

IMPLEMENTATION
COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN (CMP)
NATIVE HAWAIIAN CULTURAL RESOURCES

CR – 9

A management policy for the culturally appropriateness of building ahu or “stacking of rocks” will need to be developed by Kahu Kū Mauna who may consider similar policies adopted by Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park

I. STATUTES AND ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Conservation Districts Administrative Rules (HAR 13-5)

§13-5-2 Definitions

“Land use” means:

The placement or erection of any solid material on land if that material remains on the land more than thirty days, or which causes a permanent change in the land area on which it occurs.

The grading, removing, harvesting, dredging, mining, or extraction of any material or natural resource on land;

The subdivision of land; or

The construction, reconstruction, demolition, or alteration of any structure, building, or facility on land.

Natural Area Reserve Policy (HAR 13-209)

§13-209-4 Definitions

It is prohibited:

To remove, damage, or disturb any geological or paleontological features or substance;

To engage in any construction or improvement;

Historic Preservation (HRS 6E)

§6E-11 Penalties

“It shall be a civil and administrative violation for any person to take, appropriate, excavate, injure, destroy or alter any historic property or

aviation artifact located upon lands owned or controlled by the State or any of its political subdivisions, except as permitted by the department....”

II. PROPOSED OMKM POLICY

The stacking of rocks, including the placement of rocks to form letters, or figures, is prohibited on the University’s managed lands on Mauna Kea, including the Mauna Kea Science Reserve, summit access road corridor, and mid-level facilities at Hale Pohaku. Stacked rocks not recorded in the archaeological inventory survey of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve or not considered historic will be removed.

III. DISCUSSION

Ahu are cultural features (defined as Native Hawaiian cultural features, see CR-7 of the CMP) and not simply the “stacking of rocks.” Ahu are culturally significant and have as their basis a Native Hawaiian traditional cultural practice with purpose and meaning. There is reason to believe that a large number of the single rock features and small concentrations of piled or stacked rocks on Mauna Kea are modern and that many were constructed by non-Hawaiian visitors in the last decade or so. (CMP, 2009)

The management policy for piling and stacking rocks could be similar to that recently instituted at Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park (Kubota 2005). A culturally trained staff person will be responsible for the culturally appropriate removal of rock piles that are made on Mauna Kea. Visitors to and users of Mauna Kea will be educated about the importance of preserving the cultural landscape, with particular attention to prohibitions on the piling and stacking of rocks. (CMP, 2009)

Legal consideration

A legal consideration is compliance with existing regulations. The University’s managed lands on Mauna Kea are classified Conservation District lands and fall under HAR 13-5 which governs land uses. Land uses are defined in the HAR and may be allowed depending on the type and subzone designation. One of the definitions of land use is the “placement or erection of any solid material on land if that material remains on the land more than thirty days, or which causes a permanent change in the land area on which it occurs”. Newly found stacks of rock that remain become permanent structures that change the land area.

Although rules governing the Mauna Kea Ice Age Natural Areas Reserves (NAR) do not apply to UH’s managed lands, the NAR is an integral part of the cultural landscape of Mauna Kea. OMKM recognizes the cultural landscape encompasses the NAR and UH’s managed lands and political boundaries should not be a reason for parceling the cultural landscape. Unlike the construction of cultural features, such as shrines and alters (refer to CR-7 of the CMP), OMKM agrees with the NAR rules which prohibits

engaging in construction or improvement and removing, damaging, or disturbing geological features or substance.

OMKM believes that the stacking of rocks is a widespread activity and has strayed from its original purpose such as their use as markers which have been replaced with trail boundaries/barriers and signs. While OMKM acknowledges the right of Native Hawaiians to practice and exercise traditional and customary practices, rock stacking appears to have become a ubiquitous activity that is no longer steeped with a cultural purpose but may instead be a result of copy cat behavior. Rock stacking appears to be more of a spontaneous activity versus the more deliberate construction of a cultural features such as a lele. Over the years OMKM rangers reported stacks of rocks appearing along the side of the road side and on the summit. Another example is the numerous lettering and designs made by the placement of rocks along the roadways in Kona.

Historic Sites

Pursuant to HRS 6E-11, it is a violation to injure, destroy or alter any historic property (an historic property includes, for example, any building, structure, object or site that is over fifty years old). The potential exists for the uninitiated to use rocks from an existing historic site to construct a new stack of rocks. A few years ago an OMKM ranger reported a new stack of rocks on the summit, which is designated and registered as a traditional cultural property (tcp) with the State Historic Preservation Division. Some of the rocks used for this new structure were taken from a nearby historic property which is also on SHPD's list of historic properties.

Preserving the cultural and natural landscape

As stated above there was a large number of "find spots" recorded during the archaeological inventory of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve. Most of those were stacks of rocks believed to be constructed by non Native Hawaiians and are now permanent features that dot the cultural landscape.

Seeing stacks of rocks can encourage others who do not understand the cultural purpose of ahu to engage in "copy cat" behavior.

ACTION:

The ubiquitous nature, the ease in stacking rocks, and the large number of them in the Mauna Kea Science Reserve, make it nearly impossible for OMKM to manage and control through a permitting process. The potential for further alteration to the landscape from the random and sudden appearance of stacked rocks is very high.

To comply with conservation district rules the OMKM policy is to prohibit the stacking of rocks including the placement of rock to form letters or figures.

- Stacked rocks which have the potential to be historic will be investigated by a qualified archaeologist or similar expert prior to removal. In consultation with Kahu Ku Mauna, ahu which are found to be historic will be added to the archaeological inventory and retained on the landscape.
- Stacked rocks that are not considered historic will be removed. Following the dismantling of the stack of rocks, the rocks will be placed in the vicinity where they are found.
- OMKM shall request a permit from DLNR to place signs with the symbol similar to the one designed by Volcanoes National Park indicating the stacking of rock is a prohibited activity.