

# Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Hawai`i's Joint Forestry Memorandum of Understanding



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**1. Who created the Joint Forestry MOU?**

The partners of the Joint Forestry MOU include the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service (**NRCS**), the State of Hawai`i Department of Land and Natural Resources (**DLNR**), the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (**USFS**), and the Hawai`i Association of Conservation Districts (**HACD**) (collectively, the “Partners”).

**2. What is the Joint Forestry MOU intended to accomplish?**

The specifically stated purposes of the Forestry MOU are to:

- a. **Identify the various Partner’s roles** in providing financial and technical assistance to privately managed lands, forest landowners and land managers, and associated collaboration between the Partners on the delivery of such assistance.
- b. **Promote integrated and streamlined delivery** of the Partner’s forestry related programs to allow consistent, expeditious and user friendly interactions for landowners and land managers interested in forestry related practices on their land.
- c. **Develop a communication plan between the Partners** to further the implementation of forestry-related incentives and administrative issues as described under the MOU in a consistent manner.
- d. **Participate in annual meetings** to enhance the Partners’ interaction and cross-training efforts.
- e. **Establish Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA) or Conservation Cooperative Partnership Initiatives (CCPI)** focused on forestry management through the control of invasive species.

**3. What was the motivation behind the Joint Forestry MOU?**

The Joint Forestry MOU was developed as part of a national effort by leaders in state forestry agencies, USDA-National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), conservation districts, and USDA-Forest Service (USFS) to form partnerships that increase cooperation and improve forestry-related assistance to landowners. On a national level, a national “joint forestry” memorandum of understanding was entered into by the above listed organizations.

**4. Where can I find more information on the national “joint forestry” MOU and the forestry partnerships that are being developed in other states?**

The website <http://jointforestryteam.org> is the best resource for finding more information on the national “joint forestry” MOU and the partnerships that are being developed in other states. This web site was developed by the Joint Forestry Team, a group that was formed by the national “joint forestry” MOU partners to advance the purposes of that MOU. The Joint Forestry Team’s purpose “is to make recommendations that result in coordinated interagency delivery of forestry and conservation assistance for working forests, farms, and ranches. Team participants seek to improve the sustainability of the nation’s forests in order to provide optimum levels of public benefits and ecosystem services.”

**5. Where can I find more information about the critical issues facing Hawai`i’s native forests?**

One great resource is the Hawai`i Statewide Assessment of Forest Conditions and Resource Strategy 2010 (SWARS). This assessment seeks to (a) identify and provide an analysis of present and future forest conditions, trends, and threats on all land ownerships; (b) identify any areas or regions of Hawai`i that are a priority; and (c) incorporate existing forest management plans including state wildlife action plans and community wildfire protection plans. Please visit <http://www.hawaiiassessment.info/SWARS/> to download the entire document or individual chapters.

**6. I work for one of the Partners, either as staff or as a member of a board, what have we all jointly and specifically agreed to do under Hawai`i’s MOU?**

The Partners have agreed to:

a. Promote sustainable forestry management on privately managed lands by providing financial and technical assistance to identified forested or formerly forested lands under current or future authorized programs. Programs available for forestry assistance in Hawai`i include, but are not limited to, Hawai`i Forest Stewardship Program (FSP), Natural Area Partnership Program (NAPP), Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Hawai`i Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Conservation Cooperative Initiative Program (CCPI), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA). The Partners will work together to integrate existing programs to reduce duplication and confusion among the Partners and private landowners.

b. Identify critical forest landscapes for collaborative outreach to lands within those identified areas. Critical forest landscapes shall initially include all current and formerly forested lands and those lands identified as priority areas in the SWARS and/or the Spatial Analysis Project (SAP). The Partners shall review and refine targeted critical forest landscapes each year or as deemed necessary by the Partners, and incorporate modifications into respective planning documents, as appropriate.

c. Consult with each other on the development of program ranking criteria, permissible cost-share rates and application evaluations for forestry related projects. The Partners will work to ensure that forestry-related projects receive a representative allocation of total available conservation technical and financial assistance, as appropriate.

d. Collaborate on the development and implementation of a communication plan between the Partners, including all appropriate agency staff and affiliated Partners, to further forestry-related initiatives in a consistent manner. The communication plan should include, but is not limited to, sharing of records, material and information, and especially program guidelines; communication channels between the Partners; and dissemination of information to all agency staff involved in initiatives associated with this MOU.

e. Participate in Partner meetings, including work groups, committees, and councils, among others, to enhance the Partners' interactions and cross-training efforts, as well as to recognize and integrate local, regional and national initiatives.

f. Collaborate on outreach and education to private landowners, communities, and the general public on forestry-related initiatives, sustainable management, best management practices and other activities.

