

1998 Scenario

The year is 1998. Five years ago, in 1993, the Hamakua Sugar Company went bankrupt and shut down. A year later, Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate purchased the property that had belonged to Hamakua Sugar. This included the ditch system and Läläkea Reservoir which had been used to divert water from the stream to irrigate the thousands of acres of cane fields. Now that it is no longer necessary to irrigate the cane fields, others are claiming a need for the water. Taro farmers in the valley and small-scale farmers on the “upside” (above the valley) are claiming to need the water. Some say the diversion should be removed so that the stream can flow its natural course. Others feel that the diversion should be kept in place to provide water to new farming and aquaculture efforts near the reservoir. A complaint has been filed with the government by a community group of farmers in Waipiyo Valley claiming that the water is being wasted.