

**MINUTES OF THE May 5, 2010 NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM
COMMISSION (NARSC) MEETING, HONOLULU**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

DRAFT Subject to approval

Dr. Dale Bonar, Chair
Mr. Ronald Rapanot
Ms. Rebecca Alaka`i
Dr. Arlene Buchholz
Mr. Trae Menard
Dr. John Sinton
Dr. James Jacobi
Dr. R. Flint Hughes
Ms. Marnie Meyer, for Director Office of Planning
Ms. Sydney Iaukea, for Superintendent, Department of Education

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Mr. Patrick Conant, for Chair, Board of Agriculture
Dr. Sheila Conant, for President, University of Hawai`i
Mr. Ken Kawahara, for Chair Board of Land and Natural Resources

STAFF:

Ms. Linda Chow, Deputy Attorney General (AG)
Mr. Randy Kennedy, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)
Ms. Lisa Hadway, DOFAW
Ms. Emma Yuen, DOFAW
Ms. Vickie Caraway, DOFAW
Mr. Cynthia King, DOFAW
Ms. Tanya Rubenstein, DOFAW
Ms. Michelle Jones, DOFAW
Ms. Lisa Ferentinos, DOFAW
Mr. William Evanson, DOFAW
Mr. Matt Ramsey, DOFAW
Mr. Michael Wysong, DOFAW
Mr. Paul Conry, DOFAW
Ms. Laura Thielen, DLNR
Ms. Betsy Gagné, DOFAW

VISITORS:

Ms. Teresa Dawson, Environment Hawai`i
Mr. Michael Fausjaucu
Mr. Thorne Abbott

ITEM 1. Call to order. Chair Bonar called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m., followed by Commissioners introducing themselves.

MOTION: Jacobi/Rapanot moved that the NARS Commission move up agenda ITEM 7 to coordinate with the presence of Paul Conry. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM 2.

2a. Legislative update (refer handout titled 3a. Legislative Summary for 2010). Staff Kennedy said that Governor's Message 446 confirmed Marie Bruegmann to the NARSC. HB2542 CD1 transfers Land Conservation Funds and Natural Area Reserve Funds (NARF) to the General Funds (GF). HB979 CD1 – Department recommends veto, on using Land Conservation Funds to support invasive species control. SB2951 CD1 is meant to provide "fair compensation" when leased public land for agricultural or pastoral uses is withdrawn. Department recommends veto, because this would supersede the actual leases. HRC216 – Bid to host the IUCN in the State of Hawaii, Dept. recommends approval. In summary Kennedy said that the Department did well, and could have done a lot worse.

2b. Personnel update (refer handout titled '3b. Section Personnel'):

Department testified and has governor's approval to fill vacant positions (1-year freeze previously), not just in DOFAW, but DLNR-wide. DOFAW accountant position converted from a temporary to a permanent position. Three NARS positions have been transferred to the NARF, saving GF about \$230,000.00. Furloughs continue 2 days per month (usually Fridays). Tanya Rubenstein has been hired for vacant PCSU NARS Project Coordinator Position.

2c. NARS fund budget update, (refer handout titled '3c. NARS fund status, budget update and projections'):

Conveyance taxes have recovered with real estate market recovery. Increased projections from for NARF from \$4 million to \$6 million. Transfers for Hawai'i Invasive Species Committees (HISCs) is still ongoing, however those groups are beginning to develop their own sources of funding. Proposed allocations: FY11 is tight because of the lean years (\$600,000), invasive species mitigation; American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (AARA) money has helped in the lean years, and will be running out.

Chair Bonar inquired about the funding source for Plant Extinction Prevention Program (PEPP). Staff Kennedy said that it was from some of the T/E species funding from NARF. In general the funding is need based - if one program is better at grant writing and is not in need of funding than the proportions will be allocated differently.

Chair Bonar said that DLNR did a good job of correcting misinformation in the legislative budgets this year. Member Menard asked about the difference in funding amounts to the HISC (in FY11 \$1.2m) versus the watershed partnerships (\$600,000) Staff Kennedy responded that the HISCs have not had set money, whereas other programs have been more established, and that it will develop into a more equitable distribution later on. Member Jacobi asked if the funding for HICSs changes, how the negotiations will proceed to determine what is needed/wanted by each program; and whether there will be consensus negotiation. Staff Kennedy said that recipients of NARF get together in this room to discuss, but that the allocations are decided ultimately by DOFAW Administrator Conry and Chair Thielen.

Staff Kennedy continued with his description of the budget form submitted to the legislature for FY10: \$730,898.00. This year is balanced above the expenditures we have already projected, and those funds will transfer to the next fiscal year. HB2200 positions stayed the same except for the general fund to special fund transfers. \$700,000 of federal funds which can be increased by grants. There is a \$800,000 trailer put on by the legislature to invest in Kawainui Marsh management (vs. acquisition). Detailed worksheets are attached for HB2200. Senate budget would have devastated DAR. Testimony by the DLNR that we are going to fill our frozen positions. Summary: same number of positions and same spending cap as last year.

Chair Bonar asked how the spending cap gets altered if there is a windfall.

2d. Staff updates:

i. Kauai NARS Manager Mike Wysong program update.

Ku`ia NAR previously only contained a few small fenced exclosures for small populations of plants of concern. An assessment was completed in 2004, and unfortunately the public process rejected recommendations to protect the pockets of native, and restore significant areas that were disturbed. Compromise was made with the public and hunting communities. Staff Kennedy then added that the focus changed from restoration objectives to protection of existing good habitat. Staff Wysong said that there is high endemism and lots of potential for endangered species recovery.

Member Jacobi asked about the designation of the Alakai wilderness; if the wilderness designations predate the NAR, and if there are similar levels of protection. Staff Wysong said that it is Forest Reserve level protection, with a wilderness rule overlay. In Ku`ia, additional exclosures have been added, and/or are under construction to be completed by this summer. FUTURE: Expand and replace existing exclosures. Montane mesic forest protection expansion (not fencing necessarily). Honopu protection because not likely to be added as a NAR right now. Member Sinton asked if there are issues with fence lines crossing into Forest Reserves and crossing NAR boundaries. Staff Wysong answered that DOFAW staff/personnel feels that they can provide the same level of support even though it's outside the NAR. There is no internal support to change the boundary of the NAR.

