

Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Meeting
DOFAW Makiki Baseyard
2135 Makiki Heights Dr.
Honolulu, HI 96822
November 10, 2022

Present: J.B. Friday (Chair), Malia Nanbara (Chair-Elect), Kalena Blakemore, Bart Potter, Jordan Jokiel, Matthew Cocking, Seana Walsh, Kirk Derasin, Michael Walker (Ex-Officio), Eva Blumenstein

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

Guests: Erika Espaniola (Pu'u O Hoku Ranch, consultant), Rudi Hunke (Pu'u O Hoku Ranch, general manager), Karin Frost (Hoku Nui)

1. Call to Order

-The meeting was called to order at 12:30pm.

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

- Chair J.B. Friday announced that there will be a “Grower’s Roundtable” in January on Hawai’i Island for nurseries and growers. The forum will be geared more towards nurseries and growers in the forestry conservation industry and focus on sharing knowledge and information.
- Member Cocking announced that NRCS would be expanding their support for fencing in 2023 through policy changes. There will be a special consideration variance pathway through Michael Constantinides. The interim practice 808 Soil Carbon Amendment will be an official nationwide practice, 336 Soil Carbon Amendment (agronomy practice, incorporates biochar).
- Member Nanbara announced that those interested in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Fish and Wildlife Service partners funding should start getting projects and proposals ready. Pre-proposals will tentatively be due in February.
- Member Potter announced the 30th Annual Hawai’i’s Wood Show occurred and focused on invasive and non-native species. The show was well received by the community and sold a significant number of products.
- Member Walker announced that the 2nd round of community wildfire defense grants will be opening in the spring. For more information email Walker.
- Member Blumenstein announced that there is a watershed protection restoration grant program through Maui County Water Supply for projects that focus on passive critical watershed protection and active restoration that have a direct impact on Maui County service areas.
- Staff K. Friday encouraged the committee to think of new ways to engage new landowners to participate in BIL funding programs and opportunities. Member Nanbara suggested targeting specific landowner groups to attend future workshops since previous workshops often had repeat landowners who were interested in the topics but did not fit the program requirements.

-Member Walsh shared that there are two open positions with the National Tropical Botanical Garden, one in Hana, Maui as the collections manager for the breadfruit collection, and one in Kalaheo, Kaua‘i as the senior scientist for tropical crop diversity.

4. Review and Approval of July 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes

-The Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (FSAC) reviewed the meeting minutes from the July 15, 2022 meeting.

Motion to approve the July 15, 2022 FSAC meeting minutes. Moved by Member Potter; seconded by Member Blakemore.

Approve: J.B. Friday, Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Cocking, Walsh, Walker, Derasin; Oppose: none; Abstain: Blumenstein.

Motion Passed.

5. Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) Management Plans

5.1 Pu‘u O Hoku Ranch, Moloka‘i, Hawai‘i

- Staff Lawton introduced the 160 acre project on the east side of Moloka‘i. The proposed stewardship area is within proximity to lands managed by the East Moloka‘i Watershed Partnership, Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the Kalaupapa National Historical Park. Pu‘u O Hoku (POH) plans to restore the degraded ecosystem through fencing and working with the Moloka‘i Hunting Club to remove feral ungulates, perform non-chemical methods of weed control, and reforest barren areas by outplanting various native species suitable to those habitats.

-Guest Espaniola added that the focus of the stewardship area is to control soil erosion and runoff that is occurring on the coasts, especially the main gulch in the stewardship area. She added that the area was chosen because the size of the management area is large enough to make an impact but small enough that it can be completed within 10 years. Guest Espaniola also shared that POH is a biodynamic farm so they will not use herbicides for site prep and weed control. Instead, they will be implementing innovative methods such as steaming treatment for weed control and erosion control and mulching with the use of coir logs made of jute and wood chips.

-Guest Hunke shared that POH was encouraged by the committee in the last meeting to increase the management project area due to the ungulate fence construction. He explained that his experience and knowledge are based primarily on the ecosystems and species in Europe and that he was not as knowledgeable about native Hawaiian plants and ecosystems. Because of this, Guest Hunke asked the committee how much flexibility he had with the specific species planting list in the management plan. Chair J.B. Friday inquired with FSP staff about what kinds of changes to the plan in the species use would require Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) approval. Staff Rubenstein clarified that the objective for the POH management plan was for the FSAC to approve the plan. She added that pending fund availability, POH can make changes to the plan regarding the species being planted if there are no changes to the budget. If changes are made to the budget, that would require board approval.

