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Hawai'i Tourism Authority Announces Selected Organizations for Community Stewardship and Regenerative Experiences Programs

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is proud to announce the selection of organizations for its Community Stewardship and Regenerative Experiences programs, two key initiatives under the Community Tourism Collaboratives (CTC).

A 2024 technical needs assessment completed by HTA in partnership with Kilohana by CNHA revealed key capacity-building activities that HTA could focus on to advance a regenerative tourism model for Hawai'i. Following a highly competitive application and rigorous evaluation process, 24 organizations have been chosen to participate in these transformative capacity-building programs aimed at fostering regenerative tourism and preserving Hawai'i's cultural and natural resources.

"The selection of these remarkable organizations marks a significant step forward in our efforts to create a more regenerative and culturally respectful tourism model in Hawai'i," said Mufi Hannemann, HTA Board Chair. "These cohort programs will empower our community partners to expand their invaluable work, ensuring that our islands' cultural and natural resources are preserved and enriched for future generations."

"We are thrilled to support these organizations as they lead Hawai'i's transition to a regenerative model of tourism," said Daniel Nāho'opi'i, HTA's Interim President & CEO. "The diverse range of organizations and projects that will receive capacity-building training and technical assistance through these programs highlight the innovative approaches being taken across the islands to mālama 'āina and create meaningful visitor experiences."

The selected organizations will commence their participation in the program cohorts immediately, with the expectation that all funded projects will be completed by December 1, 2024. HTA will continue to monitor and support these projects, ensuring that they align with the goals of the Community Tourism Collaboratives to advance regenerative tourism.

Community Stewardship

Nine organizations have been selected for the **Community Stewardship Program**, receiving technical assistance and funding to grow their stewardship work ranging from \$18,500 to \$50,000. This funding will support their efforts in protecting and revitalizing Hawai'i's sacred spaces and important cultural sites. Each organization will benefit from capacity-building opportunities, including specialized workshops, professional services, and tailored consultations designed to enhance their stewardship activities.

Ahupua'a 'O Hālawā *Hālawā Valley, Moloka'i*

As stewards of this 'āina for over 27 years, Ahupua'a 'O Hālawā (AOH) has a long-standing commitment to the stewardship of Hālawā Valley. Founded in April of this year, its mission is to preserve and protect the valley's cultural and natural resources through community engagement

and education. AOH plans to use the 'ike and funding gained through this program to utilize marketing and cultural education consultants to develop their website and online presence, in order to become a greater player and steward of culturally-based, regenerative programs on Moloka'i. Follow-on funding: \$42,500.

'Āina Ho'ōla Initiative

Keaukaha, Hilo, Hawai'i Island

'Āina Ho'ōla Initiative ('AHI) is an all-volunteer organization with a mission to restore and conserve loko i'a (Native Hawaiian fishponds) and wetlands at Lokowaka Pond complex to create a thriving, balanced ecosystem. 'AHI seeks guidance to develop their organization in areas of document creation, volunteer management, data collection, and funding; and plans to use program funds to hire a project manager, purchase materials for restoration work at Lokowaka, and hire Kupu Hawai'i for conservation work. Follow-on funding: \$50,000.

East Maui Land Restoration

Honomanū Waterfall, Maui

East Maui Land Restoration 501(c)(3) serves as an umbrella for Hāna Highway Regulation, a visitor education and tourism management initiative for Hāna Highway, and East Maui Farm which focuses on rebuilding ancient taro patches at Honomanū. The funding requested will be utilized to enhance stewardship efforts and acquire necessary equipment for efforts to restore land into the future. Follow-on funding: \$44,000.

Haleakalā Conservancy

Haleakalā, Maui

Haleakalā Conservancy has been the philanthropic partner of Haleakalā National Park for the last four years, supporting programs (e.g., night stargazing) and other initiatives (e.g., powered wheelchairs for visitors) that are otherwise not covered in the National Park Service budget. The Conservancy seeks to build a robust volunteer network and develop internal capacity to apply for grants in the future. Follow-on funding: \$50,000.

