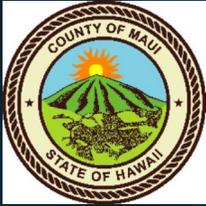


# East Maui Water Authority



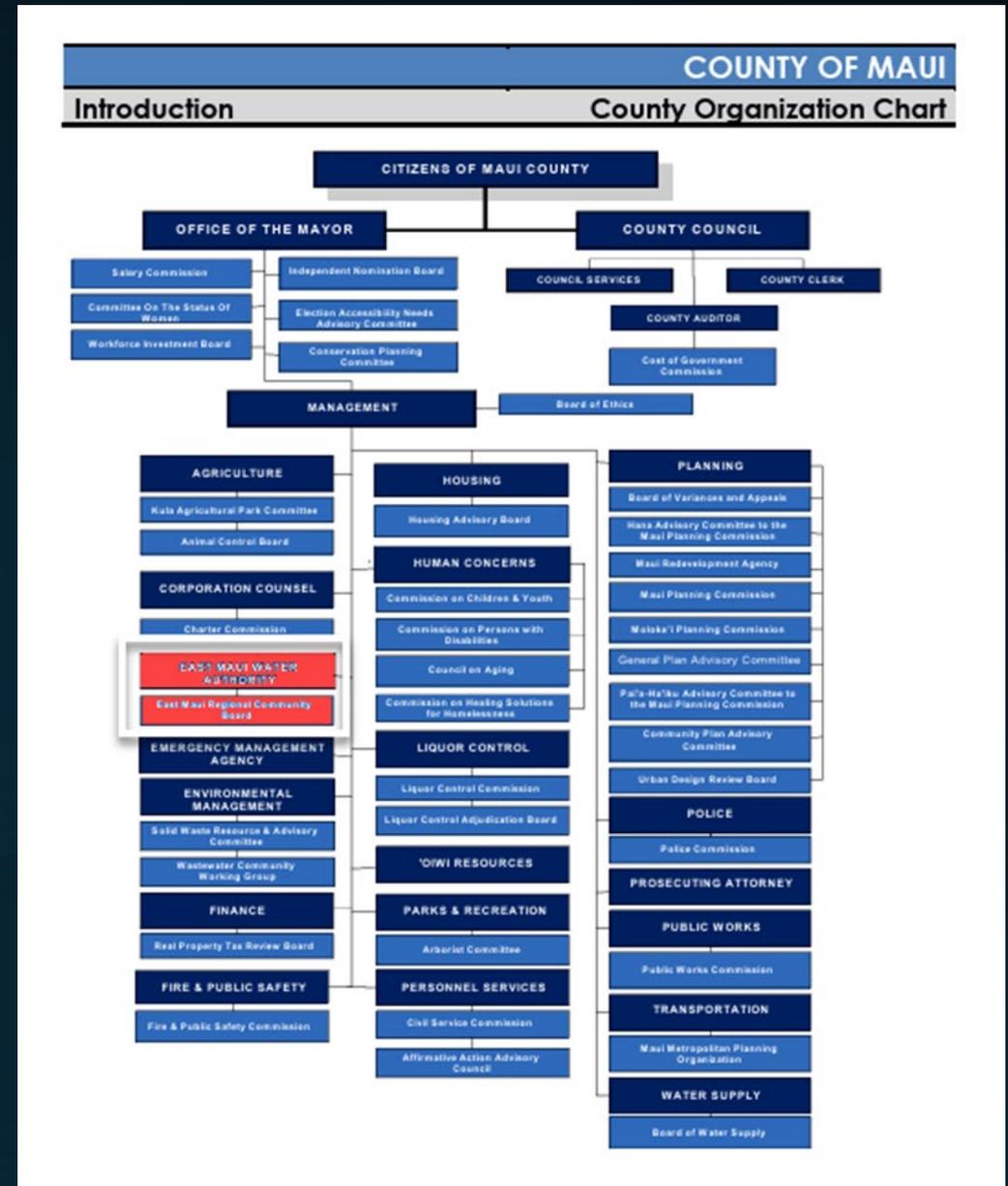
We wouldn't be  
here without the  
decades long hard  
work of the Ke'anae  
Community





