



THE OUTDOOR CIRCLE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2016 - 2017



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## President's Message



The year 2016-2017 was an event-filled year for The Outdoor Circle. Our Board of Directors and Committee Chairs worked countless hours to tend to the barrage of tasks associated with managing their positions. Thank you to all the volunteers that have stepped forward this past year to support our efforts, both financially and through your letter writing and verbal testimonies at the legislature and City Council hearings this past session. We could not have achieved the level of success that we did without your constant and very appreciated support.

As usual, we have continued to fight the ongoing battle for the City's compliance with the State sign ordinance and adherence to advertising laws. Hopefully we have been able to establish a dialogue with our government officials to help be part of a proactive program of working with the administration to improve upon existing laws and ordinances rather than always having to be reactionary adversaries.

This past year our Development Committee has worked to expand our membership base by reconnecting with members that have let their memberships lapse as well as reaching out to new potential members that have never been contacted by The Outdoor Circle. We have also established new membership and donation levels for our summer and year-end appeals which will broaden the choices for financial support available to our new and existing members and donors.

We also want to recognize our newest branch, the East Hawai'i Island Outdoor Circle.

Our staff has done an amazing job of keeping the TOC ship running smoothly, even on reduced hours. Miles Ritchie continues to produce fantastic results and receives outstanding praise for his cartography skills. He will be returning to graduate school at the University of Hawai'i, but will remain in a half-time capacity on the TOC staff.

Jackie Wah, as Operations Director, remains the person with all of the administrative answers and makes sure everything runs smoothly within the office.

Winston Welch, as our Executive Director, continues to perform above and beyond our expectations. He has been and continues to be a critical player in allowing the Board and its branches to operate as a unified yet independent membership organization.

Each branch has its own sense of identity and agenda, yet all of our members are committed to keeping Hawai'i Clean, Green and Beautiful.

I look forward to our upcoming year with its new opportunities and goals to achieve. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Aloha,

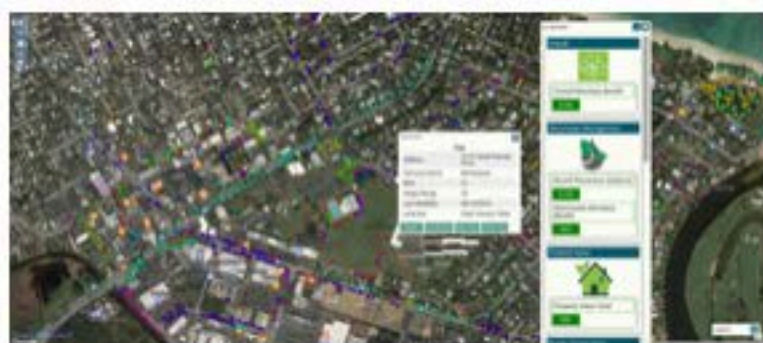
Steve F. Mechler

President, The Outdoor Circle

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## Oahu Citizen Forester Program

In the summer of 2016, the **Kailua Citizen Forester Program** began to teach a group of eager Kailua residents how to become certified Citizen Foresters. The initial two-month long training program saw a wide variety of concepts presented, including tree identification, environmental and monetary benefits of trees, how to gather tree metrics and finally, the ability to input all of this information into a Geographic Information System (GIS) while out in the field. With the assistance of certified arborists and mapping specialists, these concepts were adopted quickly by the Citizen Foresters who set out collecting data for every street and park tree throughout Kailua.



Now, as a result of the weekly dedication of these individuals, every one of these public trees in Kailua (makai of the canals) have been catalogued and the information gathered can now be accessed by the public in order to see just how beneficial these trees are to the Kailua community. With the completion of the initial Kailua pilot project area, the Citizen Foresters have moved onto nearby areas including Maunawili and Olomana and as of July 10, 2017, have mapped and collected data for 2,909 trees!

