

## **Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Virtual Meeting  
February 11, 2021

**Present:** Janet Britt (Chair), J.B. Friday (Chair-Elect), M. Irene Sprecher (Ex-Officio), ‘Olu Campbell, Jennifer Higashino, Bart Potter, Eva Blumstein, Jordan Jokiel, Nicholas Koch, Malia Nanbara, Kalena Blakemore

**Staff:** Marissa Chee, Tanya Rubenstein, Kylee Wideman, Jade Rhodes, Katie Friday (U.S. Forest Service)

**Guests:** Mathew Cocking (Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)), Philip Richardson, Adam Laeha, Laura Ka‘akua (Hawai‘i Islands Land Trust (HILT)), Shae Kamaka‘ala (HILT), Rick Ralston, Raquel Dow, Wade Lee, Justin Lee, Amber Lyman, Andrea Dean

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:00am.

### **2. Welcome and Introduction of Members**

Members were welcomed and introduced.

### **3. Welcome and Introduction of Guests**

Guests were welcomed and introduced.

### **4. Review and Approval of September 9, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

- The Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (FSAC) reviewed the meeting minutes from the September 9, 2020 meeting.
- Chair Britt said that the date was not noted in the minutes.
- Member Higashino said she was inadvertently listed as staff on page 6.

**Motion to approve the September 20, 2020 FSAC meeting minutes. Moved by Member Friday; seconded by Member Koch.**

**Approve: Britt, J.B. Friday, Koch, Blakemore, Jokiel, Blumenstein, Potter, Higashino, Campbell; Oppose: none; Abstain: Nanbara.**

**Motion Passed.**

### **5. Proposals**

#### **5.1 Richardson, Ko‘olaupoko District, Honolulu County**

- Staff Rhodes introduced this 8 acre project located in Ahuimanu Valley on O‘ahu. The goals of this project are to remove invasive plant species that will allow for the natural regeneration of koa and ‘ōhi‘a and increase native plant diversity on the property. Their long-term goals are to create a native overstory, establish a subsistence agroforestry system and install access trails to support maintenance, and ecotourism/community activities.

- Chair Britt asked if the 45% slope on portions of the property are compatible with ecotourism activities. Guest Richardson said they do not plan to bring large groups and they will not be doing much in the steeper areas.
- Member Jokiel asked what their education and outreach activities will look like and what the impact on their neighborhood might be. He also asked how much clientele would be from the local community. Guest Richardson said they envision bringing a discrete vehicle like a van through the neighborhood to his property. Small groups would be taken to different locations in the property as they are educated. He estimated that 50-75% of clientele would be local.
- Member Potter asked what the mulching practice will entail. Guest Richardson said they have a small portable mulcher and that they will primarily be using local material. They have also asked companies who have excess mulch to deposit it at the property. Guest Laeha added that they will use weed mat and synthetic mulch where it is too difficult to bring chips.
- Member Potter added that the botanical names of plants should be included in the plan.
- Member Campbell asked if commercial activities are permitted in the current zoning. Guest Richardson said he needs to research more and that he wants to make it work. He added they are not looking at doing it for a large profit. Member Campbell said they should include what activities are allowable in their current zoning in plan.
- Member JB Friday said that the applicant should include letters of support from the local community and organizations in their management plan. The plan should also specify how the project will improve watershed health and include justifications for these statements.
- Guest Richardson clarified that they are not asking for support for fruit trees.
- Member Blumenstein said the plan should include a description of the current erosion and mitigation measures.

**Motion to approve the project proposal for the development of a management plan. Moved by Member Koch; seconded by Member Campbell.**

**Approve: Britt, Nanbara, Koch, Blakemore, Higashino, Potter, Campbell;  
Oppose: Jokiel, Blumenstein; Abstain: J.B Friday.**

**Motion Passed.**

**Motion for the staff to approve the cost share for the management plan. Moved by Member Koch; seconded by Member Campbell.**

**Approve: Britt, J.B. Friday, Campbell, Higashino, Potter, Blumstein, Jokiel, Koch, Nanbara, Blakemore; Oppose: none; Abstain: none**

**Motion Passed.**

## 5.2 Hawaiian Islands Land Trust, South Hilo District, Hawai'i County

- Staff Rubenstein introduced the 885 acre project located in South Hilo. The property features a wet native forest with uluhe, 'ōhi'a, and koa at the top of the

project area. This project is focused on native forest management, koa silviculture, and cultural community engagement/outreach. The biggest threats are weeds and feral ungulates that will be mitigated by fencing. It is adjacent to state land and is difficult to access.