# Who are We?

- Voter initiated new **County Department**
- Dedicated mission to acquire and manage the East Maui water system
- Develop & implement watershed plan





# Who are We?

1 Director

1 Private Secretary : Cory Vicens

2 new employees this month:

Grant Coordinator: Leslie Tamaribuchi

Info & Educ Specialist: Serena Fukushima

Fall 2025: Water Resources Specialist & 2 intern positions

Spring/Summer 2 Watershed workers

# Independent Community Board 'Aha Wai O Maui Hikina

## 11 Invaluable Experts, Policy Makers & Advisors:

- Water policy – Chair Jonathan Scheuer (DHHL Rep)
- Water Resource Professional Knowledge - Francis Quitazol
- Agriculture – Open Seat
  - how can water resource management promote local agriculture for food security and economic benefit for our island

# 'Aha Wai O Maui Hikina

## Watershed Areas representatives:

Vice Chair Kyle Nakenlua, Members Moke Bergau, Moke Kahiamoe, Lyn Scott, Sissy Latham, Bush Martin, Janet Redo, Harry Hueo

### Provide:

- Area Knowledge and history
- The integration of Hawaiian knowlege, practices, protocol, and science into the department perspective, practices and policies
- Community perspective and feedback

# ‘Aha Wai O Maui Hikina Hawaiian Lexicon

- Examples: Renamed Board name & developed Board and Department Motto
- Protocol: Board openings and closings
- Both grounding us to perform our important work and then exit that state and be present when not at work

'Aha – Assembly, succession of guardianship

Wai – Water, Wealth

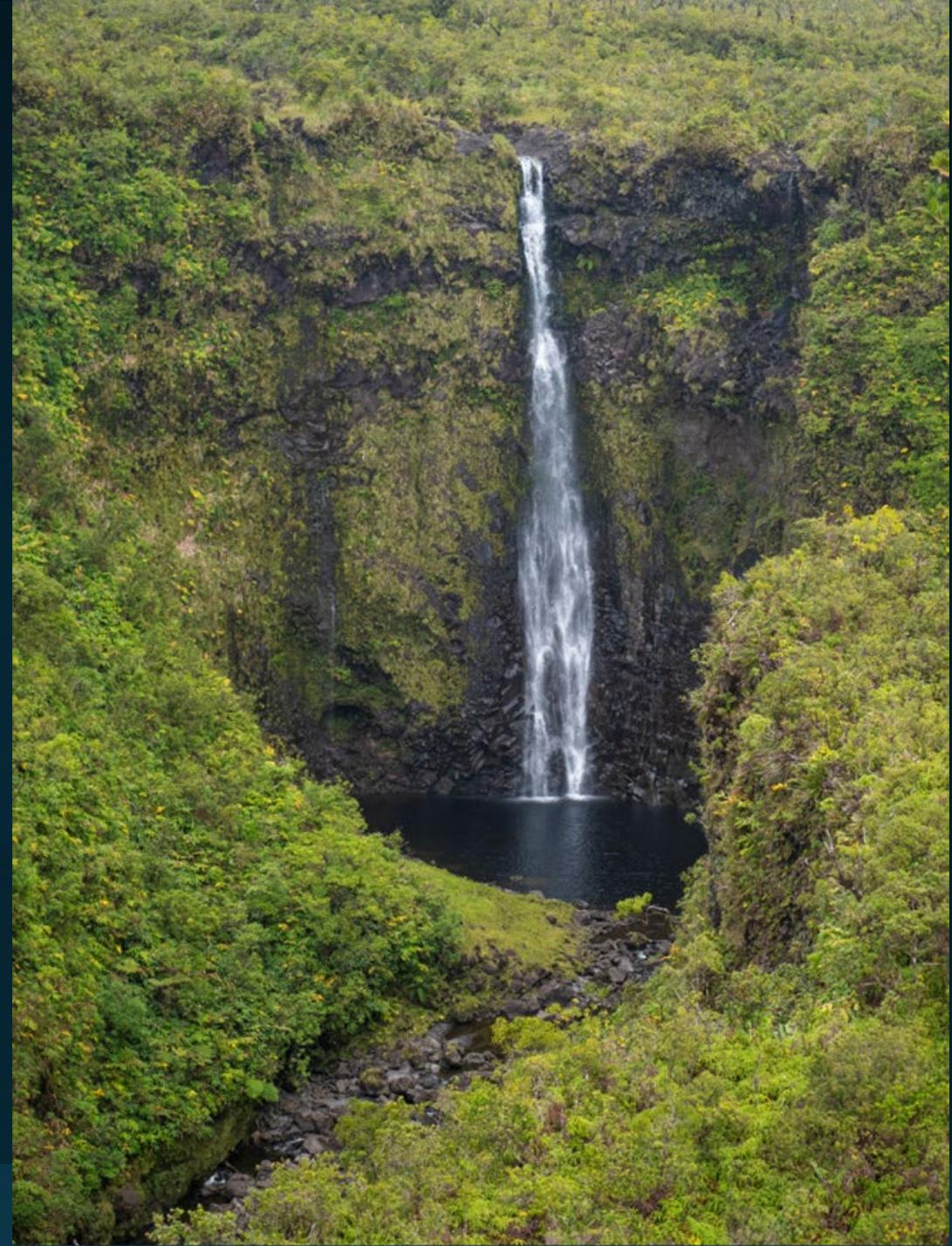
Maui Hikina - Eastern Geographic Region of the Island of Maui



