

The Nature
Conservancy



Hawai'i and Palmyra

2024 IMPACT

Kō i ka Pono

Carrying Out Our Mission

Aloha mai kākou. The theme **Kō i ka Pono: Carrying Out Our Mission** exemplifies our commitment to stand strong and continue our efforts to preserve and protect our lands and waters. While the Hawaiian Islands and Palmyra Atoll are on the frontlines of climate change and biodiversity loss, our work in these places serves as a unique example of success resulting from bold and innovative efforts and partnerships.

This past year—with your help—we have made great strides toward our mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends by working with many partners to enhance coastal reefs and fisheries, restore native forests, and safeguard endangered species like our Hawaiian honeycreepers.

By integrating traditional knowledge with cutting-edge science, we develop innovative, culturally grounded solutions that move us toward our vision of a future where nature in Hawai‘i and Palmyra is thriving, native plants and animals flourish, Indigenous leadership and stewardship is supported, and communities are empowered to responsibly care for all that nature provides.

This year we advanced progress on our five-year Strategic Plan’s cross-cutting conservation pillars: Building Nature’s Resilience; Connecting Mauka and Makai; Resisting Extinctions; and Advancing Climate Solutions. These contribute to **TNC’s global 2030 goals** to address the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you, our contributors, who have been instrumental in this journey: our generous donors, community partners, government agencies, elected officials and fellow non-profits, as well as our dedicated and passionate staff and volunteers. Together, we have achieved the exceptional impacts shared within these pages, fostering hope for a sustainable future and inspiration for global change.

We are proud to share these achievements from this past year with you, our ardent supporters, whose contributions make it possible. Together, we find a way.

Mahalo for your continued support and dedication to our mission.

Ulalia Woodside Lee
Executive Director, TNC Hawai‘i and Palmyra

Anne Carter
Board of Trustees Chair, TNC Hawai‘i and Palmyra

Cover photo: Kāne’ohe Bay, Oahu © Ian Shive



Kō i ka Pono: Carrying Out Our Mission

Your support of our chapter’s ambitious conservation goals ensures that both nature and people continue to thrive. With your help, we made notable gains.

On Molokai, after improving ungulate management at Kawela, vegetation increased by 75% and sediment flows to the reef decreased by 75%—equivalent to about 5,250 tons per year. Our seabird attraction work at Palmyra Atoll has led to the return and breeding of gray-backed terns after more than 80 years of absence. With up to 95% survival and growth rates up to three times greater than conventional approaches, direct colony reattachment emerged as a promising coral restoration method in West Hawai‘i.

None of our work happens without you and your vital support. Mahalo nui loa. Together, we find a way.

“By integrating traditional knowledge with cutting-edge science, we inspire hope for a sustainable future and inspiration for global change.”

'I'iwi, an endemic endangered Hawaiian honeycreeper, perched on a native Lobelia at TNC's Waikamoi Preserve © Zach Pezzillo



MAUI **KAUA'I**
1,583 | **1,100**

People reached during Makahiki o Nā Manu Naele through TNC-led hikes, volunteer workdays, classroom visits and outreach events



© Richard Brooks, Lightning Strike Productions

30

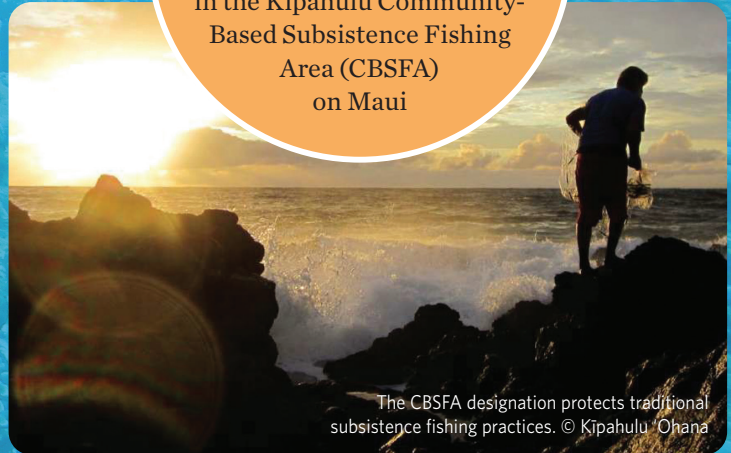
Pacific leaders learn at Digital Reefs workshop in Honolulu

66

Media stories featuring our work in far-reaching outlets, including *Scientific American*, *The Washington Post*, CBS News and UK's *Daily Mail*, as well as local news.

