

# BRIDGING SUSTAINABILITY:

## Forming Partnerships through Biocultural Initiatives



An Interactive Qualifying Project by  
**Alex Mosley**  
**Justine Moy**  
**Drew Plunkett**  
**Megan Tupaj**

Date:  
**14 March, 2023**

### ABSTRACT

With Hawai'i's economy so dependent on the tourism industry, businesses have a history of neglecting the environment and culture of the islands in favor of cost-cutting initiatives. The goal of this project was to assist local environmental organizations in persuading hotels and resorts to invest in meaningful biocultural initiatives. Using interviews, we identified existing biocultural practices of sustainable hotels and resorts, analyzed the willingness of hotels and resorts in Hawai'i to enact such biocultural initiatives, and evaluated methods used by nonprofits to form partnerships with hotels and resorts. After reviewing our results, we made recommendations regarding the ideal types of hotels to seek partnerships with and the creation and maintenance of meaningful relationships.



KO'OLAU MOUNTAINS  
WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP



**WPI**

This Report was Submitted To

**JC Watson**

*The Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership*

**Professor Lauren Mathews and Professor Despoina Giapoudzi**

*Worcester Polytechnic Institute*

This report represents work of four WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its web site without editorial or peer review.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their contributions and involvement in our project:

Professor Lauren Mathews, *WPI*

Professor Despoina Giapoudzi, *WPI*

JC Watson, *The Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership*

Pam Hinsdale, *WPI Local Coordinator*

Professor Robert Traver, *WPI*

All Interviewed Hotels and Resorts

All Interviewed Nonprofit Organizations

## **AUTHORSHIP**

The contents of this report are a result of the collaboration among all authors. Since we completed the writing and editing together, we take equal authorship of all sections of this report.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>7</b>
Biocultural Sustainability	7
Mālama ‘Āina	7
Tourist Perspectives	8
Corporate Responsibility	10
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>12</b>
Identify existing biocultural practices of sustainability “leaders” among domestic and international hotels and resorts	12
Analyze factors that affect the willingness of hotels and resorts in Hawai‘i to enact positive biocultural initiatives	13
Evaluate effective methods used by nonprofit organizations to form partnerships with their local hotels and resorts	14
Ethics	15
<b>Results &amp; Analysis</b>	<b>16</b>
Identify existing biocultural practices of sustainability “leaders” among domestic and international hotels and resorts	16
Analyze factors that affect the willingness of hotels and resorts in Hawai‘i to enact positive biocultural initiatives	19
Evaluate effective methods used by nonprofit organizations to form partnerships with their local hotels and resorts	22
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>24</b>
Focus on partnerships with luxury hotels that are not part of a larger corporate chain	24
Understand the implications of hotel size on the potential benefits of a partnership	24
Target hotels with individuals in decision-making positions who uphold the value of “mālama ‘āina”	25
Initiate and maintain partnerships by providing immediately beneficial initiatives and continued guidance	25
Seek a mutually beneficial relationship through initiatives that support the mission of both parties	26
Limitations & Future Research	26
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix A: Spreadsheets of Hotel Information</b>	<b>32</b>
A.1 Notably Sustainable Hotels & Resorts	32

A.2 Local Hotels & Resorts	32
<b>Appendix B: Initial Interview Correspondence</b>	<b>33</b>
B.1 Email Template (Sustainable Leaders)	33
B.2 Email Template (Local Hotels & Resorts)	33
B.3 Email Template (Nonprofit Organizations)	33
B.4 Cold Call Script	34
B.5 Voicemail Script	34
B.6 Interview Ethical Introduction	34
<b>Appendix C: Hotel Interview Questions (Sustainable Leaders)</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix D: Hotel Interview Questions (Local)</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix E: Nonprofit Organization Interview Questions</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix F: Leaders in Sustainability</b>	<b>40</b>
F.1: Email Correspondences with Sustainability Leaders	40
F.1.1 Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa	40
F.1.2: Singita	41
F.1.3 Turtle Bay Resort	42
F.1.4 Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko Olina	43
F.1.5 Hawai'i Green Growth	44
F.2: Interviews with Sustainability Leaders	45
F.2.1 Kahala Hotel and Resort	45
F.2.2: Six Senses Laamu	46
F.2.3 Outrigger Resorts & Hotels	48
F.2.4 Sol y Luna	49
F.2.5 Sustainable Hospitality Alliance	50
<b>Appendix G: Local Hotels Interviewed</b>	<b>52</b>
G.1 Hostelling International - Honolulu	52
G.2 Ala Moana Honolulu by Mantra	53
G.3 Hotel Renew	54
G.4 Queen Kapi'olani Hotel Waikiki Beach	55
G.5 Prince Waikiki Honolulu Luxury Hotel	56
G.6 Polynesian Hostel Beach Club	57
<b>Appendix H: Nonprofit Organizations</b>	<b>58</b>
H.1 Nonprofit A	58
H.2 Mālama Maunaloa	59
H.3 The Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership	60
H.4 Ulumau	61
H.5 Protect and Preserve Hawai'i	62

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the islands of Hawai'i, the phrase "mālama 'āina" is a core pillar of Native Hawaiian culture. "Mālama 'āina," meaning to care for and nurture the land, encapsulates the symbiotic relationship between the people and the natural environment (Trask, 2001). The connected preservation of this symbiotic relationship between culture, society, and the environment is described by the concept of "biocultural sustainability" (Hanspach et al., 2020).

Since statehood, Hawai'i's economy has become increasingly dependent on tourism, and traditional practices regarding sustainable use of the land and its resources have been disrupted. Hotels and resorts have implemented cost-saving practices that neglect their responsibility to the environment and society. The effects of these damaging efforts can be seen in the lack of authentic Hawaiian practices within the tourism industry (Trask, 2016) and the misuse of the islands' natural resources (Osorio, 2010).

Despite this misuse, it is in the best long-term interest of businesses in the tourism industry to commit to sustainability. It is vital for Hawai'i's economic survival that its environment and natural resources are protected, as nature-based tourism is the main reason people visit the islands (Arakaki, 2022). Additionally, several studies have shown that sustainability is important to tourists (Linnes et al., 2022) and that they are willing to support it through donations or volunteering (Han, 2013).

One method of achieving a commitment to sustainability is for tourism businesses to partner with local nonprofit organizations. Nonprofits can provide guidance and resources to assist businesses in enacting significant biocultural initiatives. This project aimed to provide local nonprofit organizations with approaches to initiate these meaningful collaborations with hotels and resorts. These

approaches are meant to assist the Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership (KMWP) and other nonprofit organizations to successfully establish effective, long-term partnerships.

To accomplish this goal, we first analyzed existing biocultural practices of domestic and international hotels and resorts that we identified as leaders in sustainable tourism. Through interviews, we gained insight into what motivated these world leaders to invest in sustainability as well as any obstacles that were overcome in the process. As a result of these interviews, we concluded that the notably sustainable hotels have individuals in leadership positions for whom investment in sustainability is personally important, either because of their ethical conviction, their long-term planning for the hotel, or both.

We then contacted Oahu-based hotels and resorts to assess the current state of biocultural sustainability on the island, as well as hotels' willingness to enact further initiatives. With this series of interviews, we were able to determine that most hotels on Oahu currently have some degree of biocultural practices. These practices were typically basic initiatives and were less extensive than those of notably sustainable hotels. However, most hotel staff recognized the importance of sustainability and expressed interest in exploring options for increased involvement.

Lastly, we consulted the KMWP and other local nonprofits to evaluate the methods they use to form partnerships with hotels and resorts. Through these interviews, we determined that nonprofit organizations have seen a recent increase in hotels and resorts' willingness to create a partnership. We also found that successful relationships have been built on open communication and mutual benefit.

Based on our findings, world leaders among sustainable hotels utilized the support or

partnership of nonprofit organizations to achieve their success in meaningful biocultural initiatives. These leaders made it apparent that their relationships with nonprofits offered other benefits such as deep knowledge of the local environment or greater credibility of their hotel's sustainability efforts. On the local level, we received information that all hotels were enacting some kind of biocultural initiatives, many of which stopped at the basic level. The nonprofits we spoke to expressed that they could assist hotels in preserving the surrounding land or revitalizing Hawaiian culture, as these efforts aligned with their own missions. The key to initiating this relationship is to identify a hotel with upper-level staff who are truly passionate about corporate responsibility and biocultural sustainability, and then establish an upfront, clear benefit of the partnership to the hotel.

The information that we compiled from the interviews informed the recommendations we provided for our project partners at the KMWP. These recommendations can be utilized by any nonprofit organization in Hawai'i wishing to begin partnerships with hotels and resorts. In order to create meaningful partnerships with hotels and resorts, we recommend that nonprofit organizations: 1) focus on partnerships with luxury hotels that are not part of a larger corporate chain, 2) understand the implications of hotel size on the potential benefits of a partnership, 3) target hotels with individuals in decision-making positions who uphold the value of "mālama 'āina," 4) initiate and maintain partnerships by providing immediately beneficial initiatives and continued guidance, and 5) seek a mutually beneficial relationship through initiatives that support the missions of both parties. It is our hope that these recommendations develop pathways for more effective collaboration between local nonprofit organizations and the tourism private sector in Hawai'i.



## INTRODUCTION

This project aims to provide local nonprofit organizations with approaches to persuade hotels and resorts to invest in meaningful biocultural initiatives. The tourism private sector, composed predominantly of hotels and resorts, dominates the Hawaiian economy, with nearly every resident's income directly or indirectly tied to the industry (Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, 2021). This dominance and influence has greatly helped grow the state's economy, but has also created a large reliance on hotels and resorts to contribute to maintaining the islands' economic success (Woo, 2009). Due to this reliance, hotel operation, especially in regard to sustainability, is not explicitly enforced or prioritized, and as a result, there is a growing concern from residents of Hawai'i and environmental activists that hotels and resorts have been operating with too little regard for their negative environmental impacts (Assante et al., 2012).

To address this concern, hotels and resorts within the tourism industry must refocus their efforts toward meaningful, long-term biocultural initiatives. Successful biocultural initiatives help preserve the environment and culture of a hotel's surroundings. Since Hawai'i's natural beauty and culture are what motivate tourists to visit the islands (Osorio, 2010), it is crucial that there are continued efforts towards biocultural longevity. Nonprofit organizations can provide the necessary guidance for hotels and resorts to begin or build upon these efforts. Such organizations, like the KMWP, work to preserve Oahu's major watershed and native forests, but lack effective ways to promote their sustainable mission and collaborate with hotels and resorts in the tourism industry. Many sustainable practices enacted by hotels and resorts are limited in their effectiveness (Trask, 2016), as they lack the connection to the current state of the

environment that an environmental organization possesses (J. Watson, personal communication, November 8, 2022). In collaboration with the KMWP, this project aims to bridge the gap between hotels and local nonprofit organizations by developing pathways for more effective collaboration between the two. If hotels and resorts are able to improve their collaboration with local nonprofit organizations, there is a strong likelihood that biocultural efforts will improve on Oahu.



*Figure 1: Our Team at a KMWP Volunteer Event*

## BACKGROUND

In order to evaluate what might motivate hotels and resorts to invest in sustainability, we researched a number of relevant topics and used this knowledge to guide our project. In this chapter, we begin by discussing biocultural sustainability and its relation to Hawaiian culture and history. Next, we consider existing research regarding tourists' opinions on sustainability and the extent to which it influences their vacation planning. Finally, we explore the concept of corporate responsibility, both generally and as it relates to biocultural sustainability in the hospitality industry.

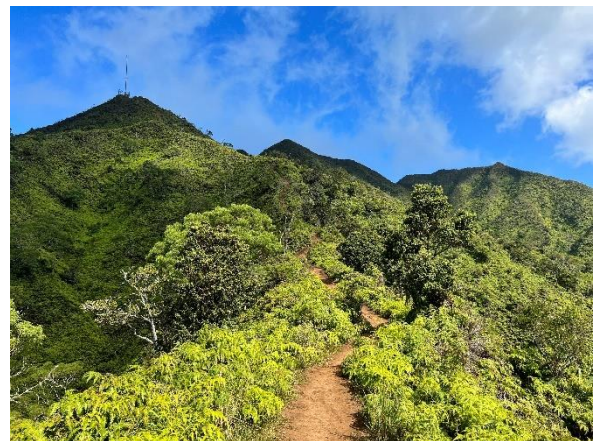
### Biocultural Sustainability

Biocultural sustainability is the interrelated sustainability of culture, society, and the environment (Hanspach et al., 2020). On the Hawaiian Islands, it is impossible to separate culture and the environment; the two have been interconnected since early Polynesia (WCC National Host Committee, 2017). Therefore, when considering the sustainability of Hawai'i, its culture, society, and environment must all be viewed as a single entity.

### Mālama 'Āina

As the original inhabitants from Polynesia developed a harmonious relationship with the islands of Hawai'i, they began to identify themselves as caretakers and direct kin of the native plants and animals (WCC National Host Committee, 2017). The phrase "mālama 'āina," meaning to love and take care of the land, became an integral value of their culture (Trask, 2001). With this value instilled in the Hawaiian way of life, the early Polynesians cultivated advanced agricultural techniques to effectively adapt to and maintain the

environment around them (WCC National Host Committee, 2017). Eventually, this was disrupted by the arrival of European and American settlers, as they transformed the land through Western-style agriculture, and later, urbanization due to tourism and military operations (Kaiser et al., 2002). The effects of Western culture began to take over as these urban, tourist-centered industries became integral to Hawai'i's way of life (Kaiser et al., 2002).



