

Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

In Person and Virtual Meeting (Hybrid)
47-200 Waihee Road
Kaneohe, HI 96744
April 19, 2024

Present: Kalena Blakemore (Chair), Bart Potter, Kirk Derasin, Scott Fisher, Natalie Kurashima, Timothy Flynn, Jordan Jokiel, Cheri Mardon, Daniel Bowman, Jennifer Grimm (Ex-Officio)

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

Guests: Adam Laeha (consultant), Zachary Judd (Parker Ranch), Parker Powell (Hiipaka LLC), Scott Fretz (DOFAW Maui District Forestry Manager)

1. Call to order

- The meeting was called to order at 11:54 AM.

2. Review and approval of December 12, 2023, meeting minutes

- The Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (FSAC) reviewed the meeting minutes from the December 12, 2023, meeting.

Motion to approve the December 12, 2023, FSAC meeting minutes. Moved by Member Kurashima; seconded by Member Fisher.

**Approve: Blakemore, Potter, Derasin, Fisher, Kurashima, Flynn, Jokiel, Mardon, Bowman, Grimm;
Oppose: none; Abstain: none.**

Motion passed.

3. Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) Project Proposals – Committee will be reviewing and voting to recommend approval of submitted project proposals.

3.1 Hiikapa LLC 2 FSP Proposal

- Guest Powell introduced the Hi'ipaka LLC proposal and the area where they manage the over 1,800-acre property in Waimea Valley on the island of O'ahu. The bulk of the work they've been doing has been the conversion of invasive species to native forests, ungulate control with staff and their volunteer hunting program, as well as engaging the community for native plant species outplantings. In addition to work in the upland regions, they also do wetland restoration work. Hi'ipaka LLC is currently in the last year of its approved 10-year FSP management plan. This proposal is for a continuation of the work they have been doing.

- Member Jokiel asked about the continuation of this project and whether the same funding sources would be utilized for the new proposal. Guest Powell noted that they are continuously looking for funding and have been working with USFWS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) for wetland mitigation and NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Services) for outplanting projects.

- Member Fisher asked about the waterbird birds on the property. Guest Powell said there are 'alae 'ula (*Gallinula galeata sandvicensis* or Hawaiian moorhen), 'alae ke'o ke'o (*Fulica alai* or Hawaiian coot), and 'auku'u (*Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli* or Black-crowned night heron). The property is in

close proximity to the James Campbell Wildlife Refuge, so they are along the migratory route for many endemic and indigenous waterbirds. The project has been doing predator control for approximately 15 years, primarily in the lower elevation sections of the botanical garden. They are looking for other funding opportunities to expand their predator trap grids.

- Member Fisher encouraged the project to do pollen sequencing work along the wetland corridors to help with determining what species to plant for restoration efforts. In his experience, the data from these studies have been incredibly informative and led to effective results. Guest Powell commented that they have not done pollen sequencing, but routinely do water quality monitoring and surveys, including ones that indicated the presence of 'o'opu (*Lentipes concolor*, or Hawaiian freshwater goby).

- Member Grimm asked about the nursery at the botanical garden and if they only grow plants exclusively for the property. Guest Powell commented that Waimea Valley Botanical Garden works with the North Shore Land Trust and grows native coastal plants for their restoration efforts, as well as Mālama Pūpūkea. The nursery also grows plants for the botanical garden, which often includes non-native species. The botanical garden also grows plants to give away to the public on Arbor Day.

- Member Jokiel commented that this project is a great example of being accessible to the public to see the work that is being done. He also noted the educational value of this type of project with the high amount of public engagement through volunteer workdays.

- Member Flynn commented that Hawaii Volcanoes National Park had a boot scraping station that sows the seeds and soil from visitors' shoes. He noted that it would be a great way to educate the public on how easily plants can spread and the importance of proper sanitation.

- Member Derasin asked if there are plans to make the area ungulate proof and noted that the proposal mentioned 3,000 pigs were removed over the last 10 years. Guest Powell added that they remove 300-400 feral pigs from the valley every year. The fenced management area is ungulate free but ongoing ungulate control is done for the botanical garden. Powell added that they have tried to apply for funding to fence off the entire valley, but the funding source was for bat mitigation and the property is very close to the windmills.

Motion to recommend for approval of the Hiipaka LLC 2 Proposal. Moved by Member Jokiel; Seconded by Member Fisher.