5.7

Miles of coastline, which represents an entire moku (district), supporting customary fishing in the Kīpahulu Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) on Maui



The CBSFA designation protects traditional subsistence fishing practices. © Kīpahulu 'Ōhāna

By the Numbers

- TNC Preserve
- Watershed Partnership
- Community Network Site

- TNC Research and Monitoring Site
- Mauka-Makai Project
- Marine Partnership Site

5,250

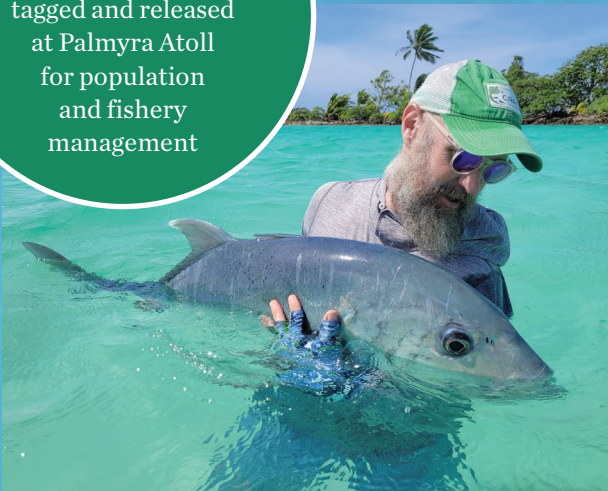
Tons of sediment, on average, not reaching Kawela reefs on Moloka'i each year due to improved ungulate management and resulting 75% increase in vegetation.



Overgrazed area outside fence contrasts starkly with recovering vegetation inside protected area at Kawela, Moloka'i. © Russell Kallstrom/TNC

1,299

Coastal sportfish tagged and released at Palmyra Atoll for population and fishery management



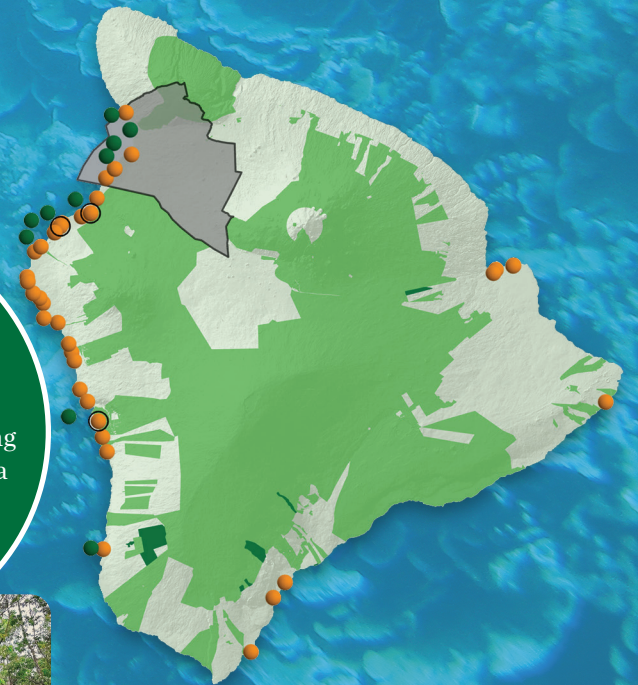
↓
Palmyra Atoll
1,000 MILES SOUTH



2.5

miles of perimeter fence replaced after 30 years since its first installation, continuing to protect 8,245 acres at Kona Hema Preserve on Hawai'i Island from invasive animals.

Kona Hema's 'ōhi'a-koa wet forest across the fence © Shalan Crysdale/TNC



‘Āina *that which feeds; land and sea*

We aim to revitalize native forests and restore abundance to coral reefs by safeguarding critical habitat and unique species, reducing land-based threats to coasts, and driving funding and policy change for lasting conservation.