*Figure 2: The Ko'olau Range near a KMWP restoration site*

Since Hawai'i was granted statehood in 1959, the tourism industry has dominated the Hawaiian economy (Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, 2021). While this dominance has greatly impacted the state's economy, it has also created a reliance on the tourism industry such that any change to tourism has great impacts on the islands (Trask, 2016). In the first ten years after statehood, Hawai'i's economy had a real per capita output (GDP) growth of 4.1 percent annually. For the years to follow, the GDP growth fell to 1.7, and eventually 0.3 percent (Osorio, 2010). Today, growth of the tourism industry in Hawai'i continues to slow as more affordable options for tropical tourism, such as Costa Rica and Mexico,



become feasible to the public (Penn et al., 2016). This declining rate of growth has had negative effects on the Hawaiian job market, and consequently, the residents of Hawai'i. Hotels and resorts cannot afford as many employees, and most salaries no longer reflect a livable income. As a result, some hotels continue to adopt practices that are more cost-effective, but disregard environmental and cultural responsibility (Osorio, 2010).

In many hotels and resorts on the islands, the Hawaiian value of *mālama 'āina* is often used to convince residents and tourists that these hotels are concerned about the environmental and cultural state of the islands (Trask, 2001). Hawaiian practices such as the *luau* and the *hula kahiko* have been adapted for profit instead of preserved for tradition. Hotels' efforts towards environmental sustainability typically operate at the surface level, like reducing sheet and towel service frequency and encouraging energy efficiency (Trask, 2016). These efforts require minimal effort and resources and provide limited benefits to the local community and environment. Many sustainable measures that hotels and resorts have put forth have been ineffective and are more focused on improving public image than making a meaningful contribution to sustainability (Silva et al., 2021).

Inefficient and environmentally harmful practices from hotels and resorts of the tourism industry have detrimental effects on the natural resources of Hawai'i (Osorio, 2010). Natural areas for tourist attraction, such as the Hanauma Bay and Ha'ena State Park, cannot be adequately maintained due to increased visitation and human activity (Lyte, 2020). Additional land is also taken to further develop the tourism industry in hopes of boosting the economy as seen on the island of

Lāna'i, where the culture has shifted from its thriving agriculture industry to growing the tourism sector (Alexander, 2022). Businesses attempt to fix the economic issues by expanding tourism, but are simultaneously harming the environment further (Osorio, 2010). Hawai'i's natural beauty continues to be what motivates tourists to visit the islands, and many residents and tourists of the islands believe it is crucial that there are continued efforts to sustain the environment for longevity (Arakaki, 2022).

## **Tourist Perspectives**

Tourists' perspectives on travel locations have a strong influence on the businesses within them (Silva et al., 2021). This is especially true for businesses that cater to tourists, like hotels and resorts. In recent years, there has been an increase in the proportion of tourists who wish to support and engage in sustainability practices (Han, 2013).

In 2022, a survey was conducted of 454 tourists in Hawai'i on their opinions of sustainability and its impact on their travel plans (Linnes et al., 2022). The respondents were given five statements regarding the relationship between sustainability and tourism and were asked to rank their agreement with the statements from 1 to 5, 1 for "strongly disagree", 3 for "neither agree nor disagree", and 5 for "strongly agree." The first two statements had little to nothing to do with sustainable tourism, while statements three and four focused on the community impact of tourism. Statement five earned a notably high average rating of 4.25 out of 5. The survey responses were analyzed in addition to notes from semi-structured interviews of the 454 tourist participants (Linnes et al., 2022).

Complete results from the survey can be found in Table 1 below.

The study concluded that tourists are willing to spend more money on sustainable tourism experiences and reaffirmed the importance of the tourism industry supporting sustainable tourism practices (Linnes et al., 2022). The data indicates that sustainability is important to tourists, and that they feel the tourism industry is responsible for operating in ways that are not detrimental to the environment (Linnes et al., 2022).

Similar conclusions have been found in other international tourist hubs. A study of Sri Lankan hotels concluded that customer loyalty is increased at sustainable hotels, as tourists feel their stay contributes positively to the environment and improves their personal image (Silva et al., 2021). Another study asked tourists in Hong Kong for their perceptions of “green” hotels, concluding that over 70% of tourists would even be willing to pay an increased fee for sustainability (Han, 2013).

Though the literature shows tourists’ self-proclaimed willingness to support sustainable hotels and resorts, whether this

holds true in practice continues to be researched in other markets. One study that sampled 108 university students in Switzerland investigated their willingness to buy green over conventional products for items such as chocolate bars, toothpaste, and socks (Berger, 2019). Researchers concluded that students were more willing to pay for green products despite the higher costs. This predominantly held true when the consumer’s choice of a green or conventional product was revealed to another subject (Berger, 2019). Other studies on consumer habits support that the desire for status plays a large role in whether consumers spend more money on pricier green products, as they signal altruism, indicate wealth, and can improve a buyer’s reputation (Griskevicius et al., 2010).

Based on these inferences, the term “green signaling” has been coined to describe the tendency to spend more money on environmentally friendly products in order to increase social status (Rahman et al., 2020). A degree of green signaling has been found to be present in hotel guests as well. Subjects from an online crowd-sourcing platform who were

Table 1: Average rating of agreement to statements on a scale from 1 to 5 from 454 Hawaiian tourists.

QUESTION	AVERAGE RATING
“The tourism industry must ensure quality tourism experiences for visitors.”	3.89
“It is the responsibility of tourism businesses to meet visitor needs.”	3.85
“It is the responsibility of tourism businesses to meet the local community’s needs.”	3.90
“Tourism must contribute to the improvement of the local community.”	4.04
“Tourism must be developed with consideration of the natural and cultural environment.”	4.25

asked to upload purchase decisions on social media were more likely to stay in green hotel rooms over conventional ones, whereas the opposite was true when the decision was kept private. Thus, green hotel owners may benefit from making the consumption process public by providing opportunities to engage in social media during their stay, such as with check-ins, shares, and photo uploads (Rahman et al., 2020).

### **Corporate Responsibility**

Corporate responsibility refers to a corporation's positive impact on the economy, society, and the environment (Lenssen et al., 2007). The destruction of Hawai'i's natural environment by the tourism industry is partially due to a lack of corporate responsibility (Osorio, 2010). Many corporations in the tourism industry believe that their only responsibility is to their shareholders and consequently neglect their respective communities and environment (Kao, 2010). In the late 20th century, greater attention was brought to corporate responsibility as it reached political agendas (Lenssen et al., 2007). Today, the definition of corporate responsibility varies in different sectors of the economy, as definitions can be catered to certain business models or industries (Yevdokimova et al., 2019). For example, the fossil fuel industry may practice corporate responsibility by focusing on its environmental impacts, while a shopping center may take responsibility for community impact and supporting local vendors.

One mechanism that is widely used in the private sector to attempt to hold businesses accountable for their environmental impact is environmental or eco-certifications. To achieve an eco-certification, a

company must adhere to criteria set by the certification organization. The company's efforts to adhere to these criteria would generally be authenticated by a 3rd party auditor, or in some cases, the certifying organization does evaluations in-house (He et al., 2021). There are many different eco-certifications both globally and locally that allow hotels to obtain a status for the biocultural initiatives they implement (Cloudbeds, 2023). These certifications can be general for all buildings or specific to hotels and resorts. Table 2 on page 11 details different eco-certifications that are common for hotels and resorts both globally and locally.

Eco-certifications are only one way to hold hotels and other businesses accountable for their impacts. Many hotels instead join or partner with organizations committed to environmental, cultural, and societal sustainability. One of the best-known organizations dedicated to hotel sustainability is the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, known simply as the Alliance (Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, n.d.). The Alliance comprises over 45,000 properties globally, including all hotels from twenty-two major hotel chains, such as Marriott, Hyatt, and Hilton (Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, n.d.). Hotels within the Alliance must uphold standards of human rights, youth employment, climate action, and water stewardship and can get further involved by joining a working group in one or more of the four areas. The program is globally recognized due to its success in promoting accountability in major hotels and resorts (Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, n.d.).

Table 2: Eco-Certifications (Cloudbeds, 2023)

GLOBAL		
Eco-Certification Program	Certification Organization	Description
LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)	U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)	-General certification for all buildings -4 certification levels from "certified" to "platinum" -Focuses on construction of new buildings and their impact on environment
Green Globe	Green Building Initiative	-Certification for hotels and other tourism, commerce, and transportation businesses -3 certification levels -One of the most thorough eco-certifications -Environmental, social, and economic sustainability, and their supply chain partners' practices
Green Lodging Program	Audubon International	-Certification for lodging facilities -Focuses on environmental standards -Water quality, resource conservation, waste minimization, and energy efficiency
LOCAL AND DOMESTIC		
Eco-Certification Program	Certification Organization	Description
Hawai'i Green Business Standards Checklist	Hawai'i Green Business Program	-Certification for Hawaiian business properties -4 step timeline process -Rating levels identified by Native Hawaiians as key cultural values -Waste reduction, energy conservation, water conservation, pollution prevention, community involvement, and cultural practices
NEHS (ETIC Ethical Hotels Standard)	The ETIC Group	-Certification for hotels and resorts -3 certification levels -Focuses on the environment, social, culture and site protection, and sustainable management -Uses international standards and agreements to break down 44 core criteria that are supported by over 380 compliance indicators
Energy Star	US Environmental Protection Agency	-General certification for all buildings -Free certification -Focuses on environmental benefits and financial value through energy efficiency -Allows hotels to compare themselves to others within industry

## METHODOLOGY

The goal of this project was to provide local nonprofit organizations with approaches to persuade hotels and resorts to invest in meaningful biocultural initiatives. To accomplish this goal, we addressed the following objectives:

- 1) Identify existing biocultural practices of sustainability “leaders” among domestic and international hotels and resorts
- 2) Analyze factors that affect the willingness of hotels and resorts in Hawai‘i to enact positive biocultural initiatives
- 3) Evaluate effective methods used by nonprofit organizations to form partnerships with their local hotels and resorts

### **Identify existing biocultural practices of sustainability “leaders” among domestic and international hotels and resorts**

We identified domestic and international hotels and resorts that are currently implementing significant environmental or cultural initiatives. We focused our research on hotels and resorts that have an international reputation for prioritizing biocultural sustainability and have been successful in implementing their biocultural models. To identify these hotels and resorts, we used Google to search for key phrases like “the most sustainable hotels in the world.” The search was narrowed by focusing on locations where the environment is a major tourist attraction. To ensure credibility, we further researched hotels that came up in the initial search. We looked on their websites to confirm that they were publicly advertising their sustainability efforts and read customer reviews that confirmed a similar experience for guests. From this larger pool of notable sustainable

hotels, we formed a list of those that claim partnership with a nonprofit organization or charity on their public websites. A sample list used to organize hotel contacts can be found in Appendix A.1. Several Hawai‘i-based hotels, including Turtle Bay Resort, the Kahala Hotel and Resort, the Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko Olina, and Outrigger Resorts & Hotels, were included in our sustainable leaders list and excluded from our research of local hotels in Objective 2. We emailed and called the final list of hotels asking to speak with someone about their biocultural initiatives. A sample email, phone call, and voicemail script can be found in Appendix B.1, B.4, and B.5, respectively. Once we identified the best contact for our research, we scheduled an interview at their convenience. These interviews were scheduled either online or in-person.

The questions asked during interviews are provided in Appendix C. Our target interviewees were managers, owners, employees, and other upper-level hotel staff members who hold sustainability-related titles. Through these questions, we assessed their current understanding of biocultural sustainability within their hotels and evaluated the hotels’ previous, current, and future sustainable measures. We asked questions about how their sustainable initiatives were first created and implemented, determining whether these initiatives were started internally or in partnership with a local nonprofit organization. Further insights included how these hotels had incorporated these biocultural initiatives throughout their business operations, as well as the environmental and cultural impact of these initiatives.



## **Analyze factors that affect the willingness of hotels and resorts in Hawai'i to enact positive biocultural initiatives**

Once we understood successful biocultural initiative implementation internationally, we investigated what sustainability measures were occurring on Oahu, what was not yet being done, and whether there was a potential for these local hotels to become leaders in sustainability themselves in the future. To understand the current state of implementing biocultural initiatives specifically on Oahu, we assessed local hotels and resorts' willingness to enact such initiatives through interviews. We compared these initiatives to those of leading sustainable hotels and inquired about the hotels' inclinations to enact initiatives beyond their existing ones. Additionally, we asked what it would take for them to deepen their commitment and reach the level of sustainable leaders.



*Figure 3: Hotels in Waikiki from Diamond Head*

We compiled multiple lists of hotels and resorts on Oahu to identify potential contacts for interviews. Utilizing Google Maps, we located the names of all existing hotels on Oahu. We did not include the Hawai'i-based

notably sustainable hotels listed in section 3.1 in our list of local hotels because in this objective, we were focused on the barriers local hotels face when attempting to engage meaningfully in significant biocultural work. Our first list of contacts consisted of hotels in the Waikiki area, while the second included hotels in areas immediately around Waikiki. We continued formulating these lists by distance from Waikiki until we reached out to all hotels and resorts on Oahu. A sample list used to organize contacts can be found in Appendix A.2. All contact information was gathered through the hotels' respective websites. Many had a single email and phone number provided for all inquiries. In those cases, we used that information to initiate contact. For hotels with multiple phone numbers or emails listed, we reached out to both the general inquiries contact and the public relations contact. No hotels on our lists had contacts for sustainability positions or hotel managers explicitly provided on their websites.

