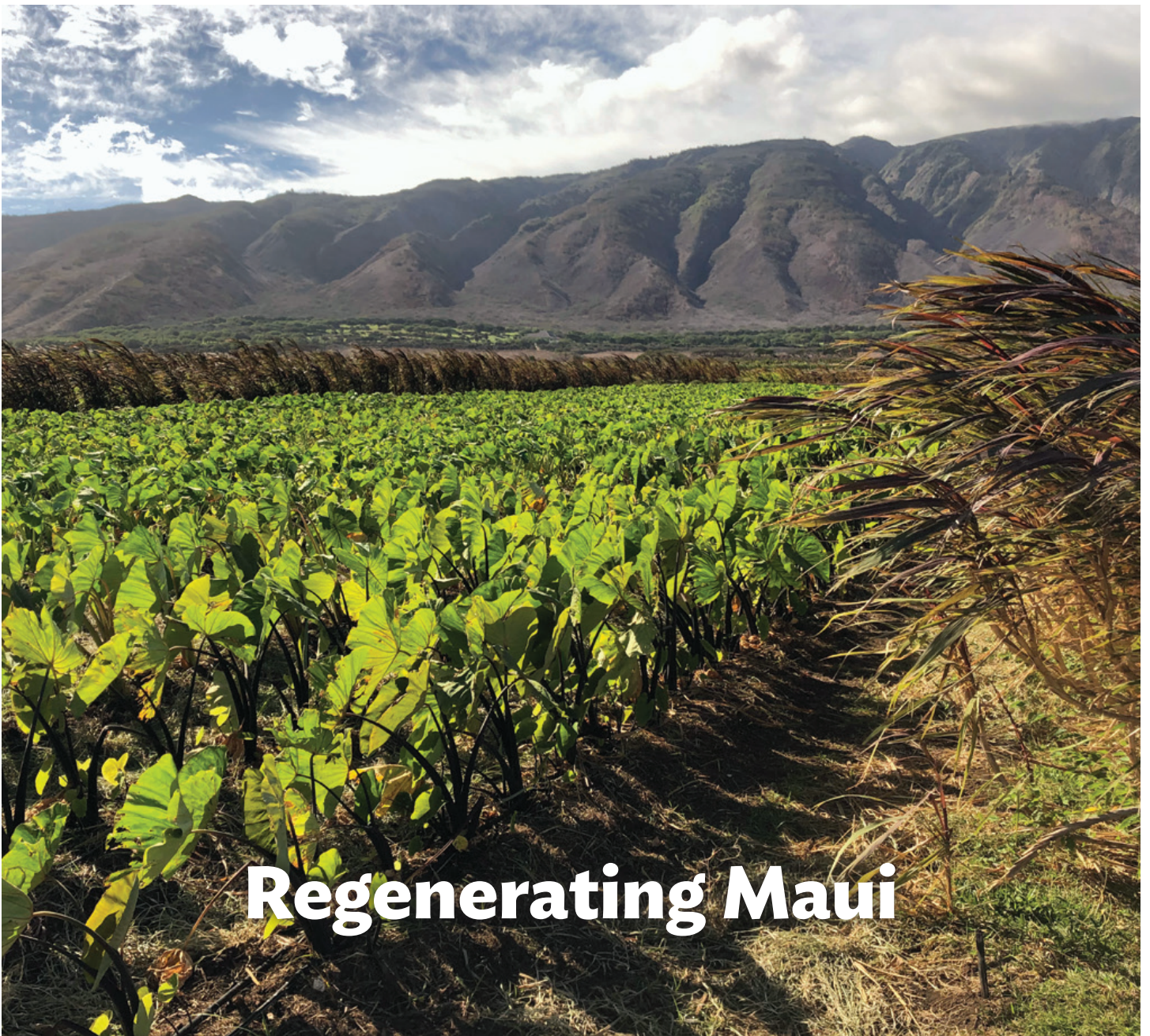




2023 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT



Regenerating Maui

Aloha,

Maui's people are still pulling together to deal with the impacts of the firestorms of August 8th. Thousands of structures were lost in Lahaina, and 100 people lost their lives. Thousands of survivors remain displaced. Kula and Olinda also lost 19 homes to fire, and many people suffered wind damage. Huge amounts of toxic debris were left behind. This tragedy has been overwhelming, and the effects continue to ripple throughout our community. Although the response has been inspiring - from other parts of Maui, from other islands, and from around the world – there is much more to do.

