

Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Siglo Tonewoods
47-4521 Old Mamalahoa Hwy
Waimea, HI 96743
March 1, 2023

Present: Malia West (Chair), Jennifer Grimm (Ex-Officio), J.B. Friday, Kalena Blakemore, Bart Potter, Mathew Cocking, Kirk Derasin, Jordan Jokiel, Aileen Yeh, Scott Fisher, Tim Flynn, Natalie Kurashima

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

Guests: Zachary Judd (Parker Ranch), Jesse Adams (Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership), JC Watson (Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership), Riley DeMattos (DOFAW), Steve Bergfeld (DOFAW), Nick Koch (Siglo Tonewoods), Ulu Kealiikanakaole (HILT)

1. Call to Order (Business Meeting)

- The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm.

2. Review and approval of November 10, 2022, meeting minutes

- The Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (FSAC) reviewed the meeting minutes from the November 10, 2022 meeting.

Motion to approve the November 10, 2022 FSAC meeting minutes. Moved by Member Friday; seconded by Member Blakemore.

Approve: J.B. Friday, West, Blakemore, Potter, Cocking, Derasin; Oppose: none; Abstain: Grimm, Yeh, Kurashima, Flynn, Fisher.

Motion passed.

3. Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) Management Plans - Committee will be reviewing and voting to recommend approval of submitted management plans.

3.2 Pia Valley Forest Stewardship Plan, O'ahu

- Agenda item 3.2 moved ahead of 3.1 due to scheduling and time for Guest Watson.
- Staff Lawton introduced the East Honolulu project in the ahupua'a of Niu. The FSAC had seen the project at the previous meeting in November during a site visit. Members were able to meet with Tyrone Montayre (property owner), JC Watson (KMWP program manager), Jesse Adams (KMWP planner), and Doug Harper (Malama Maunaloa). The project has a dedicated and regularly occurring volunteer movement led by the property owner through his non-profit, Protect and Preserve. The project is also part of a larger effort for watershed protection and reduction in stormwater and sediment runoff in conjunction with Malama Maunaloa, which has been working with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF).

- Guest Adams reinforced that the project is strategic and situated next to the new Pia Natural Area Reserve and the intent is to maintain the lower part of the valley. The project is 100% volunteer based. The plan would establish best management practices for volunteers to follow and refine to enact a landscape-level change. The project intends to intensively restore a 10-acre site, at a rate of one acre per year.
- Member Jokiel asked for clarification on the total cost and the land area/work zones. Guest Adams clarified that the budget is \$692,465.00 over ten years and that the budget does not include costs for fence construction, which are secured through the NFWF. Staff Rubenstein noted that the proposed fence would be 25 acres and that intensive restoration would occur on 10 acres within the fenced unit.
- Member Friday commented that the high estimated cost per acre was not surprising for O'ahu prices, but noted that this was due to the number of seedlings per acre. 2,000 seedlings per acre might be too dense and require thinning of trees in the future. While the high density of plantings is to account for mortality, those patterns are typically seen in patches rather than evenly spaced throughout. Since weed mat will be used, dense plantings are not necessary to shade out weeds. Member Friday recommended spacing the plants appropriately so thinning would not be required and which would reduce overall costs. Member Fisher commented that the planting density may be appropriate since sediment retention is one of the project goals. Member Friday added that using weed mat would help reduce erosion. Member Flynn added that planting density shouldn't only come from tree species and that the element of shrubs must also be considered. Guest Adams added that groundcover plantings were included in the budget and will occur in conjunction with the tree plantings.
- Member Flynn commented that the project incorporates mixed plantings with native and Polynesian introduced species, adding that Polynesian introduced species should be concentrated in the lower portion of the project area and focus on the native species in higher elevation sections of the property. Guest Adams commented that the intensive mixed plantings will be occurring in the lowest elevation section of the property within the 25-acre fence. If plantings were to occur outside of the 10-acre demonstration site close to the NAR, it would only be native species. Member Flynn asked if there was a way to quantify groundwater recharge and water quality with mixed Polynesian-native plantings. Member Potter added that the restoration that has already been done is within a narrow corridor off the trail and streambed and it doesn't represent large landscape-wide plantings, therefore wouldn't be impacting pockets of native forests present at higher elevations. Member West added that a large part of this project is community engagement and indigenous practices, therefore mixed plantings are appropriate in the intensive restoration area managed by volunteers. Guest Adams added that agroforestry was not a component of the plan and that there are no revenue goals. Member Kurashima added that the alluvial soils that are present in the area would traditionally be correlated to mixed-agroforestry plantings at this type of site on Oahu so a mixed planted strategy of fast-growing Polynesian species would be appropriate.
- Member Potter inquired if the selection of plants was driven by the species being donated to the project. Guest Adams commented that the selection of plants was based on what is currently found growing on the site and what was donated by volunteers.
- Member Flynn noted that the project would segway into the Pia NAR at the back of the valley and questioned if proximity to the NAR influences what gets selected for planting.

