

# Building Support and Capacity for State and Community-Based Marine Management in Hawai'i

## SUMMARY REPORT 2015-2017



A site visit to Olowalu, Maui, organized by The Nature Conservancy, helped advance coral reef conservation by bringing community leaders together with decision-makers from the State of Hawai'i. *Photo © TNC*

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## ***Introduction***

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i Marine Program partnered with the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) and the State of Hawai'i to support community-based management on the islands of Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i and Hawai'i. One of our primary tasks was to build support and capacity for the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) as the Division worked with local communities where there was a desire to improve marine management. To this end, TNC hosted and participated in 16 field trips and more than 25 meetings, provided strategic communications training to state employees and partners, and developed and shared targeted outreach materials to inform and mobilize action on behalf of conservation initiatives. These strategies were developed through discussions with DAR staff and leadership prior to and during the course of this partnership agreement.



State Senator Mike Gabbard, Water, Land and Agriculture Committee chair, talking with Sol Kaho'ohalahala of Maunalei, Lāna'i during a field trip to Olowalu, Maui.

*Photo © Dan Dennison, State of Hawai'i DLNR*

## ***Leadership Transitions in State Government***

The Nature Conservancy's work on this CRCP partnership came at a critical time as the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) brought on a new Chairperson, Suzanne Case, appointed by Governor David Ige in April 2015, and a new Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) Administrator, Bruce Anderson, hired in October 2015. There was a temporary adjustment period as TNC established connections and working relationships with the new team, and as the DLNR and DAR leadership developed their priorities. This process of readjustment and refocusing related to this CRCP partnership was assisted by the direct support and involvement of NOAA Coral Program lead Paulo Maurin.

## ***Field Trips, Site Visits and Meetings***

The Nature Conservancy organized and attended 16 field trips on Maui, O'ahu and Hawai'i Island with non-profit partners and community leaders to educate decision-makers about the conditions of coral reefs and coastal sites, and to share stories of places and the traditional practices connected to those places. These site visits, along with more than 25 meetings and numerous phone calls and email correspondence, also allowed opportunities for key policy makers and community leaders to discuss the ecological, cultural and socio-economic justifications for proposed management actions. Included in these field trips were DLNR and DAR leadership and staff, as well as staff and elected representatives from the U.S. Congress, Hawai'i State Legislature, and local County councils. The CRCP partnership supported five field trips to Ka'ūpūlehu, Hawai'i Island, three field trips to Kīholo, Hawai'i Island, six field trips to He'eia, O'ahu, one field trip to Olowalu, Maui, and one field trip to Kāne'ohe Bay, O'ahu. *(Details on the site visits were included in TNC's progress reports to NOAA.)* These personalized site visits provided an ideal setting for decision-makers and their staff to see these places firsthand, and to hear from the community leaders.

Connecting decision-makers and community members helped contribute to notable coral reef research and conservation accomplishments during this period, including:

- ***Ka'ūpūlehu Marine Reserve:*** Establishment of a 10-year rest area at Ka'ūpūlehu, Hawai'i Island, signed into law by Governor Ige, protecting reef fish for 10 years along a 3.6-mile stretch of coastline, to allow fish populations to increase in size and abundance from their current depleted state.



Community spokespeople like Hannah Kihalani Springer were key to conservation successes, including a 10-year rest area at Ka'ūpūlehu. Photo © TNC

- ***Mo'omomi, Moloka'i CBSFA:*** Submission of a proposal for the establishment of a Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) on the north coast of Moloka'i that establishes size and bag limits, gear restrictions, and seasonal protections for fish and invertebrate species. This proposal followed the successful establishment of the state's first CBSFA at Ha'ena, Kaua'i.
- ***Polanui and Kīpahulu, Maui:*** Submission of letters of intent from community groups to the State of Hawai'i requesting to establish marine managed areas at Polanui and Kīpahulu.
- ***He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR):*** Establishment of NOAA's newest National Estuarine Research Reserve, the first NERR to integrate traditional practices of agriculture and aquaculture, with restoration and research.

Each of these accomplishments help move Hawai'i towards the 30X30 goal set by Governor David Ige to have "30% of state waters effectively managed by 2030" to ensure sustainable fishing and

healthy coral reefs into the future.

### ***Global Conferences with an Island Focus***

The International Coral Reef Symposium (ICRS) and IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) both held in Honolulu in 2016, provided opportunities to elevate the voices of local community spokespeople to a global stage. TNC staff worked with partners to identify and provide technical support to community members who spoke about the importance of effective coral reef management in Hawai'i at each of these conferences, including the following events:

- ***Kai Kuleana Kakou – Uniting to Care for West Hawai'i's Coastal & Marine Communities***  
*ICRS Session 73b, June 22, 2016:* Charles Young of Ho'okena, Hawai'i shared his experience as a founding member of the Kai Kuleana Network.
- ***Try Wait! Reviving the Practice of Kapu to Replenish Marine Life at Ka'ūpūlehu, Hawai'i***  
*ICRS Session 71, June 23, 2016:* Hannah Springer spoke about the cultural, biological, and social need to rest overstressed reefs from fishing at Ka'ūpūlehu.
- ***Lawai'a Pono: Ancient Hawaiian Fishing Practices Applied in Modern Contexts***  
*IUCN Session 12237, September 2, 2016:* Kelson "Mac" Poepoe shared the perspective of fishing responsibly with respect to people's needs in reverence and obligation to the ocean.
- ***Global E Alu Pu Gathering:*** During the week prior to the IUCN World Conservation Congress, indigenous leaders from developing countries gathered to share lessons, stories, knowledge, and prepare to enter into the WCC with one voice. Organized by non-profit partner Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo and supported by TNC, the gathering engaged 160 people from more than 30 countries.



A handout developed to share the results of reef and fish surveys at Kīpahulu.

## Strategic Communications Materials

The Nature Conservancy worked with state and community partners to develop and share communications materials about the condition of coral reef resources and the actions taking place to improve these resources throughout the state. These materials were shared widely at community events, through TNC publications and partnerships, and in communications with state decision-makers. *(Copies are provided as attachments to TNC's final NOAA-CRCP Partnership report.)*

## Strategic Communications Training

The Division of Aquatic Resources identified strategic communications as a timely and important area in which The Nature Conservancy could help the State to build capacity. To achieve this goal, TNC led two training workshops to provide community members, agency partners, and local organizations with tools to ensure their communications support their conservation goals. *(See the South Kohala Partnership Summary Report: 2015-2017 for details on the second workshop.)*

The first workshop, held on December 8, 2016 in Honolulu, was designed specifically for the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and was expanded to include other partners. TNC staff gave a series of plenary presentations, followed by opportunities for participants to work individually on their initiatives and to ask questions of their peers and the presenters.



Representing the DLNR were six staff members, including Aquatic Invasive Species program staff, DAR legal fellow, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary representative,



Participants worked in small groups to develop and refine their strategic communications plans.

Photo © TNC

watershed partnerships planner, and Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement educational specialist. Other organizations participating in the workshop were NOAA, Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo, West Maui Watershed Partnership, West Maui Kumuwai, Sierra Club, Maui Nui Makai Network, South Kohala Coastal Partnership, and West Hawai'i Fisheries Council.

The workshop served to increase the capacity of State, Federal, NGO, and community partners to integrate strategic communications into their conservation goals. It was also a good opportunity for community members to have productive conversations with DAR staff about specific initiatives. Participants were surveyed on the utility and effectiveness of the workshop, and 54% of participants reported that the workshop met expectations, and 46% responded that it exceeded expectations.