Approve: Blakemore, Fisher, Derasin, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Grimm, Mardon, Potter, Kurashima; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion passed.

3.2 Parker Ranch Makahalau FSP Proposal

- Guest Judd introduced the Parker Ranch project as a first trial for koa agroforestry on the property, located in Waimea on the island of Hawai'i. The area encompassed in the proposal was impacted by the Mana Road fire in 2021. This proposal aims to integrate livestock and recreational hunting as well as serve as an example of short-term revenue generation that enhances reforestation. The new project is looking to use lower stocking rates of timber plantings to allow for pasture grasses to persist longer for cattle grazing operations on the ranch. They are also looking to incorporate native forages, such as 'āweoweo (*Chenopodium oahuense*), to discourage cattle browsing of koa (*Acacia koa*) trees and combat two-line spittlebug (*Prosapia bicincta*) impacts on pasture grasses.

- Member Jokiel asked if the 2021 fire burned through kikuyu grass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*). Guest Judd confirmed kikuyu was impacted and that they will need to install a water tank in the project area. The water tank will likely be used as supplemental watering for plantings in the beginning but will also be revamped to be compatible with fire mitigation and forestry activities.
- Member Potter inquired about incorporating Primavera (*Roseodendron donnell-smithii*) and Ear Pod (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum*) as planting options. Guest Judd said that those species would be experimental to see if they can grow at the elevation and climate of the project site. Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) was another tree on the planting list that Guest Judd is interested in trying. Member Potter added that Sequoia has been growing on some of the outer islands at higher elevations. Member Derasin added that Forest Solutions planted sequoias on the west side of Mana Road about 2 years ago and they appear to be growing well.
- Member Derasin asked what the plans for the existing stand would be in the project area. Guest Judd answered that the snags and dead-standing trees as a result of the 2021 fire are safety hazards. They plan to bulldoze the hazard trees, especially since they intend to have school groups and volunteers in the area. Judd added that they would like to bring a portable mill to the site to showcase local hardwoods to interested groups.
- Member Kurashima supported the idea of native forage for the cattle and asked about the treatment and plan for the understory, fencing, and cattle rotation. Guest Judd added that in his observations, he has seen 'āweoweo come back even after the cattle heavily graze it. He noted that the native forage component will be experimental and could potentially deter bark stripping on koa. Member Kurashima commented that it would be a great economic resource. Member Fisher added that 'āweoweo would provide the cattle with a good source of protein, which is lost during silvopasture.
- Member Jokiel asked about the fencing for this project. Guest Judd added that the fencing in the plan will encompass the project site with electric or barbed wire along the interior corridors to allow for grazing while koa seedlings are growing. Parker Ranch's first FSP plan included virtual fencing to control grazing in the reforestation/timber areas. If that technology is successful, it could be incorporated into this project. Virtual fencing has a lot of potential for the ranch's operations as traditional fencing costs are high, smaller paddocks are typically better for grazing, and the herds could potentially be contracted out to manage grasslands in high-fire-risk areas. The initial upfront costs for this technology are high along with the annual battery costs, but the positives may outweigh the cons.
- Member Flynn asked whether the project intends to put a fire break. Guest Judd added that they may decide to put one in the future, but conventional maintenance is ethically challenging (use of herbicides around animals). Member Flynn suggested mulching the dead wood around the pines but also commented that it may create a habitat for Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*). Member Kurashima also commented that piles of dried logs could be a fire risk but might be utilized as temporary fencing for koa seedlings.
- Member Grimm asked where seeds for planting would be sourced. Guest Judd commented that seeds would be collected from existing trees on the ranch property, specifically koa and iliahi (*Santalum paniculatum*). The planting areas from this project, as well as Parker Ranch's 1st project, would also serve as seed sources for other reforestation efforts. Member Flynn asked what the final use of the planted koa would be. Guest Judd commented that the koa will be utilized for timber production and that any revenue generated from that would help to offset the costs of the project.

- Member Jokiel commented on the diversity of planting including non-native species, adding that it could have more value in the future koa-saturated markets. Guest Judd added that the Mexican cypress (*Hesperocyparis lusitanica*) that is used as windbreaks on the ranch does not have high timber value. Parker Ranch's joint venture with Kamuela Hardwoods can test out the market response to various timber species.