Guest Adams noted that a portion of the back property was designated as critical habitat and elepaio habitat, so the back section of the 25-acre fence unit would ideally be kept predominantly native.

- Member Flynn commented that the strong community involvement speaks well for the project. Member Fisher asked if there was an educational component and plan to get students to the site. Guest Adams commented that the main labor force is the volunteers led by the landowner through recurring workdays several times a month. These “Super Chill Saturdays” include an educational component with a speaker from a local conservation or environmental group/agency. The landowner also coordinates guided hikes with a botanist that teaches about native plants and identification. Local school children have also done field trips to the site. Member West added the interns and graduate students with Malama Maunalua have also gone to workdays at the site, as well as bringing groups of school children. Staff Atcheson also added that the landowner plans to build an education center in the future to better facilitate volunteer days and outreach. Plans for the educational center are outside of the FSP area and not part of the proposed management plan.
- Member Yeh questioned if the community surrounding the project area was in support of the project. Guest Adams commented that the Thompson family, which are major landowners in the area, have been in support of the project and that many of the regular volunteers live in the Niu/Hawaii Kai area. Staff Rubenstein added that the landowner allows public access to hikers that want to access the Pia Valley trail. The only limitation to property access is the landowner only allows permitted hunters.
- Member Potter inquired about what happens to the weed mat in the long run and if it is biodegradable. Guest Adams commented that the weed mat lasts 2-3 years before starting to break down into microplastics. They plan to remove the weed mat before it starts to degrade. Monitoring will be done to ensure grass doesn’t establish on the weed mat, which will also coincide with monitoring the mat’s structural integrity. Member Flynn added that while natural material would be a more environmentally friendly option, the ease of use by volunteers and costs of using weed mat vs. the liability of a other methods such as chipping makes sense. Staff Atcheson added that using wood mulch would not be advisable given Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle has been detected near Niu Valley. Member Fisher asked if there were other materials that could be used in place of plastic. Guest Adams commented that there was a wool product being developed out of New Zealand, but no other materials were being considered for the project.
- Member Friday commented that having strong community involvement is something that the committee wants to see. He also added that the plan should dial back the claims to benefit groundwater recharge. Since the recharge rates on the property are already low, there will not be a significant impact on recharge compared to areas of higher rainfall) Member Friday also questioned if there will be significant impacts on groundwater recharge when small non-native trees are replaced with small native trees, compared to removing water-consuming grasses with native trees. Member Friday noted that there will not be significant changes being made to the water lens and aquifer, which was mentioned in the plan as a major benefiting factor. He also added that removing and keeping feral animals out of the project would help reduce sedimentation and improve water quality. Member West inquired if Malama Maunalua was researching the impacts of native/non-native plants and size in relation to groundwater recharge benefits. Guest

Adams commented that the scope of Malama Maunalua's research was currently focused on water quality. Member Friday recommended that attention should be paid to the soil taxonomy types in a project area since a lot can be revealed in what those areas looked like and what would have grown there.

