

# **Protecting the Sacred Temple of Mauna Kea**



## ***BULLDOZERS STOPPED!!!***

**Several groups have filed for a Contested Case Hearing that will challenge NASA's application for a permit to begin construction.**

**DEMAND A PONO PROCESS  
NO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT ACCOUNTABILITY  
Letters to DLNR Chair and UH President are Needed NOW!**

## **Stand firm: NO EIS, NO PERMIT**

**National Aeronautics and Space Admin. (NASA) sought a permit to begin construction of 4-6 new telescopes on the summit of Mauna Kea. Several groups have requested a Contested Case Hearing on this permit in order to provide the Board of Land and Natural Resources with specific information on why NASA must complete cultural and environmental impact statements. We are currently waiting to hear if our request for this hearing will be granted.**

**Mauna Kea is a sacred temple that houses the origins of life in Hawai'i. Cultural resources and access are threatened by the expansion of the telescope industry. Mauna Kea is also home to highly unique and fragile ecosystems, including endangered species—and a key source of groundwater for the Big Island. We must insist that Native Hawaiian cultural rights are protected and that there is adequate protection of our fragile public trust resources.**

## **The Sacred Temple**

- The summit of Mauna Kea resides in Wao Akua—the realm of Akua—the realm of Creator. It is the sacred temple of the Supreme Being. Mauna Kea is home to Na Akua (the divine deities), Na `Aumakua (the divine ancestors) and the meeting place of Papa (Earth Mother) and Wakea (Sky Father)—progenitors of Na Kanaka Maoli.
- Mauna Kea holds the burial grounds of the highest born and most sacred ancestors. It is where the sacred waters of Kanekawaiola originate and where the waters to restore life and heal are harvested.
- Just as coral polyps are the origin of life that nourish the people, Mauna Kea is the origin of land that supports the birth of the people and defines their relationship to the heavens. It is said that Mauna Kea is the origin of space—where the sky and earth separated to form the great expanse of space and the heavenly realms.
- Mauna Kea serves as the zenith of the Hawaiian people’s ancestral connection to Creation and to the spirit of creation. The central role of Mauna Kea is affirmed in oral and written histories throughout Polynesia. These oral histories originated long before contact with western societies and pre-date modern science by Millennia.
- Mauna Kea summits are Crown lands, held in trust for Native Hawaiian people and as a public trust resource. A substantial portion of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve is a Natural Area Reserve, protecting endangered species and unique ecosystems.

## **NASA’s Expansion Plan, the 1st of Many**

UH Institute for Astronomy applied to DLNR on behalf of NASA's Outrigger Telescope project, for a Conservation District Use Permit (CDUA). Over 200 people attended the Board of Land and Natural Resources hearings in Kona and Hilo, providing about eight hours of public testimony opposing the permit.

The Mauna Kea Management Plan, developed by University of Hawaii (UH), was adopted by the UH Board of Regents in June 2000, in spite of broad and prolonged public opposition. The Mauna Kea Master Plan was considered to be a compromise and heralded as an overall *reduction* of telescope development on Mauna Kea. In reality, the Plan allows a minimum of 40 new telescopes and support structures to be built on the sacred mountain!!

## **There has been broad opposition to development of Mauna Kea for the past 30 years.**

Communities’ concerns are not put to rest by UH’s assertion that the new Mauna Kea Master Plan limits development on the summit. The original lease issued in 1968 allowed for the construction of “*one observatory and support structures*” to be built on Mauna Kea. UH skirted around the lease condition by claiming that additional telescopes were part of the original “support structures.” In addition, limits on astronomy development under the 1983 Master Plan failed miserably. Even though the 1983 Plan limited development to 13 telescopes by the year 2000—by 1999, there were 24 telescopes and infrastructure for up to 36 telescopes.

**Endangered  
Wekiu Bug**



**BLNR Should Deny CDUA Permit**

- The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) does not know what the potential environmental and cultural/religious impacts of this project may be.
- NASA has not responded to the public or initiated an Environmental Impact Statement. The vast majority of public comments (including the Mauna Kea Management Authority and OHA), emphatically called for NASA to complete a federally mandated EIS. NASA's refusal prompted OHA to file a lawsuit insisting on an EIS.
- The State should not issue any permits until the federally required EIS process has been completed and there is a full assessment of the potential negative impacts to groundwater, plants and wildlife, cultural rights and religious practices.

