

# KAULUNANI

**Urban and Community Forestry Program**  
*of the Department of Land and Natural Resources*  
*Division of Forestry and Wildlife*

**2024-25 yearbook**

Guess how  
many **TREES**  
were planted

Feat. stories from  
**12 partners!**

**Year one of three-**  
**year projects:**  
*Power starts and*  
*steady progress*



These projects are made possible by the support of the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program of the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.

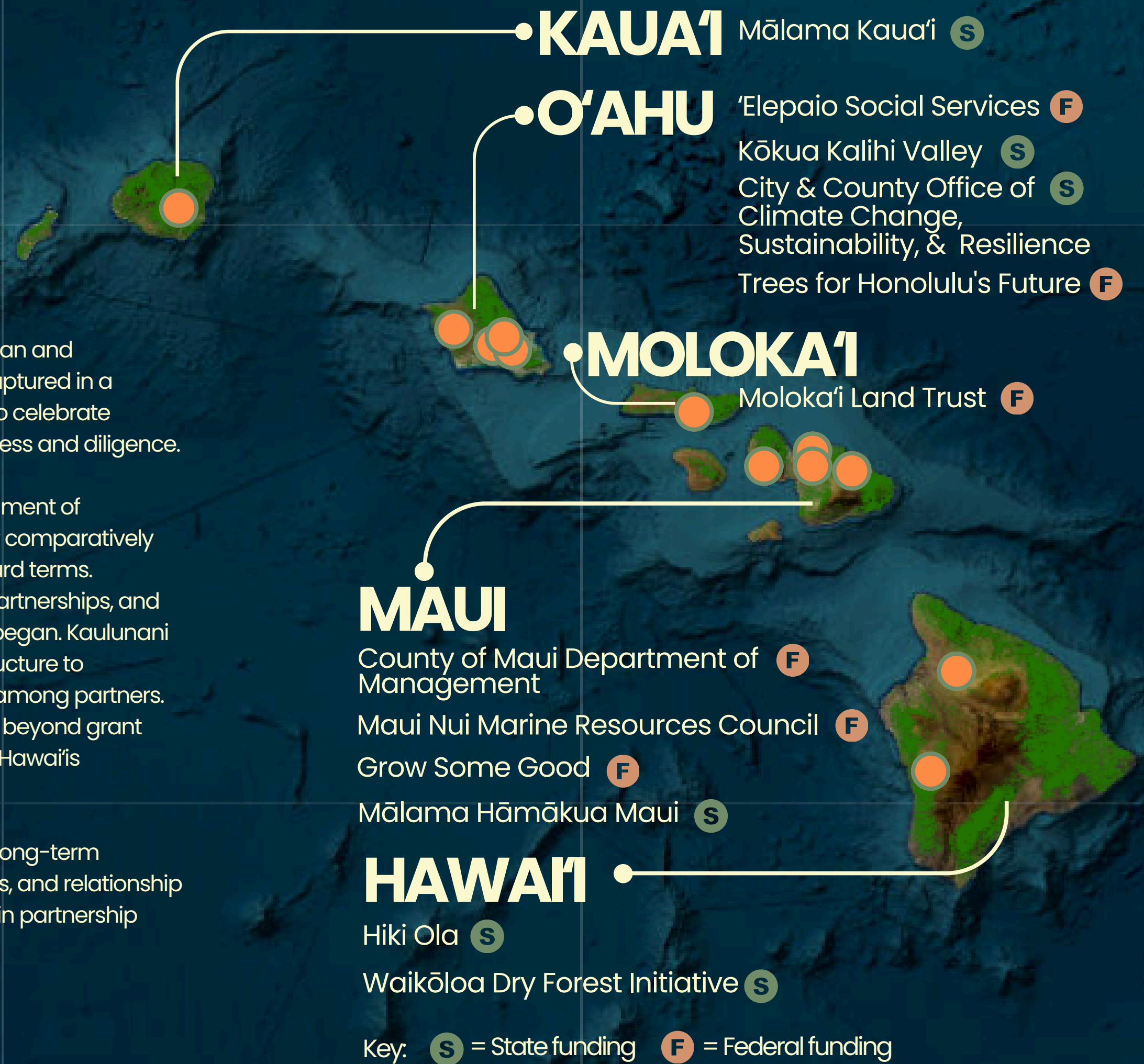
Aloha dear partners and collaborators,

Your vast and varied contributions to Hawai'i's urban and community forests reach beyond what can be captured in a pamphlet. Still, we return these highlights to you to celebrate collective effort and in appreciation for your progress and diligence.