-Member Nanbara asked Guest Hunke if they were looking for assistance in the planting section of their plan. Guest Hunke explained that they are planning to use natural processes to substitute manpower. He was planning to implement the same direct seeding practices that we had success

with within European ecosystems. Guest Hunke explained that he needed flexibility in the planting portion of the plan to account for the success and failure of direct seeding, species selection, and planting methods. He also noted that seed availability may be an issue since large volumes of seed are needed to account for lack of germination or less ideal growing conditions. Guest Hunke said they plan to direct seed species that they have an abundant collection of on hand. Member Nanbara added that POH should seek technical assistance with NRCS and work with the Waikoloa Dry Forest Initiative since they have somewhat similar growing conditions.

-Member Potter mentioned that uhaloa (*Waltheria indica*) would be a great early successional plant for reforestation efforts since it seems to appear on its own in exposed and disturbed barren landscapes. He mentioned that they could possibly loosen the dirt prior to direct seeding. Guest Hunke mentioned his apprehension about loosening soil with heavy equipment since it could lead to major erosion. Chair J.B. Friday mentioned Brad Sakamoto on Moloka'i was producing large quantities of seed and maybe a seed source for POH.

-Member Walsh suggested that POH consider different combinations of species that they included on their list since not all the species mentioned are found within the same elevation and habitat. *Acacia koaia*, for example, may not be appropriate at lower elevations where the habitat is barren and dry.

-Member Walker inquired about the success of the steam weed control methods on woody species. Guest Hunke said they have been seeing success so far on woodier species like *Schinus terebinthifolius* and *Acacia confusa*. Member Walker asked how the steaming equipment was being moved around the site. Guest Hunke replied that the steam unit is small and mobile with wheels. They plan to put the steam unit on the back of one Kubota and the water tank on another Kubota and see how it maneuvers at 300ft in elevation. Chair J.B. Friday mentioned that this steaming method is similar to flame girdling with sapwood species, minus the threat and risk of starting a potential wildfire. He also added that it would be interesting to see how this non-chemical method works and if it's time effective as it would provide useful information for other landowners opposed to herbicide use.

-Member Jokiel added that the POH species list is a good starting point. He also mentioned that scarification success depends on the environment and habitat intactness. Based on his observations and experience doing restoration work at Haleakala Ranch, if the site isn't already predominantly native and is in bad ecological condition, they may not see success in direct seed sowing. He added that they may create a bigger problem by disturbing the ground and increasing their weed problem.

-Guest Hunke expressed his concerns that the efforts of planting will require too much labor to keep those plants alive amongst the weeds. Member Jokiel added that the POH budget allocates for weed control and that follow-up maintenance is needed especially at low-elevation sites. Member Jokiel also added that the hardest part isn't the initial knockdown of weeds, but the follow-up maintenance. Member Nanbara mentioned that the budget listed "site prep" as 16 acres being treated twice and suggested that it should be listed under "weed control" instead. Chair J.B. Friday followed up by saying it makes sense that site prep is done twice since the second round of weeding will kill whatever flushes out after the initial treatment.

-Member Potter inquired about the type of oil that was going to be used on the palm fronds. Guest Espaniola explained that the idea is to use linseed oil and soap on the palm fronds to help

prolong the breakdown of the vegetative material so that the fronds will last longer for their mulch purposes. She also noted that they hope to see adaptability with this practice.

- Chair J.B. Friday shared that there have been other direct seeding projects on the Big Island and that the success of those projects has been highly dependent on weather and rainfall. He also noted that it also depends on the volume of seed you can collect (the more seeds that are being sowed increases the number of seeds that will germinate into a plant, even if germination rates are 1-2%). Chair J.B. Friday will find information for POH on the success of the Mauna Kea Restoration Project and Pu‘u Wa‘a Wa‘a. Staff Rubenstein also added that she would find information on the strategies used for restoration efforts on Kaho‘olawe.

- Member Walsh asked for clarification on the mention of Kanaloa (*Kanaloa kahoolawensis*) in the POH plan since the only individual known to exist in the wild is on Kaho‘olawe. Guest Hunke clarified that it was likely a typo and that it should have been uhaloa (*Waltheria indica*).

