

# Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site

Draft Foundation Document  
Public Review | August 2014



Photo on front: View of Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site from the Ocean.

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## MISSION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service (NPS) preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

The NPS core values are a framework in which the National Park Service accomplishes its mission. They express the manner in which, both individually and collectively, the National Park Service pursues its mission. The NPS core values are:

- **Shared stewardship:** We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.
- **Excellence:** We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.
- **Integrity:** We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.
- **Tradition:** We are proud of it; we learn from it; we are not bound by it.
- **Respect:** We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. While numerous national park system units were created prior to 1916, it was not until August 25, 1916, that President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Park Service Organic Act formally establishing the National Park Service.

The national park system continues to grow and comprises 401 park units covering more than 84 million acres in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These units include, but are not limited to, national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and the White House. The variety and diversity of park units throughout the nation require a strong commitment to resource stewardship and management to ensure both the protection and enjoyment of these resources for future generations.

## INTRODUCTION

Every unit of the national park system will have a foundational document to provide basic guidance for planning and management decisions—a foundation for planning and management. The core components of a foundation document include a brief description of the park as well as the park’s purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, and interpretive themes. The foundation document also includes special mandates and administrative commitments, an assessment of planning and data needs that identifies planning issues, planning products to be developed, and the associated studies and data required for park planning. Along with the core components, the assessment provides a focus for park planning activities and establishes a baseline from which planning documents are developed.

A primary benefit of developing a foundation document is the opportunity to integrate and coordinate all kinds and levels of planning from a single, shared understanding of what is most important about the park. The process of developing a foundation document begins with gathering and integrating information about the park. Next, this information is refined and focused to determine what the most important attributes of the park are. The process of preparing a foundation document aids park managers, staff, and the public in identifying and clearly stating in one document the essential information that is necessary for park management to consider when determining future planning efforts, outlining key planning issues, and protecting resources and values that are integral to park purpose and identity.

While not included in this document, a park atlas is also part of a foundation project. The atlas is a series of maps compiled from available geographic information system (GIS) data on natural and cultural resources, visitor use patterns, facilities, and other topics. It serves as a GIS-based support tool for planning and park operations. The atlas is published as a (hard copy) paper product and as geospatial data for use in a web mapping environment. The park atlas for Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site can be accessed online at: <http://insideparkatlas.nps.gov/>.



## FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

A foundation document includes a brief description of the park, park purpose, significance statements, fundamental resources and values, and interpretive themes.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PARK

*“Pu‘ukoholā Heiau is a place of destiny. It is in this hallowed vicinity that Keōua Kūahu‘ula offered himself to his fate and where Kamehameha realized the clinching of his rise to conquest, domination, and ultimately, immortality. Today, this National Historic Site stands as the greatest historic edifice to Kamehameha’s memory – he who is regarded as the most celebrated Hawaiian who ever lived”*

Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site is located on the northwest coast of the island of Hawai‘i. Designated by Congress in 1972, this park encompasses just over 86 acres, approximately 25 of which are owned by the State of Hawai‘i. The Akoni Pule Highway (Highway 270) runs along the northeast corner of the park and separates the park’s maintenance facilities and an important park resource, the John Young Homestead, from the rest of the site; the Kawaihae Harbor is located to the park’s northwest; and Samuel M. Spencer Park is directly to the south. Located on the “hill of the whale”, the park provides spectacular views of Kawaihae Bay to the southwest where unusually large concentrations of black tipped reef sharks gather.

As one of the last major temples built in the Hawaiian Islands, Pu‘ukoholā Heiau was constructed by Kamehameha the Great in 1790-1791. Arguably one of the greatest leaders in Hawaiian history, Kamehameha became the first person to unite the warring islands

into the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. Kamehameha built the temple as a result of a prophecy that came through a priest named Kāpōūkahi. This kahuna, or priest, told Kamehameha that if he were to build a heiau on the hill known as Pu‘ukoholā and dedicate it to his family’s war god Kūkā’ilimoku, he would be able to conquer all of the islands.

It is said that thousands labored for nearly a year to construct this heiau. Stories from generation to generation indicate that the temple’s builders carried the rocks from the distant Pololū Valley. Forming a human chain, the laborers handed the water worn lava rocks one person to another up and over Kohala Mountain to this site. Without the use of mortar, cement or other bonding materials, these skilled laborers placed these rocks in exact locations in order to meet specific building specifications and adhere to strict religious protocols.

