

Feedback - Hilo Consultation Meeting - 09/25/09 - Response to Questions/Comments

Approximately 30 people attended the September 25, 2009 Hilo Beneficiary consultation meeting at the Hilo High School Cafeteria. The following are questions and comments raised at the meeting. Each was responded to and, for the most part, the information was noted to already be contained in the report. The responses on the right column reflect the response at the meeting, as well as generally stated in the report.

Pasture	
What DHHL programs are in place now for agriculture/ community pasture?	According to DHHL, Moloka`i uses a community pasture program and it has been successful. Previous tries at community pasture on Hawai`i Island have apparently not been as successful. However, the Program is open to a variety of scenarios, with community pasture being only one of the options or combinations of options for management.
Has the long term pasture area noted on the map been studied? Is it sustainable for cattle?	The pasture area west of Humu`ula Sheep Station was previously used by Parker Ranch and identified as good for pasture. According to the Ranch, this area was an ideal place for birthing cattle and it was used accordingly.

Commercial Forestry to Fight Gorse	
Are there other ways to eradicate gorse besides commercial timber? The emphasis on commercial timber seems to give a precedent for commercial timber, not other options. Why not use native trees to control gorse?	<p>The Program suggests timber to fight gorse but also allows for other viable gorse eradication opportunities.</p> <p>Interim commercial-scale timber planting can serve both as a gorse eradication mechanism, as well as an income generator. Eucalyptus and Sugi have been proposed because they have proven successful in fighting gorse and others are willing to pay rent in order to plant and manage the trees. The existing development of these crops in the general area have given rise to increased investment in required infrastructure including marketing and market development efforts by a number of public and private entities.</p> <p>Gorse is a noxious weed species that is threatening natural habitats and agro-ecosystems around the world, including Hawai`i. Management and control of this noxious plant, that has already rendered thousands of acres useless, is an essential component in any land use and management plan for these lands.</p> <p>Gorse has a life span of 30 to 40-years while the seed can remain viable in the soil for up to 70-years after that. DHHL field trials and research projects have shown that shade from trees inhibit the ability for gorse to grown and spread.</p> <p>It is anticipated that commercial-scale timber planting (the</p>

	<p>initiation of Gorse Control and Ecosystem Restoration Utilizing Commercial Timber (to include biomass for alternative energy) on approximately 10,000-acres) will shade the gorse sufficiently to keep it from producing seeds and perhaps kill it. With normal forestry operations, each year some portion of the seed bank will be removed.</p> <p>Shading has proven to be a method for killing gorse, and also generates revenue for the department however, if other viable processes are developed, they will be considered as well. DHHL field trials and research projects have shown that shade from native trees species such as koa are not effective on gorse because they do not produce enough shade.</p> <p>Eucalyptus, sugi or others trees are selected to address and control the gorse; once the gorse eradication process is well underway, the area is to be reforested back to a native koa.</p>
<p>What would “Commercial forestry” look like? Will trucks be hauling lumber off the mountain or will there be a processing plant? How much revenue can DHHL make thru commercial timber?</p>	<p>The RFQ/RFP process will be designed to provide for the best overall benefit to the department. The recommendation is to solicit proposals for a timber license for the planting and harvesting of commercial non-native tree species (i.e. eucalyptus, sugi or other) that will first serve to fight the gorse, but will also provide valuable wood products for a variety of uses which can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lumber ○ Wood chips ○ Veneer ○ Forest products ○ Biomass for alternative energy opportunities (liquid fuel and electricity) <p>Additionally, DHHL would retain rights to any Carbon Credit opportunities.</p> <p>The RFQ/RFP process would be initiated to find interested parties in commercial forestry. The Program does not anticipate allowing a processing plant. Additionally, Best Management Practices and other precaution will be made if hauling lumber off the mountain is anticipated.</p>

<p>Native Forest Restoration</p>	
<p>What is the plan to restore the māmane forest?</p>	<p>The lands of Humu`ula and Pi`ihonua represent the most important native forest areas remaining in the DHHL trust. Based on soil, elevation, and rainfall characteristics, there are an estimated 10,000-acres across the mauka portions of the property that can be restored to māmane forest, a critical Palila bird habitat.</p> <p>There are strong recommendations to enhance and restore</p>

