Kīlauea National Wildlife Refuge.

North Shore Community Land Trust

The North Shore Community Land Trust (NSCLT) is a nonprofit land trust that protects the special natural areas of the north shore of O'ahu through voluntary land conservation. Their most recent and highly publicized activity was the major role they have played in securing the funds for acquisition of the 1,129 acre Pūpūkea-Paumalū parcel adjacent to O'ahu's famous north shore beach areas.

Hawai'i Island Land Trust

The Hawai'i Island Land Trust (HILT) seeks to facilitate the preservation and stewardship of open space, environmentally sensitive lands, and culturally significant areas for present and future generations. Though the group is relatively new (it was formed in 2002) it functions in much the same manner as the Maui Coastal Land Trust and the Kaua'i Public Land Trust.

Office of Hawaiian Affairs

As the official representative agency for indigenous Hawaiians, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) invests significant resources in programs, services and advocacy for benefit of the Native Hawaiian community. OHA programs are wide ranging (including education, culture, governance, planning, historic preservation, and economic development) and recent OHA involvement in land conservation purposes include CELCP funded projects such as the Mū'olea Point project on Maui, and the recently completed purchase of the 25,855-acre Wao Kele O Puna parcel on the island of Hawai'i.

Historic Hawai'i Foundation

The Historic Hawai'i Foundation is a private, nonprofit statewide organization dedicated to the preservation of historic and archaeological sites, objects and cultural traditions of the state. Historic Hawai'i Foundation has become the leading advocate for preservation, heritage education and cultural tourism in Hawai'i, and is actively engaged in statewide preservation efforts. It presents a powerful, visible and diverse force encouraging respect for the history and cultural heritage of the Hawaiian Islands.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

6.1 State Lead Agency

NOAA guidelines require a State lead agency to be responsible for soliciting qualified conservation proposals, reviewing these documents for completeness, prioritizing proposals according to State criteria, and nominating qualified projects to the national competition. This model assumes substantial control at the State agency level, but significant flexibility exists with respect to the relationship between the lead agency and local partners. A consensus was reached at the initial meeting of the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Committee* that the lead agency for the purposes of administering the CELCP in Hawai'i would be the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program. The program is situated within the Office of Planning in the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, and was created in 1977 through the passage of Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 205A. The Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program operates within a framework of cooperation among federal, State and local agencies and public advisory groups to address coastal issues and uphold environmental law through a variety of regulatory and non-regulatory techniques.

6.2 Agencies And Organizations Eligible to Hold Land Title

NOAA can make financial awards to the lead agency in the State of Hawai'i for the purposes of implementing the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*. The lead agency can then allocate grants or make sub-awards to other State agencies or local governments as defined under 15 CFR 24.3 or entities eligible for assistance under section 306A(e) of the CZMA (16 USC 1455a(e)). NOAA can also make grants directly available to any of these eligible entities at its discretion and in consultation with the lead agency to expedite completion of an approved project. Only State or

local governmental agencies are eligible to hold title to lands acquired under the existing program guidelines unless directed by Congress, and designated entities will hold title to the land (or interests in land) in perpetuity. Eligible organizations in Hawai'i include State agencies such as the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, various divisions located within the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and individual local government agencies such as any county or municipal government. NOAA can award CELCP grants to a person, private organization, non-profit entity, or non-governmental group with congressional approval, and revisions that would enhance its ability to make this type of award are under consideration. If approved these changes would allow non-governmental organizations such as 501(c)(3) non-profit groups to submit project proposals, receive financial awards and hold title under the competitive element of the CELCP.

6.3 Eligible and Ineligible Use of Program Funds

The purpose of CELCP is to acquire properties or interests in properties from willing sellers, and the terms and conditions of the acquisition must ensure that the property will be administered for conservation purposes in perpetuity. Activities consistent with program objectives include: resource protection, restoration and enhancement, recreation, research and education. To be eligible for funding a project must:

- be located in a coastal or estuarine area deemed eligible within an approved state *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*,
- meet criteria outlined in the national CELCP guidelines,
- match federal program funds with non-federal funds at a ratio of 1:1,

- be held in public or approved private ownership (fee simple or conservation easements),
- provide conservation in perpetuity, and
- provide access to the general public as appropriate and consistent with protection of project lands.

