



For Immediate Release: February 27, 2024
HTA Release (24-04)

Hawai'i Tourism Authority Partnering with Community Organizations on East Maui Tourism Management Pilot Program *Mālama Maui Hikina collective mitigating tourism impacts at popular areas*

KAHULUI, MAUI – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) and Maui Visitors and Convention Bureau (MVCB) is partnering with three community-based organizations – Hōlani Hāna, Ke Ao Hāli'i, and Na Mahi'ai o Ke'anae – to manage and implement the East Maui Tourism Management Pilot Program following an extensive request for proposals (RFP) solicitation process that began in April 2023. Supporting HTA's mission to Mālama Hawai'i (care for our beloved home), the organizations are collaborating under the banner of Mālama Maui Hikina, which translates to caring for East Maui.

"Uplifting community-based stewardship is essential to improving destination management as these solutions HTA is supporting have been created by the community, for the community, first and foremost," said Mufi Hannemann, HTA Board Chair. "Providing opportunities for East Maui residents to educate visitors about the spaces they are entering, how to engage respectfully, and the cultural and historical significance these places bear will have significant impacts on preserving these areas and improving the overall experience for residents and visitors alike."

HTA is funding this community-driven approach to destination management as guided by its Maui Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP). HTA and MVCB also organized the East Maui Advisory Group comprised of East Maui residents which provided important input on this program.

"The formation of Mālama Maui Hikina is precisely the type of destination management partnership HTA envisioned, comprising a team of community leaders who bring valuable knowledge and perspective to their approach in proactively managing tourism's impacts for the benefit of the residents of East Maui," said Daniel Nāho'opi'i, HTA's interim president and CEO. "Our team is proud to work with these respected organizations to implement community-driven solutions aimed at improving the well-being of the community through our Mālama Hawai'i efforts."

MVCB issued a RFP in April 2023 seeking proposals from the East Maui community with innovative, community-driven management projects to address tourism's impacts at heavily visited sites identified in the [Maui Destination Management Action Plan \(DMAP\)](#).

These sites are especially popular with visitors, which may result in overcrowding, congestion, degradation of resources, safety hazards, and a negative experience for both residents and visitors. Each of the Mālama Maui Hikina partners are responsible for working to restore balance in the following East Maui sites:

- **Hōlani Hāna** – Honolewa (a.k.a. South Wailua Falls)
- **Ke Ao Hāli'i** – Kaihalulu (a.k.a. Red Sand Beach) and Waioka (a.k.a. Venus Pools)
- Native Hawaiian Philanthropy d.b.a. **Na Mahi'ai o Ke'anae** – Nā'ili'ilihale Stream (a.k.a. Bamboo Forest) and Waikamoi Falls

Meagan DeGaia, MVCB's destination manager said, "We are thankful for this opportunity and are continuing to work closely with the East Maui community to ensure that tourism management continues to be driven by residents. The East Maui Advisory Group, which is comprised of

community members from each moku (district) in East Maui, has been instrumental and resourceful in guiding us throughout this process.”

The purpose of the East Maui Tourism Management Pilot Program is to uplift community-based solutions that will be supported by HTA. It advances the Maui DMAP in which residents specifically called for managed tourism actions: initiate, fund and continue programs to protect the health of ocean, fresh water and land-based ecosystems and biosecurity; explore the capacity limits at heavily visited sites through science-based data; continue to offer cultural education and training programs to enhance and perpetuate aloha; implement a responsible communications program to educate visitors pre- and post-arrival about safe and respectful travel; amplify regenerative tourism on Maui; and develop and promote initiatives to improve the experience of transportation and ground travel.

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Link to download interviews and video footage:

<https://finnpartners.box.com/s/kl864v6mlzmxutdbax5880l3kue1c8zf>

Video courtesy of Hawai'i Tourism Authority

Link to download images: <https://finnpartners.box.com/s/8yixg7o04qhx4gddkfwiv15h0c7fwy>

Photos courtesy of Hawai'i Tourism Authority

About Ke Ao Hāli'i

Ke Ao Hāli'i is named for the low-lying heavens, *Ka Lani Ha'aha'a o Hāna*, that is likened to a blanket that covers and protects the 'āina (land). It was established in 2018 to protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Hāna moku and the customary and traditional practices of Native Hawaiians of the region for generations to come. Ke Ao Hāli'i currently has the kuleana to steward 188 acres of the Hāna Coast and to guard it from unwanted development, abusive practices, and self-serving interests that will cut off access for native 'ohana of the moku. Ke Ao Hāli'i's work now is to ensure that traditional and customary practices and the subsistence lifestyles of Hāna continue by connecting the kanaka (people) with the 'āina. It believes that by regaining its rightful seat as navigators of its kulāwi (homeland), future generations will thrive. For more information, visit savehanacoast.org.

About Hōlani Hāna

Hōlani Hāna, Inc. was established in 2009 by a dedicated group of Native Hawaiian kūpuna (grandparents) and cultural practitioners who had a shared vision to elevate the well-being of families and communities through the perpetuation of Hawaiian values, practices, and landscapes. Located in the rural Hawaiian community of Hāna in East Maui, Hōlani Hāna stewards a 5-acre coastal pu'uhonua (cultural refuge) in Papa'auhau just outside of Hāna Town. In addition to hosting groups and events at their 'āina, the organization trains emerging practitioners in traditional Hawaiian architecture under the guidance of Kuhikuhi Pu'uone (Master Indigenous Architect) Francis "Palani" Sinenci while constructing hale throughout Hawai'i. More recently Hōlani Hāna's work has evolved to include supporting grassroots, community-led capacity-building and collaboration across East Maui. Hōlani Hāna is honored to support the Wailua Hui, a grassroots group of lineal descendants, generational 'ohana, and cultural practitioners of Wailua, as it implements Mālama Maui Hikina's work at Honolewa within the ahupua'a (land division) of Wailua. For more information, visit holanihana.org.

About Na Mahi'ai o Ke'anae

Na Mahi'ai o Ke'anae, a subsidiary of Native Hawaiian Philanthropy, has a mission to provide Ke'anae farmers and community with support, training and sustainable economic development opportunities. It provides workforce development training and opportunities to support Ke'anae

families. Na Mahi'ai o Ke'anae has provided cultural workshops and community work days to community organizations, businesses and eco-volunteers to help increase cultural knowledge and history of the area. It promotes hands-on learning experiences in farming and conservation of the natural resources of Ke'anae. For more information, visit nativehawaiianphilanthropy.org.

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 hawaiitourismauthority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), Threads and [Twitter](#).

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