

## **Forest Stewardship Program Advisory Committee Meeting**

DOFAW Baseyard Hilo, Hawaii

March 19, 2010

9:30am

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

**Present:** John Henshaw (Acting Chair), Lea Hong, Tanya Rubenstein, Bill Cowern, Laura Brezinsky, DayDay Hopkins, Mike Tulang, David Clausnitzer, and Kip Dunbar. **Members absent:** J.B. Friday, Katie Friday, Betsy Gagne, and Craig Rowland. **Staff:** Sheri Mann, Irene Sprecher, Colleen Carroll, and Don Yokoyama.

**Meeting Minutes** September 3, 2009. **Motion to approve with minor edits. Moved by Hong, seconded by Dunbar. Passed unanimously.**

### **Hawaii Statewide Assessment and Resource Strategies (SWARS)**

Colleen Carroll gave a presentation to the Committee on the process and progress of the Hawaii SWARS. The Committee generally likes where the state is at with the overall issues and the structure of the report/document.

Discussion:

- The Committee would like to review the fire chapter including how the resources and potential threats are evaluated. They would like to see mapping done on historical fire locations and areas where there is high fuel load and have that incorporated into areas of interest. The Committee reviewed the associated fire map that detailed the Communities at Risk and wanted clarification on what/how does an individual or community have to do to become a Community Wildfire Plans (CWP)? Also there are a number of areas throughout the state that are not CWPs, the fire section of SWARS should include encouraging communities to become a CWP within the strategy section. If a community is in a high fire zone, the State should prioritize this area and help the community develop a corresponding plan.
- Stakeholder review and involvement of the SWARS should include more private landowners, other government agencies (EPA, DHHL, HDOH, Army Corps), large ranches (Kamehameha Schools, Parker, etc) and the agricultural associations (Cattleman's Council, RC&D). Many of these stakeholders manage forest resources and/or manage historically forested land, which may lead to future restoration.
- One threat that should be included in the SWARS is theft of resources.
- The Committee would like to see research on opportunities for native and non-native species restoration and services incorporated into the SWARS, so that there may be future funding available.
- Forest Products section should include comment on energy need, including biofuel, as well as feedstock options and building material needed as they relate to Hawaii's demands.

### **NRCS / FSP Template and MOU**

Staff provided a draft Memorandum of Understanding between DLNR and NRCS for collaboration on forestry related program delivery. The intention of the MOU is to detail the potential relationship between DLNR and NRCS in the implementation primarily of the NRCS EQIP and the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP). Under a national MOU the Association of

State Foresters, NRCS, USFS, and National Soil and Water Conservation Districts laid out the framework for collaboration among agencies with one of the primary relationships focusing on the use of Forest Stewardship management plans for funding cost-share opportunities under NRCS EQIP. For Hawaii, the state is interested in incorporating other forestry related incentives beyond the FSP / NRCS management plan relationship, including cost-shared positions, technical service agreements, and/or cooperative partnerships that would open the door to watershed partnerships access of NRCS financial assistance. Agencies are still in discussing the details and hoping to move forward with the MOU shortly.

Staff provided a draft Forest Stewardship Program Handbook that revises the handbook format and includes additional practices, different terminology, and information on NRCS financial programs in an effort between agencies to more closely align forestry incentive programs. The revised draft handbook is the effort of DOFAW and NRCS to ease the use of Forest Stewardship management plans under a variety of other financial programs.

Discussion:

- The Committee is supportive of this new potential relationship with NRCS financial programs, and would like to continue to fund cost-share on management plan development through the Forest Stewardship Program. Currently all management plan development costs are incorporated into the cost-share agreement with the state for practice implementation and is reimbursed once contract is approved.
- The Committee may want to include details on a multi-use resource management plan for use under the Forest Legacy Program.
- The Committee is also interested in what they can assist NRCS with as their forestry programs expand. The Committee expressed the need for a whitepaper to explain issues at the national level.
- The Committee recommended the use of a Subcommittee to review and update the handbook including practice cost and language.
- Clausnitzer, Dunbar, and J. Friday were recommended for Subcommittee and staff will organize efforts.

**Motion to organize a Subcommittee to further review the Forest Stewardship Program Handbook. Moved by Henshaw, seconded by Clausnitzer. Passed unanimously.**

**Motion to approve the continued cost-share support for the development of Forest Stewardship management plans outside of cost-share assistance for prescribed practice implementation. Moved by Henshaw, seconded by Dunbar. Motion passes, Brezinsky abstained.**

### **Wao Kele O Puna (WKOP) Forest Reserve Coordinator**

Julie Leialoha, the WKOP Coordinator presented a brief update on the management achievements associated with this WKOP Forest Legacy acquisition that has occurred over the past 3 years. Management activities have involved some invasive species control and monitoring, filling the geothermal well, and working towards the removal of the geothermal land designation, as well as management plan discussion and development. The Coordinator is actively engaging OHA to encourage and assist them in becoming a responsible resource management authority for the area.

