

Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Division of Forestry & Wildlife

DLNR Koke'e Cabin

Honolulu, HI 96822

May 27, 2016

Present: Rich Von Wellsheim (Chair), Betsy Gagné (Ex-officio), Michael Constantinides, Gregory Koob, Patrick Conant, Greg Hendrickson, Jonathan Ching, Janet Britt

Staff: Irene Sprecher, Marissa Chee, Malia Nanbara

Guests: Katie Friday, Michael Opgenorth

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 10:40am by Chair Wellsheim.

2. Welcome New Members and Guests

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

3.1 November 13, 2015 meeting minutes

The FSAC reviewed the meeting minutes from the November 13, 2015 meeting and made the following corrections:

- Page 2: "Honolulu" should be added before "County Board of Water Supply".
- Member Gagné, Member Conant, and Guest Friday provided staff with written corrections.

Motion to approve the November 13, 2015 FSAC meeting minutes as corrected. Moved by Member Gagné, seconded by Member Constantinides.

Approve: Wellsheim, Gagné, Hendrickson, Koob, Conant, Ching, Constantinides, Britt; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion passed.

3.2 January 29, 2016 meeting minutes

The FSAC reviewed the meeting minutes from the January 29, 2016 meeting and made the following corrections:

- Page 7: "mala" should be replaced with "maua", "flugia" should be replaced with "*flueggia*".
- Page 9: "hold" should be replaced with "holes", "flugia" should be replaced with "*flueggia*".
- Member Gagné, Member Conant, and Guest Friday provided staff with written corrections.

Motion to approve the January 29, 2016 FSAC meeting minutes as corrected. Moved by Member Gagné, seconded by Member Britt.

Approve: Wellsheim, Gagné, Hendrickson, Koob, Conant, Ching, Constantinides, Britt; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Item 4.2 was changed to item 4.1.

4. Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) Project Proposals

4.1 Kahanu Gardens project Hana District, Maui County

- Guest Opgenorth introduced his project. NTBG wants to have a strategic approach to restoration in the hala forest surrounding NTBG. The hala trees are still being used by cultural practitioners; the hala scale has decreased the health of trees making it easier for invasive species such as African tulip and ink berry to persist. In 2015, 380 plants were out-planted in a small area. Some of the plants have been historically documented in area, and some were plants the NTBG organization is working with. They also have an ongoing Hawai'i Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) project that is focused on improving the riparian buffer zone. They have planted trees such as hala, kou, and kukui. The project is currently in the maintenance phase.
- Member Koob expressed concerned about the invasiveness of kukui in wetter areas. Guest Friday said it is controllable if it is part of a managed system.
- Guest Opgenorth said that they are including the larger eastern area in the management plan, but do not intend to do restoration until a later time. They feel it is better to start in the smaller two acre area to ensure success.
- Member Conant asked if they have any problems with pigs, or if there is a need to do fencing. Guest Opgenorth said that they have a good relationship with hunters in the community and pig damage is minimal. They may look into fencing in the future, depending on need. The high cost of fencing is also prohibitive.
- Member Ching asked if the community would be supportive or against fencing. Guest Opgenorth felt there may be mixed feelings about it.
- Guest Opgenorth said he hasn't seen resistance in native cultivars. Guest Friday offered to put him in touch with people she has worked with in the Marshall Islands who have identified resistant cultivars.
- Member Ching asked if they have been working with any cultural or community groups. Guest Opgenorth said they have been working with mostly local practitioners, but are hoping to hold workshops and events in the near future. Member Ching suggested they use influential members from the community to help bridge the discussion to see what benefits the community.
- Member Constantinides asked who owns the cattle and how are they managed since there are no fences. He added that grazing in forests and doing restoration can be challenging. Guest Opgenorth explained that grazing is only done in eastern section where the land is leased to a local rancher whom they have an ongoing working relationship with. The cattle help keep the weeds down in the unit and are rotated. Guest Opgenorth believed the hala can recruit with cattle present, and the cattle seem to favor African tulip more.
- Member Koob said that if the connection between forest restoration and wildlife habitat improvement for monk seals is being made, other marine life such as fish and corals should also be included.
- Member Gagné said that cats infected by *toxoplasma gondii* should be a concern.
- Member Koob asked how planting dry forest species in an area that receives 100 inches of rain will be successful. Guest Opgenorth said that good drainage is key; trees such as the wiliwili do well there.
- Member Koob asked if the project is recreating a native forest, or bringing plants into more of a garden setting. Guest Opgenorth said they are trying to be opportunistic by planting

species that were not necessarily documented in the area, but need a place to grow or have low numbers. Member Koob said that they need to clarify that they are doing ex situ conservation in the management plan.

Motion to approve the project proposal for the development of a Forest Stewardship management plan. Moved by Member Conant, seconded by Member Gagné.