As a result of the overwhelmingly positive and successful experience of this first ever Citizen Forester program in Hawai'i, new locations around Oahu will also begin to have Citizen Forester programs. Due to TOC's involvement in this collaborative program, the next area will also take place in a location that has a branch presence albeit with a distinctively urban feel and environment, Waikiki. "We are excited to work together with Kaulunani and Smart Trees Pacific to build a coalition of partner organizations in order to raise awareness for trees in Waikiki and in doing so, protect the ones we currently have, while identifying new planting locations which will increase our urban forest," says Brian Bagnall, President of the Greater Waikiki Outdoor Circle Branch.

Finally, a big mahalo to the programs other partners: Kaulunani, Smart Trees Pacific, City and County of Honolulu, and the University of Hawai'i.



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## Trees for Honolulu's Future



*For a sustainable Hawaii.*

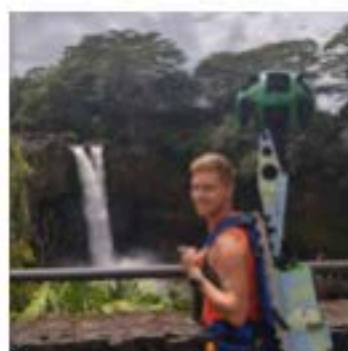
Last year a new coalition of conservation activists, government agencies and private corporations came together to create *"Trees for Honolulu's Future"* (THF) which is now its own certified non-profit organization. The entire coalition began when Brian Bagnall, President of the Waikiki Branch, approached Tom Dinell (UH Urban Planning Professor) about an article Dinell had written in the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* calling for a need to plant one million trees on Oahu in order to reduce the local impacts of climate change. Bagnall felt that such a large task should begin immediately but only if many of the "key players" from the island were involved. As a result, the *"Trees for Honolulu's Future"* was formed and is now a think tank and source of support for programs ranging from tree plantings to environmental education curriculums in schools.

With the help of TOC's Programs Director, Myles Ritchie (Research Committee Chair and THF Board Member) and Executive Director, Winston Welch (THF Board Member), TOC has played a crucial role in not only the formation of this new non-profit, but are actively working with others such as the City and County of Honolulu, Aloha Arborists Association, Smart Trees Pacific and the University of Hawai'i to soon begin the process of reforesting Oahu and educating the public of the environmental, monetary, psychological and cultural benefits that trees provide.

## Google Trekker Program

The Outdoor Circle was approached by Google in order to partner with them on their **"Trekker" Program** which allows "virtual" tours to be placed on Google maps. This process was accomplished by carrying a 50-pound backpack with 15 cameras on top that take a 360-degree panoramic image every 2.5 seconds.

TOC was contacted by Google for this program due to our historical prominence throughout the state and for our recent innovative mapping programs.



This program was made possible due to a grant from HECO who fully supports TOC's mission and this program of allowing individuals online "virtual" access to these incredible areas regardless of financial, physical or other potential limiting factors. This has been, and will continue to be, one of the most innovative programs TOC has ever worked on and will literally put TOC and many Hawai'i locations "on the map" for a global audience to experience and enjoy.

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## Protecting the Scenic Environment through Public Advocacy

From **The Outdoor Circle's** beginnings 105 years ago, we have been vocal advocates on public issues in support of our mission to protect the scenic environment. This year TOC has been very active because numerous legislative proposals at both the state and local level have threatened scenic conservation.

### **Historic Thomas Square will be preserved as a park.**

When the Honolulu Mayor's office proposed transferring Thomas Square out of the Oahu Parks inventory and into the City's commercial enterprise property inventory, TOC joined with the City Council and others to oppose the plan, and instead support, and ultimately pass, an alternate bill keeping Thomas Square a park.



**Plans to install wireless communications equipment on utility and street light poles was defeated for this year.** TOC opposed HB 625, which would have allowed a new form of visual pollution to be installed by cell phone companies throughout the state, on all utility and light poles. The bill eventually died in conference committee, but will be back next year and will require more work.

