

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2011 NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM
COMMISSION (NARSC) MEETING, WAIKAPU, MAUI**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

DRAFT Subject to approval

Dr. Dale Bonar, Chair
Ms. Rebecca Alaka`i
Mr. Trae Menard
Ms. Marie Bruegmann
Dr. R. Flint Hughes
Ms. Marnie Meyer, for Director, Office of Planning
Dr. Sheila Conant for President, University of Hawai`i
Mr. Pat Conant, for Chair, Board of Agriculture

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Dr. John Sinton, Vice Chair
Mr. Ronald Rapanot
Mr. William Tam, for Chair, Board of Land and Natural Resources
Ms. Sydney Iaukea for Superintendent, Department of Education

STAFF:

Mr. Randy Kennedy, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)
Ms. Betsy Gagné, DOFAW
Ms. Emma Yuen, DOFAW
Mr. John Cumming, DOFAW, Maui
Mr. Bill Evanson, DOFAW, Maui
Mr. Glenn Shishido, DOFAW, Maui
Dr. Fern Duvall, DOFAW, Maui
Mr. David Quisenberry, DOFAW, Maui
Mr. Daniel Ornellas, Land Division, Maui

VISITORS:

Mr. Robert Pattison, US Forest Service
Ms. Emily Fielding, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Ms. Roxie Sylva, TNC
Ms. Megan Webster, Maui Land and Pineapple Company (MLP)
Mr. Joe Ward, MLP
Mr. Lono Dunn, MLP
Mr. Chris Johns, MLP
Mr. Daniel Tanaka, MLP
Ms. Teya Penniman, Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC)
Mr. Max Renigado
Mr. Kalani Hu
Ms. Audrey Dack
Mr. Rob Parsons, Mayor's Office, Maui
Ms. Benita Brazier
Mr. David Schoonover
Ms. Tabitha Benner
Mr. Leslie Kuloloi`o
Mr. Larry Stevens

Ms. Rebecca Goff
Mr. Iokepa Meno
Mr. Tom Craly

ITEM 1. Call to order. Chair Bonar called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. followed by Commissioners introducing themselves followed by others;

ITEM 2. Approval of Minutes of September 20, 2010 NARSC Meeting.

MOTION: HUGHES/S. CONANT moved that the NARSC approved the minutes. **Motion carried unanimously.**

ITEM 3. Legislative and Budget Update: Randy Kennedy. Staff Kennedy passed out handouts of the latest bills; many of which will not likely survive; he also explained the legislative process; need to be vigilant on bills raiding the Natural Area Reserve Fund (NARF). The Kona Wilderness Bill is still alive; it would add the coastal lands at Manuka to the existing NAR. There is yet another resolution to create yet another feral ungulate working group to address hunter concerns on the Big Island. He also handed out a budget summary showing these improvements: 1) conversion of 16 temporary to full time positions; 2) purchase of ten new vehicles; need new dependable vehicles; 3) raise the spending cap (so can purchase vehicles). The conveyance tax is doing well (10 million), back to 2007-2008 levels; this information is accurate at the present time; things can change quickly.

ITEM 4. Enhancement: Emma Yuen.

ITEM 4.a. Ka`ena Point Natural Area Reserve Extension: proposal for discussion and action for referral to DOFAW for further review. Staff Yuen said that the landowner of a small but significant parcel was interested in selling; it is just on the State Park boundary and could act as a buffer; it is a small cove that provides a view of the old railroad bed; it is just under one acre; it is a "pinch point" for vehicles; may have an issue with fishers, however. This presentation is to see if the NARSC is interested in forwarding this to DOFAW for next steps to write a grant to purchase the property.

Chair Bonar asked about cost; Staff Yuen estimated about \$40K. Member Meyer asked why it was not in original NARS land; staff Yuen replied it was in private ownership. Member Hughes asked if white areas on Map were in-holdings; she replied they were. He also wanted to know the management history. Staff Kennedy stated that much of the land was acquired for a State Park; not all was able to be purchased. Some other areas have been purchased; others do not want to sell; some may not be resolved. Chair Bonar felt that this should be referred to DOFAW for further action and called for a motion.

