



**Rediscovering  
Hawai'i's Soul**

HO'ĀLA  
HOU ANA  
A KĀ  
HAWAI'I

*Our collective declaration to preserve & perpetuate Hawai'i's Soul*



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## Foreword

Aloha,

It is with profound gratitude that we present this declaration that was thoughtfully co-created by the Rediscovering Hawai'i's Soul (RHS) network and serves as the foundation of the RHS initiative. This collective work is a result of the tough yet sincere dialogues, enriching discussions, purposeful collaboration, and transformative expert teachings that have transpired through the RHS gatherings that begin in August 2022. This resource includes our shared values, the rationale that underpins our journey, and the unvarnished truth-telling that leads to healing, which is, at its core, the objective of this initiative.

### **Creation of 4 Possible Futures of Hawai'i Scenarios**

In August and September 2022, at the invitation of Hawai'i Executive Collaborative and with the guidance of Reos Partners, a social impact organization focused on bringing transformational change to complex global challenges, a Scenario Team of 43 leaders from diverse sectors and backgrounds in Hawai'i met for two in-person workshops to craft four possible futures of Hawai'i scenarios.

### **RHS Network Expansion**

Through a series of scenario briefings and implications workshops, the RHS network grew to include more than 100 organizations. The scenarios were shared with businesses and community organizations as a strategic planning tool to be used to provoke new thinking, make opportunities and threats more visible, and enable richer, more useful conversations about what Hawai'i must



do to nourish and sustain Hawai'i's Soul. The scenarios served as a springboard for the expansion of the RHS network and basis for transformative personal and institutional work of its members.

### **Building a Collaborative Agenda**

In June 2023, the inaugural RHS Network gathering included more than 250 individuals invited to co-create a collaborative agenda. Participants self-selected into groups that focused on pivotal aspects within the community that can be addressed through the RHS collective agenda and 13 topics, or choice points, were identified—from tourism, to ceded lands. The focus has evolved to support the groups working on these choice points.

As we reflect on this endeavor that the network created together, we are reminded of the strength of community and the power of shared purpose. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has contributed to this profound collective voice to benefit the future of Hawai'i—its land and people.

Mahalo,  
RHS Core Team

*Kamana'o Crabbe  
Micah Kāne  
Michelle Ka'uhane*

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*Glenn Miyataki  
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**“... we are reminded of the strength of community and the power of shared purpose.”**



## Introduction

Intrinsic to Hawaiian culture, identity, and consciousness is the fundamental belief that Native Hawaiians lived in harmony with the universe. A deep understanding of sense of place by the original stewards of this land carried with it a sacred responsibility to care for the natural elemental forces and life cycle ecosystems of the environment.

This ancestral *'ike* (deep knowledge) is rooted in the philosophy of island consciousness and reciprocity, and it is reflected in traditional practices and beliefs. So today, as we reimagine a future for Hawai'i that is thriving, inclusive, and grounded in Hawaiian values and our diverse cultures, it is incumbent on us to rediscover what it means to live and to lead with Hawai'i's Soul.

To that end, the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative and its partners convened a diverse group of leaders—Native Hawaiian elders, business and nonprofit professionals from more than 100 organizations across Hawai'i—who have been gathering in different configurations to examine the possible futures of Hawai'i and grapple with how to encapsulate the essence of Hawai'i's Soul in words and actions. The tangible, cross-sector collaborations that have resulted from this generative network is testament to the trust and respect being forged to find a collective way forward.

## Acknowledgements and Commitments

Understanding and committing to the deep connection *‘āina* has with people is core to Hawai‘i’s Soul. For that reason, the work involved in forging a path toward a more resilient Hawai‘i needed to start with a shared recognition of place and a shared agreement about approach.

### Acknowledgements

- We acknowledge Hawai‘i is the indigenous land whose original people are identified today as *Lāhui Kānaka Maoli* or Native Hawaiians.
- We acknowledge that Queen Lili‘uokalani yielded her authority under duress and protest to the United States to avoid the bloodshed of her people during the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i.
- We acknowledge the deep multi-generational *‘ehā* (pain) of Native Hawaiians and the subsequent challenges and disparities they continue to endure.
- We acknowledge the generations of immigrant communities, their descendants, and their pain as they were displaced from their homelands to work on the plantations of these lands to contribute to the diverse and vibrant communities that make their home here today.
- We recognize that we are not able to right every wrong and commit to helping to set the foundation for healing to occur by having honest conversations, recognizing the humanity of ourselves and neighbors, honoring the history of people and place in truth, and taking bold, perhaps imperfect, action with an intention to do what is pono.