Department & Board Motto:

Eia no o kūlanihāko‘i,  
no kākou e mālama ai!

*“Here indeed is Heaven  
reflected on Earth,  
It is for all of us to Protect,  
Preserve and Sustain”*



# Local Watershed Communities

- Know watershed current conditions and challenges
- Hold ike kupuna, ancestral knowledge of the area and sustainable practices to promote eco system health
- Support community kuleana of watershed
  - Promotes community health through connection to land and stewardship
- Partner with EMWA Watershed Division in their work and will be home to local community baseyard

Local Watershed Communities

And

Upcountry Water Users

Residents that have been directly affected by lack of water

Both provide an important perspectives  
as we work towards local control

Don't want to replace the old system of water extraction that ignored impacts of water diversions on people in the area and inequitable distribution with a similar system and perspective, instead...

# Create new system of mutually beneficial water resource management

Has an awareness of the impacts on watershed communities

Honopono ke aina and community concept:

- acknowledgment of past injustices
- create community benefits
- Kumu Pono Associates to assist with historical research

# Create new system of mutually beneficial water resource management

- Promotes equitable distribution and meeting water needs of the community
  - Finding ways to build capacity and lower costs of delivery (DWS)
- Recognizes benefits of meeting community water needs and community's role in food and affordable housing production

# Create new system of mutually beneficial water resource management

## Promotes local and island food security

- Dept of Ag Food Security Plan and documentation of food grown with East Maui stream water
- Kula and Haiku Surveys showing need and uses of water

## More water to local communities builds affordable housing

- Need to discourgae luxury home development for short-term rental and secon, third home use

# Create new system of mutually beneficial water resource management

Provides island-wide economic benefits

- By supporting small ag and large ag where profits stay in community and money is recycled through island economy

Creates long-term island water security

- Lahaina is on the forefront of climate change, balancing housing needs with tourism and luxury development economy and inefficient state regulatory system

