

Maui County is one of the most beautiful places on Earth. It is home to 126 perennial streams, 10 major waterfalls, 249,000 (2017) acres of agricultural land and dozens of spectacular beaches. The South Shore of Maui Island hosts the largest proliferation of Humpback whales on the planet each year during their birthing season. The islands are not only a beautiful place; they are a very special and spiritual place.

Maui County needs human stewardship to protect it. While our mayor, council members, administration and executive offices are tasked with their designated duties, the community members also need to be on board as stewards of the aina and the culture. It is not wise to expect the government to dictate all human affairs.

In pre-contact Hawai'i, everybody did their part – their kuleana. We will succeed in taking care of our islands only if we understand once again that everybody plays a part in stewardship. I can't emphasize this enough. We need to give back to the place that gives us life.

The Aloha spirit carries us through our challenges as well as our joyful times and it colors our relationships with each other, creating a very unique culture and lifestyle. I am thankful every day that I live here.

### ***A little about myself***

I have lived on Maui since 1998. My journey here has been a myriad of people, places and events that I believe have led me to choose to run as Mayor of Maui County in 2022. My life experience has also provided a great deal of education and a variety of experiences that provide the wisdom and insight I feel is necessary to lead Maui County into the future.

I have an AA in Liberal Arts from UH Maui College, have authored 8 books, have a publishing company, teach improv and have three children and eight grandchildren. I have had a varied work history including a cleaning company on Maui, and a painting and maintenance company in the mainland. I have managed apartments, sold cellphones, worked as a server, administrative assistant and more. I host an internet radio show and have worked on a crisis line, led a Girl Scout troop and worked with Junior Achievement both in the mainland and on Maui.

My magazine, Sustainable Aloha is available online as a PDF on [www.sustainablealoha.org](http://www.sustainablealoha.org). Other websites include:

[www.alanakayformayor.info](http://www.alanakayformayor.info)

[www.violetphoenixpublishing.com](http://www.violetphoenixpublishing.com)

[www.alanakay.com](http://www.alanakay.com)

[www.hawaiielectionintegritynow.org](http://www.hawaiielectionintegritynow.org)

[www.missionimprovable.com](http://www.missionimprovable.com)

Throughout my time on Maui, I have gotten to know many of the different cultural and political groups who live here, have studied the issues and the government processes, and I have run for political office in 2012 and 2014.

I am a visionary who believes everything is possible. When I managed apartments, I took on a pending foreclosure project on a neglected apartment complex that many believed could not be salvaged, including the bank. I was hired by the court appointed receiver and with my direction and leadership, the property was rehabbed and was brought out of foreclosure. It was eventually sold and is still a thriving part of the community it is in.

### ***Is Maui County ready for the future?***

Maui County needs a makeover, beginning with the administration. We have a budget that is almost one billion dollars, which exceeds the average per capita budget of most administrations across the country.

We have many career politicians who have had the opportunity, but have not addressed the issues we face – most of which are very well veiled from the public eye. In the meantime, the mayor and council continue to give themselves pay raises. I would like to see a more cohesive team that is working toward some real solutions. I will be outlining many of our problems and suggested solutions in this booklet.

Although Maui County is comprised of four islands – Maui, Lanaʻi, and Molokaʻi and Kahoʻolawe – I will often refer to the islands as one place because these islands are very interdependent. I recognize that they are culturally different, however.

My focus often falls on Maui Island more because it is the place I know best. It is also the island in Maui County that has the most active with regard to commerce and tourism. Lanaʻi and Molokaʻi are very unique and very representative of the Aloha culture and lifestyle. They also have unique challenges with regard to agriculture. I am aware of some of the issues and invite those in the know to contact and educate me more.

In this booklet I am going to summarize and suggest solutions for serious issues that are impacting our ability to move forward sustainably, safely and effectively. First and foremost, we need to think like an island, not like a large metropolitan area somewhere in the mainland or elsewhere. We can never be like Oahu either – we need to learn from their mistakes and we don't have the carrying capacity they have.

In everything we do, we need to consider our carrying capacity as well as the sustainability of our ecosystem. Without these measures, we will destroy this precious and spiritual paradise, never to be experienced again in our lifetimes. Nature took well over one million years to create this place to perfection, and it has taken only a few hundred years for people to begin its demise. *Furthermore, we cannot use climate change as an excuse for our continued neglect and mistreatment of Maui's ecosystem.*

Although I am outlining my personal thoughts regarding these issues, I realize I do not have all the answers. The best answers come from diverse individuals coming together to determine the most intelligent solutions. To this end, I will work toward the use of charrettes and task forces to solve some of our pressing problems and move away from divisive politics, litigation and cliquiness. We should be working together for the greater good in every way that we possibly can.

