



## Restoring Abundance to Hawai'i Marine Waters

Hawai'i is home to world-renowned coral reefs and marine life that provide sustenance, sustain local livelihoods and lifestyle, and support a billion-dollar tourism economy. These irreplaceable natural resources are increasingly threatened by pollution, climate change, poor land use practices, and overfishing.

To help restore the abundance of Hawai'i's ocean, Resources Legacy Fund (RLF) has joined forces with the State of Hawai'i and locally-based philanthropy to support Hawai'i's Marine 30x30 Initiative, which calls for effectively managing Hawai'i's nearshore waters, with 30 percent established as marine management areas by 2030. Hawai'i leads the nation as the first state working to achieve the international conservation goal of protecting 30 percent of the planet by 2030.

The people of Hawai'i are committed to making their islands more sustainable for the benefit of present and future generations. In 2016, Hawai'i Governor David Y. Ige announced the Sustainable Hawai'i Initiative to the World Conservation Congress, laying out five ambitious goals, one of which is the Marine 30x30 Initiative.

Never has such a conservation effort been more critical. As coral reefs worldwide are threatened by warming seas, Hawai'i's reef ecosystems uniquely benefit from slightly cooler temperatures than most tropical waters, making them a climate change refuge with global significance.

Now is the time for Hawai'i to leverage unprecedented political will, financial commitment, and scientific and cultural expertise to support this transformation of the management of its marine resources.

### **Bolstering State and Community Leadership**

The State of Hawai'i and its Division of Aquatic Resources are leading the Marine 30x30 Initiative, analyzing and identifying improvements needed in existing management areas, and working with communities to identify places where improved management will restore abundance to nearshore waters. The State invited RLF to provide technical assistance in designing and executing the initiative. RLF and its philanthropic partners, led by the Hawai'i Community Foundation, are also working to raise at least \$3 million per year to advance the initiative's goals. Philanthropic funds will support the following actions:

» *Empowering Community Efforts:* Community groups and networks of cultural practitioners throughout the Hawaiian islands are working to revive effective, traditional stewardship practices. Philanthropic investment is needed to advance these efforts and elevate co-management as part of the Marine 30x30 Initiative. Expansion of Hawai'i's successful Makai Watch program, which empowers community members to identify and report marine resource rule violations to promote compliance, is one example of how philanthropy can transform local marine resource management. Supporting broad outreach and enhancing participation in community-based programs can enhance public support.

» *Setting the Stage for Good Governance:* Coordinated, well-structured governance is vital to successful outcomes over the long term. In our experience, clearly defined and agreed upon roles and responsibilities, lines of authority, planning milestones, and strategies for transparent communication ensure greater efficiency and accountability among partners, timely progress toward shared goals, and ultimately, more successful outcomes. Philanthropy can support technical assistance to agencies to develop new concepts that enhance interagency coordination and planning.

» **Leveraging Private Investments for Public Funding:** Long-term conservation gains require public funding to sustain robust natural resource management programs at appropriate scale and durability. With pollution, climate change, sedimentation, and overfishing already causing significant declines in its nearshore fisheries and coral reef health, Hawai'i cannot afford to postpone significant investment in the protection and restoration of its treasured marine resources. Philanthropic funds can support work by partner organizations to craft and advance measures to increase public funding for ocean conservation and management.

» **Building a Movement:** A strategic, well-researched communication and outreach plan is the foundation of any successful campaign for public support. Hawai'i residents value their rich marine resources, with 90 percent viewing coral reefs as important to their culture. Harnessing this support to catalyze successful political outcomes requires well-timed polling and research to develop strategic messaging, especially messages targeted to opinion leaders and elected officials.

» **Ensuring a Strong Foundation in Science:** The Marine 30x30 Initiative must incorporate leading scientific information to ensure that its marine managed areas will function as an ecological network, informed by traditional knowledge, and crafted with monitoring and enforcement in mind. Private funds can also help expand the role of community science and education programs.



Kim Moa, courtesy of KUA

## Leveraging Experience for Smart, Swift Success

RLF is proud to join the effort to protect and sustainably manage Hawai'i's nearshore waters. Based in Honolulu, RLF staff is working closely with the Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources, the Hawai'i Community Foundation, and others to build the partnership necessary to succeed at this ambitious undertaking, based on approaches specifically tailored to Hawai'i's political and cultural environment.

RLF brings to the Marine 30x30 Initiative more than 15 years of experience developing marine protected area networks (MPAs), which are spatially defined ocean areas managed to protect biodiversity and habitat. From 2004 to 2012, RLF partnered with the State of California on an effort that resulted in protection of 17 percent of state waters in the nation's first science-based statewide network of MPAs. Since 2012, RLF has continued this partnership to ensure long-term effective management of California's MPAs, and is working with tribal communities to advance co-management of marine resources. RLF's experience and lessons learned will be valuable in the collaborative work with Hawai'i-based partners to help shape the long-term management of Hawai'i's marine resources.

RLF has 20 years of experience conserving land, water, and ocean resources while advancing healthy communities and social equity. We have a proven track record of leveraging philanthropic funds to create billions of dollars in public funding and successfully designing and implementing effective outreach campaigns, based on data, to deliver results. We have facilitated the protection of more than two million acres of land across the American West and Mexico; led efforts that generated more than \$26 billion in new public funding for water, land, and ocean conservation; and supported 50-plus commercial fisheries worldwide in achieving sustainability certification.

*Hawai'i depends on the health and resilience of its sensitive reefs and ocean wildlife.  
Let's work together to restore abundance to Hawai'i's nearshore waters for everyone and everything that benefits from them.*