g. Encourage the use of forestry consultants for planning purposes by supporting training and certification programs for forestry Technical Service Providers, which may include workshops, webinars, site visits or other resources available.

h. Subject to the availability of funds, enter into Contribution Agreements to further initiatives under this MOU, which may include, but are not limited to, jointly funded new position(s) focused on:

- 1) Increasing forestry outreach to privately managed lands;
- 2) Assisting privately managed lands with management plan development;
- 3) Assisting privately managed lands applying for and enrolling in financial assistance programs;
- 4) Providing technical assistance for implementation of forestry practices;

- 5) Providing training and educational workshops and materials for privately managed lands and Partners staff, as appropriate; and
- 6) Other objectives that further the protection and enhancement of forestry resources.

The Partners agree to enter into a separate agreement(s) from this MOU to facilitate initiatives. Contribution Agreements will include goals for the project(s) or position(s) that must be met in order to continue any cost-share funding under the agreement, as appropriate.

- i. Promote the control of and limit future establishment of non-native invasive species in the Hawaiian Islands. Specifically, NRCS and USFS will comply with Executive Order 13112 limiting the use of federal funds for activities with the potential to introduce or spread invasive species (Appendix B), and DLNR and HADC will voluntarily follow similar principles. The Partners will use the Hawai‘i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment for initial screening of potentially invasive species. Support of the Hawai‘i-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment tool and program (including assessment staff to collect information on plant biology, ecology and invasiveness, and to predict whether plants may become invasive in Hawai‘i) is a priority and the Partners will work together to identify funding support for this effort.
- j. Work to establish Cooperative Weed Management Areas or a Conservation Cooperative Partnership Initiative focused on forest management including the control of invasive species.
- k. Participate in an annual interagency review of initiatives under this MOU to gauge the need for modifications or improvements to the MOU or initiatives under the MOU and/or agency-specific programs.

**7. I work for the NRCS. What specific commitments has my agency made (in addition to those identified under question 6, above) with respect to the Joint Forestry MOU?**



NRCS has agreed to:

- a. Authorize the use of approved Hawai‘i Forest Stewardship Program management plans as forest management plans for the purposes of funding under EQIP or other appropriate NRCS programs.
  - (i) NRCS will work with DLNR and the USFS to revise and update the Forest Stewardship Program’s management plan template to include information required for NRCS program contract agreements. Forest Stewardship management plans following this revised template and approved by the Forest

Stewardship Advisory Committee will be a complete plan containing all information required for entry directly into NRCS contracting software.

(ii) NRCS will work with DLNR to coordinate the review of submitted Forest Stewardship project proposals for NRCS program eligibility requirements.

(iii) NRCS will notify the Partners of all joint-program forestry projects under this MOU that include financial assistance components, at least annually.

b. Ensure that forestry-related projects, including those with approved Forest Stewardship management plans, receive a representative allocation of total available conservation technical and financial assistance each year, and consult with the Partners on an adequate level for this allocation.

c. Assign NRCS staff to serve on the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee convened by DLNR, and local or state work groups hosted by Partners, as appropriate.

d. Provide technical support and program training to Partner staff, as requested, to assure that they understand NRCS programs, conservation planning policy, procedures, structural designs (as applicable), and other practices that are required to meet NRCS standards and specifications to assure proper communication is conveyed to potential participants.

**8. I work for the DLNR. What specific commitments has my agency made (in addition to those identified under question 6, above) with respect to the Joint Forestry MOU?**



DLNR has agreed to:

a. In relation to the Hawai'i Forest Stewardship Program and management plans:

(i) Work with interested privately managed lands to develop a Forest Stewardship management plans for their property or project.

(ii) Support and coordinate the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee which will be responsible to review and to advise the Partners concerning approval of all Forest Stewardship management plans. DLNR will assure that staff and personnel associated with the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee have adequate knowledge to plan and apply various forestry related practices.

(iii) Provide authorization and final approval of all Forest Stewardship management plans through the State Forester.

(iv) Direct landowners with approved Forest Stewardship management plans to their local NRCS office for possible enrollment into an NRCS financial incentive program.

- b. Work with NRCS to revise and incorporate all necessary information that is required to initiate contract agreements under NRCS financial incentive programs into the Hawai'i Forest Stewardship Program Handbook and associated management plan templates.
- c. Provide training, in conjunction with USFS, to NRCS and HACD staff on forest stewardship, forestry management practices to expand capacity in the Partners.
- d. Continue to provide technical assistance to NRCS forestry participants with approved Forest Stewardship management plans, as requested. DLNR will provide assistance to Partners, as needed, in completing forestry management plans outside of the Forest Stewardship Program.
- e. Assign DLNR staff representation to participate on the State Technical Advisory Committee, convened by NRCS, and local or state work groups hosted by Partners, as appropriate.