- Member Friday also inquired about the rock walls and whether the State Historic Preservation Division has been consulted. Member Fisher inquired if any archaeological surveys had been done in the area. Guest Watson added that a Site Plan Approval (SPA) had been approved for the lower parcel, but was unsure if an archaeological survey had been done in the area. Guest Watson also noted that the landowner did a cultural plan where they spoke with prominent people of the area about the history and cultural sites, which was used to develop the SPA. Member Fisher commented that the frequency of burials at a low-elevation site like Pia Valley would be something to be aware of. Guest Watson also added that fence construction would have no ground disturbance and that management would not be done around caves and cliffs. Member Fisher added that burials didn't only occur along caves and cliffs and that at lower elevations burials can be found almost anywhere. Member West added that part of the project has already received USFWS funding, so cultural survey work has already been done in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Member Friday commented that when listing herbicides that will be used, the active ingredient should be used and not just the product name. He added that staff implementing the plan may choose to find a generic brand or sometimes the brand name changes.
- Member Friday commented he was skeptical about the effectiveness of hydrogels. He noted that hydrogels work by absorbing water and moisture and that including them with plantings would result in water being pulled away from the soil and plant. Member Friday recommended that trials be done to test the efficacy of hydrogels, by applying hydrogels to some of plantings and seeing how they perform over time compared to plantings without hydrogels.
- Member Kurashima asked for clarification on the brush management being done outside of the FSP area. Guest Adams commented that brush management (weed control) would be done around existing pockets of native forests outside the fenced unit as well as targeting large mature incipient invasive non-native trees that are dropping seed and fruit throughout the property.
- Member Cocking recommended that Guest Adams look into incorporating NRCS practice 595 into the budget as it might better fit into the practice compared with brush management.

Motion to recommend approval of the Pia Valley Management Plan contingent upon comments from the committee being addressed. Moved by Member Friday; seconded by Member Potter.

Approve: West, Blakemore, Jokiel, Potter, Cocking, Derasin, Yeh, Kurashima, Flynn, Fisher, Grimm; Oppose: none; Abstain: Friday.

Motion passed.

3.1 Parker Ranch Forest Stewardship Plan, Waimea, Hawai'i

- Staff Rubenstein introduced the Waimea project on Hawai'i island. The restoration project would primarily focus on mamane forest establishment and would also support forest and

palila recovery efforts in the adjacent Mauna Kea Forest Reserve and Palila Mitigation Areas. She also shared that the project would have big benefits to the state given that a private landowner is interested in doing cooperative management on such a large scale. Due to the scale and size of the project, the management plan and budget was developed to help the landowner apply for multiple grant sources vs. obtaining all support from FSP.

- Guest Judd presented the 3,300-acre project on Parker Ranch as changing from one productive commodity (grazing) to a less productive land use as far as revenue for Parker Ranch. The project site is currently pasture and remnant native forests that were impacted by the 2021 Mana Road fire. The strategy of the project is a phased approach to keep fuels down and land in productivity through grazing for as long as possible until funding sources have been secured for reforestation efforts. Collaborations with the Mauna Kea Forest Restoration Project (MKRP) have been ongoing to learn about effective methods for landscape-scale restoration. Novel methods for fuel load reduction are also incorporated into the plan to combat the threat of wildfires, which is the largest threat to the area. There have been five lightning fire ignitions within the past few years, so wildfires will be a persistent threat moving forward.
- Member Potter inquired about what happens to the old mamane fence posts when new fence lines are being constructed along long fences. From a woodworker's perspective, it would be valuable to salvage the wood. Staff Rubenstein commented that due to the age of a lot of the old cattle fences, they would be considered historical and would require compliance if removed or destroyed. Since it ends up costing more to remove the old fences, they are often left standing when new fence lines are constructed. Guest Judd remarked that unfortunately, many of these old posts were burned in the most recent fire.
- Member Flynn inquired about whether spot spraying was realistic as a weed control method for site preparation and to encourage natural regeneration through the grass. Guest Judd commented that there is documented regeneration in remnant forests in neighboring Pu'u Mali, which has similar forest types. Guest Judd added that they expect natural regeneration to occur without spot spraying in areas where there are remnant forests left, but don't expect natural regeneration in open pastures.
- Member Flynn inquired about why the area was planned to be heavily planted with koa, even though the area was historically mamane forests with little to no koa. Guest Judd replied that mamane trees are all that is left after 150 years of cattle grazing. Judd shared that while there is currently no koa in the project site, there are remnant patches of koa just outside the project perimeter. Koa is being planted to provide shade and habitat, but also to account for the importance that koa has in the ecosystem at higher elevations. Koa is also a faster growing native species in comparison to mamane.
- Member Derasin inquired about why the fencing cost per foot was so high. Guest Judd replied that the costs incorporated into the management plan are currently the most realistic costs for fencing. Judd shared that the cost was based on a current DLNR fence bid and that the price used in the budget was on the high end. While the costs will likely be cheaper, he wanted to account for higher-end costs for planning purposes.
- Member Derasin inquired about how practical grazing using remote fencing would be in keeping cattle out of the forest and how educated the cowboys would be on the technology. Guest Judd shared that the technology has yet to be used in the state, so it has yet to be seen how practical the technology is. There may be issues (i.e., battery dies, the sensor goes bad, etc.), but it's the cost of doing business for the plan goals. It will require cooperative work

