

East Maui Water Authority



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

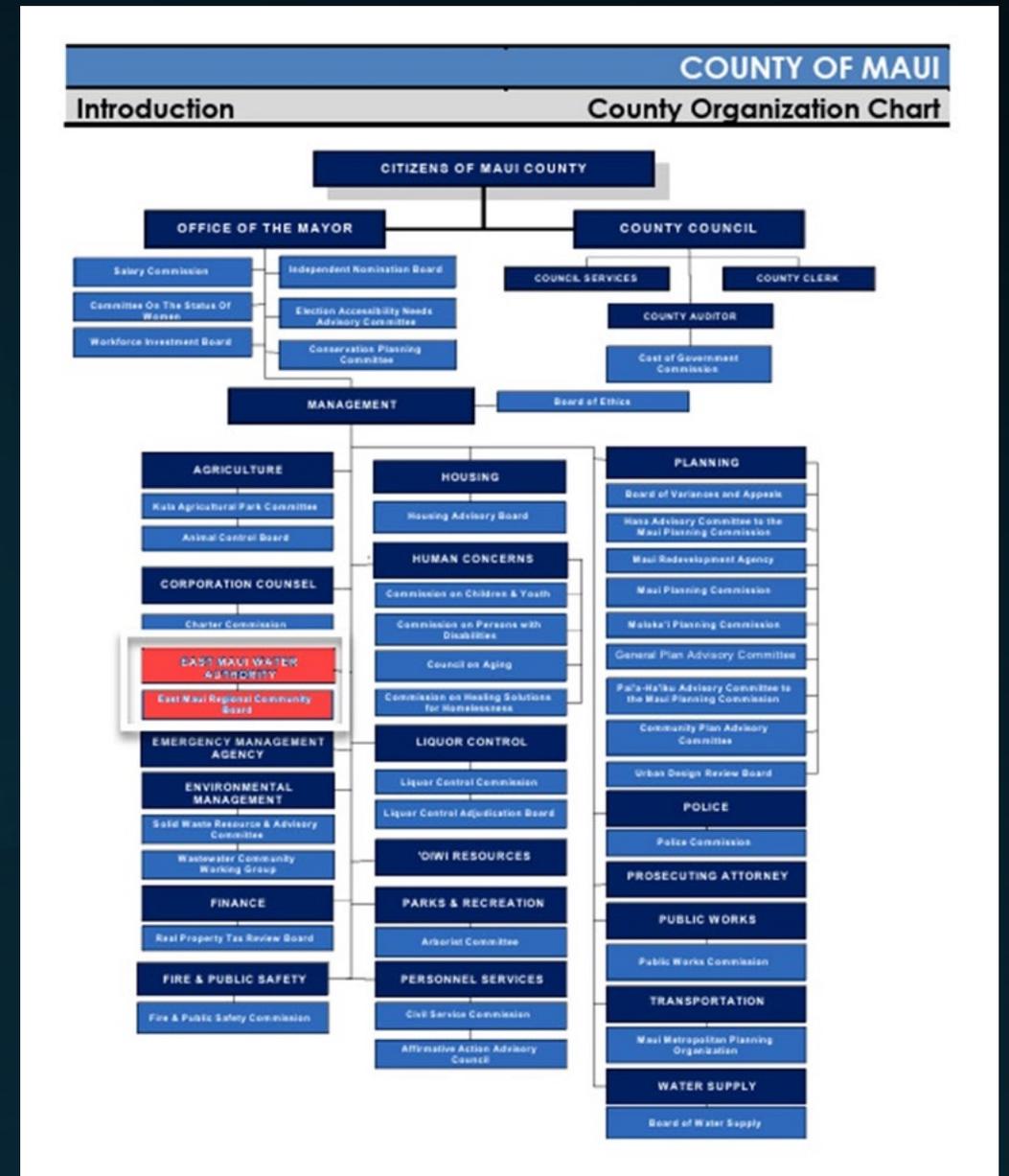




Who are We?

East Maui Water Authority

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





Who are We?

1 Director : Gina Young

1 Private Secretary : Cory Vicens

Two new employees this month:

Grant Coordinator: Leslie Tamaribuchi

Information and Education Specialist: Serena Fukushima

Fall 2025: Water Resources Specialist and two intern positions

Spring/Summer 2026: Two Watershed workers

Our Independent Community Board 'Aha Wai O Maui Hikina



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



Create new system of mutually beneficial water resource management

Has an awareness of the impacts on watershed communities

Honopono ka 'āina and community concept:

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



Uniting Local Watershed Communities And Upcountry Water Users

Residents that have been
directly affected by
lack of water



Both provide 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...



Mutually beneficial water resource management

- Promotes equitable distribution
- Recognizes benefits of meeting community water needs and community's role in food and affordable housing production
 - Maui County Dept of Ag Food Security Plan and documentation of food grown with East Maui stream water
 - Kula and Ha'ikū surveys



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

Responsible management with long-term planning and funding component

- Reduce negative impacts of climate change and capitalizes on new climate aspects
 - Capture high episodic rain events
 - Reduce flooding and turbidity with new reservoirs
 - Lining of ditches and tunnels
 - Upgraded infrastructure that is able to handle heavy rain flows
 - Data capture to understand and monitor streams

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”*



EMWA and AWOMH Mission

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



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.