MOTION: HUGHES/MENARD moved that the NARSC refer the proposal for extension of Ka`ena Point Natural Area to the Division of Forestry and Wildlife for the next steps, including obtaining funding to purchase the property. **Motion carried unanimously.**

ITEM 4.b. Legislative update on extension of Pu`u Maka`ala NAR, Hawai`i Island; discussion and action on a resolution to support keeping the former Kulani lands as an addition to Pu`u Maka`ala NAR. Staff Yuen said that the 6600 acres around the Kulani Prison were to be added to the existing Pu`u Maka`ala NAR. The Legislature has threatened to disallow this; therefore asking for a resolution from the NARSC to oppose that and support retention of the addition to Pu`u Maka`ala, which is outside of the actual prison foot print, and already managed in partnership with others. Member S. Conant thanked staff for update, and wanted to be sure members were kept in the loop to write testimony or provide information to legislators. Chair Bonar felt it was valuable to have an additional resolution. Member Hughes asked if the former Boys Home would be included, as well as the open pasture lands that are now reverting to native forest. Staff Yuen projected a map that showed the boundaries that now include the Boys Home in the NAR extension.

MOTION: S. CONANT/MENARD moved that the NARSC strongly supports retaining the 6600 acres of former Kulani Prison lands, including the Boys Home, as an extension of Pu`u Maka`ala NAR. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM 4.c. Enhancement Update: Staff Yuen gave a brief summary of a chart that shows the current list of areas under various stages of discussion: Kanaio Mauka, Hono O Na Pali, Poamoho, Ilio Point, Tract 22, Nakula, Kulani (Pu`u Maka`ala Extension), Ka`ena extension. Chair Bonar remarked that significant progress has been made, however slowly, to expand protected areas.

ITEM 5. Briefing: An introduction to the US Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) efforts in Hawai`i with respect to Natural Area Reserves: Robert Pattison, FIA Coordinator; discussion and action to recommend this project. Mr. Pattison gave a brief overview of the US Forest Service (which is part of the US Department of Agriculture) and the functions of the various research stations and their role in long-term research and monitoring of forest changes over time. The oldest plots are 70 years old; there a number of plots across the US and islands, none including Hawai`i and other Pacific Islands. Work has been concentrated in the Hawaii Tropical Experimental Forest at Laupahoehoe; 1 plot is about 400 acres in size; plot installation takes some time. There are also subplots that look at species composition, diameter, understory, disturbance from pigs and other factors, soil carbon, debris, and vegetation sampling. Benefits to the NARS include an index for species diversity, carbon, invasive species, and in the long-term provide insight to changes within and without the plots, working across all land ownership. This FIA will be expanded to other Reserves on the Big Island; it will take about 6 years to set up all the plots. This is important because date will be in a 10-year cycle. Member Hughes pointed out that plots are carefully put in to not call attention to the areas; they are simply to be a part of management.

ITEM 6. Pu`u Kukui Watershed Preserve: Presentation, discussion, and recommendation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources that this project be approved for another six-year funding cycle as part of the Natural Area Partnership Program. Megan Webster, Pu`u Kukui Watershed Protection Coordinator, gave a power point overview of the project's progress for the past funding cycle and plans for the next six years. Member Menard recused for discussion and vote.

MOTION: HUGHES/S. CONANT moved that the NARSC recommend approval to the Board of Land and Natural Resources for the next six years of funding for Pu`u Kukui Watershed Preserve as a part of the Natural Area Partnership Program. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Bonar called for a short recess at 1:30 p.m.; reconvened meeting at 1:50 p.m.

ITEM 7. `Ahihi-Kina`u NAR Update: Bill Evanson.

ITEM 7.a. Draft `Ahihi-Kina`u Management Plan status: presentation, discussion, and recommendations for further revisions and actions to be accomplished during the present closure period to be incorporated into the final draft that will guide management actions from the end of the current closure period. Member Menard recused himself from discussion. Staff Evanson gave a summary of events, groups (particularly TNC and the Advisory Working Group that wrote the draft) and actions resulting in the current draft; he referred to 28-page the Overview (handed out at the meeting) which summarizes the 128-page plan in its current draft form to address the following areas of the Reserve: anchialine pools, coral reefs, coastal marine habitats, cultural landscape, native leeward shrublands, and wilderness qualities; along with principal threats: human use, alien species, land-based impacts, and climate change. The threats and how to deal with them are central to the issue, particularly managing human use. The plan is seen as an adaptive management document: as new information arises, it becomes incorporated; this includes addressing issues such as unexploded ordnance (UXO) and management recommendations that may arise from this issue. As the draft has been reviewed, it is clear that further review is needed before the plan is ready for backing by the Land Board, so this is just an update today.

