

**MINTUES OF THE April 21, 2008 NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM  
COMMISSION WORKSHOP, Honolulu**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

**DRAFT Subject to approval**

Dr. Dale Bonar, Chair  
Dr. Scott Rowland, Vice Chair  
Dr. James Jacobi  
Dr. Lloyd Loope  
Dr. R. Flint Hughes  
Ms. Rebecca Alakai  
Mr. Richard Hoeflinger  
Dr. Sheila Conant, for President, University of Hawai`i  
Mr. Scott Derrickson, for Director, Office of Planning (OP)  
Mr. Patrick Conant, for Director, Department of Agriculture

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

Ms. Sylvianne Yee  
Ms. Colleen Murakami. For Superintendent, Department of Education  
Mr. Ken Kawahara, for Director, Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

**STAFF:**

Ms. Linda Chow, Deputy Attorney General (AG)  
Ms. Betsy Gagné, DOFAW  
Ms. Christen Mitchell, DOFAW  
Mr. Randy Kennedy, DOFAW  
Mr. Bill Evanson, DOFAW  
Ms. Lisa Hadway, DOFAW  
Mr. Matt Ramsey, DOFAW  
Ms. Emma Yuen, DOFAW  
Mr. Brent Liesemeyer, DOFAW  
Mr. Talbert Takahama, DOFAW  
Mr. David Smith, DOFAW  
Mr. Mike Wysong, DOFAW  
Mr. Chris Mottley, DOFAW  
Ms. Page Else, Hawai`i Conservation Alliance

**VISITORS:**

Ms. Teresa Menard, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)  
Ms. Paige Else, Hawai`i Conservation Alliance  
Mr. Jason Sumiye, TNC

**ITEM 1. Call to order and introduction of members.** Chair Bonar called to the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m., members introduced themselves.

**ITEM 2.a. Preliminary discussion on framework for evaluating the existing Natural Area Reserves and identifying gaps in the portfolio.** Staff Emma Yuen gave a brief introduction and overview for the workshop.

**ITEM 2.a. Sample analysis by The Nature Conservancy.** Staff Yuen introduced Ms. Theresa Menard, Geographic Information Specialist with TNC, who looked at the representativeness issue for the NARS. Today there are only 1.9 million acres (47%) out of the total 4 million acres in the State with some form of native ecosystems. TNC looked at ten ecosystems for its review: alpine, subalpine, montane dry, montane mesic, montane wet, wet cliff, lowland wet, lowland mesic, lowland dry, and dry cliff (coastal is not covered here), to measure viability on a landscape, size, ecosystem condition (good, poor, etc.). Member Hughes asked how TNC defined native; Ms. Menard: 50% or more native canopy, using a viability rank (very good, good, fair, poor), for the ecoregions.

Member Loope: With climate change, alpine areas may be in bad shape; this needs to be factored in. Member Rowland: Hawai'i as a whole may be affected. While East Maui alpine area is largely within the boundary of Haleakala National Park, there is a small but important part between the Astronomy Precinct and Polipoli (the area was proposed a few years ago as a NAR); another portion of alpine and subalpine is not represented on the Big Island (Waihaka, in Ka'u was nominated as a potential NAR a number of years ago); dry alpine at Pohakuloa (Kipuka Kalawamana was proposed a number of years ago); on O'ahu, the Ko'olau mountains have no current Reserves, though one is proposed (Poamoho). TNC is offering to help analyze viability in the future.

Staff Hadway: noted that endangered species are not taken into account. Ms. Menard said they decided to keep it simple and only look at ecosystems. Member P. Conant asked if he could get a hard copy of the charts. Ms. Menard said she would provide a set to Staff Yuen to share.

Member Jacobi: difficult at this point to do a statewide analysis; need to come up with potential areas and then show higher species richness, etc.; hate to slow down the process before detailed analysis and more field work. While it is tempting to gravitate to green (best) areas, it is important to look at the yellow/red areas that may be more disturbed than green, but the best we have got with some ecosystems; therefore they may be of a higher priority. Member Jacobi: if endangered species are present, that would raise some of the red areas higher; there are gems to consider in some of these areas such as caves, anchialine pools, and geological features. Staff Yuen thanked Ms. Menard for her presentation.