	<p>various areas in the overall property because of their importance as habitat, biodiversity and condition (and ability to restore) as native forest.</p> <p>The setting aside, protection and restoration of these areas is critical for the protection, restoration and enhancement of `Āina Mauna. Wildlife corridors help provide a contiguous habitat from the lower koa forest to the higher elevation māmane forest to facilitate the migration of native forest birds between these habitats.</p> <p>Additional Fencing, excluding and removing ungulates, would allow existing trees to produce and maintain root shoots and basal sprouts, thereby increasing foliage and subsequent tree processes.</p> <p>Centralized plant propagation, staging and storage facilities will be located at Kanakaleonui Bird Corridor and north of Pu`u `Ō`ō. These propagation centers will be used for both the native forest restoration and sustainable koa forests.</p> <p>Replanting efforts would focus on a mosaic of 'islands' using combinations of native plants grouped together (for example, pūkiawe, pilo, `a`ali`i and `ohelo may be planted together) that will grow outward until they all connect into one diverse native forest.</p> <p>Māmane (mauka areas) trees would then be planted around the existing shrubs so that they can utilize the beneficial traits of the 'islands.'</p> <p>Continued research is necessary to effectively evaluate the various experimental methods of out planting. Experimental plots should be established to be used for this research.</p>
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Homesteading	
<p>What is meant by "new model" for future homesteading"?</p>	<p>The Program has been revised to further explain this concept. Instead of "a new model", the language has been revised to "an option".</p> <p>Once the gorse eradication process is well underway, the homesteading area will be planted with koa for reforestation. This area includes the significant portions of the site that are proposed for sustainable koa restoration.</p> <p>The forested areas also provide DHHL with an option for future agricultural homesteading. Once the koa restoration is accomplished, DHHL will have the opportunity to consider creation of agricultural homesteads using forestry for beneficiaries. Homesteaders would be responsible to control ungulates, gorse</p>

	and other invasive species in the homestead area. The commercial koa forest management operations can continue, with the DHHL and beneficiaries benefitting directly from the commercial sale of koa.
Who will be able to sign up for homesteads?	<p>Dispositions of Homestead and Pasture Leases, Licenses and/or RPs will be through the standard DHHL processes for these types of dispositions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since homesteading and pasture use are the typical and conventional disposition activities of DHHL, it is recommended that the proposed uses at Humu`ula/Pi`ihonua come under existing DHHL planning, design, development, funding, disposition and management. • These proposed uses can fit in the “queue” for development scheduling and disposition with other Homesteading and Pasture uses • While the Homestead lots will be rural, due to the areas remote location and lack of traditional infrastructure, the cost of development is likely to be significant and beyond the scope and capacity for the remaining revenue generating opportunities proposed on the property.

Koa Forestry	
Will the initial homesteading area need to be planted with koa? Is there koa there now?	<p>There are scattered koa trees in the area now. Koa planting would begin immediately in the form of koa forest restoration. Koa is one of the predominant tree species found naturally in the Humu`ula/Pi`ihonua lands.</p> <p>It is presently the highest value timber crop in Hawai`i. It grows easily and well in this area if introduced ungulates are removed.</p> <p>Restoring the Humu`ula/Pi`ihonua lands to koa through carefully planned and managed reforestation is its highest and most compatible economic use.</p> <p>Based on soil, elevation, and rainfall characteristics, there are an estimated 10,000 acres in Humu`ula and adjacent Pi`ihonua mauka that could be restored and managed under a sustainable koa forest harvesting regime.</p> <p>A restored sustainable koa forest provides several opportunities and options for future decision-making by DHHL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sustainable koa forest would provide jobs and generate income to the DHHL trust. • Once a sustainable koa forestry operation is in place, portions of the property could be considered for future agricultural (sustainable koa forested) homestead

	opportunities, affording homesteaders a sustainable koa forest as a part of their homestead.
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Other	
What is the elevation?	Elevations range from approximately 4,500 to 9,000 feet mean sea level.
There are three springs on the property? Where are they?	The three springs are reported to be near Pu`u `Ō`ō Ranch.