- Member Fisher asked about naio (*Myoporum sandwicense*) on the planting list, how that species is doing in the area with thrips, and where propagules will be sourced. Guest Judd commented that the naio thrips are everywhere and that seeds would ideally be sourced from individuals exhibiting signs of thrip resistance. Guest Judd noted that naio stands in Kona looked promising. Member Fisher recommended not planting any naio along the coast, as Maui currently doesn't have any naio thrips and that strong winds could potentially transport them between islands.

- Member Grimm asked what the ideal timeframe for the project would be. Guest Judd commented that he is hoping to have the management plan done by summer and that the first project will be starting next year. Guest Judd noted that they are trying to maximize the large amounts of federal funds that are currently available while it lasts. Capacity is the current limiting factor for implementing the projects.

-Member Potter asked whether the donut fencing strategy being used at Haleakala Ranch could also be incorporated in the project. Guest Judd commented that the cowboys had originally requested that the project area be replanted. He is trying to find the balance of planting for timber production while still allowing for grazing. Member Jokiel added that the donut fencing strategy is expensive to build and maintain with the use of herbicide for weed control. Member Jokiel noted that it ultimately depends on the landowner and that it is cost effective to work with grazing animals to keep the grass down.

- Member Derasin added that planting in the area will help with water retention and ultimately improve forage.

- Member Kurashima asked about the agroforestry component of the project and if high-value species such as maile (*Alyxia stellata*) or mamaki (*Pipturus albidus*) would be incorporated. Guest Judd commented that the area might be too dry for those species, but bees in the area could be a potential high-value product. He noted that wide spacing between planting rows would allow for equipment and experimental plantings.

Motion to recommend for approval of the Parker Ranch Makahalau Proposal. Moved by Member Fisher; Seconded by Member Potter.

Approve: Blakemore, Fisher, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Grimm, Mardon, Potter, Kurashima; Oppose: none; Abstain: Derasin.

Motion passed.

4. Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (FSAC) – Committee will vote to recommend approval of applicants to be on the FSAC.

4.1 Malia West

Motion to recommend for approval Malia West to be on the FSAC for a second term. Motion moved by Member Fisher; Seconded by Member Bowman.

Approve: Blakemore, Fisher, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Grimm, Mardon, Potter, Kurashima, Derasin; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion passed.

4.2 Kalena Blakemore

Motion to recommend for approval Kalena Blakemore to be on the FSAC for a second term.

Motion moved by Member Fisher; Seconded by Member Flynn.

Approve: Fisher, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Grimm, Mardon, Potter, Kurashima, Derasin; Oppose: none; Abstain: Blakemore.

Motion passed.

4.3 Adam Laeha

Motion to recommend for approval Adam Laeha to be on the FSAC. Motion moved by Member Fisher; Seconded by Member Kurashima.

Approve: Blakemore, Fisher, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Grimm, Mardon, Potter, Kurashima, Derasin; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion passed.

5. FSAC Chair-elect- Committee will vote to recommend approval of a Chair-elect.

- Member Blakemore nominated Member Kurashima for FSAC Chair-elect. Member Kurashima accepted the nomination.

Motion to recommend approval of Natalie Kurashima as FSAC Chair-elect. Motion moved by Member Fisher; Seconded by Member Jokiel.

Approve: Blakemore, Fisher, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Mardon, Potter, Derasin; Oppose: none; Abstain: Kurashima.

Motion passed.

6. Forest Legacy Program (FLP) Projects – Committee will review and vote to recommend approval of changes to awarded FLP projects and review and vote to recommend approval of FLP project proposals for future submissions to the Forest Service.

6.1 FY22 East Maui Rainforest FLP Project, Haiku, Hawai'i – Committee to review and vote to recommend approval of changes to the awarded project.

- Guest Fretz introduced the project and how it relates to the Koolau Forest Reserve (KFR). Much of the mauka forests in East Maui are protected, however coastal forests are not and are highly threatened by development. The State identified parcels for sale by Alexander and Baldwin (A&B) that would enhance management, habitat connectivity, and public access to the shoreline if acquired and added to KFR. The parcels provide a variety to benefits including public access to the coastline, freshwater resources, habitat for native seabirds and threatened and endangered flora and fauna,

and contain remnants of the historic Pi'ilani trail. The project is divided into three phases due to the complexities of title issues and funding sources.

