

E KŪPAKU KA 'ĀINA GUIDING PRINCIPLES



MĀLAMA 'ĀINA. One person, one family, one community caring for the land can, over time, make powerful change.

The day-to-day practice of land restoration is like breathing and walking; exquisitely simple. The work can be hard, hot, and sweaty; easy in its execution. Each day you know you have accomplished Something. A month's, a year's, a decade's worth of Somethings will make profound change. You just have to do it. The power of this kind of change lies in the impact it has on those who watch. For a few years, maybe even a decade or more, it might look as if nothing is moving, and then, all of a sudden, the ground is no longer barren, the desmodium is gone, the ginger is in retreat, there are native ferns in the understory, and between the kiawe and the buffeleggrass, the schefflera, guava and the christmasberry, there are native seedlings holding forth, getting ready to make the leap -- to replace the alien cover -- and moving undeniably towards abundance.

MAKA'ALA; MAKAWALU. Observation and discernment are key skills for those who attend the land.

HANA KŪPONO. Every action we take on an island affects everything else. Work in balance with existing resources, connections and energy flows.

HO'OMANAWANUI. Have patience. Healing soils takes time. Recovering ecosystems requires attention to large and small patterns.

HO'OPAPAU. Be deeply and fully engaged in the work at hand.

PŪLAWALAWA. Be strong and active in work; bind the hale tightly and firmly.

NĀNĀ I KE KUMU. Look to the source.

MAHI'AI KŪPONO. Return to the passion and the roots of agriculture, where land shaped the work and where we belonged to the land; where practices and crops fit the topography and resources of a place and the cycles of the seasons.

HO‘ĀLA NĀ KUPU LAU. Reawaken, revitalize, and sustain traditional cultural land and water management practices, along with appropriate modern technologies, that restore the health of the land.

Diversified agriculture is not just about changing crops; but also about changing the way we conceptualize and practice agriculture. Long ago, the word “agriculture” meant “a nurturing and fostering of the land.” Somewhere between the 15th and the 21st century, the “culture” was lost from agriculture and the link between families, communities and the land was broken. We have tilled apart the maleness and femaleness of producing food, the water from the soil, and fenced ourselves out of relationships with the natural world.

We have as much to learn about recovering island ecologies and Hawaii’s unique biocultural diversity as we do about recovering ourselves. We need to understand everything that the land, cultural traditions, and indigenous science can teach us.

KŪ‘ONO‘ONO. If you care for a place, it will care for you. Know what is essential, what is sacred, what is unnecessary.

An economy of abundance, often described as “access to unlimited resources,” ought to have humbler roots. Consider ecological, physical, mental, spiritual, cultural, social and economic health to be part of a whole – a truer definition of abundance. Look for the presence of respect and dignity in our lives, and in our treatment of the land. Contemplate how often we laugh, our relationships, how truly well we are. And weigh all this against our ability and willingness to sustain the health of these islands and in doing so, ourselves, long into the future. We have stood outside the dynamic synergy of the natural world for so long that we have missed the vital breath that sustains us.

Knowing that we have what we need, we are above want and have the prosperity of spirit to share.

KUAPAPA. Live quietly.

HO‘O KUPAIANAHA. Retain the wonder and the amazement of life. Be inspired.

E PILI ANA ĀPAU. Everything is connected.