I also realize that, as mayor, I do not have the full capacity to enact all of the changes I would like to see. I will however have the ability to influence change and get Maui County moving in the right direction. I foresee the next generation riding on the momentum that we will be creating in the very near future, but first, the antiquated, sluggish ways of conducting government business have to be dismantled.

### **My goals as Mayor:**

Integrated Water Resource Management

Managed Tourism

Systems approach to all aspects of government operation and the ecosystem

Diversification of the economy with a focus on Agriculture and Agricultural Exports

Creation of a sustainable economy where permanent residents, especially those who were born here, are not driven into poverty by the tourism industry and outside investors

Mediation and Cooperation instead of Litigation

### **Chapter One: Integrated Water Resource Management**

When I did a story about Maui Island water in the Summer 2019 issue of Sustainable Aloha Magazine, I spent countless hours interviewing and emailing department heads on the county as well as state levels, combing through publications and court documents to determine why there was so much contention regarding water supply. Of utmost importance, we are over-pumping the I'ao Aquifer. I wanted to know why the issues with the I'ao Aquifer did not appear to be moving toward resolution. (The I'ao Aquifer had been designated as a special management area in 2003 because salt water had begun encroaching on the freshwater lens)

***After close analysis, I determined that we don't have a water shortage issue; we have a water management issue.***

In a nutshell, the State of Hawai'i has done a much better job in recent years toward improving our water and stream management, but Maui Island is not anywhere close to where it needs to

be on water integrity and sustainability. Most importantly, department heads and other county personnel are not properly educated on water resource management and island hydrology. We need to bring in some experts or educate the people we have. Here is a great link that explains hydrology: <https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/water-science-school/science/groundwater-flow-and-water-cycle>

*The integrity of our island hydrology needs to be restored:*

There are many phases of hydrology, notwithstanding restoration and prevention. Simply searching for new water sources and battling over diversions is not the answer. If one understood island hydrology, they would understand that the health of a watershed consists of many components. From the height of the mountain peaks, the flora and soil to the underground caverns, springs, aquifers and dikes – all of the parts work together to produce rain and fresh water– essentially keeping the island alive. Impede any aspect of this interdependent system and the watershed moves toward collapse and eventually rendered incapable of sustaining life.

This is where Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) comes in.

If we destroy our water supply, we cannot pipe it in from faraway places as people in the mainland do. Furthermore, we expect a higher quality of life and do not want to derive our water from an expensive, environmentally hazardous desalination system. We should never consider desalination an option when we can fix our problem by being more attentive and responsible.

We have built heavily over the aquifers, preventing infiltration of surface water. Automobiles, concrete and asphalt in compacted urban centers create heat islands, causing the dew point to move to a higher elevation, which impacts the rainfall. We are over-pumping the I'ao aquifer because the water is being diverted to the North Shore area to compensate for a contaminated upcountry well and we are also pumping millions of gallons to green up Kihei and Wailea, which is essentially desert.

Maui County spends millions of dollars each year on the search for new water sources and the restoration of the watersheds. This is problematic for a few reasons. The money that is given to watershed restoration groups is not tracked with regard to progress or effectiveness. The money and effort put into finding new water sources would be better spent on education and IWRM. With IWRM, we would be managing our water efficiently and wisely and likely would not need new sources.

***There is danger in continuing on the current trajectory:***

- The I'ao Aquifer's freshwater lens that provides the lion's share of water to Maui Island is dependent on a system that balances a freshwater lens atop a saltwater base, straddled by dikes in the higher elevations of lava. It has recently been discovered that

there is also fresh water below the aquifer and it seems logical that its existence has something to do with the delicate balance created by nature. The water department is considering tapping into the fresh water under the aquifer. **We need to consult with a professional hydrologist before we do something as risky as this.**

- The I'ao aquifer was designated as a special management area in the 1990's because it was determined that the County of Maui was not taking proper care of it. The state has not done much with regard to the aquifer, other than monitor the levels and control pumping. The water department heads on the county level have told me that the health of the aquifer is not their responsibility. They have said it is out of their hands now that the state is in charge now. This is a prime example of how departments are not working together and passing the buck, essentially leaving the aquifer completely in limbo. **We must continue to protect the health of the aquifer regardless of who is in charge.**
- The central valley of Maui Island was built on falsely inflated aquifer sustainable yields. 145 years of diversions for water thirsty sugar cane caused the hyper-replenishment of the aquifers in the central valley. What is going to happen now that the volume of diverted water has been lessened? **IWRM would help solve the problem.**

*It does not have to be this way!!*

Hundreds of years ago, the konohiki was in charge of diversions. Use of diversions was carefully planned to prevent demise of the system. Diversions had nothing to do with money or clout. It is said that the islands were more sustainable and had a greater carrying capacity as a result of thoughtful systems thinking. Although historical accounts vary, I believe this summation is likely.

