

Hawai'i Forest Institute
Mealoha Kraus People's Choice Grant Report

The [Hawai'i Forest Institute](#) was able to make many achievements in 2022 with the help of the Mealoha Kraus People's Choice Award grant of \$10,000. Our forest restoration and education projects fitted nicely with Hawaii Life Charitable Fund focus for 2022, "Hawaiiana- Perpetuating the culture, traditions and history of our first ancestors who settled these Hawaiian Islands".

At Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest and Kalaemanō Cultural Center in North Kona on Hawai'i Island, through our forest restoration and education program [Ho'ola Ka Makana 'ā o Ka'ūpūlehu](#) our Cultural Ecology Team engaged 715 volunteers in service learning activities including outplanting 1,305 native seedlings. The site crew maintained the 76-acre endangered dryland forest habitat and brought 2.48 additional acres under intensive management. Other learning sites included Ka loko o Kiholo, Kahuwai, and Pu'uwa'awa'a. The Team shared stories of place, ancestral connections, and natural history of these rare dryland ecosystems, intertwining a homeland perspective into 'āina-based learning.

At the [Keauhou Bird Conservation Center \(KBCC\) Discovery Forest](#), 143 volunteers were engaged in service learning activities including outplanting 1,200 native seedlings. The 40-acre site was managed and an additional 1.25 acres were cleared. This projects involved outplanting native seedlings in a endemic forest canopy with Acacia koa and 'Ōhi'a Lehua as the pioneer species. Ten different native species were outplanted in 2022 (A'ali'i, Koa, Manono, Maile, 'Ōhi'a, Kōlea, Ōlapa, Hō'awa, Pilo, and Papala Kepau) Birds being cared for at KBCC are the 'Alalā (extinct in the wild), Palila, 'Akeke'e, and 'Akikiki. This project is significant because of the rare bird element and by planting 'Ōhi'a Lehua, which is being devastated by Rapid Ohia Death (ROD).

At the [Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest](#) we engaged 173 volunteers in monthly forest stewardship activities, including planting seedlings, weeding, installing plant ID signs, and harvesting fruit for the animals at the Zoo. We partnered with Mālama Learning Center to develop Symphony of the Hawai'i Forests educational materials for teachers, students, and visitors that will enhance their understanding about Hawaiian trees in the Discovery Forest. We installed 10 new plant ID signs and produced 20 8.5"x5.5" postcards to hand out to volunteers. The postcards feature native and Polynesian-introduced plants, native forest birds.

[Go Native: Growing a Native Hawaiian Urban Forest](#)



Ko'oko'olau (Bidens asymmetrica), Endemic to Hawai'i Island. Photo: J.B Friday, PhD.

The Go Native project includes community outreach and creating a growers guide and an online, interactive, community portal encouraging Hawaii's residents and businesses to grow Native Hawaiian and Polynesian-introduced plants, as well as increase public awareness of the value and benefits of planting Hawaiian plants and trees.

The guide titled ***Go Native!: Your guide to growing Native Hawaiian and canoe plants wherever you live, work, or play*** was published in August 2022 and is available for purchase

on [Amazon.com](#). [Link to Sneak Peak of Growers Guide](#).

We would be happy to mail you a copy or copies of the Go Native Growers Guide. Please send mailing address and number of copies.



Student plants seedling at Ka'ūpūlehu. 2022



KS 3rd Grade students plant seedling at KBCC Discovery Forest. 1-27-22



Farrington High School students plant sugar cane at the Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest. 5-12-2022

BIG ISLAND NOW

News

Hawai'i Forest Institute Awarded \$10K Grant

March 3, 2022 · 4:00 PM HST

A Big Island organization whose mission is to promote the health and productivity of Hawai'i's forests recently was awarded a grant that will benefit several of the nonprofit's projects.

According to a press release, the Hawai'i Forest Institute based in 'Ō'ōkala was awarded \$10,000 from the Mealoha Kraus People's Choice Award program. The program is administered through the Hawai'i Life Charitable Fund, a donor-advised fund at the Hawai'i Community Foundation.

"Our forest restoration and education projects fit nicely with Hawai'i Life Charitable Fund's focus for 2022, Hawaiiana, perpetuating the culture, traditions and history of our first ancestors who settled these Hawaiian Islands," said Hawai'i Forest Institute Executive Director Heather Simmons.

Projects the institute is working on include: The **Ho'ola Ka Makana'ā o Ka'ūpūlehu project** includes forest restoration and education at Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest and Kalaemanō Cultural Center in North Kona. The Ka'ūpūlehu Cultural Ecology Team shares stories of place, ancestral

connections and natural history of these rare dryland ecosystems, intertwining a homeland perspective into 'āina-based learning.

The **Keauhou Bird Conservation Center Discovery Forest** involves outplanting native seedlings in a endemic forest canopy with koa and 'ōhi'a as the pioneer species. Twenty different native species have been outplanted at the Discovery Forest since 2014. KBCC Caretaker Ulumauahi Keali'ikanaka'ole coordinates student volunteer events and inspires youth to bond with their environment through service-learning activities connecting science with culture. Birds being cared for at KBCC are the 'alalā, palila, 'akeke'e and 'akikiki.

The **Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest** demonstrates culturally significant plant and tree species that once grew near traditional shoreline villages of O'ahu. The institute recently produced a [Docent Workbook Interpretive Guide](#), [New Plant ID Pages](#) and a [Forest Friends Coloring Book](#) featuring native animals and their habitat. This year, Hawai'i Forest Institute is developing "Symphony of the Hawaii Forests" educational materials for students and teachers.



Site Manager Wilds Pihanui Brawner gives a planting demonstration at Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest in North Kona.

The **Go Native: Growing a Native Hawaiian Urban Forest** includes producing a video series and a quick reference guide encouraging people to plant native and Polynesian-introduced seedlings.

Mealoha Kraus was a well-loved Hawai'i Life broker and the Hawai'i Life Charitable Fund's first board chairperson. She lost her battle with breast cancer in late 2019.

Kraus was a leader in every sense of the word, according to the press release, and under her leadership, the fund raised and distributed more than \$200,000 in 2018 to help with recovery efforts from the eruption of Kīlauea volcano in Puna and flooding on Kaua'i and O'ahu. She remains a guiding light for the fund.

Each year, agents and brokers with Hawai'i Life, a real estate firm, collectively choose a giving focus for the Mealoha Kraus People's Choice Award grant program. Grants are made available to eligible nonprofit organizations throughout the state with programs that align with Hawai'i Life's mission and giving focus for that calendar year.

For more information about the Hawai'i Life Charitable Fund, click [here](#).

In 2003, the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association formed the Hawai'i Forest Institute to help protect and conserve Hawai'i's forests through forest restoration, educational programs, information dissemination and support for scientific research.

For more information about the Hawai'i Forest Institute, click [here](#).

Links to Photos and Educational materials created in 2022:

[Symphony of the Hawaii Forests Educational Piece:](#)

[Mahalo-'Aina-Discovery-Forests-Photos-2022.pdf \(hawaiiforestinstitute.org\)](#)

[Mahalo 'Āina Discovery Forests Photos 2022-2 – Hawaii Forest Institute](#)

[Native Plants and Fauna Post cards](#)