Hono O Na Pali update: Environmental Assessment (EA) for ecosystem protection of the remote, rugged terrain. In response to a question by Member Sinton, Staff Wysong stated that proposed campsites are for facilitating building of strategic fence lines. The area has endangered sea bird nesting habitat (Newell's shearwater and Hawaiian petrels). Strategic fences could block off pig ingress from north, goat ingress from south; there will be trapping, and baiting to remove animals from the interior.

Besides work in the NARS, staff also work up in the Alaka`i with the watershed partnerships. At present they are helping construct a fence line on the Alaka`i Plateau. They also help with monitoring in the bogs. There is a proposal to retrofit the current fences to keep deer and possibly goats out. Also there is potential for creating more public hunting access points to facilitate public hunting in the area.

Member Jacobi asked if Staff Wysong believed that public hunting helps accomplish ungulate control; Staff Wysong stated that increased public hunting can reduce pressure, but never eliminates the threats. He said that the program is trying to find a balance to create more protected areas in one location, and create more public hunting areas in others. Member Menard added that [public hunting] is not the best option to manage ungulates in open areas - may not reduce populations - but may keep the populations moving to reduce damage over time. Staff Wysong agreed and said they are facing situation compromise. Chair Bonar asked what kind of challenges the Kaua'i NARS program is facing with no branch manager currently on Kaua'i. Staff Wysong responded that it is difficult, and because he was temporary assigned to the branch manager position in March, it took time away from the NARS projects.

Member Buchholz asked if the deer population is increasing; Staff Wysong said that he did not have hard data from the wildlife program, but Member Menard added that it does appear that deer populations are increasing.

Member Jacobi said that some reduction could actually have a more positive affect on the deer populations (stimulate reproduction), and questioned whether we could meet conservation goals in areas outside the NAR. In Ku`ia NAR, there are a number of endangered species, and an amount of effort to achieve a certain level of protection. He said that he understood the variable pressure on the landscape, conservation, public use, etc., but that we have to try to figure out where to put resources. Member Menard replied that we must strike a balance, and find a way that is mutually compatible; Staff Wysong added that Ku`ia NAR, for example, has been preserved for a long time, and that we needed to do this kind of management decades ago. Member Jacobi reiterated that to achieve our conservation mandate, we have to figure out what areas we can be effective in, and which areas we will not be successful in. Staff Wysong said that if the mesic forest is one of the sections that we want to protect, that we must protect the proposed area in Honopu, as it has the greatest need and the best habitat. Need to focus and concentrate efforts there.

Member Rapanot said that if you create more access for public hunters, it will help with the [ungulate] management. Staff Wysong agreed that he wants to give public hunters first crack at getting animals out of the enclosure areas; but added that when the management goal is eradication, we have to move past that and do full eradication.

Member Rapanot related his experience working with Staff Evanson on Moloka'i: fencing areas and then giving the public the opportunity hunt the areas. By doing that, he said we can get the populations down to low numbers, but then we have got to keep up the pressure because animals can find their way back in. Staff Wysong said they are considering using those techniques on Kauai, flying hunters in, etc. The only drawbacks being that it's really rough and difficult terrain to consider. But there is language is in the EA already to pursue that.

Member Jacobi said that the goal is to get animals out within 2 years of fencing, else they do more harm to the area you want to protect. Public hunting is great for public involvement and public relations, but not as a management tool. [We have to determine] whether you can meet the goals that you have with the smaller pieces, or if you need the extensive matrix beyond that. These are tough management issues, but we cannot solve our conservation problems with ungulates on the landscape.

Staff Wysong continued his update on personnel: NARS Manager – permanent, NARS Specialist – temporary, NARS Technician – temporary, Kauai botanist position vacant – will be really valuable with all the new exclosures going in, 3 Americorps interns (but only 1 position for FY11), 2 RCUH technicians, for a total of a staff of 6 perhaps 7.

Member Buchholz asked who completed the fencing in Kuia, contractors or staff? Staff Wysong answered that contractors are used for the big ones, and staff are used for the smaller ones. Work is done with cooperation with partnerships and volunteers too.

Chair Bonar called for a short break from 9:33 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

MOTION: Jacobi/Sinton moved to hold off the Maui staff report until after discussion of ITEM 3. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM (2d) iv. Big Island Staff Update: Lisa Hadway.

Staff Hadway only just returned 4 weeks ago. She stated that there was a fire at Manuka NAR last month, believed to be set by an illegal camping fire, which ultimately burned 2.5 acres of native forest. National Park Service and DOFAW responded. The fire burned 8ft underground. The area was 99% native, so the staff believes that restoration is possible, and would like to pursue it. Tanya Rubenstein was working on Pu`u Maka`ala management plans and Manuka plans, getting ready to go out [for internal DOFAW review]. These are 10 year plans for each of those reserves. Mauna Kea field work is now complete. The surveys for the cultural resources management plan are complete, and the report will be complete within the next year. There is going to be UH overlap with the [OMKM] sub-plans. Big Island NARS is also hiring PCSU technicians onto the NARS staff. The strategic fence in Kohala, which is funded by AARA money and is a watershed partnership cooperative project, is now completed. Over 5000 acres have been added to Kahauale`a NAR.

Staff Hadway went on to say that the experimental forest has no director, and is in transition in terms of leadership. A planning committee is set-up to give oversight (FS and DOFAW staff). There is now funding for 1-year term position to manage the experimental forest, hopefully hiring in the next 1-2 months. Susan Cordell (FS) will be supervising that position. Unfortunately it is a facilitating position vs. a leadership position. The goal is to develop management plan for Laupahoehoe NAR and FR. The Forest Service can pay for management plan consultant, and the new coordinator would supervise the development. Member Jacobi asked how the lack of leadership has affected NARS. Staff Hadway replied that it affects both NARS and the FR's, as communication is hampered, and there is a lot of work to do to run the experimental forest.