with the cowboys to quickly round the cattle in the event the technology fails. The alternative to remote fencing would be electric fencing, which is also not “foolproof”. The project wants to try to use this innovative technology and be adaptive.

- Member Derasin questioned how the project would reduce the high anticipated mortality rates of plantings, and whether irrigation, gels, etc. would be used. Derasin commented that given the high costs, reducing mortality should be addressed. Guest Judd shared that the area is challenging, being that it is in the frost zone and dry 6 months out of the year. Judd added that the project will be adaptive to changing environmental conditions and plant heavily during the wet season and plant nothing during the dry season. The project will likely take longer than 10 years due to challenging conditions. The project will be following the planting methods being used at Pu’u Mali, with no irrigation or post-planting watering.
- Member Derasin asked how bad the problem with naio thrips was in the area and if the planting list should remove naio. Guest Judd shared that the thrips are bad, but naio is an important component of the native forests. He believes thrip-resistant naio exists and the project would like to eventually plant thrip-resistant naio in the landscape. However, until orchards of thrip-resistant seed stock are established, they will try to plant individuals sourced from a wide genetic diversity. Judd added that eliminating naio from restoration efforts would be a disservice to the forest since it is such an important component of the ecosystem. Judd shared that he has seen individual naio exhibiting signs of thrip resistance and that it is just a matter of collecting seed and propagating. Member Friday shared that a project in Kona had collected naio seeds from a healthy tree and seedlings appear to be looking healthy, providing evidence that there does appear to be some resistance in wild populations.
- Member Grimm asked for clarification on the temporary conservation easement mentioned in the plan and the “commodity to no commodity” goal of the plan. Guest Judd clarified that having a temporary 30-year easement compared to a perpetual easement was more acceptable to the ranch. Member Fisher added that the state doesn’t hold temporary easements and the problem would be finding someone that does. Fisher added that the downfall of a temporary easement would be the lack of a tax deduction. Guest Judd clarified that although the pastures are productive lands, they don’t anticipate using the forests for any business return once these areas are restored. The goal is expanding habitat and improving watershed for conservation. While a business return on the forest restoration is not the intent of the plan, Guest Judd cannot speak to the future managers of the ranch someday financially benefitting from the work.
- Member Friday added that the projected costs of \$6,000 per acre were relatively low considering island cost. Friday also commented on frost damage to koa plantings and provided Hakalau as an example, where they plant only in the spring and avoid the summer dry season and the fall, when seedlings are most vulnerable to frost damage. Guest Judd added that it will be a learning experience and noted that the planting schedule will mirror MKRP.
- Member West mentioned to Guest Judd that they should seek the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) for funding opportunities and that they might be a good fit for the recovery program.
- Guest Judd mentioned that it was difficult to get quotes from fence construction and other vendors given the timing and scale of the project. Other cost estimates in the budget were

based on a living wage in Waimea and inflation over 10 years. Projected increases (3%) can be seen in the changing costs per acre over the course of the plan. As the project gets closer to implementation, the project will be refining the budget.

