

The 'Aha Moku System and Collaborative Governance:

Ancient Practices, Modern Solutions



There is no man familiar with fishing least he fishes and becomes an expert.

There is no man familiar with the soil least he plants and becomes an expert.

There is no man familiar with hō'ola least he be trained as a kahuna and becomes expert at it.

That mana'o was the standard that kupuna went by in determining who would sit on the councils . . .

Through the 'aha councils with multiple expertise woven into a strong cord, the people established lōkahi.

Lōkahi is the balance between the land, the people that lived upon the land, and the akua.

The result of lōkahi was pono, the spiritual balance in all things.

The 'aha represents the binding and the pono that is created for the land that will sustain life.

This prepares the way spiritually for the land physically . . .

The manifestation of pono is the land and people flourishing abundantly with food and many descendants.

This comes from understanding the concept of the 'aha.

- Kumu Hula John Ka'imikaua

THE 'AHA COUNCILS

The 'aha councils formed as a means to govern the people and manage the 'āina within moku (regions or districts on each island) and smaller land divisions (ahupua'a). 'Aha council leadership was determined by the people who collectively understood who the experts were in their community. These were experts in fisheries management, hydrology and water distribution, astronomy and navigation, architecture, farming, healing arts, etc. Thus, the leaders who governed the people and managed the resources were actual practitioners; those who had gained a comprehensive and masterful understanding of the biological, physical, and spiritual aspects of the 'āina. These experts utilized their knowledge to care for the natural resources and produce food in abundance – not just for the people, but for successive generations.

Each island was divided into moku and the 'aha councils customized their leadership and management in ways that were most appropriate for their place. For example, the 'aha councils of Moloka'i considered eight different resource realms before making their decisions. If a proposed solution was determined to be good overall to each of the resource realms, honored the ancestral past, addressed the needs of the present, and created abundance for future generations, then the solution was adopted.

'Aha moku leaders throughout Ka Pae 'Āina gathered often to learn from each other. These religious and educational exchanges allowed them to adopt innovations, make improvements, and progress forward together. As the lands and the people flourished, the 'aha moku councils elected to divide moku into smaller, more manageable units of land called ahupua'a. From here, the people managed themselves under the guidance of their own experts, forming their own 'aha ahupua'a. Governance remained within the ahupua'a unless an issue affected the entire moku. These councils would convene according to whether decision-making was necessary at the island-wide (mokupuni), regional (moku), or more specifically at the ahupua'a level. Representative leadership was present at all of these levels.

The people governed themselves through the 'aha councils for seven hundred years from the second century, A.D. until the Tahitian migration and introduction of the hierarchical ali'i system in the end of the ninth century. Under ali'i rule, political conquests typically consolidated power in a Mō'i (supreme chief) who acquired authority over an entire mokupuni. When a new mō'i came into power, he redistributed the lands amongst his loyal chiefs through a process known as kalai'āina. However, well known land divisions and boundaries were maintained so as to avoid confusion and conflict and to maintain productivity.

The ali'i appointed to govern various moku were called ali'i 'ai moku. They, in turn, selected ali'i 'ai ahupua'a to govern ahupua'a. Konohiki, those who possessed special expertise in natural resource management, were designated by the ali'i 'ai ahupua'a to oversee agricultural activities, fairly allocate water, monitor fishery health, and enforce kapu. The Konohiki, in turn, relied on the local 'ohana to cultivate the land and maintain the resources. Thus, land management continued to rest in the hands of those who were most intimately knowledgeable about the specific needs of their ahupua'a.

