



Hawaiian Acres

[Have you placed obstructions in the road lot?](#)



[Read This!](#)

[History](#) [Environment](#) [Hawaiian Acres Community Association](#) [Hawaiian Acres Road Corp.](#) [Land for Sale](#)

The History of Hawaiian Acres

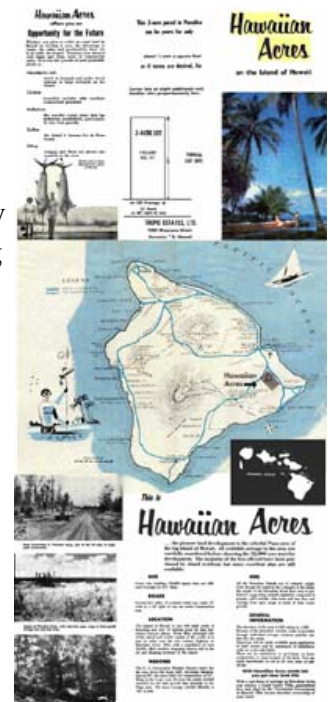
In 1958, two mainland businessmen from Denver, Colorado, Glen I. Payton and David F. O'Keefe organized a Hawaii Corporation called Tropic Estates. They purchased 12,191 acres of land between Kurtistown and Mountain View from Big Island politician and businessmen, Robert M. Yamada.

The land was divided into 4,008 lots and put on the market for \$500.00 to \$1,000.00 each, with terms as low as \$150.00 down and \$8.00 per month. The project was named Hawaiian Acres. The lots sold very well.

Hawaiian Acres became the first of many speculative subdivisions to be created. This subdivision boom continued until its end in 1975. It was never really anticipated on how to provide infrastructure should the demand arise as a result of these subdivisions filling up. It was even discussed by a HI County Planner to have the county buy up these lots. The reasoning stood, that should these subdivisions reach build-out the county could go bankrupt providing the required infrastructure. It was an ominous economic forecast indeed.

As it developed, few people actually resided in Hawaiian Acres in those early years. Though the lots sold well, few would find the rustic nature and rural lifestyle to their suiting. The type of people to make such a lifestyle change and commitment, were either those that could afford nothing but, or those that sought the relief and seclusion from the ever maddening urbanization of Oahu or the mainland, from which most made their pilgrimage.

The people that endured this ruralness came to love and respect the treasure they had found; those that didn't moved on. The absence of modern amenities tended to separate the dreamers and want-to-be's from the do'ers and pioneers. As the years passed, the trend that attracted those pioneer spirited people continued, and it does so to this day. The difference between the early day pioneers and the modern ones is simply the difference that modern



technology has had on society in those 30 plus years. Those that came in the beginning could expect slow police and fire response, no electrical service, unmaintained roads, rudimentary water catchment, poor communication systems, outhouses, and distant neighbors.



Today with community association maintained roads, improved police and fire response, a volunteer fire department, a working neighborhood watch program, the availability of alternative energy, satellite television, a fair telephone system, refined water catchment, and cesspools, those that make the move now can hardly go wrong. Hawaiian Acres is a great place to seek the good life. It offers privacy, abundant rainforest and rain (130"-200" per year), scenic vistas of 2 active volcanoes (Pu'u Oo and Mauna Loa) as well as the inactive Mauna Kea, sweeping views of the Pacific ocean, trade winds, access to state land for hunting and

traditional gathering of medicinal herbs, and reasonable insulation from the dreaded city life that most came to escape from.

Hawaiian Acres, under the State Land Use Law is zoned agricultural. It is comprised mostly of 3 acre lots with a few larger and a few smaller. Of the 72 miles of roadway, less than 10 miles are paved. Telephone service is available to about 90% of the subdivision, with electrical service at an estimated 50%. Most residents in some way or another employ alternative energy. Examples are solar electricity a.k.a. photovoltaic, solar water heating, and generator production of power, etc... All Hawaiian Acres homes use some type of rain catchments to obtain their supply for household use of water. Some residents haul in their drinking water if their catchments system is substandard or without purification capability, or if the quality is questionable due to rodent, avian, or vegetative contamination.