A mauka-makai view of Mākolēlau, Molokaʻi © Butch Haase/Molokaʻi Land Trust

Restoring Native Forests

In FY24, 2.5 miles of corroded hogwire and posts were replaced, protecting 8,245 acres at Kona Hema Preserve on Hawaiʻi Island. Protecting native Hawaiian landscapes often starts with a fence—not to keep out people, but to limit access by invasive animals. As Hawaiʻi forests evolved in isolation without the presence of grazing animals, many of our plants do not have natural defenses (thorns, menthol, capsaicin, etc.) to ward off hungry lips. Introduced animals engage in an endless cycle of grazing and rooting that leads to complete ecosystem change. Years of progressive TNC management, starting with the construction of ungulate (hooved animal)-proof fencing and removal of invasive weeds, has led to the recovery of native forest flora in the absence of perpetual browsing.

Gray-backed Terns Return to Palmyra

At Palmyra Atoll, TNC’s seabird restoration project is seeing early success, including two years of successful breeding by gray-backed terns, marking the return of this species after more than 80 years of absence. This result is a testament to the decades of threat abatement, habitat restoration and innovation implemented by TNC and our partners.



Grey backed tern decoys © Sarah Glover

Safeguarding Habitat for Endangered Species

The Mākolēlau ahupuaʻa on the south shore of Molokaʻi, consisting of 1,045 acres of culturally and ecologically important land containing critical habitat for 38 endangered species, is now protected in perpetuity. In January 2024, TNC completed the project by transferring the fifth and final parcel to the State of Hawaiʻi.



Reef Restoration in Hawaiʻi

TNC partnered with communities at Kaʻūpūlehu and Kealahou to catalyze science-based, culturally grounded reef restoration in Hawaiʻi. Our year-long pilot projects are testing and refining three coral restoration techniques to learn what works best for Hawaiian corals. This is an important step toward empowering communities and others to scale reef restoration across the state. With up to 95% survival and growth rates up to three times greater than conventional approaches, direct colony reattachment has emerged as a promising technique for key reef-building coral species in West Hawaiʻi and beyond.

Community members attach coral to the reef at Kahuwai Bay. © Liquid Cosmos Divers

DONOR PROFILE

The Kosasa Foundation

Fueling Innovative Biochar Project on Maui

The Kosasa Foundation’s commitment to environmental and community health led to a transformative project following the Maui wildfires in 2023. Thanks to their generous support, TNC is pioneering the use of biochar technology by converting invasive pine trees on Maui that were spreading into native watershed areas into a valuable community resource.

Cut pines are dried and burned in a kiln to make biochar, a product which improves soil health and enhances plant growth. The biochar will be donated to communities impacted by the wildfires to help heal the burn-scarred landscapes.

We are grateful to the Kosasa Foundation for their vision and support of this innovative, nature-based solution that improves watershed health and community wellbeing.



Kosasa Foundation program officer Bob Agres and board member Gloria Gainsley (front left and right) participated in a TNC hike led by Dr. Sam Gon (third right at the top), senior scientist and cultural advisor. They stopped along the trail to visit Pohakualuahine, a sacred boulder covered with ancient petroglyphs. © Lara Siu/TNC

Pilina *relationship, union, connection*

We strive to deepen the reciprocal relationship between nature and people by offering on-site hikes and workdays, webinars and special events like art shows.

Hikes, Hunts and Plantings with Partners

Connecting people to nature and each other is critical for effective conservation outcomes. In FY24, we collaborated with 21 partner organizations, planted 1,500 native trees on Kauaʻi, Maui and Hawaiʻi Island, and participated in more than 100 community workdays, hunts, hikes and service trips.

Partners are collaborating on mauka-makai efforts to improve reef conservation. © Drew Sulock



Collaborative Conservation to Protect Hawaiʻi’s Coral Reefs

To foster collaborative conservation, TNC has supported broad partnerships on Maui and Hawaiʻi Island to protect some of our most valued coral reefs. These coordinated mauka-makai efforts have attracted significant funding for TNC and more than a dozen government, community and non-profit partners to scale culturally grounded, place-based management.



Connecting People to Nature through Art

Artist and philanthropist Taiji Terasaki launched his “On Rewilding, Palmyra Atoll” exhibit at Honolulu’s First Hawaiian Bank in December 2023. His experience during an artist residency on TNC’s Palmyra Atoll Preserve had a profound effect on his artistic practice, compelling him to focus on stories



Taiji Terasaki’s “On Rewilding” exhibit inspired by TNC’s Palmyra Atoll Preserve. © Toni Parras/TNC

of conservation and environmental action. The result was a captivating interactive exhibit aimed to inspire and influence people’s attitudes toward the climate crisis. The nine-month-long exhibit was available to ~54,000 bank visitors and reached more than 15,000 people on social media. [View the Reception Reel on Instagram](#) and [Artist Feature on YouTube](#).