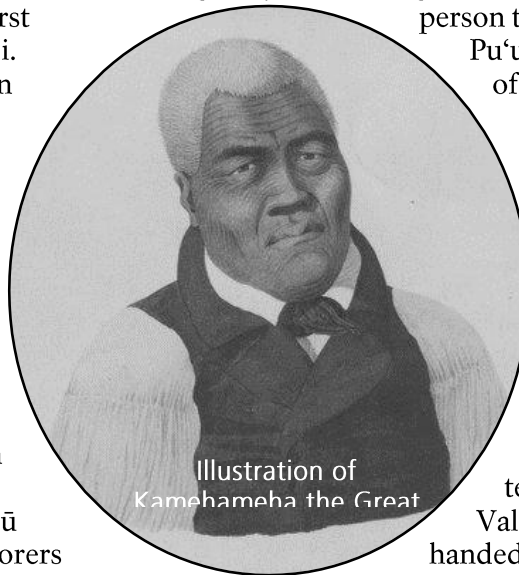


Illustration of  
Kamehameha the Great

When Pu‘ukoholā Heiau was completed in 1791, the temple was consecrated with human offerings, the principal sacrifice being the high chief Keōua Kūahu‘ula, Kamehameha’s cousin and principal rival who ruled the eastern half of Hawai‘i island. Major battles ensued as Kamehameha led his army and *peleleu* (fleet of war canoes) northward, reconquering Maui in 1794, and securing O‘ahu

in 1795. Kaua'i peacefully succeeded through negotiations in 1810. For the first time in the history of Hawai'i, the Hawaiian islands were united under one *ali'i* (chief), thus forming the Kingdom of Hawai'i and fulfilling the prophecy 19 years after the building of Pu'ukoholā Heiau.

For this reason, many contemporary Hawaiians still believe that Pu'ukoholā Heiau has a significant role to play as the Hawaiian people of today attempt to rebuild the Hawaiian nation and pursue a level of sovereignty and independence which once prevailed over the islands. Pu'ukoholā Heiau continues to serve as a beacon of unification where hundreds of Hawaiian practitioners gather regularly to honor Kamehameha and their ancestors in traditional rituals and protocol to perpetuate these sacred practices.

In addition to preserving the remains of Pu'ukoholā Heiau, the park protects other sites of historic significance, including Mailekini Heiau, a luakini and/or an agricultural Heiau which was eventually converted to a military fort; the ruins of Hale o Kapuni Heiau, a temple dedicated to sharks which are believed to be ancestral 'aumakua (family guardians); the Royal Court, or Pelekane, site of numerous diplomatic meetings between Kamehameha and foreign visitors; and John Young's homestead, believed to contain the remains of the first Western-style house in Hawai'i.



View of Pu'ukoholā Heiau from the bay at Pelekane

## PARK PURPOSE

The purpose statement identifies the specific reason(s) for establishment of a particular park. The purpose statement for Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site was drafted through a careful analysis of its enabling legislation and the legislative history that influenced its development. The park was established when the enabling legislation adopted by Congress was signed into law on August 17, 1972 (see appendix A for enabling legislation). The purpose statement lays the foundation for understanding what is most important about the park.

The purpose of Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site is to conserve and protect three heiau: Pu'ukoholā, Mailekini, and Hale o Kapuni; the John Young Homestead; and the surrounding cultural landscape. The park interprets these resources and their role in Hawaiian culture, including the unification of the Hawaiian kingdom under Kamehameha I.

## PARK SIGNIFICANCE

Significance statements express why a park's resources and values are important enough to merit designation as a unit of the national park system. These statements are linked to the purpose of Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Statements of significance describe the distinctive nature of the park and why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. They focus on the most important resources and values that will assist in park planning and management.

The following significance statements have been identified for Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site. (Please note that the sequence of the statements do not reflect the level of significance.)

1. Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site commemorates the unification of the Hawaiian islands and people under Kamehameha I, who established his supremacy after high chief Keōua Kūahu'ula was offered here on a temple altar built to fulfill one of three prophecies predicting the destiny of Kamehameha I.
2. Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site is the only site known to encompass a concentration of three types of heiau that illustrate traditional Hawaiian religious practices. Pu'ukoholā Heiau was a ceremonial luakini, or state temple; Mailekini Heiau was either a luakini and/or an agricultural heiau; and the submerged Hale o Kapuni Heiau was dedicated to sharks, believed to be ancestral 'aumakua (family guardians).
3. Pu'ukoholā Heiau is the last great temple that was constructed by Kamehameha I, as high chief and guardian of Kū, and dedicated to the war god Kūkā'ilimoku under adherence to the strictest ancient Hawaiian religious protocols.
4. Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site preserves the homestead and legacy of John Young, the only foreigner bestowed the titles of high chief and Governor of Hawai'i Island by Kamehameha I, and whose homestead contains the first-known examples of western-style structures built in the islands.
5. Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site protects Hale o Kapuni, a temple where the chiefs of the ocean (sharks) and the chiefs of the land (ali'i) came together, illustrating a spiritual connection between the land and the ocean.
6. Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site protects Pelekane, or the Royal Compound, which served as a temporary residence for ancient chiefs and historic ali'i (royalty) including Kamehameha I, Queen Emma, Liholiho (Kamehameha II), and other important figures in 19th century Hawai'i.
7. Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site helps preserve the bay at Pelekane which is one of two known areas in the Hawaiian islands where unusually large concentrations of black tipped reef sharks gather.
8. The mana (spiritual power) of Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site nurtures and contributes to the relevance of spiritual aspects of Hawaiian culture by inspiring continued cultural practices and ceremonies.

## FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

Fundamental resources and values (FRVs) are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to warrant primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. Fundamental resources and values are closely related to a park's legislative purpose and are more specific than significance statements.

Fundamental resources and values help focus planning and management efforts on what is truly significant about the park. One of the most important responsibilities of NPS managers is to ensure the conservation and public enjoyment of those qualities that are essential (fundamental) to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. If fundamental resources and values are allowed to deteriorate, the park purpose and/or significance could be jeopardized.

The following fundamental resources and values have been identified for Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site:

- **The three heiau** – The park protects three heiau: Pu'ukoholā, a designated National Historic Landmark, Mailekini, and Hale o Kapuni and associated features, such as kikiako'i (leaning stone post). These sacred temples embody mana (spiritual power), contributing to the ancient, historic, and contemporary relevance of this site.
- **Pelekane** – The royal compound, Pelekane, was a favored governing site of many ruling chiefs as they traveled throughout their chieftom and served as a temporary residence for ancient chiefs and other historic ali'i (royalty) due, in part, to the area's valuable attributes which include sources of available freshwater in arid Kawaihae (the waters of wrath).





- **John Young Homestead** – The John Young Homestead, with its mixture of Hawaiian and western architectural styles and artifacts, is the best material evidence of the intense interaction of Hawaiian and Western culture in the early years following first contact and the introduction of cultural diversity in the Hawaiian islands. Architecturally, the household contains the earliest known examples of Western-style structure in the Hawaiian Islands, and its ruins include rare physical evidence of a kauhale (cluster of traditional structures).
- **Cultural landscapes and associated features** – The park encompasses a significant segment of Alaloa (long trail), a part of Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail, that served as a transportation route through Kawaihae, connecting other heiau and communities on the island, and played a major role in the Makahiki (seasonal tribute to the god, Lono). This resource and other features associated with the cultural landscape, which include historic structures, archeological resources, and vegetation, contribute to the National Historic Landmark designation of the park.
- **Legacies and stories of key figures in Hawaiian history** – King Kamehameha I, Queen Ka‘ahumanu, John Young (trusted advisor), Liholiho (King Kamehameha II), Queen Emma, high chief Keōua Kūahu‘ula (cousin and rival of Kamehameha I), and high priest Kāpōūkahi (temple architect) are among the key historical figures whose association with Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site and events that took place here represent a significant part of Hawaiian history. Stories, oral histories, museum collections, and other ethnographic resources help perpetuate their legacies and those of ancient chiefs.
- **Marine communities** – The off-shore waters of Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site provide a refuge for endemic and other native species in Hawai‘i, especially for black tipped reef sharks and other species of sharks that congregate here, as they did in historic times.
- **Soundscapes and dark night skies** – The general ambient quiet and the presence of dark night skies are integral to the historic ‘aina (land) of Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site and the mana embodied at this site, maintaining the reverence of this wahi kapu (sacred place) and enabling ongoing cultural practices and ceremonies to occur in an atmosphere experienced by nā kupuna (ancestors).
- **Terrestrial ecosystem** – The park includes native vegetation, several of which are reintroduced threatened and endangered species, terrestrial vertebrates, and freshwater communities that are part of an important hydrologic system and provides valuable habitat for native species.
- **The legacy of ho‘oku‘ikahi (unification)** – The ho‘oku‘ikahi (unification) that took place at Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site affected all Hawaiian history to the present day where it fosters and enables connections with other significant sites, stories, and communities in Hawai‘i and around the world.
- **Cultural kīpuka** – The continued presence of mana at Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site allows the park to serve as a cultural kīpuka, or protected place where the seeds of Hawaiian culture are preserved and can grow, thrive, and be nurtured to serve other locations. The ongoing opportunities for Native Hawaiian traditional uses and adherence to traditional cultural protocols perpetuate traditional practices, knowledge, and the cultural significance of this area.
- **Visitor opportunities** – the park provides opportunities for all visitors to learn and understand the founding of the Hawaiian Kingdom, experience the living Hawaiian culture, and connect with this wahi kapu (a sacred place).

## INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from, and should reflect, park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all park significance statements and fundamental resources and values.

Interpretive themes are an organizational tool that reveal and clarify meaning, concepts, contexts, and values represented by park resources. Sound themes are accurate and reflect current scholarship and science. They encourage exploration of the context in which events or natural processes occurred and the effects of those events and processes. Interpretive themes go beyond a mere description of the event or process to foster multiple opportunities to experience and consider the park and its resources. These themes help explain why a park story is relevant to people who may otherwise be unaware of connections they have to an event, time, or place associated with the park.

The following interpretive themes have been identified for Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site:

- By constructing and dedicating Pu‘ukoholā Heiau to the war god Kūkā‘ilimoku, Kamehameha I gained the mana (spiritual power) that enabled him to unify the Hawaiian Islands and people.
- John Young’s role as the king’s advisor on military, commercial, and political matters, as well as his governorship of Hawai‘i Island was very important to the ascendancy of Kamehameha I to power; because of his influence, western goods and ideas were spread throughout the islands.
- The location, alignment, and design of Pu‘ukoholā Heiau was selected because of the mana (spiritual power) existing in the temples already on the hill and because its strategic views afforded sighting of invading enemies.
- Pu‘ukoholā Heiau continues to represent a sacred, spiritual gathering place. The Hawaiian culture and traditions representative of the era of Kamehameha I continue to be practiced today.
- Three prophecies: the birth of Kamehameha I, the lifting of the Naha stone, and the building of Pu‘ukoholā Heiau, were fulfilled when Kamehameha I conquered Hawai‘i Island in 1791 and when he became the first king of the Hawaiian Islands in 1810.
- Respect and appreciation for Native Hawaiian culture associated with the war god Kūkā‘ilimoku is demonstrated by the techniques, processes, and other religious protocols used in the initial construction and continued stabilization, maintenance, and preservation of Pu‘ukoholā Heiau.
- Off-shore waters are frequented by large gatherings of black-tipped reef sharks. Many believe that Hale o Kapuni spiritually attracts sharks to the bay as in the years when the sharks were fed regularly at the submerged temple by the chief Alapa‘ikūpalumanō.



Cultural Practitioners



Rainbow over Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site



Whale off the shores of Pu'ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site



Restoration of the Heiau

## **APPENDIX A: ENABLING LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATIVE ACTS FOR PU'UKOHOLĀ HEIAU NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

### **PUBLIC LAW 92-388**

#### **AN ACT**

To provide for the establishment of the Puukohola Heiau National Historic Site, in the State of Hawaii, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That in order to restore and preserve in public ownership the historically significant temple associated with Kamehameha the Great, who founded the historic Kingdom of Hawaii, and the property of John Young who fought for Kamehameha the Great during the period of his ascendancy to power, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire, by donation or purchase with donated funds, such lands and interests in lands, together with structures and improvements thereon, not to exceed one hundred acres, in the vicinity of Kawaihae, Hawaii, as generally depicted on a map entitled "Boundary Map, Proposed Puukohola Heiau National Historic Site," numbered NHS-PK 20,002, dated February 1970, which shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the National Park Service, Washington, District of Columbia. The Secretary of the Interior may from time to time revise the boundaries of the proposed historic site, but the total acreage of the site shall not exceed one hundred acres.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Interior shall establish the area as the "Puukohola Heiau National Historic Site" at such time as he deems sufficient interests in lands have been acquired to constitute an administrable unit. Pending and after establishment, the Puukohola Heiau National Historic Site shall be administered, developed, preserved, and maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes", approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), as amended and supplemented (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.), and the Act entitled "An Act to provide for the preservation of historic American sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance, and for other purposes", approved August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