**Bill 79 proposed to increase the size and number of advertising signs throughout Oahu.** This proposal was hidden inside a longer "housekeeping" Bill at Honolulu Hale. TOC rallied opposition across Oahu and persuaded the Housing and Zoning Committee to remove all provisions in the Bill that would expand sign clutter.

**Plan to redevelop public lands ignores the need for green space.** TOC joined other environmental advocates in sending HB 1469 back to the drawing boards. This bill set out plans to redevelop publicly owned land with no regard for the value of green space and open space in community planning.

**Protecting trees is always on The Outdoor Circle's agenda.** When City Council Parks Committee considered bills to allow removal of street trees to accommodate roof top solar panels, TOC was there to remind them of the benefits trees provide in our environment and in the beauty of our neighborhoods. Council members heard our concerns and no bills threatening trees were reported out of committee.

**"Commercial Sponsorship" proposals threaten the core values of Hawai'i's decades old billboard ban.** County Councils on Oahu and Maui have both passed damaging laws that plan to raise revenue by selling "sponsorships" on city and county property. We feel this is in violation of the Hawai'i Outdoor Advertising statute which outlaws all "off-site" outdoor advertising, and we were vocal opponents of the Oahu Bill 78. Several Council members are crafting additional bills to limit the negative effects Bill 78 will have on the scenic environment, and TOC is working with them to accomplish this. But we are also considering legal action. Stay tuned!



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## Carbon Neutrality Challenge

The **Outdoor Circle** and the **University of Hawai'i** have teamed up to work on a new project called the *"Carbon Neutrality Challenge."* With the help of Professor Camilo Mora, of the UHM Geography Department, this program will see several important components presented in order to make a truly unique and comprehensive program.

In order for the program to work, there are three distinctly different components.

The first involves going into schools and working with students from 5th grade through university in order to teach a uniquely tailored curriculum on climate change

and its numerous impacts. After spending a few sessions with each class, they then begin the second phase of the program, calculating their carbon footprint. In order to do this, the students (and their families)

will use a website designed specifically for the Carbon Neutrality Challenge to calculate this footprint



by inputting various metrics. Once calculated, the website will let these students know how many trees of a certain species they will need to plant in order to become carbon neutral for that year. The last component involves having the students come out as a class, or with their family, in order to plant these trees and truly become carbon neutral for the year. This will be achieved at one of the program's planting sites where reforestation efforts are required to reduce erosion and in doing so, also help reduce the effects of climate change.

Finally, on top of having a library data base that helps these individuals learn how to maintain their trees, it also has a calendar feature that will allow users to schedule when they would like to take care of the trees planted by the class. As a result, if there are 52 students in a class, each family only needs to go and take care of the grove of trees once over the course of the year in order to ensure that the trees survive. This will help avoid a drop-off in volunteers who may not be able to go multiple times a year due to other commitments, or who would otherwise show up at the same time as others and have little or nothing to do.

The Carbon Neutrality Challenge is a truly unique program that will encourage students to not only learn more about the effects of climate change, but also have a direct impact on reducing their carbon footprint through the planting of new trees and forests across Oahu. The Outdoor Circle is thrilled to be a part of such innovation and encourage you to join or spread the word about this program so that as many students as possible will be able to participate.