Initially, there was a misguided response to the disaster – the Governor's emergency proclamation that waived environmental, cultural preservation, and land use laws in order to allow housing to be built anywhere, regardless of affordability. Maui Tomorrow and other organizations pushed back against that idea, and it was modified significantly. However, we can expect similar efforts to continue, based on the false premise that we can build our way out of the affordable housing problem in the face of unlimited outside demand. Maui Tomorrow continues to advocate for solutions that will actually benefit Maui's people instead of enriching outside investors – while preserving the open space, rural character and quality of life that make our island no ka oi.

Maui Tomorrow has been promoting the transition to regenerative agriculture for several years. Now we are beginning to see the word “regenerative” being used in place of the word “sustainable” in other contexts, such as building and tourism. The difference is that when an approach is sustainable, it can be carried on indefinitely, whereas when something is regenerative, it makes the situation better than it was. We continue to explore those concepts in this year's report. This is very timely, as Maui needs to be regenerated in many ways.

As the causes and impacts of the August 8th disaster continue to be revealed, we need to learn from what went wrong and move forward, informed by that experience, and by ancient wisdom as well as new knowledge. We invite you to join us as we work with Maui's community to regenerate different aspects of our island in ways that will be more resilient, more sustainable, and less vulnerable.

Re·gen·er·a·tive

[rē 'jenərədiv]

(adjective)

Relating to the improvement or restoration of a place or system to its original strength or properties; self-healing; getting better over time.

Regenerative Agriculture

Regenerative agricultural practices such as installing windbreaks, minimizing tillage, and planting cover crops help to restore and maintain natural systems and produce food in a manner that is healthier for people and the long-term health of the planet. Maui Tomorrow has begun to showcase real regenerative farmers in order to spread the word about the availability of alternatives to chemical agriculture. Our first set of videos features Alex Pinsky. We will continue to feature additional regenerative farmers and

their methods. You can find these videos here:

tinyurl.com/RegenAgVideos

We continue to pursue these efforts in the hope that jobs can be created in farming and its many supportive industries, thus helping to diversify Maui's economy. Regenerative agriculture can reduce Maui's vulnerability to future economic downturns, increase local food security, and help to preserve Maui's environment, open space, and rural lifestyle. ▲



Alex Pinsky is a Huelo farmer who has created an organic permaculture food forest that uses regenerative practices. His outstanding results show what can be done on a relatively small 2-acre parcel.

Regenerative Agriculture: agriculture that restores and maintains natural systems, and produces food in a manner that is healthier for people and the long-term health of the planet.

Cover Photo: Former sugar cane land in Waikapū is now being farmed regeneratively. Note the vegetative windbreaks on either side that protect the kalo from the strong winds of Central Maui.

Regenerative Building

Given the tremendous problems that Maui is experiencing in dealing with toxic debris from the Lahaina and Kula fires, we should do everything possible to minimize the use of noxious materials when rebuilding. Regenerative buildings are assembled with nontoxic materials, and the landscaping that surrounds them restores some of the natural ecosystem function that was there prior to construction. The regenerative approach to building restores and improves the site, rather than just trying not to damage it.

Regenerative structures can be affordable - built at similar or lower costs when compared to traditional methods, but with lower operational costs. Designed for self-sufficiency, regenerative buildings adapt to environmental changes, providing lasting resilience and harmony with nature. They eliminate waste, and use renewable resources to cleanly



Conceptual drawing of an affordable regenerative home, courtesy of Regen Maui.

Regenerative Building: Construction practices that positively impact the environment.

generate more energy than they use. Rain that falls on them is either consumed or infiltrated into the ground to recharge the aquifer. Unlike conventional green building design that simply tries to minimize environmental and social harm, regenerative design can actively improve the well being of people and the planet. Instead of being “less bad” by minimizing impacts, regenerative buildings can actually have net positive impacts on the environment. We are excited to report that local company RegenMaui is working to build the first affordable, regenerative home on Maui. ▲

Regenerative Tourism

Maui Tomorrow continues to work with concerned citizens to look for ways that the visitor industry can have less impact on the environment and on residents’ quality of life. The term “regenerative tourism” was initially intended to address the shortcomings of what has been described as “sustainable tourism,” which means a viable visitor industry that does not make things worse. If visitors can instead leave destinations in better condition than when they arrived, then tourism can be said to be regenerative.