SEC. 3. Notwithstanding the acreage limitation contained in section 1 of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire by donation, purchase, or exchange, such additional lands and interests therein outside the boundary of the site as he deems necessary to relocate portions of State and county roads which are currently within so acquired and convey the same, subject to such terms and conditions as he deems necessary, to the State of Hawaii or its appropriate political subdivision. Any relocation of State and county roads shall be undertaken in accordance with an agreement between the Secretary and the State or county concerned, which shall provide, among other things, for the continued maintenance of the relocated portions of road by such State or county.

SEC. 4. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act not to exceed, however, \$1,040,600 (May 1971 prices) for development, plus or minus such amounts, if any, as may be justified by reason of ordinary fluctuations in construction costs as indicated by engineering cost indexes applicable to the types of construction involved herein.

Approved August 17, 1972.



## PUBLIC LAW 106–510

106th Congress

### AN ACT

To eliminate restrictions on the acquisition of certain land contiguous to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Adjustment Act of 2000”.

#### SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON LAND ACQUISITION.

The first section of the Act entitled “An Act to add certain lands on the island of Hawaii to the Hawaii National Park, and for other purposes”, approved June 20, 1938 (16 U.S.C. 391b), is amended by striking “park: Provided,” and all that follows and inserting “park. Land (including the land depicted on the map entitled ‘NPS–PAC 1997HW’) may be acquired by the Secretary through donation, exchange, or purchase with donated or appropriated funds.”.

#### SEC. 3. CORRECTIONS IN DESIGNATIONS OF HAWAIIAN NATIONAL PARKS.

##### (a) HAWAI‘I VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Public Law 87–278 (75 Stat. 577) is amended by striking “Hawaii Volcanoes National Park” each place it appears and inserting “Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park”.

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law (other than this Act), regulation, document, record, map, or other paper of the United States to “Hawaii Volcanoes National Park” shall be considered a reference to “Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park”.

##### (b) HALEAKALĀ NATIONAL PARK.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Public Law 86–744 (74 Stat. 881) is amended by striking “Haleakala National Park” and inserting “Haleakalā National Park”.

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law (other than this Act), regulation, document, record, map, or other paper of the United States to “Haleakala National Park” shall be considered a reference to “Haleakalā National Park”.

##### (c) KALOKO-HONOKŌHAU.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 505 of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 396d) is amended—

(A) in the section heading, by striking “Kaloko-Honokohau” and inserting “Kaloko-Honokōhau”; and (B) by striking “Kaloko-Honokohau” each place it appears and inserting “Kaloko-Honokōhau”.

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law (other than this Act), regulation, document, record, map, or other paper of the United States to “Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park” shall be considered a reference to “Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park”.

##### (d) PU‘UHONUA O HŌNAUNAU NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Act of July 21, 1955 (chapter 385; 69 Stat. 376), as amended by section 305 of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (92 Stat. 3477), is

amended by striking “Puuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park” each place it appears and inserting “Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park”.

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law (other than this Act), regulation, document, record, map, or other paper of the United States to “Puuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park shall be considered a reference to “Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park”.

(e) PU‘UKOHOLĀ HEIAU NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Public Law 92–388 (86 Stat. 562) is amended by striking “Puukohola Heiau National Historic Site” each place it appears and inserting “Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site”.

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law (other than this Act), regulation, document, record, map, or other paper of the United States to “Puukohola Heiau National Historic Site” shall be considered a reference to “Pu‘ukoholā Heiau National Historic Site”.

#### SEC. 4. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) Section 401(8) of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (Public Law 95–625; 92 Stat. 3489) is amended by striking “Hawaii Volcanoes” each place it appears and inserting “Hawai‘i Volcanoes”.

(b) The first section of Public Law 94–567 (90 Stat. 2692) is amended in subsection (e) by striking “Haleakala” each place it appears and inserting “Haleakalā”.

Approved November 13, 2000.