

Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee



DATE: Wednesday, June 18, 2025
LOCATION: In person at 1151 Punchbowl St, Room 325 Conference Room (Kalanimoku Building), and Remote by Interactive Conference Technology (Online via ZOOM and by telephone)
TIME: 9:00 am

ATTENDANCE: **Present:** Kalena Blakemore (Chair-Elect), Michael Walker (Ex-Officio; present virtually for items 1-6.2)), Kirk Derasin, Aileen Yeh, Malia West, Scott Fisher (present virtually for items 1-4.1), Timothy Flynn, Adam Laeha, Daniel Bowman. **Absent:** Cheri Mardon, Natalie Kurashima, Jordan Jokiel

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

Guests: Keith Adams (Hawaii Agricultural Research Center (HARC)), Zachary Judd (Parker Ranch), Vera Benedek (National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG) Kahanu Gardens)

AGENDA

1. Review of virtual meeting technology and procedures for hybrid in-person and virtual meeting.

Call to order

- The meeting was called to order at 9:01 AM.

2. Welcome and introduction of members, guests, and member news and announcements.

3. Review and approval of January 14, 2025, meeting minutes

- The Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (FSAC) reviewed the meeting minutes from the January 14, 2025 meeting.
- Member West suggested amendment to management plan approval language in meeting minutes. Plans approvals were contingent on DOFAW review.

Motion to approve the January 14, 2025, FSAC meeting minutes with amendments.

Moved by Member West; seconded by Member Fisher.

Approve: Blakemore, Bowman, Derasin, Flynn, Laeha, Jokiel (absentee vote), Walker, Yeh, West, Fisher; Oppose: none; Abstain: none

Motion passed.

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

4.1 Kunia Village Community Forest, Waipahu, O‘ahu

- Guest Adams introduced the Hawai‘i Agricultural Research Center (HARC) Kunia Village project and summarized the FSP Proposal. The project creates a community forest incorporating agroforestry and seed production practices.
- Member Flynn asked how koa and ‘ōhi‘a will fare in the lower elevation project site. Speaking from experience in Kaua‘i, Member Flynn mentioned lowland koa struggles with twig borers and ‘ōhi‘a with pruning.
- Member Flynn suggested utilizing kalia (*Elaeocarpus bifidus*), lama (*Diospyros* sp.), olopuia (*Notolaea sandwicensis*) in overstory plantings. Also recommended follow suit of Pacific Agroforestry as a guide and recommended Citrus (*Citrus* sp.), black pepper (*Piper nigrum*), coffee (*Coffea arabica*), mamaki (*Pipturus albidis*) in the agroforestry planting area.
- Member Flynn noted that bahia grass (*Paspalum notatum*) & crown flower (*Calotropis gigantea*) listed as high-risk weeds according to the Hawaii Pacific Weed Risk Assessment and alternatives should be considered. Guest Adams responded that utilization of bahia would be for a fast-growing groundcover to minimize ground exposure after clearing. Adams noted that they are open to investigating other range grasses. Flynn suggested *Chrysopogon aciculatus*, which is a low stature grass, common in public spaces, and considered indigenous. Member Yeh suggested mānienie (*Sporobolus virginicus*).
- Member West asked about not including fuelbreak as a practice for the project despite the history of wildfire on the property. West suggested connecting with DOFAW’s Mike Walker and the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO). Guest Adams responded that the road that exists around the perimeter of the project area and the managed project area will serve as a fuelbreak to the agriculture community.
- Member West noted Hawaiian Hoary Bat (*Aeorestes semotus*) was not listed in proposal. Guest Adams responded that Hawaiian Hoary Bat or Pueo (*Asio flammeus sandwichensis*) have not been observed by staff in the area but will do preliminary monitoring for presence prior to developing the management plan.
- Member Yeh noted that tea (*Camellia sinensis*) will need close monitoring from experience due to its ability to spread quickly from seed. Tea will require routine maintenance to maintain a vegetative state. Yeh also suggested multi-use species such as ko‘oko‘olau (*Bidens* sp.) and pikake (*Arabian jasmine*) in the agroforestry zone.
- Member Derasin asked what kind of site preparation will be done and the scale of prep. Derasin noted clay pan may be a challenge from site preparation experience at nearby Kukaniloko site. Derasin also asked where seeds will be sourced, if they will be grown at HARC or through other partners.
 - Guest Adams explained a portion of the site will require minimal grading and extensive clearing of invasive vegetation. Adams explained roughly 2/3 (~20

