



NĀ ALA HELE
Hawai'i Trail & Access System

Nā Ala Hele Hawai'i Island Advisory Council Minutes

Approved: April 10, 2025

Revised:

MEETING DATE: February 12, 2025

- PLACE:**
- Remote ZOOM Conference Call/Video
 - Division of Forestry and Wildlife at
19E Kawili St. Hilo, HI 96720

- Voting Members Present:**
- Terrence Noda, Chairperson
 - Nani Pogline, Vice Chairperson
 - Chuck Flaherty, Secretary
 - Jeffrey Yamauchi
 - Christopher Seymour
 - Moana Rowland
 - Kawehi Ryder
 - Roger Kanealii Jr.

- Voting Members Absent Excused:**
- David Rietow

- Voting Members Absent Unexcused:**
- none

- Ex-Officio:**
- Jackson Bauer, Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program
 - Rick Gmirkin, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trails

- Ex-Officio Absent:**
- Jonay Enrique, Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program
 - Madison Braum Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program

- Invited Guest:**
- Theresa Dean (PBR)
 - Mckenna Bassett (PBR)
 - Irene Sprecher (Forest Solutions)
 - Robbie Justice (Forest Solutions)

- Public:**
- Ike Yoshino
 - Dixon West
 - Justin Vanderpol
 - Deborah Chang
 - Noah Gomes
 - Diane Ware
 - Laurie Sumiye
 - Tom Reeve
 - Amy Miwa
 - Gunnar Hillert
 - Conrad Hokama
 - James Eller
 - James Klyman
 - Carey Yost

I. Call to Order: 6:01 pm

II. AC CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

In order to expedite the very full agenda and make sure the Council has time to nominate and vote on the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary positions, Terrence said he would be expediting the agenda. He requested that any members of the public would be providing testimony to place that in the chat to assist in expediting the meeting as well. He also covered other typical procedural information.

III. Review DRAFT MINUTES of December 11, 2024 meeting

a. Nani said it was her understanding that the Council had agreed to send the same letter to Mayor Alameda regarding Waipi'o Valley access as had been approved and sent to former Mayor Roth. Chuck said he could go back and review the meeting video to clarify. Jackson recommended the minutes be tabled until next meeting. Nani made motion to move approval of meeting minutes to next meeting agenda. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Jackson referred the Council to the written testimony submitted by Diane Ware and sent out to the Council. Terrance asked if any member of the public would like to provide oral testimony. None was offered.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Program Plan update and discussion (PBR/Nā Ala Hele staff)

Jackson said there were no specific updates other than that PBR is moving ahead with their work. They have met the several bicycle groups as well as OHV and other different user groups. Jackson also acknowledge the great report PBR gave at the Council's last meeting.

B. Nā Ala Hele Program update (Nā Ala Hele staff)

- a. Program Trails updates – Jackson said all program trails are doing great.
 - i. Pololū Trail [54] – Jackson met with the new mayor, Kimo Alameda, about the trail. The conversation went well and the mayor expressed his support for public access and traditional and customary practices. Jackson said the land donation by the new landowner is moving forward, as well as the plans for portable toilet installations. The draft Environmental Assessment should be released within the next few weeks. There are a couple of pieces of legislation to provide funding for the interpretive plan, parking, etc. Jackson will let the Council know if there are hearings with opportunities to provide testimony.
 - ii. Muliwai Trail/Waimanu Campground [36] – Jackson said that there was nothing to report, except for one report of Little Fire Ants. Staff went and tested the area, but did not find any occurrences. Otherwise the trail looks good and the next trip will probably be in May.
 - iii. Upper Waiākea ATV & Dirt Bike Riding Area (Terrence) [27] – Terrence said the last windstorm blew some trees down so he and other volunteers would be going up to clear those. DLNR had an ATV training. Ridership remains about the same, but with more OHV side-side.
 - iv. Kūlanihākoʻi Mountain Bike Park (Chris) [78] – Chris shared that their volunteer group had a great clean-up with 12-14 people show up, but a storm hit just four days later undid all the work, causing a huge number of tree falls, many of them very large eucalyptus. Thanks to a massive volunteer effort 42 sections of the trail were cleared. There are still rough spots. James Ellis is working with the Chris and Jackson to have clearly identified place where people who get lost can go; it's on the website. They need some additional equipment to help them with the service roads, which also have some rough spots. Chris reiterated his mahalo to NAH for all their assistance in cleaning up the big amount of trash. They are following advice and cleaning up as soon as they identify dumping, which has resulted in less and less dumping occurring.
 - v. Puna Trail [12] – NAH started to implement the Puna Trail plan in September 2024. There is a muddy section on the way to Kehena bay where the fish pond overflows, so NAH is planning to build a kipaipai, traditional stone causeway. NAH is reaching out to schools to kokua. Jackson will let the Council know when other volunteer projects come up so they can participate.
 - vi. Other program trail updates – things are moving pretty smoothly on other program trails. Repairing damage from the windstorm is the major story.
- b. Historic Trails updates
 - i. Judd Trail – surveys are done and are waiting on completed survey reports. Trail and encroachments have been identified and documented. Working with the land division to have the

