

**HAWAII WETLAND JOINT VENTURE
Partners Meeting**

MEETING NOTES: Feb. 10, 2010
USDA Forest Service Conference Room
Hilo, Hawaii

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** J. Rubey (Hawaii Wetland Joint Venture Coordinator) facilitated the meeting. Those in attendance were:

In Person:		
Rich McKenzie	US Forest Service	rmackenzie@fs.fed.us
Christian Giardina	US Forest Service	cgiardina@fs.fed.us
Ann Kobsa	Malama O Puna	ann.kobsa@gmail.com
Rob Shallenberger	The Nature Conservancy	rshallenberger@tnc.org
Donna Ball	USFWS Conservation Partners	Donna_L_Ball@fws.gov
Christina Cornett	USGS	ccornett@usgs.gov
Matthew Wung	USDA NRCS (Hawaii)	Matthew.wung@hi.usda.gov
By Phone:		
Norma Bustos	DLNR DoFaW, Honolulu	Norma.I.Bustos@hawaii.gov
Scott Fisher	Maui Coastal Land Trust	scott@mauicoastallandtrust.org
David Penn	Hawaii Dept. of Health	david.penn@doh.hawaii.gov
Arleone Dibbon-Young	Ahupua'a Natives	nene@aloha.net
Greg Koob	NRCS (Honolulu)	gregory.koob@hi.usda.gov
Jason Vercelli	DOFAW Kauai	Jason.A.Vercelli@hawaii.gov

- 2. Hawaii Restoration and Conservation Initiative (HRCI). Presentation by Christian Giardina, US Forest Service.** (Note: The background description of the HRCI is copied directly from a summary paper written by the HRCI titled Ka Maui Hou.)

The Hawaii Restoration and Conservation Initiative is a relatively recent partnership of diverse entities that include both native Hawaiian organizations such as the Kanaka'ole Foundation, Kamehameha Schools, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, with federal agencies, the Hawaii Conservation Alliance, and many private and non-profit conservation groups.

Their collective vision is a future for Hawai'i where the relationships that define and link cultural and ecological resources are honored as sacred and whole; where Hawaiian nature and culture flourish through enhanced stewardship of traditional practices and beliefs; where health of native ecosystems and culture are protected, restored and sustained through inclusive efforts led by native Hawaiian people filling meaningful and fulfilling educational, career and leadership positions.

Native ecosystems and the Hawaiian culture they sustain are facing a stark future. While many landscapes, riparian areas and coastlines across Hawai'i have conservation status, and multiple restoration activities by diverse entities proceed on numerous fronts, the potent forces of invasive

and exotic plants, animals and pathogens wreak havoc on these unique ecosystems. Hawai'i leads the United States in the number of plants and animals federally listed as threatened or endangered (394 species). This desperate crisis has led to alarming statistics: one out of every three native Hawaiian plants is extinct, endangered or imminently at-risk of becoming endangered; invasive fish dominate and displace native species in most of our streams; three out of every four native bird species are extinct with most remaining species at severe risk; and native invertebrates are disappearing across our landscapes. Taken together, Hawai'i has lost forever hundreds of endemic species.

By anchoring new ecological and educational technologies in native Hawaiian culture, the HRCI seeks to inspire people and transform their beliefs, concerns, commitments and actions so that all who live in Hawai'i come to fully honor our interdependence with the natural world. To accomplish and sustain this transformation, they must: establish a new dialogue between traditional practitioners, land and water managers, scientists and Hawaii's diverse communities; implement new tools and strategies for conducting restoration and conservation at large spatial scales; and, support and mentor a new generation of stewards.

To implement this vision will require: 1) embracing a culturally-based land stewardship paradigm, 2) undertaking emergency actions to prevent imminent extinctions and new invasive species introductions, 3) establishing state-wide assessments, 4) enhancing cultural opportunities, 5) developing new tools and implementing new strategies for conservation, and 6) expanding education and recreation opportunities that promote a restoration economy.

The first step, as Christian explained, is to begin some pilot efforts to gather foundational ecological information. The HRCI partnership is currently seeking a federal funding appropriation for FY'11 to conduct several watershed assessment projects, looking at restoration for multiple objectives. These pilot projects will integrate five core concerns of ecology, culture, education, economy, and recreation. The seven proposed pilot areas are: Northern Kauai, the Tri-Mountain Area and Mauna Kea on Hawaii, Eastern Maui, and three other smaller areas throughout the state. These efforts will apply the new paradigm of conducting landscape level assessments of natural resource condition and function. Remote sensing will be used to conduct the landscape scale analysis and obtain a coarse level of watershed function.

3. Nene Research, presentation by Christine Cornett, NPS

Christina Cornett, a student at University of Hawaii, is working with Steven Hess of the US Geological Survey Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park to track nēnē movements across park boundaries. The questions she seeks to answer explore the travel routes of nēnē and characterize the habitats and plant communities they prefer.

In the past year Christina has began monitoring the activities of five birds using satellite transmitters. What she has found is that they travel quite extensively moving from Volcanoes National Park to Mauna Kea. Also they are frequently traveling to stock ponds on Mauna Kea that are mostly devoid of vegetation. When staying in the Volcanoes Park area they tended to spend their days near ponded water and their nights on open lava flows, finding pahoehoe patches in the middle of a'a to rest for the night.