Continued discussion:

- Quote for the development of the management plan ranged from \$8,900-\$15,000 for an average of \$11,000. NTBG is looking to write the management plan themselves.
- Member Constantinides suggested capping the cost share at \$2,500. Staff Sprecher said quotes have been higher recently.
- Member Ching felt that planning is the most important part of the process and did not want the landowners to be limited.
- The Committee agreed to not put a cap on the cost share amount and leave it to the Division.

**Approve: Wellsheim, Gagné, Hendrickson, Koob, Conant, Ching, Constantinides, Britt;
Oppose: none; Abstain: none.**

Motion passed.

4.2 Reynolds project, Ka‘u district, Hawai‘i County

- Staff Chee introduced the project as a 20 acre project in Volcano. They intend to do native forest bird habitat restoration, animal exclusion, weed control, and outplanting.
- Member Conant said the seedling costs and planting densities are high.
- Member Hendrickson suggested they do just a perimeter fence instead of smaller fences inside. He added that they may be a good candidate for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) project to allow for perimeter fencing for wildlife given what they want to do.
- Member Britt said that \$340,000 for 22 acres is high.
- Guest Friday explained that in the state program, we often have landowners who are professional experts in certain areas. When landowners write their own plans, there should be the expectation that they will seek other resources to become more knowledgeable in areas they are less familiar with.
- Staff Nanbara added that staff recommends to landowners that they input the high end of cost share rates into their estimated budget table, so that they get an idea of what implementation might cost. This is why numbers may seem high in the proposal stage.
- Member Gagné said that in the plan, rapid ‘ōhi‘a death (ROD) protocols must be included. Member Hendrickson added that all threats, such as diseases or pests, should be discussed in the plan.
- Member Hendrickson said that landowners should be compensated for writing their management plans since it is an opportunity cost for them. They should be doing additional research and seeking other sources.

Motion to approve the project proposal for the development of a Forest Stewardship management plan. Moved by Member Constantinides, seconded by Member Conant.

Continued discussion:

- Quotes ranged from \$4,300 to \$12,000 for an average of \$8,000.
- Staff noted that some landowners have had a difficult time obtaining quotes from consultants, and quotes have been higher than in the past. We may want to look into talking to larger consulting firms about the program.
- Member Hendrickson said that plans should fit the landowner's objectives. They should be cautious not to over plan.
- Staff asked the committee to let them know if they know of anyone who is capable of writing plans, and they could be added to the list of consultants.
- Member Hendrickson suggested looking into training students with natural resource backgrounds to write plans.
- The Committee agreed to not put a cap on the cost share amount and leave it to the Division.

**Approve: Wellsheim, Gagné, Hendrickson, Koob, Conant, Ching, Constantinides, Britt;
Oppose: none; Abstain: none.**

Motion passed.

5. Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) Management Plans

5.1 Ho'omau Ranch Forest Management Plan:

- Staff Sprecher reminded the committee that they approved this plan at the last meeting for the purposes of the Forest Legacy easement, and asked them to come back and address issues regarding management implementation issues for FSP cost share. A management plan is required under the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) and the state will hold the easement.
- Member Conant felt they should still consider installing drip irrigation.
- Staff Sprecher clarified that we do not require landowners to show how they will provide the cost share, but it is a discussion we have with them. They can use a combination of cash as well as time and labor.
- Guest Friday said the section on rat control measures needs to be clearer and more detailed. Member Gagné suggested using metal bands around the tree.
- Guest Friday recommended they clarify their harvesting intentions within the lifespan of the plan, as well as potential actions beyond 10 years. If there is potential for it to be done in the future, it should be included in plan and say they will seek assistance if they do. Member Hendrickson said it does not sound like they intend to harvest 'ōhi'a, but are keeping that option open. Guest Friday said this intention could be clarified. Protocols for monitoring for ROD should also be included.
- Guest Friday clarified that FLP plans should be reviewed every 10 years.
- Member Constantinides agreed with Guest Friday's comments regarding ROD and harvesting language given that it is an emergent issue.
- Member Constantinides said there may be an opportunity for the state to consider negotiating easements through the property to other public lands.
- On page 20, paragraph 3, the plan says the macadamia nut parcels are 24, 29, and 32. Member Constantinides asked if the parcels should be 24, 29, and 34.

- Member Britt said it sounds like they are removing ‘ōhi‘a to create trails. Member Hendrickson clarified that ‘ōhi‘a can be sold on Hawai‘i Island but not off island unless it is properly processed. Poles are too difficult to treat properly.
- Clarification is needed on whether diseased or healthy trees will be cut and what will be done with the cut trees.

Motion to approve plan the management plan contingent on addressing the comments from the committee. Moved by Member Constantinides, seconded by Member Hendrickson.

**Approve: Wellsheim, Gagné, Hendrickson, Koob, Conant, Ching, Constantinides, Britt;
Oppose: none; Abstain: none.**

Motion passed.