- Member Grimm inquired if there was any permanent protection on the ranch that would prevent any conversion to other uses. Guest Judd said that there wasn't, but the ranch is held in a trust for its beneficiaries. The likelihood of development is very slim. In 2017, the area was designated as important agricultural land, which restricts what can be done on the property.

Motion to recommend approval the Parker Ranch Restoration management plan contingent upon comments from the committee being addressed. Moved by Member Kurashima; seconded by Member Cocking.

Approve: West, Cocking, Kurashima, Yeh, Blakemore, Derasin, Jokiel, Potter, Fisher; Oppose: None; Abstain: Friday, Flynn, Grimm.

Motion passed.

4. Haloa Aina Conservation Easement, South Kona, Hawaii County.

- Staff Rubenstein reminded the committee that their role is to review potential Forest Legacy projects and review and approve potential changes to Forest Legacy projects. The Haloa Aina project initially received funding in the fiscal year 2018. As required by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) guidelines, the Forest Legacy program is required to achieve projected goals within 5 years of approval. The project has been proven difficult and an extension will be requested from the USFS. The project is moving forward and the landowner is committed, but there have been delays in the appraisal process and complications with the evaluation of the sandalwood oil resource. The appraisal is expected to be completed and with final review by the USFS by mid-April (2023). Since it is still unknown what the appraised value of all three parcels will be, Staff Rubenstein was looking for the flexibility to potentially buy 1 or 2 of the 3 parcels in the event there isn't enough funding to purchase all three parcels at once. This would allow phasing of the acquisition and the state could then request additional funding from the USFS and other sources to purchase the remaining parcel(s). Rubenstein reiterated that the goal was to still do easement on all three parcels but this may not be possible, depending on the appraised value and funding amount currently available.
- Member Fisher asked what division would be monitoring the easement. Staff Rubenstein replied that the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (state) would hold the easement and conduct physical, annual monitoring.
- Member Potter inquired if the appraised value is based on juvenile trees and the potential of what they will become, or if it was valued as the stand currently exists. Staff Rubenstein replied that the appraisal value was based on both criteria. Forest Solutions completed a forest inventory for existing forest on the property as part of their Forest Stewardship plan. Forest Solutions was also subcontracted by the appraiser to do an analysis of existing sandalwood resources, potential growth, and harvest projections with harvest restrictions from the conservation easement. Staff Friday added that an appraiser can never calculate precise value but will arrive at market value with as much rigor as other buyers in the market. The appraisal will provide the value of the land before and after the easement. Member Fisher also noted that the development potential of the property is likely the most

valuable feature. Staff Rubenstein noted that the parcels are Ag 20 zoning but that there were also covenants for the parcels that make development more challenging. Staff Friday added that the first step in the appraisal was to determine the highest and best use, whether it would be for development or sandalwood forestry, and the impact of the easement to restrict forest harvest or development. Staff Rubenstein added that she believes the appraisal will conclude that sandalwood forestry would be the highest and best use.

- Staff Friday commented that all three parcels are comparable, and all are being restored for sandalwood production and giving up development rights. Friday recommended that staff be able to proceed with the acquisition of one or two of the parcels in any configuration that would allow for the project to move forward after the appraisal.
- Member West questioned if there would be any long-term impacts to downsizing the scale of the project and not acquiring all the intended parcels with USFS money. Staff Friday commented that Washington has told them to do what they can do. The USFS budget is currently generous, so other projects haven't been knocked off the list for funds. Washington is also aware that inflation is a problem and that land values have increased across the country.
- Member Kurashima asked for clarification on the extent of the conservation easement. Staff Rubenstein clarified that the Forest Legacy Program allows for sustainable forestry, protection against development, and maintaining 75% forest cover. Member Fisher questioned what happens if disease or some other issue comes through and impacts the required 75% forest cover to remain in compliance. Rubenstein replied that there is an "acts of god" clause that would protect the landowner.
- Member Grimm asked if a re-appraisal would be required if two of the three parcels were purchased for conservation easements since it would likely change the value of the remaining parcel. Staff Friday mentioned that the appraiser was instructed to value the parcels individually and as a whole for the acquisition to move forward. If there will be a significant delay in acquiring the final parcel, staff will cross that bridge when they get there.
- Member Kurashima inquired how staff will prioritize which parcels will be purchased in the event a partial acquisition is the next step. Staff Rubenstein noted that all the parcels are similar, have nice forests, and are adjacent to intact forests. It would come down to the costs and the size of how many acres each parcel is, as they'd like to acquire as many acres as they could with the funds that are available. Member Kurashima noted that there are sections of the area that have older lava flows and thus have older growth koa and ohia rather than sandalwood resources, saying that those areas should be of the lowest prioritization if partial parcel acquisition was the next step.

