



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. From mountain snow to desert-like terrain and deep, lush rainforests, Hawaii’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 (HFI) is to promote the health and productivity of Hawaii’s forests through forest restoration, education, information dissemination, and support for scientific research.

These forests supply us with fresh water, protect our beaches from destructive erosion, and absorb greenhouse gases. They 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, forests are an essential link to our economic and cultural heritage. Like the early Hawaiians, we rely on and revere the ‘āina and its bounty. We use Hawaii-grown woods to craft a wide range of products including canoes, surfboards, tools, turnings, furniture, crafts, sculpture, and weapons. Hawaii’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 (HFI) strives to ensure that our connection to the ‘āina is never forgotten.

Incorporated in 2003 by the Hawai‘i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), the Hawai‘i Forest Institute (HFI) is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and sustainable stewardship of Hawaii’s forests. Over the past 16 years, we have supported efforts to restore 76 acres of forest habitat, outplant 20,000 seedlings, and engage more than 20,000 volunteers in forest stewardship learning efforts. Some examples of our work are featured below.

Dryland Forests: Hawaii’s dryland forests support many rare and endangered species. However over 95% of Hawaii’s dryland forests have disappeared due to wildfires, animal predators, invasive plants, and conversion to other uses. Through restoration efforts at three endangered dryland sites in West Hawai‘i — Ka‘ūpūlehu Dryland Forest, La‘i‘Ōpua Preserve and Pāalamanui Dry Forest Preserve — we are working to perpetuate 240 acres of endangered dryland forest habitat.

Discovery Forests: HFI is engaging volunteers in creating and maintaining the Pana‘ewa Zoo, Honolulu Zoo, and Keauhou Bird Conservation Center (KBCC) Discovery Forests. Native and Polynesian-introduced seedlings are being planted at outdoor educational settings that give volunteers and visitors a greater appreciation for Hawaii’s forests. HFI is also working with the Maui Bird Conservation Center to develop a Forest Stewardship Plan for a potential Discovery Forest.

“Forests in Hawai‘i are both fragile and surprisingly resilient; there is ample evidence today regarding the recovery of native ecosystems. Thanks to innovative programs such as those of the Hawai‘i Forest Institute, 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

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Much has been accomplished to protect Hawaii's forest resources in recent 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, we all must continue the efforts that have brought us this far.

To do so, HFI launched the MAHALO 'ĀINA: *Give Back to the Forest Initiative* with a focus of expanding our fundraising efforts through community partnerships. 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. See donor levels [here](#).

Donations raised through MAHALO 'ĀINA help support:

- Seed collection, storage, and propagation;
- Outplanting and long-term care of seedlings;
- Forest site development and maintenance;
- Project coordinators and educators; and
- Interpretive and outreach materials and supplies.

To date we have supported efforts to:

- Manage and maintain 276 acres of forest habitat.
- Restore 77 acres of forest habitat.
- Outplant more than 20,000 seedlings.
- Offset an estimated 750 tons of carbon per year for the life of the tree.
- Engage 20,000 volunteers in our forest restoration efforts.
- Engage 5,500 students in cultural and environmental educational activities.
- Benefit 3,300,000 residents and visitors through our MAHALO 'ĀINA projects and programs.

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.



"People, especially children, are often disconnected from the natural environment. The Discovery Forests are a way to reconnect them to Hawaii's forest ecosystems." — Dr. Travis Idol,

Our goal is to raise \$200,000 over the next three years to support the following projects and programs:

- [Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest, Hawai'i Island](#)
- [La'i'Ōpua Dryland Habitat Preserve, Hawai'i Island](#)
- [Pana'ewa Zoo Discovery Forest, Hawai'i Island](#)
- [Pālamanui Dry Forest Preserve, Hawai'i Island](#)
- [Christmas Tree Demonstration Project, Hawai'i Island](#)
- [KBCC Discovery Forest, Hawai'i Island](#)
- [Hawaii Wood Guild, Hawai'i Island](#)
- [Hawaii's Woodshow™, Na Lā'au o Hawai'i, O'ahu](#)
- [Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest, O'ahu](#)
- [Maui Bird Conservation Center Discovery Forest, Maui](#)

Please join us in protecting our 'āina and our legacy.



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