



# Foundation Document Overview

## Haleakalā National Park

Island of Maui, Hawai'i



### Contact Information

For more information about the *Haleakalā Foundation Document*, contact: [hale\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:hale_superintendent@nps.gov) or (808) 572-4400 or write to: Superintendent, Haleakalā National Park, P.O. Box 369, Makawao, HI, 96768

## Purpose



*For the inspiration of current and future generations, HALEAKALĀ NATIONAL PARK protects a wild volcanic landscape with a wide array of fragile and diverse native ecosystems, including plant and animal species found nowhere else on Earth. Our stewardship perpetuates the unique and continuing connections between Hawaiian culture and this sacred and evolving land.*



## Significance

Significance statements express why Haleakalā National Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Rising 10,000 feet from the sea to the summit of Haleakalā, the park protects a striking variety of natural landscapes ranging from tropical rain forest to subalpine desert. Within these lands, extreme gradients of rainfall and temperature shape the park's remarkable biodiversity.
- Haleakalā National Park preserves unrivaled examples of native Hawaiian ecosystems, providing a home for diverse threatened and endangered species, including some that exist nowhere else in the world, and still others yet to be discovered.
- From its windswept cinder fields to its lush rain forest, the Haleakalā Wilderness provides a panorama of exceptional grandeur where visitors may find solitude and inspiration within a vast and colorful landscape.
- Haleakalā National Park preserves places, resources, stories, and intangible elements of profound sacred importance to Native Hawaiians. Collectively, these are linked by the piko, the life-line that honors the past and connects the living Hawaiian culture of today to future generations.
- Haleakalā National Park is known for its exceptional scenery, including sunrises and sunsets above the clouds; coursing waterfalls, clear pools, and crashing waves; lush rain forests; and sparkling, star-filled skies. These and countless other sights and scenes provide transformational experiences for residents and visitors alike.
- Visitors to the park can enjoy a broad spectrum of natural sounds, including a rare opportunity to experience intense quiet inside the Haleakalā Crater. Sound levels in the crater are among the lowest recorded in any national park.
- The Haleakalā shield volcano, one of the highest peaks in the Pacific, is the result of countless volcanic eruptions during the past two million years, and unique erosion in action.
- At Haleakalā, the volcano's height, landscape, air quality, and location on Earth provide for excellent, clear night skies. From ancient Polynesian navigators to present-day astronomers, people have and continue to use the summit of Haleakalā to study and view the night sky. Numerous light-sensitive species, whose lives are negatively impacted by artificial light, depend on Haleakalā's natural lightscapes for survival.

## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Natural Sounds, Viewsheds, and Dark Night Skies**
- **Kīpahulu Moku (including ‘Ohe‘o Gulch and Palikea Stream)**
- **Wilderness**
- **Ongoing Connections to Living Hawaiian Culture**
- **Outstanding Geological Resources, Including the Haleakalā Volcano and Crater**
- **Archeological and Historic Resources Associated with Native Hawaiian Culture**
- **Native Hawaiian Biological Diversity**
- **Kuleana**
- **Museum Archive and Collections**