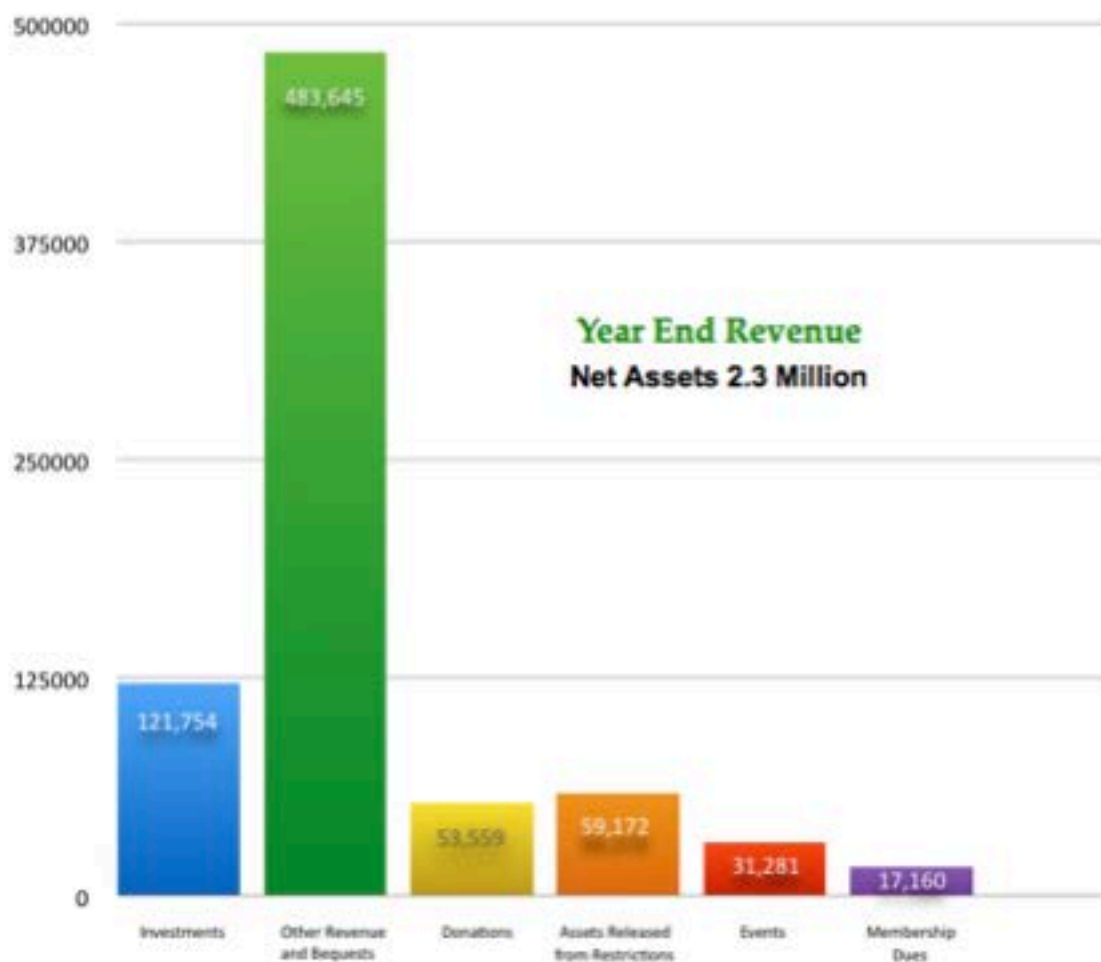
## A Few Highlights 2016-2017



Clockwise from top left: Schofield Barracks Exceptional Tree Tour; Past President Mike McFarlane presenting at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress; A few of the honorees at the 2016 Annual Membership Meeting: Joan Fleming, Lani-Kailua Branch, with Executive Director Winston Welch; Gretchen Gould, Kane'ohe Branch, seated with Mary Yannell, Kane'ohe Branch President; Peggy Cutting, North Shore Branch, with Winston Welch. Below: The 2016-2017 Board of Directors being sworn in by Senator Cynthia Thielen.



## Financials for Fiscal Year Ending 2016 Revenue & Expenses







## Mahalo to Our Donors & Supporters

The **Outdoor Circle** relies on the generosity of individuals like you. From in-kind gifts and services to bequests and grants, our donors are the backbone of our organization. The Circle is not supported by government funding. Thanks to the consistent support of people like you, we are able to accomplish amazing things for Hawai'i nei.