Regenerative Tourism: Travel that helps to restore the characteristics of a destination to their pre-travel condition.

However, we are already seeing some visitor industry definitions of regenerative tourism that ignore the need to limit the overall number of visitors. Much industry emphasis has been on “Hotspot Management” – an effort to direct visitors away from high traffic locations, to places that are not so crowded. Unfortunately this approach is resulting in increased visitor presence in previously uncongested areas, leaving local residents with fewer places to find respite from overtourism. In addition, regardless of how dispersed visitors are, there will be some types of impacts - such as wastewater, solid waste, and traffic - that are correlated with the total number of visitors, and are not reduced by sending travelers to alternative destinations. In order for tourism to become regenerative, visitor numbers need to be limited.

Depending on our choices going forward, Maui will either retain its attractiveness as a destination - with a superior experience for visitors, and a high quality of life for residents - or it will decline and become a crowded, highly impacted place that still attracts high numbers of people, but no longer generates the economic benefits that were originally envisioned. We are already seeing this play out. Over the last three decades, the number of visitors to Maui has increased by 30 percent, while inflation-adjusted tourism revenue has remained flat. ▲



Oneloa at Mākena State Park. This beach, once slated for exclusive condominiums, was saved by citizen action. Our efforts today can have an impact on our future.

Truly Affordable Housing

Maui Tomorrow continues to advocate for sound planning to shape Maui's future. This includes making sure that all Maui families have safe, secure places to live, at truly affordable prices. Unfortunately, affordable homes sold under Maui County's workforce housing policy are only temporarily affordable. It only requires 1 out of 5 homes to be affordable, which means that 4 out of 5 are unaffordable. Even worse, the affordable homes can be sold at market prices after just 5 to 10 years, leaving us with no net gain of affordables. Although many units have been built over the past twenty years, they have so far failed to house Maui's people.

Simply increasing the supply of homes won't solve our housing problem if we keep losing those affordables to the outside market. Maui has plenty of market rate homes. However, thousands of these are seldom-occupied second homes that most of our residents can't afford. Off-shore competition for houses raises market prices beyond the reach of the average Maui family.

Maui Tomorrow continues to look for ways to enable existing residents to stay here, such as:

- Urging the administration to finish creating affordable housing priority lists for residents. This task was required by ordinance, and was supposed to have been completed by November of 2022.
- Holding developers to their promises. For example, when the County Council approved the Wailea 670 housing project, the main reason given was that construction of 700 affordable homes would be significant. However, when the time came for Maui Planning Commission review, they approved the project with only 288 of the 700 affordable homes that the developer had originally promised.
- Adapting good affordable housing ideas from other jurisdictions for use here on Maui. For example, in very expensive Aspen, Colorado, 70 percent of occupied homes are owned by local residents. They receive down payment assistance in exchange for agreeing to sell only to other residents if they decide to move on. These homes are not available on the free market, so they are not subject to speculation from outside investors.
- Addressing needs of the many unsheltered residents who are forced to sleep outdoors, in their cars, or with family or friends. Maui Tomorrow urged the County to hire consultants to design a strategy to make homelessness rare and brief. That comprehensive plan is now underway.

On July 1st, 2024, the County of Maui Department of Housing will begin operations. This will allow the County to focus on creating truly affordable housing for all local residents. Maui Tomorrow strongly supported the ballot initiative that created this department; we look forward to working with them. ▲

Implementing Our Settlement at Mākena

In 2016, Makena Resort proposed to build 158 luxury homes near Mākena Landing – land that was known to contain many cultural sites. Maui Tomorrow and our allies sued, and the developer asked us to negotiate. The settlement that we reached reduced the number of units, provided for 60 units of affordable housing in perpetuity, and required the developer to hire an archaeologist of our choosing to examine the site again. As the additional archaeology has continued, many more cultural sites have been revealed. This is a direct result of your support for our efforts.

The developer has also now made progress on a required permaculture design to minimize runoff from the resort's mauka agricultural lots. When completed, the results will include reduced soil erosion, reduced flooding, reduced sedimentation of offshore reefs, and increased recharge of the aquifer underlying the land. ▲



Maui Tomorrow Board members and volunteers visit a previously unrecorded cultural site at Mākena. This site was identified as a habitation and agricultural complex, with multiple ceremonial components

Water

Maui Tomorrow continues to work with broad community coalitions to protect water quality and achieve water justice for small farmers, rural communities, and kuleana water users. Over many decades, we and our allies have made definite progress, but there is more to do.

