

Waiāhole Hydropower for Community Resilience

By Hui Ulu Mea 'Ai~ for the Cultivation of Community Self-Reliance

- Waiāhole Valley is an agricultural community that traditionally lived sustainable lifestyles within the Hawaiian ahupua'a land management system. This was disrupted in the early 1900's, when the Waiāhole Ditch was built to take water from the Ko'olau mountains at the back of Waiāhole Valley to plantation interests in leeward O'ahu.
- In the early 1990's, the community, native Hawaiian and environmental organizations petitioned the State Commission on Water Resource Management to restore water to Waiāhole and Waikāne streams. The Waiāhole Water case went to the Hawaii Supreme Court and resulted in approximately half of the water that had been diverted to leeward Oahu was returned to Windward streams.
- Waiāhole -Waikāne Valleys are a rural, agricultural community of under 1000 people. Only 33% of the residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. Waiāhole Elementary School is one of the oldest and smallest schools in Hawai'i. Forty-five percent of students are Native Hawaiian and 68% are eligible for free or reduced lunches.
- As a rural agricultural community, Waiāhole is likely to be isolated during severe weather for a period of time. Waiāhole has a unique opportunity to utilize the waters from the Waiāhole Ditch system, which the community helped restore to Windward streams, to generate hydroelectricity in support of increased community resilience. Through this project, we will bring resources to support a community-led energy innovation to leverage Waiāhole's abundant resource – water – to restore the resiliency of the valley and community.

About our team

- Hui Ulu Mea 'Ai for the Cultivation of Community Self-Reliance (Hui Ulu) was established as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization in 1981 to expand the opportunities for residents to produce, process and market foods; and to support a strong self-sufficient agriculturally based community.
- Shake Energy Collaborative is a woman-owned public benefit corporation that partners with community groups pursuing energy sovereignty to develop community-designed, community-owned clean energy.

