



## 1871 Trail to Ki'ilae Village



NPS / CHISHOLM

While the Royal Grounds and Pu'uhonua provide a glimpse into ancient times, the 1871 trail shows the progression of daily life into more recent history. See the convergence of ancient and historical times as you step back in time, walk in the footsteps of ancestors, and explore the rugged lava shoreline of the South Kona coast.

### Trail Information

**Length:** 2 miles (3.2 km) round-trip

**Duration:** 1.5 hours - 2 hours

**Trailhead:** Along the Coastal Access Road, behind the Visitor Center

**Hiking Safety & Information:**



Sun Protection  
& Water  
Recommended



Sturdy Shoes  
Recommended



Audio Tour  
Available on  
NPS App



Stay On Trail



Clean Up After  
Pets &  
Use A Leash

### Footpaths to Roadways

In ancient times, a network of trails was constructed across this rugged lava landscape to connect people, places, and resources. The 175-mile-long corridor of the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (NHT) preserves some of these ancient and historic trails. This section of trail is referred to as the 1871 Trail, due to improvements made in 1871.

The Ala Kahakai NHT generally follows the ancient coastal *alaloa*, or long trail that formed the primary route of travel around the island. The alaloa that the Ala Kahakai NHT follows is sometimes referred to as the "*alanui aupuni*," the Hawaiian Kingdom government road, that you can still see as the "King's Trail" in North Kona/South Kohala or the "Māmalahoa Trail" in North Kona which intersects our sister park, Kaloko-Honokōhau

National Historical Park. The ancient network of trails also included shorter more locally important trails like the *alahahele* that ran laterally with the shoreline, and the *maukamakai* trails, that ran from upland areas to coastal areas.

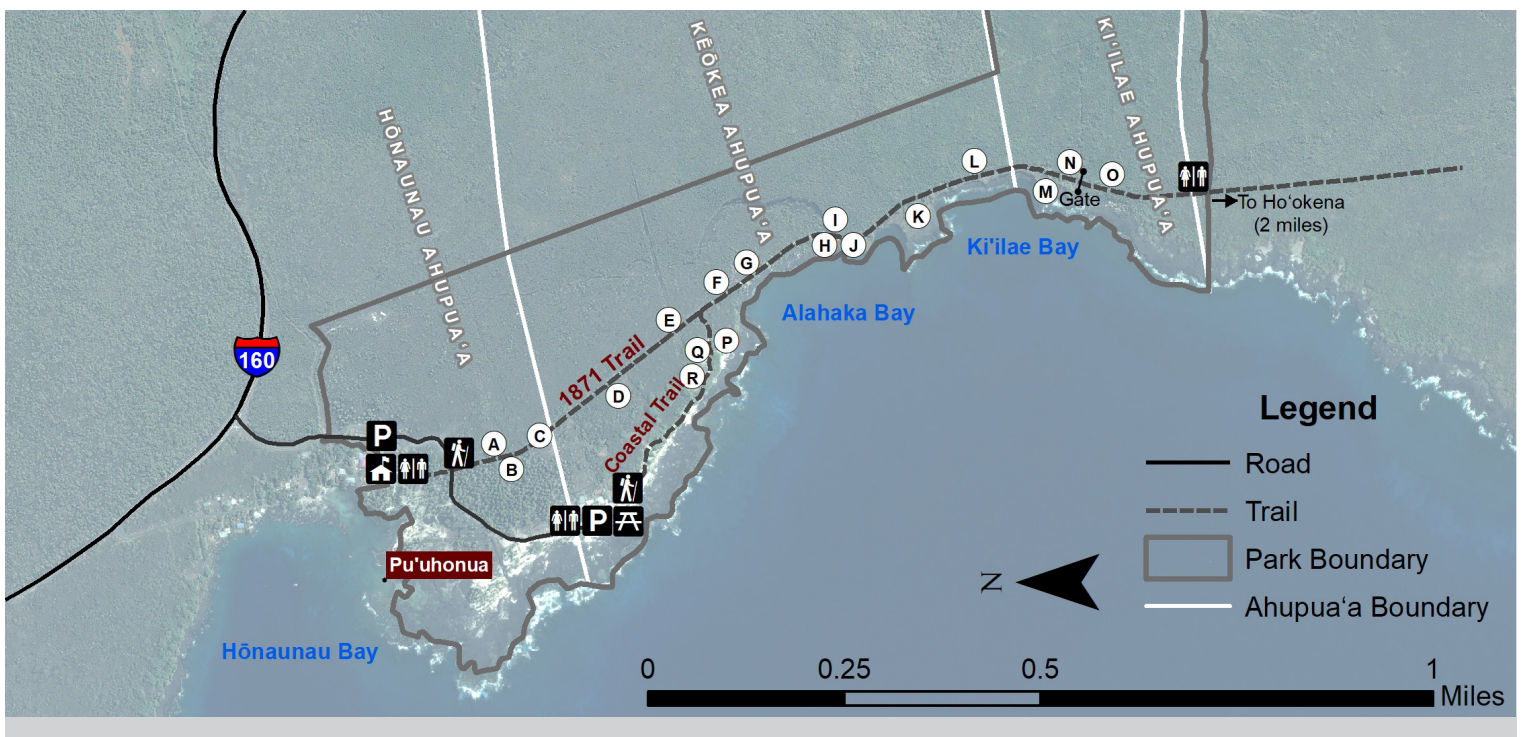
Over the years, many of these ancient trails were straightened and widened to reflect changes in transportation while others were simply abandoned. Some of the trails that survived the tests of time were preserved or even converted into roadways we know today. As you continue down the trail you will see evidence of this evolution as you will pass historic and ancient structures, see impressive geologic features, and immerse yourself in the *kahakai* (coastal) environment.