The water flows as it does for many reasons and we must respect the natural flows of tributaries, streams, and gulches. In modern times, money has driven much of the careless stream diversions to green up arid areas such as Kihei and Wailea and filling in wetlands to support developments. The result is dozens of dry streams, compromised water supplies, runoff and floods. All of these human endeavors have negatively impacted the natural system.

Adding to the problem are major stream diversions are antiquated and are costing the county a large amount of money as we pay to have diverted water piped back to Maui Island residents by private water utilities such as East Maui Irrigation (EMI) and Wailuku Water Co. (WWC). Proposals to purchase WWC and put the infrastructure back under county control, have been on the table several times in recent years, but have never passed through council.

Integrated Water Resource Management would create a data bank that uses aquifer and stream integrity data to manage the flows and diversions and consequently human behavior and developments. The State of HI has already created the Hawai'i Stream Flow Assessment which has all of the information we need to establish such a system. Use of computer systems to advise urban planning is becoming common place worldwide.

**Restoration of the integrity of our system is my number one concern and it should also be yours!!**

## **Chapter Two: Managed Tourism**

**Although tourism is a large part of our economy, it is not wise to economically put all our eggs in one basket nor is it wise to destroy what gives us life.**

Almost everybody agrees that something needs to be done about over-tourism. At any given time, there may be as many as 58,000 tourists visiting the islands of Maui County. There is a bill in council at this time to limit transient accommodations (TA's)

On one hand, we rely heavily on tourist dollars to survive and on the other hand, over-tourism wreaks havoc on our ecosystem and therefore our lives. When it all began in the 1970's, there was a "more is better" attitude. Because of governmental shutdowns, in 2020, we experienced a rare time frame without tourist traffic and dollars. I believe this should have been a time to reflect on what it means to be a major tourist destination. This was a time for us to plan more wisely in the future. Unfortunately, many people were simply waiting for things to "get back to normal." One may hardly blame businesses for wanting to restore their revenue streams.

The planes full of tourists returned in October of 2020 and once again, the beaches smelled like sunscreen, the water became a bit more cloudy and the roads were once again filled with rental cars. What had changed however, was the minds of many Maui residents had become fixed on finding a way to reduce the huge influxes in the future.

Naturally, we need to make changes as organically as possible, doing the least amount of harm to individuals as possible. We must never forget how devastated we would be if there were a true global disturbance that stopped the planes from coming and by NOT diversifying our economy, we are being fool hardy. In the end, any changes we make to our tourism policies should result in win-win scenarios. We need to put our heads together.

Here are some things to consider:

- Island destinations worldwide suffer similar problems.
- Attempts to limit the number of transient accommodations (TA's) have been a challenge. Notwithstanding legal TA's, we have countless illegal TA's.
- A substantial number of TA's are owned by outside investors.
- TA's reduce housing inventory for local residents who do not have access to more prolific economic systems.
- How much of the tourist dollar actually stays in the islands?
- The workforce must be able to thrive – how to we accomplish this?

- South Maui is naturally an arid region and greening it up means continued water diversions – do we need to stop developing there?

The council passed a new county transient accommodations tax of 3%. The money will be used for tourism related services including public safety, parks and emergency services. I can think of many other things that are impacted by tourism in addition to these.

It is clear that we need to do some planning and that things cannot continue on the current trajectory. I don't have all the answers, but I know we can find them.

### **Chapter Three – Systems Thinking**

When it gets down to it, everything is part of a system. This is inescapable. From our bodies to the oceans of the world, everything is designed to work together and everything impacts all of the other moving parts.

County government directly impacts the economy and the ecosystem. At its lowest level of functioning, government can destroy society and at its highest level of functioning, it allows for the health and expansion of the human and natural elements.

***In order to address our environmental issues, there needs to be a more efficient approach because time is of the essence. We need a proper sustainability department that is staffed with educated, open-minded people. I am open to any and all ideas.***

***Most importantly!! We must NOT blame our environmental problems on climate change!! WE are causing almost all of our problems locally.***

*Intergovernmental Organization:*

Maui County's budget is much higher per capita than most budgets across the U.S. including other Hawai'ian islands. The creation of the Cost of Government Commission has helped in a few areas but we need to create clearer goals and objectives for existing offices, work to remove duplication of effort and improve flow between departments. Government employee's salaries should be kept in check – not to greatly exceed those of the private sector.