- Staff Zhang mentioned to committee members that they can email any minor comments or suggestions about the POH plan to FSP staff to pass along to POH staff.

Motion to approve the Pu‘u O Hoku Management Plan contingent upon comments from the committee being addressed. Moved by Member Nanbara; seconded by Member Blumenstein.

Approve: Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Cocking, Walsh, Walker, Derasin, Blumenstein; Oppose: none; Abstain: Friday

Motion Passed

5.2 Hōkūnui FSP Management Plan Revision, Maui

- Staff Zhang introduced the request for approval to reduce the scope of the Hokunui plan to what they have already completed. Hokunui will also commit to maintaining the work they have already done. Hokunui is not requesting additional cost-share funding but will instead be reducing the cost-share in their budget. Staff Rubenstein clarified that this situation would be a revision to an existing plan that has a cost-share agreement that was approved by BLNR. Since they are requesting a reduction in their cost-share agreement, they will have to go back to the BLNR, but before going to the BLNR the FSAC will have to recommend whether they should approve the revision. She added that this process was different from minor adjustments to plans since they are adjusting the budget portion of their plan.

- Guest Frost shared that Hokunui’s initial ideas and vision were a bit more grandiose than what was realistic. Due to the hardships that they have been experiencing, they have asked for a reduction in the acreage of the management plan.

- Member Nanbara asked if bringing down the temporary 6-ft deer fencing down to 4-ft hog fencing would be sufficient given the deer pressure in the area and the lack of completion of the perimeter fencing. Member Nanbara wanted to clarify if the internal temporary 6-ft fence would remain until the perimeter fence was complete. Guest Frost shared that was not determined yet and that the temporary 6-ft fencing had been relatively effective and that the 4-ft fencing on the property was primarily being used to keep the animals on the property out of the forestry section of the management area. Member Nanbara wanted clarification on whether the 6-ft perimeter fencing would still be kept. Guest Frost confirmed that the 6-ft perimeter fence would remain for now but explained that the property had been subdivided leading to issues of installing 6-ft

fencing along the roadside due to road widening re-ordinance by the City and County, which would have completed the perimeter fence.

-Chair J.B. Friday asked if Hokunui had underbudgeted for fencing costs because of issues like the road widening reordinace. Guest Frost replied that the issue isn't the lack of funds for fence material but due to the road widening, they haven't been able to install the remaining 1.5 mile section of fence along Pi'iholo Road. Deer are infiltrating the property from that open section of the property, but the top and sides of the property are deer-fenced.

-Member Jokiel reiterated that the entire property is not completely fenced yet and that the 5-acre management area is deer fenced temporarily. He asked the committee if FSP can partially fund the completion of a fence around the 5-acre management area to keep the project area protected and ongoing. Since they've done so much work already, they should try to protect whatever assets and investments they have already made. Member Jokiel noted that while it may cost more out of pocket to complete the bottom section of the fence, waiting for the City and County will cost more in the long run. Guest Frost said she would be open to having a fence within a fence to protect the work that has already been completed and added that the actual reforestation area is more like 8.5 acres. She added that they have the fence material on the property and could possibly use that to fence off the internal forestry section. Staff Rubenstein added that revisions to the plan would reduce the management area, which will result in unused funding. She noted that Hoku Nui could potentially reallocate that unused funding for the completion of a smaller fence in the FSP and OHA area.

-Member Potter noted a typo of *Moringa* in the plan on page 4.

-Chair J.B. Friday inquired about the issues related to the farm production side of the operation and if it was the animal side (not covered by FSP cost-share) or the plant side. Guest Frost shared that they had approximately 1,000 chickens on the property for egg production and issues with country regulations and codes that slowed down operations due to water restrictions. But in terms related to FSP, fruit crops that were planted (lemons, key lime, avocado) will take at least another 2 years to mature and produce harvestable produce to be sold to market. Due to this issue, they have no income. Chair J.B. Friday asked if this was a problem with planning or if they anticipated a delay in production. Guest Frost believes that they have been slower to get trees into the ground than anticipated. Plants in the ground are no more than 1.5 years old and fruit production hasn't happened. She shared that it has taken the team a lot longer to prepare the soil since they do not use any chemicals to eradicate the weeds.

