

William Weatherwax

I've lived in Hawai'i for over eleven years and I definitely consider it my home. When I moved to Lahaina from the north shore of Oahu I was disheartened to see that there were so many new hotels and condos being built. West Maui is such a beautiful place that has some powerful reasons to be preserved and perpetuated. I think that it's very important to stop over development and not lose sight of the past or historical value of the island.

When I went to Kaho'olawe last fall, I noticed the enormous difference in the amount of calm and peacefulness. Kealaikahiki bay is a lot like a model of an undeveloped Maui. It's incredibly tranquil there; it's not over run by tourists and busy highways. It was the closest I've been to the way Hawai'i used to be. The culture of ancient Hawai'i was all around, we got to see the archeological site where Hawai'ians once made adz for carving canoes, and the navigators' chair where aspiring navigators were taught the ways of navigating by the stars. I really wish that every island had those qualities that were on Kaho'olawe. West Maui needs to get back to its roots more, we need less super stores and more nature preserves. We need more pristine beaches and less gigantic hotels.

Hawai'ian history is so unique and fascinating that it would be a shame to lose even the littlest piece of the past. It's important to preserve the history and culture of West Maui alive because it is such a great place. The kids that live here should learn more about the culture and history of Maui. I remember taking Hawai'ian studies when I was a junior and nobody was interested in the subject but me. I loved to learn about the Ali'i and the Ahupua'a. The ancient wars where King Kamehameha pushed whole armies off the Pali always fascinated me. It made my blood boil when I learned that the Missionary brothers forced the king to sign the islands away by gunpoint. Hawai'ians need to remember their history otherwise the wrongs of the past will just be dismissed, and that would be heartbreaking.

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Of all the places that I've lived, West Maui is the most cultured and diverse. It has a rich history and a unique culture. I'm worried though; it's great qualities could be pushed out by over-development and lack of interest. However, I have seen many signs of hope. I was glad to see that the Ritz was built further back to preserve the Hawai'ian burial ground in front of it. That shows that someone is protecting the culture of West Maui, and placing the beauty of the land over filling their wallets. History is of the utmost importance because once it is lost or destroyed it's gone forever, unlike money which comes and goes. We need to preserve the island spirit for our future generations to cherish as we have all our lives.