

HAWAII WETLAND JOINT VENTURE MEETING MINUTES

Kona Hospice Center, Kailua (Hawai'i)

February 17, 2009

(9:00-12:30 pm)

ATTENDEES:

Donna Ball	USFWS Conservation Partnership for HI Island
Norma Bustos	DOFAW Waterbird Admin.
Deac deCamp	Hawai'i Island Dept. of Parks – W HI Dist. Super.
Linda Elliott	Hawaii Wildlife Center Director
Andy Engilis (phone)	Univ. of CA Museum
Adonia Henry	USFWS Conservation Partnerships Program
Darcy Hu	National Park Service
Daryl Inaba	Hawaii County – Open Space Program
Makaala Kaaumoana (phone)	Hanalei Watershed Hui
Gregory Koob	NRCS State Biologist
Penny Levin (phone)	Maui Island consultant
Lehua Lopez	Ka 'Ohana O Honu'apo
Rich MacKenzie	USDA Forest Service
Dave Penn	Hawaii State Dept. of Health
Michelle Reynolds	USGS Kilauea Field Station Bird Biologist
Dennis Riordan	Hawaii County Parks for Honu'apo
Christina Ryder (phone)	Ducks Unlimited Biologist
Carey Smith	Pacific Coast Joint Venture Coordinator
Meredith Speicher (phone)	NPS RTCA Coordinator
Jim Trump	New Moon Foundation
Kim Uyehara	Contractor – Bird Biologist
Jason Vercelli	DOFAW Mana Biologist on Kauai
Scott Waddington	Contractor - Biologist

OVERVIEW PCJV & HWJV:

Similar to our local meeting on Kaua'i, this first Hawai'i Island meeting was opened with a power-point presentation about the Joint Venture as an introduction to new partners at the table. The presentation covered the establishment and work of the Pacific Coast Joint Venture (PCJV) and it's newer state efforts under the Hawaii Wetland Joint Venture (HWJV.)

The advantages of partnership in the Joint Venture were overviewed:

- Networking opportunities with wetland specialists and conservation players
- Exposure to new partners who can help with larger size projects
- Higher grant funding scores with multi-partner projects
- Direct input on HWJV Strategic Plan updates to benefit important wetlands
- Getting new science & management information in newsletters and workshops
- Learning about different sources of funding and application deadlines

- JV project guidance and grant review for North American Wetlands Conservation Act and National Coastal Wetland Act Grants, as well as other grant programs.
- Accessing JV discretionary funds for small projects that help wetlands recovery

KOLOA RESEARCH By Andy Engilis

The federally endangered Hawaiian Duck (*Anas wyvilliana*) “Koloa maoli” is the only endemic Hawaiian bird species threatened by “genetic extinction” from hybridization (cross-breeding) with the introduced Mallard (*A. platyrhynchos*).

Continuing the discussion of Koloa hybrid identification keys, Andy Engilis again joined us by phone to provide an overview of his progress with their development. Preliminary keys have been tested and morphological characteristics are a bit clouded. He has found that a high percentage of the birds sampled on Kauai were hybrids with a multi-generational back-cross to Koloa. The birds look like pure Koloa but are really mallard hybrids genetically. Morphologically, keying them as hybrids is too cryptic.

He has, however, been able to advance the age and sex classification of birds based on molt patterns and feathers. Therefore, he is beginning to look at the identification key as a grouping of three levels: age key, sex key, and hybrid key. When finished, the packet of keys would first be sent out to agencies for review.

Andy stressed that there will need to be some level of blending since Koloa morph types are much like the pure strain. Pure strains are still out there, but their percentages are diminishing and will likely continue to do so over time. The next steps will be to bring the model keys to the Koloa Working Group for discussion of how to proceed with management control measures.

KOLOA EDUCATION VIDEO

Following Andy’s presentation, partners viewed the final segment of the Malama Hawaii educational program on the Koloa hybridization issue. Recently the first two segments were broadcast on the television program “Outside Hawaii” and viewed by Joint Venture partners at our last meeting. In this final segment, our Joint Venture partners Norma Bustos and Jason Masaki, from the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, were featured as state experts. The Pacific Coast Joint Venture Discretionary Fund provided support for the videos.