We then contacted hotels with a provided email address and asked to speak with someone about our project. A sample email sent to hotels can be found in Appendix B.2. Once we emailed all contacts on a list, we called each of the phone numbers and asked for a further contact. A sample phone call script and voicemail script can be found in Appendix B.4 and B.5, respectively. Once hotels replied via email or phone call, we worked with the respondent to find the best contact for our interviews and then inquired to schedule an interview. Our target interviewees were upper-level hotel staff members such as managers, owners, or employees holding dedicated sustainability positions. Depending on their preference or availability, these

interviews were scheduled either online or in-person. We utilized a semi-structured interview, as it allowed us to shift conversations based on certain responses while maintaining focus on essential topics.

The questions we asked during the interviews with local hotels are provided in Appendix D. With these questions, we gauged decision-makers' current understanding of biocultural sustainability at local hotels and resorts and assessed if they currently have any sustainable initiatives. We also learned more about whether these hotels have experience working with local nonprofit organizations or if they have a willingness to do so in the future. Compiling answers from multiple hotels and resorts revealed patterns in how they view the importance of biocultural initiatives, as well as provided examples of attempted partnerships between hotels and nonprofit organizations. This knowledge directly impacted our understanding of the most effective approaches for initiating partnerships between nonprofit organizations and hotels and resorts on Oahu. Additionally, it allowed us to provide the KMWP with recommendations to initiate a long-lasting relationship with these hotels and resorts.

### **Evaluate effective methods used by nonprofit organizations to form partnerships with their local hotels and resorts**

Similar to the semi-structured interviews we conducted with hotel staff, we also interviewed managers of local nonprofit organizations. We were particularly interested in speaking to those that had already worked with hotels or other businesses to enact biocultural initiatives. Those that had not, however, were equally valuable to interview. The nonprofits

that we contacted were either recommended to us by the KMWP or found through research regarding nonprofit organizations in Hawai'i. We contacted these nonprofits via email to schedule an interview using information from their websites or the KMWP. A sample email sent to these nonprofits can be found in Appendix B.3. Depending on preference or availability, these interviews were scheduled either online or in-person.



*Figure 4: Our Team on an educational hike during a KMWP Volunteer Event*

During the interview, we inquired about these organizations' current partnerships with hotels and other businesses or whether they had ever attempted to establish such partnerships at all. If they had, we asked for more details such as how the partnerships were formed, and the factors that contributed to the success of their partnerships. If they had not, we asked what could persuade them to seek such a relationship, whether or not they considered such a partnership beneficial for them, and how they could see a partnership contributing to their organization's mission. Compiling these answers from multiple nonprofit organizations helped us understand what had already been attempted in forming these partnerships as well as what may motivate

organizations to seek these partnerships. This knowledge contributed to our understanding of the most effective approaches for initiating relationships from the perspective of a nonprofit organization. The semi-structured interview was again useful in allowing us to get as much information as possible from the interviewees in a relaxed yet controlled manner. Sample interview questions are provided in Appendix E.

## **Ethics**

This project was completed by a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. All individuals were made aware that they could leave conversations at any time, abstain from answering any questions, or remain anonymous. If we felt it was necessary to quote an individual, we asked for their permission before the interview. A sample ethics script that was given before each interview can be found in Appendix B.6. The information gathered and used was solely for academic research. This research was approved by the WPI Institutional Review Board (#23-0298).

## RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The following sections detail the findings and resultant inferences of each of our research objectives.

### Identify existing biocultural practices of sustainability “leaders” among domestic and international hotels and resorts

We researched the sustainable practices and initiatives of eight domestic and international hotels that were identified as world leaders in sustainability. We were able to interview four of the eight hotels. Table 3 below provides an overview of each hotel’s location and price range, as well as the representative we contacted, arranged in chronological order.

All interviewed hotels and resorts stated that sustainability is crucial to the long-term success of their companies. They recognized that the continued destruction of

the local environment would eventually hurt their business, especially in tropical destinations where nature-based tourism is economically important. Additionally, all of the researched hotels had initiated partnerships with one or more nonprofit organizations to assist in their commitment to biocultural sustainability. Outlines of these hotels’ sustainable initiatives and partnerships, as well as interview summaries of the contacted hotels, can be found in Appendix F.1 and F.2, respectively.

Six Senses focuses on water conservation efforts, Sol y Luna works to provide educational opportunities to the youth of the Sacred Valley, the Kahala Hotel and Resort prioritizes cultural and environmental conservation, and Outrigger Resorts & Hotels utilizes their resources to protect the ocean and its inhabitants. Each of the interviewed hotels expressed significant benefits as a result of these initiatives. One of the most common

Table 3: International Sustainable Leaders and their Partnerships and Contacts

HOTEL NAME	FORM OF CONTACT	LOCATION	INTERVIEWEE/ CORRESPONDENT	POSITION	DATE	RATE (\$-\$\$\$)
Kahala Hotel and Resort	Interview	Honolulu, Hawai'i	Pualani Fernandez	Resort Manager	2/6/2023	\$
Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa	Email Correspondence	Koloa, Hawai'i	Diann Hartman	Director of Marketing Communications	2/8/2023	\$\$\$
Singita	Email Correspondence	South Africa	Inge Kotze	General Manager	2/9/2023	\$\$\$
Turtle Bay Resort	Email Correspondence	Kahuku, Hawai'i	Marissa Kozuma	Marketing Manager	2/9/2023	\$\$\$
Four Seasons Resort Oahu	Email Correspondence	Kapolei, Hawai'i	Cassie Conching	Director of Sales	2/15/2023	\$\$\$
Six Senses Laamu	Interview	Maldives	Adam Thalhath	Sustainability Manager	2/16/2023	\$\$\$
Outrigger Resorts & Hotels	Interview	Hawai'i	Monica Salter	VP in Global Communications	2/22/2023	\$
Sol y Luna	Interview	Peru	Kelly Limo	Social Communicator	2/24/2023	\$

Key: \$ = under \$250, \$\$ = \$250 to \$600, \$\$\$ = over \$600



*Figure 5: Objective 1 Contacts' Locations*

benefits mentioned was the positive impact on the hotels' surroundings and culture. When asked to elaborate on this impact, Mr. Thalhath from Six Senses Laamu expressed, "We proudly get to say everything we do is for the community," and, "for us, the transformation and the impact was awesome." Other benefits of becoming more bioculturally sustainable included reduced long-term business costs and an increase in sustainably-conscious clientele. Ms. Salter from Outrigger Resorts & Hotels stated, "I do think that there are more people who are attracted to Outrigger because they know that we have a connection to the environment." A similar sentiment was expressed by other interviewees about their respective hotels.

In order to create these beneficial and successful initiatives, the notably sustainable hotels formed partnerships with environmental or cultural nonprofit organizations. When asked about the reasoning behind forming a partnership, Ms. Salter explained, "Because we are not

scientists ourselves, we align ourselves with local nonprofits that are experts in each area." She went on to express that Outrigger's nonprofit partnerships have allowed them to become a leader in conservation and sustainability, stating, "Our relationship with our nonprofit partners is really key to our success in this area ... leveraging their knowledge is really important to us." Mr. Thalhath also emphasized the importance of working with nonprofits in the pursuit of becoming more sustainable, claiming, "[Nonprofits] are the bridge between the community, us, and the environment." He then explained, "All of [the nonprofit partners] help to make our operation more sustainable and make us responsible," underscoring the extensive benefits for hotels that come with forming a partnership.

The most successful partnerships, however, were not ones that focused solely on the benefit of the partnering hotel, but those that involved advantages for both parties. Although hotels such as Six Senses noted



significant cost-reduction and increased profits after shifting towards sustainable operation with the help of their local nonprofit partners, they also donated a significant portion of that money back to their partners. All interviewees emphasized the educational benefit of these partnerships to their hotel guests, with Ms. Salter explaining, “We hope to inspire them to become more eco-conscious when they are here.” Mr. Thalath made a similar claim that, “Creating [a sustainable] environment helps to educate the staff and guests.” A large part of this guest education involves hotels advertising the initiatives of their nonprofit partners. With more guests aware of the nonprofits and their work, visitors are more likely to engage with them and act in accordance with their sustainable mission. In all cases of partnership, the hotel and nonprofit offered the other financial or logistical benefits they were unable to attain on their own.

In addition to researching and contacting hotels that currently invest heavily in sustainable and biocultural initiatives, we investigated two stakeholder alliances that have worked to encourage these partnerships in hotels and resorts. These two organizations are outlined in Table 4 below. The Sustainable Hospitality Alliance was formed with the sole intention of creating sustainability-based



Figure 6: Cultural Activities Bulletin at the Kahala Hotel & Resort

partnerships for hotels and resorts. Ms. Dacam from the Alliance stated, “we exist to support the hospitality industry to be more sustainable.” Ms. Salter explained that Hawai‘i Green Growth is a “larger network of all different companies that are interested in sustainability,” and that Outrigger Resorts & Hotels is one of their partners. Both organizations form partnerships directly with hotels and other tourism-related businesses and help connect them to local nonprofits and other sustainability-focused entities in their area. In addition, these organizations provide guidance to their partners on implementing sustainable measures, forming local partnerships, and maximizing the benefits of preexisting partnerships between hotels and

Table 4: Sustainability Alliances and their Contacts

ORGANIZATION NAME	FORM OF CONTACT	LOCATION	INTERVIEWEE /CORRESPONDENT	POSITION	DATE
Sustainable Hospitality Alliance	Interview	London, England	Anna Dacam	Environmental Program Manager	2/14/23
Hawai‘i Green Growth	Email Correspondence	Hawai‘i	Dylan Senkiw	Coordinator for Sustainable Tourism Forum	3/1/23

nonprofits. Ms. Dacam explained that, “More companies are realizing sustainability isn’t just an add-on.” She also believed that the role of the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance is to help guide hotels and other tourism-related companies who are, “looking to be better, looking to learn, [and] looking to contribute,” but may not know how to go about such a process.

The main motivation behind both organizations is to unite sustainably-conscious tourism businesses with nonprofit organizations so that they may work collaboratively towards biocultural sustainability. Ms. Dacam commented that to create a more sustainable industry, “we need to work together,” referring to both tourism businesses and nonprofit organizations. A partnership network focused on sustainable operation was extremely appealing to Outrigger Resorts & Hotels, and can potentially motivate other hotels to prioritize sustainability in their day-to-day operation.

### Analyze factors that affect the willingness of hotels and resorts in Hawai‘i to enact positive biocultural initiatives

We interviewed a total of six hotels on Oahu, detailed in Table 5 below. Complete interview summaries from all hotels can be found in Appendix G. Many hotels mentioned a number of basic environmental initiatives, as outlined in Table 6 on page 20. Of these initiatives, the majority of hotels prioritized water conservation, with Mr. Racoma from the Queen Kapi‘olani Hotel saying it was an easy step to take that also saved money. Promoting recycling, reducing single-use plastics, and switching to energy-efficient lighting (LED bulbs) were also popular basic initiatives among the hotels. While 67% of hotels had some sort of recycling initiatives, many also mentioned the futility of recycling in Hawai‘i, with most waste being sent to an incineration plant and not truly being recycled. Mr. McGuigan from the Ala Moana Hotel

Table 5: Local Hotels and their Contacts

HOTEL NAME	INTERVIEWEE	POSITION	DATE	RATE (\$-\$\$\$)
Hostelling International Honolulu	Sue Naki	Manager	1/23/23	\$
Ala Moana Honolulu by Mantra	Matthew McGuigan	Manager	1/25/23	\$
Hotel Renew	Earl Quon	Rooms Operations Manager	1/26/23	\$
Queen Kapi‘olani Hotel Waikiki Beach	Alex Racoma	Director of Engineering	1/30/23	\$
Prince Waikiki Honolulu Luxury Hotel	Rod Suzumoto	Director of Property Operations	2/1/23	\$\$
Polynesian Hostel Beach Club	Shelley Ham	Manager	2/7/23	\$

Key: \$ = under \$250, \$\$ = \$250 to \$600, \$\$\$ = over \$600

explained, “as much as we see three-bin



Figure 7: Objective 2 Contacts' Locations

compartmentalization, it still goes to the same place.”

The interviewees mentioned numerous reasons that their hotels were interested in biocultural sustainability. Two of the six hotels discussed enacting environmental initiatives in order to save money or receive financial stipends. Additionally, multiple interviewees claimed that environmental impact was their largest motivator for wanting to become more sustainable, with many stating that they wanted to support the environment for moral reasons. Mr. Quon from Hotel Renew elaborated that, “some would do it for publicity and others would do it because they actually care and know it is the right thing to do.” The interviews revealed further motivations such as public perception and eco-certification. Prince Waikiki Honolulu Luxury Hotel discussed their attempts to get Hawaiian Green Business Standards Certification. Additionally, a large number of hotels spoke to the importance of their guests' opinions when making sustainable decisions and explained that they are most driven to make changes when they are brought on by guest feedback. All six of the hotels mentioned the influence of tourists' opinions on their decision-making,

Table 6: Basic Environmental Initiatives and the Proportion of Interviewed Hotels that Enacted Them

INITIATIVE	PROPORTION
Reduced Water Use	83%
Recycling Initiatives	67%
Reduced Single-Use Plastics	50%
LED Bulbs	50%
Gardening/Native Plants	33%
Eco-Friendly Cleaning Supplies	17%
Reduced Electricity Use	17%

with Ms. Ham from Polynesian Hostel Beach Club stating, “guest feedback is always number one.”