- Staff Zhang explained that the committee is being asked to recommend approval of changes to grant award. Following title research and funding availability, Phase 1 is proposed to include a modified subset of 5 parcels. Two will be acquired with grant funds, and 3 may be acquired via donation and used as cost-share for the grant.

- Member Fisher noted that this stretch of land has a dramatic density of housing and that acquisition and preservation of the area would be amazing. He also commented that the Hawai'i Land Trust has been approached by landowners about donating land but the land trust does not have the capacity to manage those lands. The potential for land conversion is very high in the area.

- Member Blakemore explained that some lands might have broken title because kupuna who owned land might have leased it to A&B or other sugar cane operations, but did not show up to refute the sale. Member Blakemore questioned whether lineal descendants of those who originally owned the land would be able to show up and claim stewardship and ownership of the land. Guest Fretz added that they looked into the title reports and that A&B hired a genealogist to look at titles. Some of the breaks are simple with the break between the original owners during The Mahele and their kids. Fretz also noted that state or federal funds cannot be used for broken title lands. Member Blakemore added that the way around acquiring broken title lands would be if it was donated to the state.

- Member Jokiel asked if A&B are actively marketing the parcels. Guest Fretz shared that A&B hasn't listed the parcels but they fully intend to sell them. Two parcels have been purchased by a benefactor who will hold them for the state to purchase. A&B wants to work with the state, but there is an urgency to sell. Staff Rubenstein added that the state is working with The Trust for Public Land (TPL) to acquire 2 parcels that have clear title as part of Phase 1. She also added that TPL can enter into agreements to facilitate state land acquisitions.

- Member Fisher asked if there were any intentions to restore the historic Pi'ilani trail in the parcels. Guest Fretz commented that they plan to restore the trail but will need to find it first. The state would like to put a network of trails in the area but also want to avoid heavy use. There needs to be a balance between access and working with local communities. Member Fisher added that a benefactor expressed interest to Hawai'i Land Trust about trail resources.

Motion to recommend for approval changes made to the FY22 East Maui Rainforest FLP Project, Haiku, Hawai'i. Moved by Member Fisher; Seconded by Member Bowman.

**Approve: Blakemore, Fisher, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Grimm, Mardon, Potter, Kurashima, Derasin;
Oppose: none; Abstain: none.**

Motion passed.

6.2 FY24 Pa'akea Stream Addition to Ko'olau Forest Reserve (East Maui Rainforest Project Phase 2, Nahiku, Hawai'i) – Committee will review and vote to recommend approval of project for submission for FLP funding.

-Staff Zhang introduced Phase 2 of the project, which includes one parcel with clear title. The state is submitting a proposal requesting \$1.5M in FY24 Forest Legacy Project (FLP) Inflation Reduction Act funding for this parcel, and are requesting committee approval for submission for funding.

- Staff Rubenstein commented that the state is working with multiple funding programs and only applying funding to one parcel that fits the funding parameters. Guest Fretz noted that the parcel is adjacent to KFR, is densely forested with non-native species, has a waterfall, and is near the beach.

- Member Potter asked if A&B set a time frame to wait for the state before they entertain other offers. Staff Rubenstein commented that there is no deadline, but A&B would like to get it done as soon as possible. The state is trying to keep A&B engaged and is currently working with TPL on the acquisition. Guest Fretz also noted that A&B initially wanted to close phase 2 of the acquisition by the end of 2023. A&B's deadlines aren't hard, but they set price structures for the year. Member Fisher also noted that the state can only offer the appraised value of the parcels and that private individuals making offers at just about that value.

Motion to recommend approval of FY24 Pa'akea Stream Addition to Ko'olau Forest Reserve (East Maui Rainforest Project Phase 2, Nahiku, Hawai'i) for submission for FLP funding. Moved by Member Flynn; Seconded by Member Jokiel.

**Approve: Blakemore, Fisher, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Grimm, Mardon, Potter, Kurashima, Derasin;
Oppose: none; Abstain: none.**

Motion passed.

6.3 FY26 East Maui Rainforest (Phase 3, Nahiku, Hawaii) – Committee will review and vote to recommend approval of the proposed project for submission for FLP funding.

- Staff Zhang presented Phase 3 and the plan to continue on-going title research and discussions with project partners and landowners to inform which parcels may be included in future FLP grant submissions, or donated and used as cost-share. Staff are anticipating grant submissions for FLP funding in Fall 2024.

