

**DRAFT MINUTES OF ENHANCEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING of the
NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM COMMISSION (NARSC) May 4, 2009,
Honolulu.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Dr. James Jacobi
Mr. Trae Menard
Mr. Scott Derrickson, for Director, Office of Planning

STAFF:

Mr. Randy Kennedy, DOFAW
Ms. Betsy Gagné, DOFAW
Ms. Emma Yuen, DOFAW
Mr. Michael Constantinides, DOFAW
Mr. David Smith, DOFAW
Mr. Ryan Peralta, DOFAW
Ms. Marigold Zoll, DOFAW
Ms. Sheri Mann, DOFAW
Mr. Bill Evanson, DOFAW (via phone from Maui)

VISITORS:

Ms. Lea Hong, Trust for Public Lands (TPL)
Mr. Wilson Unga, TPL

ITEM 1. Emma Yuen, as Enhancement Coordinator, called the meeting together at 1:35 p.m., with handouts of the Conservation Management Strategy, Biologically Important Area Proposals for Kanaio Makai, Puehuhunui/Kauaula, and Namolokama and maps.

ITEM 4.b. Discussion and Recommendations for acquisition opportunity at Honouliuli, O`ahu. Staff Yuen summarized that acquisition was pending for DOFAW at Honouliuli, and Staff Mann had suggested the NARS Commission have a discussion on the appropriate designation of this area, as it has many rare species. Since there is so much expertise about this area from the Commissioners in the Subcommittee, this is the right time to determine what we want the area set aside to. Staff Yuen presented a powerpoint with maps of the area and biological and historical information relating to the land transfer. Staff Zoll presented a powerpoint with maps of habitat quality, the DOFAW 2009 Management Guidelines for Conservation classes and Vegetation classes, as well as fences and known rare species. They used HI GAP for vegetation classes. Conservation had four classes, with the fourth the most able to be impacted and the least important. Poamoho was in C1. Member Jacobi asked for copies of the management guidelines. Staff Smith said they weren't officially released yet.

Staff Yuen said that this meeting should include both a discussion of a NAR proposal and general management recommendations. Member Jacobi said that this was a good chance to discuss the different vehicles for DOFAW lands for conservation management. He was still struggling with understanding the different ways in DOFAW to do conservation.

Staff Mann said that for acquisition, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Recovery Lands Acquisition program requires some level of committed management. She clarified that not all the areas need committed management, just special areas within parcel and that the requirements are more general. They do not have to upgrade the land.

Member Menard said that fire and road maintenance are the biggest management problem. Member Jacobi said that the Army's conservation activities have the most money. Staff Zoll said that the army does not manage the whole area, they have certain areas. TNC has a spreadsheet of all the management units and which agencies does work, such as the Plant Extinction Prevention Program. Staff Smith said it was a matrix of who takes care of what, they have color coded different ones that take the lead, as long as the Army trains in Makua they will stay, if not, they will go away. They manage the area because they have to. The people who work for it want to do it, but the army is doing it for the Makua reason.

Staff Zoll said that their endowment is set up with TNC's easement. Ms. Hong said that it was around \$350,000 pledged for management, which is around \$10-15,000 a year. With a 501(c) 3, could build the endowment up.

Staff Mann asked what the NAR's interest in the area. Staff Jacobi said this was the first day this has come up for them. Staff Yuen said that Staff Liesemeyer who wasn't able to make the meeting said that the area did not satisfy the representativeness or intactness criteria. Staff Mann said that perhaps the NAR criteria was loose. Staff Constantinides said that instead of it being loose, it was more selectively applied, to fit the uses of the Commission. The criteria used morphs from one area to another. Also, it is a big chunk of land, and not all area needs to be a NAR or a Forest Reserve, it could be a combination. In the slideshow, it said that it had the highest level of biodiversity on Oahu, the highest level of threatened and endangered species. That should be a big reason for a NAR.