Discussion:

- The Committee is supportive of assisting with the long term management, protection and/or legal obligations associated with this land and willing help with any.

## FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

### **Project Proposals**

Neirode Forest Stewardship proposed project. The Neirode project is approximately 40 acres located in Mountain View on the Big Island, Hawaii. The management objectives will focus primarily on restoration and conservation and will include fencing to exclude feral animals, boundary invasive species control, and outplanting to enhance existing native vegetation. The consultant was present to address any questions on the project and has submitted a full management plan in hopes that the Committee will review and approve the project proposal and consider the management plan for approval.

Discussion:

- The Committee feels that this project is within the scope of the Forest Stewardship Program and would like to consider the review of the associated management plan.

**Motion to approve the Neirode Forest Stewardship project proposal and to review submitted management plan. Moved by Hong, seconded by Tulang. Motion passes, Brezinsky abstained.**

### **Management Plans**

Neirode Forest Stewardship management plan. Project objectives include native forest conservation/protection, native species restoration and habitat improvement, and forest recreation and research enhancement.

Discussion:

- The project is in Agricultural District and classified as 3A. It is similar to another Forest Stewardship project in this area. There are three areas that have been previously cleared on the property. Threats to the site include feral ungulates (pigs) that occasionally use the property and invasive plant species, especially in areas that have been previously cleared. Outplanting will be required in areas that have been damaged by feral ungulates; cleared, or otherwise, will require invasive species removal
- The Committee had questions on the coqui frog statement that they will increase organic matter in the soil. The Committee requested that this statement be removed unless there is appropriate scientific information relating to this fact.
- The Committee also wanted to express that the program does not support cost share on fencing for the purposes of property boundary delineation. The Committee does not find this to be the case on the Neirode project due to the threats in this area and the objectives of the project.
- The project areas that will require additional soil amendment are primarily located on the areas that have been previously cleared.
- The Committee would like to explore cost-share funding on the development of this management plan and would like to assist the landowners with any modifications needed to the project budget that may be required if the landowner is interested in practice implementation cost-share under a NRCS financial assistance program.

**Motion to approve the Neirode Forest Stewardship management plan subject to the completion of follow-up by staff as discussed. Moved by Tulang, seconded by Hopkins. Motion passed, Brezinsky abstained.**

**Existing Forest Stewardship Projects**

- The Conant Forest Stewardship project submitted a request for input and potential approval to use a clumping bamboo to aid in suppression of kahili ginger from the neighboring property. The landowner has put in numerous hours in the attempt to control the weeds, but is fighting a losing battle. The bamboo would be used for about 80ft along the existing fence line and will aid in shading out non-native invasive species. They are not requesting reimbursement. Staff informed them that this would be allowed on their property under their Forest Stewardship agreement and expressed the need to use a clumping bamboo.
- The Committee was provided an education brochure from the Waikoloa Dry Forest project for information.
- The Hui Ku Maoli Ola project is still waiting on approval from the Governor for funding. The project funding has been allocated this year, but it is doubtful that the request will come back before the end of the fiscal year. Staff has recommended that they use their approved management plan for potential funding under NRCS financial assistance programs.
- The Ahu Lani Sanctuary project is moving forward with their project objectives through Hawaii CREP in an effort to move the project forward. They are requesting reimbursement of their management plan as developed and approved under the Forest Stewardship Program. They also requested the consideration of additional funding for fencing costs from the Forest Stewardship Program for costs over and beyond what is allowed by the Hawaii CREP cost-share list.

**Motion to approve funding for the reimbursement of cost-share funding associated with the Ahu Lani Sanctuary project approved management plan. Moved by Rubenstein, seconded by Cowern. Passed unanimously.**

**Forest Stewardship Proposal and Management Plan Evaluation Process**

The Committee was provided with a draft evaluation criteria form for review and ranking of Forest Stewardship projects for future available funding. Staff and a Subcommittee worked on drafting this document and is looking for additional thoughts and comments on description of the scoring guidance under each category and guidance on how to describe the Feasible and/or Sustainable section of scoring. The Committee will submit comments on this within two weeks.

**FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM**

**Developing Forest Legacy Projects**

Staff has received some initial interest in FY2011 Forest Legacy Program funding. Both potential projects are located on the Big Island. One project is a potential conservation easement on 4,500 acres and the other is a fee simple acquisition of numerous parcels. Staff is working with both projects to assess the goals of the landowners and interest in the potential acquisition.

### **Existing Forest Legacy Projects**

- The Kainalu Forest Watershed project is almost fully funded including required match. The State is currently working on procuring an appraisal for this project.
- The Kealakekua Heritage Ranch project is moving along with the State attorneys reviewing the draft conservation easement language and the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment expected to be completed by the end of April. The State is also in the process of contracting for an appraisal for this property.

### **Hawaii CREP**

Hawaii CREP is working through some implementation issues between supporting partners and has hopes to have a few projects contracted within the next few months. To date only one project has been contracted under the program. Staff is working with partners to try and solve some of the issues with implementation of the program.