As an extension of the Big Island Staff update, Staff Conry requested an update on Kulani and NEON. Before receiving the update, Staff Conry briefly described the situation as he understood it: Kulani has been handed over to Hawaii National Guard DOD, from Dept. of Public Safety. The DOD knows that it doesn't need all of the property for the Youth Challenge Academy (they are proposing to house there), and so they support continued conservation management on the remaining property. The DOD hasn't quite figured out what they'll need for their youth challenge program, but have said that the remainder can go to a NARS designation. It's possible the NEON site could be appropriately sited in Kulani: has power, has infrastructure, has good forest, etc. He suggested that we must incorporate that (potential for NEON) into decisions we make now, as we go forward with a NARS designation. Do we carve out a piece as a FR to accommodate NEON? First, we would need to know what the DOD is carving out, which is not yet available.

Member Jacobi asked whether the NEON site would compromise the value of the area. He said that it did, he would have problems with it, but if not, then it has potentially great benefits and compliments to a NAR. He suggested that there is not currently a subcommittee for considering Kulani as a NEON site, so NARS should consider going along at its own pace, and let the NEON figure out a real assessment of sites. Chair Bonar then asked if Cynthia King or Lisa Hadway have been contacted by NEON officially. Both answered that they had not been contacted.

Staff Hadway clarified that Forest Service doesn't speak for NEON, and vice versa. Member Jacobi added that it has been made clear that NEON is supposed to be dealing with DOFAW/NARS, but that he's not sure if that is being acted on. He suggested that the decision of NEON should not delay discussions between DOD and NARS. And that when they [NEON] gets those issues worked out, NARS can coordinate with them. He added that he can see really positive benefits if it's done right, but must be done right.

Member Hughes said from his understanding (he does not speak for NEON) the current status is that NEON would like to consider Kulani as a potential site. He noted that there are power issues and site issues that could make for a very good fit, but warned that there need to be a thoughtful, comprehensive [discussion] as to how it fits into the Kulani Plan. Requires lot of discussion of whether is appropriate and fits their interests.

Emma Yuen asked if NEON has talked to DOD [about Kulani], and Member Hughes replied that he did not believe so. Member Jacobi asked if there is a Site Sub-committee established. Member Hughes answered that Jodi and Hank need to define where they are in the process.

Member Jacobi then asked whether [the NEON plan] is the same footprint as [what was proposed for] Laupahoehoe? Member Hughes said he believed it was more or less the same. Member Jacobi expressed concern that there have been problems in the past with NEON coming in at a critical point. He suggested that given that NEON is not present at the NARSC, we don't know if this might or might not be a viable option for now. That means we have no information to make us deviate from our own trajectory.

Staff Conry said that this would be managing across a landscape, and that NEON could provide great benefits to the state - could initiate a close relationship between FS and NEON and the state, not only bringing in resources, but documenting the progress that has been made in the area. He then asked if there was any reason that knowing what the footprint is, we would not favorably consider it for permitting. This could be a favorable relationship in the future, and this reserve could be set aside to achieve long-term ecological research.

Chair Bonar asked if NEON knows that the area is being considered for a NAR. Staff Hadway and Member Jacobi said that it had been talked about at previous NARS meetings as well as during phone conversations. Chair Bonar then proposed that it was likely that this couldn't be made into a NAR for another two years. However Staff Hadway pointed out that it has already gone through DOFAW review, and Staff Conry clarified that this is something that could move forward as early as June/July.

ITEM 3. Enhancement update from Emma Yuen

In beginning her evaluation of Kulani as a potential NAR, Staff Yuen stated that her update did not involve NEON. A handout she provided included the extension of Pu`u Maka`ala NAR map. She stated the following: The existing facility would not be part of the NAR. Outstanding resources are present: higher elevations forests than are present in Pu`u Maka`ala, variable substrates and geology. The area has been historically managed, ungulates have been removed, and Tri-Mountain Alliance positions in the area. Pasturelands are undergoing koa forest restoration. Protection will ensure continued shared management of the landscape. Kulani is part of a much larger ungulate management program. There is a need for continuous maintenance and access. There exists lots of potential for T/E species outplanting. MOA between Department of Public Safety and DOD for youth challenge academy. Dept. of Public Safety has no concerns about transferring portions to NARS, (confirmed by DOD) once they determine boundaries. Motivation for this the happen soon, hoping to do this while the window of opportunity is open. Staff Yuen added that she would like to get a recommendation at the meeting if possible. She reminded commissioners that the area has been prioritized by the enhancement subcommittee, and was brought up in the last 2 meetings, and that if the NARSC agreed to recommend it, we could complete the boundary determination, then go to the land board to concurrently submit the DOD and the NAR portions.

Chair Bonar asked what the DOD had indicated they would use. Staff Yuen answered that at most 900 acres composed of disturbed by pasture and/or facility footprint are being considered for use by the DOD, as they are looking primarily at the disturbed areas. Member Jacobi suggested that some of the pastures have canopy with endangered birds, and that the DOD has been open to hearing where those areas are, and working around them. In response to concerns voiced by a commissioner about impacts of the youth challenge academy, Staff Yuen said that the youth challenge activities include cattle, forestry, wood working, but that army training not part of curriculum. Her understanding is that they might encourage army participation, but there is no training at this time.

Member Jacobi corrected that some military training has been proposed by the old boys school.

Staff Yuen also stated that there are some bills looking to re-establish the prison. Member Jacobi responded that either way, the prison has been a good partner in the Tri-Mountain Alliance, and that would not be likely to change. Staff Conry then added that whatever military training was occurring, would still have to comply with state and federal endangered species laws, etc. Staff Yuen said options would remain open, in the future, to potentially add additional acres to the NAR when it becomes clear what areas are not being used by the YCA. Staff Kennedy added that boundary discussions are 95% underway, and that DOD, EO and NARS designation can happen at the same time.

