

MINUTES OF THE December 14, 2015 NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM COMMISSION (NARSC) MEETING, HONOLULU, O'AHU

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

DRAFT Subject to approval

Dr. John Sinton, Chair
Ms. Marie Bruegmann, Vice Chair
Mr. Trae Menard
Mr. Ronald Rapanot, Sr.
Ms. Robin Newbold
Dr. Carl Christensen
Dr. Jonathan Price
Mr. Nathan Yuen
Dr. Sheila Conant, for president, University of Hawai'i
Ms. Janis Matsunaga for Chair, Board of Agriculture
Mr. Leo Asuncion, Director, Office of Planning

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Mr. Kekoa Kaluhiwa, for Chair, Board of Land and Natural Resources

STAFF:

Ms. Betsy Gagné, DOFAW Administrative Office
Ms. Emma Yuen, Acting NEPM Manager, DOFAW Admin.
Dr. Margaret Spork-Koehler, DOFAW Admin.
Ms. Charmian Dang, DOFAW Admin.
Ms. Tanya Rubenstein, DOFAW Admin.
Ms. Marigold Zoll, DOFAW O'ahu NEPM Manager
Ms. Lara Reynolds, DOFAW O'ahu
Dr. Fern P. Duvall, DOFAW Maui Nui NEPM Manager (via phone)
Mr. Peter Landon, DOFAW Maui
Ms. Sheri Mann, DOFAW Admin.

VISITORS:

Dr. Nellie Sugii, Lyon Arboretum
Dr. Marian Chau, Lyon Arboretum
Mr. Tim Kroessig, Lyon Arboretum

ITEM 1. Call to order: Chair Sinton called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m., Commissioners introduced themselves, followed by staff and others present. Chair Sinton then recognized Commission Member Marie Bruegmann, retiring from USFWS at year's end and moving to Michigan. Ms. Bruegmann was also presented with a framed image of yellow-flowered 'ohai by Susan Middleton and David Liittschwager. A card was also circulated for members to express their appreciation. A card was also circulated for Galen Kawakami, Kaua'i Branch Manager, retiring at the end of December 2015.

ITEM 2. Approval of the April 27, 2015 NARSC Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: RAPANOT/PRICE moved that the Natural Area Reserves System Commission approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM 3. Approval of July 31, 2015 NARSC Meeting Minutes.

Item 2.

MOTION: RAPANOT/NEWBOLD moved that the Natural Area Reserves System Commission approve the minutes of the July 31, 2015 Natural Area reserves System Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM 4. Special Use Permits.

ITEM 4. a. Seed Bank Project Proposal: Dr. Michael Thomas, Curator, Rock Herbarium, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Member Christensen asked if the applicant was present. The applicant was not present; however there was quite a bit of testimony from others present that raised concerns about the details of this application. Chair Sinton asked members if they had any further questions. Member Bruegmann said that she had many concerns: 1) there is no reason to collect so many common species within the NARS; this should be done outside; 2) no seed storage experience is listed in his CV; 3) not using the best science available; 4) cited Dr. Alvin Yoshinaga’s letter and his concerns as well about their lack of expertise.

Staff Mann asked to have Dr. Yoshinaga’s comments read to the group, as he felt very strongly that the application should be rejected; however the application could be resubmitted if the above issues were addressed. Staff Mann asked if he worked with the Rock Herbarium. Member Bruegmann replied that others say he has not completed his database on seed banking. Staff Spork-Kohler felt that there was a lack of collaboration between the applicant and others working in on seed banking in Hawai‘i. Member Menards has concerns about requesting so many seeds from such a small area; there could be a significant impact for natural recruitment. Member Christensen asked if there had been any consultation. Staff Mann asked why the Forest Reserve Permit for O‘ahu was revoked. Staff Zoll replied that staff gave him the benefit of doubt, but then found out that he was not collaborating with Lyon Arboretum or others in the seed banking community, so felt that it was best to revoke the permit until such time as concerns could be resolved.

Staff Zoll said that the applicant was proposing to store many species of orthodox seeds which are very problematic for long-term storage. Member Bruegmann added that many of these have not been tested for 100 years (proposed length of storage time); but Hawaiian seeds will not survive long-term freezing. There also needs to be an exit strategy: when and where to out plant. Member Yuen felt that while it seemed like a good idea, there was no follow through. Member Bruegmann reiterated the concern that such a high volume of seeds being requested could have a major impact on natural regeneration in the NARS. Staff Zoll said that she and Lara Reynolds (O‘ahu DOFAW Botanist) met with him. Member Bruegmann said that staff has bent over backwards. Dr. Marian Chau from Lyon Arboretum said it was important to look at the numbers of species and collections; it would be difficult to collect that many specimens and take far more time than originally stated in the application. The initial target list contains many species that will not store for a long period, or there are not 20,000 individuals to collect. Mr. Tim Kroessig, also of Lyon Arboretum, said that if he collected those numbers, there would be nothing for restoration or natural regeneration, and there are also viability

concerns. Dr. Nellie Sugii, Propagation Specialist at Lyon Arboretum said that he needs to be sure they are orthodox.