# Create new system of mutually beneficial water resource management

Responsible management with long-term planning and funding component:

- Reduce negative impacts of climate change
  - capture high episodic rain events
  - reduce flooding and turbidity
  - lining of reservoirs, ditches and tunnels
  - upgraded infrastructure able to handle heavy rain flows
  - data capture to understand streams

# EMWA and AWOMH Mission

County Charter provides 2 main mandates:

- Obtain control of local surface water in East Maui
- Develop and Implement a Watershed Plan for East Maui Water Collection Area

# Charter Mandated Mission:

## Obtain Local Control of East Maui Water Resources

- Board partnership
- Working with the DLNR & BLNR
- Negotiations with Mahi Pono
- Working to understand state process
- Stakeholders through monthly AWOMH & DLNR East Maui Interim Committee meetings
- Broad community engagement

# Charter Mandated Mission:

Obtain Local Control of Local East Maui Water Resources

## Working with the BLNR

- Oct 2024: tried issuance of long term license
- Nov 2024: issuance of long term license through contested case process – BLNR voted no
- Dec 2024: Issuance of Annual Permit
- August 2025 Update
- December 2025 Annual Revocable Permit

# Interim Committee of East Maui Stakeholders

## Stakeholder input:

### Major concerns about lack of rainfall and climate change

- Heard from expert on Rainfall data – future is unknown and uncertain
- Want to hear from kupuna
  - spin off evening series
- First discussion with Mahi Pono on their farm plan
  - Concern about planting plan in era of reduced rainfall and reduced surface water availability
  - Frustration with “we’re in compliance answers” to questions

# Mahi Pono/EMI Discussions

- We are in the early stages of talking with Mahi Pono
- Working to reframe discussion to bring in historical awareness and need for equitable outcomes
- Discussions are led by Mayor Bissen
  - Mayor is strong advocate for local control
- DWS and Managing Director are partners
- Consultation with stakeholder communities
  - We need to inform you & get your input and buy in