Hawaiian Civic Club of Wahiawā

Wahiawā, O'ahu

Wahiawā Hawaiian Civic Club was organized 89 years ago to specifically maintain Kūkaniloko Birth Site, share her mo'olelo, and to preserve all things Hawaiian – seen and unseen. Since Kūkaniloko Birth Site is no longer publicly accessible without expressed entry permission, Hawaiian Civic Club of Wahiawā will be using their funding to develop their mo'olelo and "sense of place" in an online, virtual format; and learn from professionals about how to best collect data for future grant and funding requests to keep the work of this near century-old organization going for generations to come. Follow-on funding: \$50,000.

Hui Aloha Kīholo

Kīholo State Park Reserve, Hawai'i Island

Founded in 2007, Hui Aloha Kīholo (HAK) seeks to protect Kīholo in pono ways by activating community to mālama 'āina, developing a sustainable revenue model (e.g., camping permits), educating keiki in place-based environmental and cultural practices, and protecting wahi pana such as Keanalele cave and Wai 'Ōpae from further degradation. Through this program, HAK seeks to update their website, creating a comprehensive community resource particularly to promote involvement opportunities, and hopes to develop a better, more integrated data collection plan. Follow-on funding: \$50,000.

Hui O Laka

Kōke'e & Waimea Canyon, Kaua'i

Hui o Laka operates the Kōke'e Museum, a natural history and cultural museum founded in 1954 with the intention of educating the public about Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon. Hui o Laka seeks to expand its virtual outreach and camping reservation system by modernizing and enhancing its website and social media presence, and thus share 'ike of Kōke'e with a broader audience within and beyond the pae 'āina. Follow-on funding: \$18,500.

North Shore Community Land Trust

Hale'iwa, O'ahu

Founded in 1997, North Shore Community Land Trust (NSCLT) is a community-driven organization focused on the preservation and protection of the 60,000+ acres of O'ahu's North Shore, including through specific programs like Waiale'e Laka Pono that seeks to restore the native ecosystem and food systems in the ahupua'a of Waiale'e. Funding will be used to clear invasive plants from the Waiale'e area, host community work days, and initiate agroforestry as a new pillar for restoration alongside mālama for the lo'i kalo and wetlands. Follow-on funding: \$50,000.

Pōhāhā I Ka Lani

Waipi'o Valley, Hawai'i Island

Established in 2001, Pōhāhā I Ka Lani conducts place-based cultural education, land stewardship, and community engagement at sacred places throughout Waipi'o Valley and 'Ōla'a on Hawai'i Island. The organization is seeking fundraising guidance and organizational development opportunities (e.g., revenue generation, staff training) through their participation in this program. Follow-on funding: \$45,000.

Regenerative Experiences

Fifteen organizations have been chosen for the **Regenerative Experiences Program**, with direct funding to seed their regenerative transformation ranging from \$20,000 to \$35,000. These funds will be used to develop and enhance visitor experiences that are deeply rooted in the principles of regenerative tourism. By participating in this program, organizations will create market-ready activities that foster reciprocal relationships between residents and visitors, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared by all.

Aloha with Touch Kaua'i

Islandwide, Kaua'i

Aloha with Touch Kaua'i is committed to providing high-quality cultural and wellness retreat experiences. The organization hopes to increase partnerships with local experience providers, host more local retreats, and transition from a classic business model to a more purpose-driven approach focused on transforming perceptions of Hawai'i for visitors. Follow-on funding: \$20,000.

Ancient Leaf Tea

Onomea Bay, Pāpa'ikou, Hawai'i Island

Ancient Leaf Tea is a family-owned and operated LLC founded in 2004 with the mission of producing the finest in organically and regeneratively grown teas and produce on its farm near Onomea Bay. The company currently has one major farm tour offering called the Tea Tour and Tasting, a two-and-a-half hour long experience that starts with a one-hour tour of tea fields and market gardens. Given that the length and price of this tour is geared toward higher-spending

visitors, they hope to expand their operations to be more accessible for larger groups and local community members. Follow-on funding: \$24,000.