DONOR PROFILE

Bill and Sonja Davidow

Transforming Coral Conservation in Hawaiʻi

With a home on Kauaʻi’s north shore and a deep love for the island’s natural beauty, Bill and Sonja Davidow are passionate advocates for protecting Hawaiʻi’s environment. After witnessing the devastating impacts of the 2018 floods on both the local community and coral reefs, they became acutely aware of the urgent need for solutions. Climate change, unsustainable fishing, coastal development and land-based threats, such as sediment and untreated wastewater, continue to endanger Hawaiʻi’s reefs.

In response, Bill and Sonja have generously funded a three-year statewide project. This work will gather crucial research and knowledge, equip communities with tools to incorporate local wisdom into effective management solutions and develop a comprehensive toolkit for wastewater interventions. Thanks to the vision and passion of donors like Bill and Sonja, we are working toward creating globally relevant examples for coral reef conservation and recovery, striving for healthy and resilient ocean and island ecosystems in Hawaiʻi and beyond.



Bill Davidow hiking with his daughter, Becky. © Liz Harvey/TNC

Climate

To bolster our ability to adapt to a changing climate, we champion innovative techniques to combat threats, drive cutting-edge climate research, and to inspire hope and action.

Advancing Global Coral Research

The Palmyra Bleaching Consortium, a dozen institutions convened by TNC, completed its first year of studying a major coral bleaching event in 2023 at Palmyra. The atoll’s remote location offers a rare window into how healthy reefs—free of local stressors, such as overfishing and wastewater—respond to bleaching. New monitoring techniques and insights, such as the role of water flow and turbidity patterns, are being shared with hundreds of coastal communities around the world.



A drone’s-eye view of Palmyra Atoll through the remote-control display of an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle flying over the Atoll © Dr. Joe Pollock/TNC

Hawaii Emergency Reef Restoration Network members re-attach corals to a reef. © Liquid Cosmos Divers

Hawai’i’s Emergency Reef Restoration Network

Spurred by an urgency to help reefs withstand climate impacts, TNC purchased reef insurance and convened partners to develop a coordinated response for reef-damaging events. These efforts resulted in the Hawai’i Emergency Reef Restoration Network—10 organizations that have developed collective plans, secured required permits and undertaken restoration projects together.



Hawai’i’s Vanishing Forest Birds

In 2017 just 41% of Hawai’i residents could name a native forest bird. After years of statewide outreach through the Birds, Not Mosquitoes partnership, the number has grown to 76%. This awareness helps generate support for our efforts to suppress mosquito populations that carry deadly avian malaria, threatening native birds with extinction.

The Kiwikuu, an endangered Hawaiian honeycreeper endemic to Maui, at TNC’s Waikamoi Preserve © Zach Pezillo

DONOR PROFILE

Cooke Foundation

Safeguarding Hawai’i for Future Generations

For more than 100 years, community support has been the heart of the Cooke Foundation, ever since Anna Rice Cooke established it. TNC Hawai’i and the Cooke Foundation have a deeply intertwined history. Their president, Sam Cooke, became TNC’s first board chairman in 1981, a year after TNC Hawai’i was established, and he guided the new organization toward ambitious conservation goals. Our 42-year relationship has been central to TNC’s growth and conservation achievements.

Throughout their years of philanthropy, the Cooke Foundation has championed numerous projects, always with the mission to safeguard Hawai’i’s unique heritage for future generations. For example, their support has helped protect Kaua’i’s native forests, which are vital to the survival of native honeycreepers now threatened by rising temperatures that allow avian malaria mosquitoes into remote mountains. By protecting these birds, which are crucial for the forest’s water capture, the Cooke Foundation’s generosity continues to demonstrate their commitment to Hawai’i’s communities.

JC Watson, Amber Strong Makaiau, Fred Cowell, Lissa Dunford, Ulalia Woodside Lee, Catherine L. Cooke, Gregory Wrenn, Lori Admiral © Lara Siu/TNC



The Power of Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to successful conservation. We engage in diverse collaborations with community, state, federal and nonprofit entities to make the biggest impact.