- Member JB Friday commented that imagery shows several ‘ōhi‘a trees that appear symptomatic with Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death (ROD) infected trees. It is important to take ROD into account when planning. One suggestion he provided was to pick an area where they are going to harvest koa and if ‘ōhi‘a get damaged and infected, they can fell the trees in that area.
- Member Higashino commented that the inventory information and objectives were somewhat vague. Guest Kamaka‘ala said that the management planning process will help inform them of their proprieties and activities.
- Member Nanbara asked for clarification on if they have selected locations for silviculture and native forest restoration. Guest Ka‘akua said that once they get a better understanding of the land, they will plan accordingly.
- Member Potter asked about the need for an environmental or archaeological assessment for the economic components of the proposal. Guest Kamaka‘ala said it would depend on what their management actions are. Staff Rubenstein said that if state funds are used, even in the agricultural district, that would trigger an environmental assessment.
- Member Koch, who had visited the property before, said that the property is heavily impacted by weeds such as miconia and strawberry guava.

**Motion to approve the project proposal for the development of a management plan. Moved by Member Jokiel; seconded by Member Blumenstein.**

**Approve: Britt, Campbell, Higashino, Potter, Blumstein, Jokiel, Nanbara, Blakemore; Oppose: none; Abstain: J.B Friday, Koch.**

**Motion Passed.**

**Motion for staff to approve the cost share for the management plan. Moved by Member Blumstein; seconded by Member Higashino.**

**Approve: Britt, J.B. Friday, Campbell, Higashino, Potter, Blumstein, Jokiel, Nicholas Koch, Nanbara, Blakemore; Oppose: none, Abstain: Koch**

**Motion Passed.**

### 5.3 Ralston, Kona District, Honolulu County

- Staff Rhodes introduced this 8.5 acre project located in Pālolo Valley on O‘ahu. The property was formerly dominated by dense stands of koa and features rare old koa growth with patches of ‘uluhe, pala‘ā, and hāpu‘u. The property abuts Honolulu Watershed Forest Reserve. The primary goals are to restore the natural koa overstory, increase native plant biodiversity, and allow for the natural regeneration of mixed mesic forest resources. The project plans to plant wilt resistant koa and collaborate with the community and non-profit organizations, such as the Ala Wai Watershed

Association and University of Hawai'i system to serve as an educational resource for future land stewards interested in conservation and native reforestation.

- Guest Laeha commented that the landowner has done invasive species removal on his own and has engaged with local hunters. Temporary fencing has also been installed.
- Member Potter commented that he has visited this property and commends the work the landowner has done so far. He said the property also has native birds such as 'elepaio, pueo and 'auku'u. He felt that the project has great chance of success.
- Member JB Friday reiterated his comment about providing justification showing how the project will improve the watershed. He also felt that the cost listed for removing woody material was low and is realistically higher. He continued that support letters from organizations and further explanation of public benefit in the plan would be beneficial.

**Motion to approve the project proposal for the development of a management plan and have staff approve the cost-share. Moved by Member Koch; seconded by Member Blumstein.**

**Approve: Britt, Campbell, Potter, Blumstein, Jokiel, Nanbara, Blakemore, Koch; Oppose: none; Abstain: JB Friday.**

**Motion Passed.**

#### 5.4 Pu'u O Hoku Ranch, East Moloka'i, Maui County

- Staff Wideman introduced this proposal located on East Moloka'i. The vision is to reduce the number of deer and pigs and reforest the ranch property. The proposed project area is 173 acres of former pasture land dominated by invasive shrubs and grasses. They are proposing to start at a small scale during the first 10 years, and eventually establish a dryland forest across the 1,000 acres of the ranch. Last July, the ranch established a one acre test spot to help determine feasibility and gain experience. This project will include a community involvement plan to offer hunting, subsistence, and recreation opportunities.
- Guest Henke commented that their goal is conservation on the property. They may get rid of all of the livestock on the property which will provide opportunity for other land uses. The deer population is a major challenge with a rate of one deer per acre. This creates a substantial amount of erosion which creates runoff on the coral reef.
- Member Jokiel commented that the project will be challenging and that gains at scale are important on Moloka'i. He was encouraged by the engagement by Puu O Hoku Ranch with the watershed partnership.
- Member JB Friday asked about the plans for water irrigation on the property considering the severe drought conditions. Guest Henke said they have a water system and envision one line going down the mountain which they can switch off later. He wants to minimize the need for weeding and irrigation as much as possible. Member JB Friday continued that they should collect detailed data on plant survival and monitoring test plots before the project is implemented.

- Member Koch also encouraged the use of irrigation to assist with establishment. He felt they could utilize machines to help with site preparation work. Guest Henke said he preferred to use a lower impact approach. Currently, their site preparation work does not involve clearing the whole surface, only where they want to plant. Member Koch recommended they use an excavator to do spot preparation.
- Member Blumstein asked how they are going to balance maintaining deer numbers for hunting with reforestation. Guest Henke acknowledged that fencing is important for establishment but said that fencing is the last resort and will be used more sparingly. There is also pushback and concern from the local community regarding large fences on the property.

**Motion to approve the project proposal for the development of a management plan and have staff approve the cost-share. Moved by Member Jokiel; seconded by Member Nanbara.**

**Approve: Britt, Campbell, Potter, Blumstein, Jokiel, Nanbara, Blakemore, Koch; Oppose: none; Abstain: JB Friday.**

**Motion Passed.**

## **6. Management Plans**

### **6.1 Dow, Puna District, Hawai'i County**

- Staff Rubenstein introduced the 25 acre project located in Volcano on Hawai'i Island. Approximately 17 acres are degraded 'ōhi'a-hapu'u forest, and 8 acres are grassland. They are focused on doing native forest restoration and are aiming to emulate the nearby Small Tract Ola'a forest in the National Park. The main threats to the project are pigs, invasive grasses, ROD, and other invasive plants, such as Himalayan raspberry and ginger.
- Member JB Friday asked about the public benefits of the project and if they will be collaborating with Volcano Arts Center's educational program. He also inquired if there is going to be insight sharing with other similar projects in the neighborhood. If so, this should be described in the plan. He also asked to separate the herbicide brand name and the active ingredient and include more information on the soil's taxonomy.
- Member Nanbara said that more detail is needed on the implementation schedule and management units. A map with the management units should be included. She was also concerned about potential overlap between practices cost-shared by both FSP and NRCS.
- Member Koch said that the plan should also include a better soil map, detailed description of herbicide applications, and use of equipment.

**Motion to defer the management plan and encourage the applicant to resubmit after comments are addressed. Moved by Member Koch; seconded by Member Nanbara.**