**9. I work for the USFS. What specific commitments has my agency made (in addition to those identified under question 6, above) with respect to the Joint Forestry MOU?**



USFS has agreed to:

- a. Provide annual financial assistance to DLNR for the administration and implementation of the Hawai'i Forest Stewardship Program as well as other State and Private Forestry (S&PF) programs directly or indirectly supporting the management of privately managed lands. USFS will also offer opportunities for additional financial assistance through the S&PF Redesign competitive grants process, including providing information about these programs to the Partners.
- b. Consult with the Partners to reconcile guidelines for annual accomplishment reporting so that Partners know how to properly report cooperative accomplishments.
- c. Facilitate forestry technical assistance to cooperative projects with NRCS, DLNR, and HACD to benefit privately managed lands, from national and regional Forest Service experts and programs including, but not limited to, the Reforestation, Nurseries and Genetic Resources (RNGR) team; Research, especially concerning silviculture; the Forest Health program; Cooperative Fire Assistance program; and forest land taxation specialists.
- d. Assign USFS staff representatives to participate on the State Technical Advisory Committee, convened by NRCS, and staff representatives to serve on the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee convened by DLNR, as well as other local or state work groups hosted by Partners, as appropriate.

- e. Initiate active correspondences with other USDA agencies, including Farm Service Agency and Rural Development, to explore opportunities for collaboration with national and regional Forest Service experts and programs including but not limited to biomass utilization technical experts and the Forest Products Laboratory.

**10. I work with a local Soil and Water Conservation District, what are some things that we can do (in addition to those identified under questions 6, above) to help further the purposes of the Joint Forestry MOU?**



The Soil and Water Conservation Districts can:

- a. Cooperate and coordinate with forestry agencies in the delivery of forestry assistance to privately managed lands.
- b. Invite partners to participate in regional and national meetings and conservation initiatives.
- c. Assist in identification of forestry needs on a regional basis.
- d. Collaborate with Partners in landscape or watershed planning and implementation.
- e. Increase your knowledge of forestry programs.

**11. Is the intention of the MOU to assist those that intend to preserve their forest as a refuge or to provide assistance to those that are managing their forest for timber and other forest products?**

Both! DLNR Chairperson William Aila, Jr. made a concise statement of the goals that the Partners would like to achieve when he said, “The Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Hawai`i Association of Conservation Districts will help to build a partnership of trust and collaboration critical in sustaining the health of our unique forest lands and watersheds. Additionally, the MOU promotes local job growth in and diversification of the forest products industry thereby contributing to the sustainability of our island communities.”

**12. A forest landowner/manager has land that they would like to manage (either for its ecosystem values or its forest products values, or both). Where do they start?**

The best way to start is to make contact with any of the MOU partners: the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the State’s Division of Forestry and Wildlife, the local NRCS office, or the State and Private Forestry Office of the United States Forest Service. Any of these partners will provide a landowner/manager with the necessary support and guidance they may need to successfully work their way through the programs which will



provide both planning and financial assistance. If they do not currently have a forest management plan, then the best program to assist them will be the Forest Stewardship Program. Information about this program can be found at <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/dofaw/forestry/fsp> which also provides a link to the Forest Stewardship Handbook. The Forest Stewardship Handbook contains all of the information that is needed by the forest landowner to participate in the program. Procedures for application, proposal and management plan content, forestry practices, cost-share rates, and more can be found within the Handbook.

**13. The landowner/manager has completed the Forest Stewardship Program and has a forest management plan, how do they get the financial assistance to implement it?**

Financial assistance provided through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) most clearly complements planning accomplished through the Forest Stewardship Program by enabling the forest landowner/manager to implement practices that are called for in their Forest Stewardship plan.

**14. Are there other State and/or Federal programs that can assist a forest landowner/manager in conserving and managing their forest?**

Yes! There are many programs administered by the MOU Partners that may be appropriate for a forest landowner/manager in conserving and managing their forest. As a forest management plan is developed under the Forest Stewardship Program, the landowner/manager will identify the very specific goals and objectives they will have for their forest. The vision they develop for the future of their forest (and how they plan to get there) will inform them, and the Partner agencies that are working with them, which additional programs might make sense. Some of the additional programs that are available to forest landowners and managers include: Hawai'i CREP, the Natural Area Partnership Program, the Conservation Cooperative Initiative Program, Agricultural Management Assistance, the Forest Legacy Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, the Wetland Reserve Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and the Healthy Forests Reserve Program, just to name a few.

