

News Release



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Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge Seeks Comments on Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment *Public Invited to Participate in Open House*

The Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge draft comprehensive conservation plan has been released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for public review and comment. When final, the plan will guide management of the refuge for the next 15 years.

“We’ve been developing this draft plan over the past 3 years, incorporating ideas raised by the public during the scoping period,” said Jim Kraus, project leader for the Big Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex. “This is another opportunity for the public to have important input into how their national wildlife refuge will be managed.”

On August 25, refuge staff will hold an open house to hear comments from the public and to address questions regarding the draft plan and its associated environmental assessment. The open house will be from 5 to 7 p.m. at the refuge administrative office, located in Hilo at 60 Nowelo Street.

The draft plan provides the vision, goals, objectives, and strategies for management activities on Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge was established in 1985 to protect endangered forest birds and their rainforest habitat. It consists of two units, the Hakalau Forest Unit on the windward slope of Mauna Kea and the Kona Forest Unit on the leeward slope of Mauna Loa. Both units support a diversity of native birds and plants rarely found in Hawai‘i today.

Three alternatives are proposed in the draft document, including maintaining current management; increasing reforestation, restoration, and ungulate removal efforts; and placing less emphasis on invasive species control and rainforest habitat restoration, while increasing efforts to provide nēnē foraging habitats and wildlife-dependent recreation on the Hakalau Forest Unit. Based on public comments, one or a combination of the alternatives may be selected for implementation in the final plan.

Copies of the full document and/or a summary (planning update) can be obtained at the refuge administrative office or by calling the refuge at 808.443.2300. The document is available online at <http://www.fws.gov/hakalauforest/planning.html>. Comments on the draft plan and environmental assessment may be made at the open house or by letter, fax, or email. All comments must be emailed or postmarked by September 15, 2010 to be considered. Comments may be sent by email to: FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov (please put “Hakalau Forest NWR CCP” in the subject line); by mail to Jim Kraus, Project Leader, Big Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 60 Nowelo Street, Suite 100, Hilo, HI 96720; or by fax to 808.443.2304.

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