acres) of the property will be reforested. There has been communication with Dave Elliot (ORC&D) and contractors. Tilling and drilling prior to planting will be needed.

- Guest Adams noted seeds will be sourced from HARC seed banks and Army Natural Resources Program O'ahu. Seeds for this project area will be sourced from Wai'anae stock and plant species will be determined based on current needed for restoration and post-fire response efforts. Plants will be grown in-house primarily at HARC and ANRPO nurseries but will utilize other sources if necessary.
- Member Bowman suggested connecting with NRCS field office for conservation groundcover plant recommendations. Perennial pea (*Arachis pintoii*) could be a groundcover option, though the site may be too dry.
- Member Bowman asked if agroforestry species will be scattered throughout project site or if there be smaller agroforestry plots. Guest Adams responded that agroforestry will be incorporated as appropriate within the project area. Member Bowman suggested AgroforestryX (<https://www.agroforestryx.com/>) as tool to visualize incorporating agroforestry layers.
- Member Laeha asked about management of woody debris created by project clearing. Guest Adams responded that immediate management of woody debris will involve mulching but noted concerns about coconut rhinoceros beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*) management. The site is predominately guinea grass with woody debris being secondary. Member Laeha asked if CRB is present on site. Guest Adams responded yes.
- Staff Friday suggested thinking about community engagement through long term management of the site. Opportunities to connect with Heather McMillen (DOFAW State Urban Forester, Kaulunani) and learn from other community forestry efforts. Guest Adams responded the community surrounding is already engaged in managing the surrounding area and is hopeful of engagement in management practices.
- Member Bowman noted that avocado (*Persea americana*), mango (*Mangifera indica*), breadfruit listed in the proposal are strong overstory species. Suggested identifying small sites focused on agroforestry to integrate the community into the system.
- Member Flynn suggested the agroforestry plot could follow a similar structure to the community garden plots to promote sustainable community engagement and food production.
- Member Bowman suggested using established canopy trees in the project area as community agroforestry areas that could focus on intensive planting in the mid and understory.

Motion to recommend for approval of the Kunia Village Community Forest Proposal. Moved by Member Flynn; Seconded by Member Bowman.

Approve: Blakemore, Bowman, Derasin, Fisher, Flynn, Laeha, Jokiel (absentee vote), Walker, Yeh, West; Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion passed.

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

5.1 Makahalau, Waimea, Hawai'i island

- Guest Judd introduced Parker Ranch Makahalau project and summarized the FSP Management Plan.
- Member West asked to confirm silvopasture will be outside of the 10-year plan. Guest Judd responded that Parker Ranch's first FSP project that involved koa (*Acacia koa*) silvopasture is being used as a gauge of timing for koa maturity and cattle grazing in the area. Judd suspects that silvopasture will occur after 10-years. Member West suggested adding silvopasture Best Management Practices (BMP) in the area if they want to incorporate the practice in the 10-year plan.
- Member West asked Member Bowman if barbed wire fencing is allowed in areas with Hawaiian Hoary Bat. Bowman noted that he would check on the latest decision on the issue. West asked if FSP will support barbed fencing. Staff Rubenstein responded that it is unlikely FSP will support. Member West noted that the type of fencing for the project should be aligned with the funding source.
- Member Bowman suggested removing or modifying the windbreak to 1) utilize area as fuels management or 2) plant denser koa. Without silvopasture, native outplanting in scattered system will not have wind tunnel effect, thus windbreak may not be necessary. With silvopasture, a shelter belt is needed if grazing cattle.
- Member Flynn asked about virtual fencing system for cattle management that was part of Parker Ranch's first FSP management plan. Guest Judd noted that the technology has not been trialed in the state to his knowledge. The system is under consideration by Parker Ranch, but costs remain a challenge.
- Member Flynn asked about 'āweoweo (*Chenopodium oahuense*) as forage. Guest Judd responded this plan has shifted away from enhanced silvopasture, but may incorporate spittle-bug resistant grasses since two-lined spittle bug (*Prosapia bicincta*) is a growing threat to forage grasses on Hawai'i island.
- Member Derasin noted that 150 koa density planting/acre is good. Suggested removing bad koa early on as it can create problems during the thinning and harvesting stage in the future. Derasin also noted to keep up with pest management specifically for rose beetles (*Adoretus sinicus*) and acacia psyllids (*Acizzia uncatoids*). Derasin also noted that 10ft row spacing is good, but Forest Solutions has been doing 12ft spacing to allow more room for heavy equipment.

