



EKOLU LINDSEY

Ekolu is the embodiment of someone who has successfully inspired and empowered diverse members of Maui's communities to preserve, protect, and restore cultural, historic and environmental resources and traditions for generations to come.

Ekolu has taken on the legacy of his father, "Ed Lindsey" in his dedicated efforts to restore and preserve cultural and historic lands in West Maui. The Lindsey family established Maui Cultural Lands (MCL) as a nonprofit organization in 2002 as one of only a few land trust organizations on Maui targeting Hawaiian cultural lands along the coast and inland areas. As a Maui-based grassroots land trust organization whose mission is to stabilize, protect and restore Hawaiian cultural resources, MCL operated on the basis of volunteerism and place based learning. When Ekolu's father passed in 2009, Ekolu stepped up as president of MCL. Ekolu is taking the lessons learned from his dad and making them into reality. Currently, MCL has four project areas located from Ukumehame to Ka'anapali in West Maui with the primary goal to reforest Honokowai Valley and the Ka'anapali area with native and endemic plant species. Through Ekolu's leadership and commitment, MCL takes residents and visitors every week up to project areas for regular maintenance work dedicated to preserving the Honokowai Valley projects.

Another grassroots initiative under the leadership of Ekolu Lindsey is Polanui Hiu, comprised of a diverse community group working to restore the resources and traditions once practiced along the shores. Ekolu co-founded Polanui Hiu in 2010 as the first of Maui's six Community Managed Makai Areas (CMMA) working under the umbrella of the Maui Nui Makai Network. Polanui Hiu is located in Lāhaina, Maui and encompasses 222 acres of sandy, rocky beach and fringing as well as patch coral reefs. Nā Papalimu O Pi'ilani, the reef off Maui's Lāhaina coastline at Polanui, was once known for its abundance of fish and edible limu. These resources, carefully tended by kūpuna sustained Lāhaina families for generations. The area is small enough to be manageable by the community group and large enough to show biological gains under the appropriate strategies. Like other reefs adjacent to high population centers, it now shows signs of significant human impact associated with overharvesting, recreational use, sediment run off and poor water quality. Polanui Hiu is building an engaged community of volunteer citizen scientists who help monitor reef conditions and fish populations. Group members and community volunteers meet the first Saturday of the month at the Lindsey 'Ohana residence to conduct the surveys. Polanui Hiu aims "to educate, advocate, create awareness, and re-establish pono practices, which will help to ensure a healthy marine ecosystem for those yet unborn." Participants include visitors, residents, students, teachers and school children who learn the history and culture of the area. Through their involvement, they learn to understand the human impacts on near shore ecosystems in relation to land use practices. Volunteers create and strengthen cultural foundations using site specific, place based education and through Makai experiential learning systems.



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