Landscape Archaeology in Kalaupapa, Moloka‘i, Hawaiian Islands
by Professor Patrick V. Kirch

Jutting into the turbulent Pacific waters from the forbidding, cliff-bound coast of northern Moloka‘i Island, the Kalaupapa Peninsula is famous (or infamous) as the site of the leprosy (Hanson’s disease) settlement established in the 1860s by the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. However, Kalaupapa and the adjacent valleys of Wai‘ale‘ia and Waikolu—which together comprise the Kalaupapa National Historical Park—are also remarkable for an incredible diversity and richness of archaeological sites. The Kalaupapa region was home to a large population of Native Hawaiians during pre-contact and early historic times, who carried out intensive dryland cultivation of sweet potatoes on the peninsula, and irrigated pondfield cultivation of taro in the valleys. The remains of these agricultural systems, along with numerous house sites, heiau (temple) foundations, and other kinds of sites can be found throughout the Park.

Despite a pioneering survey of heiau sites in 1909 by J. F. G. Stokes of the Bishop Museum, the archaeological resources of the Kalaupapa were largely ignored until recently. A survey of parts of the peninsula by Gary Somers of the National Park Service indicated considerable potential for archaeological studies, and limited cultural resources management projects had provided information on a few sites. In August of 2000, an OAL team headed by Prof. Kirch spent three weeks in the Park carrying out a reconnaissance survey of selected sample areas, ranging from Waikolu Valley to the Nihoa landshelf. Approximately 100 archaeological sites were discovered and recorded in these sample areas, verifying the great variability in the archaeological landscapes of the Kalaupapa region. Several major heiau were also remapped in detail.

In addition to the survey work, the OAL team studied a stratified pondfield irrigation complex at the mouth of Waikolu Valley, obtaining a radiocarbon date of A.D. 1240-1280 (calibrated) from charcoal in a buried cultivation layer. Our team also resampled the Kaupikiawa Rockshelter site, originally excavated by Richard Pearson of the University of Hawaii in 1966-67. New radiocarbon dates suggest that this shelter was first occupied about 670-550 years ago (B.P., calibrated). A limited edition report on the 2000 OAL Kalaupapa project has been published; for copies, while available, contact the OAL directly. (P. V. Kirch et al., 2002, From the ‘Cliffs of Keolewa’ to the ‘Sea of Papaloa’: An Archaeological Reconnaissance of Portions of the Kalaupapa National Historical Park, Moloka‘i, Hawaiian Islands. Oceanic Archaeology Laboratory, Special Publication No. 2. Berkeley: Archaeological Research Facility.)

A second phase of archaeological research at Kalaupapa began during the summer of 2002, under the direction of OAL PhD student Mark McCoy, and will form the basis for McCoy’s doctoral research (see below).

Kalaupapa Peninsula Archaeological Project (KPAP)
by Mark McCoy

Overview
The Kalaupapa Peninsula Archaeological Project (KPAP) focuses on the pre-European contact and early historic era of occupation on the Kalaupapa Peninsula located within the Kalaupapa National Historical Park (www.nps.gov/kala/) on the north shore of Moloka‘i Island, Hawai‘i.

The Kalaupapa Peninsula historically has been home to two tragedies: the creation of the famous leprosy settlement in A.D. 1866 and the removal of the traditional Hawaiian community (kama‘aina) between A.D. 1865 and 1895. However, the Early Historic Era (A.D. 1778 - 1866) and Traditional Hawaiian Era (A.D. 200 – 1778) on the Kalaupapa Peninsula has often been overlooked in the past. Recently, a volunteer crew led by University of California, Berkeley Ph.D. candidate Mark D. McCoy completed four intensive surveys as well as several small-scale test excavations in the three traditional Hawaiian community territories (ahu‘upa‘a) of Kalaupapa, Makanalua, and Kalawao. The project in general focuses on ancient agricultural and community development in these ancient community territories that shared the extensive dryland Kalaupapa field system. Overall, the first phase of the project confirmed that area is home to one of the best preserved archaeological records in the islands.
Archaeological Field School
Preparations are currently underway for a University of California, Berkeley sponsored field school in the Kalaupapa National Historical Park. The field school will allow the opportunity to train a new generation of archaeologists in Hawaii and provide the National Park Service (NPS) with vital information about the archaeological landscape needed to assess the impact of future development in Kalaupapa. We are indeed very fortunate to receive generous project funding and logistical support from the NPS.

Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement
The name Kalaupapa has forever become linked with leprosy (Mycobacterium leprae), now called Hansen’s disease. In 1866, under pressure from Western medical and political advisors, the Kingdom of Hawai‘i created a leprosy settlement on the Kalaupapa Peninsula at the base of the enormous sea cliffs of Moloka‘i Island. Over the years the peninsula has been home to some 8,000 patients including Joseph DeVeuster, the famous “Leper Priest of Molokai.” Father Damien, as he is known, has been the subject of a number of popular books and a full-length movie. The arrival of new patients from the Hawaiian Islands ended only after the disease became treatable with sulfone antibiotics in mid-1940’s. Today, many years after the quarantine was lifted, most of the last of the original Hansen’s patients still choose live in Kalaupapa. Although the Kalaupapa Peninsula is part of a National Historical Park, visitor access to the tiny community of about one hundred people - including patients and full-time employees of the State of Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH) and the National Park Service (NPS) - is strictly controlled on behalf of the patients. The people of Kalaupapa and their stories of separation, disease, and their will to overcome prejudices make it a very special place in the hearts of the people of Hawai‘i.

Project Description
Although archaeologists have been visiting the peninsula for many years, the Kalaupapa Peninsula Archaeological Project will be the first to take on the massive task of characterizing the development of the Kalaupapa field system. This dryland field system consists of a continuous series of rows of low walls oriented to protect the plants within garden plots from the dominant northeastern winds that sweep across the peninsula. Historic era documents tell us that this area at one time was popular with foreign traders because of the bountiful harvests of a variety of sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes. To track the development of the fields – which current evidence suggests may have occurred over a period of some 500 years – a combination of information gathered from survey, excavation, and historical records will be incorporated into a relational database utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. Valuable ethnographic data from land claim records will specifically aid in a discussion of community development on the peninsula.

Previous Research
We know, from several occasional visits by early surveyors, pioneering archaeologists, and enthusiastic amateurs, of many ancient sacred sites in Kalaupapa (e.g., temples (heiau), fishing shrines (ko‘a), etc.). Since the creation of the Kalaupapa National Historical Park in 1980, archaeology on the peninsula has been aimed at cultural resource management often ahead of large-scale construction projects. In the summer of 2000 a team from the University of California, Berkeley’s Oceanic Archaeological Laboratory, led by Professor Patrick V. Kirch, went to Kalaupapa to investigate the area. Their geographically broad research included the four traditional land units (ahupua‘a) within the park boundaries and clearly showed the peninsula is home to one of the most well-preserved archaeological records in all the islands.

Phase 1: 2002 Field Season
The first phase of the Kalaupapa Peninsula Archaeological Project (KPAP), undertaken in the summer of 2002, continued the long-term partnership between the University of California, Berkeley and the NPS. A volunteer crew led by Ph.D. candidate Mark McCoy completed four intensive surveys as well as several small-scale test excavations in the three traditional land units (ahupua‘a) of Kalaupapa, Makanalua, and Kalawao. In addition, nearly all of the sacred sites described at the turn of the century by J.F.G. Stokes (Bishop Museum) have been re-located, mapped in detail, and had their GPS locations recorded in a GIS database. This same technology was used to record agricultural garden plots in the extensive dryland field system on the peninsula.

Phase 2: Archaeological Field School
The second phase of the project involves an archaeological field school. Undergraduate students from Hawai‘i and the mainland U.S. will be trained in methods of survey, excavation, and analysis. This will include several surveys to discover new sites, the excavation of portions of known sites including...
sites found in the previous phase, the radiocarbon dating of samples from these excavations, the analysis of recovered material (e.g., stone, shell, bone, historic artifacts, etc.), and the continued development of the GIS database.