

# THE MAUNA LANI BAY

*Hotel and Bungalows · Hawaii*

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## **MAUNA LANI PLANTS TREES TO OFFSET AIR TRAVEL CARBON FOOTPRINT**

**KOHALA COAST, Hawaii** - Visitors to Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows on the Big Island of Hawaii will have a chance to buy and plant a tree to help offset their travel carbon footprint, and then reap part of the profit when it's cut down in 30 years or so.

Guests of the eco-friendly resort in Hawaii will also be able to monitor the tree's progress on the Internet, including how much carbon dioxide it absorbs and whether it ends up as a skateboard, koa canoe or part of a wind-power generator.

The Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows and True Offsets, a company that is setting the world standard for carbon offsets, are partnering in the new ecological restoration project to help reduce the carbon footprint of air travel to Hawaii.

Guests will be offered the opportunity to buy a tree sapling and plant it in on the Hamakua Coast, and then watch it over the next several years via a web site. The plan is to mail tree investors a check for 5% of their plant's value at harvest time, which could be up to \$2,500 on a koa tree that's worth \$50,000 in today's market –after a 30 year growth cycle.

Brian Butterworth, hotel general manager, says the partnership reflects the resort's commitment to environmental stewardship in the hospitality industry. "It allows our guests the opportunity to offset the carbon footprint of their trip here as well as to provide them with a hands-on ecological enhancement experience," he said.

True Offsets founder Jonny Dubowsky said Hawaii is the ideal place to kick start this kind of eco-friendly tree planting project that he hopes will set an example for the future of forestry management and the growing carbon offset industry.

"It's an investment toward a carbon neutral planet through transparent reforestation and renewable energy projects," he said "If we can't do it here, we can't do it anywhere." "If you don't harvest a tree at the end of its life and turn it into a wood product, it's bogus," Dubowsky said. "A dead, decomposing tree emits all that carbon back into the atmosphere."

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Mauna Lani has committed to buying 135 trees - bamboo, ohia, avocado, royal palm, koa - for their guests, who can help reduce the carbon footprint in Hawaii during their visit and can expect a check sometime in the future.

Each tree will have a unique bar code to help investors track it, and Dubowsky has researched the carbon sequestration rates of tree species at different elevations to ensure the process is at maximum efficiency. "We've patented the process and it's the most accountable one out there," he said. "You can literally trace a tree through its life, until it's a skateboard or some other product."

*Condé Nast Traveler* also recognized Mauna Lani's green sea turtle program as an ecotourism attraction. Since 1989, in collaboration with Oahu's Sea Life Park, Mauna Lani has raised juvenile *honu* (turtle) in its saltwater ponds until they are large enough to be released in the wild. The *honu* are part of the resort's complimentary fishing feeding tour designed to raise awareness of the endangered species. In addition, each Fourth of July, Mauna Lani releases healthy juvenile *honu* into the ocean as part of their annual Turtle Independence Day celebration. Since the program's inception, more than 160 juvenile *honu* have been released into the wild.

Mauna Lani Resort has also been recognized by The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Energy (DOE), and Center for Resource Solutions (CRS) for significantly advancing development of the green power market. Mauna Lani first won this award in 2004 and continues to excel at protecting the environment. Mauna Lani was also the recipient of the Green Business Award from the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, the Hawaii Hotel Association, the Hawaii Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism, and the Hawaii Department of Health. The resort also won the *Keep It Hawaii* Kahili Award for their Kalahuipua'a Fishponds in the category of historic preservation.

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## **About Mauna Lani**

Mauna Lani Resort sits oceanfront on the finest stretch of shoreline on the Kohala Coast of the Big Island of Hawai'i. Located 23 miles north of the Kona International Airport. The resort features the luxurious Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows, Mauna Lani Spa and the Francis H. I'i Brown North and South Golf Courses. For reservations call 800-367-2323 or visit [www.maunalani.com](http://www.maunalani.com).

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