encroachments removed. The volunteer crew has cleared most of the trail.

- ii. Hōnaunau to Ho'okena Trail. Same thing, paper work for surveys are being wrapped up and volunteers have cleared most of the trail.
- iii. Onouli to Kealakekua. Archaeologists will begin work in the next month or so.

c. Access updates

- i. Kaupakuea Access to Hilo Forest Reserve (Nani) [49] – Nani said she has not heard from Kevin Sullivan in the Planning Department, so was wondering if he is still there after the change to the Alameda administration. Jackson pointed out he is civil service and is still there. Jackson urged Nani to keep reaching out to Mr. Sullivan. Jackson pointed out that Jeff Darrow, who had been deputy Planning Director, is the new Planning Director. Since Mr. Darrow has been with the Planning Dept for many years, he is familiar with NAH and its work. Nani said she was excited that Mayor Alameda supports public access and looks forward to working with him.
- ii. Nā'ālehu Hills subdivision (Chuck) – Jackson said NAH is drafting a response letter to the county regarding trails and public access issues associated with the property. Jackson asked Chuck if he had any update. Chuck asked Terrence if he would allow a member of the public, Diane Ware, who has been following this proposed project and the related actions of the Ka'ū Community Development Plan Action Committee (Ka'ū CDP AC) . He also pointed out the landowner of this proposed project was directly related to the Black Sands Beach project being proposed around Punalu'u. Terrence agreed and invite Diane to provide testimony, but she had dropped off from the meeting. Chuck said he had had conversations with Jackson because the maps had government roads described along with other accesses, so the issue of which are public access roads versus private has to be resolved. The Nā'ālehu Hills subdivision covers a very large area above the town Nā'ālehu. Chuck said that a large number of residents, especially kanaka maoli, expressed their opposition to the proposed project at the most recent the Ka'ū CDP AC. Local kanaka maoli raised property title concerns. Jackson said NAH's main concerns are delineating government roads on the property as well as public access to the forest reserve mauka of the property. At this point, Diane was able to return to the meeting via Zoom and Jackson asked her to provide testimony. Diane said the Ka'ū CDP AC sent a letter to the Planning Dept. in response to testimony given by local residents at their last meeting regarding issues with the subdivision and clouded titles. There also was concern about waterways transversing the property. Terrence asked about the Ka'ū CDP AC. Chuck asked to interrupt Diane and then explained the CDPs were enabled after the county General Plan was adopted in 2005. Starting in 2008 and in subsequent years, six CDPs were created by residents of six districts, Kona, Puna, South Kohala,

North Kohala, Hāmākua, and Ka‘u. Each CDP has an Action Committee whose members are nominated by the mayor and confirmed by the county council. The Ka‘ū CDP AC had the Nā‘ālehu Hills subdivision on its January 2025 meeting agenda and took testimony which resulted in the AC drafting and approving to the Planning Department expressing the ACs concerns. Terrence asked Jackson if there was a public access to the forest reserve. Jackson said there was and that it needed to be documented and codified. Terrence asked if there was a name for this access. Jackson said there wasn't, but described a couple of geographic features in the area. Jackson said NAH wanted to be careful not to inadvertently extinguish other access and noted that there were other historic roads that needed to be examined. The Council thanked Diane for her testimony.

- d. Administrative Tasks update
- e. Other NAH program updates – Jackson shared that a Presidential Executive Order had frozen all federal grant funding, including the Economic Development Administration Grant that funds these 3 programs trails. NAH came close to having to lay off employees and staff, but a lawsuit and federal court order rescinded the order in time to prevent this outcome.
 - i. Nā Manu ‘Elele Trail Steward Program – no significant changes. NAH has 20 stewards state-wide through this program.
 - ii. Nāpu‘u Recreation Plan (Forest Solutions/Nā Ala Hele Staff)- had first meeting with ‘ohana of the area and got a lot of great information and ideas. Good working relationship being developed.
 - iii. Ala Kahakai Interpretive Plan – had a site visit with the consultants a couple of weeks ago. Went to each district and had very productive meeting the people of those places. Visited a lot of sites.
 - iv. Statewide Nā Ala Hele Program Manager – the position still remains open. Jackson has been assigned to serve in this position for the month of February.