Staff Kennedy said that there already was a lot of native ecosystem section's work and interest in there, when TNC was fishing for a NAPP there, the NARS Commission determined that it was more a Forest Stewardship Program than a NAPP. The section has been protecting it since 1993 when Bill Garnett was working there. Member Menard said that when he began working there, he shifted the focus from ecosystem protection to population protection and managing remaining remnants. NAR is more of an ecosystem management, with intact areas, killing pigs and weeds. Honouliuli is more of a PEP thing. Staff Kennedy said it could also be a snail sanctuary, too as there are three populations in Ekahanui, and elepaio. Member Jacobi said that the "green" on the map was generous, and that representativeness in low areas was difficult as they are more degraded, as far as a standard for being in NARS. The highest biodiversity is actually in Waianae Kai and Pahole. Should representativeness be ecosystem or species-based?

Staff Constantinides said that a combination of a NAR could be appropriate, as PEP is already housed in the NAR section, and they could pick up a portion of this. Staff Mann said that it a lot about funding allocations – where do you want to put your money? Staff Kennedy said that they have been supporting PEP. Staff Smith said that it could have

NAR involvement, but no designation because of native ecosystem section working in there. He would question whether it qualifies as a NAR.

Member Jacobi said it was very important to harness the Army's purposes. Make sure they prioritize our purposes. Staff Smith said that with the RLA, they need a strategic management plan, and with the Army, Friends of Honouliuli, PEP, and native ecosystems section, they could have a management and funding matrix.

Member Jacobi asked about the timetable, and that he would be happy to help with the plan. Member Menard said he would like to help too. Staff Smith said that the Legacy Lands funding needs to be signed by the governor. Ms. Hong said that it is not confidential, they have an agreement to purchase in this year or next. The money is raised or available, with Legacy Lands, Army, and possibly county. Staff Zoll said that TNC has an easement in place until the land transfer, right of entry access agreement needed, especially with DOFAW and volunteers. This is a new area with no funding, but the army work is continuing. Ms. Hong said that the potential new landowners could help and cooperate.

Member Menard said that this area has good infrastructure with roads, trails, catchments, and fences. Staff Smith said that TNC is coming to staff meetings and training them to take on this huge new area with no extra funding. Will have to work with new partnerships, with the Waianae Mountains Watershed Partnership. Member Menard said it was a good place to take volunteers for day trips, they could get a lot done. The outreach program should be kept going, and the army program. Staff Zoll said that the army has two volunteer coordinators.

Staff Yuen asked if there was interest NAR. Member Derrickson asked whether they needed to decide now, when would things need to be finalized? Staff Yuen said that a NAR could always be designated later, but it would be much easier administratively as we are setting aside areas, and not withdraw areas in the future. If there is a desire to make part of it a NAR, should decide now rather than later. Member Derrickson said that some areas are NARS possibility. Member Jacobi said he was unclear what areas are "norable" – and that NARS will have a role in a broader or narrower context. The area has important value, and will help with the management strategies over the landscape. All the players working there makes this a little less urgent, as it is being managed. Keep it on the table through the Native ecosystems management.

Staff Yuen said that instead of keeping it on the table, should decide now if possible. Member Menard asked what would be the difference if it would be a NAR than not? Staff Kennedy said it would give more of a focus for the management of that area exclusively for conservation, such as in Ekahanui for instance. Staff Yuen said that it could be a plant sanctuary too. Staff Kennedy said that was similar to a NAR, and could have snail sanctuary. The rules for a plant sanctuary are not complete. Member Jacobi said that plant sanctuaries are usually smaller than a NAR, which fits this area more.

Staff Constantinides said that the administration process to set aside area as a NAR or Forest Reserve or both right now is relatively simple, but if we wait until later it will be much harder. Agreed with Emma's point – move this along.

Staff Smith said that the area would become a Forest Reserve by default. If became a NAR, would be more of a special operation. If became a Forest Reserve, forestry is already at capacity. NARS could help maintain the fences. Staff Takahama is engaged in the area.

Staff Kennedy said that PEPP could be involved. Staff Zoll said they have specific species. They are very specific about which species to work on since they need to prioritize so much.