At this time, our government is suffering from silo management of almost all of our interdependent components. Systems thinking is the first aspect of our government that needs to be addressed.

*Water:*

Water is the most integral and basic of all of the systems. Fortunately for State of Hawaii, most of the leg work for the integration of systems thinking has been done through the creation of a handful of very critical documents. The Water Use and Development Plan (WUDP), and the

Hawai'i Stream Assessment provide integral documentation of minimum sustainable stream flows that will protect flora and fauna, sustainable yields of aquifers, growth projections and so much more. Integrated water resource management (IWRM) uses computerized analytics to direct human activity, leaving out the political aspect and hopefully reducing the need for litigation. Please see Chapter One – Integrated Water Resource Management to learn more about this topic.

#### *Shoreline management:*

Nature has its own system of beach management and *sea walls impede this natural process*. Throughout the year, the sand shifts with the seasons. Sea walls prevent the natural movement of the sand, causing some areas to receive more sand than they should while other areas receive less sand – creating an ever-increasing imbalance. So, although people use seawalls to control erosion, they are effectively causing more erosion by installing them. What to do with West Maui developments that are being impacted by the encroaching ocean? I don't know, but seawalls are not the answer.

#### *Wetlands and brackish water:*

We used to have dozens more wetlands along the coastal waters than we do now. We also had stream flows that met the ocean, creating the optimum environment for some types of fish.

The wetlands were designed by nature to hand these occurrences and the overbuilding has caused runoff that is polluting our near shore waters. Believing that we have the capability to meddle with the natural flow of water, we have also severely impeded the ability of the ecosystem to manage both ocean water surges and heavy rainfall.

Native Hawaiian cultural practices and fauna that are dependent on brackish water are severely impacted and have resulted in extinctions.

### **Chapter Four: Diversified and Sustainable Economy**

Tourism and government comprises a large part of our economy. We need to move into other areas for many reasons.

The shutdown of our islands in 2020 gave us a feel for how it would be if and when tourism fails to support us. During that juncture and at other times, our supplies have been threatened by striking workers and natural disasters.

During the times when I was campaigning, the number one desire by all cultural and economic groups was that we become as independent of outside suppliers as possible. It is ok if one is not able to get a sofa or a television, but it is not ok if one is not able to get food. **At this time, we import most of our food and this needs to change.**

That said, Maui Island and Moloka'i have prime farmland. Year round growing seasons and plenty of sunshine and rain are a true blessing. Not only should we be able to feed all of our residents, but we should also be able to export our produce and take our place on the world stage. **I see Maui County as one of the top producers of fabulous produce on the planet.**

Industry (such as Mahi Pono), government and the community need to be cooperating and working together for mutual benefit. In order to do this, we need to examine our own judgments and prejudices in order to open the doors to understanding and communication between the groups. As soon as Mahi Pono purchased the land in the central valley, they were hit with opposition on so many fronts. **I would like to see Mahi Pono work with community liaisons to keep communication flowing and to maintain transparency – making sure they are responsive to the needs and goals of the community, while feeling as though they are not being attacked.**

I hear many people talk about hemp. I am not discounting the value of hemp; I am simply emphasizing diversified agriculture as opposed to mono-cropping. Hemp building products need to be studied as **we begin to use more natural building products that are harmonious with the environment.**

Eco tourism has been growing and appears to be indicative of a worldwide trend. With more tourists seeking mindful vacation experiences, **it is wise for us to bolster this aspect of our economy.** Getting tourists involved in the land with hands on experiences steers them away from the usual tourist traps – snorkeling excursions, whale watches, dinner cruises, etc., all of which are damaging to the ocean and the reefs.

**Exporting products made with Maui grown ingredients is something that is sustainable even when and if tourists are not visiting.**

Our situation is not unique. Island tourism destinations historically have suffered the same issues we suffer here in Maui County. Tourist dollars don't necessarily stay on the island and outside investors throw the economy off balance.

While wealthy investors, part time residents and visitors can afford ever increasing costs of island paradise, the workforce and those who were born here before the tourism boom struggle to make ends meet.

### ***Fall out from economic imbalance***

As I mentioned earlier, a government should not impede the ability for its citizens and ecosystem to thrive. Often folks believe that raising the minimum wage or creating government handouts is the solution. **We need to get to the root of the problem instead of putting band aids on it.**

The end result of an imbalanced economy such as ours is poverty and homelessness. I have noticed that it is assumed by most bureaucrats that homeless people are mentally ill or substance addicted. This is far from the truth here in the islands and to understand this, we must look at it differently.

