

Lida Pigott Burney manages the Makauwahi Cave Reserve, a collaboration with Grove Farm under support from three federal agencies, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and the Hawaii Tourism Authority, on a 17-acre parcel on Kauai's south shore at Maha'ulepu. The site is famous for the spectacular fossil and archaeological finds in the cave, also for the habitat of a rare assemblage of endemic blind cave invertebrates. On the surrounding property, six different management units demonstrate a wide array of restoration techniques, provide critical habitat for endangered plants and animals, and provide an experimental test-bed for ecological applications and cyberinfrastructure.

Her technical expertise includes palynology, aerobiology, sediment coring, excavation, and rare plant conservation. She is the author of numerous publications on the effects of human activities on prehistoric environments, causes of extinction and environmental change, and conservation. Her work at Makauwahi Cave with Dr. David Burney, and a crew of scientific collaborators, college students, and dedicated volunteers, provides educational opportunities for thousands of school children and cave visitors every year. She co-hosts a college-level field school program each summer for the University of Hawaii and organizes special events and volunteer opportunities for the local community and visitors to the island. She also supervises a jobs program at Makauwahi Cave that trains unemployed native Hawaiians of Ni'ihau descent in conservation techniques and produces native plant seeds and nursery stock for other restoration projects.