To restore the Earth’s balance, we need to shift from a philosophy of dominion over nature to one of interpenetration and respect. For indigenous peoples, recognizing that we are part of the web of life is obvious. But in Western law, nature is property and laws protect the property rights of individuals and corporations (as persons), but not those of the natural world. Rights of Nature is a worldwide movement to amend constitutions and introduce laws to codify the rights of the natural world, balancing what is good for humans with what is beneficial for other species and the planet.

Thomas Linzey is cofounder, executive director, and chief legal counsel of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, a nonprofit law firm that provides affordable legal services to communities facing threats to their environment, agriculture, economy, and quality of life. He assisted the Ecuadorian constitutional assembly draft Rights of Nature language into their constitution and is a frequent lecturer to groups and local governments on corporate personhood and the Rights of Nature.

Kapua Sproat is Assistant Professor at the Ka Huli Ao Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law, Director of the UH Environmental Law Clinic, and Counsel for Earthjustice’s Mid-Pacific Office. She grew up on Kaua‘i’s rural North Shore, where her ancestors lived since time immemorial. Raised with a strong sense of kuleana, a cultural obligation to help take care of Hawai‘i and its natural and cultural resources, she became an attorney to protect the areas she lives in and loves.

Four-Part Series — Man/Woman and Nature: Restoring the Balance

“Rights of Nature” is the first of four public conversations on the relationship of humans to the natural world. The other three programs are:

Thursday, July 26 – Journey of the Universe – Pualani Kanahele and Mary Evelyn Tucker
Thursday, August 16 – Biomimicry: Learning from the Natural World – Bryony Schwan and Sam Gon

Admission is $10 per event or $35 for the four-part series (if purchased by May 15)
This series is supported in part by the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority and the County of Maui.

Thomas Linzey will also lead a daylong workshop “Recognizing the Rights of Nature: Elevating Community Rights Above Corporate Rights. Where Do We Start?” on Wed. May 16.

Information: Ala Kukui / Hana Retreat, www.alakukui.org, 808-248-7841
Tickets: Maui Arts & Cultural Center, www.mauiarts.org, 808-242-SHOW (7469)