Many interviewees reported that the emphasis placed on environmental preservation by Native Hawaiian culture was a significant factor in their motivation to become more sustainable. Of the six interviewees, four identified as either Native Hawaiian or kama'āina, life-long residents of Hawai'i. All of these interviewees cited their identity as a major reason for their passion for sustainability, and the non-Native interviewees understood the cultural significance of sustainability in Hawai'i. Ms. Naki from Hostelling International Honolulu stated that, “adding the cultural element and attitude ... to what's available [for sustainability] is important.” Mr. McGuigan explained that, as a Native Hawaiian, “the lessons that were being taught to my family are being taught to me,” and that this cultural influence was something

he wanted to carry into his hotel's day-to-day practices. Most interviewees expressed similar ideas to Mr. McGuigan, who stated, "when we have opportunities to be sustainable, absolutely we'll take them."

These motivations have prompted many of the interviewed hotels to enact further biocultural practices beyond their basic initiatives. In addition to their current initiatives, a number of hotels including the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel and the Ala Moana Hotel have attempted to integrate Native Hawaiian culture and practices into their businesses and amenities. Queen Kapi'olani Hotel held events such as lei making demonstrations, hula dances, or native art exhibits with the goal of educating guests about Native Hawaiian culture.

For most of the hotels however, numerous logistical challenges hindered their attempts to become more sustainable. Three of the six interviewees mentioned corporate barriers in attempting to initiate sustainability practices. For example, many explained that although the management of their particular hotel would like to do more, they are part of a corporation in which significant initiatives need to be approved by a central authority. While many hotels expressed environmental and cultural preservation as a driving force of their initiatives, the financial impact of shifting towards sustainable practices was always mentioned in tandem. Three of the six hotels indicated that further environmental initiatives might be cost prohibitive for the hotel. Some hotel managers like Mr. McGuigan explained that although they wanted to switch to compostable trash bags or bamboo room keys to reduce their plastic usage, the cost to make those changes did not make them feasible. Leaders within hotels are forced to consider

the financial implications of new initiatives, and, in most cases, cannot make sustainability-related decisions that will significantly impact their bottom-line profit. It is important to distinguish the difference between hotel leaders' desire to become more sustainable and their ability to actually do so, as most hotels face corporate or financial challenges that prohibit them from making any major changes on their own.

In addition to logistical challenges, many hotels explained that there is a general lack of motivation in Hawai'i, which has limited sustainability initiatives. Mr. McGuigan expressed that "innovation isn't really something we push for in Hawai'i", while Mr. Quon stated, "the unfortunate part about Hawai'i is that people point to the other guy and say that they aren't doing it." Mr. McGuigan and Mr. Quon further explained that in attempts to become more sustainable in the past, involved parties were lackadaisical in their efforts and slowed down initiatives before they even got started. Some hotels cited tourists as the problem, with Ms. Ham explaining, "we try to educate our guests prior to arrival to be thoughtful of the community and culture, but we find that typically falls on deaf ears; people are here to party." Mr. Racoma believed that staffing inconsistency was to blame for the tourism industry's general struggle to become more sustainable. He explained that as leaders in a hotel get promoted or move on to a new location, their attempted initiatives move on with them or fade away entirely, making it challenging for institutional knowledge to survive and for sustainable initiatives to come to fruition.

Although all six interviewees understood the implications of culture on sustainability in Hawai'i, many cited a lack of

cultural understanding as a reason that other hotels are not prioritizing sustainability. Some, including Mr. Racoma and Mr. McGuigan, explained that it is the passion and commitment to Hawaiian land and culture that drives hotels to become more sustainable, and those without a Native Hawaiian mindset struggle to translate Hawaiian philosophies into their hotel operation. Despite the mention of challenges, all of the hotels we interviewed understood the benefit of becoming more sustainable beyond their current initiatives, with almost all of them expressing an eagerness to improve in the near future.

None of the interviewed hotels has an established partnership with a nonprofit organization, though the Ala Moana Hotel is in the process of forming one. Most other hotels mentioned that they would be open to forming a partnership in the future. Hotel Renew and Polynesian Hostel Beach Club expressed interest in forming a partnership immediately and wanted more information on initiating one during the interview. Those wary of the idea believed that a level of trust was needed

between the hotel and the organization before a relationship could begin, with Mr. Quon stating, “if we find the right partner who is in it for the right things then by all means.” It was also expressed that in many cases a clear benefit would have to be shown for the hotel. Many interviewees believed that most hotels would need to be shown a bottom-line, dollars and cents impact, with Mr. Quon continuing, “they have to do their part to sell it correctly.”

**Evaluate effective methods used by nonprofit organizations to form partnerships with their local hotels and resorts**

We interviewed a total of five nonprofit organizations, detailed in Table 7 below. Complete nonprofit interview summaries can be found in Appendix H. All of these organizations specialized in environmental protection, land and sea restoration, or cultural awareness. When asked about the different relationships they formed, all five nonprofits stated that they previously partnered with hotels and resorts. Two of the

*Table 7: Local Nonprofits and their Contacts*

NONPROFIT NAME	INTERVIEWEE	POSITION	DATE
Nonprofit A	Anonymous A	Executive Director	2/7/23
Mālama Maunaloa	Doug Harper	Executive Director	2/9/23
KMWP	JC Watson	Manager	2/10/23
Ulumau	Mark & Aloha McGuffie	President & VP	2/16/23
Protect and Preserve Hawai'i	Tyrone Montayre	Founder/President	2/20/23



five, Protect and Preserve Hawai'i and Mālama Maunalua, worked with businesses in other service industries. Additionally, all five shared promotional material with their hotel partners to educate guests or advertise their volunteer activities. Interviewees mentioned different ways that these relationships were formed. One nonprofit directly contacted its partners, while the other four were sought out by their partnering hotels or businesses.

The main motivation for these nonprofits to establish partnerships was to increase hotels and resorts' commitment to biocultural sustainability. Mr. Watson from the KMWP explained that "having collaborative relationships and moving forward as a team of entities is the way it has to be in Hawai'i." This sentiment was also shared by the director of Nonprofit A, who said, "I would want to see people working together between hotels and tourists as well as islands." For this to work, Mr. Montayre of Protect and Preserve Hawai'i emphasized, "communication will always be number one." Another motivation was the desire to educate tourists about the natural land, as stated by Mr. Harper from Mālama Maunalua, who said, "it's important for people to learn about the place they're in." Other motives included the desire to further their mission as well as financial assistance for their biocultural initiatives.

All of the interviewed nonprofits stated that they encountered various obstacles within their partnerships. Many expressed that keeping partners engaged and actively participating in their volunteer events was a major challenge. Mr. Watson explained that "higher-level communication doesn't get communicated down the chain to people doing the logistical stuff related to volunteer activities." Mr. and Ms. McGuffie from Ulumau

voiced a similar concern, saying that "staff members have not been looked at as a stakeholder," directly impacting the communication of their organization's efforts. Organizations like Nonprofit A have fewer employees and thus lack the personnel to manage more partners and events.

Despite obstacles, many interviewees have noticed an important shift in attitude toward biocultural initiatives within hotels. Nonprofits such as Ulumau acknowledged that businesses are now beginning to see the importance of moving towards sustainability and giving back to the community, with Ms. McGuffie explaining that the environment "is changing quickly, and [hotel owners are] recognizing that they need to make changes in how they manage their staff." Organizations including Ulumau and the KMWP hope to encourage businesses to adopt a more environmentally conscious mindset.

All nonprofit interviewees alluded to the fact that they had something to offer hotels, whether it be their unique knowledge base or their attractiveness to more sustainably-conscious tourists. In addition, many interviewees implied that nonprofit organizations were the link between hotels and the world around them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

From our research, it appears that the upper-level staff of Hawaiian hotels and resorts demonstrate a general desire for bioculturally sustainable practices. Based on our research, this desire seems to extend beyond a profit-based motivation. Many also expressed interest in partnering with nonprofits to help guide their commitment to sustainability. However, there still exists a gap between good intentions and positive, tangible action in the tourism industry, as hotels and resorts lack the necessary guidance from nonprofits to enact meaningful biocultural practices. In order to bridge this gap and assist local nonprofit organizations, we identified specific recommendations that would help initiate the process of developing meaningful collaborations with these hotels and resorts.

### **Focus on partnerships with luxury hotels that are not part of a larger corporate chain**

One of the most important aspects of creating meaningful partnerships is finding the right hotels to initiate these partnerships with. All eight of the hotels identified as leaders in sustainability were luxury hotels and were successful in acquiring funds for their nonprofit partners. These hotels also cater to affluent clientele that, based on our research, tended to be more environmentally conscious. An opt-out or mandatory donation program, for example, is much more realistic and impactful at high-end hotels where guests are already paying a more significant amount for their stay.

Not all luxury hotels, however, are strategic partners for nonprofits. Some luxury hotels are a part of much larger worldwide

chains where decisions about partnerships are made at a corporate level. These chain hotels are nearly impossible for a local organization to partner with, as a single location may not be allowed to form a partnership that does not include the entire company. Due to this challenge, it is in nonprofits' best interest to seek partnership with luxury hotels outside of corporate chain structures, as they possess greater potential for further biocultural initiatives to come to fruition.

### **Understand the implications of hotel size on the potential benefits of a partnership**

The size of a hotel greatly impacts its ability to enact biocultural initiatives and form partnerships, especially when considering hotels with no preexisting initiatives. Larger hotels hold a greater potential for positive biocultural impact, as they have more guests and resultantly a greater profit. They may also have an easier time beginning opt-in or opt-out processes due to the scale of their operation. These larger hotels, however, are much more challenging to begin initiatives with. Creating such a change is a significantly larger logistical undertaking that in most cases involves a corporate network that is hard to navigate and convince on sustainability without a communicated bottom-line benefit. Although smaller hotels have fewer guests and comparatively lesser financial means for sustainable initiative implementation, they were more willing on average than larger hotels to form partnerships. While their impacts are lesser, they are also more easily achievable, as potential initiatives may focus more on mission spreading and guest volunteering rather than on monetary investment. In our research, we found that two

of the six local hotels we interviewed, Hotel Renew and Polynesian Hostel Beach Club, were immediately interested in forming a partnership, and both of these were smaller hotels. If a nonprofit is just beginning to find partners in the hotel industry, it is beneficial for them to start their efforts with smaller hotels. This would allow nonprofits to build a partnership base and produce bottom-line profit information that can eventually be presented to larger hotels with greater profit potential.

### **Target hotels with individuals in decision-making positions who uphold the value of “mālama ‘āina”**

Another important factor in forming these meaningful partnerships is connecting with the right people. When looking for potential partners, we also recommend that nonprofits consider the mindset of hotels' current leaders. Based on our research, hotel leaders that expressed a strong personal desire to care for and preserve the environment were more willing to invest in sustainability and prioritize it in their hotel's operation.

It was clear in our research that all interviewees from notably sustainable hotels possessed a personal commitment to environmental preservation. These interviewees were also engaged in the culture of their hotels' local communities and contributed to them in their hotel operation. An example of this is Ms. Limo from Sol y Luna who coordinates all correspondence relating to the Sol y Luna Foundation, which is currently providing an education to 170 students in the Sacred Valley of Peru. The interviewees at hotels leading in sustainability all possessed a similar mindset of positive environmental or

cultural impact, resulting in their direct contribution to biocultural sustainability.

Locally, upholding a Native Hawaiian mindset was identified as a main motivator for all of the interviewees to invest in sustainable efforts. Those who grew up immersed in Hawaiian culture were taught the importance of caring for the environment and giving back to the land they were raised on, while those who were not from Hawai'i still felt a connection to the islands' fundamental culture and care for the environment. All local interviewees also expressed enthusiasm for spreading awareness of Hawaiian culture to educate the islands' visitors. Many upper-level hotel staff were interested in forming a partnership with a nonprofit organization, as they understood the significance of culture and the environment to the Hawaiian way of life and a nonprofit's ability to better connect them to it. Contacting these hotel leaders who truly are aware of and appreciate Hawaiian culture and the environment would be most beneficial for nonprofits, as they share similar passions for sustainability and a willingness to improve their current practices.

### **Initiate and maintain partnerships by providing immediately beneficial initiatives and continued guidance**

During the initial stages of a relationship with a hotel, we recommend that a nonprofit propose easily achievable initiatives, especially those that are proven to save the company money. Initiatives like reduced water or energy usage, while less substantial than other biocultural practices, can be a good starting point to demonstrate the value of sustainability to more reluctant hotel management. With so many hotel interviewees expressing that a

bottom-line economic impact would motivate them to invest, these money-saving initiatives may provide the necessary incentive while still working towards conservation efforts of nonprofits. Additionally, minor collaboration initiatives can lay the foundation for a more meaningful partnership. These initiatives could include guest volunteering with the nonprofit or educational seminars from nonprofit representatives. Once hotels understand how to begin their sustainability efforts and get involved in these collaborative initiatives, they can build up to a more extensive and impactful partnership with a nonprofit.

After basic initiatives are enacted by these hotels, the nonprofit can provide guidance and aid them in deepening their commitment to sustainability. Based on our research, hotels with little or no preexisting sustainable practices generally lack the time, knowledge, or money to enact meaningful biocultural initiatives that have a real impact beyond the surface level. The nonprofit's role in the relationship is to demonstrate solutions to these problems by educating the hotel staff about how to establish sustainable practices in a timely and cost-efficient manner. This can be done using a hands-on approach, with representatives from the organization visiting the hotel to facilitate the change, or by sending information from afar and remaining available to answer questions.