Motion to approve flexibility of staff for the potential acquisition of one or two of the three parcels pending appraisal. Moved by Member Blakemore (with a friendly amendment of phase acquisition (*the intent is to acquire all parcels)), seconded by Member Flynn.

**Approve: West, Cocking, Flynn, Kurashima, Blakemore, Fisher, Potter, Friday;
Oppose: None; Abstain: Grimm, Derasin, Yeh.**

Motion passed.

5. Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee

5.1 Jordan Jokiel

- Staff Zhang introduced Member Jokiel's membership application for renewal. She also announced that there is one open seat and that current members could recommend potential applicants to staff. Member West requested that staff email current members with what islands and areas of expertise were absent from the current advisory committee.

Motion to recommend approval Member Jokiel's application for a second membership term. Moved by Member Fisher; Seconded by Member Friday.

Approve: West, Cocking, Flynn, Kurashima, Yeh, Blakemore, Derasin, Fisher, Potter, Grimm, Friday; Oppose: None; Abstain: None.

Motion passed.

6. Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee

- Staff Zhang reminded Members West and Blakemore that their terms end at the end of 2023, and that could reapply if they are interested. Staff Zhang also reminded Member Friday that his second consecutive term ends at the end of 2023 and that he would need to wait one year before reapplying for the committee again in 2025.

Motion to nominate Member Blakemore as Chair-Elect. Moved by Member Friday. Seconded by Member Cocking.

Approve: West, Cocking, Flynn, Kurashima, Yeh, Derasin, Potter, Fisher, Grimm, Friday; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion passed.

7. Ongoing Forest Legacy Projects Update

FY18 Kamehamenui Forest, Kula, Maui County

- Staff Rubenstein commented that the project is a fee acquisition owned by the state that was completed in 2019. The Maui district is working on a management plan that is scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2023. Public meetings, archaeological studies, cultural and environmental assessments, and traffic studies have been completed. Drafts will be presented to the public in an interactive StoryMap format for comments. Staff Rubenstein said that she would share the links to the plan and environmental assessment with the FSAC when they were available.

FY21 Na Wai Eha, Wailuku, Maui

- Staff Rubenstein commented that the project is a fee acquisition that has funding from the state and USFWS. The project is complex because the state wants to purchase the mauka lands but needs the county to buy to makai lands and purchase the water system. The Trust for Public Land and the Maui DOFAW district managers are helping with the project and re-engaging the new mayoral administration and County water manager on the issues. Staff Rubenstein commented that if the county doesn't purchase the water system the project may fall through since the landowner doesn't want to sell the land and water separately.
- Member Fisher added the complexities of the project come from the number of interested parties and political inclinations as well as broad public support. Member Fisher also added

that recent court rulings on the Na Wai Eha water allocations may influence County decisions.

FY22 Hana Highway Rainforest, Hana, Maui

- Staff Rubenstein commented that funds for the project had been secured through grants for Alexander and Baldwin lands that were under threat for development. The Maui district wants the land since it is next to state parcels, however, several of the parcels have broken title. The Trust for Public Land is helping with the project to see how the lands can be acquired.
- Member Fisher added that this project is not as political as Na Wai Eha, but the issue of quiet titles raises concerns and issues. Member Fisher shared that Hawaii Land Trust (HILT) has taken the position to not accept quiet title lands. He questioned whether the state could take quiet title lands. Staff Rubenstein replied that the state can accept quiet titles only as a donation and cannot purchase land with such titles.