Member Christensen said that it sounded like there were 2 competing projects: Lyon and the applicant. Dr. Chau said that there was no prior collaboration or communication, only a press release announcing the project, with posted data on his website. Mr. Kroessig said that Alvin Yoshinaga founded the seed storage program at Lyon; however, the applicant did not reach out to collaborate. He does not appear to know the process involved with seed storage. Member Bruegmann said that there was no evidence of expertise in his CV. Member Conant said there appeared to be a lack of integrity and some misrepresentation, including being part of the Plant Extinction Prevention Program (PEPP); dishonesty is unacceptable.

Staff Reynolds was also concerned about his lack of response or collaboration. Staff Mann said he appeared to have been here for some time; and asked who hired him from the Millenium Seed Bank Program. Member Bruegmann replied that there are no people in the program now that seem to know; having tried to find out more information. Staff Mann felt need more direct communication with the Millenium Seed Bank Program. Member Bruegmann felt that it could give Hawai'i a bad name; Dr. Yoshinaga is also trying to find someone in the program to speak to for clarification. Staff Mann felt that he could come back to the Forest Reserve if denied by the NARSC; although she also had concerns about such large numbers in the Forest Reserves. Member Bruegmann said that he ignored Staff Dang when she suggested that it was not appropriate to collect such large numbers in the NARS, stating that the NARS is generally the least disturbed of native ecosystems, and large collections and activities were directed to other areas. He said that he would be getting a Forest Reserve Permit and was waiting for the NARSC Meeting to address this.

Chair Sinton said that we need to be convinced: 1) why in the NARS and not outside; 2) what has been done before and why this is also needed; 3) what efforts have been done to make effects less of a concern (i.e. 20,000 seeds from the NARS is ill-advised). He then called for a motion.

MOTION: CONANT/BRUEGMANN moved that the Natural Area Reserves System deny the application. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Sinton said that staff will communicate via letter with him to explain the denial and that he needs to do address unresolved issues and collaborate with other seed bank entities..

ITEM 5. a. Draft management Plan for Pahole NAR, O'ahu Island: Presentation and discussion by Tanya Rubenstein and Marigold Zoll for approval in concept. Staff gave a power point overview. Member Christensen asked about threats. Staff Zoll said that invasive plants were the biggest threats; that this is a starting point for the management plan, with section 1 providing background and current conditions and the second section the planned management actions, with section 3, the dynamic part of the

plan, as well as providing institutional memory (she used the Hunters Shack as an example: it is an enclave within the NAR, but is part of the Forest Reserve, so it is permitted for camping whereas the NAR is not). Native plants are in pockets in larger amount of invasive species. One of the goals it to increase the connectivity; to clear corridors of weeds so that the native communities may expand, and the area can be more accessible to volunteers as well as staff. Army Natural Resources staff have been working under permit in Pahole as off-site mitigation for Army presence and actions in Makua Valley. Member Menard asked if they could overlap and help with rare species. Staff Zoll replied that they do, explain that Staff Reynolds looks after non-PEPP species. Member Menard said that weed control was still most of the budget. Staff Rubenstein said the 1981 map, is difficult to update. Dr. Jonathan Price said that mapping techniques have changed so much that it is difficult to compare older maps with current conditions.

Staff Zoll said it is very important to identify where the most important native areas are. Member Bruegmann said it is pretty grim in some places. Staff Zoll said that if more Natural Area Reserves are created on O'ahu, they will need to increase staff, as we spend lots of time in Pahole compared to other areas just to hold the line against weeds. Member Christensen asked whether there had been any recent invertebrate surveys. Staff Zoll said that an arthropod "Bioblitz" was held by Cynthia King, and there is on-going research on spiders by Dr. Rosie Gillespie and others. Staff Rubenstein added that there are also surveys for rats and ants, as well as control. Member Menard felt it was important to have specific goals and priorities, with so many invasive species over such a large area. Member Bruegmann liked the idea of connectivity of areas and the institutional memory. Staff Zoll said that with intern and staff turnover, institutional memory can be very helpful. Member Menard felt it was important to know in overlapping areas with the Army, who is weeding what and where, especially around the rim of Makua Valley. Member Conant asked about biocontrol; Staff Zoll said that strawberry guava control agents are being monitored in Pahole as well as Poamoho. Member Menard asked if Ka'ala would have a separate plan Staff Zoll said yes they are updating an older plan.

