



Hands Across the Water: An Immersive Conference in Ocean Food Systems



ETHOS (Earth Ocean Food Systems) and Kauai Sea Farm are partnering together to host a first ever Hands Across the Water: An Immersive Conference in Ocean Food Systems in the fall of 2024. We will bring together a cohort of up to 30 entrepreneurs working on community-scale, indigenous-based, ecological, and restorative aquaculture and fisheries. Participants will work together to accomplish a project at the host site, Kauai Sea Farm, demonstrating actionable, real-world applications of [restorative aquaculture](#) and an [ecosystem approach to aquaculture](#) and [fisheries](#) and resulting in knowledge-building, new partnerships, and local-level impact.

The Immersive Conference Model

This is not a standard conference aiming for knowledge transfer. Rather, Hands Across the Water is a 3-day, field-based experience emphasizing collaborative learning, problem solving, and partnership building. Hands Across the Water will take place every two years, designed with a host site and project collaborator working to restore traditional and Indigenous practices and foodways. Spanning cultures and climates, we will work with partners across the globe, from Hawaii to the Canary Islands and from Norway to Saudi Arabia. We will showcase initiatives that serve as global examples, are ripe for expansion and replication, can involve others, are on track to significantly bolster local economic activity and food security, and are led by marginalized, under-represented, or Indigenous communities.

Our time together combines real-time action and problem-solving for projects on the ground with learning, presentations and discussions. A cohort of global practitioners will learn and work together over 3 days, investing time and resources directly into the host's aquaculture and fisheries enterprise. Participants will benefit from working collaboratively on a project identified and led by the host site, engaging in immersive discussions about community-based, Indigenous-based, ecological and restorative aquaculture, and aquatic permaculture. Our global cohort will be invited to future Hands Across the Water events, including meeting opportunities and immersive conferences in new locations.





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The Immersion Workshop on Kaua'i, Hawai'i: Oct 15 – 18, 2024

Join us in October 2024 at our first ever Hands Across the Water immersive “unconference” in Ocean Food Systems, in Kauai, Hawaii, with Kauai Sea Farm. Kauai Sea Farm, a Hawaiian family- owned and operated business, manages and stewards the Nomilo fishpond, an indigenous ecosystem that has been in the family for over 100 years. The oldest and one of the most fertile fishponds in Hawaii, this extinct volcanic crater is now filled with an 18 acre saltwater pond, fed by two channels connecting to the ocean. Legend has it that Pele, the goddess of fire, first made her home here in Nomilo.

Participants will work on projects that advance Kauai Sea Farm’s ecological and restorative aquaculture projects. This might include working on opai hatchery production, conducting water quality assessments, and analyzing the beneficial impacts of the fishpond on the local ecosystem.

Themes for discussion will focus on community-scale restoration and ecological aquaculture and fisheries systems and practices for organic foods, human and environmental health. We will explore socially responsible aquatic food production that uplifts underrepresented and marginalized communities and fosters socially responsible business development. Traditional and ancestral knowledge and Indigenous systems and practices will be highlighted, as will the impacts of climate and social changes, roles of tourism and modernity. Engaging future leaders, adopting food justice in industry development, and promoting responsible policy development will be explored.

Tentative Schedule:

- Hands Across the Water Eve: Arrival, welcome greeting, and dinner
- Day 1: Site tour, project overview, planning and prep work. Evening talk and network building.
- Day 2: Half-day work onsite at fishpond and hatchery, and half-day meetings and discussions for planning, idea generation, and troubleshooting for KSF projects. Evening talk and network building.
- Day 3: Morning work onsite. Afternoon talks and discussions of action steps and follow-up plans.
- Day 4: Depart or continue to volunteer on projects at KSF or other partners.

This experience will provide:

- Real time engagement in native oyster and shrimp culture and emerging methods in an ecosystems approach to aquaculture and fisheries, over 3 days of collaborative work, learning from and problem-solving with the Kauai Sea Farm team and other participants.
- Relationship-building among practitioners who value community-based approaches that prioritize environmental restoration and uplifting Indigenous practices.
- Skill-sharing and peer-to-peer learning about emerging methods in an ecosystems approach to aquaculture and fisheries.
- Networking with practitioners, entrepreneurs, nonprofit organizations, for profit companies, and funders to identify ways to advance shared goals.
- Deep engagement with practitioners and experts in the field from across the globe in an intimate setting, without conflicting sessions or long days of sitting and listening.



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Cost to Participate

Registration fees will vary based on workshop location. Interest forms will be available and once submitted, will be reviewed by organizing partners. Invitations will be extended based on maximizing a diversity of knowledge and experience, and site capacity.

The 2024 participant fee is expected to be \$750-1,000, for registration, accommodation (3 nights), meals, and transportation from accommodation to meeting sites and work sites.

Hands Across the Water is a direct investment into local-led initiatives advancing community-based, Indigenous-based, or restorative aquaculture and fisheries. We will seek sponsorships to cover event costs (planning, fees, meeting space, transportation, supplies, and project costs). Any proceeds from registration costs will be directed to the host or other community-based aquaculture activities in the local region, after accounting is completed, and through decision-making among project hosts and planning committee.

Sponsorship Levels for 2024 Workshop

We are seeking to raise \$200,000 to conduct our first conference. If fully funded, 100% of registration fees will be utilized as a donation to our conference host, Kauai Sea Farm. Our goal is to generate a \$10,000 donation for the local enterprise:

- **Full, "Life-Cycle" Partners: \$100,000:** Primary logo placement on all event- and cohort- related web sites, documents and materials, and named in all global and local media and social media posts as our "Life Cycle" Partners over the course of the 2 year cohort. Inclusion as a strategic, decision-making partner to help ETHOS determine the 2026 planning and venue.
- **Restorative Partners: \$50,000:** Logo placement on all related web sites, local media documents and materials, and named in all media as our "Restorative" Partner for overall critical support of Kauai Sea Farms and Hands Across the Water 2024.
- **Ecosystems Level Supporters: \$25,000:** Logo placement on all related web sites, local media documents and materials, and named in all media as our "Ecosystems" Partner for a specific aspect of the overall global to local primary interest work of this partner, such as indigenous, food justice, low trophic level aquaculture.
- **Local Level Supporters: \$1,000 to \$5,000:** Generous logo placement and great thanks by local partners given throughout the event.



To support or to get involved, contact: Cristina Sandolo, cristina@oceanethos.org, 267-636-0474