**ITEM 2.b. Sample analysis: Emma Yuen.** Staff Yuen: Back to representativeness and the question of how much importance should be placed on it. Should the focus be on current intact areas with lots of rare species or lands that are heavily impacted or altered. Member Jacobi said it is a complex issue: wet forests differ from Kaua'i to the Big Island, and even differ on island such as between Puna and Kona. There should be other components such as insects, birds, plants. The challenge is to use this as a framework, then get down to look at the areas and ask experts their opinion, not just do GIS ranking.

Do not want to get hooked into something that sounds good but will not fly on ground. Staff Yuen agreed. Member Jacobi: Look at other entities with similar mandates, such as National Park Service (NPS), with perpetual management, etc.; should we work only in the NARS or also look at other areas under some other management scenario. Member P. Conant: Point with the tables, to see if protected elsewhere; it is pretty small in the NARS. Chair Bonar: Strategic Plan reiterates the value of Partnerships; learn from them and look at what all are doing together or on adjacent lands; perhaps enhancing this with a Memorandum of Understanding. Member Rowland cited the no unnecessary duplication. Staff Yuen: Some reserves may be adjacent to areas already managed (such as NPS) and although appearing to be duplicative, have the beneficial effect of adjacent managed NPS lands, leveraging management of our own areas through shared learning experience.

Member Hughes: Percent protected by NARS or other areas is about the realm of degradation across the State, even though there may be duplication, we may lose some, so redundancy is important to **not** overlook. **All** areas are under potential threat by ungulates, weeds, and global climate change. Member Loope agreed: high elevation rainforest over next 100 years will be the focus; 100 years from now will not be able to follow the letter of the law; need to look for the most defensible, and that is likely to be high elevation forests. There are a lot of State lands at high elevation; can we assume they will be protected; citing East Maui Watershed Partnership where protection for biodiversity and providing hunting opportunities are coordinated across the landscape including degraded lands.

Member P. Conant: Assign some crude value to areas outside NARS (i.e. NPS with fences and animal control versus not fenced, no control, etc.). Member Hughes added lava, and fires as risks to consider. Chair Bonar: Internal versus external threats.

Member Jacobi: Hawaii Conservation Alliance (HCA) has a project (Effective Conservation) that aims to get at the issue and assess the current status of biodiversity, management, etc.; introduced Ms. Page Else as the coordinator of this long term effort, with periodic review over the long haul. This will look at the State's role through the NARS (including the Natural Area Partnership Program), and the overall picture: is it a vehicle or a partner; one entity's view is not like NARS or others. Need to be aware from the most protected, no ungulate damage, native-dominated, etc., to most-disturbed, but with some important elements; NARS should not drive by itself. This is for the whole State, not just the efforts of TNC.

Member P. Conant: Cannot wait for what we do not have; we need to keep moving on what we have got in line. Chair Bonar: Lots on the list, others coming in; we are resource limited, cannot do everything. In reality, we need to be smarter in choosing what to put our resources into. Member Jacobi: Need to be on same page, not catch as catch can; there is sound reasoning on the list as is; no need to start over again with a new list.

Member Derrickson: Duplication and redundancy are a small part of the bigger picture; ownership up to recently was largely restricted to State lands, now we have Legacy Lands Act and other potential funding vehicles to acquire other lands; look at what is not covered. Having in NARS not the only way to protect and manage; need to look at gradations as well as being opportunistic. In looking at potential areas in Forest Reserves, have gotten push-back from Foresters, so ownership is as important as management when considering criteria. The NARS may take the lead, but not always does an area need to go into NARS to be effectively managed. We can push from outside and though the percentage of NARS may be small, protection and management may be higher than elsewhere.

Member Rowland said he has been on the NARSC for 7 years and it seems to be impossible to make a new NAR. It seems staff and Commission Members are too busy to push, or others disagree; need to focus on how to get over the road blocks. When Annette Kaohelaulii was on the Commission, Poamoho was on its way to being established; she left the Commission with no further action towards designation. Member S. Conant said she originally resigned as a Commission Member back in 1977 because no new NARs were being designated. The matrix is great, but too much disagreement; need to spend time on issues and work on one particular place: clear all the hurdles.