Hui O Ka Wai Ola volunteer doing water monitoring © Bruce Forrester

TNC co-led efforts with Hui O Ka Wai Ola, a consortium of non-profit organizations and community volunteers, to collect, analyze and share eight years of leeward Maui coastal water quality data. The report includes recommendations for improving the area’s water quality, such as upgrading sewage treatment systems to reduce nitrates and restoring wetlands to capture eroded sediments.



In Hawai‘i,
the management and stewardship of priority watersheds is paramount. As the sole source of all our drinking water, the forested uplands of our islands play a critical role in our ability to call Hawai‘i home. Across the state, TNC is part of a network of Watershed Partnerships that work to ensure the productivity of our water-gathering headlands. This past year, we worked with more than 65 landowners to manage more than 233,613 acres of watershed lands across all islands.

Wainiha Valley stream © Evelyn Wight/TNC

The Power of Partnerships

TNC is a member of an international partnership aiming to recover an extinct-in-the-wild bird, the Guam kingfisher (sihek). Together we planned for a rewilding of sihek to Palmyra Atoll, with the ultimate goal of returning the species to its native home on Guam.



Sihek Recovery Program partners build one of three aviaries to receive sihek at TNC's Palmyra Atoll Preserve. © Caitlin Andrews



East Maui residents attend a Makai Watch training in 2024 hosted by Division of Aquatic Resources and Kipahulu 'Ohana. © Scott Crawford/TNC



About 50 participated in workshops to create a Snapshot of Olowalu-Ukumehame. © TNC

With support from TNC and training from DOCARE, eight community groups on Maui and Hawai'i Island established Makai Watch programs. Their members serve as modern konohiki (caretakers), monitoring and educating ocean users on marine resources while promoting compliance with rules.

TNC, Kipuka Olowalu and Coral Reef Alliance engaged about 50 community members, landowners, resource managers and kupuna on Maui to create an *Olowalu and Ukumehame Ahupua'a Snapshot*. The *Snapshot* summarizes the area's cultural, historical and ecological resources and will inform plans for building coastal, reef and community resilience.

TNC's
Palmyra Fish
Aggregating Device
(dFAD) Watch program brings
together commercial fishing
companies, U.S. government
agencies and artisanal fishing
communities to intercept drifting
dFAD before they ground on the reef.
We also repurpose the recovered
equipment to support
local fisheries.



© Chris Ryen



© Kydd Pollock



© Chris Ryen

dFAD floating in the water at Palmyra © Kydd Pollock

Advancing Understanding Through Research

Our published research creates a ripple effect, inspiring other science-based initiatives and practices. Below are a few examples of our publications that increase understanding of our islands' unique ecosystems and help guide our actions to mālama 'āina.



“The role of feral goats in Maui fires,” co-authored by TNC Senior Scientist and Cultural Advisor Sam ‘Olu Gon and published in *Science*, stresses the importance of removing invasive weeds and animals and restoring native plants as crucial for fire suppression in Hawai‘i. The article has been downloaded 1,527 times to date.

