



MAHALO 'ĀINA

Give Back to the Forest

An Initiative of the Hawai'i Forest Institute

Our 'Āina, Our Legacy

Hawai'i is like no other place on earth. When people think of Hawai'i, they likely picture palm trees, vast beaches, and warm, tropical weather. In fact, the Hawaiian Islands also host climates that rival the harshest places on earth. From mountain snow to desert-like terrain and deep, lush rainforests, Hawai'i's ecosystems are unparalleled in both their beauty and uniqueness.

These ecosystems support many different forest types, ranging from tropical dry forests and arid scrubland to subalpine woodlands and cloud forests. They also include urban forests, agro-forests, and commercial tree farms. No matter the type, healthy forests are ecological life-support systems that are vital to our environment, our health, and our livelihood.



The mission of the Hawai'i Forest Institute is to promote the health and productivity of Hawaii's forests through forest restoration, educational programs, information dissemination, and support for scientific research. HFI was established in 2003 by the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA).

These forests supply us with fresh water, protect our world-class beaches from destructive erosion, and absorb greenhouse gases. These forests shelter more than 10,000 unique species of flora and fauna, an unprecedented example of biodiversity that holds the promise of new medicines and food crops.

Moreover, these forests are an essential link to our economic and cultural heritage. Early Hawaiians relied on and revered the land and its bounty. They used native woods to make iconic canoes, surfboards, tools, and weapons. Today, Hawai'i's forest and wood products industry contributes over \$30 million annually to the state economy.

When we lose sight of the value our forests bring to our way of life, through development and conversion to other uses, we endanger their health and very existence. The Hawai'i Forest Institute exists to ensure that our connection to the land—the 'āina—is never forgotten.

Protecting Our Forests

Founded in 2003, the Hawai'i Forest Institute (HFI) is a statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation and sustainable stewardship of Hawaii's forests. We collaborate with public and private partners to support forest restoration efforts, public education and outreach, and scientific research. Over the past 12 years, we have supported efforts to restore more than 50 acres of endangered dry forest habitat, outplanted 8,000 culturally significant plant species, and engaged more than 8,800 individuals through these exciting efforts. Examples of our work are featured below.

Dryland Forest Preserves

Hawaii's dry forests support many rare and endangered species. However, over 95% of Hawaii's dry forests have disappeared due to wildfires, animal predators, and invasive plants.

Through support of restoration efforts at six sites in West Hawai'i—Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest, La'i'ōpua Dryland Habitat Preserve, Pālanui Dry Forest Preserve, Honokohau National Historical Park, Pu'uhoonua O'Honaunau, and Kaloko Makai Dryland Forest Preserve—we are working to protect and enhance more than 350 acres of endangered forest habitat.

“Forests in Hawai'i are both fragile and surprisingly resilient; there is ample evidence today of recovering of native ecosystems. Thanks to innovative programs such as HFI's, there is more forest restoration occurring in Hawai'i today than ever before; a legacy I am proud to bequeath to the next generation of forest stewards.”

— Nicholas Koch, HFI Director and HFIA President

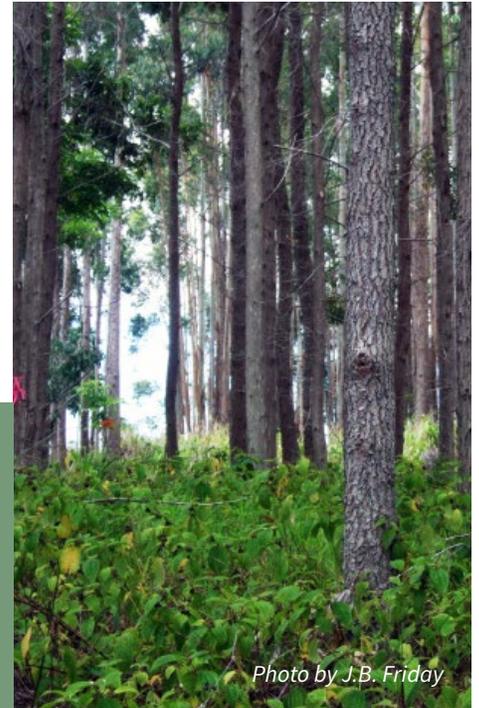


Photo by J.B. Friday

Discovery Forests

HFI has been instrumental in the creation of the Pana'eua Zoo Discovery Forest in Hilo and the Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest demonstration projects. Hundreds of elementary school students and volunteers have planted native and Polynesian plants in an outdoor educational setting that will give thousands of annual visitors a greater appreciation for Hawaii's forest ecosystems.