Multi-year partners featured here represent a segment of Kaulunani's overall grant program, with awards of comparatively larger dollar amounts and longer, three-year award terms. Kaulunani currently maintains 58 active project partnerships, and has supported 450+ projects since the program began. Kaulunani is grateful for the opportunities created by this structure to strengthen our network and build pilina with and among partners. However, we emphasize that partnership extends beyond grant programs along with our shared commitment to Hawai'i's community forests.

In fact, this program thrives only because of your long-term preparation, your connection to your communities, and relationship to the 'āina you steward. We are honored to work in partnership with you and uplift the stories you share.

E ulu ke ola!  
Kaulunani team



# HĀNAI KAIĀULU

Projects that *nourish communities*  
with a focus on food

## ‘Elepaio Social Services Ao Pulapula

The name *Ao Pulapula* emphasizes that we are in the time of planting – in the face of invasive species and destabilized food systems, communities have the power to build self-sufficiency and food supply. To that aim, project partners established a nursery at the Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, which has stocked, sprouted, and distributed hundreds of plants to and with West O‘ahu community members. For example: in one planting round, local students planted, cared for, and took responsibility for 384 niu (coconut).



Hear from project partners, Kehau and Jesse!

## Mālama Kaua‘i Village Harvest

This project promotes proper tree care and local food utilization through gleaning (fruit harvest) workdays, tree care workshops, and establishing three tree greenhouse nurseries. Community harvest days have yielded over 5,000 lbs. of fruit that are returned to community members across Kaua‘i.

## Kōkua Kalihi Valley Ulu Koa

Ho‘oulu ‘Āina fosters relationships among community and ‘āina through plant care and distribution, guided by the foundation of their 100-acre nature preserve in Kalihi Valley, O‘ahu. Their story-catching methodology adds depth to their accountability to ‘āina. They graciously shared about this methodology with our grant partner cohort and elaborated on its impact: *“We are invited to tell our story from a place of sovereignty where we can connect to what we know as ancestral wholeness and through ceremony invite future wholeness so that we can heal the community by healing the land.”*

## Grow Some Good Nā Māla Kaiāulu

With steady volunteers and community group visits, Grow Some Good has expanded their agroforest footprint, growing native and food plants in urban Kahului, Maui. Conveniently located adjacent to the Maui Family YMCA, hundreds of youth were connected to the projects and plants over spring, summer, and fall breaks.



Photo: Sean Hower Photography

## Trees for Honolulu's Future Trees for Pālolo

This project, taglined “Planting Trees, Growing Community,” has focused on building community relationships that support healthy trees. With support of Pālolo community members, Council members, and City and County staff, Pālolo Valley District Park received a 10-tree transformation and the Pālolo Neighborhood Board accepted a resolution to consider establishing a community garden in the urban Honolulu valley.



Photo: Trees for Honolulu's Future

*“You who are planting trees here today are planting the future.”*  
Reverend Noriaki Fujimori,  
Pālolo Hongwanji

# URBAN KĪPUKA

Projects that grow *green infrastructure*  
and *refuge* among hardscapes

# BY THE NUMBERS

**1,729** youth  
**4,132** adult

volunteers and event participants

**'A'ALI'**

*Dodonaea viscosa*

Most popular tree! 1,257 planted, 326 distributed by four different partners. Mahalo 'a'ali'i for your prolific seed production and fast growth rate!

**2,624** trees  
**1,101** shrubs  
**206** ground covers

planted with community

**\$137k+**

value of 3,670 volunteer hours

**34** unique tree species/ varieties

**867** trees adopted by community members

**497** trees cared for/maintained



Original artwork (featured here) by Kelsie Dayna for the 2025 Year of Our Community Forests campaign offers a guiding vision of thriving community forests.

# PLANS TODAY...

*County initiatives to coordinate urban forest management and ordinances*



## City & County of Honolulu Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, & Resilience

This project marks a step forward in modernizing and strengthening urban forestry management to actualize a vision of a thriving tree canopy and more climate-resilient O'ahu. In this phase, project partners engaged internal stakeholders and completed the process to select a contractor to lead policy and technical design work.

## County of Maui Department of Management

This project will develop Maui's first Urban Forest Management Plan, an essential roadmap to grow and care for the island's urban forests. In this phase, the project coordinated across departments responsible for urban forests to develop a scope of work (including challenges and needs) and select a team of consultants to progress the plans. The project team is motivated to build capacity and partnerships and advance equity in Maui's community forests.

# TO RESTORE OUR FUTURE

*Projects that scaled up to **plant and distribute** thousands of native plants*

## Mālama Hāmākua Maui Restoring the Hāmākualoa Coast

On the Hāmākualoa Coast of Maui, this project supports the restoration of 318 acres to provide a community-accessible open space. Starting with road improvements and garbage cleanup, the project has grown to plant dozens of native trees and plants and engage a growing network of volunteers and advisors, including a Cultural Advisory Committee with 'Aha Moku representatives and kūpuna community members.