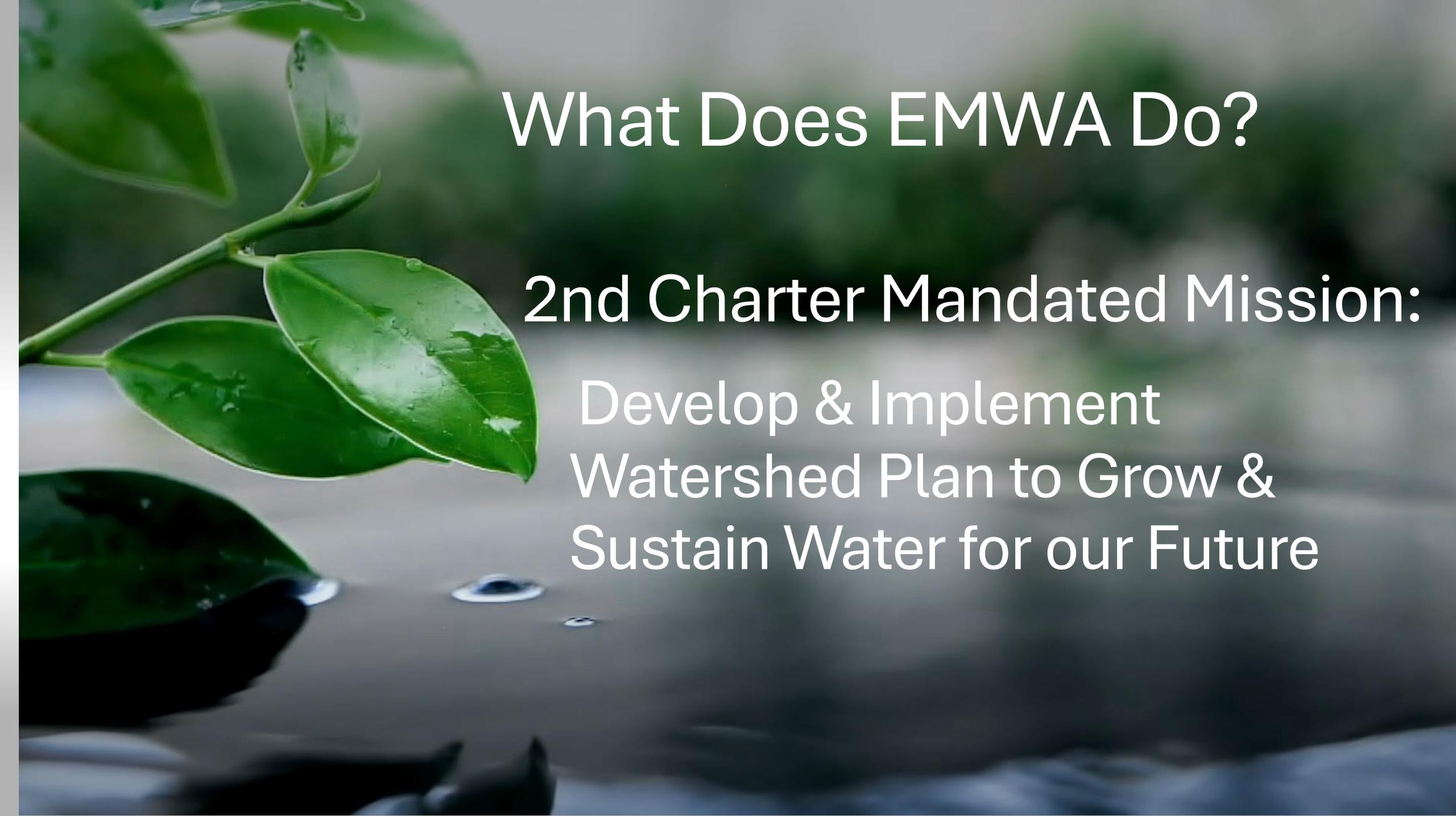
# Working with the State System

- Legal side – Intergovernmental agreement vs public auction (private interest uses community resources)
- Political side: requires creating political will & overcoming powerful invested interests