### **Seek a mutually beneficial relationship through initiatives that support the missions of both parties**

The most impactful partnerships are mutually beneficial, allowing the nonprofit organization to thrive as well as the hotel. One way we recommend to achieve this is by instituting a

donation program that charges hotel guests an additional fee for their stay. The Kahala Hotel and Resort was one of the most successful examples we encountered of implementing this kind of program. When guests make a reservation, they are presented with an opt-out fee that goes directly to the Kahala's sustainable initiatives and nonprofit partners. Both parties benefit from this transaction, with the nonprofits receiving funding for their organizations and having their mission advertised to guests. The Kahala's benefits include community engagement, marketing opportunities, and the curation of an enlightening biocultural experience for guests. A donation program contributes to this commitment by allowing the nonprofit to continue their own biocultural mission with the economic help of the partnering hotel. A partnership can also contribute to the nonprofit's mission by encouraging guest volunteering, promoting environmental or cultural awareness, or enacting biocultural initiatives that pertain to the organization's mission. In all cases, this creates a relationship that respects and supports the missions of both the hotel and nonprofit.

### **Limitations & Future Research**

While these recommendations have been formed based on our findings, there are some limitations to the research we conducted. It is worth noting that a degree of selection bias may be present in this study; while we reached out to every hotel on Oahu and more on other Hawaiian Islands, only a small portion responded, and even fewer scheduled an interview. Those who were willing to speak with us were likely already more inclined towards sustainability, which could explain why every hotel we interviewed had some kind

of biocultural initiatives. Thus, a truly random sample of Hawaiian hotels and resorts may yield different results.

In order to better assess the feasibility and success of partnerships between nonprofit organizations and Hawai'i-based hotels and resorts, there is a need for further research in the future. To demonstrate the value of a nonprofit partnership, a sustainability rating model, customized for the culture and environment of Hawai'i, could be created and made available to hotels and resorts. This could be a tiered model that is implemented by a nonprofit, beginning with basic initiatives and providing pathways for improvement towards a deeper commitment to sustainability. The model could suggest different biocultural initiatives and provide instructions for implementing each one, upgrading the hotel to higher tiers when a certain number of initiatives are enacted or a certain level of commitment is achieved. Ideally, this tiered model could act as an eco-certification, similar to the Green Lodging Program or the Hawai'i Green Business Standards Checklist, that hotels could market to environmentally conscious guests.

The KMWP could consider legitimizing this eco-certification model by establishing a local sustainability alliance that hotels of any size could join after achieving a certain tier of sustainability. Hotels in this alliance could work together to create volunteer opportunities for their guests, support local sustainable vendors, and preserve Native Hawaiian culture. This alliance would allow small hotels that otherwise cannot make a large impact to be part of something that contributes greatly to the betterment of Hawai'i. It would also put KMWP at the forefront of Hawaiian biocultural sustainability in the hospitality industry.

Outside of the hospitality industry, many nonprofit organizations we spoke to expressed a desire to partner with local schools to educate young Hawai'i residents about their environment and culture. Research could focus on developing pathways for this kind of collaboration, ensuring that the future of the Hawaiian Islands is safe in the hands of those who will inherit it.



## CONCLUSION

Nearly all of the hotels and nonprofit organizations we spoke to expressed a willingness to partner with each other, as they recognized the positive effect such a relationship could have on Hawai'i's biocultural preservation. Some hotels showed more potential for impact than others, as well as an increased likelihood to partner with nonprofits. Local nonprofit organizations who wish to partner with hotels and resorts in

Hawai'i should reach out to luxury hotels that are not part of a chain or a large collection of smaller hotels to pool donations or guest volunteers. To have the highest chance of receptiveness, they should target hotels with bioculturally conscious individuals in decision-making positions. It is our hope that the recommendations included in this report will assist local nonprofit organizations in persuading hotels and resorts to invest in meaningful biocultural initiatives.



*Figure 8: The Ko'olau Mountain Range*



## REFERENCES

- Alexander, S. (2022). *Billionaire Larry Ellison Bought a Hawaiian Island and Is Pushing Residents Out*. Bloomberg. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2022-oracle-larry-ellison-ianai-hawaii-plans-tourism>
- Arakaki, M. (2022). *Domestic Visitors Willing to Pay More for Sustainable Tourism*. University of Hawai'i System News. Retrieved from <https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2022/02/20/sustainable-tourism-experiences/>
- Assante, L. M., Wen, H. I., & Lottig, K. (2012). An Empirical Assessment of Residents' Attitudes for Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case Study of O'ahu, Hawai'i. *Journal of Sustainability and Green Business*, 1, 1–27.
- Audubon International. (n.d.). *About the Green Lodging Program*. Audubon International. Retrieved from <https://auduboninternational.org/green-lodging-program/>
- Berger, J. (2019). Signaling Can Increase Consumers' Willingness to Pay for Green Products. Theoretical Model and Experimental Evidence. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 18(3), 233–246. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1760>
- Cloudbeds. (2023). *The Top Green Hotel Certifications for Your Eco Hotel*. Cloudbeds. Retrieved from <https://www.cloudbeds.com/articles/eco-friendly-hotel-certifications-overview/#global>
- ENERGY STAR. (n.d.). *Energy Star Certification for Buildings*. Retrieved from [https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/building\\_recognition/building\\_certification](https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/building_recognition/building_certification)
- ETIC Hotels. (n.d.). *Etic Hotels Green Standard (EHGS): ETIC Hotels*. ETIC Hotels Green Standard (EHGS) | ETIC Hotels. Retrieved from <https://etichotels.com/etic-ethical-hotels-standard-ehgs>
- Green Globe Certification. (n.d.). *The Global Leader in Sustainable Tourism Certification*. Greenglobe. Retrieved from <https://www.greenglobe.com/>
- Griskevicius, V., Tybur, J. M., & Van den Bergh, B. (2010). Going Green to Be Seen: Status, Reputation, and Conspicuous Conservation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(3), 392–404. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017346>
- Han, X., & Chan, K. (2013). Perception of Green Hotels Among Tourists in Hong Kong: An Exploratory Study. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 34(4), 339–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332969.2013.827069>
- Hanspach, J., Jamila Haider, L., Oteros-Rozas, E., Stahl Olafsson, A., Gulrud, N. M., Raymond, C. M., Torralba, M., Martín-López, B., Bieling, C., García-Martín, M., Albert, C., Beery, T. H., Fagerholm, N., Díaz-Reviriego, I., Drews-Shambroom, A., & Plieninger, T. (2020). Biocultural Approaches to Sustainability: A Systematic Review of the Scientific Literature. *People and Nature*, 2(3), 643–659. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10120>

- Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism. (2021). *Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i's Tourism Sector – 2021 Update*. State of Hawai'i, 1–11. Retrieved from [https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/Native\\_Hawaiians\\_in\\_Tourism\\_2021.pdf](https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/Native_Hawaiians_in_Tourism_2021.pdf)
- Hawaii Green Business Standards Checklist For Hotels and Resorts. (n.d.). *Hawaii Green Business Standards Checklist for Hotels and Resorts*. Retrieved from <https://health.hawaii.gov/shwb/files/2013/06/grnbushr110410.pdf>
- He, D., Ren, S., & Zeng, H. (2021). Environmental Labeling Certification and Firm Environmental and Financial Performance: A Resource Management Perspective. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 31( 3), 751– 767. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2915>
- Kaiser, B., Krause, N., Mecham, D., Wooley, J., & Roumasset, J. (2002). *Environmental Valuation and the Hawaiian Economy: Introduction and Executive Summary*. University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization. Retrieved from <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/HawaiiEnviroEvaluation.pdf>
- Kao, R. (2010). *Sustainable Economy: Corporate, Social and Environmental Responsibility*. World Scientific Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1142/7350>
- Lenßen, G., Perrini, F., Tencati, A., & Lacy, P. (2007). *Corporate Responsibility and Strategic Management*. Emerald Group Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1108/cg.2007.26807daa.001>
- Linnes, C., Agrusa, J., Ronzoni, G., & Lema, J. (2022). What Tourists Want, a Sustainable Paradise. *Tourism and Hospitality*, 3(1), 164–183. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp3010013>
- Lyte, B. (2020). *The Coronavirus Has Been Good for Hanauma Bay*. Honolulu Civil Beat. Retrieved from <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/04/the-coronavirus-has-been-good-for-hanauma-bay/>
- Osorio, J., & Howes, C. (2010). *The Value of Hawai'i: Knowing the Past, Shaping the Future*. University of Hawai'i Press.
- Penn, J., Hu, W., Cox, L., & Kozloff, L. (2016). Values for Recreational Beach Quality in Oahu, Hawaii. *Marine Resource Economics*, 31(1), 47–62. <https://doi.org/10.1086/683795>
- Rahman, I., Chen, H., & Reynolds, D. (2020). Evidence of Green Signaling in Green Hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 85, 102444. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102444>
- Silva, L., Dissanayake, P., Kumarasiri, B., & Soorige, D. (2021). Customer Loyalty Towards Sustainable Hotels: Case Studies in Sri Lanka. *Proceedings of the 9th World Construction Symposium*, 231-243. Retrieved from [https://ciobwcs.com/downloads/papers21/20\\_WCS2021\\_Proceedings.pdf](https://ciobwcs.com/downloads/papers21/20_WCS2021_Proceedings.pdf)
- Sustainable Hospitality Alliance. (n.d.). *Advancing Responsibility*. Retrieved from <https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/>
- Trask, H.-K. (2001). Native Social Capital: The Case of Hawaiian Sovereignty and Ka Lahui Hawaii. *Social Capital as a Policy Resource*, 149–159. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4757-6531-1\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4757-6531-1_9)

- Trask, H.-K. (2016). Lovely Hula Lands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture. *Border/Lines*, (23). Retrieved from <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/bl/article/view/24958>
- USGBC. (n.d.). *LEED Rating System* | U.S. Green Building Council. Retrieved from <https://www.usgbc.org/leed>
- WCC National Host Committee. (2017). *Hawaiian Culture*. IUCN World Conservation Congress. Retrieved from <https://2016congress.iucn.org/hawaii/about-the-host/hawaiian-culture/index.html>
- Woo, S. (2009). U.S. News: Heavy Reliance on Tourism Has Hawaii's Economy Hurting. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.wpi.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/u-s-news-heavy-reliance-on-tourism-has-hawaiis/docview/399127280/se-2>
- Yevdokimova, M., Zamlynskyi, V., Minakova, S., Biriuk, O., & Ilina, O. (2019). Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility Applied to the Concept of Sustainable Development. *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues*, 8(3), 473–480. [https://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2019.8.3\(14\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2019.8.3(14))

## Appendix A: Spreadsheets of Hotel Information

Below are the spreadsheet outlines used to organize and track our contacts.

### A.1 Notably Sustainable Hotels & Resorts

Below is the table outline used to organize the contacts and locations of sustainable hotel leaders.

Hotel Name	Location	Contact Email	Contact Number

### A.2 Local Hotels & Resorts

Below is the table outline used to organize the locations and logistics of local hotels and resorts.

City	Hotel Name	Website	Street	Postal Code	Phone	Email	Other Notes

We then used this checklist outline to track responses.

Hotel Name	Emailed?	Did they respond?	Did we reply?	Called?	Left a voicemail?	Did they respond?	Interviewed?	Other Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Appendix B: Initial Interview Correspondence

### B.1 Email Template (Sustainable Leaders)

*Below is an email template used to reach out to hotels with significant biocultural initiatives.*

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_, and I am part of a group of college students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are in Hawai'i for the next few weeks working on a project about sustainability within hotels and resorts. Additionally, we are investigating the role that local and environmental organizations can have in enacting sustainability measures. Your hotel is a prime example of what we are trying to accomplish through our project.

We would love to speak with someone in your organization that can provide us with more information relating to your hotel's current sustainability efforts. Please let us know the best person for us to contact.

Your help with our project would be greatly appreciated.  
Thank you in advance!

### B.2 Email Template (Local Hotels & Resorts)

*Below is an email template used to reach out to local hotels and resorts to find a contact for an interview.*

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_, and I am part of a group of college students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are here on Oahu working on a project about sustainability within hotels and resorts and will be conducting research for the next five weeks in the Waikiki area.

We would like to briefly speak to someone in your organization that can provide us with more information relating to our research. Please let us know the best person for us to contact.

Your help with our project would be greatly appreciated.  
Thank you in advance!

### B.3 Email Template (Nonprofit Organizations)

*Below is an email template used to reach out to nonprofit organizations.*

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_, and I am part of the group of college students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts interning with the KMWP. We are here on Oahu working on a project about sustainability within hotels and resorts.

JC Watson gave us your contact information and said you would be willing to let us interview you. We would love to learn more about the work of your organization and your experience working with hotels, resorts, and other tourist businesses.

Additionally, we would love to get involved with your organization's volunteer days while we are here! Any information you could provide us on those would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your help! We look forward to speaking with you!

## **B.4 Cold Call Script**

*Below is a script for a cold phone call to hotels and resorts to set up an interview.*

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_, and I am part of a group of college students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are here on Oahu working on a project about sustainability within hotels and resorts and will be conducting research for the next five weeks in the Waikiki area.

We would like to briefly speak to someone in your organization that can provide us with more information relating to our research. We were wondering if you could help get us in contact with the right person.

## **B.5 Voicemail Script**

*Below is a template for a voicemail in the event there was no answer to our calls.*

Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_, and I am part of a group of college students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. We are here on Oahu working on a project about sustainability and would love to briefly speak with someone in your organization that can provide us with more information. My phone number is \_\_\_\_. Please give me a call back when you have the chance. Thank you!

