

Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting
Papahana Kualoa
46-403 Haiku Road
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
July 15, 2022

Present: J.B. Friday (Chair), Janet Britt, Kalena Blakemore, ‘Olu Campbell, Bart Potter, Malia Nanbara, Jordan Jokiel, Matthew Cocking, Seana Walsh

Staff: Tanya Rubenstein, Marissa Zhang, Brittany Lawton, Katie Friday (U.S. Forest Service), Taylor Young (Kupu Intern)

Guests: Adam Laeha (consultant for Loui plan), Leah Rothbaum (Trust for Public Land), Kelly Brannon (U.S. Forest Service), Riley DeMattos (DOFAW)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:45am.

2. Welcome and Introduction of Members and Member News and Announcements

- Chair Friday announced that Natural Resource and Environmental Management (NREM) Department at the University of Hawaii took over the Army Natural Resources Program of Oahu (ANRPO) from the Botany Department. As a result, they were able to hire Dr. Clay Trauernicht, who was previously the Wildfire Extension Specialist, in a new restoration and conservation position. He also shared that a biocultural restoration position was approved.
- Staff Rubenstein announced that the new Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) Forestry manager, Jenny Grimm, will be starting in August.
- Member Campbell announced that in relation to the Farm Bill, he was coordinating native Hawaiian advocacy efforts in relation to the bill. He added that if there was anything else that members wanted to add as it pertained to the scope of the bill, to send them to him so he can add it to the testimony.

3. Welcome and Introduction of Guests

4. Review and Approval of March 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (FSAC) reviewed the meeting minutes from the March 23, 2022 meeting.

Motion to approve the March 23, 2022, FSAC meeting minutes. Moved by Member Britt; seconded by Member Blakemore.

Approve: J.B. Friday, Britt, Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Campbell, Cocking, Walsh; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion Passed.

5. Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) Management Plans

5.1 Loui (Holokila LLC), Volcano, Hawaii

- Staff Lawton introduced the 10.6 acres project located in the Puna district of Hawaii Island. The project is located within a 1.5 mile radius of Volcano National Park, Olaa Forest Reserve, and Kahaualea Natural Area Reserve. The main objectives for this project are ecosystem restoration of the relict native forest, improving habitat for native forest bird populations in the area, and educational outreach to the community. The management practices proposed for this site includes ungulate fencing around the perimeter of the property, removal of non-native species, and outplanting native vegetation to rebuild the ecosystem. An interesting aspect of the long-term goals of this project is the educational outreach and revenue component to help in funding the ongoing management. The project is nicely situated due to the history of the landscape and architecture, as well as its proximity to Volcano National Park. Visitors will be able to stay at guest cottages and learn about the importance of native forests, native forest birds, and be able to participate in restoration efforts.
- Member Nanbara commented that the budget section of the plan should have one column designated for Natural Resource and Conservation Science (NRCS) cost share rates separate from (Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) contributions. Guest Laeha said they are in the process of applying for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding, as the overall labor cost for kahili ginger removal will be high. Member Nanbara asked if the cabins mentioned in the proposed outreach plans currently existed on site. Guest Laeha said there are 2 existing cabins on the property and no additional structures will be added.
- Member Britt asked for clarification on what “exceptional old growth ‘ōhi‘a meant in the management plan. Guest Laeha said that exceptional old growth ‘ōhi‘a trees are considered larger than other ‘ōhi‘a in the stand, which suggests that those trees are from an older generation. There is a lack of a younger ‘ōhi‘a generation in these stands due to the encroachment of tibouchina. The density of planting will save in weeding costs long term. Member Britt questioned by ‘ōhi‘a was not included in the tree and shrub planting list on page 20. Guest Laeha said with giant ‘ōhi‘a trees existing on the property, the seed bank in the area will help with reforestation. Also due to Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death (ROD), they don’t want to move material from potentially ROD infested areas.
- Member Potter mentioned that the name of the biocontrol was misspelled in the plan. He also questioned whether caging desirable seedlings was a practical solution for ungulate damage. Guest Laeha said that real fencing of the property’s perimeter would be the most effective protection against ungulates. However, caging would be done on select native species that are uncommon on the property.
- Member Blakemore suggested that Guest Laeha include letters of support from the community for the projects. She didn’t see any included with the plan, but highly recommended getting buy in from community members that want to be involved. She also noted that on a site visit done with Staff Rubenstein and Lawton and Pat Conant in June, significant clearing had already been done at the entrance of the property.
- Member Walsh questioned the realistic practice of caging seedlings and suggested that the plan be clearer on what specific species are being protected. She also noted that the