# Community Engagement

What got us here will lead our future success

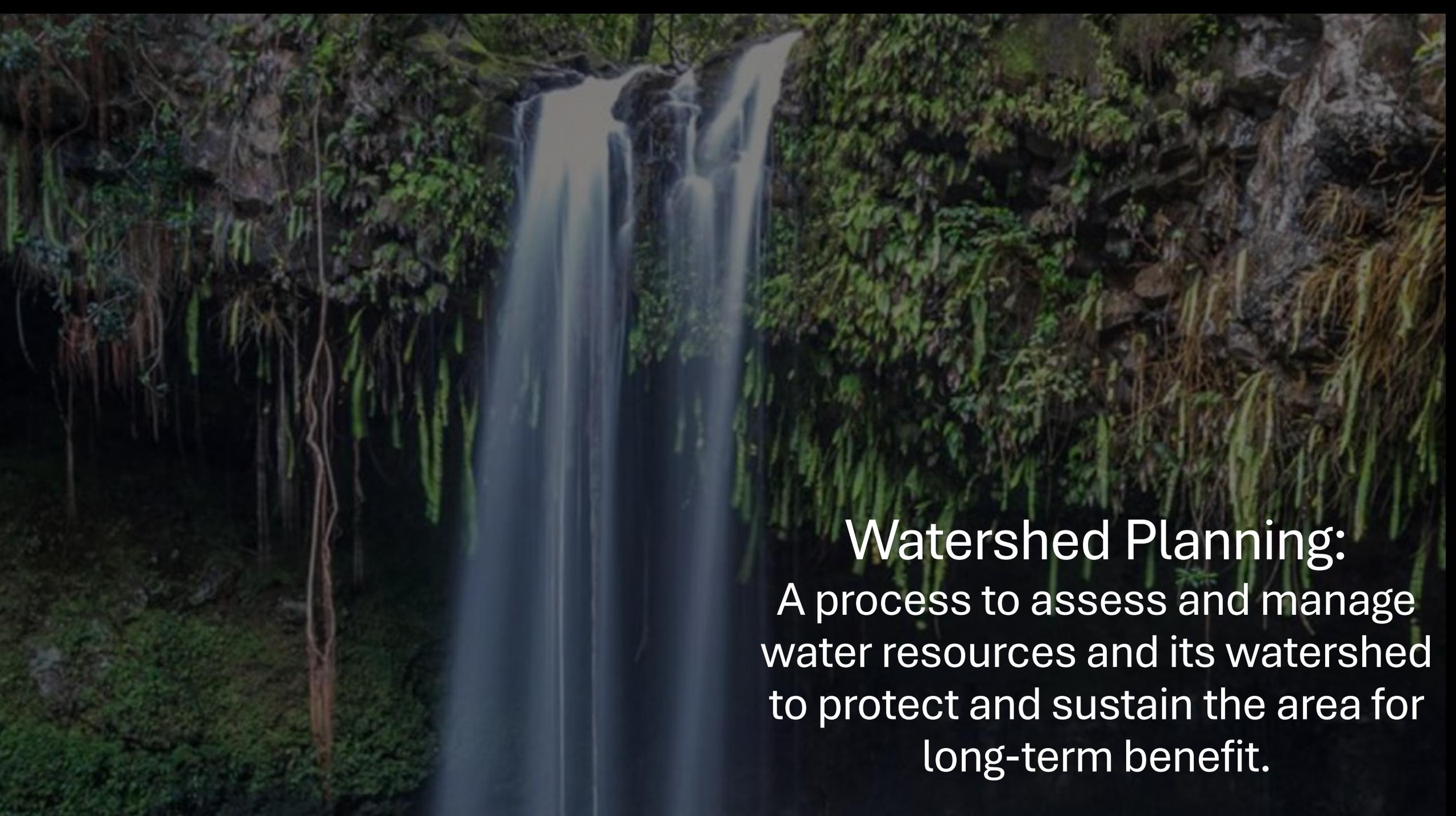
- Educating and keeping community up to date
- Providing an avenue for community input
- Gauging and harnessing community will
- AWOMH Boardmembers, Kula and Haiku Community Associations, Na Moku Aupuni O Ko'olau, DLNR Interim Committee of East Maui Stakeholders, individuals in the community – all about relationship building. Listening and actually doing what they want



# What Does EMWA Do?

2nd Charter Mandated Mission:

Develop & Implement  
Watershed Plan to Grow &  
Sustain Water for our Future

A photograph of a waterfall in a lush, green forest. The water is cascading down a rocky cliff, creating a misty spray at the bottom. The surrounding vegetation is dense and vibrant green, with many hanging vines and ferns. The overall scene is serene and natural.

**Watershed Planning:**  
A process to assess and manage  
water resources and its watershed  
to protect and sustain the area for  
long-term benefit.

# Watershed Plan

Programmatic – evolving, living document

- Different needs and programs for each watershed

Document to assist with grant funding for programs

- Descriptive:
  - Current community, challenges and opportunities
  - Document history: thriving sustainable community
    - impacts of diversions
    - Opportunities for community benefit through watershed and water resource management

## Watershed plan to be culturally rooted

- Using traditional sustainable practices
- Ike kupuna and ancestral knowledge
  - Board members, community, and Kepa & Onaona Maly research

## Community-based

- Engagement meetings, info and education specialist
- Focus on lower elevations where communities are most affected



## ABOUT NĀ MOKU

Nā Moku 'Apuni 'O Ko'olau Hui organized June 1996 as a non-profit organization to educate, perpetuate, serve and protect historical, spiritual, traditional, & environmental well being of Ke'anae/Wailuanui. Members are lineal descendants/current residents.