## **B.6 Interview Ethical Introduction**

*Below is our ethical introduction for conducting interviews.*

We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute working on a research project about sustainability in hotels and resorts in Hawai'i. With your permission, we may quote your responses, but if you prefer to remain anonymous, we will not reveal your name. You do not need to answer questions if you do not want to, and you can leave the interview at any time. We'd also like to know if you'd be okay with us recording the meeting in case we need to review it later.



## Appendix C: Hotel Interview Questions (Sustainable Leaders)

*Below are sample interview questions for hotel managers and staff of notably sustainable hotels and resorts.*

Definition:

Biocultural sustainability - the interrelated sustainability of culture, society, and the environment

- 1) Logistical information on the hotel/resort
  - i) Depending on the hotel, we may have already known this information. This was mainly to help us classify/categorize hotels when coding interview answers
  - b) How many employees work for your hotel/resort?
  - c) How many guests can your hotel/resort accommodate?
  - d) Where is your hotel/resort primarily located?
  - e) How would you describe your hotel/resorts impact on the environment?
    - i) This logistical information determined if there was a pattern based on size/location and amount of involvement in biocultural initiatives
- 2) Are you familiar with biocultural initiatives?
  - i) If no, we defined biocultural sustainability using the definition above
  - a) Do you know of any certifications that a hotel can receive for biocultural sustainability? Have you received any?
    - i) In asking these questions, we hoped to gain a general idea of hotel managers' understanding of biocultural initiatives
- 3) What are the current biocultural efforts within your hotel/resort?
  - i) This gave us context as to what the hotel was already doing
  - ii) Background research was done on this prior to the interview. This allowed us to see if there was more to the initiatives than the website provided
  - a) How did these initiatives begin?
    - i) It was important to understand what has worked for other hotels in the past so that the KMWP can recreate these successful implementations in the future
  - b) What steps were taken to implement and continue these initiatives?
    - i) This allowed us to understand what worked in creating initiatives
  - c) With nonprofit organizations, what has allowed the partnership to work for both parties? How did the relationship with that organization work? What characteristics made the relationship impactful?
    - i) This helped us understand which kinds of initiatives were common and how they were put into place, as working with a nonprofit is a common mechanism.
  - d) Are you aware of any biocultural initiatives of other nearby hotels and resorts?
    - i) It was interesting to know if they monitored what their competition was doing
- 4) Do you feel you can improve your current initiatives? Is there anything that you would change about the current plan?
  - i) This question allowed us to understand if the hotel was continuously reevaluating their initiatives.
  - a) What were the limiting factors that were overcome when implementing your current initiatives?

- i) This allowed us to see if it was a corporate issue, neglect of their social responsibility, turnover at different positions, etc..
- 5) How has marketing these initiatives impacted the business?
  - i) This gave us insight into the potential benefits of these initiatives
  - a) Have you noticed a switch in clientele since the implementation of initiatives?
    - i) This gave us additional insight and showed that there are people who truly care about biocultural initiatives
  - b) What is the role of client feedback in your hotel and how does it contribute to the way the hotel operates?
    - i) This was one possible motivator behind the implementation of initiatives

## Appendix D: Hotel Interview Questions (Local)

*Below are sample interview questions for hotel managers and upper-level staff of local hotels and resorts.*

Definition:

Biocultural sustainability - the interrelated sustainability of culture, society, and the environment

- 1) Logistical information on the hotel/resort
  - i) Depending on the hotel, we may have already known this information. This was mainly to help us classify/categorize hotels when coding interview answers
  - a) How many employees work for your hotel/resort?
  - b) How many guests can your hotel/resort accommodate?
  - c) Where is your hotel/resort primarily located?
  - d) How would you describe your hotel/resorts impact on the environment?
    - i) This logistical information determined if there was a pattern based on size/location and amount of involvement in biocultural initiatives
- 2) Are you familiar with biocultural initiatives?
  - i) If no, we defined biocultural sustainability using the definition above
  - a) Do you know of any certifications that a hotel can receive for biocultural sustainability?
    - i) In asking these questions, we hoped to gain a general idea of hotel managers' understanding of biocultural initiatives
  - b) Are you aware of different nonprofit organizations within the area? Specifically KMWP, a place-based nonprofit that provides fresh water to many hotels in the area?
    - i) This question allowed us to gauge the hotels' knowledge of organizations in the area while also mentioning the KMWP
- 3) What are the current biocultural efforts within your hotel/resort, if any?
  - i) If the answer was none, we moved to question 4
  - ii) This gave us context into what the hotel is already doing and whether they had enacted any initiatives in the past
  - a) How did these initiatives begin?
    - i) It was important to understand what has worked for other hotels in the past so that the KMWP can recreate these successful implementations in the future
  - b) What steps were taken to implement and continue these initiatives?
    - i) This allowed us to understand what worked in creating initiatives
  - c) Have you ever attempted to implement biocultural initiatives in the past? If so, were they successful or not, and why?
    - i) It was important to know if these hotels had attempted to implement initiatives in the past. This showed a willingness to make a change and awareness of the issue
  - d) Have you ever partnered or worked with a nonprofit organization before? If so, how did the relationship with that organization work? What would have made the relationship more impactful?
    - i) This helped us understand which kinds of initiatives were common and how they were put into place, as working with a nonprofit is a common mechanism
  - e) Are you aware of any biocultural initiatives of other nearby hotels and resorts?
    - i) It was interesting to see if they monitored what their competition was doing as it spoke to their motivations

- 4) What factors are limiting your hotel/resort from engaging in (further) biocultural initiatives?
  - i) This question allowed us to understand the obstacles that hotels faced in enacting these kinds of initiatives
  - a) Where are these limiting factors coming from?
    - i) This allowed us to see if it is a corporate issue, neglect of their social responsibility, turnover at different positions, etc..
  - b) What change would need to occur to remove these limiting factors?
    - i) This helped us understand if these changes were perceived as quick fixes or large fundamental issues within the hotel system
  - c) Would your hotel be open to exploring the option of a sustainability partnership in the future?
    - i) This allowed us to understand if there was a desire to implement initiatives if the limiting factors could be avoided
- 5) What is the role of client feedback in your hotel and how does it contribute to the way the hotel operates?
  - i) This was one possible motivator behind the implementation of initiatives
- 6) Do you have any contacts at other hotels and resorts that we could reach out to?
  - i) This was an easy way to find more contacts, especially if one hotel had preexisting connections with another

## Appendix E: Nonprofit Organization Interview Questions

*Below is a sample interview for managers of local nonprofit organizations.*

- 1) Have you attempted to form a partnership with a business before? If yes, can you tell us about it?
  - a) Have you ever partnered with a business that is structured on biocultural sustainability?
  - b) What have you found is the best way to begin a relationship with a business?
    - i) This gave us a general idea of what has been attempted in the past
    - ii) We left this generally about partnerships with all businesses because some organizations may have had success forming partnerships outside of hotels
    - iii) If an organization only talked about partnerships with businesses that are not hotels, we noted their strategies to form the partnerships and applied them to the context of hotels and resorts
  - c) What is the size of the businesses you have been in contact with or reached out to?
- 2) What do you see as the likely benefits of partnerships between for-profit businesses and nonprofit organizations? What are the drawbacks?
  - i) Learning about these benefits from the perspective of organizations allowed us to understand the motivations behind forming such partnerships beyond the KMWP's own motivations
- 3) What do you see your organization's role being in one of these partnerships with a local hotel or resort?
  - i) It was useful to gauge the involvement of each party in the relationship as some had more laid-back, guidance-based roles whereas some got much more involved and used their own resources
- 4) What are the key successful factors (from the nonprofit point of view) of an established relationship?
  - i) This gave us insight into entry points of these hotels/resorts and allowed us to provide the KMWP with different approaches to persuade hotels
- 5) Do you have any contacts at other hotels and resorts that we could reach out to?
  - i) This was an easy way to find more contacts, especially if one organization had preexisting connections with another

## Appendix F: Leaders in Sustainability

*Below are email correspondences and interview summaries from hotels identified as leaders in sustainability.*

### F.1: Email Correspondences with Sustainability Leaders

*Below are all summarized email correspondences with sustainable leaders.*

#### F.1.1 Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa

*Below is the summarized email correspondence with the Director of Marketing Communications, Diann Hartman, from Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa in Koloa, Hawai'i starting on February 8, 2023.*

Rate: \$\$\$

Current Initiatives:

- Reduce
  - Solar photovoltaic system produces 465,000 kWh per year of clean renewable energy which reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 415 tons annually
  - 4,000 sq. ft. hydroponic garden that produces 300 lbs of lettuce each week
  - Reusable water bottles and filtered water stations
  - LED replacements in all chandeliers and wall sconces
  - Wet waste from kitchens goes to pig farms for feed
- Reuse
  - Energy efficient AquaRecycle system for laundry water. Reduces water usage by 10.5 million gallons and greenhouse gas emissions by 332 metric tons annually
  - Waste cooking oil is collected and processed into bio-diesel fuel
- Recycle
  - Recycling throughout resort for glass, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans
  - Divert over 60% of waste from the landfill, including an average of 15 tons of recyclables, 12 tons of green waste and 35 tons of wet waste per month
- Established an Enrich Program that allows guests to volunteer for different organizations (National Tropical Botanical Garden, Surfrider Foundation, Kauai Humane Society, and Habitat for Humanity)

Other Notes:

- Leader in Sustainability 2019 - Recognized by the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association for going above and beyond to implement sustainable practices in everyday operations
- Green Key Global: Recognized for sustainable initiatives with the Four Key Rating (2010-present)



## F.1.2: Singita

*Below is the summarized email correspondence with the General Manager, Inge Kotze, from Singita in South Africa starting on February 9, 2023.*

Rate: \$\$\$

Current Initiatives:

- Energy: Our off-grid lodges to be 80% powered by on-site renewable energy and on-grid lodges 30% powered by renewable energy
- Water: Reduced water used per bed night by 30% from baseline year
- Transport: 100% electric game viewers within three years of commercial availability, and 80% of balance of fleet within four years of commercial availability
- Food: 50% of fresh produce procured within a 100km radius
- Materials: elimination of single-use plastics in 2020 6. Waste: send only 10% of waste to landfill by 2023

Motivations:

- Covid sparked tourists to ask about philanthropic events and what sustainable initiatives hotels and resorts are implementing
- Protect African wilderness for future generations
- Want to embed One Planet Thinking into their everyday practices so it is part of their culture and expansion

Challenges:

- Budget, when transition to large capex items like renewable energy, water monitoring devices and rainwater harvesting system
- Taking stakeholders on the sustainability journey. There is a need for stakeholders to understand their role and responsibilities, be aware of why sustainability is important and adopt the implementation into both their personal life and work life

Other Notes:

- "2020 ushered in a new decade and an environmental 'super year'; a year in which we had an incredible opportunity to make an ambitious global commitment to battle biodiversity breakdown and urgently tackle the climate emergency"
- "People are traveling far more consciously and are demanding a sustainable experience, and it is important for operators to ensure that they are delivering what they are saying"
- "If they are aware and understand what drives these goals and actions they are more likely to adopt and support the implementation of sustainability"

### F.1.3 Turtle Bay Resort

*Below is the summarized email correspondence with the Marketing Manager, Marissa Kozuma, from Turtle Bay Resort in Kahuku, Hawai'i starting on February 9, 2023.*

Rate: \$\$\$

Current Initiatives:

- Kuilima Farm
  - Promotes stable and sustainable food production on the island and provide all with agricultural and cultural education opportunities
- Coastal Preservation
  - They host monthly beach clean-ups with their internal team and public pop-up beach clean-ups in collaboration with Sustainable Coastlines, Surfrider Foundation, and Parley Hawai'i to welcome the community to join
- Solar Rooftop
  - In 2021, the resort added 6 arrays of solar panels to each cluster of Ocean Bungalows (7). 3 arrays generate almost 619,000 KW hours each annually
- Bio-Diesel Conversion
  - Partnered with Pacific Bio Diesel - turns hundreds of gallons of oil used in kitchen into biodiesel
- Native Flora and Partnership with Hui Ku Maoli Alo
  - By recognizing their legacy and rich history of the region, they have created a focus on planting native plants
- Welcome the Whales
  - In a partnership with NOAA - counts humpback whales off the shores of the resort
- Kuilima Farm
  - By 2023, a tree planting activity will be available that supports the 'Ulu (breadfruit) industry, which is a significant crop to the resort and Hawaiian society
- Turtle Bay Foundation
  - The mission is to provide support for deserving youth and organizations for the sustainable future of the North Shore and Ko'olauloa Communities

Other Notes:

- Hawai'i Green Business Program & Award
- Earned prestigious 4 Green Eco-Leaf rating by completing a 70 point comprehensive eco-audit survey administered by iStayGreen.org
- Recognized as a member of the Hawai'i Green Business Program (HGBP), which assist businesses that strive to operate in an environmentally and socially responsible manner
- Green Eco-Leaf Rating

## F.1.4 Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko Olina

*Below is the summarized email correspondence with the Director of Sales, Cassie Conching, from Four Seasons Oahu Resort at Ko Olina in Kapolei, Hawai'i starting on February 15, 2023.*

Rate: \$\$\$

Current Initiatives:

- Energy usage reduction
  - Installed variable speed chillers and LED lighting while upgrading their existing energy management system
- Water usage reduction
  - Installed new water-saving linen program and are closely monitoring hotel water usage
- Solid waste reduction and recycling
  - Recycling program for various materials and are working with vendors to solely utilize recyclable materials
- Purchase recycled, reused products
  - Paper straws are being implemented throughout the resort,
- Pollution prevention
  - "Waster Stream Profile": a program for non-trash items
- Blue Zones Project initiative called "The Polu Project": In collaboration with other community partners in west Oahu, they created a kickoff event called Kupuwai. One of the events, Cultivating Healthy Communities, features plant-based cooking demonstrations using native Hawaiian ingredients, gardening workshops with indigenous plants, cultural games, children's activities, and more

Other Notes:

- Leeward coast's first "Blue Zones Approved worksite," where the movement's focus is that food and lifestyle decisions should flow from the environment
- Operate as one of Forbes "Top 100 Great Places to Work" with a sharp, clear focus on employee morale
- Recognized member of the Hawai'i Green Business Program

## F.1.5 Hawai'i Green Growth

*Below is the summarized email correspondence with the Coordinator for Sustainable Tourism Forum, Dylan Senkiw, from Hawai'i Green Growth, starting on March 1, 2023.*

### Current Work:

- Public-private partnership committed to advancing economic, social, and environmental goals
- "The Aloha+ Challenge," Hawai'i's statewide commitment to sustainability goals by 2030
  - 70% clean energy
  - 30% of consumed food produced locally
  - Natural resource management
  - Reduce waste by 70%
  - Increase overall livability in the environment
- Sustainability Business Forum
- Ala Wai Watershed Collaboration
- Focused on policy

### Relationships:

- A diverse range of businesses and organizations in Hawai'i including Outrigger Hotels & Resorts, The State of Hawai'i, Hawaiian Airlines

### Quotes:

- "The COVID-19 pandemic and related disruptions seen in 2020 underscore the importance of cross-sector partnerships and green growth policies that can stimulate the economy and create employment opportunities while supporting community well being and environmental stewardship."

