

Section 3.5 | Areas of Stability

Through the community plan process, the community not only identified areas that should change in the next 20 years, they also identified areas that should remain the same. These areas of stability reflect several things the South Maui community cares about protecting for future generations, including cultural resources, open spaces, environmental features, and natural systems, like wetlands. There are three areas of stability identified in this Plan.

Gulches

Area Description

This Plan identifies gulches in greater detail than the previous community plan. Improved imagery and topographic information have made it easier to identify and map gulches more clearly and accurately. This Plan takes a significant step toward identifying and mapping these features of the South Maui landscape to aid in the protection of the community and coastal resources from flooding and mud flows.

Why is this area important?

Gulches are pathways for water to move mauka to makai. As water flows downhill, it picks up soils, decaying plant matter, and contaminants. Prohibiting development and impervious surfaces in these areas ensures that as water runs through the gulches, vegetation and soils slow the flow, thereby allowing for filtration and sedimentation before the flow reaches the reefs and loko i'a. Additionally, protecting these natural drainage systems and adjacent floodplains from development reduces the risk of flooding and harm to the community.

Preserving gulches with an Open Space community plan designation will allow traditional practices to continue and encourage restoration activities allowing more water to infiltrate the 'āina and decreasing the potential for damaging floods.

'Āhihi-Kīna'u/Kanaio

Area Description

The 'Āhihi-Kīna'u and Kanaio Natural Area Reserves are important natural and cultural assets. 'Āhihi-Kīna'u was the State's first Natural Area Reserve, designated in 1973. The reserve includes marine ecosystems, anchialine ponds, and lava fields from the last eruption of Haleakalā. The 'Āhihi-Kīna'u Natural Area Reserve consists of 1,238 acres of land and 807 acres of ocean. Kanaio was designated a Natural Area Reserve in 1991. The rough lava terrain contains a remnant of the native dryland forest that once covered the leeward slope of Haleakalā, the Hoapili trail, and other archeological sites.

Why is this area important?

As the majority of South Maui has developed and changed, the 'Āhihi-Kīna'u and Kanaio Natural Area Reserves have protected and preserved the geologic setting of the most recent lava flow on Maui, unique nearshore coral reef ecosystems, anchialine ponds, many cultural and significant geologic sites, as well as habitat for numerous rare and endangered species. Although the area is primarily State Conservation, ensuring that development in the area respects the open space and the natural aesthetic will be necessary to maintain this unique area.

Area-specific policy: **Policy 3.5.1** | Preserve viewsheds, both mauka and makai, from Ahihi-Kina'u and Kanaio Natural Area Reserves. The built environment must respect the area's cultural and scenic resources and historic significance, and should blend with the surrounding area as much as possible.