Each project must also develop a strategy for long-term stewardship that identifies the entity or entities responsible for on-going conservation management. Activities inconsistent with program objectives include: agriculture, aquaculture, shoreline armoring, construction of most roads, buildings or facilities (except to support conservation activities) and active recreation facilities. The federal share of program funds cannot be used for funding long-term operations, maintenance or management of land, construction (buildings, boat launches, docks or piers) shoreline armoring, or other acquisitions that completely restrict access. Acquisitions are not allowed for the sole purpose of complying with habitat mitigation requirements resulting from agency, corporate or individual actions, or for the primary purpose of enforcing fish, wildlife, or other regulations. Land acquisitions for active recreation such as sports facilities, water parks or playgrounds are not allowed. Federal funds, funds previously used or proposed for use to match another federal grant, and mitigation funds are not allowable sources of matching funds for program purposes.

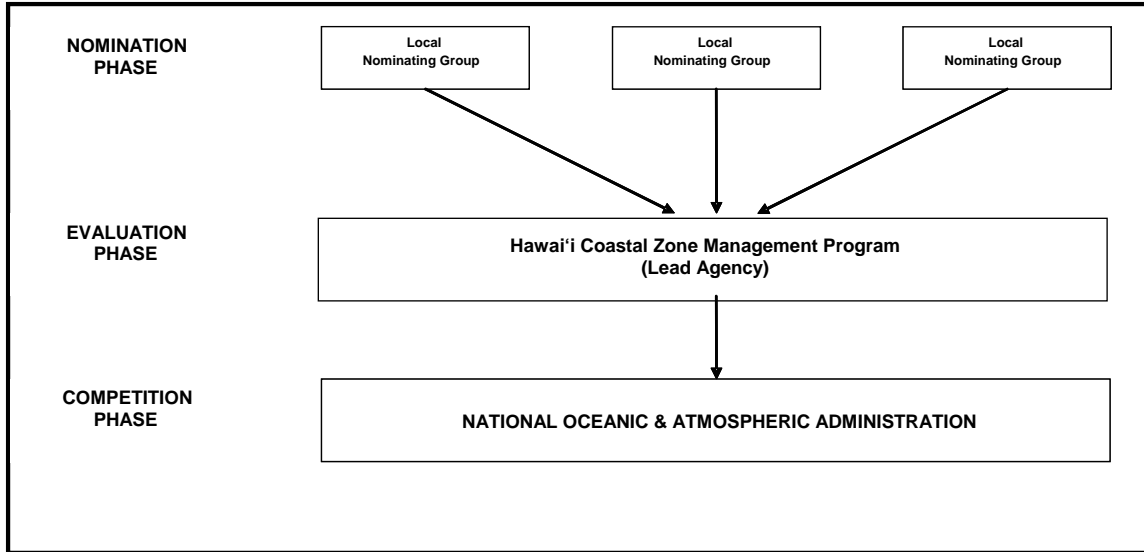
6.4 Project Review Process

Two models were discussed at the first meeting of the Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Committee on November 30, 2005 to facilitate the project review process at the State level. The first option was a "lead agency" model where the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program would both receive and review proposed projects.

Potential benefits of the “lead agency” model could include program consistency and the availability of State resources to support the evaluation of proposals. Drawbacks of this approach could include reduced local support for project applicants and the potential loss of an opportunity to enhance coastal land conservation within local land use planning processes.

The second option for project evaluation was “local” model with each county taking the responsibility for reviewing and subsequently nominating projects that would be forwarded to the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program for nomination to the national competition. Benefits associated with the “local” model could include enhanced local participation in the program and the potential for improved integration of coastal land conservation into local land use planning systems. Potential drawbacks could include the availability of adequate county staff and resources to manage the annual review of CELCP project proposals.

