

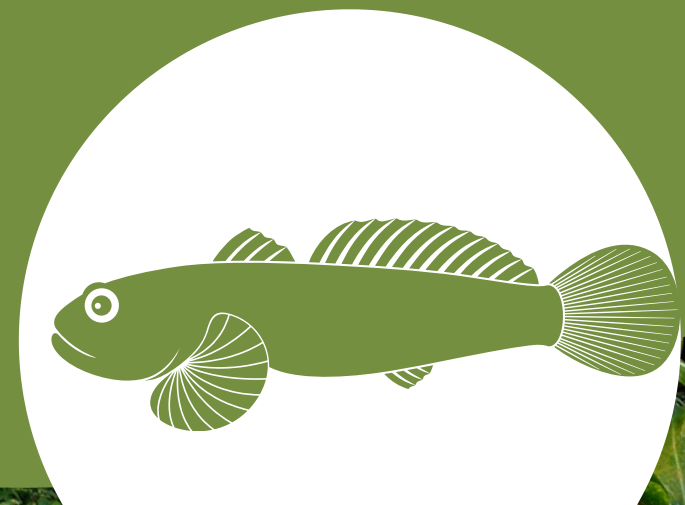
Community Victory: Securing Hawaiian Intellectual Property in Maui Hikina

Born from the first Maui DMAP, the Hawai'i Tourism Authority partnered with three east Maui based nonprofits in 2023 to form the Mālama Maui Hikina Pilot Program. The purpose of this program was to steward “hotspots” along the Hāna Highway, a model rooted in community-driven management



‘Āina-Centered Approach

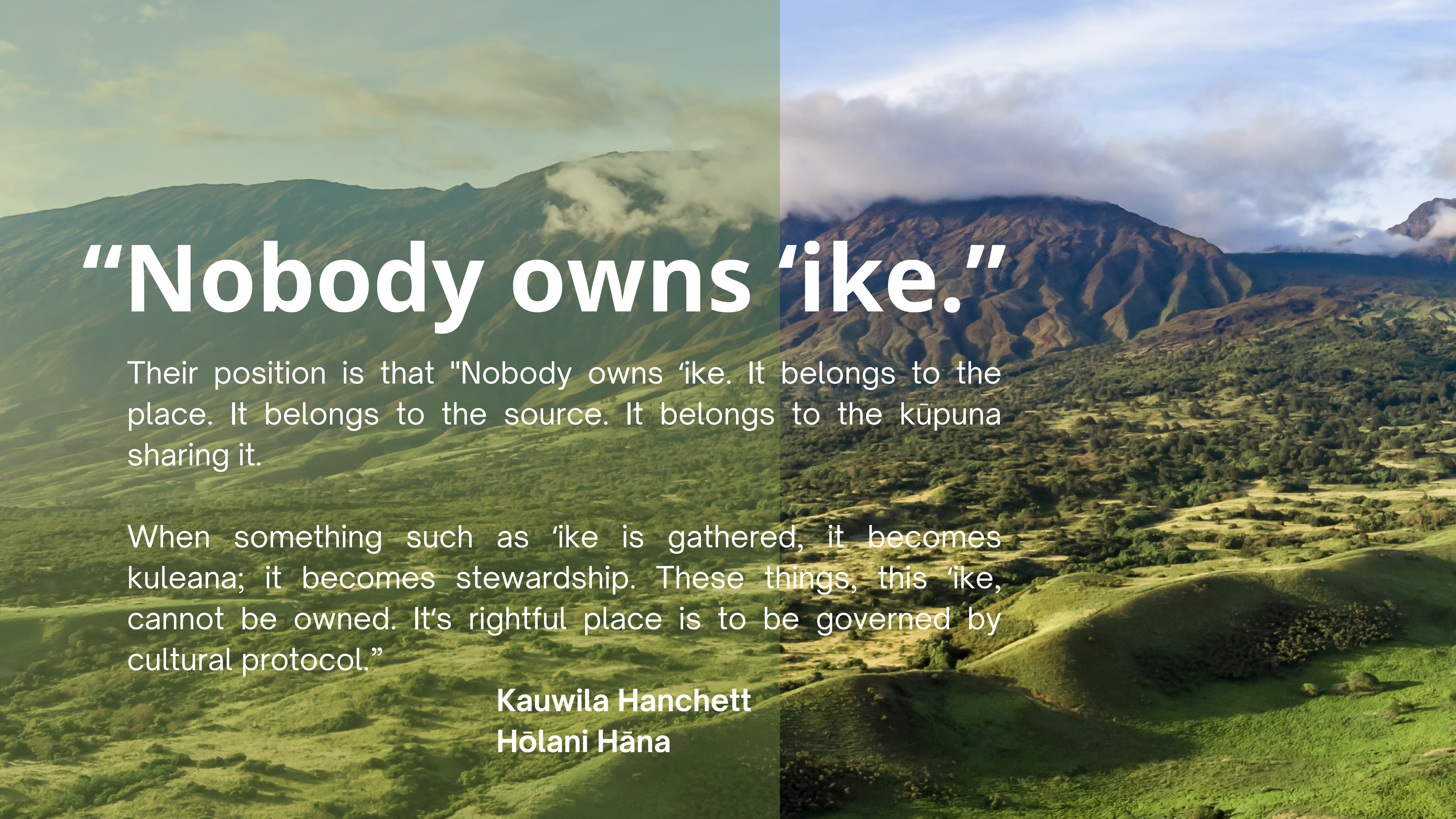
Āina-centered and community-led, Hōlani Hāna and Ke Ao Hāli‘i sought to build on their already-strong foundation of cultural, place-based knowledge to guide stewardship. They also intended to conduct ‘Ohana Interviews which was an in-depth study of place-based mo‘olelo, traditional names, and meanings which then provided the cultural foundation for the Mālama Maui Hikina Pilot Program.





Intellectual Property

During the contract negotiation phase, the three nonprofits who HTA was seeking to partner with in east Maui, Na Mahi'ai o Ke'anae, Hōlani Hāna and Ke Ao Hāli'i were united in bringing to HTA's attention the issue of Intellectual Property within the contracts. The east Maui nonprofits stood firm, unanimously refusing to sign contracts that would have transferred community knowledge to the state.



“Nobody owns ‘ike.”

Their position is that "Nobody owns ‘ike. It belongs to the place. It belongs to the source. It belongs to the kūpuna sharing it.

When something such as ‘ike is gathered, it becomes kuleana; it becomes stewardship. These things, this ‘ike, cannot be owned. It's rightful place is to be governed by cultural protocol.”

Kauwila Hanchett
Hōlani Hāna

Culturally-Governed 'Ike

HTA worked with the Attorney General to find new, acceptable language that **excludes place-based and cultural-based knowledge coming from community sources** from the contract definition of Intellectual Property.

This is significant because

- The nature of these contracts recognized and respects traditional lifeways.
- HTA and the nonprofits were able to find common ground and move forward with increased trust.
- We now have a model for other communities to follow.