## Waikōloa Dry Forest Initiative Community Forest Expansion

Building on 55-acres of successful dry forest restoration in Waikōloa, Hawai'i Island, this project continues planting and forest care across 10 acres with volunteer and student groups. Project staff reflect on the impact of the community's continued work (lower left).

## Moloka'i Land Trust Community Plant Production and Monthly Tree Giveaway

This project gifts trees, shrubs and groundcover grown by Moloka'i Land Trust staff to community members. A growing group of plant adopters share in MLT's vision of Moloka'i-specific plants grown on island, for community, many to supply seeds for future forest restoration efforts.

*"When you host a volunteer day on bare rock, it is hard to visualize and imagine what the area will look like a few seasons into the future. But as the trees grow, and the layers of the restoration start to grow together, the people who planted a particular grove, weedwhacked a really difficult area, or shared meaningful connections and stories with you become part of the fabric of the forest."*

*Reflection from Waikōloa Dry Forest Initiative, Inc.*

Photo: Waikōloa Dry Forest Initiative multigenerational community volunteer day

# FOR COMMUNITY, FOR EVER

Projects that focus heavily on **growing community involvement**



Community planting day article



Photo: Maui Nui Marine Resource Council

## Hiki Ola Ola i ka 'Āina

Growing tree stewards is just as valuable as growing trees themselves. At the Kealakekua Mountain Reserve on Hawai'i Island, Hiki Ola provides opportunities for youth to connect to forests through kilo (observation), care, and planting.

*"The ultimate goal for Hiki Ola is not only for the youth to become knowledgeable about our native species, but also to spark interest within the youth to become the next generation of culturally grounded stewards and decision makers for our beloved 'āina."*

## Maui Nui Marine Resource Council Restorative Resilience: Growing a Community Landscape for Lahaina

Guided by Kahoma Village community members, this project planted fruit, shade, and lei trees, and continues to support a group of stewards committed to their care. Project partners reflect,

*"The transformation of this public green space into an urban forest serves as a vital component of Lahaina's post-wildfire recovery, providing both community resilience and ecological restoration."*

## What's ahead?

Spending time with each of these partners and learning about their project goals and intentions emphasizes the different approaches that collectively aim to grow thriving urban and community forests.

In geographic footprint, projects range in size from a block-sized residential gathering space where a community forest is activated and established, to entire islands developing management plans.

In scales of time, projects will continue to address urgent efforts like feeding communities and rescuing fruit from mature trees, while empowering communities in the longer journey to take on the responsibility to plant and care for trees. Still other projects equip young people with relational and technical skills to grow food, and plant and care for trees and native plants.

Analyses will ask how policies and frameworks can support the well-being of trees and communities, how community forests can grow by studying planting and tree distribution data, and how participant stories and experiences might guide future programming.

Within the diversity of project scope and methodology, each partner emphasizes importance of relationships and partnerships. This includes collaboration among community groups, and across sectors including education, energy, and agriculture. The heart of these connections are between people and trees, described as reciprocal healing between communities and 'āina, caring for trees, and building food security.

We cheer on these projects in their continued efforts to strengthen relationships between people and trees. Mahalo nui for creating pathways to engage people in generating vitality for Hawai'i's community forests!

## Kaulunani Advisory Council

*Volunteer members provide strategic direction and guidance of the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program*

**Jennifer Maydan, Advisory Council Chair**

*County of Maui Office of Recovery*

**Kialoa Mossman, Vice Chair**

*Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation*

**David Smith**

*Division of Forestry and Wildlife*

**Matthew Bauer**

*Kupu*

**Alex Connelly**

*Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo*

**Terri Koike**

*Division of Urban Forestry, City and County of Honolulu*

**Kris Kokame**

*AES Hawai'i*

**Niki Kunioka-Volz**

*Department of Agriculture, County of Kauai*

**Noa Lincoln**

*Tropical Plant & Soil Sciences, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*

**Matthew Loudermilk**

*AHL*

**Jesse Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku**

*Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center*

**Kevin Sullivan**

*Department of Planning, Hawai'i County*

**Alisha Summers**

*Department of Planning, County of Kauai*

**Jermy Uowolo**

*Micronesians United-Big Island*

**Miranda Hutten**

*USDA Forest Service*

Members emeriti:

2024 **Danielle Frohlich**

*SWCA Environmental Consultants*

2024 **Desireé Page**

*Hawaiian Electric*