

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR SHARED STEWARDSHIP
OF
HAWAII'S FORESTS AND WATERSHEDS
Between the
STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
the
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION
And the
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
PACIFIC ISLANDS AREA**

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) is hereby made and entered into by and between the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources hereinafter referred to as "DLNR," the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, hereinafter referred to as the "U.S. Forest Service," and the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pacific Islands Area, hereinafter referred to as the "NRCS."

Background: Hawaii's forests occupy approximately 1.4 million acres or over one-third of the State's land base. The Hawaiian Islands, often characterized as the most geographically isolated archipelago in the world, are high islands with volcanic origins. Most of the inhabited islands encompass a remarkable variety of climates and ecosystems including high, forested mountains. This variety has resulted in a rich diversity of plant, insect, and animal species as they have colonized and adapted to these islands. Polynesian settlers were the first humans known to have inhabited these islands. With their arrival, they brought plants and animals they needed to survive the long voyage from their homes in the South Pacific and to later flourish in their new home. These people quickly learned how to utilize the many resources of the Hawaiian forests for food, clothing, shelter, ornamentation, and medicine. As the people of Hawaii observed their own impacts on the forests, they learned and appreciated the relationship between freshwater, the forest, and the life they found there. They observed that rain followed the forests, that without rain, there was no water, and without water, there was no life. This acquired wisdom was expressed in an 'ōlelo no'eau (i.e., traditional poetic saying) as follows:

Hahai no ka ua i ka ululā'au.
Rains always follow the forest.

Hawaii's forests are essential for sustaining clean and abundant water in the islands; our island forests not only ensure water is deposited into underground aquifers, they also capture moisture from clouds passing over the islands. In addition, Hawaii's isolation has resulted in incredible displays of endemism that leads the nation in terms of biodiversity; unfortunately, land-use changes and the introduction of invasive species have resulted in the most federally endangered and at-risk species in the nation. Further, the beautiful backdrop provided by Hawaii's natural

resources makes it a sought after recreational and tourism destination – making this Hawaii’s primary industry. Most importantly, Hawaii’s forests are essential for sustaining life in the islands.

Federal, state, native Hawaiians, and private managers of forests and rangelands face a range of urgent challenges, among them increasing scale and intensity of wildfires, insects and disease epidemics, invasive species, human population demands, and climate-induced impacts such as rising sea levels, severe storms, and changing rainfall patterns and habitat dynamics. Thus, there are increasing concerns about the viability and sustainability of these forests, watersheds, and rangelands in terms of the benefits they provide to people. Of particular concern are increasing size, severity, cost, and damage of wildfires; biosecurity concerns leading to the introduction of new and expanding pest and invasive species populations; and forest loss and conversion due to expanding human uses and impacts.

To address these issues, the U.S. Forest Service announced a new strategy, “Toward Shared Stewardship across Landscapes: An Outcome-Based Investment Strategy,” outlining plans to work more closely with states to identify landscape-scale priorities for targeted treatments in areas with the highest benefits. This agreement outlines commitments of the State, U. S. Forest Service, and NRCS to increase the scope and scale of critical forest treatments that protect communities, create and sustain jobs, and improve forest health and resiliency.

Title: Memorandum of Understanding for Shared Stewardship of Hawaii's Forests

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this MOU is to document the cooperation between the parties in working together toward accomplishing mutual goals to maintain and restore healthy, sustainable forests and watersheds that continue to provide benefits to people now and into the future. The U.S. Forest Service, NRCS, and the State of Hawaii, through the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) as lead agencies, make this commitment in accordance with the following provisions.

II. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTERESTS:

The DLNR, U. S. Forest Service, and NRCS all have interests in managing forests and watersheds in Hawaii. Increasing our coordination, particularly in areas where our interests overlap, will be mutually beneficial by protecting and restoring healthy forests throughout the state, while also increasing efficiency by sharing or leveraging resources.

The mission of the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources is to enhance, protect, conserve, and manage Hawaii’s unique and limited natural, cultural, and historic resources. These lands are 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.