THE 8 RESOURCE REALMS AND THE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Moana-Nui-Ākea	The farthest out to sea or along the ocean's horizon one could perceive from atop the highest vantage point in one's area.
Kahakai Pepeiao	Where the high tide is to where the lepo (soil) starts. This is typically the splash zone where crab, limu (seaweed), and 'opihi (limpet) may be located; sea cliffs; or a gentle shoreline dotted with a coastal strand of vegetation; sands where turtles and seabirds nest; or extensive sand dune environs.
Ma Uka	From the point where the lepo (soil) starts to the top of the mountain.
Nā Muliwai	All the sources of fresh water, ground/artesian water, rivers, streams, springs, including springs along the coastline that mix with seawater
Ka Lewalani	Everything above the land, the air, the sky, the clouds, the birds, the rainbows
Kanaka Hōnua	The natural resources important to sustain people. However, management is based on providing for the benefit of the resources themselves rather than from the standpoint of how they serve people.
Papahelōlona	Knowledge and intellect that is a valuable resource to be respected, maintained, and managed properly. This is the knowledge of the Kahuna, the astronomers, the healers, and other carriers of 'ike.
Ke 'Ihi'ihi	The elements that maintain the sanctity or sacredness of certain places.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

Collaborative Governance is a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is *formal*, *consensus-oriented*, and *deliberative* and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets. Collaboration implies two-way communication and influence between agencies and stakeholders. Although ultimate authority may lie with the public agency, stakeholders directly participate in the decision-making process.

Three critical variables affect the collaborative process: starting conditions; institutional design; and facilitative leadership.

Starting Conditions set the basic level of trust, conflict, and social capital that can either facilitate or discourage cooperation.

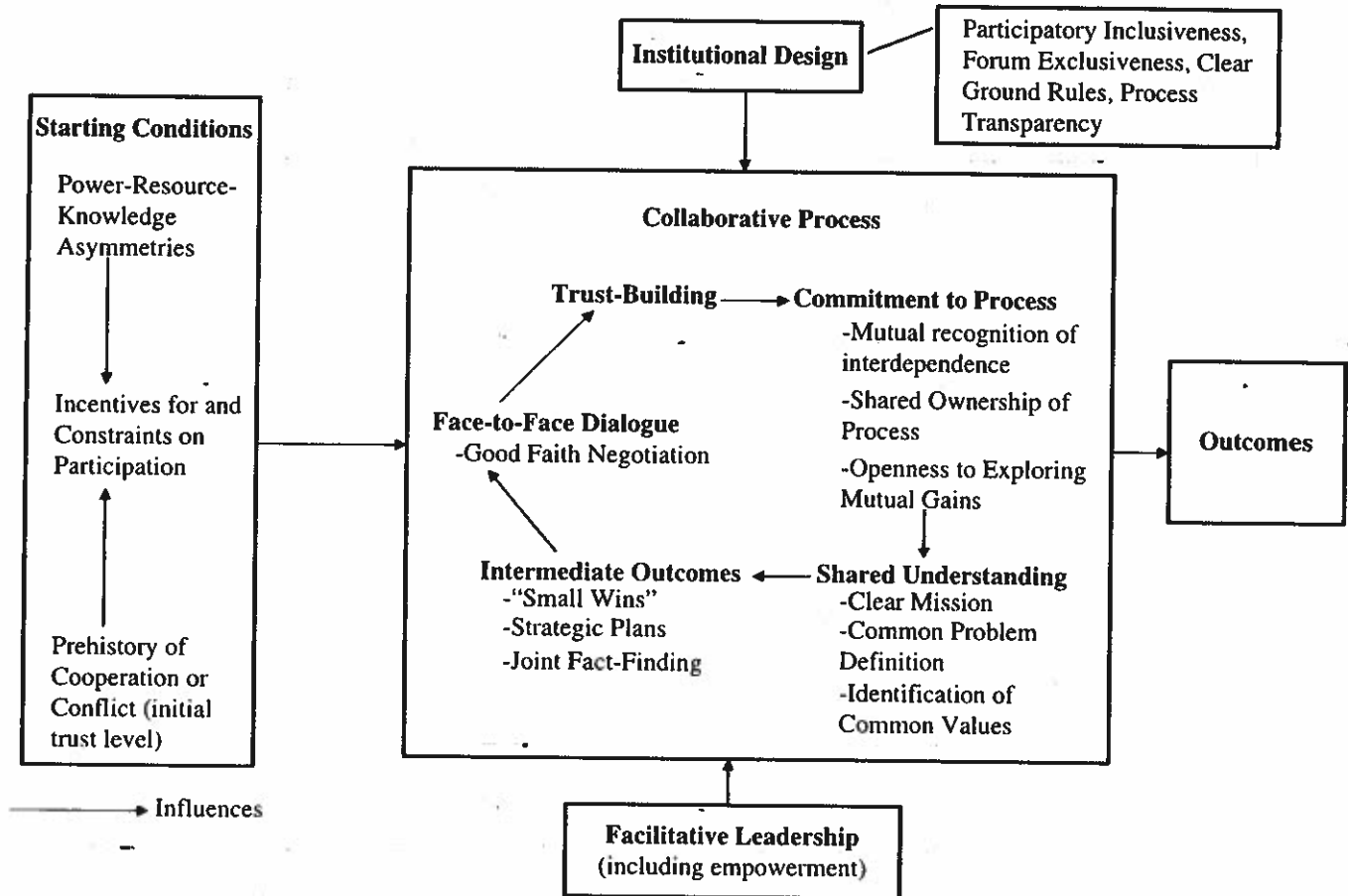
- If there are significant *power/resource imbalances* such that important stakeholders cannot participate in a meaningful way, then effective collaborative governance requires a commitment to a positive strategy of empowerment and representation of weaker or disadvantaged stakeholders.
- *Incentives to participate* will increase if stakeholders feel that cooperation is necessary to achieve their goals. Collaborative governance is prevalent in local resource management disputes because of the joint dependence of local groups on a common resource.
- A *prehistory of antagonism* requires that positive steps be taken to restore or build trust.

