



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Hanalei, Hulē'ia, and Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuges

*Planning Update Number 2, February 2011*



*Hanalei NWR / Credit USFWS*

## Summary of Public Scoping Efforts

The Kaua'i National Wildlife Refuge Complex (KNWRC) includes Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Hulē'ia NWR, and Kīlauea Point NWR (KPNWR). The Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) planning process for KNWRC began in 2009 with a series of public scoping meetings and talk story sessions. Planning Update 1 was mailed in January 2010 to approximately 500 recipients, including local conservation groups, research organizations, Native Hawaiian groups, County, State, and Federal government agencies, individuals, and others who have expressed an interest in the planning process. Planning Update 1 described KNWRC's purposes, preliminary goals

and issues for consideration, and a summary of the talk story sessions held in the communities of Hanalei and Kīlauea.

Since Planning Update 1 was published KNWRC staff hosted a third talk story session, a week of transportation meetings, and two public scoping meetings. Held January 12, 2010, the Hulē'ia talk story session, similar to the first two, was designed to listen and learn from stories shared by local residents, respected kūpuna, and concerned citizens about their history of the Hulē'ia valley. Approximately 55 people attended the three talk story sessions.

Two public scoping meetings were held at the Līhu'e Public Library and the Kīlauea Elementary School cafeteria on January 26 and 28, 2010. Approximately 30 people attended the meetings. All of these public meetings were designed to further identify community concerns, challenges, and potential solutions concerning all aspects of refuge management. In addition, two written comments were submitted during the public scoping period. The comments are summarized on pages 2-3.

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# Thank You for Participating

## *We learned a lot from your comments!*

Most of the comments we received during the public scoping period expressed support for the KPNWR, with an interest in addressing the following issues.

### **Hulē‘ia Talk Story Session**

Participants recommended that the CCP include Hulē‘ia valley’s history including land ownership (Monarchy to present) and identify the kuleana land located within the refuge boundary. Requests were made to include the cultural significance of taro farming to the Hulē‘ia valley and for the refuge to reconsider using taro farming as a tool to help achieve the goal of recovering endangered Hawaiian waterbird populations.

Participants of this 3rd talk story session also expressed that a strong emphasis be placed on improving water quantity and quality for Hulē‘ia NWR including the importance of ample clean water for fishing and swimming. The public suggested that the refuge take the lead in formation of a community partnership to assist in watershed restoration planning for Hulē‘ia river and associated streams that affect the refuge.

The meeting participants would like our plan to include goals for additional wetland restoration and for removal of invasive species in riparian (especially red mangrove) and lowland forest habitats. The public stated that increased staffing is needed to work towards recovery of Hawai‘i’s endangered waterbirds at Hulē‘ia NWR. Public interest was also expressed regarding the potential expansion of Hulē‘ia NWR to include the adjacent Alekoko fish pond.

### **CCP Public Scoping Meetings**

Public comments were recorded, compiled, and summarized into the following four general topics which are applicable across the three refuges. These topics are: priorities, partnerships, visitor opportunities, and refuge expansion.

### **Priorities which the CCP should reevaluate:**

- Elevate endangered species recovery (especially for the koloa maoli) as a higher priority within the refuge complex – this includes addressing the imbalance of staff and funding for wetland habitat management and enhancement.

- Focus additional effort on water security and quality for the wetland refuges, especially in regards to taro farming on the refuge but also including aquatic habitat protection.
- Continue to provide a quality visitor experience focused at KPNWR with smaller scale opportunities enhanced at Hanalei and Hulē‘ia NWRs.
- Capture the history of land ownership and the cultural significance of taro farming, including kuleana lands, on refuge-owned lands.

### **Partnerships**

- Enhance community partnerships at all three refuges especially in the areas of: transportation planning for KPNWR, environmental outreach to local high schools and the college, aquatic habitat preservation for Hanalei NWR, and watershed restoration planning for Hulē‘ia NWR.
- Specifically focus on improving the refuge’s coordination/partnership with the refuge taro farmers of Hanalei valley. The CCP should clearly articulate the past and current role of taro farming at Hanalei NWR, from both a cultural and biological perspective.
- Establish Friends organizations to help support Hulē‘ia and Hanalei NWRs.

### **Visitor Opportunities**

- Enhance existing programs across the three refuges to include: increased hiking opportunities (especially on Crater Hill), additional environmental programs for youth (e.g., volunteer habitat restoration at Hulē‘ia NWR and an outdoor classroom program at Hanalei NWR), incorporate additional Hawaiian culture into refuge interpretation programs, construct bird blinds and interpretive panels at Hanalei and Hulē‘ia NWRs, and increase environmental interpretation at Kīlauea Point and Hanalei NWRs overlooks.
- Implement incremental small-scale improvements to improve traffic congestion and visitor safety at KPNWR; including such changes as developing pedestrian and bicycle access, improving visitor signage, modifying fee structure and using advance appointments to spread out congestion during the most heavily visited time periods, and making relatively small infrastructure improvements to KPNWR.

### Expansion

- Community concerns exist over moving the Hanalei overlook.
- KPNWR's expansion should continue in coordination with willing sellers.
- Expansion of Hulē'ia NWR should be considered to include the Alekoko fish pond.

### Transportation Assistance Group (TAG) Meetings

The TAG met with KPNWR staff and conducted a public meeting during the week of October 21-24, 2009. The TAG is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)-independent group comprised of transportation planning professionals providing technical assistance with transportation concerns at KPNWR. The TAG's goal was to use previous transportation plans (including the Alternative Transportation Study) and new information gathered from refuge staff, the community, and other stakeholders to provide a fresh set of transportation recommendations to the refuge for use in the CCP.

Based on community sentiment the TAG recommended that KPNWR begin to implement small-scale operational and infrastructure

improvements in an incremental manner, as soon as possible. They reiterated the Kīlauea Town Plan's comment that KPNWR should manage visitor demand using such things as entry fees, advance appointments, better signage; and make only modest changes to parking and transportation arrangements instead of promoting increased visitation to KPNWR. Based on the premise that the visitor traffic to the refuge has a significant effect on the community of Kīlauea, the TAG strongly encouraged refuge staff to establish close coordination with the community and other stakeholders including Kīlauea Neighborhood Association, the County of Kaua'i, Kaua'i Bus, and Hawai'i Department of Transportation; especially during the CCP process. The TAG recommended small-scale infrastructure improvements such as relocating the fee booth, resurfacing existing parking areas, restructuring traffic flow, and improving pedestrian safety.

Comments from the talk story sessions, public scoping meetings, and the TAG meetings are currently being reviewed by Complex staff in relation to CCP development. The next planning update will identify what issues will be considered in the CCP and what issues fall outside of the scope of the CCP.

## Planning Schedule

### *Planning Step:*

**Planning Update 3 (Alternatives)**

**Draft CCP/EA**

**Public review/comment on Draft CCP/EA**

**NEPA Decision**

**Planning Update 4 Issued**

**Final CCPs**

### *Target Date:*

**Summer 2011**

**Fall 2011**

**Fall 2011**

**Summer 2012**

**Fall 2012**

**Fall 2012**

**Schedule dates are tentative and subject to change as CCP planning progresses.**



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## **How to Contact Us**

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**Please include "Kauai NWRC CCP" in the subject.**

**Find Us On the Web:**

**<http://www.fws.gov/hanalei>**

**<http://www.fws.gov/huleia>**

**<http://www.fws.gov/kilaueapoint>**



*Kilauea Lighthouse / Credit Brenda Zaun, USFWS*