After a discussion of the relative merits of each approach with the *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Committee*, it was agreed that the “lead agency” model was preferred. Project proposals developed by local partners would be forwarded prior to a specified deadline to the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program for evaluation and ranking. State agencies such as the DLNR and county agencies are expected to work closely with local partners such as *The Nature Conservancy*, *The Maui Coastal Land Trust*, and *Trust For Public Land* to prepare high quality proposals that would be submitted to the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program for review prior to their consideration for submission to the national competition.



Relationship Between the Lead Agency and CELCP Partners

6.4.1 Project Solicitation

The Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program will solicit CELCP proposals after notification from NOAA that funds are available for projects under the competitive grants program. A list of agencies, organizations or individuals interested in coastal land conservation should be developed to facilitate these solicitations, and application instructions should be developed using information contained in this plan. Application instructions should describe the CELCP guidelines, applicant and project eligibility criteria, project information requirements, and the proposal review process. A contact list of State and local government staff or private organizations familiar with the CELCP and proposal development should also be included in the solicitation to assist new participants in successfully completing the application process.

6.4.2 Project Submission and Evaluation

All project proposals received by the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program prior to the specified submission deadline will be

assessed for completeness and compliance with the CELCP eligibility criteria. Proposals will also be reviewed to insure the mandatory existence of a willing seller and existing property owners must understand any conservation restrictions or easement concepts being proposed. The appropriateness of designated matching funds will be assessed to insure that these are reasonable, available within the performance period, and consistent with CELCP guidelines that recognize cash contributions, donated land or land value from properties with similar coastal or estuarine attributes, or in-kind services such as restoration. Incomplete proposals or applications that do not meet program eligibility criteria will not be included in the project evaluation process as described below. Applicants will be notified in writing of a negative determination as soon as possible, and this notification should describe proposal deficiencies to allow applicants to re-submit if the solicitation has not closed.

Prior to the proposal submission closing date has passed, the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program will nominate and assemble a *Peer Review Committee* to be charged with the evaluation and ranking of all acceptable proposals submitted to the open round of CELCP competitive funding. The *Peer Review Committee* should include members from relevant State and county agencies, resource managers, and from local land conservation groups, but in no case should any individual directly associated with a current proposal be included to avoid conflict of interest. Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program staff should provide the review committee with copies of each proposal and specific instructions regarding review criteria, scoring and ranking. Committee members will then assess the merits of each proposal individually and score projects based on the evaluation guidance outlined in Section 7.0 of this document. All evaluation decisions must be based solely on information contained in the written project proposals submitted by applicants.

After committee members have completed their individual assessments, the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program will convene a meeting of the full *Peer Review Committee* at its offices in Honolulu. At this meeting the review committee members will discuss their individual assessments, address any inconsistencies or errors, and attempt to develop a consensus ranking of the proposals under consideration. If a consensus ranking cannot be agreed upon by the *Peer Review Committee* at this meeting, project proposals will be ranked according to the combined total point awarded by each individual reviewer. In either case, a ranked list of all proposals from highest to lowest and a copy of all evaluation comments will be forwarded to the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program which will certify the evaluation process and final results.

6.4.3 Selection for the National Competition

After the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program has certified the recommendations of the *Peer Review Committee*, ranked project proposals and all necessary supporting materials will be forwarded to NOAA for the CELCP national competition. The Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program may forward the single highest ranked proposal or any number of proposals based on NOAA guidelines and the amount of funding allocated to the competitive grants program for the relevant fiscal year. Applicants selected to proceed to the national competition will be notified and instructed to provide any additional information required to support their proposals.

7.0 GUIDANCE FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

As outlined in Section 3.0 and Section 4.0 of this plan, all lands within Hawai'i are deemed eligible for CELCP funding, but priority is allotted to ecologically significant shoreline habitats, coastal wetlands, and adjacent coastal upland areas that can be effectively managed and advance the goals or priorities of land conservation programs currently operating within Hawai'i. The evaluation guidance provided below supports the emphasis on specific coastal habitats and reflects criteria used by NOAA to rank project proposals at the CELCP national competition. Resource values represent the most important single criteria in the evaluation guidance, but technical and scientific merit, qualifications of the applicant, and project costs are also considered. These evaluation criteria are intended to be used by the *Peer Review Committee* (described in Section 6.4.2) during its evaluation of project proposals, and provide the basis for ranking proposals in terms of overall conservation merit. Financial aspects are also considered during the preliminary review of proposed projects conducted by the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program after submission.