Facilitative Leadership is crucial for bringing parties together and getting them to engage in a collaborative spirit. Leadership is also important for empowering and representing weaker stakeholders. Collaborative leaders must have the skills to (1) promote broad and active participation, (2) ensure broad-based influence and control, (3) facilitate productive group dynamics, and (4) extend the scope of the process.

Institutional Design refers to the basic protocols and ground rules for collaboration, which are critical for the procedural legitimacy of the collaborative process.

- The process must be *broadly open and inclusive* of all stakeholders, even potentially “troublesome” ones.
- *Clear and consistent ground rules* reassure stakeholders that the process is fair, equitable, and open.
- *Process transparency* means that stakeholders can feel confident that the public negotiation is “real” and that the collaborative process is not a cover for backroom deals.

A MODEL OF THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS



The collaborative process depends on achieving a cycle of communication, trust, commitment, understanding, and outcomes. The process is time-consuming, especially if there is a history of adversarial relationships. However, trust-building is a critical investment. Once a working consensus is achieved, progress can develop quite rapidly.

THE 'AHA MOKU ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC) is a legislatively created board that exists within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). The AMAC is empowered to advise the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) on issues related to land and natural resource management through the Aha Moku System.

The Puwalu Series

In 2006, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council convened *Ho'ohano'hano I Nā Kūpuna Puwalu* (the Puwalu series). The purpose of the series was to increase the level of participation in the Hawaiian community in the management of natural resources through a reawakening of attention to ahupua'a principles, and through broader representation of Hawaiian needs and interests throughout the islands. Kūpuna and Hawaiian cultural practitioners from over one hundred ahupua'a gathered to share their mana'o and concerns. After the third meeting in the series, it was agreed that a legal framework should be established that would allow for community consultation using the Hawaiian perspective and traditional methods such as the ahupua'a management system.

Act 212 (2007)

Initiated a process to create a system of indigenous Hawaiian best practices that acknowledges the natural contours of the land, the specific resources located within each moku, and the methodology necessary to sustain resources and community.