Member Menard asked what the next step was. Staff Yuen answered that the proposed boundaries have been submitted, based on the NAR recommendation that had gone to NARSC previously. At present we are waiting for DOD to get back to us to see what they are interested in. Chair Bonar then asked whether NARSC could move forward with this with the current maps, knowing they would change a little? Staff Yuen suggested that was a question for Attorney General Linda Chow, but that perhaps there was a possibility that the NARSC could designate to the DLNR Chairperson the ability to approve it.

Member Jacobi said that because of the quality of the resources in Kulani, the boundaries of the DOD are not going to get bigger - endangered birds and plants limit any expansion. As such it is likely that the NAR parcel will increase vs. the other way around. Staff Hadway mentioned that the communication has been good to date, and that BI staff and Staff Rubenstein will help make final boundary determinations. Chair Bonar asked if it is possible to exclude specific areas from tax map keys (TMK's).

Chair Bonar then read the official recommendation from the ITEM 3: Proposal and DOFAW Recommendation Pu`u Maka`ala Extension document, and suggested that the language be changed to add: "And subject to approval of the boundaries of that area by the NARS Commission Chair in consultation with the DLNR staff...Approve recommendations to the BLNR and the governor to establish the extension of Pu`u Maka`ala Natural Area Reserve..." Staff Conry clarified that there has to be a map that designates the boundaries before the proposal can go before land board.

Chair Bonar asked how close the staff is to agreeing that the DOD line is suitable. Staff Yuen answered that they are very close. Chair Bonar again suggested language that the final determination of the line will be made by the Commission Chair in consultation with DLNR staff.

Member Jacobi then stated that the letter NARSC sends to the board should be the method of bringing up the NEON issue, not in the recommendation. In response to a question from Chair Bonar, Staff Hadway commented that the infrastructure for managing the area is all in place. She said that the site is a great addition to the NARS, even if a lot of work. It will be possible to work closely with TMA staff to continue to protect the place in perpetuity.

MOTION: Jacobi/Rapanot moved to recommend approval of ITEM 3 with the following language: “And subject to approval of the boundaries of that area by the NARS commission chair, in consultation with the DLNR staff, we recommend to approve the recommendation to the BLNR and the governor to establish the extension of Pu`u Maka`ala Natural Area Reserve TMK (3) 2-4-008-009 (POR), South Hilo, Hawaii.”

Motion carried unanimously.

Staff Conry stated that the recommendation will not go to the board until the boundary issue is settled, but that could potentially be in June if the discussions proceed quickly. Member Menard summarized that 6500 acres of native forest with ungulates controlled and weeds in check, is effectively conserved land for the NARS.

Member Hughes extended thanks to Tanya Rubenstein for all of her work at TMA. Staff Rubenstein responded that Kulani is a very special area. Member Jacobi added that excellent management continues with Colleen Cole heading the TMA. Also, with Staff Yuen in the NARS he said that NARS can move forward in a way that we would have been unable to in the past. Chair Bonar welcomed members of the public in attendance to feel free to give testimony or ask questions at any time.

Staff Yuen continued her enhancement summary, stating that the proposed increase to the mauka section of Kanaio NAR has been approved by BLNR. And a proposal will be submitted to BLNR for the establishment of Na Kula NAR, and a public meeting was recently held. Regarding Moloka`i, NARS is hoping to have a board submittal prepared for `Ilio Point in the summer. Staff Conry added that hazardous materials must be identified through DOH hazardous material clean-up plan (for `Ilio Point), because whoever owns the land becomes responsible. A survey is going to be done, and if they find hazardous material, it is possible that DOH can trace to responsible parties. Examples of hazardous material include not UXO necessarily, but old dumped generators, etc. He noted that it's important to protect the NAR Fund before proceeding.

Staff Conry went on to thank everyone who helped (with the legislative session). He said that [NARS] came out very well, and had big wins versus losses. He said that the environment was pitted against school kids, health, homeless, etc. But that staff were able to push the value of protecting the environment, and there is a collective statement that we are a good investment in the future of the state.

Member Menard, Member Jacobi and Chair Bonar then thanked Staff Conry and Kennedy for their hard work.

(2d) iii. Maui Staff Update: William Evanson

Staff Evanson stated that on Moloka`i, staff are working with Moloka`i Pig Hunters Association to complete aerial shooting missions in the fall. So far they have an excellent safety record. Flying in hunters with dogs to hunt pigs, per DOFAW policies. Pu`u Ali`i

1,500-acre unit, divided in half, and fenced for about 8 years, altered to deer fence 3 years ago. They have been hunting continually, but not aggressively for several years. Hunters currently go in with staff, but the program may be moving toward the next step for staff control. The plan will be presented to hunters to get their feedback. Staff has professional dogs, for 1/ person hunting teams, from Pro-hunt New Zealand. The staff is also considering the use of snares again, however it is a highly controversial subject. Snares were last used in 1993, and there are ongoing negotiations and meetings to discuss future us. Staff wants to be effective, but also maintain public relations with the community on Molokai. It is important to fence areas in total, and then conduct animal control as effectively as possible.

Staff Evanson went on to say that the recent Na Kula public meeting was controversial - but that meetings are always more controversial when animal control is the subject. Staff is finishing off the last 400m of fence in Pu`u Ali`i NAR. They used a natural barrier of the sea cliff on one side which may or may not be effective. Animals will take a couple years to find their way back in sometimes, and other times it happens quickly. NARS must continue to replace fencing which is degraded. There is a low density of ungulates in the upper unit, and the Makai unit has medium ungulate activity. There has been aerial shooting during winter months. Staff is trying to stop ingress on the upside (Wailau side of Oloku`i) which does not have resident ungulates. The goal is to get some surveys done in the area (botanical and entomological).