Christina shared that the area of Kahuku (in the Kau District), at 6,500 feet elevation and dotted with small permanent pools, was likely used in the past by nēnē due to its name of Kipuka Nene on old Hawaii maps. Christina suspects that nēnē originally used wetlands on a daily basis as her first year results are already showing the strong affinity these birds have to being near water.

Christina has grant funding for four years to continue the transmitter study on nēnē. She will be deploying seven new solar transmitters this year. With more data she plans to do some point intercept plots on nēnē habitat areas and vegetation communities. She will be correlating the data to wetlands and reporting back to JV partners on what she finds. We look forward to learning more from her findings and, hopefully, applying her results to wetland restoration work.

Christina's powerpoint presentation can be accessed in the Hawaii portion of the PCJV web at www.pcjv.org

4. Strategic Plan Focus Areas

After three other partner meetings across the Hawaiian Islands, draft maps for the identification of focus areas in the HWJV Strategic Plan were brought to our Hawaii Island partners. The focus areas are these areas where partners agree there is the highest ecological need to protect and restore habitat. To facilitate selection, a list of criteria were defined and amended. Focus area identification began in late January 2009 with an initial scoping meeting and continued in May when partners meet on Oahu to further define the selection criteria and map focus areas on the core islands. At the Maui (September '09) and Kauai (November, '09) meetings some further refinements were made with input from partners on these islands.

During this fourth presentation focus areas on Hawaii Island received close review and the area near Hilo was suggested to cover the limited habitat available in this portion of the island. In addition, the focus area on the northern side of Molokai was updated to include only the smaller area of wetlands.

Next steps: Final drafts of the maps will be posted to the PCJV website for final partner review and comment, prior to the HWJV Executive Steering Team approving the areas for addition to the HWJV Strategic Plan.

5. HWJV Coordinator's Update by J. Rubey

NEW Wetlands Brochure. DOFAW's new Wetland Brochure and Poster, funded by the PCJV, was passed out. It is the first wetlands information material available for the general public of Hawaii. The brochure and poster can be accessed on the PCJV website at: www.pcjv.org/hawaii/wetlands Copies of the poster can be obtained directly from DOFAW's Michelle Jones at Michelle.G.Jones@hawaii.gov

PCJV Discretionary Projects. The annual PCJV Discretionary Funds granting round is underway. The HWJV Executive Steering Committee (EST) drafted review criteria for project assessment and these were shared with partners for comment and additions. The EST will review the projects this month and make recommendations to the PCJV Board approval in April.

Conservation Registry. The PCJV Conservation Registry Portal is operational. Partners can upload conservation projects at the web address <http://pcjv.conservationregistry.org/> Introductory webinars are being held for partners to get familiar with this new tool.

6. HWJV Partners' Reports:

- **Malama O Puna: Ann Kobsa** mentioned that 20 acres of mangrove at Wai'opia have been successfully killed back completing the work for that site. Four other sites have permits to start herbicide treatment. The cost of herbicide is only 5% that of manual removal.
- **USFWS Conservation Partnership: Donna Ball** mentioned that Sheldon Plentovich is the new Coastal Program coordinator replacing Chris Swenson. The Conservation Partnership works with private landowners on the island. Their focus areas tie with the focus areas selected by the watershed hui's.
- **NRCS: Matthew Wong** reported that the enrollment deadline for the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) has just passed. However, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) can be applied for year round. Their information website is www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov
- **DLNR DoFaW (Honolulu): Norma Bustos** provided updates on the feral cat problem. She indicated that the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has some funding directed at predator control of cats and they may be partnering on the feral cat brochure she will be developing with funding from the PCJV discretionary round in 2009. Also she recently attended a USFWS & NPS meeting on the feral cat issue.
- **Maui Coastal Land Conservancy: Scott Fischer** updated that the Nu'u site is progressing with the clearing of invasive species in the pond area. At Waihe'e they are currently clearing California grass around the wetland.
- **Ahupua'a Natives: Arleone Dibbon-Young** reported on activities on Molokai. At Ohiapilo her contract with the county for maintenance ended in October 2009. EPA is working with Maui County to address continued management requirements. The wetland at Kolea is being used as an education site to study vegetation and there is a small restoration happening at the harbor.
- **The Nature Conservancy: Rob Shallenberger** mentioned that TNC has recently completed their Marine Coastal areas mapping which can be found at www.hawaiiiecoregionplan.info It contains a list of wetland areas and a link for waterbirds. Rob is a board member for the Hawaii Wildlife Center and thus knows that their new building for wildlife rehab will be completed this month. Rob also serves on the Hawaii Legacy Land Commission.

- **USDA Forest Service: Rich McKenzie** reported that the EPA grant that he and Greg Bruland (University of Hawaii) received to study 40 coastal wetland sites is complete and the final reporting submitted. Their next proposal will target montane bog assessment. The Forest Service will be doing some work on invasive fish in anchialine ponds with the NOAA NE Research Reserve on the Kona side.

No site tour was conducted this time due to a lack of available participation.