Our newest project is the Keauhou Bird Conservation Center (KBCC) Discovery Forest. As KBCC works to reestablish self-sustaining populations of critically endangered birds in the wild, HFI is planting koa and other native trees to provide habitat and food for the birds.



“People, especially children, are disconnected from the natural environment. The Discovery Forest is a way to reconnect them to the native ecosystems.”

— Dr. Travis Idol, HFI President



Outreach and Education

Our support of education and outreach programs provides hands-on forest stewardship opportunities for local and visiting youth. At the Kalaemanō Cultural Center, students, community members, and visitors learn about the connections of mauka (mountain) and makai (shoreline) environments of the Ka'ūpūlehu area. As part of the Kapāpala Canoe Forest Project, HFI developed a plan to bring youth to the Kapāpala Canoe Forest for cultural and environmental education.

“Our time in the forest has helped me realize how many native plants are all around us.”

— RJ Bohol, Hawai'i Island Youth Corps

HFI's success depends on our inclusive approach: bringing together diverse stakeholders from landowners, businesses, and industry experts to government groups, nonprofit organizations, and concerned citizens to achieve common goals. Moreover, we actively engage local community participation in our stewardship efforts, teaching residents and school children about nature and its link to Hawai'ian culture—right in their own neighborhoods.

We seek to leverage these education, demonstration, and informed advocacy efforts to create a shift in the public's understanding and appreciation of our diverse forest resources. By doing so, we can enhance and multiply statewide efforts to promote healthy and productive forests.

MAHALO 'ĀINA

Much has been accomplished to protect Hawaii's forest resources over the past 10 years. Strong watershed partnerships have been formed and approximately 2.2 million acres have been rededicated for uses in restoration, conservation, and appropriate economic forest development. While these achievements are remarkable, our job is far from finished. We must continue the efforts that have brought us this far.

To do so, HFI launched the MAHALO 'ĀINA *Give Back to the Forest* Initiative to focus our fundraising efforts on expanding community partnerships that support the protection and perpetuation of Hawaii's forest ecosystems. More than just a tree planting program, MAHALO 'ĀINA helps support total ecosystem management and forest stewardship, along with innovative opportunities for environmental and cultural education.

Our ambitious goal is to raise \$300,000 over the next three years to support the following projects:

- Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest, Hawai'i Island
- La'i'Ōpua Dryland Habitat Preserve, Hawai'i Island
- Kaloko Makai Dryland Forest Preserve, Hawai'i Island
- Pana'ewa Zoo Discovery Forest, Hawai'i Island
- Pālamanui Dry Forest Preserve, Hawai'i Island
- 'Āina Mauna Christmas Tree Demonstration Project, Hawai'i Island
- Kapāpala Canoe Forest, Hawai'i Island
- Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest, O'ahu
- Keauhou Bird Conservation Center Discovery Forest, Hawai'i Island
- Kua O Ka Lā Public Charter School, Hawai'i Island
- Hawai'i Island Native Hawaiian Seed Bank Cooperative, Hawai'i Island
- Honokohau National Historical Park & Pu'uhonua O'Honaunau Restoration, Hawai'i Island
- Kōke'e Area Restoration and Reforestation Project, Kaua'i
- Maui Bird Conservation Center Discovery Forest, Maui
(in exploration stage)

The dollars raised will fund native seed collection and storage; propagation, planting and long-term care of seedlings; forest site development and maintenance; project coordinators and educators; and interpretive and outreach materials and supplies.

Your generous support of MAHALO 'ĀINA will have an enduring impact. By 2018:

- 168 acres of forest habitat will have been maintained.
- 77 additional acres of forest habitat will have been restored.
- 19,000 more seedlings will have been planted, offsetting 4,750 tons of carbon.
- 6,000 additional volunteers will have been engaged.
- 5,000 students will have participated in cultural and environmental educational activities.
- 3,330,000 residents and visitors will have benefited from MAHALO 'ĀINA projects.



He ali'i ka 'āina:
He kauwa ke kanaka

The land is chief:
Man its servant.

Healthy and productive forests are balanced, bountiful systems that deserve our care, consideration and respect. By recognizing our forests as natural assets with economic, environmental, and social/cultural value, we can help promote sustainable forest management and more responsible decision-making. Through MAHALO 'ĀINA, we encourage broader thinking and collaboration that stimulates market-based conservation and stewardship.

The MAHALO 'ĀINA *Give Back to the Forest* Initiative will help ensure a thriving future for the Hawai'i Forest Institute's forest restoration and education programs to benefit the 'āina and the people of Hawai'i for generations to come.

Please join us in protecting our land and our legacy.



MAHALO 'ĀINA

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