Dear Friends of The Merwin Conservancy,

We are happy to report that the Merwin Palm Forest is thriving and filled with new learning thanks to a series of student field trips taking place amongst the palms of Pe‘ahi. Children and their teachers are learning first-hand lessons about deep ecology, land stewardship, soil restoration, gardening, and the power of planting trees.

Through these visits and the growing partnerships with their teachers and schools, we are giving these young students the opportunity to see themselves as integral parts of their natural world, and then to write about it. In the process, they are learning to express themselves and their feelings from their experiences amongst the palms through poetry and illustrations, inspired by the knowledge that they are walking in the footsteps of W.S. Merwin.

The poems and art these students have created during their time walking, observing and thinking within the garden are extraordinary. These creative responses to the Merwin Palm Forest embody a critical part of the mission of the Conservancy, namely to inspire a new generation to understand first hand the importance of the connections between language, art and place.

We have included a poem and a drawing created by two Maui 5th graders while sitting under a canopy of palm leaves on page three of this newsletter. We encourage you to visit our website, where more student poems and art are available.

We deeply appreciate your generous support of these activities so that we may continue to share the treasures of the Merwin Palm Forest with future generations.

With gratitude,

Jason Denhart, Executive Director
Matt Schwartz, President, Board of Directors

“Just being here, with the garden, the ‘palm forest,’ all around us, day after day, I think has taught me a great deal… I hope guests will include students…”
— W. S. Merwin, The House and Garden: The Emergence of a Dream
No. 6 with Barry Lopez

Award-winning nature writer, environmentalist and humanitarian, Barry Lopez joined us for an inspiring October evening in The Green Room. The *Arctic Dreams* writer shared readings from his books and stories, focusing on the relationship between human culture and the natural world. In tribute to W.S. Merwin, he offered a reading of “Unchopping a Tree”, which Merwin had read by request for a young Lopez while he was in school. A truly touching evening.

No. 7 with Susan Casey

Three-time N.Y. Times best-selling author Susan Casey captivated a nearly sold-out Green Room audience in December, sharing jaw-dropping stories from the adventures she embarked on in the process of doing research for her three ocean-inspired books, *The Wave*, *The Devil’s Teeth*, and *Voices in the Ocean*. At a lively reception, our guests enjoyed conversation while Susan signed books and chatted with fans of her work.

No. 8 with Hawaii: Language Matters

A deeply reverent February evening celebrating the mana of a living Hawaiian language, this sold out event featured chant and hula from Kealiʻi Reichel and members of his halau, mele by Nā Keiki Pūnana Leo O Maui, a W.S. Merwin poem read by poet Bob Holman, a screening of the documentary *Language Matters with Bob Holman*, and a panel discussion moderated by the filmmaker David Grubin including Dr. Puakea Nogelmeier, Kepā Maly, Kealiʻi Reichel, and Kaimana Brummel, Kīpo Raymond and Leilei Ishikawa.

No. 9 with Jane Hirshfield

Kicking off April’s National Poetry Month, the most recent Green Room event featured Jane Hirshfield—one of our nation’s most celebrated poets, essayists, and translators. Jane read from her vast collection of poetry and inspired the audience, who strongly felt her “insightful and eloquent” gifts for poetry and awareness.

**New Work**

**What is a Garden?**

*By W.S. Merwin and Larry Cameron*

Recently released by University of South Carolina Press, this hardcover collection of essays and poems by W.S. Merwin paired with luminous palm forest photographs by Larry Cameron, attest to the astonishing transformation made on the Merwin property over the years. This book powerfully tells the story of the Merwin Palm Forest, and captures the beauty of the biodiversity and life that has been put back into the land.

www.merwinconservancy.org
Support W.S. Merwin’s living legacy.

When W.S. Merwin was asked about his and his wife Paula’s gift of their land, their home and their garden and palm forest to the non-profit Merwin Conservancy, he said,

“We decided to leave this property to everyone’s children and grandchildren, not just our own.”

Please join us in honoring the Merwins’ gift with a tax-deductible contribution to The Merwin Conservancy. With your generous donation, W.S. Merwin’s reverence for nature and spirit of creativity embodied in this special place may forever be shared by future generations. Thank you for your support.

Creative Seeds Sprouting...

When we take young people to visit the Merwin Palm Forest, their eyes grow wide with excitement and possibility. When they take time for reflection and writing in their notebooks after learning about the garden and its history, their imaginations take over.

“A Peaceful Forest” by Tess Morettie-Hill

Artwork by Cyrus Laury-Schaefer

We’re Growing

Just as the palms and plants of the Merwin Forest are growing and thriving, so is The Merwin Conservancy. The organization’s staff has expanded – with the addition of longtime Conservancy supporter Sara Tekula as Director of Communications and Outreach and Palm Collection Manager Olin Erickson. Sara has lived on Maui since 2004 working in education and marketing, and is a champion of environmental causes who loves to plant trees. Olin – a professional landscaper and arborist – has been the Merwins’ personal gardener for 13 years, and has stepped into a new role in helping manage the botanical collection.

Our board of directors also welcomes four wonderful new members, poet and teacher Naomi Shihab Nye, Halekulani COO and supporter of the arts Peter Shaindlin, former software engineer and developer and current Hawai’i Island Palm Society President Mary Lock, and Maui artist and conservationist Susan Conway Kean. The full group gathered together in December on Maui for a productive weekend retreat, laying the groundwork for the future of the organization.
Thank you for your support, philanthropic investment and your partnership. You are preserving the living legacy of W. S. Merwin and conserving the world-renowned Merwin Palm Collection forever. Mahalo nui.

With deep appreciation, sincerely,

The Merwin Conservancy Board of Directors, Advisors & Staff

Our Mission

The Merwin Conservancy’s mission is to preserve the living legacy of W. S. Merwin, his home and palm forest, for future research and study for botanists and writers, for environmental advocacy and community education.

The Merwin Conservancy P.O. Box 809 Ha‘ikū, HI 96708 • 808-579-8876

*CONNECT WITH US ON THE WEB:

Facebook: /TheMerwinConservancy
Twitter: @wsmerwinlegacy

And visit:

www.merwinconservancy.org
to enjoy news, weekly poems and palm facts!