Member Jacobi said that whoever drives this needs to focus on the strategic plan, and all including NARS should decide the best ideas for area. South Waianae are different from North Waianae. Should not close the door on this proposal. Member Menard said the vegetation communities were different. Member Jacobi asked if the timeline for the strategic plan was needing to be before the acquisition?

Staff Smith said he was lead as Branch Manager, and this involves all sections, recreation, forestry, trails, native ecosystems, hunting. Although, has to decide whether this goes in a public hunting area, with the limited resources. Staff Peralta said that as far as Forestry versus NAR, Forestry does the gates, maintenance, nuts and bolts. NARS does the real conservation. Army is species – based. We can't do enough of what we have to do, much less do more. We need help. Staff Smith said that the native ecosystems section has been helping, Staff Takahama's working on it. Member Menard said that makes him feel great if Staff Takahama is on it, that means a lot to him. Staff Zoll said he believes the tide is beginning to turn for the native ecosystem. Staff Smith said he is the designated go-to guy for Honouliuli.

Staff Zoll said they have been creating plans for forestry, and have ranked all the DOFAW areas with 8 priorities: watershed, native ecosystem, T&E, recreation, hunting, forest protection, etc as well as management for specific projects. Has made outlines for all areas, like Waianae Kai. This helps with KMWP planning too.

Staff Yuen said this was a good discussion and that she will not write a NAR proposal but the Commissioners will work with Zoll to help with the Strategic Plan.

ITEM 2. Minutes of May 4, 2009 Enhancement Subcommittee Meeting. Deferred until next meeting at request of Member Jacobi. Member Menard said that he meant to move forward management of Koaie canyon, rather than a NAR proposal, which was what the minutes said. He wanted to change that and further discuss that with the branch, whether it be a NAR or Wilderness Preserve.

ITEM 4. a. Recommend opportunities or strategies for conservation management and designation of Biologically Important Areas statewide (Namolokama, Kalalau,

Back Pali, North of Ku`ia, Back of Wailau and South Slope, East of Wailau, Lana`ihale, Hanawi West/East, Kanaio Coast, Kauaula/Puehuhunui, Northwest of Pu`u O `Umi NAR, Kamilo, Pohakuloa Gulch, Wai`ea, Cliff above Pebble Beach, Mauna Loa Mosaic, Waimanu, Hamakua, Puna Lowland Wet Forests).

Staff Evanson joined via speakerphone. Staff Yuen said she has provided proposals for biologically important areas for Kanaio makai, Namolokama, and Puehuhunui/Kauaula. The process that determined these 25 or so areas did not look at whether they would be a NAR, it was looking at biologically important areas. NAR isn't the only vehicle. We already suggested at the last meeting working on Weed Risk Assessments, and Management Guidelines, Watershed Partnerships. This process has also provided a forum for the branches to talk about these areas and have productive planning discussions.

Member Jacobi asked Staff Evanson about the branch meeting to be held on Na Kula that he had proposed in the last subcommittee meeting. Staff Evanson said that it is scheduled for Thursday May 28 at 7:30am. He had felt uncomfortable last meeting and Staff Landon and Staff Stevens thought the matter was more straightforward as far as a NAR criteria. But there is more to a NAR proposal than that. The district seems to have the need to discuss. While it seems straightforward, needs to have management recommendations. Branch doesn't want to have any major surprises. They need to focus and finish the management guidelines, and evaluate these areas. Member Jacobi said that they need to go with what they have now.

Staff Yuen asked what areas they wanted to discuss, and started to describe the makai area of Kanaio. Introduced meeting participants. The area is a state unencumbered parcel, with an important coastal area, although it can be said to be connected to lowland ecosystems.

TNC says that there is 50-90% live coral offshore, and some of the best reef cover, low algae cover, and high fish biomass, green turtle habitat and hawksbill resting. There is a rocky intertidal area, some sandy area, important dolphin resting area, and humpback calving area. There is unique geological features of wave cut platforms in the bedrock. It will probably be put on their draft marine portfolio.