# Watershed Work Partnering with:

- DLNR Division of Forestry & Wildlife
- East Maui Partnership
- MISC
- Local community groups:
  - Na Moku Aupuni O Ko'olau
  - Haiku Community Association



# Building out new Watershed Division

## Watershed Work:

- 1 Water Resource Person 2026 position
- 2 field workers 2026 positions for 4 months
- Equipment and baseyard
- Work includes: stream clearing to improve mauka-makai connection, invasive species below 3000 ft, native reforestation in Huelo for better resilience
  - Focus is on state zones 2&3 – below 3,000 feet where work is most needed and area that impacts the watershed community the most

# EMWA's Limited Scope

It's important to understand the water authority's limited jurisdiction: providing untreated East Maui stream water to County Dept of Water Supply and Mahi Pono.

Aside from the amount of water delivered to each user, we have no control over how that water is used or the development of alternate sources of water.

We do have control over how we upgrade the East Maui delivery system and how the watershed is managed to grow water and have a responsibility to the watershed communities to bring them into our decision making and to represent them when working with other state and county policymakers.

# Watershed and Water Resource Planning Community Conversations

Goal: To unite stakeholders

Bring the input from each of the meetings to each community

Recognize and Honor Community Uniqueness

Ke'anae, Kula, and Haiku

Monday, June 16 - Wednesday, June 18, 2025

# Watershed and Water Resource Planning Community Conversations

Bring expertise to Policymakers

Public Financing Panel Discussion  
Wailuku Planning Conference Room  
Tuesday, June 17: 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Online: go to [Wikiwai.org](http://Wikiwai.org) or Department of the East Maui  
Water Authority website ([mauicounty.gov](http://mauicounty.gov))

# Communities Share History Around Lack of Water and Desire for New System of Management

- Have been pitted against each other
- Led to a reduction in their voice
- Distraction from goal of local management

# Previous Kula Community Input Land Stewardship

- Mālama ‘āina
- Create a return to indigenous stewardship and Hawaiian values system
- Activate ‘aha moku/‘ike kupuna/indigenous wisdom for watershed, forest, and hydrologic cycle stewardship
- Undertake care and management of the precious watershed
- Create and access funding and workforce development for land stewardship and watershed restoration

# Previous Kula Community Input Water Infrastructure

- Improve water systems infrastructure
- Increased water retention and watershed improvements
- Improve water infrastructure for drinking and firefighting through a better engineered system
- Improve water availability including water storage/reservoirs for drinking and fire

# Previous Haiku Community Input

- Anger over a lack of stream water and inequitable distribution of water
- Anger over their community needs not being a priority and feeling that they must be a source of water for South Maui
- Their watershed is non-native plants, resiliency comes through native reforestation
- Need for equitable access to resources – lack of sharing, owner takes all
- Frustration over slow work to complete mandated diversion removals
- Concerns about climate change and need for better data reporting

# Tonight's Meeting

Co-Host: The Public Finance Institute

Non-profit who helps governments & other organizations to embed values in public finance decision-making to create lasting change in the world.

Specialize in developing public finance programs to create equity, sustainability, and inclusion of all community members in fiscal decision-making.

Bring expertise in finance, community engagement, indigenous cultural values, and methods to reduce climate risk