Goat in Kahikinui, Maui © Forest & Kim Starr



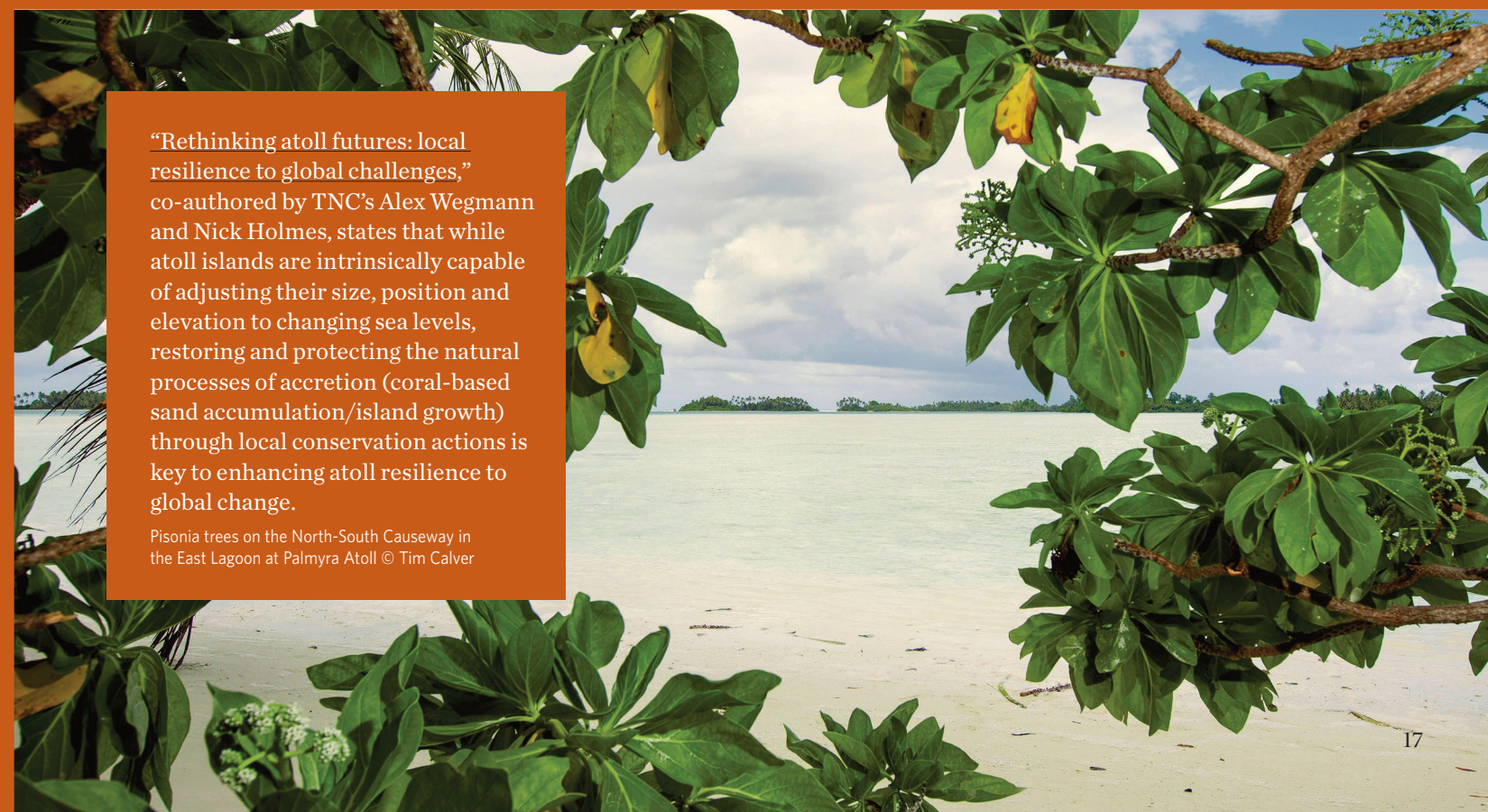
“Ōhi‘a Lehua (*Metrosideros polymorpha*): A Most Resilient and Persistent Foundation Species in Hawaiian Forests” is co-authored by TNC Senior Scientist and Cultural Advisor Sam ‘Olu Gon. ‘Ōhi‘a has great significance in Hawaiian culture and grows in a wide diversity of habitats, from sea level to more than 2,200 meters, from extremely wet to dry zones, and is one of the first woody species established on young lava flows. It provides habitat for endemic plants and animals and is the primary vegetation cover for Hawaiian watersheds.

An ‘i‘iwi at TNC’s Waikamoi Preserve on Maui © Keith Burnett



More than 20 co-authors, including TNC’s Marine Science Director Eric Conklin and Coastal and Estuarine Scientist Kim Falinski, contributed to “Coral reefs benefit from reduced land–sea impacts under ocean warming,” published in *Nature*. The research looks at reef surveys conducted over 20 years in Hawai‘i and found that reefs with increased herbivorous fish populations and reduced land-based impacts, such as wastewater pollution and urban runoff, fared better after severe heat stress and suggests that integrated land-sea management is needed.

Coral reef in Kāne‘ohe Bay, O‘ahu © Ian Shive



“Rethinking atoll futures: local resilience to global challenges,” co-authored by TNC’s Alex Wegmann and Nick Holmes, states that while atoll islands are intrinsically capable of adjusting their size, position and elevation to changing sea levels, restoring and protecting the natural processes of accretion (coral-based sand accumulation/island growth) through local conservation actions is key to enhancing atoll resilience to global change.