- Member Fisher asked that since there is a cost share component to the acquisitions, if the state asking A&B to sell at a lower than appraised value. Staff Rubenstein noted that TPL is handling the negotiation and coming up with a reduced price for the parcels. Guest Fretz added that the appraised value of the parcels with clear title is \$5.35 million.

- Member Bowman mentioned that the proposal incorporated potential opportunities for timber products and other revenue streams. Staff Rubenstein added that timber products and other revenue opportunities were removed from Phase 2.

- Member Kurashima asked if the state plans to bring on more staff to manage additional lands. Staff Rubenstein noted that it would be dependent on capital improvement funds and the state legislature. Member Flynn also mentioned that this project could follow the model used at Hā'ena by getting the community involved to manage access and charge non-residents for access to generate revenue for management. Guest Fretz commented that the DOFAW Maui District has the capacity to manage the parcels. They received a large donation for trails and access. Fretz also mentioned that in some cases, such as for KFR, DOFAW works with various agencies to manage access and other

issues. Fretz also noted that they currently have staff and future onboarding staff to facilitate management.

- Member Flynn asked where the Pi'ilani trail would start. Guest Fretz noted that the trail circumnavigates the island of Maui. The trail follows the highway and then goes through some of the Phase 3 parcels in Nahiku.

Motion to recommend approval of FY26 East Maui Rainforest (Phase 2, Nahiku, Hawaii) for submission for FLP funding. Moved by Member Fisher; Seconded by Member Jokiel.

**Approve: Blakemore, Fisher, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Grimm, Mardon, Potter, Kurashima, Derasin;
Oppose: none; Abstain: none.**

Motion passed.

7. Forest Legacy Program and Projects Update – Committee will be provided with status updates on the following programs and ongoing projects.

7.1 FY17 Hāloa 'Āina

- Staff Rubenstein updated the committee that the project is not moving forward. The appraisal was too low for the landowner to subordinate his mortgage to the conservation easement. Time is running out and funds will expire in June 2024. The landowner is talking with Kamehameha Schools about buying an easement or parcel for access to their lands. Rubenstein added that lessons were learned from this project. The state needs a 3rd party, like TPL, to facilitate land sale. It takes too long for the state to do it on its own with short terms on various funding sources.

7.2 FY18 Kamehamenui Forest, Kula, Maui

- Guest Fretz updated the committee that the fence to the upper 2/3 of the parcel (approximately 2,100 acres) has been completed. The upper fence will protect the best remaining habitat on the parcel. The state plans to plant in the mesic reforestation zone that has an active seed bank. The lessee has cattle in the area and their lease expires in 60 days. The state plans to give public hunters the opportunity to remove feral ungulates for about 6 months before management gets taken over by DOFAW. The management plan and environmental assessment (EA) are currently under revision and will soon go out for public comment. The plan will then go to the Board of Land and Natural Resources. Fretz noted that the EA was specifically for the planned 25 miles of recreational trails for the area.

7.3 FY21 Na Wai Eha, Wailuku, Maui

- Guest Fretz updated the committee that this project will probably not happen. To buy the watershed lands, the county would have to buy the water system. However, the county doesn't want to buy and manage the system. The landowner does not want to sell the land separate from the water system.

7.4 FY23 Kāne'ohe Pali, Kaneohe, Oahu

- Staff Rubenstein updated the committee that the project is moving forward and that TPL is within a month or so of the final deal with the landowner. They are hoping to close by the end of the calendar year.

7.5 FY24 Maunawili Forest, Kailua, Oahu

- Staff Rubenstein updated the committee that the project is still going and that the state is working with TPL. There is strong community support for the state to acquire the property and the funds have been acquired. TPL must renegotiate with the landowner since they did not accept the initial offer. Complications of this project come from the different appraisal values of the golf course, the different parcels for various users (community organizations and state), and examining and mapping the kuleana lots.

8. Announcements

- Staff Rubenstein mentioned the RCPP alternative funding arrangement that went through the RFP process and funded a few FSP projects. Rubenstein also mentioned that the program will be applying for IRA stewardship funding.

- Staff Rubenstein mentioned that the next meeting will tentatively be virtual and in August.

Motion to adjourn the FSAC meeting. Moved by Member Fisher; Seconded by Member Jokiel.

Approve: Blakemore, Fisher, Bowman, Jokiel, Flynn, Grimm, Mardon, Potter, Kurashima, Derasin;

Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion passed.

9. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm