

In 2018 University of Hawai'i at Hilo Geography major Kaylyn Ells-Ho'okano worked with Hawai'i Community College Geography instructor Drew Kapp to produce a map highlighting the ahupua'a of the moku or district of Puna. Ahupua'a are traditional Hawai'i land divisions that typically trend mauka-makai, from the uplands into the sea, and are a foundational element of Hawai'i geography, culture and society.

Kaylyn and Drew produced the map as a first step of the Puna Ahupua'a Awareness Project, an initiative to heighten the consciousness of Puna residents of the roughly sixty ahupua'a of which their moku is comprised: how they are arrayed, their patterns, locations, shapes, sizes, and names. Because so many people in Puna reside in subdivisions that were created in the last half-century generally without regard for traditional Hawaiian land division, and rarely honoring and employing Hawaiian place names of the areas, Kaylyn and Drew – and many others – feel it is critical that members of the Puna community be knowledgeable about and strengthen their affiliation with their respective ahupua'a, and continue to breathe life into the traditional, indigenous names by using them on a regular basis. Related to that, it was also important to Drew and Kaylyn to create a bilingual map, with text in both 'Ōlelo Hawai'i and in English. Select 'ōlelo no'eau or poetical sayings associated with Puna appear on the map, as well.

The Map of the Ahupua'a of Puna also includes recent satellite imagery that suggests land use and vegetation; major environmental features; the Kīlauea-Maunaloa geologic boundary; bathymetry; towns and villages; a few roadways, and lava flows produced by the 2018 Kīlauea eruption and subsequent shoreline changes in this dynamic district.

This map is for the community and its distribution and use is highly encouraged.

Future work for the Puna Ahupua'a Awareness Project includes the creation of an interactive ahupua'a map, the composition of a mele or chant honoring the ahupua'a, and the physical marking of ahupua'a boundaries in key areas in Puna.

Drew and Kaylyn are grateful for the assistance they have received from SDAV affiliates and members of the UH-Hilo, Hawai'i Community College, and Puna communities.