

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

August 11, 2023

Chairperson and Members
Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING ON MANAGEMENT OF KAWAINUI MARSH
WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

BACKGROUND

Kawainui is located in Kailua on the island of O'ahu and bordered by major roadways including Kalaniana'ole Highway, Kailua Road, and Kapa'a Quarry Road. Kawainui was recognized as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in 2005 for its historical, biological, and cultural significance. The wetland encompasses around 830 acres of land and is the largest remaining freshwater wetland in the state of Hawai'i.

Kawainui has been recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as a waterbird recovery area as it provides habitat for four endemic and endangered Hawaiian waterbirds. It also plays a role in the Ko'olaupoko watershed as an important source of flood control and sediment filtration protecting urbanized areas of Kailua and the nearshore waters and reefs of Kailua Bay through improved water quality.

This brief is intended to inform the Board member of current activities taking place at Kawainui. The Division has nearly finalized its planning process to incorporate a multi-pronged approach to the management of this Sanctuary. The approach encompasses a myriad of users and delineates levels of usage to ensure compliance with the Department's mission.

DISCUSSION

The Department's mission statement: *"Enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawaii nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors"* has been a driving force in the development of the Kawainui Marsh Master Plan. The process prioritizes mandated activities based on land designation as a Wildlife Sanctuary and examines the need and ability to provide features and access that accomplish the Department's mission.

The primary natural resources activities identified and described in the plan focus on wetland habitat enhancement, endangered species recovery, flood control, infrastructure, re-forestation, and native plant propagation. These activities are currently managed by the

Oahu Branch of the Division of Forestry and Wildlife. Key features and programs include the Kawainui Restoration Ponds, Flood Control Levee, Kahanaiki reforestation area, and the Hamakua Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary. The Division has also worked to clean up debris, modify access points, control and mitigate runoff, erect perimeter fencing, and construct a management facility to provide a foundation for long-term land management. Crews work to restore marsh function and recover endangered species, daily. The Branch also has ongoing partnerships with community, cultural, and educational stewards that aid in accomplishing management goals.

As the core critical functions are addressed and partnerships evolve, the ability for multi-use land management practices has emerged as an extremely viable option to address the Division's limited land management resources. Community, cultural and educational stewardship has been identified as an option that provides direct benefits to the Division's mission and satisfies our obligation to appropriate parties.

The Master Plan/EIS is a high-level planning document that demonstrates the Division's commitment to accomplishing the Department's mission. The aim is for transparency to identify obligations, describe operations, and empower appropriate stewardship practices to aid in the management of Kawainui. Many community, cultural, and educational stewards have been identified throughout the planning process. The value placed on matters and land uses for which the Division is not a subject-matter-expert has altered the spectrum in which we typically assign operation and management activities. Our aim in this process has been to determine the level of acceptable impacts to our managed resources by analyzing the entirety of Kawainui's resources.

RECOMMENDATION

This informational briefing is a "non-action" item on the board's agenda. A representative from the Oahu Division of Forestry and Wildlife is here today to present an update on the management of the Wildlife Sanctuary.

Respectfully submitted,



David G. Smith, Administrator
Division of Forestry and Wildlife

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



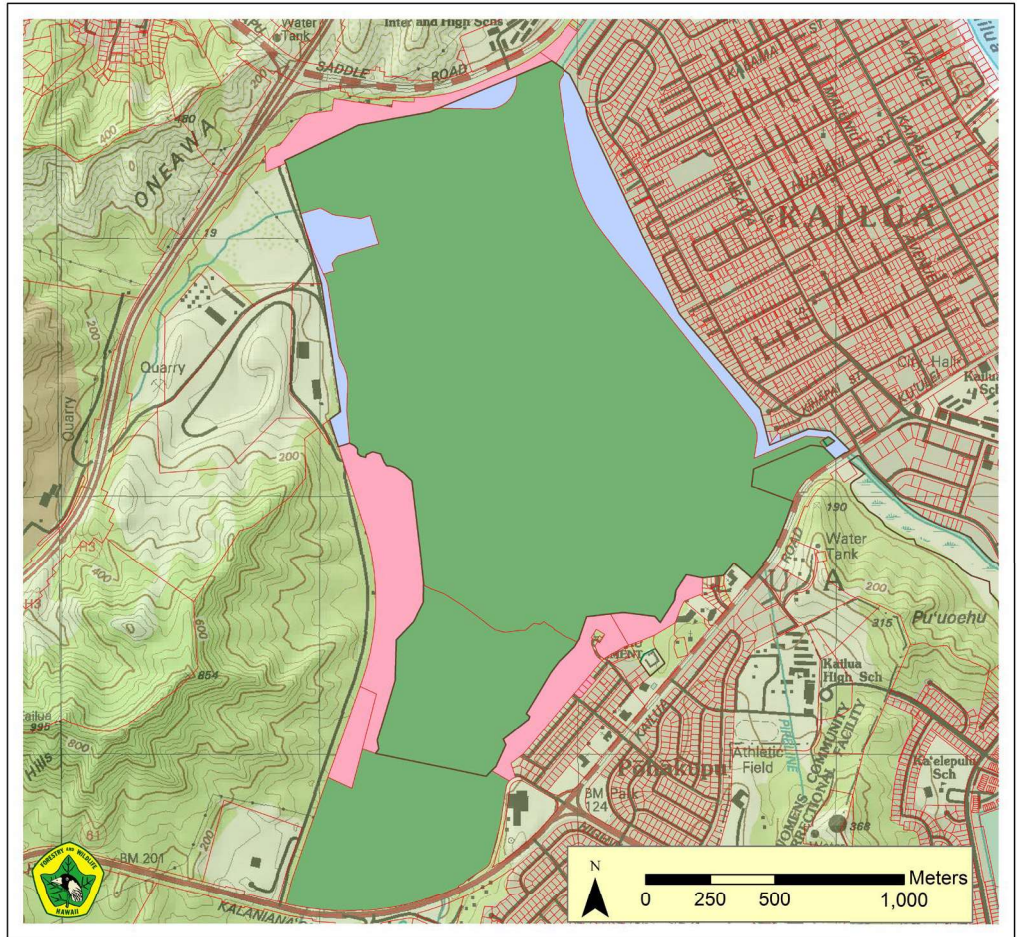
DAWN N.S. CHANG, Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources

Attachments: Kawainui maps

Attachment 1: Kawainui Parcel Map



Attachment 2: Kawainui Land Ownership



**KAWAINUI MARSH
STATE WILDLIFE
SANCTUARY**

LAND OWNERSHIP

Legend

NEWTMK8-11

Kawainui Land

Owner

City & County HNL

State

State-DOFAW

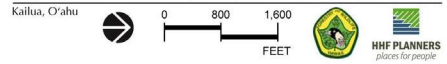
State-DSP

Attachment 3: Kawaiui Vicinity Map



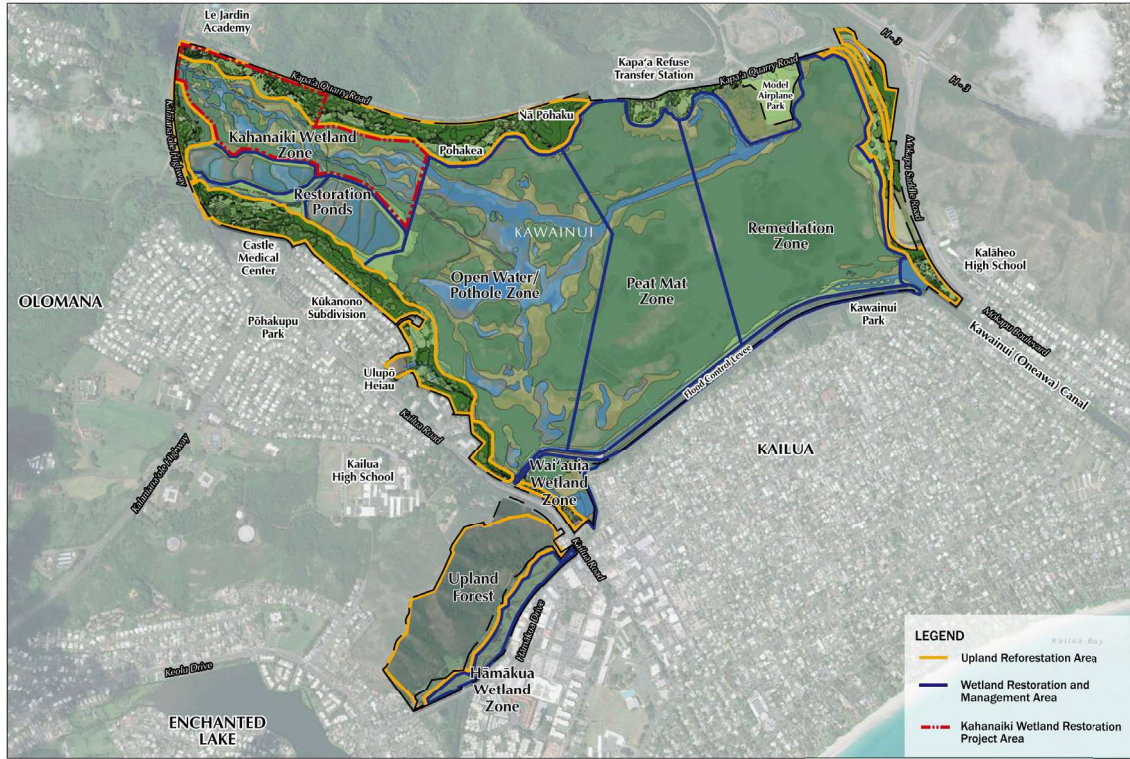
Source: State of Hawai'i GIS

Kawaiui - Hāmākua Master Plan
Figure 1.2 - Vicinity Map



Attachment 4: Kawainui Management Areas Map

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Source: State of Hawai'i GIS

Kawainui - Hāmākua Master Plan
 Figure 2.5 - DOFAW Management Areas