The mission of the Division of Forestry and Wildlife is to responsibly manage and protect watersheds, native ecosystems, and cultural resources and provide outdoor recreation and

sustainable forest product opportunities while facilitating partnerships, community involvement, and education. Mālama i ka ‘āina.

The mission of the U. S. Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The U. S. Forest Service manages 193 million acres of National Forest System lands with tribal governments, state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.

In Hawaii, California, and the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands, the Pacific Southwest Region is responsible for assisting state and private forest landowners to manage its forested lands. U.S Forest Service’s goal is to help retain and restore ecological resilience on state and private forests to achieve sustainable ecosystems, and that also provide a broad range of services and benefits to people including water, wood, energy, clean air, water purification, flood and climate regulation, carbon sequestration and storage, culturally important species and places, biodiversity, fish and wildlife habitat, scenic landscapes, recreational opportunities, jobs, and many others. The Pacific Southwest Research Station covers the same geographic region and supports studies and research to deepen our understanding of forest management and aid in the prioritization, enhancement and targeting of investments to address key forest and rangeland stewardship questions. By coordinating data investments, data analytics and acting as a statewide data hub, they also enable stakeholders to adapt priorities and management techniques to the dynamics of Hawaii’s changing ecosystems.

The mission of the NRCS is to deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world. Their vision is resilient islands with clean and abundant water, healthy soils, and thriving agricultural communities. Through voluntary conservation programs, NRCS helps producers and partners protect and conserve natural resources on private lands throughout the Pacific. Their locally-led, science-based approach offers land-owners a variety of conservation solutions that enhance their environment and commercial viability.

In consideration of the above premises, the parties agree as follows:

III. IT IS MUTUALLY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT:

Shared stewardship is essential for conserving Hawaii’s vital forest ecosystems. The U.S. Forest Service, DLNR, and NRCS, hereinafter referred to as “Partners” or separately as a “Partner” will collaborate, coordinate, and work jointly with each other and with other stakeholders - including sister agencies at federal and state levels as well as private landowners, counties, non-governmental organizations, communities, and universities - to proactively identify and carry out projects to improve and protect forest and watershed conditions, ensure that Hawaii’s forests continue their role in sustaining life and livelihoods in the islands, and that connect people to forests. The Partners will take an integrated approach to prioritize investments and connect with other parties that are needed to have the greatest impact on the priorities identified in the State of Hawaii Forest Action Plan and

Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan. In particular, the parties commit to focusing on the following actions to advance shared stewardship opportunities:

- **Biosecurity and Protection of Hawaii's Watersheds.** Geographically isolated in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Hawaii's unique forests are especially vulnerable to invasive species, including plants, pathogens, feral ungulates, and insects that enter the state through a variety of pathways. Invasive species damage and out-compete native species, disrupt hydrologic processes, promote wildland fires that native ecosystems are not adapted to, destroy habitat for Hawaii's rich biodiversity, and erase cultural connections between the forest and Hawaii's people that have existed for hundreds of years. The Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan (<https://hdoa.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Hawaii-Interagency-Biosecurity-Plan.pdf>) outlines needs related to prevention, early detection and rapid response, as well as management of long-established species that disrupt ecosystems such as hooved animals and strawberry guava.

The most cost-effective, long-term control for many species, especially plants and insects, is biological control. Hawaii has a long history of biocontrol successes, yet current efforts need to be increased to manage a list of priority targets effectively. Other needs identified in the plan include increased forest pathology capacity, more field-based positions focused on the management of invasive species, and increased funding for the fencing and removal of ungulates. In addition, close collaboration with state and federal quarantine agencies is needed to keep out globally emerging pests and/or the prevention of landscape-scale epidemics such as Rapid Ohia Death, which is caused by two previously undescribed fungi.

