

# Environmental Education and Interpretation CD, Hanalei NWR

## Comments and Responses

1. **Comment:** The HHCA supports the proposed Environmental Education & Interpretation activity, provided that it is focused on local school groups and that the activities in the valley at the managed wetland units and taro lo'i are limited to no more than 6 local school groups per year, as is stated in the Draft Compatibility Determination.

**Agency Response:** *The revised CD clarifies the limit on the number of EE programs held in the valley. The EE programs held in the wetland management units and lo 'i kalo demonstration ponds may serve up to 6 local school classes annually. EE may also include smaller groups (2-6 students) working with Refuge staff on approved science projects. Interpretive programs held in the WMUs and demonstration lo 'i kalo consist of guided hikes of small groups ( $\leq 15$  participants), with a maximum of 180 participants hosted annually. These programs occur primarily in conjunction with Friends of Kaua 'i Wildlife Refuges activities and/or during special events (National Wildlife Refuge Week, Migratory Bird Day, World Wetland Day).*

2. **Comment:** I question the numbers put forth regarding school visits in the CD. Schools usually hire regular school buses to go on field trips. Buses accommodate at least 44 students plus additional teachers. Being conservative about the numbers per bus, forty-four (44) students multiplied by twenty-four (24) visits annually is one thousand fifty -six visitors per year (1056), not 600. This is a significant underestimation

**Agency Response:** *The Refuge is capping the total number of visitors for EE programs scheduled with our Visitor Services staff each year. Visitor Services staff are shared across three refuges on the island. EE programs conducted at the Hanalei Viewpoint are limited to twice per month, 24 classes per year, for a potential of 600 students annually, dependent on availability of staff to conduct programs. We note that local schools have access to 24-passenger vehicles to facilitate single classroom visits, but a single standard school bus may be authorized at the Viewpoint only.*

3. **Comment:** I question the cost of portable restrooms at \$1000 annually.

**Agency Response:** *Portable toilets are leased by the day for special events, not a full year.*

4. **Comment:** The small group sizes would limit the Refuge to meeting the needs of small groups of students that are more likely to come from a private school or homeschool environment. To equitably meet the needs of public-school students, group size would need to be at least the size of a public-school classroom (approximately 30 people including aids, teachers and chaperones). Ideally the capacity would be that of a school bus, approximately 45 students, as transportation costs are a limiting factor for most schools.

**Agency Response:** *Group size in any sensitive areas of the refuge should be limited. In the valley, a large student group would be separated into several smaller groups of 15 people or less and work in separate areas of the Refuge to limit impact. A standard 45-passenger school bus may be authorized at the Viewpoint only.*