

# **Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Kealakekua, Hawaii  
Kealakekua Heritage Ranch  
June 29, 2007**

## **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

J.B. Friday (acting Chairperson), Kip Dunbar, Craig Rowland, Katie Friday, Lea Hong, Bill Sager, Betsy Gagne. **Members Absent:** Mike Tulang, Laura Brezinsky, Bill Cowern, DayDay Hopkins, Bob Joy, Rebecca Alakai. **Staff:** Sheri Mann, Melissa Sprecher, **Visitors:** Paul Conry, Greg Hendrickson, Clark Allred

**09:20am**

## **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Meeting minutes** December 1, 2006. **Motion to accept the minutes. Moved by Gagne, seconded by Dunbar. Passed unanimously.**

### **Spatial Analysis Project**

DOFAW staff has been reviewing the national level analysis layers and incorporating additional layers that are more accurate/appropriate for Hawaii. Staff is looking into some historical information and incorporating/updating the associated GIS layers for the State. Additionally, the staff would like to map the Forest Legacy areas with the SAP data. We will have a product, hopefully, by the next Forest Stewardship Committee meeting for review by the Committee.

### **FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

The Committee reviewed one new Forest Stewardship Program proposal, Waikoloa Dry Forest Recovery Plan, and one new management plan, Hui Ku Maoli Ola. Additionally, the Committee gave verbal approval of the previously electronically (email) approved proposal for the Maui Land and Pineapple proposal. Maui Land and Pineapple is currently working on drafting their management plan for the project.

### **Waikoloa Dry Forest Recovery Plan Proposal**

Waikoloa Dry Forest project has been granted funding from NRCS for approximately \$300,000 for fencing and similar practices in support of the project. The application submitted to the Committee prior to the meeting was a funding request to the Private Stewardship Grant Program with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Committee was asked to review this application as a FSP proposal and make their determination of the project based of this application. Prior to the meeting Sheri and Melissa made a site visit to speak with the project manager and fundraiser as well as a representative from NRCS involved in the project. FSP proposal will be asking for practice not already funded

though NRCS, potentially fire management and irrigation. The Waikoloa Outdoor Circle will be managing the project and has been given an license to 250 acres for 15 years. This license agreement will be very similar to a lease on the land, however; a land lease is not possible as the TMK is 1800 acres and the landowners do not wish to subdivide the 250 acres out of the TMK. NRCS is fine with this arrangement, but the State will have to make sure that this will work with the FSP. The projects goals are to remove the feral goat population in the area and provide fire protection from the native wiliwili and uhiuhi trees on the site. Other activities will involve irrigation, invasive species suppression, and outplanting of T&E species or other dry forest species.

**Motion to approve the Waikoloa Dry Forest Recovery Plan proposal, submit comments, and invite applicant to submit a project management plan for final approval by the Committee. Moved by K. Friday, seconded by Gagne.**

**Comments/Discussion:**

- The applicant has been working with the State Forest Health program in relation to the affect of the gall wasp on the wiliwili trees and some trees are still hanging on. The applied treatments work best if the trees are watered and the tree still have leaves that are respiring. The applicant is working with the right people to save the trees.
- The uhiuhi trees are the important feature in the project as there are so few of the trees remaining, approximately 30 trees total in the state with 15 trees on this project site.
- With the Waikoloa Outdoor Circle involvement, education and community awareness is built right into the project.
- One project concern if the fire threat, one fire could destroy the entire area unless the fuel load (fountain grass) is managed and controlled. The winds in that area can be very strong and even the village is subject to fire threat. FSP could work with the applicant to support a firewise plan already worked out with the Waikoloa Village. Applicant should be put into contract with Jared Bactusman or Wayne Ching with DOFAW fire program. Additionally, the U.S. Forest Service will be providing restoration training courses at dryland forest sites (PWW and Hakalau) within the next month. K. Friday will speak with Susan to see if it is appropriate for someone from the project to attend the course.
- The control of the fire break and fuel load with the project area are very important. It could be possible to even place a sprinkler/mist system around each of the uhiuhi trees as protection. Ideas and plans should be worked out in the management plan.
- The applicant has already begun removing the fountain grass from around the uhiuhi and wiliwili trees to reduce some the fire threat. A fire retarded could also be used in relation to the project.

**Motion carried, passed unanimously.**

**Hui Ku Maoli Ola (Schirman) Management Plan**

Schirman is submitting the Hui Ku Maoli Ola Management Plan for Committee review. The management plan has been reviewed by DOFAW staff and discussion between the applicant and staff ever provided to the Committee. The applicant has submitted a letter of support from the landowner (Kamehameha Schools) and an archeological survey. Missing information are practice quotes for budget justification.

