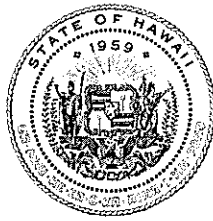
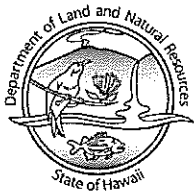


LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

July 24, 2009

LAURA H. THIELEN
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BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAIHOLAWE ISLAND RESTORATION COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Natural Area Reserves Commission
Kalanimoku Building
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, HI 96813

To the Natural Area Reserves Commission:

The Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) has completed its review of the Draft Proposal for the Kaluanui Natural Area Reserve. The Oahu Branch staff supported the concept of a Kaluanui NARS, and met to discuss the natural resource values of the area.

Staff from the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Division of Aquatic Resources and Division of State Parks reviewed the draft proposal for the Kaluanui Natural Area Reserve (February 2009), data from Kaluanui compiled by The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii (TNCH), US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Division of Aquatic Resources. We also reviewed a report by Oceanit Engineering about the rock-fall hazards present in the area, and heard accounts from NARS staff familiar with Kaluanui about recreational use of the area. Staff determined that it would not be prudent for Forestry and Wildlife to acquire the high risk areas around the waterfalls.

Staff from the Oahu Native Ecosystem Protection and Management Section then camped in the area for three days and performed ground surveys of the watershed, assessing natural resource values, potential threats, and hazards.

The assessment from the staff performing the survey was that the Kaluanui drainage certainly would be a valuable addition to the Forest Reserve system, but that the quality of the native ecosystems in the Kaluanui drainage did not achieve that necessary for inclusion into the NARS system as being the most relatively intact representative of the wet cliff and lowland wet ecosystems on the windward side of the Koolaus. In addition, two main reasons for inclusion of this area as a NAR (wet cliff ecosystem, and native fish assemblages) would not be achieved in the area that Forestry and Wildlife would be willing to acquire. In the upper reaches of the parcel, the wet cliff ecosystem is not represented, it is unlikely that native fish would be present, and it seemed that the damselfly abundance has decreased. However, more information is needed on the aquatic and terrestrial invertebrate resources, as well as geological features of Kaluanui and northern areas.

This is consistent with the TNCH assessment of the area, which rates the quality of the ecosystems in the drainage as "fair". This does not seem consistent with the expectation that natural area reserves be of high quality native habitat.

As such, DOFAW recommends against including the Kaluanui drainage into the Natural Area Reserves System. However, DOFAW will continue to assess the area to find the most intact representatives of these ecosystems, and seek to manage the valuable natural resources that it does contain. We will evaluate and include Kaluanui in our DOFAW management guideline assessment. Areas that meet the highest conservation and vegetation categories will be managed in cooperation with our partners (Koolau Mountains Watershed Partnership, Oahu Plant Extinction Prevention program, and Army Natural Resource program), on an ecosystem level with adjacent Forest Reserves (Kaipapau and Hauula) to a high conservation standard.

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Conry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "P" and a long, trailing "y".

Paul Conry, Administrator
Division of Forestry and Wildlife