-Chair J.B. Friday asked what lessons can be learned for future agroforestry projects in the future. Often people will report "pounds of food" harvested as a measurement instead of the monetary value. He noted that agroforestry systems are complex and cost a lot more to manage. He posed the question "how do you translate the traditional pacific island agroforestry to a modern economy?" Member Nanbara commented that Hokunui was the first of its kind to come through the FSP and lead to other programs exploring agroforestry and making technical guides on functional agroforestry projects. She added that the original intent of this project should be maintained in the revised management plan. The agroforestry portion of the plan and the bulk of the work done was the original intent of the plan, and while they are missing the native forestry component Hokunui has done a large portion of what they committed to.

-Member Cocking added that NRCS's mixed agroforestry specifications for species diversity and density include at least 20% composition of native plants in the design. They have never done

any studies on the economics of that kind of system but would be interested and worthwhile. He also noted that most agroforestry projects that NRCS has supported are not the “bread and butter” component of these operations, but rather a novel practice that supplements incomes within a larger operation of a more central product being farmed.

-Member Jokiel added that one of the strengths of Forest Stewardship should be to encourage innovative projects that evolve forestry practices with the times and needs of the community it supports.

-Member Nanbara inquired about fencing in the OHA section and whether that area should be included in the revised fenced area since culturally significant plants were being protected. She added that since there would be available funds due to the reduction in the scope of the management plan and the internal fence construction would be occurring, they might as well include that area in the fence. Guest Frost added that a lot of that area is already fenced in with 4-ft fencing and would be something they would be interested in integrating into the revised plan.

Motion to approve modifications to the Hokunui Management Plan. Moved by Member Cocking; seconded by Member Blumenstein.

Friendly amendment to recommend consideration of installing 6-ft fencing permanent fencing around the completed plantings. Moved by Member Cocking; seconded by Member Jokiel.

Friendly amendment to recommend staff work with Hokunui to determine the most effective configuration of 6-ft fencing. Moved by Member Nanbara; seconded by Member Cocking.

Approve: Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Cocking, Walsh, Walker, Derasin, Blumenstein; Oppose: none; Abstain: Friday.

Motion Passed.

6. FSP Handbook

-Chair J.B. Friday noted that his previously submitted comments on the handbook had not yet been incorporated. Staff said there may have been a versioning issue and would review his comments again after the meeting.

-Staff K. Friday commented that she had conceptually asked for a cross-check between federal and state components of the Forest Stewardship plan and saw that there could be improvements to the climate change section. She added that it would benefit to have a prompt for the planner to guide the landowner in considering what changes may occur over a few decades with respect to climate change. The US Forest Service has subregional models that would give alerts to areas receiving less rainfall or more prone to storms.

-Staff Rubenstein elaborated on the process after FSAC approval. Staff is intending to request BLNR approval for both the handbook and rule revision at the same time. She also noted that FSAC members could send more comments and suggestions to be incorporated into the handbook draft prior to being presented to the BLNR.

-Member Walker asked how often the cost share rates get updated given the rates of inflation. Staff Zhang reported that the Permitted Interaction Group met several times in 2021 to update

the cost share rates and that the in-kind rates were increased across the board. Staff Rubenstein also added that the ranges were kept broad and allowed for justification for certain practices such as fencing, which require three quotes rather than stringent budget ranges.

Motion to recommend the approval of the revised FSP Handbook with comments from FSAC members. Moved by Member Nanbara; seconded by Member Blakemore.

Approve: Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Cocking, Walsh, Walker, Derasin, Blumenstein; Oppose: Friday; Abstain: none

Motion Passed.

7. Forest Stewardship Rule Revision

-Staff Rubenstein shared that the committee initially considered a rule revision in 2012 but it did not move forward. In 2021, the legislature approved revisions to the statute governing the Forest Stewardship Program. Given the handbook revisions that were initiated in 2012 and the recently revised statutes in 2021, it is perfect timing to revise the Forest Stewardship Rules. Staff Rubenstein clarified that the rules will incorporate changes in the statute, as well as changes initiated in 2012. The process to revise the rules had been approved by the BLNR Chairperson and an Attorney General has been assigned to work on the legal aspects of the rule revision. If the FSAC approves the initiation of the revision process, it can then go to the BLNR for approval where the revised rules will be subject to public hearings and input. Staff Rubenstein added that FSAC members could add input either during the public hearing phase or prior.

