

Map of Trust Lands on Oahu

The farms of common Hawaiians disappeared during the 19th century when the traditional “feudal” system gave way to white-inspired private property. Some upper class Hawaiians (families of the chiefs) managed to keep their estates, but the public lands of the Hawaiian monarchy (Crown lands and government lands) were involuntarily ceded to the United States at annexation. After designating much of the ceded lands for military purposes, the federal government returned the rest of the ceded lands as a public trust. Some wealthy Hawaiian royals also placed big parcels of land into a private trust.

Today the island of Oahu is an interesting tapestry of trust lands. This map from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) shows the breakdown. The green areas are the State held ceded lands, which include Honolulu International Airport. The pink areas are the federally held ceded lands, which include all the military bases. The orange areas are lands held in trust by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, which are mostly on the less desirable leeward side of the island. The purple areas are lands held in trust by the private Bishop Estate. The yellow and red areas are smaller parcels held in trust by two other royal estates.

Map from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, “Public and Private Trust Lands—Oahu,” 2005. Map link courtesy of the OHA. Trust land maps of four other islands are also available on the OHA website at www.oha.org. The direct map link is www.oha.org/cat_content.asp?contentid=36&catid=44.