C. Budget/Legislative Update (Nā Ala Hele staff)

The legislative session has started and there are a several bills to watch. The first is a bill to provide funding for Pololū. That bill has passed through its first committee. Another bill is for operational funding. There is also a Capital improvement Project funding bill for the design, planning, and construction for Pololū. Another bill proposed to charge rescue fees for those who are rescued as a result of their own negligence, such as entering closed or otherwise prohibited areas. The concern is that people would not ask for help for fear of being charged, thereby putting their lives at risk. Another bill is related to e-bikes. Chris is being very helpful in giving me some information to pass on to the legislators. It's basically defining what e-bikes are, the different classes, and suggesting rules and licensing for each. A member of the public, Mr. Kylma, asked Jackson to explain e-bikes. Jackson referred Mr. Kylma to the International Biking Associations flyer explaining the 3 classification and then provided a detailed summary of that flyer. Another member of the public, Debbie Chang, asked Jackson for the

number of the Pololū bill because the state legislature website provides a means to tracking bills. Chuck, Nani, and Terrence asked if Jackson could provide a list with the bills and their numbers he presented. Jackson said he would provide those to the Council.

D. Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Update (Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail staff)

Rick said the Ala Kahakai staff were also a part of the Interpretative Plan Visit and that it was a very well organized trip, especially for the people from the mainland. AKNHT is continuing its work to develop a community-based management plan for the Kauleoli Unit Management Plan Unit that begins south of Pu'uhonua O Hōnaunau and runs along the coast to Ho'okena. It is about a 95 acre parcel and includes the Hōnaunau to Ho'okena trail Jackson mentioned earlier in the meeting. Community meetings were scheduled to be in the latter part of March 2025, but have now been moved to April. Goal is to get ancestral and lineal and cultural descendants' knowledge of traditional and customary practices in order to prepare the most appropriate management plan. Two other primary projects ALKNT is working on are the logistics for the Ka'awaloa trail repairs on the lower part of trail and then another project through the interpretive division. That project is to create a mural of the Kanaka Maoli god, Kua, on the Captain Cook USPS post office. Kua is part of the name Kealakekua, meaning "the pathway of the god". AKNHT is working with the local group, Ho'āla Kealakekua Nui, headed up by Shane Akoni Palacat-Nelson.

and Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail staff will present updates as it relates to the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Corridor. This is informational only and no discussions or votes will take place during this agenda item.

E. Subcommittee Updates:

a. OHV Subcommittee (Terrence, John Howerton) – Jackson said there are no updates, except that Jackson communicated the subcommittee's desire that a space for an area for OHV be considered in the development of the Nāpu'u Recreation Plan.

b. Waipi'o Valley Access Road Subcommittee (Terrence, Nani, Debbie Chang) [64]

Nani said Mayor Alameda has signed the 15th Waipi'o Valley Road declaration of emergency, renewing the rules contained in the previous one, including a prohibition against pedestrian access from January 6, 2025 through March 6, 2025. Nani would like to work with Debbie to draft a letter to the mayor for a meeting to ask him if and when pedestrian access will be restored and to encourage a pedestrian plan is being otherwise developed. Terrence noted that the issue is public safety and the Council has no authority when it comes to the county's development of the public access to Waipi'o Valley. However, the Council does have an interest in public access to NAH trails and he believes the mayor should be made aware that this is the only access to Waimanu and other surrounding state-owned areas. Jackson pointed out that, while this is a county road, the Council is concerned with all public access, not just trails and has expressed concerns about public access to Waipi'o Valley, the Muliwai and Waimanu trails, the Muliwai plateau used by hunters, ocean resources, etc. that have used this access in the past. Jackson then informed the Council that