Anelakai

Keauhou Bay, Kona, Hawai'i Island

Anelakai is a paddle-powered ocean tourism company based in Keauhou Bay on the island of Hawai'i which offers guided, culturally-rich Hawaiian Double Hull Canoe tours as well as kayak tours. Anelakai's goal is to be truly sustainable and non-invasive with no motors, leaving no carbon footprint, yet leaving a love and appreciation for the ocean and island with everyone they host. Program funds will allow the company to further hone their guides' knowledge of the areas they tour, as well as customize their food and beverage offerings to be locally made and sourced. Follow-on funding: \$20,000.

Common Ground Kaua'i

Kapa'a, Kaua'i

Common Ground Kaua'i is a 63-acre, regenerative hospitality company that offers a Farm and Food Experience from Monday through Friday that includes a 45-minute tour of their agroforest followed by a 100% locally sourced meal. They would like to build on this success by expanding offerings to include more culturally grounded experiences which adhere to their commitment of sourcing 100% of its ingredients locally and sharing the cultural traditions and stories of 'Ōiwi culture. Follow-on funding: \$35,000.

Hāna Arts

Hāna, Maui

Established in 1991, Hāna Arts has evolved into a comprehensive arts and cultural education provider, offering a wide array of cultural and artistic programs. Hāna Arts seeks to enhance and expand its cultural workshop offerings at the Hāna Farmers Market. These workshops, which currently include experiences such as lei making, lauhala weaving, and ulana niu (coconut frond weaving) are a cornerstone of their community engagement and cultural preservation efforts. Follow-on funding: \$20,000.

Ho'i Ho'i Ea

Waikāne, Kāne'ohe, O'ahu

Ho'i Ho'i Ea is a community-driven, Native Hawaiian-led organization dedicated to the preservation and restoration of Hawaiian cultural practices and natural resources. The organization is currently exploring and developing a co-stewardship model with the City and County of Honolulu, securing rights of access to 29 acres of the 500-acre parcel designated for preservation in Waikāne Valley. Within the next two to three years, they envision transforming the site into a dynamic pilot project that serves as a vibrant community hub and cultural park. Participation in this program helps lay the foundation for this dramatic future expansion. Follow-on funding: \$25,000.

Honpa Hongwanji Hawai'i Betsuin

Honolulu & Wai'anae, O'ahu

Honpa Hongwanji Hawai'i Betsuin (HHHB) is the oldest and largest Buddhist temple in Hawai'i, which brings together spiritual leaders from the community of Wai'anae, O'ahu. These leaders have come together to discuss the creation of a special experience that offers exposure to indigenous Hawaiian spirituality and Buddhist spirituality/philosophy, and the intersection between the two worldviews. HHHB intends to flesh out this experience through participation in this program with a launch in the near future. Follow-on funding: \$25,000.

KA'EHU

Paukūkalo, Wailuku, Maui

KA'EHU currently runs a program called the Community Environmental Stewardship Program (CESP) which acts as a huaka'i for residents and visitors. With the intention of regenerating coastal ecology and Hawaiian cultural practices, this program facilitates stewardship upon the lands of the nonprofit, utilizing the 'auwai, lo'i kalo, māla, its green house, and the shoreline of Ka'ehu Bay (and eventually its loko i'a) to provide mālama activities on 'āina. Integrating both the spectrum of service of the CESP and the intentionality of its voluntourism activities, KA'EHU would like to expand its services to conference and convention attendees traveling to Maui. Follow-on funding: \$25,000.

