

Hāna Advisory Against Visiting Wai'oka and Kaihalulu in East Maui

Recommendations by Ho'omakaukau Maui Hikina - 'East Maui Ready' EMR Leadership



EMR is issuing a standing advisory requesting that both Wai'oka and Kaihalulu areas be avoided when looking for recreational spots to visit in Maui Hikina (East Maui). As with the many non-sanctioned trails of both Maui Hikina and statewide, these areas are hit with high levels of emergency response calls. Please consider the impacts. **We ask that hikers and site seekers visit only areas that are open to the public or managed by state and federal parks.** East Maui is making strides in our diverse ahupua'a to change the narrative based on obvious impacts and with respect to our first responders, by listening to the 'āina and with consideration to our knowledgeable resident voices. Only outdated misinformation will recommend going to these places - please do your part and share this advisory!

KAIHALULU - Landslides with recent rains and earthquakes in the last couple of weeks of February 2024 have caused the so-called 'trail' to this pu'u (volcanic cone) to be extremely dangerous. The trail, coated with ironwood seeds, is slippery with sharp volcanic cinders; the shoreline is unstable and crosses private lands. Local emergency responders are regularly called to the area due to accidents and injuries. The area has no dedicated parking.

WAI'OKA - A report from the Blue Water Task Force, a division of the Surfrider Foundation, shows test results with samples collected at Wai'oka from January 31, 2024 dating back to Spring 2023, as having higher than recommended safe levels of Enterococcus bacteria based on Hawai'i State Department standards. (<https://bwtf.surfrider.org/report/51/1205>). The water at Wai'oka has a natural rock boundary from the ocean that has been standing most recently since April 2021. This area is prone to flash flooding, which historically has resulted in injury and death from those unaware of the danger. The area has no dedicated parking.

East Maui has only one ambulance, and a limited police and fire department, dedicated to the 40-mile coastline of the Hāna District known as Maui Hikina (East Maui), stretching from Ko'olau to Kaupo. When our emergency responders have to deal with those who venture into areas which are not maintained for either community or visitor engagement, based on outdated misinformation, we put our residents at a grave risk. **Because of this danger and for cultural respect to these lands, we are strongly advising, as an active constituency of emergency preparedness leaders, that the areas of Wai'oka and Kaihalulu be removed from local and visitor itineraries!**

As part of a County of Maui grant, Ke Aō Hali'i (KAH) (www.savehanacoast.org), a local East Maui nonprofit organization, is collaborating with the [Maui Visitor and Convention Bureau division of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority with the Mālama Maui Hikina project](#). Beginning in the first half of 2024, teams led by KAH monitor the Kaihalulu and Wai'oka sites, to engage in visitor surveys and education. KAH, owner and steward of the adjacent lands, is working with the community to build long-term management plans for these culturally significant sites.

Only visit places in Maui Hikina open to the public or managed by state and federal parks!

For decades our dedicated leadership in East Maui has worked to mitigate disaster occurrences; involved community members currently meet as Ho'omakaukau Maui Hikina - 'East Maui Ready (EMR)' on the last Wednesday of each month at 5pm. EMR works on building and sustaining a network of emergency preparedness throughout East Maui to assist in times of need. We maintain rescue tubes at both Kaihalulu and Wai'oka as well as several other locations, and are continually working on ways to educate the public, stem misinformation, and inform, when there are emergency conditions. See the calendar listing on [HānaMaui!](#) if you would like to join in the EMR discussion and learn more at <https://hanamaui.com/makaala/>.

Other recent news references and past rescues from Kaihalulu and Wai'oka:

[2/27/24 - HIKER WHO FELL 1,000 FEET RECORDS CAUTIONARY PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT](#)

[2/29/24 - 3 visitors rescued after falling from steep Kauai hiking trail](#)

[3/8/21 - Woman who lost husband, friend in flash flood says visitor education needed](#)

[2/20/19 - Five Rescued in Two Days at Kaihalulu in Hāna, Maui](#)