East Maui Community Water Authority

Maui Tomorrow supports transition of large private water systems to public control. The public is dependent on these water sources. We can't afford to have old plantation water systems be sold on the world market or be subject to shifting corporate ownership or policies. Last year's successful

amendment to the Maui County Charter created Community Water Authorities. This gave our government the tools to acquire and manage these vital water systems and shift control of public water resources back to our communities.

Under this new charter amendment, water authorities, with boards composed of local residents and stakeholders, can help restore accountability, maintenance, and investment in our water resources. Water authorities also qualify for funding that is not available to private, for-profit entities. Formation of the East Maui Regional Water Authority is underway, with members appointed and funding allocated to hire staff. Its purpose is to secure the state lease for the East Maui water license areas. Mahi Pono, the largest user of water from East Maui, will still be able to get water at a fair price for bona fide agriculture. The Water Authority will have an opportunity to make system improvements that can minimize waste and better protect public trust uses. In the future, additional regional water authorities can be formed for West Maui, Nā Wai 'Ehā or other regions.

Maui Island Water Use & Development Plan

The Maui Island Water Use & Development Plan (WUDP) is a long-range plan for the use, development, conservation, protection and management of Maui's water resources. This plan is critical to Maui's water future.

At the urging of the community, the state Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM) did require some improvements to the County's version of the WUDP. However, the massive document is still long on discussion of alternatives, and short on specific actions and timelines. Many sections rely on outdated data, especially the West Maui scenarios. Water use for resorts remains excessive, while rural areas like Ha'ikū are wrongly assumed to have minimal future water needs. This assumption would allow excessive amounts of groundwater to be piped away to drier areas of Maui. The WUDP gives little emphasis to the idea of public ownership of the former plantation water systems. In short, Maui Tomorrow must continue being a voice for public trust water resources on Maui. We need and appreciate your help. Your donations help us to ensure that Maui's water will be used wisely to restore our streams and aquifers, and to ensure water for all.

Nā Wai 'Ehā

Nā Wai 'Ehā (the Four Great Waters) encompasses Waikapū Stream, Wailuku River, Waiehu Stream, Waihe'e River, and their surrounding ahupua'a. In 2016, after Alexander & Baldwin, Inc. announced the closure of Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Co., the Hui o Nā Wai 'Ehā and Maui Tomorrow asked the state water commission to leave more water in the streams for community uses.

In 2021, the Commission set the stream flow standards for Nā Wai 'Ehā, but they set them too low, thus missing an historic opportunity to support life-giving boosts to stream flows and help to recharge 'Iao aquifer.



Waterfall in East Maui

This past December, the Hawaii Supreme Court heard our appeal of the Commission's decision. We asked the justices to make it clear that public trust needs like adequate stream flows must be considered first when allocating water resources - not after giving water to other users.

We are hopeful that the court will rule in our favor. ▲



Companies that were granted water for sugar cultivation kept diverting the waters of Nā Wai 'Ehā after the plantations were closed. Portions of some streams are too dry and hot for aquatic life to survive.

Community Plan Update

Community plans are important for the future of Maui because they are an expression of people's vision for the future of their communities. They are a part of the County general plan, which has the power under state law to regulate decision-making with regard to issues such as land use planning, water resources, transportation, and affordable housing. In order to implement that vision, community plans and all parts of the general plan need to be written with specific language that is enforceable.

A draft of the updated South Maui Community Plan has now been completed by the Community Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). In a process that lasted more than a year, CPAC members listened to developer presentations and public testimony, and voted on proposed revisions to the existing community plan. Maui Tomorrow was actively engaged in this process. We supported planning principles and land use requirements that would require development to be environmentally sound and enhance the quality of life on Maui.