Chair Bonar: That is why the push for the Strategic Plan to prioritize, with Staff Yuen helping to focus so can aim to take action. Member Rowland said he was not criticizing anyone; just maybe find one and work on it over the next seven years. Chair Bonar said his goal was to help with this through the Strategic Plan process. Staff Yuen: Help strengthen the process to include on the list as potential NARs was done as a Statewide analysis through 1) HI GAP (37 different classes from natural to fully degraded alien systems), 2) Ecoregional Analysis (TNC: 10 classes) and 3) Marine Resource Analysis. Staff Yuen went over the current classifications (Scientific value, administrative, size, number of areas, ownership).

**Scientific Value**, used in Hi GAP (intact, species richness, critical habitat/recovery, etc.); Member Jacobi sent predicted species-rich base layer to Staff Yuen; presented at last year's Hawai'i Conservation Conference, uses predictor parameters; Jonathan Price uses historic range of Hawaiian flora; maps show that there are more endangered species on the two older islands (Kaua'i and O'ahu). Staff Yuen: throwing out models to include critical habitat, recovery habitat; perhaps better than political.

**Administrative**, reason protected from pests, dams and encroachments. Could use incipient invasive species as a model to take access and other elements into consideration. Member Loope felt that was not a good measure because they are not going after the worst or most widely distributed species. Members Jacobi and P. Conant agreed the data is not there. Staff Yuen mentioned high fire risks (layer not created yet) or volcanic activity.

**Size of areas**, large enough but no larger than necessary: suggest this as a last cut, need to look at other issues first, **not** focus on size. Need to look at management, fences, etc.

**Number of Areas**, unnecessary duplication has generated controversy over the years; first estimate envisioned up to 50 areas.

**Ownership** does not include Federal lands; change of subzones (such as Agriculture to Conservation) may be included. HIGAP did analysis of areas with conservation and management plans in place (NPS, NARS, NAPPs). Need to look at: 1) knowledge of NARS/DOFAW staff (but what do Branch Managers and NARS Managers feel about adding new NARs), 2) where gaps are in present System, 3) add in official DOFAW recommendation step in the NARS designation process.

Member S. Conant raised an objection to the first one; should depend on knowledge **not** on feeling! Should be objective. Staff Smith: that is why **do not** have a new nomination: staff have strong feelings.

Staff Yuen said that the final product will be a report: maps with analysis, critical habitat, check list, scoring support for ranking results of meetings with Branch Managers. Maps will be in layers (side by side?); most helpful elements for measures?

Chair Bonar: agrees with member Jacobi that fixed numerical scoring not a good measure our purposes; it is less flexible, would not suggest establishing scoring as an absolute guide; more like oranges and tangerines. GIS is powerful but want maps where can add/subtract or darken or lighten areas for emphasis; need a 3-dimensional analytical program that is dynamic through time; pull up maps on screen or on wall. There should be capabilities within the IT system for all to use.

Member S. Conant: do not use scoring system at all; i.e. three different people could give you three entirely different scores! Each proposed site should be summarized. Chair Bonar agreed there should be an over view followed by holes missing by island (overall?) leading towards a high needs versus list of areas already proposed, and how to address this.

Member P. Conant: Need to go beyond the Branch Managers, take into account institutional knowledge, not just present staff, so be sure to include Steve Perlman, Rick Warshauer, and others who have been out in the field and see the changes. Chair Bonar: agreed, as proposal gets developed. Member Loope: Meet with Branch Managers not at end but at beginning; ask what they think early on.

Chair Bonar: Who prepares each proposal appears to be whoever is most interested; it should be more rigorous: one person to work on proposals. Member Derrickson: See focus on representativeness and scientific value **first**, then start to bring in the administrative/management issues (i.e. why a certain area can or cannot be managed; need to see what is scientific and on the ground before start ruling out whether too difficult to manage, etc.; so yes, need to talk to managers early.

Member Rowland: But if we spend a long time then it becomes a political process and no way for any new NARs. Member Derrickson: Find out fast; government has a limited amount of land (1.9 million acres); only a small subset of acres meets our criteria; very small area indeed.