### Commitments

- We commit to *“He ali‘i ka ‘āina; he kauā ke kānaka”* (Land is chief; man is steward). We recognize that island consciousness stems from recognizing that resources are finite and calls on each of us to perpetuate the natural life cycles of Hawai‘i’s ecosystems through reciprocity.
- In the true spirit of *Aloha ‘Āina, Mālama ‘Āina, and Mālama Honua* we commit to appropriate stewardship and island consciousness of Hawai‘i by properly protecting, maintaining, and revitalizing efforts for the restoration of natural life cycles, environmental landscapes, and cultural *wahi pana*.
- We commit to support, promote, and advance the integrity and authenticity of Native Hawaiian heritage, *‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i* language revitalization, and perpetuation of traditional customary rights and cultural practices.
- We commit to building stronger, trusted relationships together to make pono decisions that are better informed by Hawaiian cultural *‘ike* and are in collaboration with leadership from Hawai‘i’s public and private sectors that uplifts opportunities for prosperous indigenous wealth and governance over Hawai‘i’s native lands, resources, and assets.
- We recognize the interdependency of our *‘āina* and people and commit to preserving, perpetuating, and honoring the soul of Hawai‘i so that together, we can provide a better island home to our future keiki for generations to come.



**“The magic happens when you have inspiring vision and committed people. We are a bridge.”**

Duane Kurisu, RHS Core Team Member



**“Whether your ancestors came in a canoe 1,000 years ago, or you came on a cargo ship, or worked in the plantation, or you came on an airplane yesterday ... if you love these islands and let them love you, you are kō Hawai‘i. We all have the same amount at stake.”**

John Waihe‘e III, RHS  
Core Team Member

### **Hawai‘i’s Soul: “You know it when you feel it.”**

The essence of these islands—and what makes this archipelago unique—can be described as Hawai‘i’s Soul. It’s a way of existing in a reciprocal relationship with all living things: the *‘āina*, the ocean, the sky, the *kānaka* who originated from the islands, and immigrants and people who call Hawai‘i home.

Hawai‘i’s Soul is tangible, pervasive, and indispensable to our island existence. It is living with island consciousness—the understanding that the health of culture, community, and individuals is inseparable from the health of earth’s life cycle. It is our *kuleana* to use that awareness to care for Hawai‘i and for each other with tenderness, so that people and place thrive together as one.





## Creating a Thriving Soul for Hawai‘i

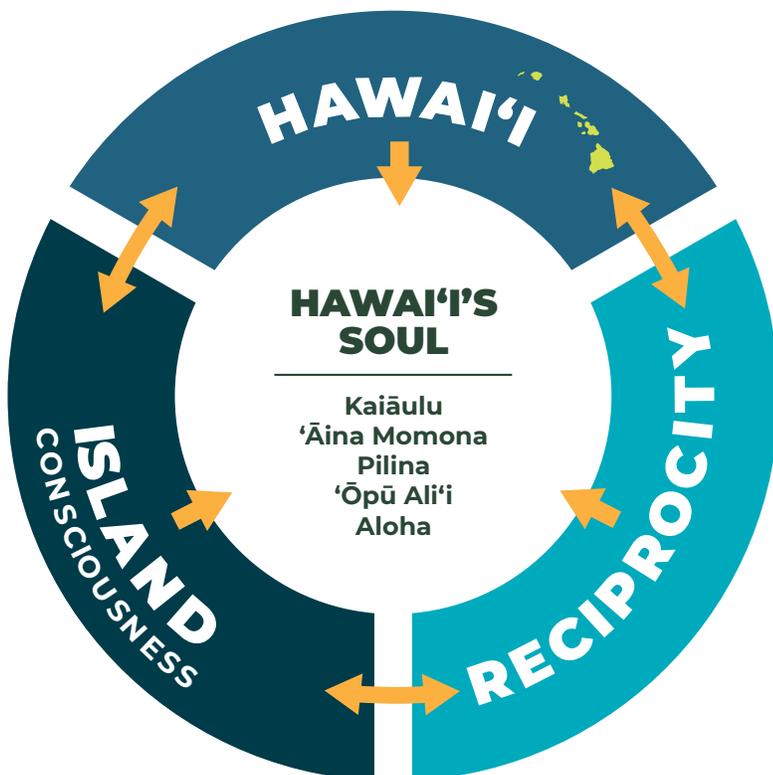
For those of us who call Hawai‘i home, we must recognize that our thinking is shaped by these islands. Developing a mindset of island consciousness and deep understanding of our reciprocal relationship (pilina) with ‘āina and people is essential to how we live in this place that we love.