## F.2: Interviews with Sustainability Leaders

*Below are all summarized interviews with sustainable leaders.*

### F.2.1 Kahala Hotel and Resort

*Below is the summarized interview with Pulani Fernandez, Resort Manager, from the Kahala Hotel and Resort in Honolulu, Hawai'i on February 6, 2023.*

Rate: \$\$

Current Initiatives:

- KISCA - Kahala Initiative for Sustainability, Culture, and the Arts
  - Optional \$10 fee to contribute - thinking of making it mandatory
  - Fee includes a tree planted in guests' name at north shore restoration site
- Partnered with KMWP for seed planting
- Sunset series: speakers about certain environmental or cultural topics
- Events such as beach cleanups, native art programs, hula, lei making, net throwing, ohala
- Play a sustainability video on room TVs as guests arrive
- Adding native plants to property
- Finding alternatives to plastic water bottles

Motivations:

- Upper-level staff are locals and passionate about the environment
- Belief that they are beginning a long standing commitment for the future
- Old hotel meant it needed an upgrade anyway
- She guessed that the sustainability initiatives do bring a degree of business
- Ownership is resort trust in Japan that also supports sustainability

Challenges:

- Hard to find sustainable local vendors
- Time - people are busy and can't necessarily spend time planning initiatives

Other Notes:

- COVID helped the process get started
- The Kahala's guests are much more environmentally conscious than others
- Noticed an increase in interest from local community with biocultural initiatives

Key Quotes:

- "But we want the big picture; what else can we do"
- "We can't change everything quickly, we just have to start"
- "Passion helped push the project"

## F.2.2: Six Senses Laamu

*Below is the summarized interview with the Sustainability Manager, Adam Thalhath, from Six Senses Laamu in the Maldives on February 16, 2023.*

Rate: \$\$\$

Current Initiatives:

- Growing ingredients from their organic garden
  - In-house aquaponics initiative to teach the community where they bring people on tours to educate them to do it themselves
- Every property is named after the community (local area, region, an experience that showcases the local culture)
- "Sustainability Fund" – comprised of 50% of water bottle sales, 100% soft toy sales, and 0.5% of revenue
  - People can apply to utilize this fund for their own sustainable efforts
- All properties have endemic plants and gardens
- Waste management plan
- Established an in-house operation: Maldives Underwater initiative
- Partnered with the Blue Marine Foundation to preserve the seas surrounding them by studying and protecting reefs
- Partnering with Manta Trust, UK-based organization studying and protecting the manta ray habitat

Motivations:

- Passionate about regenerative tourism where guests stay for a week or two and they learn about themselves
- To help guests open their minds to sustainability
- To create an open and friendly environment that allows for guests and staff to learn about the culture and environment
- To inspire others to become committed to sustainability

Challenges:

- No challenges in these organizational parts
- Being a developing country and geographical country overseas is difficult – most of their goods are imported
- Community education while not having enough expertise to share within the community
- Climate change limiting natural resources such as water

Other Notes:

- Their values consist of Emotional Hospitality, Crafted Experiences, Pioneering Wellness, Local Sensitivity & Global Sensibility, Responsible & Caring, Fun & Quirky
- Finding a common goal is a key factor in their successful partnerships

Key Quotes:

- "Once [guests] come here, they are starting a journey toward wellness and sustainability"
- "Catch the impactful travelers that spend their money in a good way makes them and the hotel feel good"



- “We want to make an authentic connection between guests and host”
- “Learn to study the local environment, work to preserve the natural environment, and find sustainable development for the future within climate change adaptation”
- “Creating [a sustainable] environment helps to educate the staff and guests”
- “For us, the transformation and the impact was awesome”
- “[Nonprofits] are the bridge between the community, us, and the environment”
- “All of [the nonprofits partners] help to make our operation more sustainable and make us responsible”
- “We proudly get to say everything we do is for the community”
- “Sustainable focus helps a lot in cost cutting”

## F.2.3 Outrigger Resorts & Hotels

*Below is the summarized interview with the VP in Global Communications, Monica Salter, from Outrigger Resorts & Hotels on February 22, 2023. They have 33 locations worldwide, 25 of which are in Hawai'i.*

Rate: \$\$

Current Initiatives:

- Nonprofit Partners: Kualoa Ranch, Sustainable Coastlines, Waikiki Aquarium, NOAA, Manta Pacific Foundation
- Other relationships: Board of water supply, Hawaiian Electric
- Part of Hawai'i Green Growth, a public-private partnership of a diverse range of businesses in Hawai'i committed to advancing economic, social and environmental goals
- Focused on ocean conservation
- Try to cultivate a sense of place at their resorts and immerse guests in Hawaiian culture

Challenges:

- Retrofitting sustainability initiatives into very old buildings
  - Costs more money, replacing toilets/AC units

Other Notes:

- 25 properties in Hawai'i, 2 in Fiji, 1 in Maldives, 1 in Mauritius, 3 in Thailand
- Green seal certified
  - First hospitality company in Hawai'i
  - Get a green check next to their name in google searches

Key Quotes:

- "Because we are not scientists ourselves, we align ourselves with local nonprofits that are experts in each area"
- "Our relationship with our nonprofit partners is really key to our success in this area... leveraging their knowledge is really important to us"
- "as a beach resort company, having healthy oceans is super important to us"
- "I do think that there are more people who are attracted to Outrigger because they know that we have a connection to the environment"
- "I think they will lean towards that green check"
- "We hope to inspire them to become more eco-conscious when they are here"
- "We created a mālama Hawaii package where if you stay at least 3 nights every 3rd night is free if you go and do this eco volunteerism"
- "The sustainability of our oceans is critical for our location"
- "We want people to feel that culture then they're on the property"

## F.2.4 Sol y Luna

*Below is the summarized interview with the Social Coordinator, Kelly Limo, from Soy y Luna in Peru on February 24, 2023.*

Rate: \$\$

Current Initiatives:

- Founded the Sol y Luna Foundation in 1996, the foundation has four core projects
  - Sol y Luna Intercultural School
    - Educating disadvantaged children in Peru's Sacred Valley
  - Paqari
    - A center for disabled children
  - Sol y Luna Home
    - An orphanage that provides a loving and safe home for Peruvian children who have been victims of abuse or abandonment
  - Roots & Wings
    - A further education programme where they support students who have graduated from the Sol y Luna School in their further studies
- Do not use plastic, recycle, and reduce pollution

Motivations:

- To provide education for underprivileged and disadvantaged children

Challenges:

- Covid 19 & ongoing political unrest in Peru

Other Notes:

- The foundation was established 25 years ago and the hotel was established 20 years ago to support the foundation
  - This allowed for new avenues of revenue/donations for the foundation
- Hotel made up of small houses (casitas) - 40/49 casitas in the hotel

Key Quotes:

- "Give education to around 170 students from kindergarten to high school"
- "We care a lot about how we can teach about taking care of the environment"
- "They want to come to the school to know how the foundation works"
- "I think there is a balance. Even though the hotel was created to support the foundation, they are separate from each other"
- "Tourists wanted to come to a place that was peaceful with a lot of green areas"

## F.2.5 Sustainable Hospitality Alliance

*Below is the summarized interview with the Environmental Program Manager, Anna Dacam, from the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance in London England on February 14, 2023.*

### Current Work:

- Registered charity, work internationally with main office in London (one employee in India, one being added in Egypt)
- 22 hotel Alliance members, making up 35-40% of the hotel industry by room
- Provide resources to partners on implementing sustainability within their hotels and hospitality-related businesses
- Reach their larger scale through partnerships with local organizations
- Destination work - helping local hotels begin sustainability initiatives
- Internal benchmarking of hotels to ensure sustainable values are upheld
- Start hotels with entry level practices so they can see the positive results of sustainable initiatives and get onboard with more extensive measures
- Focus on four areas of action: human rights, youth employment, climate action and water stewardship
- Help hotels build diversity and inclusion programs and improve ethical recruitment
- Free tools, resources, and fact sheets on environmental impacts for partners

### Relationships:

- No specific requirements to join the Alliance besides the fundamental desire to be better in regards to sustainability
- Recently have a new CEO and have new partners
- Partners looking at tourism and responsibility tourism
- Initiative last year to reduce plastic use by partnering with One Planet - created a tool for hotels to measure their level of plastic output and begin to decrease them
- Delivery partners help implement projects - local partners that knows how to reach the target audience
- Create a partnership and then reach out to local organizations to help the new partner
- Hotels reach out to the alliance and then they go out and look for their own partner
- Some organizations just use their curriculum
- Hotels can come in with pre existing partners
- Destination programs and development - currently in Africa, working on localizing supply chains
- UNEP, UWC, One Planet

### Challenges:

- Still formalizing the process for verification - catching up after growth post-COVID
- Want to focus on tracking sustainability efforts within the hospitality industry next year
- Convincing the CEO and people at the top that sustainability is really important
- Hard getting buy in at the corporate level beyond financial benefit
- Getting the message of sustainability from corporate level down to managers, housekeeping, etc.

### Other Notes:

- The Alliance works in a competitive space, so their goal is to get companies to not view each other as competitors, but as allies
- Small organization - only about 20 total employees
- Only worked as an independent organization for about two years now
- Alliance started in the 90s and has existed for about 30 years
- Started by a group of hotel CEOs that came together and recognized the problems in the hospitality industry
- For the first 20-25 years, there was not much growth of the Alliance - some founding members with a few new joining occasionally
- In the past year, the Alliance has grown massively - over double the size
- Noticed a really big mentality shift of leaders in the hospitality industry and believe it has been the driving factor for increased engagement in the Alliance
- Large focus on bringing together leaders of the industry so they can help each other improve their initiatives
- Marketing resources, advertising and speaking at events to get name out

#### Key Quotes:

- "We exist to support the hospitality industry to be more sustainable"
- "Looking to be better, looking to learn, [and] looking to contribute"
- "Hang on, we're approaching this wrong, we need to work together"
- "How do you engage all of your staff because at the end of the day they are the ones who are going to help you deliver your strategy"
- "People suddenly had more time to reflect on the world around them"
- "There's definitely been a really big shift towards sustainability"
- "More companies are realizing sustainability isn't just an add on"
- "We need to become sustainable so our business can exist in 10 years time"

## Appendix G: Local Hotels Interviewed

*Below are interview summaries from local hotels and resorts on Oahu.*

### G.1 Hostelling International - Honolulu

*Below is the summarized interview with the Manager, Sue Naki, on January 23, 2023.*

Rate: \$

Current Initiatives:

- Recycling glass bottles and aluminum cans
- A vegetable garden that guests are free to use for cooking
- Compact fluorescent lamps
- Solar panels installed

Motivations

- Family traditions and values that have been passed down from past owners
- Genuine care for the environment and native species
- Wanting to give back to the community

Challenges

- Feasibility is an issue as it is a small hostel where there is very little manpower
- High costs needed to implement other initiatives throughout the hostel
- Doesn't have much time to begin new initiatives

Other Notes

- They're trying to do what they can with the resources they have, but they are struggling to
- Expressed a want to implement more sustainable initiatives, but cannot keep up with the many product changes and improvements
- Have worked with various organizations in the past for volunteer events where they would personally transport their guests if needed

Key Quotes

- "People are willing to do [volunteer activities] because they do it at home. Just gotta talk it up."
- "Adding the cultural element and attitude towards the earth and what's available [for sustainability] is important"

## G.2 Ala Moana Honolulu by Mantra

*Below is the summarized interview with the Manager, Matthew McGuigan, on January 25, 2023.*

Rate: \$

Current Initiatives:

- Eliminating single use plastics, moving towards bulk amenities/toiletries
- Buffet style restaurant - no takeaway plastics
- Goal to add water bottle refillers - aluminum water bottle rollout in 2023
- Partnering with H'oulu 'āina (kalo farm) - wants to engage guests and employees in volunteer work - formed this through a preexisting, local relationship

