

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

March 31, 2017

Chairperson and Members
Natural Area Reserves System Commission
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i

NARS Commission Members:

SUBJECT: REQUESTING APPROVAL OF THE LONG-RANGE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PU'U KUKUI WATERSHED PRESERVE, ISLAND OF MAUI, DURING FY 18-24, AND TO RE-AUTHORIZE FUNDING FOR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT IN THE NATURAL AREA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM OVER THE NEXT SIX YEARS.

BACKGROUND:

Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve (PKW or Pu'u Kukui Preserve) was established in 1988 to protect watershed forests and associated native plants and animals. At over 8,600 acres, the preserve is one of the largest privately-owned nature preserves in the state. Maui Pineapple Company, Ltd. (MPC), a subsidiary of Maui Land & Pineapple, Inc. (ML&P), began management programs in August 1988 under a management agreement with The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i (TNCH), in which TNCH assisted MPC's PKW preserve manager to implement management programs, and has continued to act as a consultant to the project on an ad hoc basis. In July of 1992, ML&P entered into a six-year contract with the state of Hawai'i as the first private landowner participant in the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Natural Area Partnership Program (NAPP); renewing this contract every six years guided by the Long Range Management Plan prepared for each request for re-authorization of funding for the following six years; with a 2:1 match (for every dollar the private entity puts up, the State matches it with two dollars).

The current Long Range Management Plan, approved for FY 2012-2018, is scheduled to be renewed in 2017 for State Fiscal Years 2018 – 2024. Maui Land & Pineapple has prepared a new Long Range Management Plan for review by the Natural Area Reserves System Commission, and staff, before passing to the Board of Land and Natural Resources for final approval.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

The attached Long Range Management Plan consists of a brief description of the Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve, an overview of native resources that are protected, and how those resources complement the State's Natural Area Reserves System (NARS). In the next section, management considerations that have shaped management programs are documented. A

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description of each management program follows, and includes a goal statement, explanation of the management method chosen, and a detailed timeline. Although Natural Area Partnership agreements are made in perpetuity, funding is authorized on a six-year basis to allow for periodic State and Public review which requires approval of a six-year Long Range Management Plan by the Board of Land and Natural Resources (with review and approval by the NARS Commission (NARSC), which is being requested at the NARSC meeting on March 31, 2017. Some of the actions may extend past the FY 18-24 timeframe, as proposed management actions, and their maintenance will be ongoing; just as it is with Natural Area Reserves and Forest Reserves.

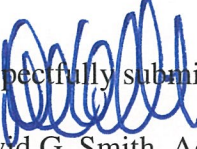
Current focus is the ma uka lands of; however the long term goal of ML&P is to increase the existing Preserve by incorporating approximately 3,000 acres of conservation lands ma kai of the Preserve, in coastal and riparian areas, creating one of the State's largest privately managed preserves from the summit of the mountain down to the sea. Coastal and marine resources are directly affected by land use practices in the upper watersheds, therefore the inclusion of the ma kai conservation lands will allow for a watershed-wide management, with increased community outreach and opportunities to accessible lands.

Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve is adjacent to other protected lands, including Honokowai Section of West Maui Natural Area Reserve, which contains Violet Lake, and the actual summit of Pu'u Kukui. The Boardwalk, the first and largest of its kind on Maui, was constructed within the Preserve, allowing better access for Preserve managers, more direct access to the NAR section, and better access to those reading the rain gauge at the summit of Kukui. Many projects have larger upfront costs to start with, such as fencing. Because of the special bog habitat, it was discussed and decided in the early years as NAPP, to focus on construction of a boardwalk. This initial cost has helped better protect the fragile bog ecosystems, while helping get volunteers in and out. Such requests are detailed in the budget sections of Long Range Management Plans.

Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve is a key member of the West Maui Watershed Partnership, along with the State of Hawai'i, The Nature Conservancy, and other private landowners forming a Partnership inspired by the creation of the first watershed partnership: East Maui Watershed Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Natural Area Reserves System Commission recommends that the Board of Land and Natural Resources, accept the Long Range Management Plan for Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve FY 18-24, and re-authorization of funding for Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve, island of Maui, during FY 18-24; for continued enrollment in the Natural Area Partnership Program, for a total budget of \$1,280,164 over the six years of this current renewal.

Respectfully submitted,

David G. Smith, Administrator
Division of Forestry and Wildlife

Attachment: Long-Range Management Plan FY 18-24