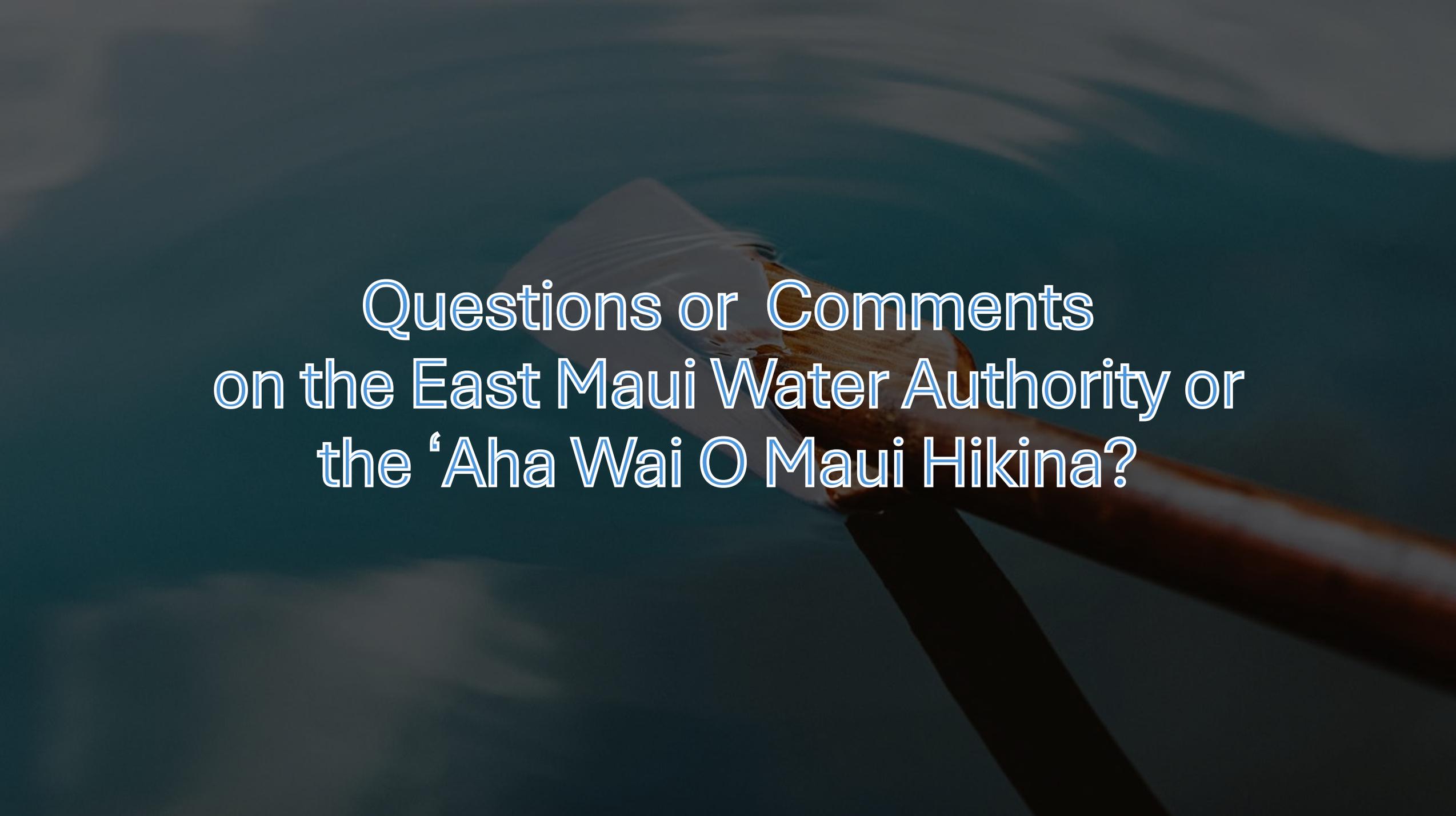
# Tonight's Meeting

There will be 4 small breakout groups, each led by one or more facilitators, in one part of the room and the questions will be printed on tables.

Each group will have a main topic / set of questions they will focus on.

We are looking for input from Ke'anae Community members, but welcome listening by all.

Each table has a different topic, but there will be a summary at the end from each group given by the facilitators.



Questions or Comments  
on the East Maui Water Authority or  
the 'Aha Wai O Maui Hikina?