HAWAII DISCRETIONARY PROJECT OVERVIEW & PRIORIZATION (‘09 Apps.)

The following table of ten PCJV Discretionary Fund Grant applications were overviewed and briefly discussed in preparation for ranking those considered of highest priority by the Joint Venture partners.

Project Title	Applicant	Type*	Task(s)	Fund Request
Aimakapa Fish Exclusion	Scott Waddington for NPS	PD&I	Investigative techniques for removing predatory fish over a several acre pond	\$ 9,060
Black Pot Park	Kauai Public Land Trust	PD&I	Yellow book appraisals for up to 5 acres acquisition	\$ 4,000
Feral Cat Brochure	DOFAW	C&O	Educational brochures	\$ 3,000
Hamakua Marsh Restoration	The Wildlife Society	PD&I	Remove invasive trees along ½ m. stream bank	\$10,000
HNC Wetland Restoration Partnership	Hawaii Nature Center	PD&I	Engaging community volunteers for invasive plant removal on 2 sites	\$10,000
Honu'apu Restoration	Ka 'Ohana O Honu'apo	PD&I	Resource data gathering & restoration plan for 6 acres	\$10,000
Kawaihau Restoration	Pono Pacific	PD&I	Removing invasive plants & predators on 21 restored acres	\$10,000
Mana Community Engagement	DOFAW	C&O	Mobilizing community support & engagement	\$10,000
Nu'u Restoration	Maui Coastal Land Trust	PD&I	Invasive plant & predatory removal on 6 acres	\$10,000
Waterbird Conference	The Wildlife Society	C&O	Conference on recovery & management issues	\$ 5,000

* PD&I = Project Development & Implementation
C&O = Communication & Outreach

PCJV and HWJV COORDINATOR'S REPORTS

Carey Smith, Pacific Coast Joint Venture Coordinator, was in attendance and provided an overview of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Grant Program. He discussed the value of the small grant portion of the program as an avenue to provide seed money to build partnerships with new nonprofit organizations. Helping them to get started in important conservation work.

Carey provided a hand out listing the 2009 PCJV project proposals that were submitted under the 2008 NAWCA and National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant round. He also mentioned that a portion of PCJV funding is being used to support the Pacific NW research to identify the most strategic remaining places for waterbird habitat protection. The rest of the PCJV funds constitute the discretionary pot for partner project support.

Rubey reported that a small working group of HWJV partners began discussion around identifying focus areas for the Hawaii Joint Venture Strategic Plan. The benefits of identifying focus areas would be: 1) to become more strategic in the pursuit of grant funding to conserve these areas, while 2) providing additional grant program evaluation support to areas that are specifically mentioned in the plan for target action. A follow up meeting for interested Joint Venture partners to discuss criteria and focus area identification will be held via web-cast in early May.

HWJV PARTNER REPORTS

Christina Ryder (USFWS NAWCA Adm.): Mentioned that the Washington Office is addressing “programmatic grants” under NAWCA. There will be the opportunity to access more funding through this program in the near future.

Meredith Speicher (NPS RTCA): Is looking for wetland school curriculums. Recommendations and ideas are welcome.

Adonia Henry (USFWS Conservation Partnerships Program): Mentioned that the USFWS Conservation Partnerships Program can help with project development and putting together project proposals. The program has biologists on each of the islands. Donna Bell is the staff representative on Hawaii Island. The Conservation Partnership Program facilitates collaborative restoration on private, state, and federal lands by providing technical and financial assistance. Funding programs include the: Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Pacific Island Coastal Program, and Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership. Program information can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/publications/fy08%20cpp%20annual%20report.pdf>

Linda Elliott [Hawaii Wildlife Center]: Announced the value of having their new rehabilitation center here on Hawaii Island - where none has existed prior to now.

Greg Koob (NRCS Biologist): Announced that the State Dept. of Health has given the approval to move forward with a discussion on the blanket certification for Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permits. When this is finalized, it will make permitting for wetlands habitat restoration projects much easier. Other good news related to the New Farm Bill is the expansion of assistance to private non-industrial forest lands.