plan mentioned monitoring plants for nutrient deficiencies, but there was no follow-up plan noted. Member Walsh commented on the community outreach aspect of the project, noting that it wasn't clear on who the audience was, and it was misleading to refer to visitors as being part of the "community". Guest Laeha said that due to the proximity to Volcano National Park (NP), it would be hard to compete with their current outreach program. Instead, the outreach will be geared more towards people who may not have accessibility to Volcano NP and the wildlife viewing opportunities there. Guest Laeha explained that not everyone can hike into Volcano NP at ideal times to watch native forest birds. However, guest would be able to stay at the cottages on the property and would be able see native forest birds either from the cottages or on short hikes through the property. Guest Laeha also intends to engage specific community groups by collaborating with local native nurseries to help in plant selection for the restoration efforts. Guest Laeha also mentioned that the property owners are aware of the scope and amount of work that will be required and are committed to the goal of the project regardless of potential revenue income from visitors.

- Guest Laeha asked if the committee had any recommendations for community groups that they could engage with. Chair Friday said there are 3 other FSP projects in the Volcano area that he could visit. Pat Conant's property would be a good reference for the kind of work that could be done. Staff Rubenstein mentioned that Pat Conant was there on the site visit in June and spoke with Lucas Morgan (relative to the property owners) about sharing seed and plant material for outplanting on the Loui Property.
- Chair Friday had a question about the budgeting for tree and shrub site prep. He asked if site prep costs could be displayed as cost per acre because they wouldn't be actively tilling the ground to prep for planting, but instead planting directly into weeded areas. Member Cocking said that NRCS does site prep in cost per acre and not plant. Guest Laeha said that some parts of the property are patches of uluhe surrounded by tibouchina groves that would require heavy clearing. The weed control wouldn't be "pin-to-pin" clearing so it would be hard to quantify since the patches of weeds aren't continuous. Chair Friday asked about the brush management section of the budget and what percentage of the property's understory has tibouchina, guava, ginger. Guest Laeha said 70-80% of the property has tibouchina, guava, and ginger, with ongoing management required for ginger after the initial removal. Chair Friday commented that the costs for the brush management section are appropriate.
- Member Jokiel commented that the groundcover establishment section of the budget may want to take into consideration the higher costs for selected groundcover species due to the highly competitive costs for those species (i.e. palapalai). Member Cocking added that NRCS payment practices aren't designed around individual plants, but rather based on broadcast seed application.

Motion to approve the Loui Property management plan. Moved by Member Potter, seconded by Member Jokiel.

**Approve: J.B. Friday, Britt, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Campbell, Cocking, Walsh;
Oppose: Nanbara; Abstain: none.**

Motion Passed.