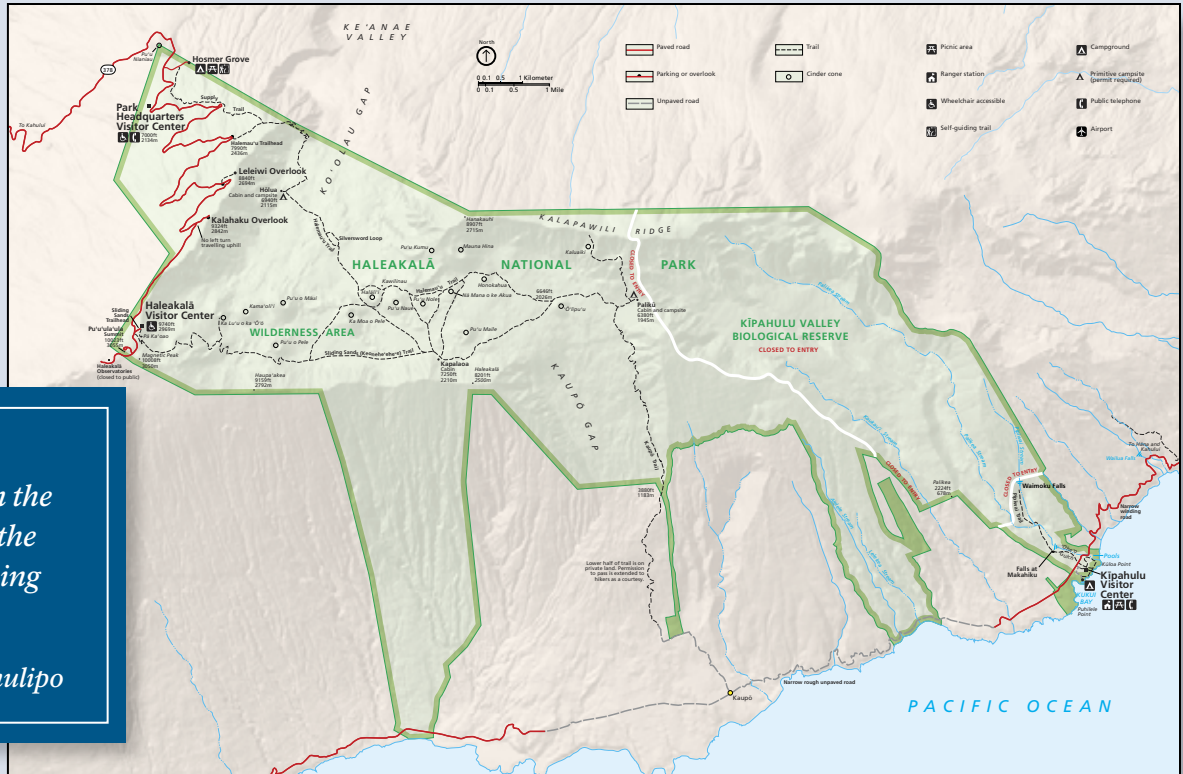


## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Haleakalā National Park supports diverse ecosystems from sea level to 10,000 feet in elevation that are the last and only home for many plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth.
- Haleakalā National Park’s endemic plants and animals are continually threatened by alien species and human actions. Loss of these species endangers not only the health of remnant Hawaiian ecosystems, but intricate connections with living Hawaiian culture.
- Haleakalā National Park’s visitors, neighbors, and staff share the kuleana (responsibility) of protecting the park’s ecosystems and qualities of wilderness, clear night sky, natural quiet, and clean air.
- The Native Hawaiian principle of mālama ‘āina (caring for the land) parallels NPS management goals at Haleakalā National Park, allowing park staff, neighbors, and visitors to learn from and apply both traditional knowledge and scientific research.
- The Haleakalā shield volcano is the result of two million years of an ongoing contest between volcanism and erosion, in which the handiwork of Pele is constantly challenged by the forces of wind and rain.
- From the first Polynesian settlers to visitors today, people have been drawn to Haleakalā—for cultural and religious reasons, historic and scientific interests, recreation, and inspiration.
- Haleakalā is sacred to Native Hawaiians and supports a vibrant, living Hawaiian culture, including stories, sites, and traditions that link the past to the present and future.

# Description



*“Born was the stingray living in the sea, guarded by the stormy petrel living on land.”*

*– found in the Kumulipo*

Haleakalā National Park is on the eastern side of Maui, the second-largest island in the Hawaiian Islands chain. Originally established in 1916 as part of Hawaiʻi National Park, Haleakalā National Park became a separate national park system unit in 1961. The park is characterized by starkly contrasting mountain and coastal environments. Within a few miles from the coast the park rises dramatically in elevation to 10,023 feet at the summit of the dormant Haleakalā Volcano. Wind, rain, temperature, and altitude contribute to shape the widely diverse character and composition of the park’s ecosystems. The northern and eastern slopes of Haleakalā and the rain forests of the Kīpahulu Valley are among the richest botanical regions in Hawaiʻi. The remarkable ecological diversity of the park is recognized by its designation as a United Nations International Biosphere Reserve.

Approximately 24,000 acres (72% of the park) is designated wilderness. Although the park’s ecosystems retain a high percentage of unique and endemic species found nowhere else in the world, invasive plants and animals have led to the extinction or severe decline of many native species. Haleakalā’s wildlife and vegetation are therefore intensively managed to prevent further species declines and extinctions.

The Haleakalā Crater measures about 20 miles in circumference and dominates the volcanic landscape at the summit. In several places the rim of the crater rises more than 2,500 feet above the crater floor. From east of the volcano rim, the great rain forest valley of Kīpahulu drops thousands of feet to the coast. The upper Kīpahulu Valley is designated a biological reserve and is home to a vast profusion of flora and fauna, including some of the world’s rarest birds, plants, and invertebrates. The general public is restricted from accessing the fragile rain forest of the biological reserve.

Haleakalā National Park is a sacred place to kānaka maoli (Native Hawaiians) and is fundamentally linked to their traditional and contemporary beliefs, practices, and way of life. The concept of kuleana (responsibility) is central to these beliefs, passed on from the kūpuna (elders) to future generations to ensure stewardship and respect for all things spiritual and physical. Tangible and intangible cultural resources and values, place names, oral traditions/history, and features of the landscape are invaluable parts of Hawaiian culture.

Approximately 1.2 million visitors annually come to Haleakalā National Park to experience its natural and cultural wonders. The majority of visitors who travel to the summit and visitor center are drawn there to witness the awe-inspiring sunrise. On clear nights, many enjoy world-renowned star gazing and astronomy-oriented activities because of the exceptional viewing conditions.