Member Price felt that the balance of the resources available and threat level (i.e. lowland mesic and dry forest) has the highest plant diversity, even small pockets like at Pahole and so management actions are incredibly important and it is important to work with partners. Chair Sinton asked about collaboration with the Army. Staff Zoll replied that we are clearly conveying our priorities to them and they are more collaborative now, as well as acting under a long-term Special Use Permit. Further discussion ensued about the importance of priorities across the O'ahu Natural Area Reserves.

MOTINO: CHRISTENSEN/BRUEGMANN moved that the Natural Area Reserves System Commission approve the draft Pahole Management Plan in concept. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Sinton called for a short break, reconvening 15 minutes later.

ITEM 6. 'Āhihi-Kina'u NAR, Maui: Update on management including fencing makai boundary; parking lot improvement environmental assessment; volunteer program; Final Decision Document from USACE and next steps leading up to long-term management and access; concerns about drone activity: Peter Landon, 'Āhihi-Kina'u Manager. Staff Landon gave a power point overview, starting with the kipuka project where outplanting takes place in protected areas, with a focus on restoration. There is on-going Batis (pickle weed) control in the anchialine pools with staff and volunteers, and marine debris cleanups. He gave an overview of the EA process for the parking lot improvements at Kanahena (near "Dumps" surf site), now the focus of staff and volunteer offices as well as information for the public. The makai fence (made with cattle panels) is complete and most of the goats are gone. Staff did a lot of outreach prior to fence construction. Member Yuen asked about trails. Staff Landon replied that in the closed area no one is currently allowed; but gates may be installed for some future access. The volunteer program is up and running with the recent hire of Jeff Bagshaw, who has extensive knowledge and expertise in interpretation; he has been doing more recruitment and training of volunteers. Member Newbold was most appreciative of all the forward progress.

The parking lot will not be paved with petroleum products, but will be concrete. Member Newbold was concerned about potential runoff. Staff Landon said that Engineering staff are calculating big rain events to determine if there might be any runoff and how to deal with that and numbers will go into the Final EA.

Member Christensen asked about the rulemaking process. Staff Landon replied that they would be going to the Land Board to ask for permission to hold a hearing to address the parking issue and where any money could be deposited, such as the Natural Area Reserve Fund (NARF); but will not be able to begin charging anything until after January 2017.

Staff Landon then gave an update on the Decision Document concerning Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) in the Reserve, recently completed by the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). There were 4 recommended alternatives, with an 18 month timeline to 'clear' selected areas (alternative 3) including buffers around the anchialine pools, coastline, existing trails, large kipuka. Any material found would be blown in place, except for anchialine pools.

Member Menard asked if we'd be given the opportunity to say where the 200 acres will be. Staff Landon said yes, that it is not just along trails, but we need to be sure and access has to be in cleared areas only. We are still waiting to hear whether USACE will receive Department of Defense (DOD) funding necessary to complete this process, so no start date as yet. Member Christensen asked about access to cultural sites; Staff Landon said that they would be part of the process. Member Christensen said that consultation on cultural access is very important.

Drones in the Reserve, as well as other areas, are a growing concern; however rules governing their presence in the NARS as well as other areas will need to follow guidance being developed by the FAA. This matter will need to be handled across the board and

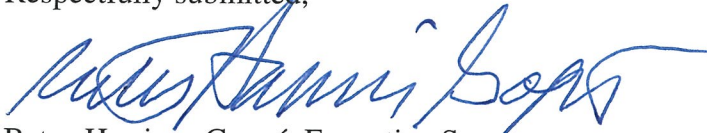
will be a subject at future meetings. Further discussion reiterated the importance of controlling drones from the start and not letting things get out of hand.

Member Newbold thanked staff for all the progress and report.

ITEM 9. Announcements. Staff Gagne said that the Joint Consultation between the NARSC and Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (FSAC) is tentatively set for May 11, 2016 in DOFAW Conference Room 323. Current members are Menard, and Conant; if they are unable to attend, alternates may be selected at the next NARSC meeting.

ITEM 10. Adjournment. Chair Sinton adjourned the NARSC Meeting at 12:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Betsy Harrison Gagné", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Betsy Harrison Gagné, Executive Secretary
Natural Area Reserves System Commission