Rich McKenzie (USDA Forest Service): Shared that the wetlands study he and Greg Bruland (Univ. of Hawaii) have been conducting is completing its second year, with sampling scheduled for March and June.

Kim Uyehara (Constructor): Mentioned her work with studying bats and their use of wetlands as feeding areas. She reminds us to consider them in wetland restoration work. An inquiry was made to Kim regarding the status of the Safe Harbor Agreement program she had worked on with the NRCS. She indicated that the State

law does not allow for these types of agreements with landowners, so the State is trying to get that changed. In the meantime, the USFWS is applying Section 7 compliance to this issue.

Michelle Reynolds (USGS Kilauea Field Station Bird Biologist): Has questions about the role of introduced fish on wetland function. She has concerns about the issues of exotic fish and temperature changes on the potentials of botulism. She would like to network with others on this issue. She reminds those of us doing wetland restoration projects that water control structures are needed to flush a site when botulism outbreaks occur, if birds are to be saved. We need to know more about how to prevent & address botulism.

Jason Vercelli (Kaua'i DOFAW Biologist): Reports the happy news that there are 80 new Nene goslings on Kauai that need dispersal. Homes are being sought.

David Penn (Dept. of Health): Encouraged involvement in the Water Quality Certification process and establishing wetland standards for compliance. He asked the question of what should be the State's position on wetland fill? Essentially, the State's position can be different from the federal guidelines - offering more protection if needed. He recommended that from Greg Bruland and Rich Mckenzie's work a wetland assessment methodology be developed that then informs the DOH's water quality certifications. Designated uses could be wildlife use!

For example, California has made invasive species a pollutant thus potentially requiring their removal as a condition of the certification. Also fill could be denied if it violates the intention for the conservation values of the property.

Additionally, there is no policy on wetland banking in Hawaii. However, a statewide wetlands guidance policy was created about 10 years ago. Overall, the bottom line is there are opportunities here to develop better protections for wetlands in the water quality certification program, including water quality standards, monitoring and assessment, and permitting/certification.

Norma Bustos (DOFAW Waterbird Coordinator): Is working on a statewide waterbird banding project to identify stilts, coots, and moorhen presence or absence at sites. The objectives are to see what birds use what islands and where they are traveling to better understand their needs. Kim U. mentioned that Chevron Refinery has bird data from 10 years of banding that has not been analyzed yet. And Carey S. indicated that Leigh Frederickson did some past banding on Kaua'i.

'AIMAKAPA SITE TOUR – Following the meeting Joint Venture Partners traveled to the Kaloko-Honokohau National Historic Park to view the 'Aimakapa wetland. Special thanks are extended to Scott Waddington and Kim Uyehara for providing resource information about the site during the tour and to the National Park Service

staff for their information assistance and access.

The following summary, written by Kim Uyehara, provides the **Site Background**:

‘Aimakapā Fishpond, identified as a core wetland in the USFWS waterbird recovery plan, is the largest natural wetland (~30 ac) on the Kona Coast. Along with Kaloko Fishpond, numerous anchialine pools, and reef flats, the area represents the only major protected wetland complex on the Island of Hawai‘i. ‘Aimakapā is a spring-fed, tidally-influenced, fresh-to-brackish marsh formed through subsidence and subsequent siltation of a Hawaiian Fishpond. It is important for its cultural and biological resources, such as the endangered Ae‘o or Hawaiian Stilt and endangered ‘Alae ke‘oke‘o or Hawaiian Coot. Numerous, likely interacting, factors are contributing to the degradation of this important habitat. KAHO’s General Management Plan/EIS and Resource Management Plan call for the restoration and management of ‘Aimakapā primarily for endangered waterbirds (the nearby Kaloko Fishpond is being restored and managed as a traditional fishpond). A wetland management plan is urgently needed to improve wetland conditions and guide park management in protecting and enhancing waterbird populations. Funding is scarce and highly competitive with other National Parks, staffing is also limited. Both ponds have an enormous potential for community involvement and education.