At an elevation of 650' to 1350', Hawaiian Acres sits on lava flows that range from 200-750 years in age. Some G-road lots are on flows that date to 3000 years in age. The predominant vegetation or flora consists of Ohia forest interspersed with tree ferns, false staghorn fern and the introduced Guava and Tibouchina, as well as numerous other less obvious native and introduced species.

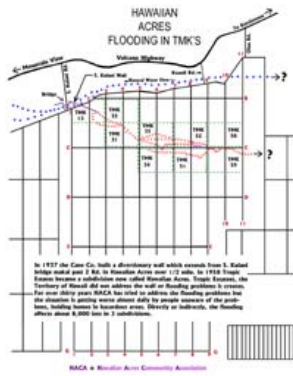


The natural wildlife or fauna, consist of the rare Hawaiian Hoary Bat (Ope'ape'a), and the endangered Hawaiian Hawk, (I'o), as well as other endangered honeycreepers that visit from higher elevations. The latter mention may be reestablishing their presence here, which was their natural habitat prior to the introduced avian malaria and pos that significantly reduced their once healthy populations. Introduced species of fauna include wild pigs, mongoose', and numerous avian species, with some of these being agricultural pest.

Hawaiian Acres has some unique geological features of which a very notable one is its numerous lava tubes or caves. Some, if not all, have unique inhabitants that have evolved within, and are found nowhere else on earth. Kazimura Cave is now known as the world's longest lava cave at nearly 40 miles, and with several entrances within Hawaiian Acres. A few caves are yet to be discovered, as entrances can be small and well hidden. Other geological features include tree molds, deep cracks, collapsed lava bubbles, and collapsed lava caves. The latter two are host to pockets or islands of vegetation that over the years have bee protected from forest fire, thus



enabling them to survive and reach a climax condition.



One manmade geological feature that has had a significant impact on Hawaiian Acres is the series of water diversion walls that total over half a mile in length and up to 12' in height, that channels water into Hawaiian Acres. This channel receives overflow from the Mt. View Drainage project developed by the county. This overflow can and has reached five feet or more in heavy rains. These walls were built by Olaa Sugar Company (AMFAC) starting in 1938, to divert floodwaters away from sugarcane fields along the Mauna Loa-Kilauea boundary into what was then considered wasteland. W.H. Shipman owned this land that was later to become Hawaiian Acres. The original developer of Hawaiian Acres became involved in litigation with AMFAC regarding these walls just after the time of subdivision. AMFAC purchased the land under and around the walls

shortly after, but has since sold almost all of them. The unpredictability regarding this flood channel is due to policy failures as well as it is from other related geological features. This unpredictability also increases the risk of planning and or development for all landowners in the vicinity. There is some concern that the cemented wall will eventually break apart due to tree roots, and lack of maintenance. If this should happen, what is already a problem could become even more serious. At this writing, the county has proposed Emergency Access Road Project planned to take the route of 8-road, through the worst flooding zone. The proposed design of lack of is a source of contention amongst the residents of this area and the users of 8-road.

Along with earthquakes, the most significant geological features affecting Hawaiian Acres future are the same as from which it was created, "lava flows". Hawaiian Acres sits in Lava Hazard Zone-3. Lava Hazard Zones are rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with a number 1 rating as the most hazardous. By this scale, it would appear imminent that Hawaiian Acres will be affected by lava sometime in the future. How far into the future is unknown. Judging by the geological history, the size and areas covered by Mauna Loa, Kilauea and Mauna Kea, it may be unwise to promote build-out or to aggressively develop in the eventual paths of lava inundation. As it currently stands, the Hawaii County General Plan and the Puna Community Development Plan does just that, promotes maximum occupancy or build-out.

