Friends of Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge

Volume III, June 2009



Hakalau Forest NWR has great news! The recent passage of the ARRA (Recovery Act) by Congress includes funding for the new 40' × 80'



Jim Kraus

Maintenance Storage building intended to replace the old barn at Pua Akala. The location for the new structure will be at the refuge administration site below the greenhouse. The design work for this

project was completed several years ago but the construction project itself was delayed when the funding was needed for higher refuge system priority needs associated with establishing the new Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Monument. The project was then put into the deferred maintenance program to await future funding. Expectations are for a contract to be awarded before the end of the fiscal year (September 30).

Kona Forest NWR: Work continues on the Kona Forest fence corridor clearing project as well as maintenance of the easement access road. There is no public entry to the Kona Forest unit, and legal access to the property is limited to official use. Once the corridor clearing is complete, a fencing contract will be established to enclose the 5300 acres, and feral ungulate removal will begin.

Staffing: Two new Pest Control workers, Isamu Lopez and Matthew James, have been hired to join

Jason Gibson and Frank Bianchini on the fence/ ungulate control crew. These are term appointments, lasting up to 3 years. This is a significant step in building up crew strength to a level necessary to maintain over 45 miles of fence lines and to control wild pigs, which are trying to make a comeback in several formerly ungulate free areas.

The advertisement for our vacant refuge biologist position closed on May 14, so in the coming weeks we hope to be reviewing qualifying applicants and selecting a new biologist.

The announcement of a term Administrative Support Assistant vacancy has also been open for 2 weeks. Clara Tsang is currently filling this niche as a temporary hire. Currently, 4 of our 9 staff members' salaries are covered by "soft money" rather than base funding, meaning we have no permanent source for salary money.

CCP (Comprehensive Conservation Planning):

We are preparing CCP Planning Update #2, which should be mailed to our contact list as soon as we get approval to do so. The focus for this summer is to take public and agency scoping comments and begin crafting our alternatives for the Draft CCP due out in April, 2010. Any individual wishing to be on the CCP mailing list should contact the refuge office directly and ask to be added to receive future updates as well as the draft and final CCP.

Jim Kraus, Refuge Manager

THE ANCIENT OHIA OF HAKALAU

Hakalau Forest may be the best place in the State of Hawaii to see a relatively intact community of native forest birds. One reason for this is the lack of disease carrying mosquitoes at such high elevations. Another reason there are so many birds at Hakalau is that there is something special about the forest itself. Recent research has shown that the ohia trees at Hakalau are unusually old compared to most broadleaf (flowering) trees. In fact, they may be some of the oldest broadleaf trees in the world!

Just a quick botany refresher- there are basically two kinds of trees- cone-bearing trees (conifers) with needle-like leaves (pines, firs, and redwoods), and flower bearing trees (broadleafs- just about everything else). Conifers may commonly reach ages greater than 1000 years, and some (like Bristle-cone pines and redwoods) are among the oldest organisms in the world. But until recently broadleafs were thought to rarely attain ages greater than 400 years. For example, the oldest oak in North America is not thought to be greater than about 400 years old. But recent radiocarbon analyses of newly fallen giant ohia trees at Hakalau show that many of these trees are much older than 400 years. One was even dated at approximately 650 years old!





author with ancient ohia tree at Hakalau Forest NWR

How does this relate to the birds? The akepa, for example, is an endangered Honeycreeper that only nests in cavities in trees, and suitable nest cavities only occur in large old trees that have developed cracks in the trunks or holes where large branches have broken off. One reason Hakalau is such a great place to see akepa is because it has so many large old trees with cavities. In addition, these trees may offer more food resources for akepa and other native birds compared to younger trees. Perhaps some day, Hakalau may be as well known for its trees as it is for its birds.