[Note: anyone wishing to comment further on the site restoration questions and ranking presented by Kim during the tour, can e-mail her at: kjukem@lava.net]

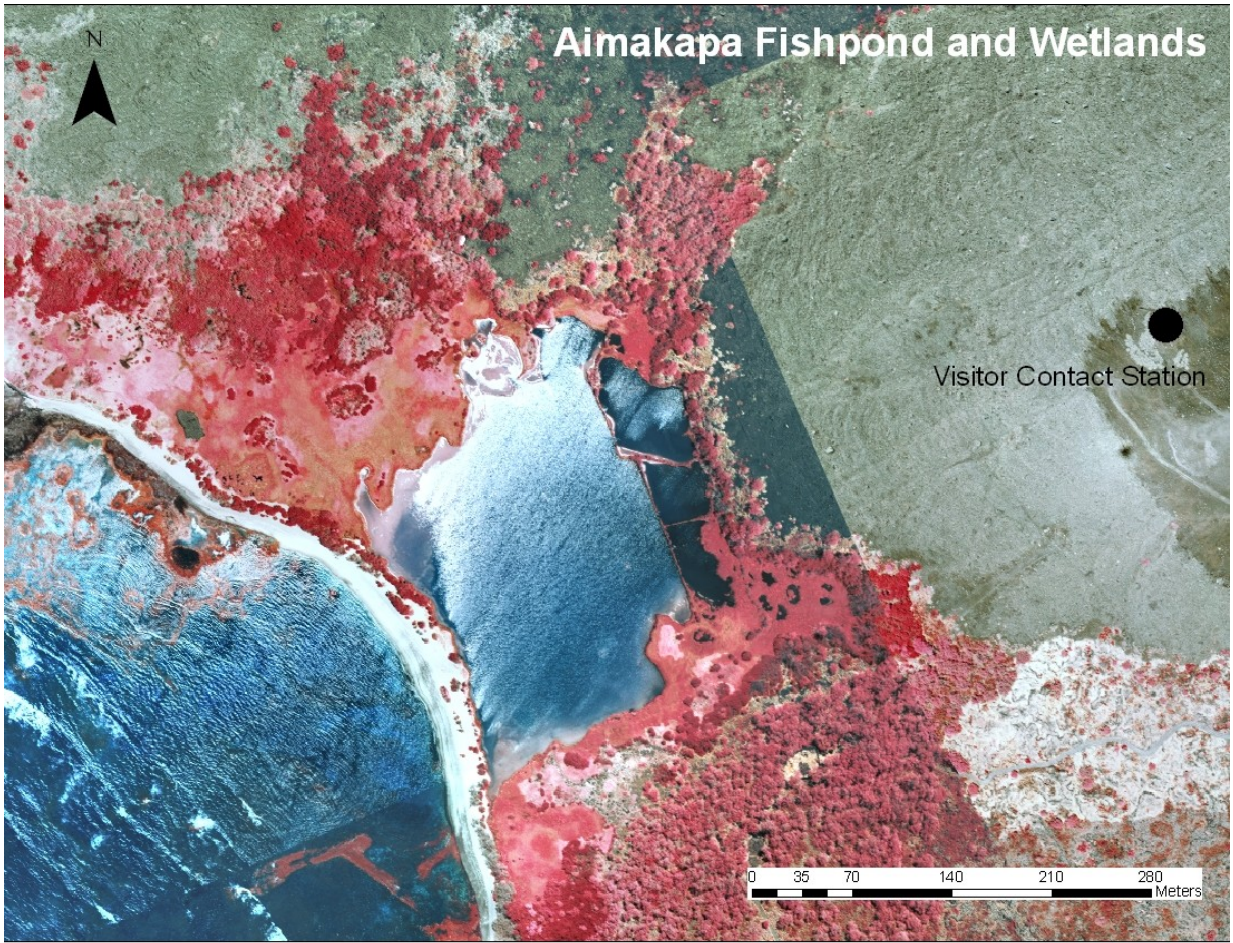


Photo: NPS file