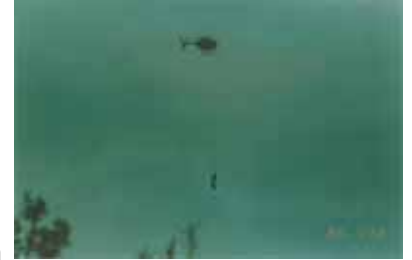
Whatever plan becomes the model in which to envision our future and to work from, for Hawaiian Acres and the surrounding subdivisions, it should give full consideration to the unstable geological nature of the land underneath. It should also attempt not to repeat what has happened to Royal Gardens (see Subdividing the Lava Fields, chapter 8, in LAND AND POWER IN HAWAII, by George Cooper and Gavan Daws). Should we not heed the lesson learned by Royal Gardens, the damage and losses will surely be severe, costly, and magnified in comparison. The likelihood that our best plans could be changed by geological events of major or minor proportions will persist throughout our lives and those of many generations of our descendants.

One natural hazard to Hawaiian Acres that should not go unmentioned is the effect of VOG or volcanic gases. The predominant wind pattern or trade winds push these noxious gases away from the Puna subdivisions most often that not. The winter weather pattern has the tendency to have a reversed wind direction known as Kona Winds. During these reversals, Hawaiian Acres is immersed in the resulting VOG for weeks at a time. During which, the visibility can be limited to as little as one half of a mile. At these times, it is thick enough to taste, thus irritating one's mucous membranes, as well as one's eyes. The health effects of volcanic emissions are a topic of concern in areas of geothermal energy production, though these particular emissions are small in comparison, they are monitored and studied closely. There is now a VOG HOTLINE in effect, that gives a daily reading. This has a scale rating of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most serious. As of this writing, no testing stations are available

for Hawaiian Acres.

Helicopter over-flights are a continuous sight to the residents of Hawaiian Acres, on their way to view the eruption activity for tourists. These over-flights are simply a side effect of living in close proximity to an active volcano. One positive aspect of the tour helicopters is that they simply pass over, as contrasted by law enforcements encroachments upon the privacy of the residents in their search and destroy marijuana eradication efforts.

No historical account of Hawaiian Acres would be complete without mention of the illicit marijuana business. Hawaiian Acres, like the rest of Puna, has been known to produce the legendary Puna Buds, one of the most potent strains of Cannabis Sativa and Cannabis Indica ever cultivated for recreational drug use. Despite its illegality, it is undisputable that the economical benefits to Hawaiian Acres, Puna, Hawaii County, and the state have been profound. AT its peak, this trade has been estimated to approach a yearly production value of nearly 1 Billion dollars statewide. Even though this industry continues to this day, it has been considerably reduce by law enforcement. Thus making it a fraction of what is was in the 1980's. This industry will most likely flourish as long as it's illegal, simply because of the laws of supply and demand of its underground economy. Direct economic benefits include jobs for law enforcement, and related support groups ranging from prosecutors and judges to penal facilities and employees as well as the growers themselves with the money they spend on cars, land, building supplies, food, fertilizers, and their families. The county, state, and federal governments benefit also from the increased revenues through sales tax, land tax, fuel tax, and income taxes generated as this illegal money filters into legal commerce. The future of this industry does have one uncertainty-legalization. Legalization would break the back of the industry completely. But this prospect would be unlikely because o the magnitude of its current economic benefits. Also, dialogue has begun regarding the merits of industrial hemp, a non-drug strain of cannabis. This fiber producing plant is used elsewhere in the world for paper, clothing, essential oils, and other uses. Should industrial hemp studies prove to be a feasible, viable and a prudent agricultural venture, and if changes to the current laws allow, it could likely be a future crop for Hawaiian Acres, considering our ideal climate.



POST OFFICE BOX 368 KURTISTOWN, HAWAII 96760 PHONE/FAX: [\(808\) 966-9892](tel:(808)966-9892)
EMAIL: HACA@ALOHA.NET