When Hawai‘i’s people—no matter where they come from or how long ago—realize their shared kuleana (responsibility) to embrace these indigenous practices, then aloha thrives and robust outcomes ensue for the kaiāulu (community), mo‘omeheu (culture), and ‘āina momona (land).

“The circle of life for us is the essence of Hawai‘i’s Soul. We will always have life here if we understand the big movement of reciprocity or aloha.”

Pualani Kanahale,  
RHS Scenario Team

Hawai‘i’s Soul Thrives





## Practices

These practices are foundational to the journey of Rediscovering Hawai'i's Soul:

### 1. Kaiāulu—Care for community

There is an inherent, unspoken bond to embrace the island's way of life. Whether Native Hawaiian, born and raised in Hawai'i, or those who moved to Hawai'i, we all must take personal responsibility to care for our communities to build a healthy and thriving society for all of our people.

### 2. 'Āina Momona—Creating an abundant 'āina

Creating an abundant 'āina is a reciprocal relationship that can't be separated from how we live, work, and play on our islands. If we call Hawai'i home, we have a duty to embrace and act on our *kuleana* or responsibility to *mālama* or care for, preserve, protect, and to perpetuate all Hawai'i's lands, oceans, natural phenomena, and elemental forces.

### 3. Pīlina—Fostering healthy relationships

Creating relationships with intention and sincerity is essential to the health and well-being of our multi-ethnic society. Healthy relationships between Hawai'i's ethnic groups, our humanity with our 'āina and families, communities, and Hawai'i as a whole is critical to creating thriving islands.

### 4. 'Ōpu Ali'i—Benevolent and courageous leadership

Leadership through island consciousness is one that emulates an enduring affection for Hawai'i—its lands and oceans, environment, people, and pono stewardship of natural and cultural resources (this more accurately describes what kind of leadership it is). 'Ōpū Ali'i is selfless leadership that exemplifies the virtues of compassion, care, forgiveness, and aloha coupled with boldness, thoughtfulness, and strength.

### 5. Aloha—Compassion and kindness with reciprocity

An illuminating attribute of people from Hawai'i is our Aloha for one another. It is the compassion, kindness, and reciprocal relationship and respect for those who are *kupa o ka 'āina*, or natives, born and raised of this land, and those who moved here and choose to call these islands home. We all have a *kuleana* to emulate this quality and obligation to teach our families, communities, and future generations.



## Transformative Scenario Planning

Through the process of Transformative Scenario Planning, the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative and Reos Partners convened a diverse group of individuals in 2022 that included Hawaiian elders and practitioners, community representatives, and business leaders to envision a variety of conceivable outcomes for Hawai'i.

The four scenarios of possible futures they crafted serve as a springboard for deeper and more sober conversations, and call for an unprecedented level of leadership with the courage to be transformative.

**“The beauty of transformational scenario planning is that everybody’s view is welcome and stays at the table. It’s not just about Hawaiians, it’s about Hawai’i.”**

Michelle Ka’uhane,  
RHS Core Team Member



# Scenario Summaries

## Multiple Possible Futures of Hawai'i's Soul

### 'Iwa



*Great frigatebirds - are birds whose appearance warns of incoming storms*

In 'Iwa, the structures of Hawai'i's governing system do not change, and access to power, influence and opportunity is increasingly controlled by those from outside. The nature of the economy is extractive, built around using the land, culture, and people in Hawai'i to drive economic profits. 'Iwa sees those who are benefiting under the current conditions continuing to benefit, while those who are currently struggling see their lot deteriorating.

**In this scenario, Hawai'i's soul is lost.**

### Manu O Kū



*The white tern - is a native Hawaiian bird that thrives in both ocean and urban environments*

In *Manu o Kū*, the structures of Hawai'i's governing system do not change, and traditional Hawaiian values are increasingly embraced and embodied by leaders in business, politics, and civil society. *Manu o Kū* sees access to power, influence, and opportunity being driven by those inside Hawai'i. This widespread adoption of Hawaiian values fundamentally shifts how people and institutions in Hawai'i engage with one another, and the term "Hawaiian" grows less fraught.