county council member Heather Kimball had sent a request to DLNR Chair Dawn Chang asking that DLNR send a representative to serve on the long-term planning committee and the person selected was Jackson. Chuck asked for clarification about what the letter would be requesting, for instance, a meeting with the mayor, a request to have a hiker representative on the mayor's advisory council, etc. Nani and Debbie said former Mayor Roth's advisory committee at some point stopped meeting. Debbie said it was just Heather's committee that was meeting occasionally now. Debbie said that she believes that any new letter should be different than the one asking for a meeting and asked Jackson should it address the fact that public access rights are being negatively affected by the emergency proclamation prohibiting public access. Jackson pointed out that "in the big picture", people have a constitutional right to access historic trails and that pedestrian use has always been given superior rights to vehicular access right by courts. Jackson also noted that people are ignoring the proclamation and going down anyway. The rangers that are there are there for educational, not enforcement, purposes. They tell people they cannot go down, but can't stop them. Also, people are going down when the rangers are not present. Most locals have a friend with a vehicle pick them up and drop them off either at the top or bottom. There is also a tour van that tourists are using supported by Waipio Artworks. Jackson is not sure about whether there is a cost or permit required for this. Jackson said he could provide Debbie with a copy of a letter he sent to then-county council member Valerie Poindexter that would provide a lot of relevant information. Debbie also suggested that the Council and NAH start using the word "pedestrian" instead of "hiker" because of legal precedent. Jackson also pointed out that equestrian use is an established historic use of the trail as well. Terrence pointed out there was already a letter to the previous administration and asked if the subcommittee would like to redraft a letter to the new administration. Nani and Debbie supported that idea. Terrence said consideration of a new draft letter would be placed on the next meeting agenda for decision-making. Chuck made a motion, that the NAH Council authorize the Waipi'o Valley Access Road Subcommittee to draft a letter requesting a meeting with Mayor Kimo Alameda to discuss pedestrian access into Waipi'o Valley. Chris seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with all members voting in favor, except Kawehi Ryder who was absent.

- c. Wailuku River Convergence Lookout Access Subcommittee (Terrence, Nani, Jeff, Chris, James Eller) [74]

Chris asked Jackson to provide him with the county map showing the owners and parcel numbers of land in the area. Jackson said he could provide a copy after the meeting. The subcommittee had a chance to speak with state representative Mattias Kusch. Rep. Kusch said he would work with the state administration to see what could be done to have this designated as a county or state recreational area. Chris also spoke with the Hawai'i Island Office of Hawaiian Affairs trustee, Kai Kahele, and he was also very interested. Chris pointed out that Dept. of Hawaiian Homelands land was involved. Chris wanted to emphasize that he is not trying to rename this area, but to provide as much

research information as possible to assist future efforts. The reason is because there is so much history associated with so many places and locations in this area. It's really big story. Chris shared how much personal time and effort he has invested in this effort, which the Council very much appreciated. Terrence asked if Chris could put these important stories together so that all the documents and maps could be agendaized at a future meeting and shared with others. Terrence also acknowledged Chris's passion for this effort. Chris asked if "confluence" could replace "convergence" because it is a more accurate term for the place where two rivers meet. Terrence said the change could be made on future agendas without a motion from the Council. James was invited to provide comments. James also acknowledged the tremendous amount of work Chris had done and said there wasn't much more for him to add, except to again point out the discussions with Representative Kusch. James believes this deserves a little more discussion between the subcommittee and Jackson. Chuck said he had testified before the state Land Use Commission last week on legislation involving county general plans and that one of the testifiers had referred to the "Narnia" area in their testimony, which indicates more people are becoming aware of potential plans for this area. Jackson asked Noah Gomes to provide testimony since he's been deeply involved in this area. Noah shared that he had begun PhD through a school in New Zealand doing research on the Wailuku River. He expressed valid concerns about sharing the maps along with sharing the stories because of the risk that comes with public exposure to historic and cultural sites. Noah said there were features, such as stones, petroglyphs, etc. Terrence said he agreed that information should be shared privately between the subcommittee and Noah to determine how best to move forward with this issue. Chris said he would like to meet with Noah at his convenience and expressed his appreciation.

- F. HAR 13-130 Rule Revision Update (Nā Ala Hele staff) – this effort has been on hold since the Bill Stormont left to be executive director of the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority.
- G. Lower Puna Trails (Nani) – Abraham Antonio spoke with the Dept of Forestry and Wildlife and they are interested in this area becoming a hunting unit, but that would require parking, etc. Nani pointed out the area is quite beautiful and filled with historic sites. The Old Government Road runs through the area. Problem is that people are buying land and are cutting off public accesses. She is concerned about fishermen's access to the shoreline, as well. She would like to see something like the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail developed in this area. Unfortunately, OGR from Hawaiian Paradise Park is a dump for stinky garbage and rusting equipment and appliances. Jackson said if there were any volunteers willing to head an effort to investigate Nani's ideas, he would assist if possible, while noting that Puna is difficult because of the private lands and DHHL land in the area, as well. Nani said Abraham and Ian Cole are working on the hunting area designation in the meantime. Terrence asked if Nani wanted to keep this item on the agenda moving forward. Nani said that was acceptable to her and that she would ask for it to be placed back on the agenda if there is an important update for the Council. Jackson pointed out that Abraham could always provide public testimony if he wanted to share any update with the Council, as well.

