

Title: *Maika'i Kaua'i, Hemolele i ka Mālie: Community Led Flood Recovery for Long-Term Resilience*

Presenter and Bio: Mehana Blaich Vaughan, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management and Sea Grant College Program, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Mehana Blaich Vaughan grew up where the moku (districts) of Halele'a and Ko'olau meet on the island of Kaua'i. She worked as a middle and high school teacher on Kaua'i and O'ahu, developing programs connecting students and their learning to 'āina. Now, Mehana is an Associate Professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management, and Sea Grant College Program. She is part of a hui of Native Hawaiian faculty helping Hawai'i communities to care for and govern the places that sustain them. Mehana's first book, "Kaiāulu, Gathering Tides" was published in 2018. It is based on 20 years of interviews with Kaua'i kūpuna and community members sharing stories of fishing and the kuleana that come with being from a place. Mehana lives in Kīlauea with her husband, mother, and three children ages ten, eight and six.

Abstract: With climate change, more typhoons, floods, fires and other local level ecological disasters threaten local communities. In 2018, the Hawaiian island of Kaua'i, long one of the wettest spots on earth, received approximately 50 inches of rain in 24 hours, causing flooding across the island. Landslides closed the only highway, traveled by over a million tourists each year. Communities all along the coast found themselves isolated. Community members and local nonprofits quickly organized to check on neighbors, evacuate tourists and reunite families by boat, deliver meals, conduct door to door assessments of family needs, staff medical teams, and clear storm debris. Less immediate actions included community coordination of home rebuilding and cleaning water ways to prevent future floods. These community efforts offer lessons for polycentric governance including the importance of strong local level institutions and networks, neighbor-to neighbor response, and local knowledge of changing ecological patterns such as historic stream paths. Community led government supported actions, local level jobs in proactive management of natural resources and rebuilding in anticipation of future disasters, rather than pushing to simply return to "normal" all promote long-term resilience.

