



The Kawainui-Hamakua Complex Master Plan Update represents a vision and call for community action for appropriate resource management. It is not a development plan. These wetlands are on the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. This master plan update includes elements supporting wetland restoration and upland reforestation, Hawaiian practices and stewardship, on-site learning activities focused on environmental and cultural subjects, and passive outdoor recreation. This plan was developed with broad public input over the course of several years and numerous community meetings. Public input is integral to the planning process, as such, opportunities for public input will continue through 2015. The concepts within the plan will guide the natural, educational, and cultural values and management outcomes of Kawainui and Hamakua for current and future generations.

THE FACTS

- The most important components of this plan are the restoration and management of wetland and upland natural resources with a primary focus on recovery of endangered Hawaiian waterbird species. Upland areas would be re-established as native upland forest. Additionally, managing the Kawainui wetland is critical for maintaining its hydrological functions for flood control. Management is necessary to reverse the ongoing degradation of these wetlands.
- Kawainui is the largest remaining freshwater wetland in the State of Hawaii. The Kawainui-Hamakua complex encompasses nearly 1000 acres. It is one of 36 wetlands in the U.S. designated a Ramsar Convention Wetlands of International Importance. It is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a significant cultural complex.
- The planning process for the master plan commenced in 2011 and has included information gathering and site visits; consultations with stakeholders, community and Native Hawaiian organizations, and agencies; public informational meetings; and analysis of site constraints and consideration of alternatives. The environmental review process will begin in the fall of 2014, and it will discuss alternatives considered and provide additional opportunities for comment and input.
- The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and its divisions of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) and State Parks have jurisdiction over different areas within the complex based on the natural and cultural resources present.
- The plan is intended to meet DLNR agency mission of restoration and habitat enhancement, integrating Hawaiian cultural practices, providing managed public access, creating educational and stewardship opportunities, and accommodating passive outdoor recreational use.

The following elements of the plan were driven by community interest and guidance as part of the planning process. Improvements would be implemented over time in phases subject to funding availability, phasing priorities, and adaptive management of the resource. DLNR does not intend to open areas unless DLNR is able to manage the area.

- Community-based Hawaiian cultural organizations have made precedent-setting strides in stewardship and educational programming within the complex. Four areas have been conceptualized by the Hawaiian community to support living culture by non-profit organizations, and are not for commercial use. This will create opportunities for people of all ages to experience the integration of traditional and cultural practices that have informed effective resource management in Hawaii for hundreds of years.
- Facilities incorporated into the plan are intended to support the uses programmed which consist of (1) areas to support cultural practices; (2) DLNR maintenance and operations; and (3) educational programs, stewardship activities, and public access and outdoor recreation. Support facilities allow for expansion of interpretive and educational opportunities, as well as community involvement in protecting and preserving Kawainui-Hamakua. Facilities would incorporate sustainable elements in their design.
- The plan currently proposes a 5.7-mile-long perimeter path and a system of foot trails, providing designated access to areas for stewardship activities, nature viewing, and other forms of low-impact recreation.
- There are three parking areas planned to be open to the public which are (1) at the education center; (2) park site across from Kalaheo High School; and (3) area across from Le Jardin Academy. All other parking area would have restricted access. These would be constructed using permeable materials. Gated entries will control vehicular access within the Kawainui-Hamakua Complex.
- Groups of 25 or more will require a permit from DLNR. Note that small commercial tours and groups are currently visiting the site. Those activities require permits and will be better managed under the plan to minimize impacts on the site's cultural and ecological resources.
- Other improvements to support management of the area being planned include (1) fencing around property boundary; (2) predator fencing around wetlands; (3) increasing staff for operations and enforcement; (4) contracting out to security firms and coordinating with non-profit organizations for monitoring activities; and (5) increased signage to facilitate enforcement.

To learn more about the project, opportunities to provide comments, and review the draft plan, please visit the project Web site at <http://www.hhf.com/kawainui/index.html>.