Kahuku Farms

Kahuku, O'ahu

Kahuku Farms, located on the North Shore of O'ahu, is a five-acre, family-owned farm with an onsite Farm Café that opened in October 2010. Their "Farm to Table" guided tour and seasonal fruit tasting is offered Thursday to Monday throughout the year. At the beginning of 2024, Kahuku Farms made it a goal to improve their guest experience and tour offerings, as their farm is so diversified and there is so much to share. Through this program, they seek to revamp their tour program to offer new and more immersive experiences for guests. Follow-on funding: \$34,000.

Kuilima Farm

Kahuku, O'ahu

Kuilima Farm is a 468-acre farm on O'ahu's North Shore in Kahuku which seeks to emphasize sustainable agriculture, reduce reliance on imported goods, and enhance food security on the island through guided tours and experiences. The Kuilima Farm tour currently takes guests through the Piko that showcases native plants. However, by integrating traditional planting methods, storytelling, and display exhibits with assistance from this program, they aim to create a transformative visitor journey that not only educates but also inspires a deeper appreciation for Hawai'i's natural and cultural heritage. Follow-on funding: \$27,500.

Mahina Farms Maui

'Īao, Wailuku, Maui

Mahina Farms Maui is a Native Hawaiian-owned family farm nestled in 'Īao Valley, whose passion lies in cultivating native and non-native plants, canoe crops, and other species with specific cultural uses, honoring its ancestral knowledge and connection to the land. Through this program, they envision developing a transformative small-group cultural immersion experience that invites visitors to connect deeply with Native Hawaiian traditions, 'ike, and 'āina. Follow-on funding: \$25,000.

Men of PA'A

Pāhoa, Puna, Hawai'i Island

The mission of the Men of PA'A is to empower and enable Kānaka Maoli, particularly Native Hawaiian men coming out of the justice system who seek recovery, restoration, and reconciliation with themselves, their 'ohana and their community. The organization's Imu Mea 'Ai initiative offers immersive experiences in traditional Hawaiian cooking and cultural practices. They aim to expand their farm operations to grow more Hawaiian staple foods like 'uala and 'ulu and source more local ingredients, and develop and diversify their visitor experiences. Follow-on funding: \$25,500.

Moloka'i Land Trust

Kaunakakai, Moloka'i

The mission of the Moloka'i Land Trust is to protect and restore the land and natural and cultural resources of Moloka'i. Moloka'i Land Trust works to promote, educate, and perpetuate the unique Native Hawaiian traditions and character of the island for the benefit of future generations of all Moloka'i, particularly Native Hawaiians. The organization's funding request is designed to support a new project focused on the establishment of a yellow seeded wiliwili forest and complementary understory native vegetation to support traditional lei makers on the island. Follow-on funding: \$35,500.

North Shore EcoTours

Hale'iwa, Waialua, O'ahu

Founded in 2009, North Shore EcoTours is a mālama 'āina focused eco-tour program aimed at building environmental and cultural resiliency in Hawai'i through regenerative tourism practices with a weekly tour schedule consisting of two different hiking experiences and three unique off-road driving excursions. The company would like to incorporate more mālama 'āina work into their day-to-day activities. Follow-on funding: \$25,000.

Tea Hawai'i & Company

Volcano Village, Puna, Hawai'i Island

Tea Hawai'i & Company was established in 2006 by Eva Lee & Chiu Leong to expand Hawai'i tea agriculture and farming culture while preserving Hawai'i's native forest environment. The company currently offers tea tour and tasting experiences headquartered in Volcano Village. One of their primary program objectives is to scale up marketing to inform the public about Hawai'i's first generation of the specialty crop tea culture, and further engage the Japan visitor market. Follow-on funding: \$34,000.

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About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority is the state agency responsible for representing The Hawaiian Islands around the world, and for holistically managing tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with community desires, economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, and visitor industry needs. HTA works with the community and industry to Mālama Hawai'i – care for our beloved home. For more information about HTA, visit hawaii tourism authority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Threads](#) and [X](#).

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