Concerns raised by the public and members included: plan does not say how it will translate into action; staff needs to come up with an operational plan to do; it does not represent the ahu moku system; volunteers should be trained to help manage human use as soon as possible; proper signage and a more accurate count of actual visitors to the Reserve as opposed to La Perouse Bay, which provides an alternative destination. There were also concerns about continued closure of most of the Reserve and the lack of access to these areas, primarily the two remote coves, since they provide some of the only sheltered areas to snorkel in along the south coast.

Chair Bonar recognized that the area is indeed a reserve not a park, so how much can the area be utilized given the sensitivity of the resources, given the limited staff and funding to implement actions; the plan is a good background summary, but now need action

plans: what to do; timeline; who does what; prioritization. Also consider budget: what do you want to get done **before** going after funding; after the NARSC and Board it goes to DOFAW staff to move forward. He expressed his frustration that it has taken so long to get even to this point, while acknowledging that the resources are indeed challenging. In addition, he expressed concerns that more funding is needed for Enforcement, signage is still abysmal and inadequate; need large clear signage not a bunch of small signs that are hard to read. He again asked about the repeater, after waiting four years; this hampers communication and makes it difficult to build a volunteer program; having worked with other volunteer programs elsewhere, they are a tremendous asset; this is a management problem: you need to make people tow the line, need people with marine and volunteer skills; you need to look at other well-managed docent programs; he emphasized again that implementation and action are the critical parts of the plan.

Commission Members added their own comments, which were then summarized by Member Meyer, who thanked TNC and the Advisory Group for all their hard work over the last couple of years working on the draft plan, as it includes a wealth of knowledge on the history, resources, and threats that exist; further, that there are many goals, objectives, action strategies, and tasks in the plan, but as others in the room had indicated, they are lacking a timeframe for implementation and budget information. As it would be too unrealistic to come up with this information for each action item, she suggested the following be incorporated as a motion:

MOTION: ALAKA`I/MEYER moved that the NARSC support continued revisions of the draft `Ahihi-Kina`u Management Plan, by moving to the next phase of finalizing the Management Plan, for staff to include an implementation strategy focusing on the eleven *priority* actions already selected in the draft plan; specific information should include: specific implementation actions, timeline for implementation, budget required, financing plan, and effectiveness indicators for each action.

Motion carried unanimously. Member Menard recused from discussion and vote.

ITEM 7.c. Maui Branch NARS updates: priority Branch projects, activities, and matters (e.g. fencing; alien species control; staffing). Staff Evanson gave an update on the security fence and gate around the office trailer; now going through the permitting process to run power to the trailer, which will take about four more months; have a generator on order now. Work is also to be done on the handicapped parking stall.

ITEM 8. Possible sighting of axis deer in Ka`u, Island of Hawai`i: update and discussion on efforts to confirm this, including geographic range of sightings, and near-future plans to address steps to prevent expansion in to other areas, especially neighboring natural areas. Member P. Conant said that there was a credible sighting of axis deer in Ka`u a few weeks ago; the landowner does not want to be identified. The Big Island Invasive Species Council (BIISC), TNC, National Park Service (NPS), Three Mountain Alliance, Department of Agriculture (HDOA), NARS, and surrounding land owners are on board with confirming and eliminating deer from the island if it is not too

late (years ago there was an attempt to introduce them; but it was denied). There are unconfirmed reports that deer are damaging coffee crops in Ka`u. Deer are already a huge problem on Maui: damaging forest resources, row crops, sugar cane, cattle rangeland forage, golf courses and landscaping, and car collisions are occurring. Since it is unknown which island they originated from, there is a risk that Bovine Tuberculosis could be introduced from Moloka`i.

MOTION: P. CONANT/HUGHES moved that DOFAW designate NARS to take an active role, along with its Wildlife Program, in confirming deer sightings and in attempting elimination of this species from then Big Island.

Chair Bonar asked if NARS staff can do this; Staff Kennedy said yes they could.

Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM 9. Announcements and next meeting date. No firm date was discussed.

ITEM 10. Adjournment. Chair Bonar adjourned the NARSC Meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Betsy Harrison Gagné, Executive Secretary
Natural Area Reserves System Commission