Motivations:

- Native Hawaiian beliefs are very important
- A Native Hawaiian, personally passionate about cultural and environmental sustainability
- Wants everything to have a purpose and a story that can be shared with guests (such as lobby and room decorations and furniture)

Challenges:

- People are too "comfortable" in Hawai'i, so no one has drive to be better
- "We've lost the point" - "aloha" is marketed instead of held as a family value and leis and other Hawaiian traditions lose meaning when they are mass produced
- Sustainability is one of the main goals, but have to get the executive committee to buy in
- Is not sure how supportive the corporate environments of most Oahu-based hotels are

Other Notes:

- The island burns most of its recycled items for energy; it can't be reused on the island and is too costly to ship out to somewhere that recycles
- To convince a non-Hawaiian to invest in sustainability, you'd have to demonstrate a bottom line impact - if they are purchasing something they want to make sure they are getting all that money back

Key Quotes:

- "When we have opportunities to be sustainable, absolutely we'll take them"
- "What we're talking about is a feeling. That's why we go to the farm...we need to feel the mud on our feet"
- "As much as we see three-bin compartmentalization, it still goes to the same place"
- "[Hawai'i's] electrical footprint is massive"
- "Innovation isn't really something we push for in Hawai'i"
- "The lessons that were being taught to my family are being taught to me"



### G.3 Hotel Renew

*Below is the summarized interview with the Rooms Operations Manager, Earl Quon, on January 26, 2023.*

Rate: \$

Current Initiatives:

- Added water station to lobby (plastic cups)
- Recycle as much as possible
- Reduce single use plastics
- Towels are recycled via a third party
- Try their best to find as many local vendors as possible
- Overall not much effort is put into sustainability

Motivations:

- Earl is a local, personally passionate about sustainability
- Would love for an organization to come show them how to be more sustainable
- Knowing that their guests want sustainable initiatives is very important

Challenges:

- Cleaning rooms is inherently unsustainable (daily washes use water, chemical cleaning supplies)
- Would need a level of trust in a nonprofits work/mission to partner with them
- Certain initiatives are much easier for bigger chains (giving money/points back to guests for sustainable choices)

Other Notes:

- They are at the mercy of the customer, so they just try to do whatever they'll want
- There is a plastic bag ban on the islands but nobody follows it
- Believes that lawmakers are the most responsible for these changes
- Believes a majority of hotels would be open to partnering with a nonprofit (he would)

Key Quotes:

- "The local government does not embrace sustainability as much as they should"
- "Some would do it for publicity and others would do it because they actually care and know it is the right thing to do"
- "The unfortunate part about Hawai'i is that people point to the other guy and say that they aren't doing it"
- "If we find the right partner who is in it for the right things then by all means"
- "Yes, completely. They have to do their part to sell it correctly"

## G.4 Queen Kapi‘olani Hotel Waikīkī Beach

*Below is the summarized interview with the Director of Engineering, Alex Racoma, on January 30, 2023.*

Rate: \$

Current Initiatives:

- LED lighting fixtures
- Motion detectors on stairwell lights to reduce electricity usage
- Low flow pressurized toilets
- Lei making classes
- Recycling and waste management
- Classes of culture and proper tourist behavior education

Motivations:

- New owners from Japan that are into the environment and giving back to it
- A whiling GM who is constantly around to support his colleagues and subordinates

Challenges:

- They seem comfortable with where they are at currently, especially with the history of the hotel
- Alex has the thought process of an engineer
  - Would need to access a different contact such as the GM for implementation of KMWP relationship

Other Notes:

- Largely based on surfing culture as a lot of the lobby decor is surfing and they have a surf shop
  - The hotel is very culture driven as they are named after the queen of the royal land that they are build on
- Alex has done volunteer work on his own and seems very open to different initiatives

Key Quotes:

- "I've never seen a general manager at a property for more than 10 plus years"
- "Following the trend"
- "We try to bring a local atmosphere here"

## G.5 Prince Waikiki Honolulu Luxury Hotel

*Below is the summarized interview with the Director of Property Operations, Rod Suzumoto, on February 1, 2023.*

Rate: \$\$

Current Initiatives:

- Installed nine water stations and they provide guests with a water bottle to continue to fill throughout their stay
- Steering away from single-use plastic
- Garden at the nearby golf course that fills unused space with different plants
- Native plants around the hotel
- Signs in bathrooms that get messages across to employees

Motivations

- Cutting down costs for the hotel to remain within their budget
- Satisfying customer wants while caring for the environment
- Understanding the large impact on the environment caused by the hotel

Challenges

- Limited space inside the hotel, so they can't implement many new initiatives
- Very concerned about cost control
- Cautious on people who come in to pitch their products and ideas

Other Notes

- Carefully designed the entrance of the hotel to represent parts of the Hawaiian culture
- Looking into the Hawaiian Green Business and striving to achieve that certification
- In the works of a opt-out program for guests
- Very involved in giving back to the younger generation through a mentorship program that introduces hotel opportunities to students

Key Quotes

- "Communication is super important. This is how change gets enacted"
- "Manage what the customer wants but also what is great for the environment"
- "They may be competitors but helping them when it comes to the environment goes a long way for everyone"

## G.6 Polynesian Hostel Beach Club

*Below is the summarized interview with the Manager, Shelley Ham, on February 7, 2023.*

Rate: \$

Current Initiatives:

- Purchase eco friendly cleaning supplies
- LED light bulbs
- Water saving
- Recycling on site
- Attempt to educate guests prior to arrival to be thoughtful to the community and culture

Motivations:

- Doing their part to take care of the environment around them
  - This began with implementing practices at home and then bringing them into the workplace

Challenges:

- Being a small hostel they are limited financially on certain initiatives they can implement
- Opt-in versus opt-out
  - Clients are on a budget and already heavily taxed so the opt-in policy would be favored

Other Notes:

- Very open to a partnership with KMWP, specifically implementing an opt-in program
- Brought up that studies show tourists want to spend more money for sustainability but doubts that is true in practice
- Caters to 18-35 year old guests
  - More specifically students taking a gap year that are traveling the world in their year off

Key Quotes:

- "We try to educate our guests prior to arrival to be thoughtful of the community and culture but we find that typically falls on deaf ears; people are here to party"
- "It's just stuff that we decided needed to be done in order to feel good about our impact"
- "Typically certifications cost money and we don't need it to thrive"
- "Guest feedback is always number one"
  - "However, the guests don't always know what they want"
- "Nobody walks into the front desk and asks what we're doing for sustainability"

## Appendix H: Nonprofit Organizations

*Below are interview summaries from nonprofit organizations that we interviewed.*

### H.1 Nonprofit A

*Below is the summarized interview with the Executive Director, Anonymous A, on February 7, 2023.*

#### Current Work:

- Cultural preservation through ancient practices

#### Relationships:

- No direct hotel partnerships
- Partnerships with schools and community groups

#### Challenges:

- Not trying to seek profit, but tourists don't understand this cultural motivation
- They are a very small organization
- Instead of "little crumbs", would rather see livable wages and locally-owned hotels

#### Other Notes:

- Strong focus on cultural education
- Business owners feel a sense of entitlement to public shore areas
- Hawaiian residents not getting the skills needed from public education - many natives that are have to work in hotels because they don't have other applicable skills
- Hawai'i has a high cost of living - median house value just went up to over \$1.5 million
- Sees more willingness for change in hotels with Native Hawaiian management
- Wants to move away from the American tourism model

#### Key Quotes:

- "Tourists have a sense of entitlement"
- "People here are land rich but not cash rich"
- "We want have a balance of educating people and having fun"
- "It would be interesting to see if workers are able to live off of hotel wages or not need to work multiple jobs"
- "I would want to see people working together between hotels and tourists as well as islands"
- "You're rich if you have fresh water to grow your food"
- "More Native Hawaiians are moving away because it's expensive to live here"
- "If people learn about the place they're staying at, it's much more meaningful"

## H.2 Mālama Maunaloa

*Below is the summarized interview with the Executive Director, Doug Harper, on February 9, 2023.*

### Current Work:

- Environmental restoration work through various collaborations

### Relationships:

- Partnership with the KMWP
- Partnership with the Kahala Hotel & Resort where they are trying to find ways to incorporate guests into what they do and the hotel itself
- Have worked with other businesses, including shopping centers and restaurants, for efforts such as implementing green structure

### Challenges:

- Getting people to volunteer at events that they hold
- Finding businesses to partner with as these relationships may taint their public image or these businesses might be using them to greenwash their message

### Other Notes:

- They reached out to businesses directly besides the Kahala Hotel, who contacted them
- Have started a rewards program where people are incentivized to volunteer at their events (ex. discounts at restaurants)
- Actively looking for organizations that wish to dedicate their efforts to help preserve the environment

### Key Quotes:

- "People are going to do good work because they want to do good work. If you provide people with a discount, for example, it'll increase the likelihood that people show up and help reward them for showing up"
- "The environment is something we all benefit from. It shouldn't be something we need to reward people for. But having something tangible is always nice"
- "Each business has its own motivation"
- "It's important for people to learn about the place they're in"

### H.3 The Ko‘olau Mountains Watershed Partnership

*Below is the summarized interview with the Manager, JC Watson, on February 10, 2023.*

#### Current work:

- Prioritizing watershed management and enacting watershed projects
- Protection, restoration, outreach/community engagement
- Making sure the forests produce ample amount of freshwater

#### Relationships:

- KMWP is a partnership itself of 50 landowners, 8 associations
- Ex. Mālama Maunaloa, Kahala Hotel & Resort
- Other non land-owning entities that support and help
- Interested in foraging new ones

#### Challenges:

- Not necessarily any, but the biggest ones are the lack of communication, engagement, and the environmental thinking
- Internal communication doesn't reoccur
- Capacity bottlenecks along the pipelines of environment restoration

#### Other notes:

- There is a criteria needed to be a partner – must own 100+ acres of land
- Their partnerships aim to work collaboratively with partners, giving KMWP the right of entry to do work for them on their land and help with protection management
- Inclusion of metrics in annual reporting to show which partners engage actively in the relationships

#### Key Quotes:

- “The biggest [challenge] is creating open lines of communication with landowners that need priority action, but you don't hear back”
- “There’s a general disconnect between people and the environmentally conscious mindset”
- “Higher-level communication doesn't get communicated down the chain to people doing the logistical stuff related to volunteer activities”
- “Everyone should understand how the natural systems play a role in our lives”
- “Having collaborative relationships and moving forward as a team of entities is the way it has to be in Hawai‘i. Not only that, but using it as a model globally to heavily promote the increased evaluation of roles as stewards of natural resources”



## H.4 Ulumau

*Below is the summarized interview with the President and Vice President, Mark & Aloha McGuffie, on February 16, 2023.*

### Current Work:

- Creating a general sustainability model for the parent company in Japan to use for that market
  - Plan to Thrive – a 5-step plan being tested in the Kahala Resort
  - Working with electric industries to achieve net zero and trying to implement microgrid and solar farms
- Working with several nonprofit organizations to implement volunteer days

### Relationships:

- Nonprofits, such as the KMWP and Mālama Maunalua
- Kahala Hotel & Resort
- Local neighborhood groups

### Challenges:

- Coming up with innovative solutions to problems that are extremely broad
- Not being included in the city's plans

### Other Notes:

- The plan to thrive consists of focus groups for different sectors of sustainability where they come up with higher-level goals
- The KISCA Program has generated 500k used to support other programs and nonprofits
  - Highly marketed on their website

### Key Quotes:

- "We want to make this hotel the best hospitable employer and make sure we are both on the same page"
- "[For our goals] What does it mean? How do we get there and how do we manage that goal?"
- "We have to collaborate with this community to make sure this bay is healthy and thriving"
- "Making sure the community thrives for the residents and visitors"
- "Staff members have not been looked at as a stakeholder"
- "Go to the landowners, not general managers. They're the ones who can make a difference, educate and negotiate with the owners"
- "[The environment] is changing quickly, and [hotel owners are] recognizing that they need to make changes in how they manage their staff"

## H.5 Protect and Preserve Hawai‘i

*Below is the summarized interview with the Founder/President, Tyrone Montayre, on February 20, 2023.*

### Current Work:

- Forest restoration and protecting Hawai‘i’s native ecosystem
- Guided hikes to educate and raise awareness on cultural heritage
- Volunteer exchange programs

### Relationships:

- Nonprofits, such as Mālama Maunalua, KMWP, and 808 Cleanups
- Government groups, such as USFW and O‘ahu DOFAW
- Kahala Hotel and Resort
- Patagonia
- Hawaiian Electric

### Challenges:

- Tyrone is the only employee of the organization - have about 20 core volunteers
- Funding - has continuously put in proposals for further funding

### Other Notes:

- Began the organization in 2019 during the pandemic
- His background in auto mechanics brings an outside perspective into his organization
- Connections allow organizations to learn from each other and not reinvent the wheel

### Key Quotes:

- “What you are doing in the mountains, will impact what’s going on in the ocean”
- “Pretty much anyone who inspires me, I will try to reach out for them”
- “When bringing in others, it is tough to for them to go the extra steps”
- “Communication will always be number one”
- “Making sure everyone knows their roles and what they have to do”
- “People don’t really think sustainably even though you hear people talking about it often”
- “People will come back a lot because of their connection to the land ... 75% of my volunteers are return volunteers to my organization or other partners”
- “People want that instant pat on the back”
- “People are less attracted to help if they did not come up with the idea. A lot of people want the credit for it”
- “Funding is always a roadblock for conservation. It is the highest priority in the world but the lowest funding”