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KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA

KAHOʻOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION

811 Kolu Street, Suite 201, Wailuku, HI 96793
Telephone (808) 243-5020 Fax (808) 243-5885

Kahoʻolawe as a Navigation Center

As the ancient voyagers navigated the Pacific Ocean in double-hulled canoes, Hawaiʻi remained isolated to all but a few master explorers skilled in charting the course north of the equator. This art of wayfinding—using only the stars, weather and ocean currents—made it possible for Hawaiʻi to be settled by early Polynesians. Although moʻolelo, or histories, recount much travel between Hawaiʻi and the South Pacific, by the time 18th century Europeans first reached Hawaiian shores, voyaging between Hawaiʻi and the rest of Polynesia lay dormant for more than 400 years.

In 1976, two lives were born. The Protect Kahoʻolawe ʻOhana, guided by kūpuna and driven to stop the military assault on Kahoʻolawe and reclaim the sacred island, was formed. That same year, the Polynesian Voyaging Society built its first double-hulled canoe, sailed it to Tahiti without benefit of modern navigational instruments, thereby reviving the Hawaiian science of long-distance voyaging. These parallel movements led the rebirth and rediscovery of Hawaiian traditions, culture and pride.

Positioned at the piko (navel) of the Hawaiian Islands, Kahoʻolawe is also named for Kanaloa, the Hawaiian deity of navigation and the deep ocean. Puʻu o Moaulaiki, a high point on the island, is the site of Pohaku Ahuʻaikūpelekapili o Keaweiki, the *Stone of Deep Magic of Keaweiki*, a navigational heiau where the rotation of the stars, the currents in the channels and the movements of the clouds can easily be observed from. Lae o Kealaikahiki, an ancient outcropping of rocks located at the island's easternmost tip, provides an unobstructed view of both horizons where Hōkūpaʻa (the North Star) and Hānaiakamalama (the Southern Cross) can be seen from the water's edge. From this sea level vantage point, apprentice navigators can study the relative positions of constellations and individual stars. In addition, Kealaikahiki's location at the latitudinal center of the major Hawaiian Islands makes it ideal for navigators to find their direction home.

Voyaging ‘ohana from throughout the Hawaiian Islands will converge on Kaho‘olawe October 22, 2004, for an event called *E Ola Mau Ke Ea a Kanaloa: The Restoration of Kanaloa Shall Live Forever*. Four Hawaiian canoes—*Hōkūle‘a, Makali‘i, Mo‘olele* and *Hōkūalaka‘i*—will arrive at Honokanai‘a to recognize the significance of Kaho‘olawe. An observational platform at Kealaikahiki, or *Pathway to Kahiki*, shall be dedicated and the site shall be opened for ongoing use as a navigational training center. No longer a barren island of desolation, this begins a new phase of restoration and meaningful use. It is another step toward establishing Kaho‘olawe's role in the preservation and perpetuation of Hawaiian traditions.