H. Hawai'i County General Plan (Chuck)

Terrance asked Chuck to give his presentation of the draft letter to the Leeward and Windward Planning Commissions providing comments on and recommendation for amendments to the county draft General Plan 2045.

Chuck first thanked Debbie Chang and Jackson for their editorial assistance and recommendations in preparing the letter.

Chuck explained the draft letter is divided into the following sections:

- About the Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council
- Related Hawai'i County Code Chapter 34-4(b)

- The Hawai'i Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council's Review of the Hawai'i County General Plans
- Hawai'i Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council's Recommendations
- In Conclusion

Chuck explained the letter addresses the content of three different General Plans. The first is the existing General Plan (GP2005). The second is the draft General Plan 2040 (GP2040). The third draft General Plan 2045 (GP2045).

The reason there are these different plans to consider is because the General Plan Comprehensive Review process began ten years ago in 2015. Since 2015, there have been three different Mayors and Planning Directors.

The process has been complicated came when GP2040 was released in 2019 because, instead of amending GP2005, GP2040 was a complete rewrite of GP2005. Then, in 2023, GP2045 was released and it was a gut-and-replace of GP2040.

The GP2045 is the version now being considered by the Planning Commissions. They have been asking for recommendations from the public, so this is the Council's opportunity to provide input to guide public access, trails, recreation, and scenic resources planning in the county of Hawai'i.

Chuck then reviewed the content of the letter which contains the Objectives, Policies, and Actions for all three General Plan documents related to public access, trails, recreation, and scenic resources. He showed how the Objectives, Polices and Actions in GP2040 are far more comprehensive, complete, and actionable as compared to those in both the GP2005 and GP2040.

Chuck asked the Council if they had questions.

Terrence asked for a motion to accept the letter for discussion purposes.

Nani made a motion, that the Council to approve draft letter. Moana made a second.

Rick acknowledged the work done on the letter and said it would be very helpful for other organizations, such as the Ala Kahakai Trail Association, involved in public access, trails, recreation, and scenic resources.

Terrence asked that Chuck revise the letter so that the reader's attention would be drawn to the "Recommendations" portion of the letter, especially given they would be

looking at hundreds of documents. He also asked that “Hawai’i Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council’s” be placed in front of “Recommendations” so that is clear to the reader.

Jackson said he was going to correct the “c/o” recipients to be the Leeward Planning Commission and the Windward Planning Commissions, not the Planning Department.

Debbie said she would help Chuck in getting format corrected.

Chuck reiterated that there would be no substantive changes in the Recommendations or any other section and that the only changes would involve formatting.

Jeff made a motion, that the Hawai’i Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council approve the draft letter with the Council’s recommended changes with the understanding that these are not substantive changes to the content of the draft letter presented.

Moana seconded the motion.

Terrence took a roll call vote. All members voted in favor with the exception of Kawehi Ryder, who was absent.

I. Council member trail experience sharing

Chris said that he and his son hiked the Ala Kahakai trail from Keauhou to Hokuli’a. They hiked 1½ miles in and out and said it was beautiful and in great shape as compared when they hiked it 1½ years ago when it was pretty rough with his son getting a keawe thorn about every 5 feet. He congratulated all who had been working on this section of the trail and said they had done a great job.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Selection of Advisory Council Leadership Positions for 2024 – Terrence asked if anyone was willing to serve as Chair. Chuck nominated Terrence if he was willing to remain in that position. Terrence agreed. After discussion, Nani agreed to be nominated to remain as Vice-Chair. Terrence nominated Chuck to remain as Secretary. Chuck agreed. Chris make a motion, that nominees Terrence for Chair, Nani for Vice-Chair, and Chuck for Secretary be approved. Chuck seconded. All members voted in favor with the exception of Kawehi Ryder, who was absent.
- B. Next meeting agenda will have Council’s General Plan letter to the two Planning Commissions. Chuck asked whether the written testimony Gunnar Hillert had submitted should be on the next agenda. Jackson said he had discussed the issues with Mr. Hillert and there was no need for it to be on the next agenda.
- C. Set next meeting date was set for April 10, 2025.

VII. ADJOURNMENT – meeting was adjourned at 8:14pm.