Staff Wysong asked how often they are flying hunters in and what the approximate costs are. Bill responded that they have completed 4 trips at the cost of about \$5000 / trip. There has been cooperation from the HALE, and the Maui branch is using slush funds where possible. Staff Wysong asked if 4 trips were enough. Staff Evanson responded that it is important to be aggressive, persistent and methodical. He recommended that if they are going to use hunters, can remove animals within 2 years. But you must do as many trips as possible for the costs. Monthly or bi-monthly trips are best.

Member Hughes asked what the overall attitudes of participating hunters are like, and also the whole community. Staff Evanson answered that hunters are variable. Some will never participate in the program, whereas some will take advantage of the opportunity. He said most hunters don't like what they are doing, because they are trying to get rid of pigs. They have fulfilled their promise of retrieving any animals that could be, and it didn't add up to a lot of additional costs given the helicopter time. Hunters are then responsible for distributing the meat to who they see fit.

Member Menard asked why they are now considering snares? Staff Evanson responded that they have reached the point in the control program that the numbers are so low that it's difficult to get guys to participate. He described that there is more difficult terrain now, and the areas left are not user friendly places. Hunters are good when numbers are high, but when numbers are low they are less effective. Overall staff is trying to move cautiously on all fronts so as not to jeopardize their ability to make progress on other fronts.

Member Menard asked about the possibility of an escalating bounty? Staff Evanson answered that bounty hunting not known to be effective, and it was discussed a while ago. He gave the example that when bounties are based on tails of rats of mongoose, some people will start to grow animals to bring back tails. He said that trapping has obvious benefits, because we can take out the animals alive, and you can avoid pain and suffering.

Member Rapanot added that traps work, that they are using them up in Kamakou, but that a helicopter is needed to move the traps around. He went on to say that 1 dog/1 person, doesn't work on Moloka'i. He attributed the failure on Moloka'i to the land being different than California, and not wide open. He described how they were able to get a lot of animals with aerial shooting. He said aerial shooting works, but if there is money and hunters could go a little more often, they would be able to bring the numbers down faster. If they could keep populations at a certain percent, he said things would be easier. Ron

Staff Evanson continued with the Maui update: In West Maui, there is currently a fire ongoing in Ukumehame, approximately 1 hour away from Lihau (section of West Maui NAR). Fires and hazards are becoming a higher risk with continued development. At present there are no ungulates in Lihau. The bird survey has been done, and there is ongoing weed control (ex. silk oak). In Panaewa (another section of West Maui NAR), above Lahaina Luna, there is dirt biking, and fence cutting issues; staff would like to try more signs. Honokowai (another section of West Maui NAR) is ungulate-free now. Some pigs got in when a stream washed out part of the fence, and it took a couple years to remove them. Snares were used in that case. Kahakuloa NAR fence was finished about a year ago. Staff must continue with inspections to make sure it's intact. They stopped the fences at the valley, hoping it would be a natural barrier, but it appears it may not be. The plan is to use volunteer hunters from Maui: give them access, and herd pigs up towards Kahakuloa (another section of West Maui NAR). They may need to make a fence going up, but will only plant to do that if it is necessary. In the meantime the goal is to try to facilitate hunting more regularly, and provide helicopter support. There is an ongoing fence project in Hanawi NAR to complete a 5-mile fence in the mid elevation section of the NAR, where it is predominantly native forest. All in house staff completing this project, and they are using FWS funds to replace a section of the fence. The upper section is complete (1500 acres uppermost area), fenced and ungulate free for about 10 years.

Staff Evanson went on to say that a common question they field is 'why do you need another NAR when you can't even maintain the current fence lines of the ones you have?' There is also an ongoing fence project Kanaio NAR. A bulldozer will be starting the next half of the enclosure, enabling installment of an 8ft high deer fence in solid rock. The first half was done by a contractor, archeological surveys are done. Next step is to get the contract out and get the bids. If fencing is started by the end of the year, it could be completed within 1 year. In Maui NARS right now there are 5 rangers ('Ahihi-Kina'u NAR), 4 specialists, 3 RYCC interns, and RCUH technicians. Staff would like to increase field crew. There is a lot of work done in house which requires a lot of hands. There is concern about burnout when the staff is doing back to back field trips camping. It is important to find balance.

(2d) ii. Oahu Staff Update: Randall Kennedy

Ocean Recreation Management Plan (ORMP) for entire Ka`ena Point coastline is moving forward. The Ka`ena Point Advisory Group will be presenting to the North Shore neighborhood board on May 27, 2010. The predator proof fence has a pending contested case, and it must be determined by AG whether the people have standing. Contactors are ready to go, and are currently on standby. Pahole is getting ready to sign an agreement with Makua. The state purchased Honouliuli. The MOU for Wai`anae Watershed Partnership signed. The Pahole fence completed last year, and the animals have mostly been removed. The Poamoho designation is currently being held up for meeting with the Army. There is some concern over the lease that's over the Forest Reserve, as there are provisions that permit live fire. Oahu NARS has 5 civil service positions, 3 PCSU positions, and 3-4 Americorps positions. Positions' funding secure through the next fiscal year. PCSU positions have AARA money. NARS staff is still trying to designate out-planting sites in the NARS for rare plants, and mitigation measures for Makua. The issue already came before the commission, and it is now sitting for the Army to respond to Makua MOU. There may be fewer interns next year with reductions of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA) funds. The latest Americorps grant proposal would make possible 60-70 positions. AARA positions heavily within DOFAW at present. In the next round there will be more distribution among ICS's and Watershed Partnerships.

LUNCH BREAK called at 12:02 p.m., adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Staff Gagné announced that it was Member Jacobi's last meeting, and presented him with a thank you gift on behalf of the Commission, Division and Department. Commissioners extended their own thanks. Staff Evanson said thank you on behalf of Maui Branch. Staff Yuen expressed that Member Jacobi has been integral to the enhancement process, especially for Kulani.

Chair Bonar noted that the NARSC needs to appoint a Vice-Chair at the next meeting.

ITEM 4: `Ahihi-Kina`u NAR.