Addressing homelessness requires the proper analysis of the facts and data. We need to take a harsh look at the reality here. To begin with, the true definition of homelessness is as follows:

- Lacks housing or lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence - This is a standard understanding of homelessness. Lacking housing or a fixed nighttime residence. Is a tent a "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence"?
- "Doubled up" – couch surfing, staying with friends - Consider those who are staying with family or friends but who are not on the lease or don't own a home. These are also known as the hidden or at-risk population.
- At-Risk: Households in which members would become homeless in less than three months if they suddenly lost their primary source of income. Also called "precariously housed," these people are three monthly paychecks away from homelessness.
- Hidden Homeless: Households in which more than one family share accommodations. These households include families that are doubled up (two or more families or groups of persons who are related by birth, marriage or adoption) and those that are sharing (two or more families or groups whose members are not related by birth, marriage, or adoption).

What percentage of Maui County residents do you believe are technically homeless if you use these criteria? A visual scan of most neighborhoods reveals numerous cars parked on the lawn and other signs of large numbers of people living in homes designed for far fewer residents.

Also, homeless counts do not include those who do not want to be seen or counted including those working poor who live in their cars.

All one needs to do is calculate the average housing costs vs. mean subsistence income to get an idea of how many people must be doubled and tripled up in properties. I ran the numbers years ago, and I bet if I ran them using current data, I would come up with the same statistic of approximately 50% of our population living below the poverty level and therefore unable to afford the average rent in Maui.

This is unacceptable. It is particularly unacceptable to continue to drive out the people who were born here because of continued overbuilding and outside influences.

The disparity between wages and housing has been gradually getting worse. I believe we are at a breaking point and cannot go on much further. This is already evidenced in the closing of businesses because they cannot find enough personnel to remain in business.

Once again, I don't have all the answers. I am sure the answers are there. I would like to hear what the community has to say.

***More ideas to bring our economy in to balance and sustainability:***

Make it very difficult or expensive for someone to buy property here if they are not full-time residents. The extra taxes could be used for a low-income or work force housing fund.

Work hard to bring more of the Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) back home to Maui County. Presently, the money goes to the State of Hawaii and the amount we get from the total is capped.

Establish a community re-investment incentive or requirement to keep more of the fruits from outside investors circulating in the community.

Encourage property managers, rental managers and brokers to support living wages for all workforce personnel who take care of the needs of the visitor industry. These managers are the liaisons to the rest of the globe and need to take responsibility for this instead of trying to set people up with the cheapest labor possible.

Developers are required to build a certain number of affordable rentals/homes and work force housing. Many leave the island without fulfilling the requirements of their entitlements. This needs to change.

**Chapter Five: Mediate and Cooperate**

We have been cherry picking our environmental favorites and slinging mud at our enemies. While we have wasted tens of thousands of dollars and countless hours in litigation over things such as GMO's, water rights, sea walls and injection wells, we have not really arrived anywhere near where we need to be at this juncture.

While we struggle with each other in the court systems, our West Maui beaches are eroding from sea walls, our South Maui beaches are suffering from runoff caused by over-building, our I'ao Aquifer is moving toward collapse, sustainable yields in central Maui aquifers are shifting due to new farming practices, and reef killing injection wells continue to put us in the national spotlight.

Task forces and charettes are useful in finding solutions that are well thought out. We also need to reconsider our attitudes toward each other and try to find ways to work together for the common good. Small groups working in opposition or competition with each other is not going to get us to the desired destination.

Here are some important documents for residents to become familiar with:

Budget: <https://www.mauicounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/126245/FY-2022-Mayors-Proposed-Budget>

Maui County Data Book (also available in soft cover from the Small Business Development Center): <https://sfdc.dev.hyperspective.com/business-research-library/maui-county-data-book/>

Hawaii Stream Assessment: [https://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/cwrm/publishedreports/R84\\_HSA.pdf](https://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/cwrm/publishedreports/R84_HSA.pdf)

Maui Island Water Use and Development Plan:  
<https://waterresources.mauicounty.gov/162/Maui-Island-Water-Use-Development-Plan>

Lanai Water Use and Development Plan: <https://waterresources.mauicounty.gov/161/Lanai-Water-Use-Development-Plan-2011>

Molokai Water Use and Development Plan:  
<https://waterresources.mauicounty.gov/205/Molokai-Island-Water-Use-Development-Pla>