I) Project Resource Values (55 out of 110 points)

Ecological Values (25 points)

Referees must assign priority to projects containing shoreline habitats, coastal wetlands, and adjacent coastal upland areas (as defined in Section 4.1 of this document) during their consideration of ecological values. Referees will evaluate the degree that projects contain intact natural habitats and examples of exceptional species diversity, should consider the occurrence of federal or State-listed threatened or endangered species and whether native or endemic species are represented on the site. Lands that possess intact ecological values are favored over areas that require significant restoration or remediation. Projects that provide core habitat for

rare or endangered coastal species, or serve as buffer zones for adjacent conservation areas should be ranked above projects that do not provide these benefits. Other conservation values to consider include the ability of a proposed project to provide connective habitats, corridors, habitat linkages and other means of reducing biological isolation. The presence of invasive or exotic species should be minimal or capable of being managed. Coastal erosion is an increasingly serious concern in Hawai'i, and proposals that include shoreline habitat must provide an evaluation of the potential impacts of coastal erosion on the long-term conservation of project lands. Referees must specifically consider:

- the type, quality and area of habitat types found on the proposed project site;
- the regional ecological importance of the proposed project site in terms of protecting species diversity providing ecological connections or linkages among other important coastal and estuarine conservation areas;
- how acquisition of the site will help establish corridors or linkages among areas of significant conservation, ecological, recreational or aesthetic values that are already protected;
- the potential success of restoration plans for the site if existing ecological values are impaired (e.g., the existence of invasive or exotic species or alterations such as dikes, agricultural and silvicultural land uses);
- how the habitat supports (or may support) federal or State listed threatened species, endangered species, or species of concern.

Conservation Values (10 points)

Referees should consider whether a project represents a keystone acquisition within a larger conservation plan or if the project directly supports the priorities and objectives of any other county, State or federal land conservation initiative. The evaluation of conservation values must consider the ability of proposed projects to protect biodiversity as a individual entity or in combination with adjoining conservation lands such as natural area reserves, national parks, State parks, sanctuaries or marine protected areas. Surrounding land uses should be compatible with long-term conservation of the site's resource values. Referees must specifically consider how the property fits within any larger conservation strategy, comprehensive coastal zone management plan, or watershed protection initiative; and whether the project exhibits a mix of ecological, recreation, historic and aesthetic values that together contribute important benefits to the coastal and estuarine environment not provided by those values individually.

Cultural Values (10 points)

Referees must evaluate whether proposed project sites include the presence of a registered archeological site or the documented use of lands by native Hawaiians for traditional and customary activities. Also of significance are areas used by traditional practitioners, religious or spiritual sites that contain petroglyphs, heiau or pu'u honua, landscape features held sacred by the Hawaiian people, and coastal areas used for traditional gathering activities. Referees must recognize features that are designated or could be nominated as a National Historical Landmark or listed on the National Register of Historic Places or a State or Local Register of Historic places. The potential existence of cultural, historical or archaeological features that have not been formally evaluated or documented must also be considered.

Recreation and Aesthetic Values (10 points)

The evaluation of aesthetic values must consider the contribution a proposed project site makes to the aesthetic character of surrounding areas, or the existence of vistas that complement existing scenic byway, trail or viewshed programs. Project sites that are within the viewshed of populated areas, visible from heavily utilized roadways, or identified as a scenic resource by a tourism or community land use plan should also be considered to possess significant aesthetic values. With respect to recreation values, referees must evaluate whether the proposed project site provides public access to coastal areas or opportunities for low-impact non-consumptive land-based recreational activities such as beach use, hiking, picnicking, nature study or birding. Lands adjacent to existing marine recreation areas also possess recreational values by providing access to water-based activities such as outrigger canoeing, kayaking, surfing, scuba diving or snorkeling. Referees must specifically consider whether the proposed project supports existing or potential recreational access needs identified in any State, county or community plan.