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

Mahi Pono/EMI Discussions

- We are in the early stages of talking with Mahi Pono
- Working hard to reframe discussion to bring in historical awareness and need for equitable outcomes
- Discussions are led by Mayor Bissen
- Department of Water Supply and Managing Director are partners
- Consultation with stakeholder communities
 - We need to inform you, get your input and buy in
 - Please give it today during engagement sessions

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

We can't be successful without
your support and your knowledge!



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

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

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

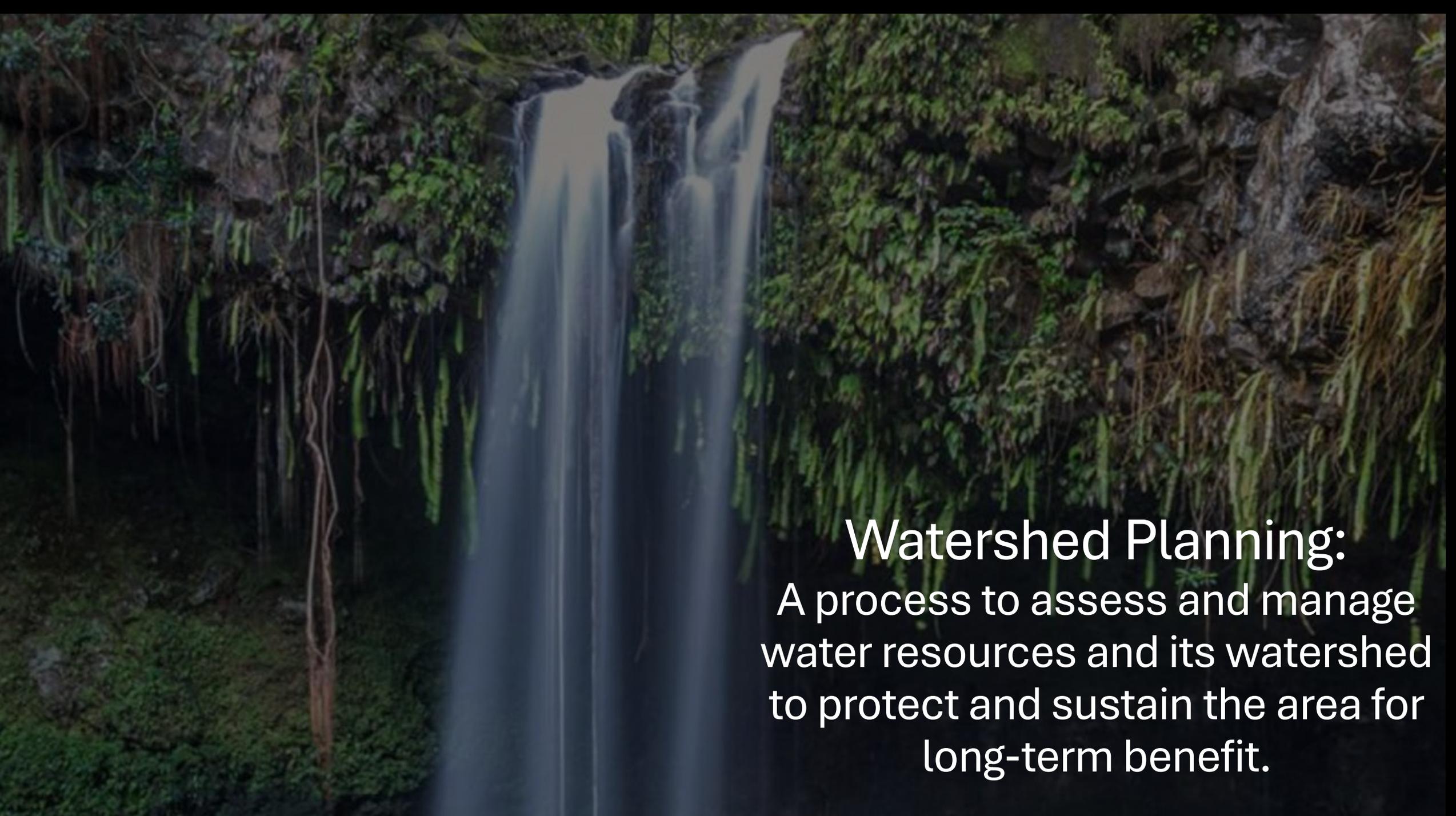


Interim Committee of East Maui Stakeholders

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

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 research by Kepa and Onaona Maly

Community-based

- Engagement meetings; information and education specialist
- Focus on lower elevations where communities are most affected



ABOUT NĀ MOKU

Nā Moku 'Aupuni '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.



Implementing the Plan

Building Out New Watershed Division

Watershed Work:

- Water Resource Specialist- fall 2025
- Two field staff- 2026 positions
- Equipment and watershed baseyard
- Early work could include:
 - stream clearing to improve mauka-makai connection
 - invasive species removal
 - native reforestation for better resilience
 - we need your input



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 or Department of the East Maui
Water Authority website (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

Yesterday in Ke‘anae

- Acknowledgements of damage done from long-term diversions to eco-system, cultural practices and communities
- Desire to pass watershed and environmental knowledge to keiki and through generations as was done for them
- Desire to provide community benefits through job opportunities caring for the watershed



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

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

Tonight's Meeting

Co-Host: The Public Finance Initiative

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

Assisting with community input, then expert panel

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

