

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 6, 2011 NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM
COMMISSION SITE VISIT, AHIHI KINAU, MAUI**

DRAFT: Subject to Approval

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Ms. Rebecca Alakai
Dr. Dale Bonar
Ms. Marnie Meyer
Mr. Pat Conant
Dr. Sheila Conant

STAFF:

Ms. Emma Yuen, DOFAW
Mr. Bill Evanson, DOFAW

VISITORS:

Mr. Tom Crowley, Action Ahihi

Met at 9:15 at the Kanahena parking lot, introductions. Staff Evanson describes management of the Kanahena area – with an office trailer installed, grading of the parking lot, and needs power poles to bring power to trailer. The ranger staff operate from 5:30am-7:30pm, every day. There have been increased visitation with the economy. There also has been opihi picking seen. Ahihi Kina`u is the largest marine protected area in the State. Visitation highest from 9am-1pm. Would like to have an information station in the parking lot, and reinstating volunteer program. However, State government takes time, is very slow. It took 6 months to get porta-potties. Member P. Conant asked about the fees, and how it seemed as if charging visitors (not locals) \$10/car would pay for the Reserve needs. Staff Evanson said that concessions were an option, but he prefers fees, and will be looking to see what State Parks does as an example. Currently Ahihi Kina`u management costs around \$340,000/yr for staffing. Reserve rules and management is more strict and for preservation; can't do anything consumptive or remove anything from the Reserve.

Mr. Crowley said that he used to be part of Action Ahihi, and volunteered at the Reserve every week. Action Ahihi used to be there, and was disappointed when that was shut down, and wants to have the program re-started. Staff Evanson said that they have a 1/2-time volunteer outreach position, and are applying for a grant to have a volunteer-outreach position. Mr. Croweley said that there were some volunteers, like Miqe Klemme that volunteered 7 days/week and he inspired other volunteers to commit to more work in the Reserve. Staff Evanson said that he wants a volunteer program to be under the NARS, and very structured, like at Hanauma Bay, which has a Sea-Grant program. Would like to employ volunteers on a regular basis.

Staff Evanson mentioned the fees, however there are many details that make things difficult, such as the gravel/impervious surface, which makes painting white lines to

delineate each parking stall easily destroyed. May have to pave the parking lot. Could have a contract with an attendant, who also directs people and provides some security, like the Pali Lookout.

The management plan was discussed. The Nature Conservancy offered to help with the management plan free of cost. Open areas of the Reserve were chosen because they were the most accessible and had cell phone access and closed areas were more remote. Has recently learned that can call 911 in the entire Reserve, and hoping to get a radio repeater spot with Maui police in a mauka area. Mr. Crowley said that when he was trying to use the radios to the cove, couldn't even get that to work because of the topography of the area. The volunteers helped with enforcement of the area. The most common thing that the volunteers needed to communicate about was violations (like seeing a fishing boat). Staff Evanson said that volunteers would provide outreach but also help find violations. It would be ideal to have volunteers at Dumps, the cove, and at La Perouse.

At the beach, Staff Evanson described the remnants of the old Hawaiian village, however the walls are being knocked down by goats. Haven't seen much goats out there recently. Deer is the greatest threats to the archeological sites in this region.

When the region was being planned, at first there was only a marine reserve proposed, however it was expanded to include terrestrial areas because of the anchialine pools. Would like to direct the impacts to enter and exit with snorkelers at the black sand area, however corals and reef are tougher here because they can survive wave action.

There was an effort to mark the 5 corners of the marine reserve, and an EA was written to install them, however were not put in place because of funding and the perception from other marine managers that they would have to also put in buoys. The buoys area not mentioned much in the management plan. Could have some strategic buoys, however.

Originally, in the State Park plan, there was going to make the entire area a park and a NAR in the middle, but this did not move forward. Ulupalakua Ranch has been very helpful, however the title is not clean with some of their land which has made land exchanges hard.

In the past, there were more raves, kids drinking in the night, fires being started, etc. Also, firefighters would have to hike to the end of the point if there was a rescue, which was hard. The rules were revised to allow closed areas, next on rule revisions should be to stay on trails and possibly don't drink alcohol. Mr. Crowley said that from a volunteer perspective, would not want to come up to someone who is enjoying a beer on the beach, and have to tell them that that was a violation of the rules. Staff Evanson said that NARS is not trying to stop people from having fun in the area. Sometimes kids would drink at night and there would be many beer bottles littering the parking lot in the morning, however since the gates have been closed this has stopped this. This area used to be the Wild West of Maui. There also have been homeless people here. There is a trend in society to break more and more laws.

They may or may not want to add around 19 acres of unencumbered State land to the NAR.

Mr. Crowley said that when he worked at Ahihi Kina`u as a volunteer, he would tell people that it is a NAR, and deserves the highest level of protection. When looking mauka, only see natural stuff. What happens mauka determines why makai is so nice. People get that message – you don't see this nice of an area in front of the Grand Wailea. It shows people why we need a Reserve. Staff Evanson said that they do have very tame fish here, however some species have been poached.

Member Bonar asked about the Hawaii Tourism Authority and whether it could fund again the cultural and natural outreach. Also, no one reads the signs, they are not made well because the font is so small, needs to have signs that encourage people to understand with icons, rather than just to serve an enforcement purpose. Frustrated that the signs are not bigger and without pictures. Mr. Crowley said that if people have to pay for parking, they could get more info at the pay parking area too.

Staff Evanson said that the area is also an US Army Corps of Engineers FUDS site which may have drone boats to find ordnance in marine areas and work on land too. It is over a million project. The area was a Navy bombing area in the 1940s.

Staff and Commissioners snorkeled in Kanahena and interacted with visitors on the beach, then at 11:30pm drove to La Perouse parking lot; ate lunch.

Staff Evanson noted that this was the first place where western man set foot on Maui, and has a lot of historical interest. Staff Yuen asked about the management plan of reducing ungulates by 90% and stated that perhaps the goal should be to remove ungulates from certain areas with fences rather than continually reduce their numbers. Staff Evanson said that there was short and long term solutions, and doesn't even know the amount of ungulates in the area in order to reach the goal of reducing them by 90% - doesn't have a baseline. As this is a new problem, need to get more information on the impacts and understand the problem.

Site visit participants hiked to Kanaio beach along Honoapili trail. Staff Yuen said that this area makai of Kanaio NAR to the coast has been looked at as a Biologically Important Area, largely because of the very high diversity of the coastal plant species found in surveys. Also, marine area is within The Nature Conservancy's marine portfolio. Members noted weedy condition of area and visited an anchialine pool, which was almost disappeared due to low tide. Staff Yuen stated that there has been discussions to turn this area into a NAR, a Forest Reserve. Goats impact the vegetation and the anchialine pools, which are also being filled in by kiawe leaves. Hiked back to La Perouse, adjourned meeting at 4:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emma Yuen, NARS Enhancement Coordinator