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What remains in Ki'ilae Village today are abandoned house sites, stone walls, agricultural features, animal

pens, and salt pans that can be seen from more recent times.



### 1871 Trail Stops:

**A. Hōnaunau Hōlua** This hōlua sledding track was used for *he'e hōlua*, “sled surfing,” or “land sledding,” an important ritual-sport in Hawai'i for *ali'i* (chiefs).

**B. Kōnane Papamū** This kōnane playing surface, or papamū, is one of many that can be seen along the Kona coastline.

**C. Stone Walls & Curbstones** These *uhau humu pohaku* (traditional dry-set masonry) walls are used to divide property or enclose garden plots and animal pens. Curbstones line the trail to make it easier for pack animals to follow.

**D. Ōma'ō Heiau** A pile of rubble and a large, extensively shaped standing stone that is all that remains of the Ōma'ō heiau (temple).

**E. Kēōka Hōlua** The Kēōkea hōlua is the longest hōlua found in the park. Stones from this hōlua were used to make the 1871 improvements to this trail.

**F. Animal Pen** This high-walled goat pen is an indicator of changing times and lifestyles. Before goats were introduced in 1813, the only domesticated animals would have been Polynesian pigs, dogs, and chickens.

**G. Alahaka Heiau & Keanae'e Cliffs** While rubble is all that remains of the Alahaka heiau today, take a moment to imagine what this impressive structure must have looked like with the impressive natural amphitheater of the volcanic Keanae'e cliffs behind.

**H. Alahaka Ramp** Prior to the construction of this ramp, access up this *pali* (cliff) was only via ladder or rope. This improvement allowed hooved animals to traverse beyond the cliffside.

**I. Waiū o Hina Lava Tube** This lava tube was formed by molten lava flowing from Mauna Loa. When the eruption ceased, the lava drained from this tube leaving a hollow tube.

**J. Shoreline Viewpoint** Rest for a moment and reflect on your journey so far. Imagine what it would have been like if this trail was your only connection to the world beyond your village.

**K. 'Āhinahina Point - John Ahu Complex** Only the most well-to-do houses in Ki'ilaie village had tin roofing that allowed for water catchment. All other fresh water was either collected from brackish ponds or brought in from wetter areas up mauka.

**L. Ki'ilaie Village** Ki'ilaie Village offers a glimpse into the past, when Hawai'i was changing rapidly, but still supported traditional aspects of daily life. This area may have been inhabited as early as the 1600's and remained occupied until the 1930's. This sustainable community thrived until a work-for-money economy became the norm.

**M. Kahikina House Site** *Ua ola no kai ia kai*. Life comes from the sea. The Kahikina family that in lived at this house site were expert fishermen and exemplified the Ki'ilaie villagers' connection to the sea. Fish and other ocean resources were a major source

of income and vital to survival in this isolated community.

**N. Mauka-Makai Trail** *Ua ola no uka ia uka*. Life comes from the land. Along the fenceline leading up the mountain is what remains of another type of ancient trail that connected the coastal areas with the fertile, rainy uplands. These mauka-makai trails connected Ki'ilaie villagers with upland gardens where the majority of food was grown.

**O. Pā Hale** The stone walls on either side of the trail are enclosed house sites of pā hale. Houses were mainly the old-style thatched grass houses, although some had tin roofs for water catchment. No house in Ki'ilaie had electricity or a bathroom.

### Coastal Trail Stops:

**P. Keawe's House Site** The remnants of this ancient house site exhibit a traditional division of space characteristic of a chiefly residence. Attributed by some to Keawe nui a 'Umi or Keawe I.

**Q. Cattle Chute** This cattle chute and corral was constructed and used during the early to mid-20th century for holding and loading livestock to be transported to other parts of the island.

**R. Salt Pans** These concrete basins were constructed in the mid-1900's and used to evaporate sea water for salt production. They were also used for drying coffee.

This tour of the 1871 Trail to Ki'ilaie Village shows the progression of daily life into the modern era. As our modern world continues to transform and climate change threatens our homes and our lifestyles, we might need to look to the past for solutions to future problems and embrace a more traditional, sustainable way of life.

*I ka wā ma mua, ka wā ma hope.* The future is in the past.

What knowledge or lessons from the past can we apply to our world today?