- **Forests Sustaining Hawaii.** Forests are essential to sustain life and livelihoods in the Hawaiian Islands. Healthy forested watersheds provide the freshwater that makes life possible in Hawaii and are the backbone of Hawaii's major industries: tourism and agriculture. Water provided by the forest fills our aquifers, irrigates our farmland, and maintains our freshwater streams and productive oceans. Hawaii's forest provides an incredible array of ecosystem services and forest products; several are economically significant in addition to their cultural and ecological attributes. *Acacia koa*, for example, is one of Hawaii's premier high-value hardwoods, culturally important for use in the construction of wa'a (canoes), and is a native successional tree that is becoming increasingly important in reforestation and carbon sequestration initiatives. By investing in projects where Hawaii's native species are helping to meet the economic needs of communities, we can provide resources and ecosystem services for people as well as promoting sustainable native forests.

Forests also play an important role in meeting several of the State's Sustainable Hawaii Initiative goals, specifically watershed protection, doubling food production (via agroforestry); 100% renewable energy (via biomass and biofuel opportunities); and carbon neutrality (via tree planting for carbon sequestration). Several private industries and businesses have also committed to their own sustainability initiatives, bringing an increasing recognition that everyone has a role to play in the care and stewardship of our natural and cultural resources. Capitalizing on projects that highlight the role that forests

play in meeting these shared sustainability goals are key to developing sustainability in Hawaii and across the nation.

Connecting People to Forests. Hawaii's number one economic industry is tourism, reaching over 10 million visitors to the islands each year. This large influx of people and the evolution of social and online information have brought increasing challenges in the management of Hawaii's natural and community resources. Record amounts of tourists and social media have dramatically increased the amount of people on sanctioned and unsanctioned trails through the forest. This increased foot traffic increases soil erosion, intensifies the opportunities for invasive species movement, damages habitat for rare and endangered species, and has put numerous lives at risk due to un-safe hiking conditions or unprepared hikers. Hawaii's recreational management has not kept pace with the increased use of our forests and trails. In many cases, there are no facilities, such as parking or bathrooms, which has impacted the communities surrounding trailheads. Leveraging the resources, lessons learned, tools and management options utilized in the national forest system may provide relevant opportunities for the management of Hawaii's forests.

Connecting people to forests and providing safe and reliable access to forests for residents and visitors of Hawaii is a high priority, whether through forest trails, under urban forest canopies, or through community stewardship of forest areas, or environmental education activities. Forests and natural and cultural resources of Hawaii are a significant part of maintaining our community health and well-being and are an essential part of our cultural and societal identity.

Shared Stewardship is about setting mutual priorities amongst Partners and all stakeholders, working across boundaries, and seeking outcomes that improve forest, watershed and community health. Tracking progress is essential to the success of these actions to advance shared stewardship. Partners agree to create a performance framework to assess progress of this agreement while providing flexibility for the diverse local context and spatial scales of these actions.

IV. MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT

The Partners are bound by all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, ordinances, and rules. If conflict arises, the Partners will evaluate how authorities can best achieve the goals of a project.

Partners will communicate on a regular basis to enhance the priorities and projects identified under this agreement. The Partners will conduct business pertaining to this agreement by means of in-person meetings, conference calls, or other means, and in each calendar year, the Partners will meet at least once in person to evaluate the progress on the agreement.

V. PRINCIPLE CONTACTS

Individuals listed below may act in their respective areas for matters related to this agreement.

State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources
Suzanne D. Case, Chairperson
1151 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 587-0400

Division of Forestry and Wildlife
David G. Smith, Administrator
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 587-0166

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Randy Moore, Regional Forester Pacific Southwest Region
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo CA, 94590
(707) 562-8737

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Valerie Hipkins, Pacific Southwest Research Station Acting Director
800 Buchanan St
Albany, CA 94710
(510) 883-8830

U.S. Department of Agriculture, NRCS
Travis Thomason, Director of Pacific Islands Area
Prince Kuhio Federal Building
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 4-118
Honolulu, Hawaii
(808) 600-2911