Maui NARS Specialist Staff Ramsey presented information to facilitate discussion of whether to continue the closure of portions of `Ahihi Kina`u NAR. Two years ago NARSC requested that portions of the land be closed (90% of the land). Impacts were occurring to the resources, anchialine ponds, cultural sites, and geological features were being trampled by visitors coming to snorkel in the area. And the area has no trails, no infrastructure, because it is a NAR. Closure was approved, and the objective was to put together an action plan to get specific objectives accomplished. The closure expires on July 1, 2010. The goal was to get baseline studies done of all of the resources. They have been successful in some, but not in all. Refer to handout "Ahihi-Kina`u." The primary issues that are confirmed are been people using restrooms in sensitive areas, public safety because it is a remote area with no communication. But they had not assessed resource health, and there was a need to focus future management.

Staff Ramsey indicated they had good preparedness for the closure. There was public information, they established a departmental presence, etc. During the closure they accomplished surveys of marine, coastal, anchialine, and geology resources. Q&A website not implemented. There were public meetings instead, as part of the management plan development process. They did not get the repeater installed, and a volunteer program has not been implemented. The public was willing to help on this, but volunteer program postponed because staff wanted direction from the management plan. A guided hike section for education could not be completed because of lack of repeater and of a volunteer program.

Geology surveys: They couldn't monitor all of the impacts to the geology, so there was a focus on high impact areas. Three main corridors were surveyed to create a baseline for future damage. A total of 56 side trails off 3 main trails. Marine surveys: HIMB consulted, and trained NARS staff. Transects established near-shore and just offshore. Surveys have indicated a high variability of fish species, so no differences noted. An emergent disease was found in one cove. The disease was seen in fish (ex. Kole), and has been observed during survey and monitoring of other areas around Maui now. Mokuha, was used for landing kayaks, and now during surveys turtles have been observed basking. Anchialine ponds surveys were done using NPS protocols. No further impacts have been observed to the pools, and birds (stilts, gallinules, and teals) have been observed using the pools where they had not been observed previously. They also found additional ponds in the complex. No toilet paper and footprints have been seen in the ponds, as previously.

Human use changes: are people following the rules, but they wonder if there are over impacts on specific areas? Data has been collected to record the number of people and cars, and measure the effectiveness of outreach? They found that the majority of visitors are aware of the closure (53%, n=1149). Residents 69% aware of closure (n=206). But most people do not look at the signs! Most knew about the closure because of interactions with the rangers. No change in public awareness with cumulative exposure to signs. User densities were based on vehicles in the parking lots in the reserve. Hawaii Wildlife Fund volunteers counted cars each day. There has been an increased maximum number of vehicles seen in the reserve since closure. There appears to be increasing use in the reserve, although there is seasonal variation in snorkeling and surfing times. The average # of people / day is low (20-30), but can exceed 100 people/site.

The `Ahihi-Kina`u Advisory Group recommends continuation of closure for another 2 years, or until the management plan is completed. Public meeting consensus supported opening the most popular areas within the closed areas, but recognized keeping many other things closed. There is general recognition that the reserve should be protected, but residents want to snorkel at their favorite spots and have limited use of the area. Most users are first time visitors, and perhaps only 1-time visitors. Locals are more aware of sensitivity issues in marine and terrestrial resources.

Member Jacobi observed that the data indicate that visitor use hasn't reduced but actually increased. And that people are not more aware. He asked how we as assessing the closure

has made a difference if it looks like more people are using the area. Staff Ramsey answered that hiking in the closed area now feels like a NAR, instead of a zoo. He noted that while numbers might not say it yet, he perceives a change. Also, there is a lack of impacts to cultural sites, presence of toilet papers, turtles, stilts, etc.

Member Jacobi then observed that we cannot know what the previous baseline was, particularly in the marine community. The baseline we are obtaining now is a very damaged baseline. He suggested that we need to identify a true target condition, based on other areas (that are not disturbed). Staff Ramsey responded that the surveys protocols used were statewide, and they can compare the data to other islands. `Opihi also compared to Northwest Hawaiian Islands.

Member Hughes asked what was going on in the open area. Staff Ramsey responded that the geological, marine and coastal `opihi surveys were done in the open area too. Coral cover changed, as well as the coral/algae proportion, but there had been no assessed change to the geology. The majority of use of the closed areas has mostly decreased, but whether we are intensifying impact on the other open areas is yet to be determined.

Member Sinton asked if Staff Ramsey thought closure was a permanent solution. Staff Ramsey said that in order to protect the open flow area, there should be a path for people to follow. The public wants to walk out to the coast to snorkel, not walk around the lava fields. Member Sinton then added that educational opportunities are potentially lost with the closure. The area used to be a field trip stop to view the geology of the area. Is there possibility of opening the pullout: signage opportunities. It is not possible to get the same perspective from the La Perouse parking lot. Staff Evanson responded that the pullout is limited, and so people park on the roadway and create a public safety hazard.

Member Hughes then asked about what problems the staff encountered with the radio repeater and the website. Staff Ramsey answered that because of internet security the State of Hawaii cannot have chats on the website. They have educational information on the website available to the public, but isn't interactive.

Staff Evanson responded that another issue relating to the radio repeater is that it must be established in conjunction with Maui Police Department, and such sometimes take a long time. Chair Bonar requested to have Paul Conry return to the meeting to talk further about the repeater issue.

Member Buchholz asked to see a photo of the `Ahihi-Kina`u. Chair Bonar stated that he thought limited access hiking could be effective, and that the guide could be a staff or a volunteer. Responding to comments from several NARS commissioners about the size, color and format of the signs, Staff Evanson stated that the signs follow the format that DLNR has used for many years. There was further discussion of the sociological issues about signs and the public's respect of them. Staff Ramsey added that DOCARE has been very responsive to complaints. They had a 93% response rate, and/or followed up afterward to the other 7% of the complaint directly.