II) Technical and Scientific Merit (25 out of 110 points)

Long-Term Management and Use (15 points)

Evaluation of the long-term management plan must consider how the proposed project site will be maintained or improved in the future. This will include the suitability of rehabilitation or enhancement strategies required to restore ecological, conservation, cultural, recreation and aesthetic values. Referees must assess whether the property is currently in the desired state for its intended conservation purpose, and if surrounding land uses are compatible with the long-term conservation of site values (as defined by existing development plans or land use designation). The proposed management plan must be evaluated to assure that it is technically sound

and possesses innovative strategies for achieving conservation goals. Other factors to consider include whether the management plan provides for the continuation of traditional Hawaiian practices or customs that are consistent with conservation objectives, if funding has been secured for proposed restoration activities, and whether identified public or private sector partners are willing to provide long-term management support.

Threat of Conversion (5 points)

Referees will consider the degree that the property is threatened by conversion from its existing state to uses which are inconsistent with the long-term conservation of existing ecological and conservation values. A significant threat of conversion is represented by the existence of an approved development plan or a standing offer to purchase the property for non-conservation purposes. A moderate threat of conversion could involve the property being situated in close proximity to other development activity or the property being listed for sale. A low threat of conversion could entail a lack of development approvals, local development trends that do not indicate a significant impending threat, or sites that are not readily developable because of physical factors such as the presence of steep slopes or access issues.

Project Readiness (5 points)

Project readiness will be evaluated by considering the likelihood that a proposed project can be completed during the identified performance award period. This assessment will include factors such as whether the proposed site is on the market, the stage of discussions with a willing seller, or the existence of a purchase or sale agreement. Assessment should be supported by documentation such as an appraisal or title opinion. Referees should also consider whether the site possesses any uncertainties or encumbrances such as liens, easements, litigations or judgments that are not likely to be

resolved within the proposed award performance period, or if the site has any history of contamination or other environmental hazard that must be resolved prior to purchase.

III) Qualifications of the Applicant (10 out of 110 points)

Referees must consider whether the applicant possesses the capacity and experience to execute the proposed land transaction and manage the property in a manner consistent with the long-term conservation of identified resource values. Factors to consider include the applicant's success with previous land conservation projects or long-term resource stewardship initiatives, and whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities and administrative resources to accomplish the proposed project. The applicant will be evaluated in terms of their capacity to complete the acquisition and manage property consistent with CELCP guidelines and State coastal zone management policies.

IV) Project Cost (20 out of 110 points)

The proposed project budget will be evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and the award timeframe. The source of non-federal matching funds must be consistent with CELCP guidelines and likely to be available within the performance period. Requested direct and indirect costs for implementation of the project must be consistent with CELCP guidelines, and administrative costs associated with executing the land transaction (e.g., appraisals or title opinions) must be reasonable. Funds allocated for salaries and fringe benefits can be only be allocated for personnel directly involved in implementing the proposed project. The evaluation of project costs must specifically consider:

- how direct land acquisition costs were estimated and if this was based on an independent appraisal or other assessment of fair market value;
- the source of matching funds and whether these are in the form of cash, in-kind contribution, donated land, or other land values (e.g., easements);
- whether matching funds are currently available or expected to be available within the award performance period;
- the suitability of any property proposed as a match for the federal share of funds (defined by the values that the property contributes, suitability of acquired legal rights, and basis of the purchase price);
- the appropriateness of any administrative costs, grants or in-kind services associated with the matching funds; and
- the viability of the proposed project if funding from other sources did not become available within the award performance period.