Motion to recommend for approval of the Makahalau Forest Management Plan.

Moved by Member Yeh; Seconded by Member West.

Approve: Blakemore, Bowman, Derasin, Fisher, Flynn, Laeha, Walker, Yeh, West, Jokiel (absentee vote); Oppose: none; Abstain: none.

Motion passed.

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

- Staff Rubenstein gave overview of expired, vacant, and expiring committee seats. Rubenstein reminded the committee has a total of 13 seats and diverse group of forestry-related representation. Member Kurashima will be chair at next committee meeting, and a new chair-elect is needed.
- Member West clarified need for timber/forest product representation on the committee. Staff Friday also noted the lack of representation from the County.
- Member Flynn asked if there is statutory limit on the number of committee members. Staff Rubenstein will follow-up on this question. Staff Friday noted a federal statute and reminded committee that the committee provides oversight on the Forest Stewardship Program, Forest Legacy Program, and Forest Action Plan.

6.1 Kirk Derasin

Approved: Blakemore, Bowman, Derasin, Fisher, Flynn, Laeha, Jokiel (absentee vote), Walker, West; oppose: none; abstain: Derasin

Motion passes.

6.2 Ashley McGuigan

Approved: Blakemore, Bowman, Derasin, Fisher, Flynn, Laeha, Jokiel (absentee vote), Walker, West; oppose: none; abstain: none

Motion passes.

Staff Friday noted Ashley McGuigan will represent cooperative extension, a federal requirement established for the committee, and bring her parallel work to increase technical assistance, more extension agents across the Pacific Islands.

7. Announcements

7.1 The Committee will discuss the timeline, objectives and priorities for the development of a strategic plan for the Hawaii Forest Stewardship Program. The Committee will establish a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) for further development and review of this plan.

- Staff Haraga and Rubenstein explained the strategic plan update and landowner outreach project.
- Member West established as leader and Member Bowman will join. Staff Friday expressed her interest in involvement in the update.

8. Forest Legacy Program Project Updates

8.1 FY22 Hana Highway Rainforest, Hana, Maui

- Staff Rubenstein shared the close of East Maui Phase I and current work to close Phase II. Rubenstein also shared updates to future acquisition actions for remaining phases.
- Member West asked if coastal areas of parcels will be included in the Forest Reserve designation. Staff Rubenstein responded all parcels will be included in the designation with consideration to specific management for the diverse areas. Member West suggested cooperation with Sheldon Plentovich (US Fish and Wildlife Service) for management of coastal areas.

8.2 FY23 Kāneʻohe Pali, Kaneohe, Oʻahu

- Staff Rubenstein shared updates on due diligence work and closing date.

8.3 FY24 Maunawili Forest, Kailua, Oʻahu

- Staff Rubenstein shared updates on due diligence work and closing date.

9. Discuss upcoming Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee meeting dates and location.

- Staff Rubenstein noted next meeting will occur in early August to September. Exact date and location are to be determined.

10. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 am.