-Member Jokiel added that he supported the new rules revision which articulated clearly that long-term leaseholders that want to do forestry work can participate in the program

-Member Potter noted that there are inconsistencies in the capitalization of agency names throughout the document. Staff Rubenstein replied that the Attorney General will look over and change the format as needed and legally required.

-Member Jokiel also added his support in changes to the rules that allowed landowners to use partner funds as a match to FSP funding, as long as the total cost-share assistance is under 90%. He noted that that revision provides powerful incentives for landowners to do forestry work.

Motion to recommend the approval of the draft amendments of the Forest Stewardship Rules. Moved by Member Nanbara; seconded by Member Cocking.

Approve: Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Cocking, Walsh, Walker, Derasin, Blumenstein, Friday; Oppose: None; Abstain: none

Motion Passed.

8. Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee

-Staff Zhang reported that 5 members terms will be ending at the end of 2022, and there is one seat that is currently vacant. There are 4 applicants for the committee whose terms will start in January 2023. Staff Rubenstein noted that the committee is losing the county representative and encouraged members to recommend any interested individuals to apply.

Motion to recommend all 4 applicants, Tim Flynn, Scott Fisher, Natalie Kurashima, and Aileen Yeh for membership on the FSAC. Moved by Member Nanbara; seconded by Member Blakemore.

Approve: Nanbara, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Cocking, Walsh, Walker, Derasin, Blumenstein, Friday; Oppose: none; Abstain: none

Motion Passed.

9. Ongoing Forest Legacy Projects Update

FY18 Haloa Aina, South Kona, Hawai‘i

-Staff Rubenstein reported that the state is still waiting for the appraisal to be completed (estimated that the appraisal and review appraisal by the U.S. Forest Service to be done by the end of the calendar year). Once the appraisal is complete an offer to the landowner can be made for the easement. Staff Rubenstein also noted that an unknown factor is how the forest sandalwood component will play into the appraisal value and that there are some options to make offers on some of the parcels in the event. Staff K. Friday added that they are waiting for the appraisal amount to determine what the next steps will be.

FY18 Kamehamenui Forest, Kula, Maui County

-Staff Rubenstein updated that DOFAW is in the middle of a planning process with the Forester on Maui, which has involved public meetings, contracting HT Harvey to produce a draft management plan by December 2022, and doing an Environmental Assessment for the trail and recreational components (paid for by Na Ala Hele). Planning to have a plan ready in April to present to the BLNR for approval.

-Staff K. Friday mentioned that from the Forest Service perspective the reforestation portion of the plan needs to be brought up to the 75% forest threshold. She also noted that the management plant is the last Forest Service component before the grant closes

FY21 Nā Wai ‘Ehā, Wailuku, Maui

-Staff Rubenstein reported that there are still issues with the county, state, and landowner. The state wants to move forward but there are still negotiations with the landowner and the county water systems. Status is at a standstill.

FY22 Hana Highway Rainforest, Hana, Maui

-Staff Rubenstein reported that there are ongoing problems with broken titles on many of the parcels. If title problems aren't resolved, not sure what the options are. Quiet titles are not looking like a promising solution. She added that they will need to meet with Alexander and Baldwin to see if the title to parcels is clear. In the end, Alexander and Baldwin want to sell the land but the state can't accept broken titles.

FY23 Proposed Project – Kāne‘ohe Pali

-Staff Rubenstein reported that the project was awarded REPI money and is high on the list for Forest Legacy funding. The process is moving forward with land surveys and phase 1 environmental studies. She also shared that the Trust for Public Land is working to get an agreement with the landowner.

FY24 Proposed Project – Maunawili

-Staff Rubenstein reported that the Trust for Public Land says they are close to finalizing an option agreement with the landowner. Funding for this procurement is looking promising with a combination of funds from Forest Legacy and REPI from the Navy. They may need to ask the legislature for \$3-4 million, which will help to purchase the golf course in addition to some of the REPI funds. The plan is to turn the golf course into a community site after the lease is over. Staff Rubenstein also added that the golf course would be managed by Land Division until the lease is over and turned over to state parks.

10. Announcements. Discuss upcoming meeting dates.

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

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:50pm.