Pisonia trees on the North-South Causeway in the East Lagoon at Palmyra Atoll © Tim Calver

Celebrating The Legacy Club

Few aspirations are nobler than wanting to leave the world a better place. We are honored and inspired by the thousands of incredible supporters who joined The Legacy Club by including The Nature Conservancy in their estate plans.

This year, we welcomed 21 new Hawai'i Legacy Club members who named TNC as a beneficiary in their will, trust, retirement plan or financial account, or who established a Charitable Gift Annuity that pays income for life.

Many of our members chose to direct their legacy gift to Hawai'i to help protect the lands and waters that sustain all life in our islands. Others created a legacy for TNC's priorities worldwide.

We are grateful to all our Legacy Club members for your generosity and vision for the future of our natural world. Your collective impact will transform native landscapes across the islands and planet for generations to come.



Hiker in Waikamoi Preserve ©TNC



Kamakou Preserve, Moloka'i © Richard Cooke III

Policy Work, Advocacy Day

Trustees Advocate for Federal Support and Environmental Restoration

Our staff and trustees continue to be vital advocates for the government policies we need to protect the lands and waters that sustain us. Government leaders from Washington Place to Washington, D.C., have come to rely on the expertise The Nature Conservancy brings.

In October, TNCHP trustees and staff traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with the Hawai'i Congressional Delegation and participate in TNC's Volunteer Leadership Summit. The group highlighted the urgent need for federal support and environmental restoration following the Maui wildfires. They also updated the delegation on the progress of Hawai'i's Vanishing Forest Birds and advocated for critical environmental programs being considered for inclusion in the Farm Bill, like watershed restoration.

Executive Director Ulalia Woodside Lee describes conservation habitat locations and projects to Senator Mazie Hirono during Advocacy Day. © TNC



Staff and trustees share about our efforts to protect native forest birds with Senator Mazie Hirono as part of TNC's Advocacy Day, an annual outreach event aimed at highlighting TNC priorities to Congressional delegations in Washington, D.C. © TNC



Protecting Land. Water. Life.

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

Board of Trustees

Duke E. Ah Moo
Kris Billeter
Dr. C. Tana Burkert
Anne S. Carter (Chair)
Ka'ulani de Silva
Daniel J. Dunn
Dave Eadie

Jan Elliott
Matt Emerson
Hon. Judith A. Epstein
Dr. Alan M. Friedlander
Benjy Garfinkle
Sean A. Hehir
Puni Jackson

Brett MacNaughton
Janet Montag
Alicia Moy
John R. Sabas
Bradley E. Smith
Julie Smolinski
Vern Yamanaka

Ihupani Advisory Council

Christopher J. Benjamin
Kenton T. Eldridge
Eiichiro Kuwana
Duncan MacNaughton
Jean E. Rolles
Crystal K. Rose
Nathan E. Smith

To make a gift, please contact Lori Admiral, director of philanthropy, at (808) 587-6249 or lori.admiral@tnc.org.

School of goatfish © Doug Perrine



In Hawai'i, the environment is the economy.

That's why these leading companies invest in The Nature Conservancy.

They understand that our environment and economy are intrinsically linked: native forests collect fresh water, coral reefs protect our coastline, and native species are fundamental to a living Hawaiian culture.

We want to thank and recognize the members of the Corporate Council for the Environment for their commitment and generosity. To learn how your company can join the Corporate Council, please contact Lori Admiral at lori.admiral@tnc.org or (808) 587-6249.

Corporate Council for the Environment

Kuleana Member \$25,000+

ALOHA Collection LLC
HEI
Kona Village Resort
Mauna Kea Beach Hotel

Ho'omau Member: \$15,000+

Macy's

Mālama Member: \$10,000+

Alexander & Baldwin
First Insurance Company
of Hawaii Charitable
Foundation
Shidler Family Foundation

Laulima Member: \$5,000+

Alaska Airlines
Haleakala Ranch Company
Merriman's
Par Hawaii Refining
Skyline Hawai'i

Kōkua Member: \$2,500+

Hunt Companies
Ulupono Initiative
William Yeoward Crystal