Member Jacobi: Suggested as a next step to hold a two-day workshop similar to a retreat, within the next 3 to 4 months with good maps as a key starting point, looking at list of proposals on the books and incorporate them into GIS; open announcement at HCC and other meetings to invite them to start looking seriously at new areas that might have been overlooked. The goal day one is to be comfortable with all the different entities and day two to focus on the process and set timelines moving in the direction of action.

Chair Bonar: Invite Warshauer, Perlman, etc. Staff Yuen: Giving a presentation at HCC on this process. Member Loope: original legislation: Scientific value is **not** a good strategy because it implies that they are being protected for Scientists! The reason science exists is to learn how to figure out what/why they are; figure out how to protect. When first at Haleakala National Park twenty eight years ago, noticed a lots of people resented scientists (saving Kipahulu Valley as a Science Reserve); hunters complained about NARS taking their hunting from them. Members Hughes and Jacobi agreed.

Staff Yuen: summarized the next steps to turn into direction from fieldwork to measuring differences through holding a 2-day workshop on enhancement, as suggested by Member Jacobi to come up with specific products and actions and move ahead for Poamoho; process keeps going; consolidate and move beyond talk. Staff Yuen asked if it would be a subcommittee or whole Commission. Chair Bonar said yes. Member S. Conant felt that 2 days was a lot to ask of the entire Commission, and wanted to know **specifically** what would be done, or just more talk.

Chair Bonar suggested a smaller group then to come up with a framework, collate information into usable tool, then go to the larger group for review. Member Jacobi agreed with Member S. Conant that this would **not** be just talk; suggest before June 30, get a smaller group to look into what to do, send format out for feedback first, otherwise will not move forward without specific framework. Chair Bonar said that since the June 30 NARSC meeting will focus on the Strategic Plan, a focused workshop with others such as Rick Warshauer would have to follow the meeting.

Member Jacobi suggested a subcommittee work with Staff, TNC, and others to come up with a framework to move forward; but also need the whole Commission involved in what to do and who does it, which will be part of the outcome of the workshop. There is never enough time at a meeting, so this would be the time to focus in a retreat-style workshop; need to **move** not just talk.

Staff Mitchell asked who is on the subcommittee: Members Derrickson, Rowland, Hughes, and Bonar; with Member Jacobi volunteering to be added. Chair Bonar asked if outside members could be added to the group. AG Chow said that while they may be

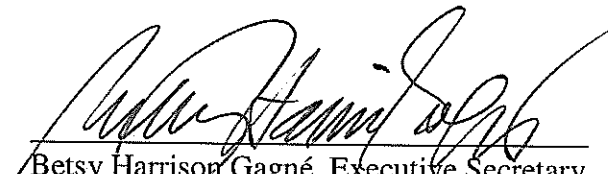
invited to participate, they could not be members, but they most certainly could be invited, as all meetings are noticed under Sunshine Law.

Staff Smith suggested a list with priority from 1 – 10, or add a new NAR to system; then a “do-ability” could be added to do it now, if there is a compelling reason, and not worry about number 1; feelings and opinions are social science; but politics of new NARs being established is where things slow down. Chair Bonar: Should be put under Administrative section. Staff Smith: Go after the no-brainers that more agree on. Chair Bonar: Agreed with member Rowland’s earlier views; if look at biological basis, look for major opposition and if so, do you want to fight it. Member Rowland: Every new NAR a strain on the resources and staff, so it is no wonder there is opposition from that point of view. Chair Bonar: field staff is critical for input to implement management and need resources to add new Reserves as well as to manage existing ones. Staff Smith said that as Branch Manager, he has to listen to all; and with different programs and usage, there will be push back particularly in Forest Reserves; this has to be considered, the earlier the better.

Staff Hadway: DOFAW needs to be encouraged to have a broader vision of what they want for their lands, such as expressed through the Management Guidelines; we should be moving in tandem. Chair Bonar: That is precisely why pushing the Strategic Plan to a higher level to have DOFAW as a whole adopt a Strategic Plan.

Chair Bonar adjourned the workshop at 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Betsy Harrison Gagné, Executive Secretary  
Natural Area Reserves System Commission