### **Comments/Discussions:**

- The project site is adjacent to Haiku Village (government land, state and city), which is a passive cultural park, high recreational area with some political issues related to the Haiku stairs (access issues).
- The surrounding access issues to the Haiku stairs is largely limited by the community. With the community being so active in this area, it would be wise to have the community in support of the project especially if access to the project site could be impacted. The applicant should take the management plan to the community board for a letter of support. Not all projects need letters of community support, unless the community is very active (as in this case) or the project involves an educational component.
- The similar FSP project for Kookia Kahili Valley (KKV) approved by the Committee looked to do much of the similar practices in an similar areas as far as the amount of invasive species. The FSP allowed KKV to budget for a few thousand more dollars in the first few years of project implementation to remove large albizia trees.
- Schirman should be provided a copy of the KKV plan as a guide of what the program is in support of funding.
- In KKV, the land is owned by State Parks Division and public access is open. With Schirman, the landowners if private and will have more control over access to the public. The access could be addressed further in the proposal.
- If SAP was functioning, would this project fit into the guidelines identified by the analysis? Answer is unclear, the project may or may not fit under SAP guidelines.
- The project represents only a small portion of the valley and the whole valley is full of invasive species. Thus invasive species will always be a problem. Is it beneficial to have a small portion of native habitat and will it be able to sustain itself?
- The value in the project is having a native forest in a community for education and public recreational value. In the proposal for this project, the public beneficiaries were more clearly incorporated. The management plan should include this information as well. Will KS be involved with work on the lands or are they just providing cash funds for the project?
- The costs rates identified with this project are arboricultural/horticultural rates not forestry rates, thus more expense. The FSP Handbook hold-down rates reflect forestry restoration rates. Felling a tree in a forest should not cost what is identified in their plan, however; the felled tree would not be removed from the site in most cases. Furthermore, the costs associated with the seedling is more related to a horticultural prices, \$5.00 is the max price for seedlings acquisition. It should not cost this high amount for all seedlings especially if they will be grown by the landowner. From a tree farm perspective, the goal is to see what is most finically valuable, but in restoration projects the costs are generally different. The program can fund-up to the identified hold-down rates within reason, and if the applicant wished to spend money beyond that amount that is to their discretion.

**Motion to defer/deny the management plan as submitted, and invite the applicant to resubmit the plan with letters of support from the community (including Kaneohe community) and revised budget with guidance that the current budget is too high for a project of this nature for our funding support. Applicant will be provided the**

**Kokua Kahili Valley project plan as a guide upon request. Moved by K. Friday, seconded by Sager.**

**Further discussion:**

- The applicant could also approach the Kaneohe Hawaii Civic Club for support.
- Want to make sure that the appropriate herbicide is being used for what they want to kill.
- Felling tree, chipping trees and seedling costs are too high for the program to fund. These should be revised.
- The State should not have a problem with the funding the project as the land is lease to the Schirman group from KS. KS is somewhat removed from the project, but will be providing cash funding for the education component equal to approximately half of the project .
- The plan states that areas will be enclosed around native species outplantings; these areas need to be identified on a map.
- Monitoring component needs to be described further; not clear on how monitoring will be conducted and the applicant will need something structures for the property (photo points, survey, etc).

**Motion carried, passed unanimously.**

**Further discussion:**

- What is the real cost to remove and restoration a non-native community to a native ecosystem? Is it realistic and cost efficient?
- It depends on the objective of the each project. If watershed is the main objective, pig proof fencing is most cost effective. If the objective is education, then more costs become involved.

**Forest Stewardship Program Rule Change**

Under the Forest Stewardship Program ruling guidelines, federal funds are not allowed as a match for the program. This is an inconsistency between programs administered under DOFAW (ie: NAPP). This is believed to originate from the program being used largely for timber program, which would eventually generate income. As the program has expanded its scope to include more restoration and conservation projects, this rule should be readdressed to allow the inclusion of federal funds as a match for the program. This will allow for the program to stay competitive with other programs. The Committee is in support of this request.

**Forest Stewardship Program Updates**

Contract development for Kokua Kahili Valley and Kealakekua Heritage Ranch are underway. Both applicants are reviewing the general and special condition language to their contracts. Hopefully, the funds will be available by August 2007.

**Mendes Project**

The Mendes FSP project goals was to use native trees as a windbreak in a very windy spot on Molokai. Over the last five years of the project, the trees (kukui, milo, nio, hau, etc) are stunted and are no longer growing. The trees grow to about four feet then are

splintered/pruned by the wind. Thus the project is looking to address some of their windbreak issues by trial experiments using construction grade windbreaks and differing set-up of native species layers. Mendes will be using a majority of their unspent funds for this trail and project can serve as an education for future clients. Some natives species to try as windbreaks are alahe'e, alapu'u, nio, alaili, uhulai, kawihai, naupaka, ulia, gardenia, kauawaia (ssp?). The Committee will be provided design plans of the project to provide feedback. Bob Joy would have information on people using different methods for wind breaks.