### This Year's Exceptional Donors (donors who gave over \$500 in 2016-2017)

#### Individuals

Patricia Benjamin

Josie Bidgood

Arlene Block

Eric Burkhardt &

Jean-Marie Burkhardt

Marilyn Cole

Catherine Conrad

C.F. Damon

Peter Drewliner

Kevin Eckert

Judith Flanders

Alice Guild

Diane Harding

Karin Hazelhoff

Barb Hegarty

Carol & Pete Hendricks

Lynne Johnson

Mary & Harvey King

Chacha & Ari Kohler

Gloria Kosasa Gainsley

Steve Mechler

David & May Lyn Powell

Jean Rolles

Mary Ann Schmeltzer

Denise Soderholm

Scott Wilson & Christine Yano

#### Corporations, Foundations and Other Entities

American Carpet One

County of Hawai'i

Harold K.L. Castle Foundation

Hawaiian Electric Companies

John M. Simpson Foundation

Home Street Bank

IBM

Lanikai Association

Sustainable Solutions Foundation

Zadoc and Lawrence Brown Foundation

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## Mahalo & A Hui Hou



### **Patsy Gibson (1928-2016)**

Patsy Gibson was an icon in The Outdoor Circle. Known for getting things done, she served as President of the North Shore Outdoor Circle (NSOC) branch from 1992 to 1995, also serving on the TOC Board of Directors in 1993. She reminded us about staying true to the TOC mission and to be careful not to lose our clout by spreading ourselves too thin when it came to signing on to the many causes that wanted our endorsement. She will be remembered for setting a high standard when it came to fundraising, coordinating house and garden tours, luncheons, auctions and plant sales, all which brought in the necessary funding to kick-start landscaping efforts for several NSOC projects including the glorious entrance to Haleiwa/Waialua — Weed Circle, her champion project.

## Outgoing Board Member



Outgoing board member **John-Carl (JC) Watson**, of the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council and the 'Ōhi'a Legacy Initiative, will continue to be active on the The Outdoor Circle Tree Committee. We thank JC for his dedicated service to TOC.



## Welcome to our Newest Branch

The **East Hawai'i Island Branch** was born as a result of the potential loss of two majestic and iconic banyan trees in the town of Honomu. Hawai'i County was considering cutting the trees down when members of the community contacted The Outdoor Circle for help in saving what arborist Steve Nimz called the finest examples of *Ficus Benjamina* trees in the entire state. We are happy to report that not only were the trees saved but the latest branch of The Outdoor Circle is thriving and addressing other environmental concerns in their community.



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## Our Members Make a Difference!

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### New Lifetime Members

Eric Burkhardt  
Jean-Marie Burkhardt  
Roberta Cable  
Errol Rubin  
Susan R.S. Schofield

### Our Mission

To keep Hawai'i clean, green, and beautiful by preserving, protecting, and enhancing our environment for future generations.

### Board of Directors 2016-2017

Steve Mechler, President  
Lowana Richardson, Vice President  
Kathleen Bryan, Treasurer  
Paula Ress, Secretary  
Cheryl Langton, Branch  
Representative  
Josie Bidgood, Advisor,  
Development Committee  
Diane Harding, Advisor  
Kauai Lucas, Advisor,  
Nominating Committee  
Directors:  
Michael Moskowitz  
Elizabeth O'Sullivan  
John-Carl Watson

### Branch Presidents

East Hawai'i Island: Donald Inouye  
East Honolulu: Susan Spangler  
Kane'ohe: Mary Yannell  
Kaua'i: Maureen Murphy  
Lani-Kailua: Diane Harding  
Manoa: Jeremy Lam  
North Shore: Kerry Germain  
Waikiki: Brian Bagnall  
Waikoloa: Sally Mazzarella  
Waimea: Cheryl Langton

### Staff

Winston Welch, Executive Director  
Jackie Wah, Operations Director  
Myles Ritchie, Programs Director



**The Outdoor Circle**

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