**In this scenario, Hawai'i's soul is transformed.**

### Nēnē



*The Hawaiian goose - is a bird that is known to fly in pairs*

In *Nēnē*, Native Hawaiians seek and receive Federal acknowledgement as Indian Tribes and establish a government-to-government relationship with the United States. The term "Hawaiian" is defined as a person holding citizenship in the tribal government. Hawaiians in this scenario feel reconnected to land, and a subsistence economy emerges on Hawaiian lands. *Nēnē* enshrines existing tensions between the Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian communities in new structures.

**In this scenario, Hawai'i's soul is split in two.**

### 'Ua'u



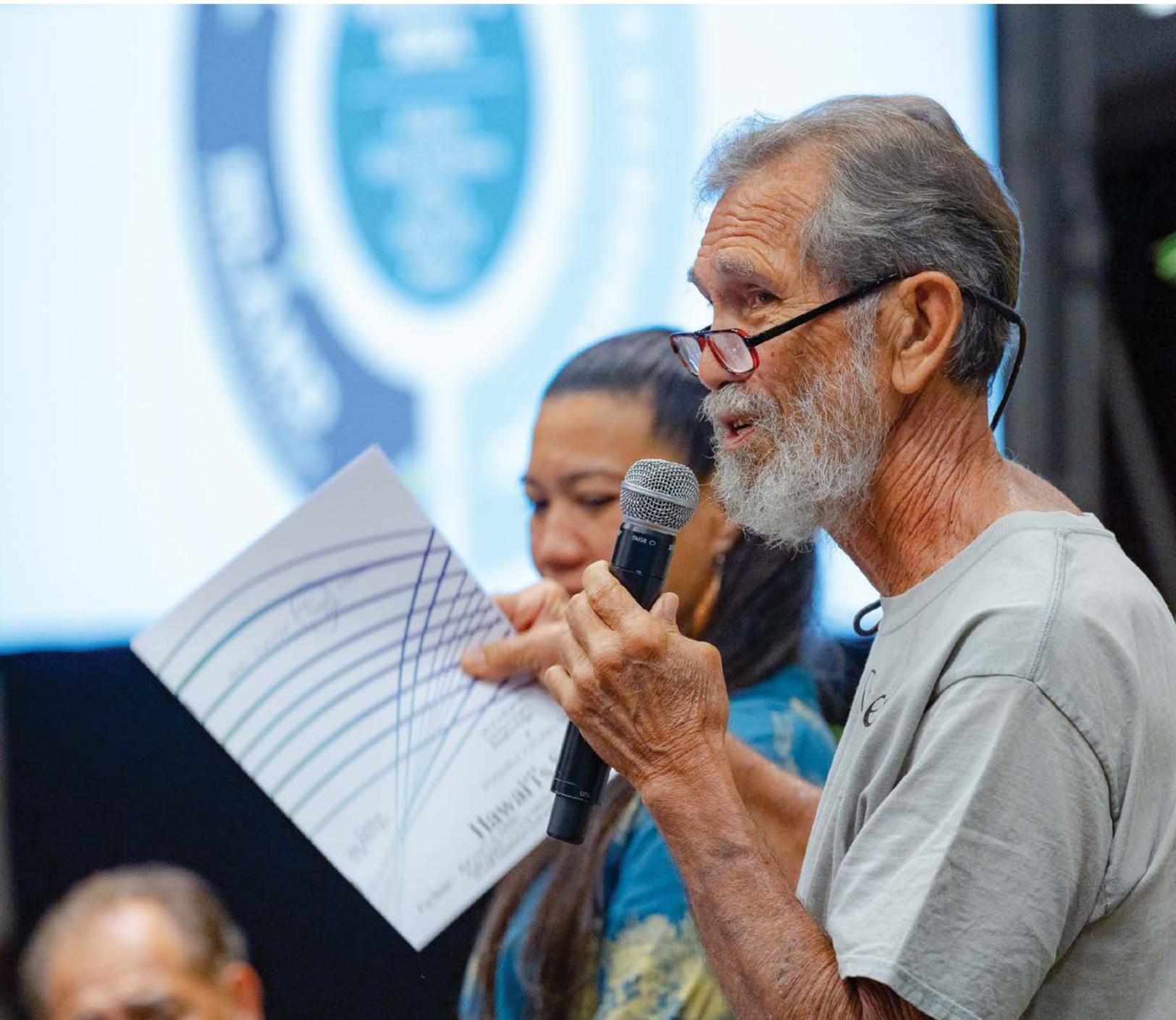
*The Hawaiian petrel - is a bird that guides voyagers to unknown lands*

In 'Ua'u, regulatory power and governing authority shift toward the individual states. A weakened federal government leads some states to leave the union, and Hawai'i becomes its own sovereign nation. As an independent nation, Hawai'i becomes a political and economic target for existing world powers. All citizens of the new nation are considered Hawaiian. 'Ua'u occurs via a major shift in the longstanding international order, and contains the most uncertainty around Hawai'i's future.