### **FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM**

The Forest Legacy Program Kealakekua Heritage Ranch Phase I will be funded for '07 for \$2million. The '08 Kealakekua Heritage Ranch Phase II and Na Wai Eha applications ranked very well nationally. It appears as if Kealakekua Heritage Ranch Phase II will be funded. Na Wai Eha application would have also been funded, but the application had to be pulled due to lack of interest to sell by the landowner. Puu O Hoku was also submitted for '08, but did not score very high due largely to the late submission of the application to the State. The State is interested in resubmitting this application for '09 funding.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)**

CREP is a USDA Farm Bill program that is a modification done by a State to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Partnership is made between FSA, NRCS, and the State. The program provided funding to agricultural landowners (farm or ranch land) to remove portions of their land from production and set it aside for conservation and restoration purposes. Landowners are required to sign 15 year contracts and receive an annual land rental rate and are allowed to cost-share conservation/restoration practices. Hawaii does not currently have a robust CRP, thus the State and the federal representatives have worked to put together something that would be attractive to landowners. Part of the requirement for the program is for the State to fund 10% of the cost of the program, and this amount has been authorized by the State Legislature.

The Hawaii CREP will involve lands identified as riparian buffers and forest restoration of areas that are important in watersheds. Part of the program will be restoration of degraded upland pasture and riparian buffers. Upland is not defined as any particular zone, but refers to degraded pastureland. 15,000 acres are available for enrollment under the program initially. A few constants remain on the eligibility of landowners, especially in relation to AGI limitation (\$2.5 million or if 75% of income must be from agriculture). Landowners that do not meet this requirement can still have their acreage enrolled in the program if the land is leased out to another party.

The involvement of the FSP Committee may come from directing the State's 10% match to landowners (\$250,000/yr). Landowners as they enroll in the CREP, they would also

be eligible for funding under the FSP. The \$250,000/yr will be funneled through the FSP funds. A private landowner will apply to the CREP at the same time will be applying for funds under the FSP. The State can provide an incentive for one of the cost-share practices, this is still being worked out. (Could help fund the EA process). The Committee could provide information on what the qualifying guidelines are.

Might need to look into the State EA process with relation to both the Hawaii CREP and FSP. If we decide to go for a programmatic EA, need to make sure that invasive species are a factor and addressed. Also need to address the FSP guideline if we decide to go for a rule change to include CREP information (50% cost-share requirement and using federal funds as a match). Might need to be relaxed some with include the CREP.

Next steps for CREP are to get the MOA between the State and Federal governments and put together the Addendum to the CREP proposal. Details hopefully will be worked out within six months.

**11:45pm**

## **BREAK FOR LUNCH**

### **Forest Stewardship Committee Bylaws**

Sheri and Melissa have put together draft bylaws for the Committee's review. The bylaws will be used to govern the Committee and address such things as Committee duties, officers, meetings, elections, vacancies, and attendance.

### **Comments/Discussion:**

- Under duties should include approval of strategic plans and assessment. Also may need a full Committee vote to approve these document (more than just a quorum).
- Define what is required to pass a measure or resolution
- Define a "yes" vote, a majority of member present
- Under the Committee composition change 'tribal representative' to 'Native Hawaiian representative.'
- Include a Cooperative Extension Service representative to Committee composition.
- The Voting rights are bit strict (good standing). Change to must attend two/one meetings within the last twelve months. How are members excused from absences at meetings?
- Under Officers section change 'shall elect officers' to 'shall elect the Chairperson Elect.'

### **House Concurrent Resolution 200**

HCR 200 Steering Committee meet at the beginning of May to discuss objectives and goals of the working group. Areas/interests being addressed by the Committee include State tax credit for the donation of conservation easements, county tax structure (native forest dedication, comparable agricultural and forestry tax rates, etc), example pilot projects for new incentive programs, and address restrictions to landowners (citizens right to sue). K. Dunbar will be joining the Steering Committee at the next meeting on July 23, 2007.

### **Agricultural zone to Forest Legacy AON**

DOFAW staff would like to consider adding Agricultural zone lands to the Hawaii Forest Legacy Assessment of Needs. These lands represent some of the more threatened (by development) forested areas in Hawaii. The Committee is in support of the action

### **Next FSP Committee Meeting**

The FSP Committee will need to hold the next/upcoming meeting to coincide with the NARS Commission meeting.

### **Other**

- J. Friday to add Committee members to mailing list for Hawaii Forestry Journal (HFIA).
- The FSP Committee received the new shirts for the Forest Legacy Program.
- Field trip was on the Kealakekua Heritage Ranch FSP project and FLP area.