Chair Bonar (addressing Staff Conry) stated that the repeater issue is something that has been worked on for years now with no progress, and it's a danger to the public and to rangers. He described it as a serious and frustrating problem which needs to be addressed. Staff Conry suggested the NARSC draft a one paragraph request to the department chair to make sure that the issue is elevated, and said that he would be willing to co-sign it.

Member Jacobi summarized the a recommendation to extend the closure for another two years, but asked if that occurs, what info needs to be in hand (what response would we need to see from the resource that we're trying to protect) to trigger relaxing or maintaining the closure. Or, continuing on with some modification with some guided hikes. Are the survey data sufficient, and/or will more data answer that question?

Staff Ramsey responded that the baseline surveys are good, and there are action plans submitted, including one for if the closures are extended. If the trails get marked and then there is a continuation with monitoring and measuring changes. Right now there is no comprehensive coastal survey of those two areas, and so still need to assess impacts. Chair Bonar added that in a marine system you have to look for 3-5 years, at least. In one to two years you will not be able to distinguish changes. Subsequent monitoring is critical to show long-term effects. Difficult to determine how many are enough, and what the carrying capacity is (such as 10 groups per day or less or more)

Member Hughes asked if there is absence of impact in areas, does NARSC continue on with the closure, or consider opening things up. Or does NARS need to ratchet things down even more, and expand those controls to other areas. Staff Evanson said that one resident he spoke with suggested closing down the cove because of all the impacts. Monitoring is necessary. But from general observations, the area is now functioning as a NARS should: serving as habitat for endangered stilts, and turtles. There seem to be more fish inside of coves, because they are able to use the coves without being harassed. The advisory group saw those instantly as benefits (with the turtles appearing on the beach). It is both interesting and important to monitor in open areas too.

Chair Bonar stated that the dump and cove site remain open, and are good controls. Member Menard responded that there is a need to collect more quantitative data to show changes, not just anecdotal data. Member Hughes added that it is a struggle to look at something very dynamic, and therefore it would be helpful to come up with the resources to increase the scope. Staff Ramsey responded that the study methodology currently is to use experts, which is expensive, and data collections are less frequent. Another option is to have a volunteer program and/or rangers to do surveys 2-3 times per year, focusing on indicator species (jacks, etc).

Chair Bonar noted that there are lots of divers who know the fishes backwards and forwards, and asked what it would take to get a good volunteer program in place. Staff Ramsey answered that there is a volunteer manual, job descriptions, and the precedent that they could start out doing what Hawaii Wildlife Fund volunteers did. There is a need to work with and communicate with the partners. Expectations were completely different

with previous volunteers, and that was a problem. Also there was lack of ability to fire a volunteer. The volunteer manual is clear, but need help to start it up.

Staff Evanson suggested that staff need a station in the dumps parking lot. They would like a trailer in dumps parking lot to serve as a base for volunteers to get information and sign in. The program needs to be supervised. Also, need for radio communication.

Chair Bonar agreed that the repeater was important, but followed by saying that there was no reason that there should not be a volunteer program in place by the end of the week, and that there is no need to wait for a trailer. There are lots of good examples of how these things can be done. Member Rapanot suggested that if safety is the key factor that satellite phones would be a good option. Staff Ramsey replied that satellite phones were proposed in the plan. Staff Evanson added that prices have gone down, and that there is money available to get satellite phones. Member Jacobi proposed that if the repeater isn't ready by June 1, then to purchase satellite phones. Chair Bonar and Member Menard suggested that the NARS program keep the phones even if a repeater is installed.

Chair Bonar asked Staff Evanson when the trailer/field office could be ready. Staff Evanson said by November/December 2010. Chair Bonar replied that putting off the establishment of a volunteer program to wait until that is ready is not acceptable, and that there just needs to be a protocol. The volunteers are there and committed and ready. A volunteer should be just as responsive as a regular staff, and if they are not, you fire them. Test the possibility of chaperoning groups, etc. Staff Evanson said that would be like the Haleakala model.

Concerned citizen Mike Fausjaucu stated that he would like to give testimony. Fausjaucu lived on Maui for 5 years, before the closure, and continues to be in touch with lots of people on the island. He suggested that large amounts of data collection can be done, like reef surveyors that Staff Ramsey mentioned. Even though the data is anecdotal, a distinction is made in the database to clarify the level of expertise of the collector. If you are willing to consider using that expertise, you can get lots of data that wouldn't get otherwise, and it could fit into the volunteer program. There are a lot of people willing and able, and not as concerned about the safety issue, because they are familiar with the area.

Newly appointed NARSC Member Ms. Sydney Iaukea, representing the Superintendent, Department of Education, was introduced and asked to sit at the table (she is replacing Ms. Colleen Murakami).

Member Jacobi added that the testimony that has been submitted is interesting, and that there is lot of interest in area. There was a spectrum of opinions, and it is valuable to get that response from folks (over 70 responses). The testimony was not a referendum, but gave valuable perspectives. Chair Bonar added that most don't just wall it off forever, but recognize that it needs a control. Member Jacobi continued on to say that the key thing in long term management is the response of the resources (less trash, etc). There should be a target condition that we are shooting for, not just current baseline, but from other areas

that are comparable. Reducing the number of people may not have a significant impact in terms of how the resources respond, so it is important to keep the science in there. Good to use volunteers, but we also need to calibrate with good science.

Chair Bonar responded that there is good volunteer research going on in the Chesapeake Bay, and that it's just a matter of lining up volunteers to do it. Member Menard added that specific calibration protocols must be in place. Staff Evanson reiterated that before the closure, `Ahihi Kina`u was more like a park, and now it appears to be a reserve. 98% of the Reserve is closed, but the most heavily used portions are open and supporting a fair amount of use. This closure strikes me as being a good thing.

MOTION: Rapanot/Hughes moved to recommend continue closure “for 2 years or until the management plan is implemented.” Motion carried unanimously.

Member Jacobi stated that closure does not extend to the marine system, and wondered whether it is something that should be considered, he added that the management plan must address the marine side. Staff Gagne added that some areas should be managed access, but that the water side is difficult to restrict, due to the navigable waters, etc. Staff Evanson agreed and said that managing a marine section is difficult to manage through Dept of Forestry and Wildlife. It is not something that is not possible, but also, it is not easy.