6. FSP Draft Handbook

- Chair Friday commented that the updated handbook format is readable and understandable. He didn't have any major issues with the updates but will communicate small points with staff.
- Staff Zhang noted that the updated handbook reflected the report summarized at the previous Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) meeting. She also mentioned that the timetable to finish the handbook would be a finalized draft by the next meeting in the fall.
- Member Britt noted that the address for the branch office for Hawaii Island did not have a city.
- Member Jokiel commented that the format of displaying the range of costs in the management practice section made it much easier to reference and understand. He also noted that the handbook should emphasize the "additional considerations" on page 17 to encourage people to develop innovative practices. He said supporting innovative projects is important for improving future management practices. He also questioned the benefits of small projects to the program.
- Member Blackmore commented that the new format and design is easy to understand and read.
- Member Potter asked whether the public could view completed management plans. Staff Rubenstein said the public can request plans that staff will redact before sending. She also said they don't want to have complete management plans available to the public to avoid plagiarism. Chair Friday added that there are additional concerns about unwanted people coming to the property because plans can describe the tools and equipment that might be present. Member Nanbara also added that lists of endangered/threatened species on properties shouldn't be made available to the public. Staff Zhang commented that the FSP website has project highlights and not whole plans.
- Member Blakemore recommended that existing projects host "open-house" types of events to showcase successful projects and encourage networking among landowners. Member Nanbara added that DOFAW used to organize landowner workshops with speakers from NRCS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that provided lessons and information for the public who were interested in landowner assistance programs. Chair Friday commented that several landowners on Hawaii Island do that simply because they enjoy sharing what they've done on their property.
- Staff Friday questioned if it was time to start thinking on how to share what the broader program is. She mentioned the possibility of supporting shorter term plans after hearing that Papahana Kuaola was initially hesitant to commit to a 10 year contract with the FSP. She added that maybe it was time to develop different aspect of the program such as short plans, practice plans, technical assistance, etc. She also added that maybe we should consider the FSP manual as being imbedded within a larger set of services.
- Member Campbell felt that project "readiness" should be included in the evaluation criteria. He noted that some past plans were more prepared to start than others. Member Campbell added that projects that need funding in order to get matching funds by a certain time should be ranked as a higher priority. He also added that the economic sustainability and feasibility of a project should be included in the evaluation criteria. There should be some sort of assurance that there will be some source of reliable funding through the duration of the project. Papahana Kuaola shared that the changes in leadership direction

directly halted work for several years. Member Campbell suggested adding something about resilience and leadership direction to ensure successful completion of the project. Staff Young added that Matthew Schirman of Hui Ku Maoli Ola recommended that all community groups vested in the project enter a contract with FSP. Campbell also brought up other factors of resiliency such as organizational structure, if the land is being leased, and if changes in land ownership could affect the zoning. Member Nanbara reminded members that because landowners are entering into a 10 year contract with the state, they should be aware of the long-term commitments or their contract could be terminated.

Motion to approve PIG report on the FSP Handbook revisions. Moved by Member Nanbara, seconded by Member Campbell.

Approve: J.B. Friday, Britt, Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Campbell, Cocking, Walsh; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

7. FY24 Forest Legacy Project

7.1 Maunawili Valley, City and County of Honolulu

- Guest Rothbaum of The Trust for Public Land (TPL) reintroduced the Maunawili Valley FLP project and updated the FSAC with the current status on funding the land acquisition. The project didn't get federal funding during the last fiscal year (2021), but TPL is seeking alternate sources of funding. Guest Rothbaum said TPL is proposing to resubmit the same project as last year, with the acreage of the land acquisition being adjusted for subdivision of the land and community groups buying parcels that DOFAW doesn't have any interest in. The non-golf course sections of the property are being divided into 6 parcels: 3 parcels being bought by the state, 2 parcels being bought by Ho'okua'aina, and 1 parcel being bought by Kauluakalana. The state is interested in purchasing the golf course as it provides key access points for forested area and hiking trails. It was also noted that the current leasee of the golf course had first claim on buying the property, with the state next in line. Guest Rothbaum also mentioned they plan to acquire \$1.5 million from the "America the Beautiful Challenge" via National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and they are working with the Marine Corps to secure Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) funding (asking for \$10 million, but expecting to get less than the requested amount).
- Member Potter noted the photo on the Maunawili Project proposal wasn't actually of Olomana and should be retaken to accurately display the area of the project. Member Potter also mentioned that significant forestry had been done in the area in the 1900's and that those old plantings could be a component of forest management going forward.
- Guest Rothbaum mentioned that Marigold Zoll, DOFAW Oahu District Manager, was looking to incorporate new partnership models for forestry and resource management with community groups.
- Member Jokiel added that he was happy to see these types of large scale projects being protected from development on Oahu. After seeing the restoration done at Papahana Kuaola, it was promising to see the potential for large land acquisition projects. **Motion to approve the Maunawili FLP project proposal as a FLP project. Moved by Member Britt, seconded by Member Nanbara.**

Approve: J.B. Friday, Britt, Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Campbell, Cocking, Walsh; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion Passed.

8. Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee

- Staff Zhang reminded members Britt, Walsh, Jokiel, Campbell, and Blumenstein that their terms are ending at the end of December. Member Britt has served 2 consecutive terms so she would need to rotate out at least 1 year before reapplying. The other members may reapply for another term at the next meeting.

9. Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee Chair Elect

- Staff Zhang explained that because Member Menard had to step down, the Committee needs to vote on a new Chair Elect to serve out the rest of Member Menard's term. The Chair Elect will also serve as Chair starting in January 2023. Chair Friday will serve as Chair through the rest of 2022.

Motion to nominate Member Nanbara as Chair Elect. Moved by Member Britt, seconded by Member Campbell. Member Nanbara accepted the nomination.

Approve: J.B. Friday, Britt, Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Campbell, Cocking, Walsh; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion Passed.

10. Ongoing Forest Legacy Projects Update

FY17 Hoomau, South Kona, Hawaii

- Staff Rubenstein explained that the project unsuccessfully ended due to a combination of running out of time (expired the 5 year grant period with the Forest Service) and difficulty with coming to an agreement on what the easement terms would be around the development of the easement area (lodging, camping, etc) with the landowner. The Nature Conservancy (owns adjoining property) had issues with the aspects of development, and they were going to be the donation cost share for the project.

FY18 Haloa Aina, South Kona, Hawaii

- Staff Rubenstein reported that DOFAW has a contract for the appraisal for the project and are close to getting a final easement and survey. DOFAW is just waiting for the right numbers to come out of the appraisal to make an offer to the landowner. Staff Rubenstein went on a site visit with Guest Brannon to look at the property. The landowner is still enthusiastic and motivated about the project and DOFAW hopes to close by the end of the calendar year.

FY18 Kamehamenui Forest, Kula, Maui County

- Staff Rubenstein said there are plans for an extensive management planning process with a consultant which will include community meetings, archeological surveys, withdrawing an upper portion of sensitive habitat from a ranching lease which has become a politically sensitive issue. They have Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funding to build ungulate fencing that will tie into Haleakala Ranch fencing.

FY21 Na Wai Eha, Wailuku, Maui

- Staff Rubenstein said that funding has been acquired and the last year was spent negotiating with the landowner. The County wanted to buy a portion of the lower property from Wailuku water for water infrastructure and DOFAW wanted to buy the upper portion that has little water infrastructure. However, there is some reluctance from both the county and landowner to take on certain aspects of the deal. The DOFAW district manager on Maui, Scott Fretz, has lined up a private donor that would potentially buy the lower part and donate it to the state if the county backs out. There are still structural aspects of the project to work out.

FY22 Hana Highway Rainforest, Hana, Maui

- Staff Zhang explained that DOFAW originally requested \$6 million for 1,050 acres across 16 parcels and the project was ranked #3 by the national Forest Legacy Program (FLP) panel. DOFAW later became aware of title issues on several of the parcels. Due to the title issues, the scope of the project has been reduced to 395 acres across 4 parcels that DOFAW has received title reports for. Of the 4 parcels, 3 have broken title. DOFAW is currently working with the seller on how to move forward, possibly through quiet title action and wait for title reports for the other parcels.
- Staff Friday added that DOFAW signed a grant application for \$1.9 million for the 4 parcels. She added that DOFAW had to relinquish their place for funding so other national projects would be able to use the funding in time, creating “goodwill” from Washington for their transparency. This has put DOFAW in a good position when title reports become available to ask for funding down the line. Should clean title reports become available, DOFAW could swap different parcels within the area through the Forest Service and not go through Congress. Staff Friday commented that the Forest Service is willing to be accommodating to make sure that the issues of land title are done in a “pono” way.
- Staff Rubenstein asked the committee if there are any community groups our resources that could help navigate title issues in Hawaii. Member Campbell said a lot of title issues in Hawaii are related to kuleana lands and suggested talking to Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation. Member Blackmore added that quiet title land transactions are a disservice to Hawaiian families that may have ownership of land title. She reiterated that DOFAW should be transparent and give Hawaiian families an opportunity to participate in the program. Member Nanbara suggested the Hawaiian Civic Clubs in the area may be a resource for archival information. Member Campbell added that these types of searches require more research on lineage and archived documents rather than a simple title search. He also added that the University of Hawaii Law School has a clinic program that helps families with legal ties to land issues, which could be an opportunity for collaboration between students and the state.

11. Announcements. Discuss upcoming meeting dates.

Staff Zhang will send a doodle poll later to schedule the next FSAC meeting.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3pm.