**For example, the state must know how NASA plans to:**

- Prevent contamination of groundwater and the lake, provide monitoring and testing plans. Address the transportation, storage, use and disposal of hazardous toxic substances.
- Protect cultural and religious resources
- Treat and dispose of wastewater and sewage
- Monitor and protect the Wekiu bug
- Protect access by Native Hawaiians

**Specific Issues that Need to be Addressed**

***It Just Doesn't Add Up***

Observatories from France, Canada, United Kingdom, Japan, the United States (and others) pay the state **\$1.00 (one dollar)** per year in lease rent!! NASA's annual budget alone is approximately \$14 billion dollars. The Observatories are owned by the richest nations in the world. Residents of Hawai'i do not benefit at all from the millions of dollars in revenues generated by the Observatories through renting out viewing time. We must demand accountability of the revenues generated by this industry.

Taxpayers are subsidizing UH Office of Mauna Kea Management, the Master Plan and development on the mountain!

In addition, taxpayers bear the risks and the liability if/when groundwater contamination or additional toxic spills occur. **There are alternatives!**

## **Environmental Impacts**

- Mauna Kea is a principle aquifer for Hawai'i Island.
- In the last 30 years, none of the Observatories have produced a federal EIS of their activities on the fragile environment or on the cultural and religious resource of Mauna Kea.
- The cumulative/combined effects of 30 years of telescope industry activities and development must be addressed.
- As a direct result of the development and activities on Mauna Kea, the endemic Wekiu bug population has been reduced by 99.7%. In addition there are other endangered species that require specific protection and monitoring.
- There are numerous toxic materials used by the Observatories on Mauna Kea, including elemental mercury and hazardous solvents. At least one observatory has had four documented mercury spills.
- Due to inadequate sewage systems used by the observatories, human waste and other effluents leach directly into the porous volcanic soil.
- The water quality of the lake and aquifer must be carefully monitored.

## **Cultural Rights**

Mauna Kea is a sacred temple revered throughout Polynesia. It is a religious shrine. It holds the bones of our most revered ancestors. Native Hawaiian people must have input into how the mountain is used and what happens on it. We have been blocked from the process, just as we have been blocked from the mountain.

**Cultural access is a right.** Access rights have been blocked by the University. The ice, snow, and waters, including the lake, of Mauna Kea are regularly used for customary, traditional cultural and religious purposes. The Mauna Kea road is a state road paid for by the taxpayers of Hawai'i, yet University personnel often stop traffic and deny access to the general public and to Native Hawaiians, while allowing observatory staff free use of the road.

## **The Public is Cut Out of the Process**

For over 30 years there has been broad opposition to any new development on Mauna Kea. The Mauna Kea Advisory Council is not accessible or accountable to the public. UH President Dobbie and UH Hilo Chancellor Tseng appoint representatives, including Native Hawaiians to the Advisory Council, which is advisory only. The final decisions are made at the highest level. All public input is under the direct control of the University. There is no accountability.

**There is no opportunity for true community-based participation in any of the decisions that impact this vital public trust cultural and religious resource.**

## **There are Alternatives**

*Mauna Kea—The Temple: Protecting the Sacred Resource*, is a report by The Royal Order of Kamehameha I and Mauna Kea Anaina Hou, a group of cultural practitioners formed to oversee activities on Mauna Kea. Both groups include cultural lineal descendents of sites on Mauna Kea.

This well-documented report describes the fatal flaws of the Mauna Kea Management Plan and provides viable, practical alternatives, including directing revenues from the telescope industry to the State of Hawai'i for resource management, general education. It also suggests a format for public involvement in management decisions on Mauna Kea. This report and other information on protecting Mauna Kea can be found at [www.kahea.org](http://www.kahea.org)

**Stand firm: NO EIS, NO PERMIT**

## **What You Can Do to Protect the Sacred Mountain**

**Write Today! Tell DLNR and UH  
NO EIS, NO PERMIT**

**Stop unchecked expansion on the sacred temple of Mauna Kea**

**Write or Fax: Gill Coloma-Agaran, Chairman**

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