**In this scenario, Hawai'i's soul is tested.**

## Comparison of the Scenarios

	'Iwa	Nēnē	Manu o Kū	'Ua'u
<b>How is Hawai'i governed?</b>	Current governance structures and power dynamics continue.	A sovereign Native Hawaiian government in parallel with current governance structures.	Current governance structures are transformed by Native Hawaiian ways of being, knowing, and doing.	Hawai'i becomes an independent sovereign nation.
<b>How does the world see Hawai'i?</b>	As a tropical playground.	As an example of two governance systems co-existing on shared territory.	As a model of sustainability - balanced growth and stewardship of land, people, and economy.	As a target for advancing political and economic ambitions of other global actors.
<b>Who controls access to power?</b>	Outside wealth, power, and influence increase over time.	Parallel power structures - Native Hawaiian government holds influence on Hawaiian lands, current power structures elsewhere.	Local wealth, power, and influence, shaped by Native Hawaiian values.	The new Hawaiian government, with reduced access to outside capital.
<b>What is the nature of Hawai'i's economy?</b>	Extractive - "What can I take from this land, people, and culture to enrich myself?"	Subsistence economy on Native Hawaiian lands - "How can I use this place to sustain myself?" - alongside a capitalist economy.	Regenerative - "How can my economic activity enrich this land, people, culture, and economy?"	Survival - "What must we do to meet the needs of our citizens?"
<b>How is healing facilitated?</b>	Through individual effort and practice.	Through federal recognition and reconnection to land.	Through a widespread embrace of aloha 'āina and Hawaiian values.	Through sovereignty, and a renewed sense of autonomy and empowerment.
<b>Who is considered Hawaiian?</b>	"Hawaiian" continues to be defined through blood quantum.	"Hawaiian" is defined by citizenship in the new tribal government.	"Hawaiian" is defined by cultural norms and practices - those who embody aloha. Native Hawaiians retain identity as kanaka.	"Hawaiian" is defined by citizenship in the independent nation of Hawai'i.
<b>What happens to Hawai'i's soul?</b>	Hawai'i's soul is lost.	Hawai'i's soul splits in two.	Hawai'i's soul is transformed.	Hawai'i's soul is tested.



**“There’s  
optimism that  
we are on the  
right path. This  
work can work.”**

RHS Network member

## **Choice Points/Collaborative Agenda**

A set of critical choices confronting Hawai‘i is emerging from deep, ongoing conversations and collaborations that are structured to be cross-sector and cross-informational. Out of these knowledge weaving opportunities (*Haku*), self-selected working groups are focusing on pivotal questions that have shaped a Collaborative Agenda.

Each of the 13 choice points—whether centered on climate, equity, education, military, tourism, ceded lands, power, *‘āina*, economy, outmigration, or Hawai‘i’s Soul—is framed with an eye toward understanding the root causes of a particular challenge. Only then can we direct our collective energy toward solving the right problems.

# How...

do we integrate the teachings of Hawai'i's Soul into our actions?

do climate and energy intersect with other critical issues?

do we promote equity?

does Hawai'i's Soul influence our education system?

do we shape the future of tourism in Hawai'i?

is power exercised?



# What...

sacrifices and trade-offs are necessary for our state to embrace Hawai'i's Soul?

do we do to keep Hawaiians in Hawai'i?

does the military's presence in Hawai'i look like?

happens to ceded lands?

is our relationship to 'āina?

do we do to promote economic well-being?

does success look like and how do we measure it?

**“This is not just talk. I’m watching action unfold. There are business leaders who are standing with us in advocacy, doing the work. They are not just checking a box.”**

Michelle Ka’uhane,  
RHS Core Team  
Member



“Ōpū ali‘i—this will take bold, courageous leadership.”

Kamana‘opono Crabbe, RHS Executive Lead

### Call to Action

Quarterly Haku virtual meetings provide existing and new members a chance to learn from each other, share progress on actions, and strengthen connections and relationships. We invite you to add your voice and your commitment to this collaborative effort. Reach out to get involved in the outcomes-driven process called Rediscovering Hawaii’s Soul.

Learn more at [HawaiiSoul.org](http://HawaiiSoul.org)





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