

YACHAY WASI Sacred Sites Event - Submission 14 - USA - Received April 21, 2006

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The Sacred Sites Kukuio Kane Heiau and Kumukumu Springs

What remains of the site of Kukuio Kane (the light of mankind) Heiau and the Kumukumu (the sacred water source) Springs, which are related and non-contiguous sites, have been hidden because they are threatened by modern development. What remains of the Heiau was known to exist on land that once belonged to a pineapple industry and may include land that has been given to a religious organization. While the exact location of the Heiau continues to be hotly contested by archivists, including those at the Bishop Museum, developers and archaeologists, there are no reminders of the (lack of) existence of this original Heiau site in the State of Hawaii map of culturally significant sites and no attempts have been made to restore this Heiau. The memory of the Heiau is part of the oral tradition and sacred knowledge. Worship may continue at a smaller and more hidden heiau on the east side of the island, though the huge rock platform that was torn down by the Libby, McNeill and Libby, Co. Pineapple Corporation in the early twentieth century is gone. Today, these non-contiguous indigenous Hawaiian cultural sites have been bisected by many roads. The original land was held together by Royal Patents under the monarchy and is now divided into small portions with many types of new owners. Condominiums have developed over the taro fields that were part of the agricultural layout that connected the sites. Nearby, an historic family cemetery related to both of these sites is threatened by a runaway truck ramp for a major freeway. The water source continues to be protected by a Hawaiian family who inherited the land and water rights. The spring continues to be in use by the Hawaiian cultural practitioners who's gathering rights continue to be honored by this family. It has also been said that the "Drums of Kane" have been heard in the banana patches at night and indigenous Hawaiian people have claim to have gathered for religious practices nearby which means that religious practices have been taking place in relation to these sacred sites.

The historic importance and cultural significance of this Kukuio Kane Heiau and Kumukumu Springs is being neglected. Though it is being preserved by oral tradition and cultural practitioners, State Historic Preservation has clearly been lacking, as evidenced by continued development and the accommodations and protestations that have been made by the indigenous Hawaiians. Indigenous Hawaiians vehemently protested the development of H-3 freeway in opposition to the creation a tunnel through a mountain. In 1999, for example, a portion of the Royal Patent 174 was condemned by the Department of Transportation and was in litigation in 1999. That case record exists on file in the State of Hawaii court system. I was one of the people who filed an amicus brief in one of the condemnation hearings. During the investigation for this case, I came to learn that there is a wealth of cultural information to be gathered in relation to these sites, including genealogical records, land records, folklore, history of royal romances, agricultural development, cultural practices and so forth. Further, the development of H-3 federal highway may even have bisected the original Heiau site or at the very least, further divided the non-contiguous sites for a person walking on foot. The aerial photographs I obtained of the sites overtime may be helpful in discerning where the site may have been located. It has been told to me that this site may have importance as this major Heiau and its' water source have mystical powers to heal mankind. A significance of this Heiau site is that its history of use connects with ancient practices of the island cultures scattered throughout the Pacific Ocean. Among the folklore that I have collected, I am told that this was perhaps the first large scale and/or oldest sacred site in Hawaii to have been constructed because it is on the eastern side near what I am told is the original landing spot of the people who first arrived on the island of Oahu. Certainly the original site looked out onto the horizon of the rising celestial bodies and was an important place to watch for omens and to measure time.