FY23 Kāneʻohe Pali

- Staff Rubenstein updated that funds for the fee acquisition have been secured with the USFS and the Navy with Readiness and Environmental Protection and Integration (REPI) funds. The project is on track with surveys getting done. The project is in partnership with the Trust for Public Land and would be held in fee by the State, with lands being added to the state forest reserve.

FY24 Maunawili Forest

- Staff Rubenstein updated the project is moving forward and the remaining funds needed for the acquisition are being requested from state Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funds. Funds have been secured from USFS Forest Legacy and Navy REPI funds. The project is in partnership with the Trust for Public Land and would be held in fee by the State, with lands being added to the state forest reserves.
- Member Potter asked for an update on the golf course component of the project. Staff Rubenstein updated that the state wants to buy the golf course and that Forest Legacy money cannot be used for the purchase. The golf course has a 40-year lease, so the state would take over the lease and collect the revenue and eventually convert it to a park or some other community use. The golf course is also a key component for access to the adjoining parcels and trails in the valley. REPI and CPI funds can be used for the golf course purchase, however USFS funds cannot.
- Staff Rubenstein announced a call for proposals for new Forest Legacy projects for private forest land that is threatened by development that would be a good candidate for a conservation easement or acquisition by the state. Potential projects must be land sold by a willing landowner.
- Member Potter asked if the 75% forest cover requirements must be met at the time of acquisition. Staff Rubenstein clarified that the land doesn't have to be forested at the time of acquisition but must be reforested to achieve 75% forest cover within 10 years.
- Staff Friday reminded members that by one of the statutes, one of the roles of the committee is to advise the USFS and DOFAW with the Forest Legacy Program and FSP. The USFS also has a smaller program with Community Forests and Open Space

Conservation program, which has had only one project in Hawai'i (The Amy Greenwell Garden). Guidelines for the program are a private landowner that is willing to sell the land or easement. For the Forest Legacy program, the land or easement must be held by the state and must achieve 75% forest cover within 10 years. For the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation program, the title would be held by the county or a land trust, and the land must already be 75% forest cover. - Staff Friday mentioned that with the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), more funding will be available to the Forest Legacy program. The program is generally very competitive, but Hawai'i projects tend to rank very well due to factors such as threatened and endangered species, water, and indigenous peoples. Generally, Congress wants projects to be completed within 2 years, but issues come up resulting in delays and extensions. Staff Friday announced that there will be calls for initiatives for grants to support the state or state's partners to resolve some of the issues for projects to be ready. Part of the IRA is the goal to meet the needs of disadvantaged, underprivileged, and indigenous peoples.

- Staff Friday shared that the USFS and American Forest Foundation have an initiative to facilitate information and tools for families to resolve land title and ownership issues. The program's goal is to address the institutions and get out of the pattern of loss of land for disadvantaged groups. Since broken title issues seem to be an issue, Staff Friday suggested a viable project could take place to make information available on procedures and issues for land claims to be sorted out legally. Friday also added that there would be funding opportunities for a project that would "level the playing field" and right past injustices to be corrected and make it more feasible to complete forest protection projects. Staff Friday is open to discussion on ideas for this type of project and others.
- Member Blakemore recommended a legal training or workshop with lawyers for Hawaiians to track and learn about land titles. Having a program could also be a compelling opportunity for Hawaiian lands to be protected into conservation easements, offering some ownership into "malama aina" kinds of work. Member Blakemore also added that the Office of Hawaiian (OHA) affairs could potentially be interested in sponsoring that type of initiative.
- Member Kurashima recommended consulting with Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation as a partner as well as a program that educated people on how to do title searches and their rights to land (even if they have a fraction of a title). It could potentially avoid situations where multiple individuals on a title can't come to a decision, and they just give up the land title rights to avoid conflict.

8. Announcements.

- Staff Rubenstein announced that the next meeting would likely be remote and via Zoom. The date hasn't been set yet but is projected for summer to early fall depending on FSAC approval needs for potential Forest Legacy Program project grant applications.

9. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.