VI. PROVISIONS

- 1. Notices:** Any communications affecting the operations covered by this MOU given by any Partner is sufficient only if in writing and delivered in person, mailed, or transmitted electronically by e-mail or fax, to the contact of each organization at the address specified in this MOU. Notices are effective when delivered in accordance with this provision, or on the effective date of the notice whichever is later.
- 2. Participation in Similar Activities:** This MOU in no way restricts the Partners from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.
- 3. Endorsement:** Any Partner's contributions made under this MOU does not, by direct reference or implication, convey endorsement of any Partner's products or activities.
- 4. Nonbinding Agreement:** This MOU creates no right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity. The Partners shall manage their respective resources and activities in a separate, coordinated, and mutually beneficial

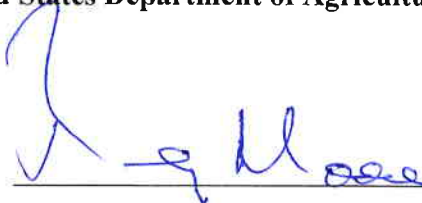
manner to meet the purpose(s) of this MOU. Nothing in this MOU authorizes any of the Partners to obligate or transfer any funds or anything of value.

5. **Other Agreements:** Specific, prospective projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, property, and/or anything of value to a Partner requires the execution of separate agreements and are contingent upon numerous factors, including, as applicable, but not limited to: federal agency availability of appropriated funds and other resources; State agency availability of appropriated and allocated funds and other resources; and federal and State agency administrative and legal requirements (including agency authorization by statute). This MOU neither provides, nor meets these criteria. If the Partners elect to enter into an obligation agreement that involves the transfer of funds, services, property, and/or anything of value to other Partner, then the applicable criteria must be met. Additionally, under a prospective agreement, each Partner operates under its own laws, regulations, and/or policies, and any Partner/agency obligation is subject to the availability of appropriated funds and other resources. The negotiation, execution, and administration of these prospective agreements must comply with all applicable law.
6. **Statutory and Regulatory Authorities:** Nothing in this MOU is intended to alter, limit, or expand the Partners' statutory and regulatory authority.
7. **Partner Acknowledge in Publications, Audiovisuals, and Electronic Media:** The Partners shall acknowledge each other's support in any publications, audiovisuals, and electronic media developed as a result of this MOU.
8. **Termination:** The Partners, in writing, may terminate this MOU in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration. A written termination agreement will be created and provided by the Partner requesting termination to the other Partner as soon as possible but not later than 30 days prior to the intended Termination Date (defined below).
9. **Modifications:** Modifications within the scope of this MOU must be made by mutual consent of the Partners, by the issuance of a written modification signed and dated prior to any changes being performed. Requests for modification should be made, in writing, at least 30 days prior to implementation of the requested change.
10. **Termination Date:** This MOU will terminate five years from the Effective Date (Termination Date). Extension of this MOU for an additional five years may be made by mutual consent with a signed and dated modification of this MOU by the Partners (Extended Termination Date). Once fully executed, this MOU is effective until it is terminated by the Partners in writing, the Termination Date, or the Extended Termination Date.

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES

By signature below, each Partner certifies that the individuals listed in this document as representatives of the individual Partners are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this agreement.

United States Department of Agriculture U.S. Forest Service



Randy Moore, Regional Forester Pacific Southwest Region



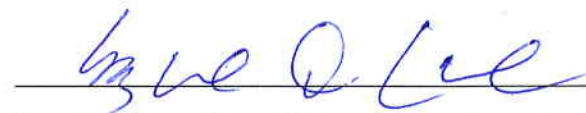
Valerie Hipkins, Pacific Southwest Research Station Acting Director

United States Department of Agriculture NRCS

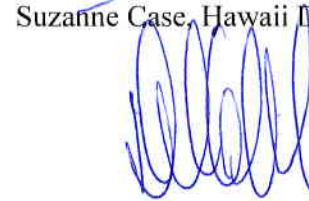


Travis Thomason, Director of Pacific Islands Area

State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources



Suzanne Case, Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources Chairperson



David G. Smith, Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife Administrator



The authority and format of this agreement have been reviewed and approved for signature.

21 February 2020

CONSTANCE ZIPPERER

Date

USDA Forest Service Grants Management Specialist

USDA Forest Service #20-MU-11052021-215

Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0596-0217. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal relay at (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.