Patrick Hart,

UH Hilo

Water Tank Fundraiser

and Friends of Hakalau Forest

For many years Horticulturist Baron Horiuchi has needed a water tank dedicated specifically for greenhouse use so, in November 2008 the Greenhouse Water Tank Fundraiser was started. Your Friends organization is now raising funds for a 24,000 gallon water tank. What a great way for all of us to help the Refuge's greenhouse & reforestation effort. The goal of \$9,000 was started 11/30/08. Where we are as of June 1st 2009, \$2,720. Nearly 1/3 of the way there!



photo by Ken Kupchak

Having a dedicated greenhouse water tank will enable uninterrupted watering of native and endangered seedlings and plants being propagated on site at the refuge greenhouse. When prolonged dry spells or a drought occurs, water tanks get very low, and it's a full day's task to haul enough water for one week of greenhouse irrigation. The water must be hauled by truck all the way from a tank at Pua Akala barn which is very time-consuming as well as costly, and that source of water also can run out. If water runs out, the seedlings will die. It's essential to have a 24,000 gallon water tank dedicated to the greenhouse to protect the native and endangered seedlings & plants. Reforesting supports recovery of the

native birds and Baron will be the first to say "it's all for the birds". Recall when you first heard sounds of Hakalau's forest birds 'I'iwi, 'apapane, 'amakihi, 'akepa, 'elepaio & possibly the Hawai'i creeper & 'akia' polā'au; it brings to mind just how special is Hakalau Forest

refuge.

April 2009 Baron was awarded FWS Employee of the Year by the National Wildlife Refuge Association for outstanding dedication and commitment. The Friends would like to honor this dedication and commitment by giving a water tank specifically for the greenhouse. If you can, please help support this effort with whatever dollar amount you're able to give. In so doing you'll ensure the survival of native seedlings which will be out-planted to reforest the refuge, and will help in the recovery of forest birds whose song fill the forest canopy as they flit from blossom to blossom. Theirs is a truly inspiring thank you.



Baron Horiuchi

We're a third of the way there, two thirds yet to go and every donation helps make a difference. We are hopeful there will be a good response and are concerned that if the fundraising takes quite a while, the water tank cost will go up. If you haven't yet donated, please consider giving \$10, \$20, \$50 or whatever you can to this worthy cause. Please write your check to Friends of Hakalau Forest & write in the memo line "water tank" so your donation will go specifically to this fund; you'll be sent a receipt for your tax records. Mail to: Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR, P.O. Box 6065, Hilo HI 96720.

From the Friends Board, the dedicated Refuge staff & the forest birds, Thank You.

VOLUNTEERS

April 3, 2009 Greenhouse Volunteers





VOLUNTEERS

left to right:

Patricia Richardson

Deborah Ward

Brice Murayama

Baron Horiuchi (Horticulturist)

Malia Kipapa (Intern)

Kathy Frost

Marta Lepes

Interested in a one-day volunteering at the refuge greenhouse?

During the winter months the Friends of Hakalau Forest does one-day volunteer trips (maximum 5/trip) where we work in the greenhouse & transplant native seedlings. November through March FWS suspends the out-planting projects and we help in the effort to restock the Refuge's native plant greenhouse.

For additional opportunities to volunteer with Friends of Hakalau Forest projects on the Refuge or volunteer with helping to maintain the Friends organization Contact

friendsofhakalauforest@gmail.com



volunteer cabin

Wish List for the volunteer cabin

If anyone has a large pot with lid they'd like to donate, the volunteer cabin could use about a 16 quart size. To arrange for getting the pot to the volunteer cabin, contact FWS-Hakalau Forest and leave a message for Malia Kipapa- 808-443-2300.

BOARD MEMBERS: President Lorraine Ellison , Vice President Dick Wass , Secretary & Newsletter Emily Needham, Treasurer Cathy Lowder , Members at Large: Jim Wiley, Pat Hart, Deighton Emmons, Creighton Litton. Advisor Refuge Manager Jim Kraus.