8.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

A *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Committee* was organized to advise the authors of this document and the lead agency (Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program) on the preparation of the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*. The committee includes representatives from:

- each of the four County Planning Departments,
- private land conservation organizations,
- a respected Native Hawaiian Practitioner,
- Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program,
- State Department of Land and Natural Resources,



Public participation and inter-agency cooperation was built through Advisory Committee meetings, a website specifically devoted to the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan*, and public presentations in each of the four counties. These presentations were arranged in consultation with advisory committee members, and for the most part, coincided with public meetings of Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation Commissions within each county. This strategy was used to build agency and public knowledge of the *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program* and to draw upon the shared goals and interests of this project and these public commissions. A list of the *Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Committee* members is provided in Appendix C and public consultation events are outlined in Appendix D.

APPENDIX A: COASTAL DATA RESOURCES

The [Hawai'i Statewide GIS Program](#) is located in the State Office of Planning in the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. This office leads a multi-agency effort to establish, promote, and coordinate the use of geographic information systems (GIS) technology among Hawai'i State Government agencies. The State Office of Planning is responsible for planning and coordinating activities that are critical to the State's enterprise GIS. The primary goal of the Statewide GIS Program is to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness in government decision-making. The site contains free online GIS data and mapping tools for viewing environmental data for each county in the State of Hawai'i. The Statewide GIS Program can locate coastal land parcels containing native, threatened and endangered species, as well as key wetland areas in areas zoned for development. This program also offers downloadable GIS data that identifies information such as land use and zoning within each county.

Public Data on [I-Map Hawai'i](#) (an easy to use online map viewer)

[All Downloadable Data Layers](#)

[Coastal and Marine Data](#)

[Natural Resource and Environmental Data](#)

[Political Boundaries and Administrative Data](#)

APPENDIX B: COUNTY AND COMMUNITY PLANS

County General Plans

[Kaua'i General Plan](#)

[O`ahu General Plan](#)

[Maui General Plan](#)

[Hawai'i General Plan](#)

Community Plans

[City and County of Honolulu Sustainable Communities Plans](#)

[Maui County Community Plans](#)

[Hawai'i County Regional And Community Plans](#)

[Kaua'i County Planning](#)

APPENDIX C: HAWAI'I ADVISORY COMMITTEE (as of 9/06)

Thorne Abbott
Maui County Planning Department
Wailuku, Maui

Dr. Gary Blaich
Kaua`i Public Land Trust
Kīlauea, Kaua`i

Dr. Dale Bonar
Maui Coastal Land Trust
Wailuku, Maui

Dave Caylor
Kaua`i County Planning Department
Līhu'e, Kaua`i

Scott Derrickson
State of Hawai'i Office of Planning
Honolulu, O`ahu

Alice Kawaha
Hawai`i County Planning Department
Hilo, Hawai`i

Sam Lemmo
Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands
State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources
Honolulu, O`ahu

Art Challacombe
City and County of Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting
Honolulu, O`ahu

Hannah Kihalani Springer
Hawaiian Native Cultural Practitioner
Ka`ūpūlehu, Hawai`i

Josh Stanbro
Trust for Public Land
Honolulu, O`ahu

APPENDIX D: PUBLIC MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS

Wednesday, November 30, 2005

Hawai'i Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan Advisory Committee Meeting
State Office of Planning
Honolulu, O`ahu

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Public presentation at a meeting of the Kaua'i County Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation Fund Commission
Lihu'e Civic Center
Lihu'e, Kaua'i

Friday, May 26, 2006

Presentation to Maui County planning staff and the general public
Conference Room # 219 at One Main Plaza
Wailuku, Maui

Tuesday, May 30, 2006

Public presentation at a meeting of the Hawai'i County Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation Commission
Hilo Lagoon Center
Hilo, Hawai'i

Tuesday, May 30, 2006

Meeting with Land and Asset Management staff
Parker Ranch
Waimea, Hawai'i

Wednesday, May 31, 2006

Presentation to Hawai'i County planning staff and the general public
Mayor's Conference Room at Hanama Place
Hilo, Hawai'i

Wednesday, June 30, 2006

Presentation to City and County of Honolulu staff
Department of Permitting & Planning Offices
Honolulu, O`ahu