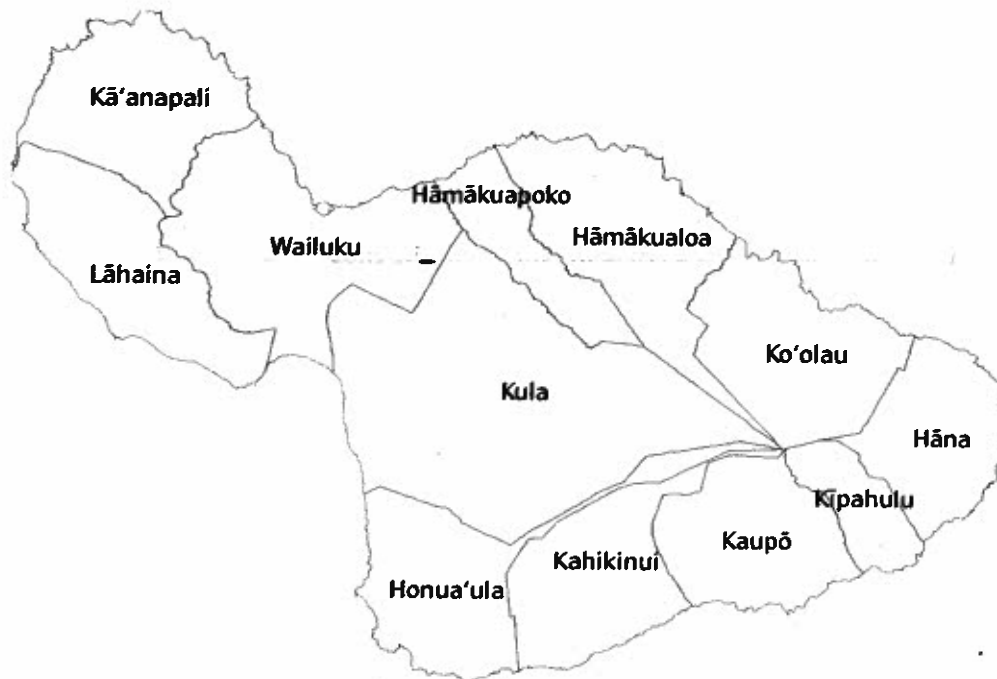
Act 288 (2012)

Established the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee within DLNR. The AMAC consists of eight members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate from a list of nominations submitted by the 'aha moku councils of each island. The AMAC's role is to advise DLNR on issues such as:

- Integrating indigenous resource management practices with western management.
- Identifying a comprehensive set of indigenous practices for natural resource management.
- Fostering understanding and practical use of native Hawaiian resource knowledge, methodology, and expertise.
- Sustaining the State's marine, land, cultural, agricultural, and natural resources
- Providing community education and fostering cultural awareness of the benefits of the 'Aha Moku system.
- Developing an administrative structure that oversees the 'Aha Moku system.

‘AHA MOKU O MAUI CONTACT LIST

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'AHA MOKU ADVISORY COMMITTEE CONTACT LIST

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Executive Director	Leimana DaMate	DLNR-AMAC PO Box 621 Honolulu, HI 96809	Leimana.k.damate@hawaii.gov

'AHA MOKU DRAFT RULES PROCESS

Pursuant to SCR 55 (2015), the AMAC is in the process of engaging stakeholders for the purpose of developing and adopting rules for its operation and administration. The current draft of the rules can be found online at:

www.ahamokuhawaii.org/uploads/4/1/9/5/41958209/amac_draft_rules__10.6.15_.pdf

Draft Rules Schedule:

1. First deadline to submit comments is April 30, 2016.
2. When all comments are received, they will be compiled and given to the AMAC member (po'o) of each island to share with and receive additional input from the public and the ahupua'a and moku communities of that island; after which a new draft will be finalized and distributed.
3. June, July, and August of 2016 are planned for public and moku meetings within the State.
4. A new comment period on the revised draft rules is anticipated to be September 2016
5. AMAC will vote on the final rules in October, 2016.
6. The final report on the Aha Moku rules will be submitted to the Hawaii State Legislature in 2017.

Comments on the proposed rules can be submitted online at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1HvqfuSQ4QXmqQP9dBNVE2xYiKz4NQ_fBeSlv7a10wYs/vi ewform

Comments on the proposed rules can also be sent to the AMAC office at:

Aha Moku Advisory Committee, c/o DLNR, P.O. Box 621, Honolulu, HI 96809.