**Approve: Britt, Campbell, Potter, Blumstein, Sprecher, Nanbara, Koch; Oppose: Jokiel; Abstain: JB Friday, Blakemore.**

## **Motion Passed.**

### 6.2 Herzog, Hana District, Maui County

- Member Wideman introduced the Herzog project located in Hana on Maui. The property is 150 acres with 106 acres proposed for FSP. The property was previously former sugar plantation and has been sporadically grazed in recent years. They are currently installing perimeter fencing around the property. The vision is to create a healthy native forest and agroforestry area with silvopasture components. Invasive species on the property include strawberry guava, African tulip, and feral pigs.
- Member Nanbara wanted clarification on their proposed species list for the native restoration area since it includes non-native species. Guest Lyman explained that the list includes some species they may use to protect the native species while they are young. Guest Dean said they are open to removing species that may not be appropriate for the area.
- Member Nanbara also asked for more information on invasive removal methods. She added that if they are including non-native species in the native area, the goals for the area should reflect that. There also needs to be more of a distinction between what is proposed for planting versus what is existing.
- Member Campbell asked what the public benefits are of the project. Guest Lyman said that they want to help with availability and movement of local produce in Hana. She added that the property is not suitable for public access. They are also employing local workers on their crew. Member Campbell was also concerned about price tag and lack of benefit associated with forestry component. Guest Dean added that Kahanu Garden and a farm are located directly below the property, so landowners are trying to be good stewards of their lands since the properties below would be affected by their actions.
- Member JB Friday questioned the need for non-native species in the native area. The native trees they are proposing do not have high shade requirements. He also questioned the need for timber trees in the agroforestry area if they will not be harvested. He wanted more information on the food production component and how they envision that will look.
- Member Koch asked if they have had any issues with the high amount of rainfall in their test plot. Guest Lyman said that the plantings are doing well so far.
- Member Blumstein asked if miconia control is in the budget and if they are working with the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC). Guest Lyman said miconia is concentrated more in the drainages and upper section where they have had trouble accessing. MISC has not been on property yet.
- Member Potter expressed that there is concern of including Toona trees because of its very invasive potential.
- Member Jokiel asked about the plan for outplanting uluhe. He also felt that the budget per acre is high. Guest Dean said Rich von Wellsheim advised them that said that if invasives are cleared, the existing uluhe would proliferate.

**Motion to approve the management plan, contingent upon comments from the committee being addressed. Moved by Member Koch; seconded by Member Campbell.**

*Continued discussion:*

- Member Sprecher commented that non-natives included in the plan should include Weed Risk Assessment score.

**Approve: Britt, Campbell, Potter, Blumstein, Sprecher, Nanbara, Koch, Blakemore; Oppose: Jokiel; Abstain: JB Friday.**

**Motion Passed.**

### 6.3 Hāloa ‘Āina, South Kona District, Hawai‘i County

- Staff Rubenstein introduced the 2,780 acre project located in upper Kealahou on Hawai‘i Island. This project is a conservation easement under the Forest Legacy Program. DOFAW is currently working with landowners to draft the conservation easement. A forest management plan is a condition of the easement. They are currently not seeking state funding for implementation, but may do so in the future. There is dry native forest that features naio, a‘ali‘i and ‘iliahi. Their short-term goals include reduction of ungulates, weeds, and fire threat, and to maintain and expand forest cover. The long-term vision is sustainable sandalwood oil production and having a diverse native forest in perpetuity.
- Staff Katie Friday recommended the plan provide more detail on the archaeological resources and any other voluntary actions the landowners may want to take regarding protection of archaeological resources. Since plans under the national standards are required to address climate change, she offered to share an additional resource on areas where rainfall or vegetation conditions may change in the next 100 years.
- Member JB Friday, who has recently visited the property, expressed his amazement at the transformation on the landscape.
- Guest Justin Lee clarified that they are currently harvesting ‘iliahi on the neighboring Kamehameha Schools property and do not anticipate harvesting from their property for the next 10-12 years. They are not planning on producing oil from other species.

**Motion to approve the management plan, contingent upon comments from the committee being addressed. Moved by Member Jokiel; seconded by Member Sprecher.**

**Approve: Britt, Nanbara, Jokiel, Blumenstein, Sprecher, Blakemore, Potter, Campbell; Oppose: none; Abstain: J.B. Friday, Koch.**

**Motion Passed.**

## 7. **Forest Stewardship Program Handbook**

Staff is currently updating the FSP Handbook to make it better aligned with NRCS, simplified for landowners, and include a detailed appendix for consultants.

**Motion to create a permitted interaction group to review the FSP handbook and provide guidance. Moved by Member Nanbara, seconded by Member Koch.**

**Approve: Britt, Nanbara, Jokiel, Blumenstein, Sprecher, Blakemore, Potter, Campbell, J.B. Friday, Koch, Oppose: none; Abstain: none**

Member Britt and Nanbara volunteered to participate in the permitted interaction group.

**8. 2021 Legislative Proposals Affecting Forest Management**

Staff Rubenstein will send out legislative updates from Member Campbell and Staff Chee at a later time.

**9. Announcements and Travel**

Staff Chee will send a doodle poll at a later time to schedule the next FSAC meeting.

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12pm.