



Haleakalā Centennial



Haleakalā National Park celebrates its first 100 years in 2016. We share this Centennial anniversary with Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and the National Park Service itself. Like the National Park Service, the Hawai'i parks came into being because individuals loved these spectacular scenic areas and wanted to share them with the rest of America and to preserve them for the future.

A Park Is Born

Haleakalā began as a section of Hawai'i National Park, established on August 1, 1916. The National Park Service was established on August 25, 1916, to conserve national parks for “the enjoyment of future generations.” Hawai'i park promoters had originally focused on the frequently erupting volcanoes of Hawai'i Island. Two promoters, Lorrin A. Thurston and volcanologist Dr. Thomas A. Jaggar, worked with Hawai'i and Washington, D.C., officials to bring about the new park. Thurston had lived on Maui as a child and visited the peak of Haleakalā many times. A newcomer to the islands, Jaggar found Haleakalā compelling, saying that “the crater at sunrise is the greatest volcanic spectacle on earth.” Thus, Haleakalā was included as part of Hawai'i National Park.



Journeys to the Summit

In ancient times, few visited the peak of Haleakalā. This mountaintop is part of *wao akua*, the realm of the gods, while humans live below in *wao kanaka*, the realm of man. On this sacred mountaintop, ancient Hawaiian seers studied the stars, *kāhuna* (priests) conducted ceremonies, and stone workers found fine-grained basalt to make stone implements. Sometimes people hiked over the top of the mountain to reach the opposite side, rather than trek along the rugged shoreline. In general, however, the mountain peak was a place to regard with awe from below.

Horses brought to Hawai'i by early Western visitors

made travel to the summit easier and enabled more people to enjoy the beauty of its great summit valley, carved by water and erosion. Local families loved to camp on the valley floor. Generations of Upcountry Maui residents thought of the “crater” as their backyard. They rode up often, sometimes hunting wild goats (originally imported by visiting sea captains) that had multiplied and spread into these sensitive lands.

By the early 1900s, Maui community leaders had set up the first permanent structure on the “crater” rim to shelter overnight visitors and were actively promoting the establishment of a national park.



Welcoming the World

The Maui section of the new park received funding as part of federal programs to improve the economy during the 1930's Great Depression. The first ranger was assigned to the Haleakalā section in 1935 to welcome visitors and supervise preservation efforts.

The most important project for sharing the beauty of Haleakalā was the building of a road to the summit. When it opened with a great celebration in 1935, young Maui men working for the Civilian Conservation Corps organized parking for 320 cars filled with excited islanders. Then they went back to their work of constructing trails, hauling materials to carpenters building three cabins on the valley floor, and assisting with early efforts to save the rare 'āhinahina (silversword) plant.

In 1961, Haleakalā became a separate national park.



The new Haleakalā National Park continued to grow, first with buildings to serve visitors and then, in 1976, with the addition of a new park section in Kīpahulu. Several thousand acres in Kīpahulu and Kaupō were added in the late 20th and early 21st century, raw lands with yet unknown treasures now preserved for posterity.

Saving Species

More than 200 endangered species live in Haleakalā National Park. The two most famous are the Haleakalā 'āhinahina and the nēnē.

Boy Scouts helped park and state wildlife officials establish a refuge for the nēnē, a goose not normally found at this elevation. The boys strapped cardboard boxes to their backs, each holding a nēnē, and carried the birds to their new home at Palikū. Long extinct in the wild on Maui when the



first birds arrived in 1962, the nēnē, adapted well and are frequently seen on park land.

Found nowhere else, the 'āhinahina and other native plants were near to extinction from careless human activities and the predation of wild goats, cattle, and pigs. Beginning in 1976, park staff and many volunteers worked to remove the feral animals and surround the park with fencing to keep them out. Native plants now flourish on the protected lands.



For the Future

Haleakalā National Park continues its century-old stewardship of natural and cultural treasures with the help of partners, kūpuna (elders), volunteers, visitors, and local residents. The park conducts year-round habitat restoration and endangered species protection programs, volunteer projects, education programs, cultural demonstrations, and internships.



These efforts are part of the park's ongoing kuleana (responsibility) to protect the timeless natural and cultural legacies of Haleakalā for future generations.

