

What is OMKM?

The Office of Mauna Kea Management (OMKM) is the primary agency responsible for managing the Mauna Kea Science Reserve. It was created by the Master Plan adopted by the UH Board of Regents in 2000. The Master Plan also charged the chancellor of the University of Hawai'i Hilo to appoint seven community leaders to serve on the Mauna Kea Management Board (MKMB) and nine Hawaiian cultural advisors to serve on the Kahu Kū Mauna Council (KKMC). MKMB and KKMC advise OMKM and the UH Hilo Chancellor on matters involving Mauna Kea.

Shortly after they were formed, OMKM, MKMB and Kahu Kū Mauna met and agreed on a joint mission statement:

“Achieve harmony, balance and trust in the sustainable management and stewardship of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve through community involvement and programs that protect, preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and recreational resources of Mauna Kea while providing a world-class center dedicated to education, research and astronomy.”



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How Does the Master Plan Function?

Much of the current debate over Mauna Kea was triggered by a 1998 Legislative Auditor's Report that criticized the University of Hawai'i's management of the mountain. With the help of a community advisory committee, the Master Plan was developed over a two-year period that included extensive public testimony presented at meetings held across the island of Hawai'i. The Master Plan, adopted by the UH Board of Regents in June 2000, responded to the community's demand for greater local oversight by shifting primary management responsibilities from UH Manoa to UH Hilo.



The seven members comprising the MKMB are all recognized community leaders nominated for their special expertise in 1) Hawaiian culture, 2) environment, 3) education, 4) land management, 5) community, 6) astronomy and 7) commercial operations. They are nominated by the UHH Chancellor and approved by the UH Board of Regents. MKMB members meet regularly and present their recommendations to the Chancellor. MKMB meetings are open to the public. Agendas and minutes are posted in accordance to the state Sunshine Law.

To further expand community involvement, the MKMB has established working committees involving additional experts from the community to address issues involving Hawaiian Culture and the Environment.



When is the Kahu Kū Mauna Council Consulted?

Kahu Kū Mauna is comprised of seven Big Island residents appointed by the MKMB who are knowledgeable of the cultural significance of Mauna Kea. The council advises MKMB and OMKM on all cultural matters affecting the mountain. Actions affecting the summit environment are submitted to the KKMC, which meets independently to consider the impact actions might have on cultural issues. The KKMC's recommendations are conveyed to OMKM, MKMB and UH Hilo Chancellor. A representative of KKMC attends MKMB meetings to present the council's perspectives and recommendations.

What do the Mauna Kea Rangers Do?



The Mauna Kea Ranger Program was established in 2001. Headquartered at the Visitor Information Station (VIS), rangers are on duty every day of the year, interacting with visitors, offering health and safety warnings, and answering questions regarding the historical, cultural, scientific

and environmental highlights of Mauna Kea.

For the first time in the long history of public activities on Mauna Kea, rangers are able to monitor daily activities on the summit, watchful of unsafe or inappropriate activities and responding to emergencies.

Is it Working?

While far from perfect, a follow-up audit conducted by the Legislative Auditor in 2005 reported that significant improvements were made since its original study in 1998:

“The master plan addressed most of our previous audit findings, including establishing controls for and a method of measuring the impact of future development.



“The master plan also created a new management structure, housed within the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, comprised of the Office of Mauna Kea Management, the Mauna Kea Management Board, and the Kahu Ku Mauna Council. This management structure has been instrumental in establishing controls for the science reserve, particularly the ranger program, which has increased visitor education and awareness of Mauna Kea’s cultural and natural resources. Additionally, the university has established the astronomy precinct, which confines development to 525 acres within the science reserve...”

What is the CMP?

The Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) provides a management framework for the University of Hawai'i (UH) to address existing and future activities in the UH Management Areas on Mauna Kea.

The CMP was approved by the state Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) in April 2009 on the condition that UH complete four sub-plans addressing: public access, cultural resources management, natural resources management, and decommissioning. On March 25, 2010, the BLNR unanimously approved the CMP's four sub-plans, along with the management framework and implementation for project development. The CMP will guide OMKM in its effort to manage existing and future activities and uses to ensure ongoing protection of Mauna Kea's unique cultural and natural resources.



The process of developing the CMP involved an extensive analysis of the mountain's resources and threats to them. One example was the need to learn more about the wekiu bug in order to develop appropriate protective measures.

Sustainable Resources Group Intn'l, Inc. (SRGII), a Hawaii-based environmental consulting firm specializing in environmental management and water resources engineering, was selected by

the OMKM Environment Committee to write the Natural Resources Management Plan.

Pacific Consulting Services, Inc. (PCSI), a private archaeological survey firm with extensive experience on Mauna Kea, completed the first-ever archaeological survey of the summit. PCSI drafted the Cultural Resources Management Plan.

The Natural Resources Management Plan and Cultural Resources Management plan were combined to develop the CMP, which also entailed considerable community input in developing effective and appropriate management strategies.