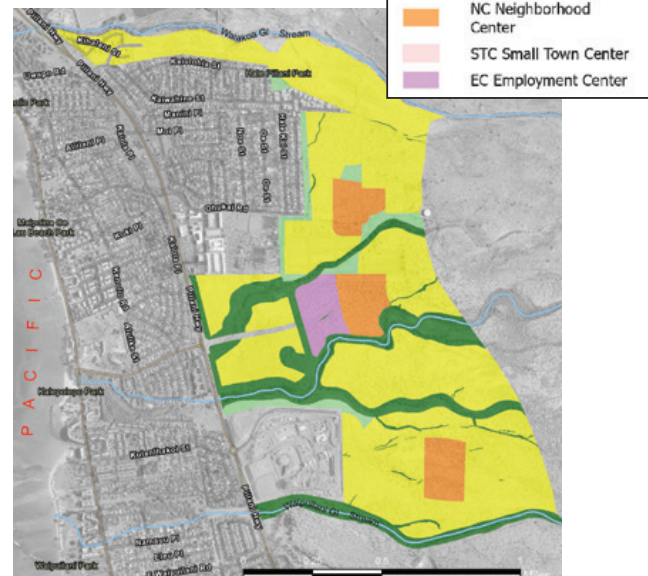
The population and housing studies that formed the basis for the plan assumed greater growth than was supported by actual census numbers, so the amount of new development initially proposed by the Planning Department's first draft was excessive. On top of this, at the request of a developer, the department recommended adding nearly 600 acres of development in the area mauka of the worst flooding in Kihei. Situated at the north end of Kihei, this would

significantly increase traffic congestion for vehicles headed further south toward Mākena. This additional development was supported by the CPAC, although restrictive policies were added to require a variety of affordable and market housing, to mitigate excessive runoff, and to require a two-lane road connecting East Lipoa Street (Lipoa Parkway) to Veterans Highway. These restrictive policies will be subject to amendment by the County Council, so the community will need to rally to keep them in the plan. Otherwise, there may be 600 acres of unrestricted development on top of the already excessive amount of developable land that was originally proposed by the department.

Although an infrastructure analysis for the South Maui planning region had been undertaken before the CPAC convened, it did not include cost estimates or a timeline, and it did not analyze requirements for the additional 600 acres of North Kihei Mauka. Fortunately, at its last meeting, the CPAC voted to require a full infrastructure analysis for the entire community planning region, to include estimated costs and a timeline to provide this infrastructure over the next 20 years.

Maui Tomorrow continues to be concerned that the vague wording of the updated land use descriptions will limit the plan's enforceability. Although the CPAC added language to specify which uses would be permitted, the Planning Director at the time stated that the department would oppose that additional language during subsequent reviews by the Maui Planning Commission and County Council. Maui Tomorrow will continue to work to make sure community plans are enforceable, reflect good planning principles, are environmentally sound, and reflect the will of the community. ▲

Almost 600 acres mauka of Pi'ilani Highway were designated for new development by the South Maui Community Plan Advisory Committee. This would be in addition to the large tracts of land already designated for thousands of housing units in South Maui.



You make the difference!

Maui Tomorrow continues to advocate for needed reforms that will reduce overreliance on the visitor industry, support regenerative agriculture, and increase the pool of housing that is truly affordable for local residents. Your donations enable us to continue these efforts, which are essential to protecting and enhancing Maui's quality of life.

For over 34 years, Maui Tomorrow has been taking action to protect open space, insisting that development be environmentally sound, and helping to preserve the opportunity for a rural lifestyle on Maui. We continue to demand compliance with Hawaii's environmental and land use laws. With your support we will continue to help keep Maui nō ka 'oi.



Albert Perez, Executive Director

Mahalo nui loa,

Albert Perez

To learn more about Maui Tomorrow, to get involved, or to donate to our efforts, please visit us at [Mauitomorrow.org](https://mauitomorrow.org). Every contribution is sincerely appreciated and will be used wisely to further our mission.

Maui Tomorrow Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and your contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law. To learn more about tax-wise options for current or planned giving, please contact us.

Where would we be without Maui Tomorrow?

Quality of Life
Stream Restoration
Mega Mall **Olowalu** Truly Affordable Housing
Makena
Preserving Open Space
Sustainable Agriculture Overtourism
Community Plans
Partnering with Maui's communities to protect
the 'āina since 1989.

**Go to: mauitomorrow.org to learn more
about what you can do to protect our 'āina**



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To help Maui Tomorrow with a gift,
please go to

MauiTomorrow.org/donate

Please note: We continue to receive reports of the post office returning mail that is sent to our Wailuku street address. When contacting us or sending in a donation, please use the above post office box instead.

Maui Tomorrow Foundation is a
tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.