Staff Evanson said this same area was proposed as a south Maui coastal NAR, below Hoapili trail, and connect with Ahihi Kinau. Additionally, a stewardship La Perouse plan included this proposal. Upper area has lower plant values, primarily rough aa lava flow and part of it was an old bombing range. Is the boundary the TMKs? Staff Yuen said the state parcel was under consideration, but could add the surrounding Ulupalakua land to have that protected too. Staff Evanson said that could be an Ahihi Kinau extension, but would need to acquire private land, and have an agreement with Ulupalakua ranch, as they are interested in checking this out, but the time is not ripe yet. They recognize the coastal values. There is a fenced *Sesbania* kipuka. The original proposal for Kanaio NAR was for 8,000 ac of makai to mauka. But some of it is trashed, and mostly lava, and rejected by the branch.

Staff Yuen said that the branch was interested in increasing public hunting. Member Derrickson said it is not an interesting public hunting area because it is hard to get around in the area. Staff Evanson said that there is a rough road to Kanaio beach, and is popular as one of the few open roads. Public access is a big issue. Also fences would cost a lot of money, as it is rough aa.

There are cultural considerations and sites. Staff Yuen said that there was a recommendation to have SHPD but there is no cultural reserve layer. Some of the other issues are to prevent illegal public use, dangers with unexploded ordnance, and fence northwest portion to keep out public from inholdings. Staff Evanson mentioned Bully Dupont living there and biking in Puu Pimoe and in Kanaio NAR. Don't want to push too hard with marine conservation. Human use is more on the western side, not on east except for Ulupalakua employee's family. It is an opihi picking site. Member Menard agreed that the western side had the most light use. East of Pimoe there are *Manduca blackburni*.

Staff Yuen said that another need was to figure out the extent of the dry forest. Art Medeiros had given TNC a map of the extent, and his recommendations. Staff Evanson said that this was part of a comprehensive stewardship initiative. They could have problems with animal control because of public. Is there a ceded lands issue? Also, there is a joint venture with Shell Oil to make a wind farm on the East side. They may want to mitigate for that.

There are a huge number of goats, around 200-300 recently, and they move around because of droughts. Ulupalakua Ranch put bulls to the west. Staff Yuen said that another idea was to fence a portion of coastal area, with gates for vehicles, or ungulate guards. There also is the administrative idea – proposed National Park plan said that it should be a State park, but they have little capacity right now to add parks. This could be a low-elevation Forest Reserve, or even extend Ahihi Kinau. Staff Constantinides said that Staff Shishido did not want a Forest Reserve, but Staff Yuen remembers he did. Member Jacobi remembered that he did seem to think a Forest Reserve was an option, to have a public hunting overlay, but there is the liability of the inholdings.

Staff Evanson said that the goats are changing the paradigm of the area with the coastal areas, and in the enclosure, when they flew by they saw a goat or two in the fence. They need to fly by the area again.

Member Menard said that the coastal area is a gem, and that area is the most viable as a NAR. Member Derrickson said possibly a plant sactuary in some spots. Staff Evanson said they have to overlay all the values –recreation, T&E, and Art Medeiros' data, and the cultural features on a map. Member Menard mentioned the kipukas and where there are lava fingers into the ocean. Staff Evanson said there were two inholdings by Kanaio beach, would have to keep providing public access there. There is akoko shrubland on the west but the eastern side is better for conservation.

Staff Yuen said that they have been looking at the terrestrial part, but have not looked at the marine part. It seems like most of the terrestrial resources are along the coastline. Also, the National Park has mapped the akoko and other natural communities along the coast. Should some of the area be designated? Staff Evanson said that if it wasn't a Forest Reserve, maybe it should be a NAR, since Land Division would be happy to get rid of area, it has been nothing but problems for them. Would like to see a better map of the resources, values, species present and scope, scale.

Staff Kennedy said this was one of the more "urgent" areas as this could be developed, or used for other things.

Staff and members needed to leave, and so discussion would need to continue at a later date.

ITEM 5. Announcements.

ITEM 6. Adjournment. Meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.