Chair Bonar revealed that Staff Ramsey will be leaving at the beginning of June, and thanked him for all his work at NARS, and especially at `Ahihi-Kina`u.

Chair Bonar called for a break from 3:02 p.m. – 3:13 p.m.

ITEM 5: Permits

Staff King told Chair Bonar that the two permit applications relating to Roi (groupers introduced for fishing that have been found to significantly prey on native reef fish) control have been withdrawn from the agenda. Chair Bonar said that he would like to initiate a general discussion on the subject.

5c. Dr. Scott Santos, Auburn University: Research on the microbial biodiversity of the Hawaiian anchialine ecosystem

MOTION: Rapanot/Sinton moved that the NARS Commission approve the permit application of Dr. Scott Santos. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Bonar remarked that the application was well prepared, and appreciated.

Chair Bonar provided background on the `Ahihi-Kina`u Roi Roundup Proposal. Roi round-ups have been occurring around Maui, and the community is doing good things. City and County of Maui, in collaboration with TNC, has talked about roi removal studies associated with the event. Roi are introduced species that are invasive, feed on keiki of native fishes. There has been discussion of growing populations of roi in the

reserve. If the organization were to submit another permit application, and it does not contain the same level of baseline studies as what TNC can provide, is the commission going to expect a rigorous follow up?

Chair Bonar then invited Staff Evanson to express his concerns over the proposed event. Staff Evanson described how he contacted his counterparts at DAR to help him review the permit application. He said that there was not support from the Honolulu DAR staff, who expressed concern that roi roundups typically have no follow up monitoring associated. Staff Evanson also contacted a Kona collaborator, Yuan Dirken, who is currently doing research to determine if the introduced grouper is a threat, and how managers should deal with them. From the data collected so far, it seems that native fish could actually increase at certain sites with the presence of roi, but it's not clear either way. Staff Evanson stated that his main concerns were that it is undetermined whether there is a need for management, or what the impacts there might be, and that TNC was unable to do the pre-monitoring initially proposed. In addition, the timeframe was very short to plan the event, and there was a negative interaction with a researcher who suggested that if roi removal was done in `Ahihi-Kina`u, then they could not use the site as a study area and would pull funding from the project in the Reserve.

Chair Bonar noted that there was a timeliness issue with doing the diving before summer. He also stated that just because we do not have absolute proof does not mean that there is not a negative effect. Staff Evanson replied that he was told the fish could be filling a predatory niche (for jacks, etc.) that have been overfished.

Member Menard asked how removing roi affects the natives. Staff Evanson said he was told that it could have a greater affect on rarer species, but not on commoner species. Staff Ramsey added that multiple sites are being examined to determine the effects of removing roi from an area, what comes back in, the value of doing that on BI in marine protected areas, and areas with variable fishing pressure.

Member Jacobi stated that if the data collections at `Ahihi-Kina`u are currently detailed enough to indicate how the resources are behaving without human impacts, potentially the monitoring protocol is in place to see changes with roi. Member Jacobi requested that experts come in to the commission to give presentations on the topic to make a fully informed decision on it. He expressed confusion about management objectives, because in areas that are so infested (for example coqui frogs will repopulate an area if control is done, but there are populations all around) what is the frequency that it will be necessary to provide control, and how effective will we be? There is a need for the information that satisfies this question. It is important to must make sure that the perception is not given that this is something that isn't just an excuse for a select group of people to go fishing in a great place.

Chair Bonar repeated his initial question as to whether citizen science or professionals would be sufficient for monitoring. Member Jacobi suggested it match what is being done for monitoring in `Ahihi-Kina`u. However, Staff Ramsey responded that the current protocols would not be sufficient because transects are only in select areas. And also roi

hang around in select areas. Although the response of the other fish populations could still be measured. Member Menard asked whether the same monitoring protocol is sensitive enough to sense a change from the roi roundups in the other fish populations. Member Jacobi suggested that there will be sampling noise because of the change in human impacts. Member Menard added that what is being done at Puako would be a good proxy for what would happen at `Ahihi-Kina`u.

Member Alakai then asked what the difference is between hunting for control and this. Member Jacobi answered that extensive research has been conducted to show the detrimental impacts of ungulates. Staff Evanson noted that this also was not something being proposed by NARS staff, but from an outside organization. Member Alakai asked if it doesn't do harm why NARS would be opposed to it. Staff Evanson responded that without aquatics support, he was reluctant to move into decision making in the aquatic realm, and that he thought NARS should engage the specialists.

Staff King commented that one of the reasons the permit was on the agenda for review was because when permits are reviewed, the question is asked as to whether this could be done somewhere else. Chair Bonar responded that this was management, not research. Staff King noted that research has not been done yet.

Member Hughes commented that roi are surely non-native, and the argument that they only eat 7 fish per day is not sound because you have to consider the impact on the scale of our entire coastal ecosystem. He also stated that the idea that someone threatened to pull funding is inappropriate. Staff Evanson stated that actions taken in the NAR should be carefully considered. Member Hughes responded that a community group volunteering their time and energies should be encouraged.

ITEM 8: Report on Joint NARSC and Forest Stewardship Committee on dispersal from the NAR Fund: Sheri Mann, Randy Kennedy. Deferred to the next meeting

ITEM 9: NARSC Executive Secretary summary: Cynthia King. Staff King is temporarily assigned to position of NARS Commission Executive Secretary until Betsy Gagné returns, hopefully within a month (she was only cleared by Doctor to attend afternoon portion of this meeting).

ITEM 10: Announcements

Member Hughes stated that the end of the week is always better for scheduling NARSC meeting (Wednesday, Thursday or Friday). Chair Bonar suggested that a poll be taken through Doodle.com to schedule the next meeting.

ITEM 11. Adjournment. Chair Bonar adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Cynthia King, Acting NARSC Executive Secretary