Continued discussion:

- Staff Sprecher explained that Ho‘omau Ranch is having discussions with NRCS about funding some portion of the management work, so they will be looking at joint funding. We like to have the plan approved so they can have conversations with other funding sources.

Motion to approve the budget contingent on addressing the comments from the committee. Moved by Member Hendrickson, seconded by Member Gagné.

**Approve: Wellsheim, Gagné, Hendrickson, Koob, Conant, Ching, Constantinides, Britt;
Oppose: none; Abstain: none.**

Motion passed.

6. Forest Stewardship Project Proposal

- Staff Nanbara explained the changes that were made to the proposal form. Average rainfall was added and cost share ranges were included next to the proposed practices. Resources for vegetation selection were also added. The biggest change to the form was the budget section. Directions on how to use the attached excel document were included.
- Member Constantinides asked if “sugar cane” is still a relevant land use category in Section 4 since crop land covers it. For Section 9, the NRCS vegetative guide would be a good resource. The URL needs to be updated.
- For Section 3, Member Conant said the dominant species and percent forest cover should be specified.
- Member Ching asked if stakeholders in area would be listed in section 11. He felt it would be good to understand up front when working on the plan.
- Staff Chee demonstrated the estimated budget spreadsheet.
- Member Constantinides felt it would be important to have a clear schedule of operations. He suggested taking the table and repeating it multiple times if they have multiple units. Staff Sprecher asked if this is necessary in the proposal phase. Member Hendrickson felt that if they are going to have really different practices in different areas, they should address it. Guest Friday suggested making it optional. Staff Sprecher suggests that it could be used for the development of the management plan as well.
- Member Constantinides suggested putting a low, medium, and high difficulty column. Member Hendrickson said those columns could be color coded or manually inputted. Member

Ching said a column could be added for justification of their difficulty selection.

- Member Hendrickson said it would be interesting to have a start and end time, and then have it generate how much it would cost each year and what the average might be. Staff Sprecher said several of the landowners come to us without knowing how many plants they will need or how long practices might take. At the proposal stage, it needs to still be simple enough since there are still many unknowns.

7. FSAC New Members

- There were two applications for one open seat this term. Hank Oppenheimer, the Maui Nui Plant Extinction Prevention Program Coordinator, and Christian Giardina, a research ecologist for the USDA Forest Service applied.

- The committee reviewed and voted for a representative for the FSAC based on the State and Federal guidelines.

Voting to approve Christian Giardina for open seat on committee: Hendrickson, Britt.

Voting to approve Hank Oppenheimer for open seat on committee: Gagné, Constantinides, Wellsheim, Koob, Conant, Ching.

Hank Oppenheimer was selected for the open seat.

9. Chapter 195F, HRS, 2016 Legislative Proposal

- The FSP bills did not pass this session. There was also a bill regarding penalties for violation of forest reserve rules that did not make it to conference.

- Staff will inform the committee when bills are submitted. Member Britt suggested indicating which bills are the highest priority.

- Member Hendrickson said the committee members should do more to help get bills passed, such as connecting with their representatives and senators more. Guest Friday said more appreciation and publicity about the programs could get some partners to participate more during the process.

- Staff Sprecher said we can bring language to the next meeting for review.

10. Joint Consultation between the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee and Natural Area Reserve System Commission

- No additional funding was allocated toward either program. All funds are allocated through general funds now.

- 27,000 acres have been enrolled between FSP and CREP. There are 82 landowners and 24 more projects being developed. The programs are only reaching 2.4% of private forest land in Hawai'i, 5% if you include projects under the Natural Area Partnership Program (NAPP). There are 77 landowners on email list for FSP. Under the Joint Forestry MOU, participation has increased 83% over last 4 years. We are anticipating a high encumbrance for fiscal year 2017.

- FSP has given out \$4.3 million which averages out to \$165/acre. There are 15 active cost share projects and 9 projects with management plans only. There are 16 developing management plans.

- For CREP, there are 18 projects, for a total of 982 acres.

- The American Forest Foundation is looking for a Hawai'i project they can do at the landscape level. Individual plans would then be easier to create.
- Staff Sprecher said NAPP will be updating and or reviewing their management plans over the next year. Member Constantinides asked if they are taking a hard look at whether or not the projects need to be renewed. Staff Sprecher said that they have conservation easements connected to the projects so they are perpetual. Staff Nanbara added that we are looking at adapting the NAPP plans to qualify under the FSP standards to capture them under the program.

11. Forest Legacy Project Updates

- Item 11 was not discussed, and will be heard at the next meeting.

12. Hawai'i Forest Action Plan

- Item 12 was not discussed, and will be heard at the next meeting

13. Announcements and Travel

- The next meeting will be tentatively scheduled for early September on Maui.

14. Formal Meeting Adjourned at 1:45pm

15. Site Visit to Kokee Restoration Site

May 28, 2016

16. Site Visit to Green Energy Biomass Facility