



NĀ ALA HELE
Hawai'i Trail & Access System

Nā Ala Hele

Hawai'i Island Advisory Council Minutes

Approved: June 18, 2025

Revised:

MEETING DATE: APRIL 10, 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
 - David Rietow
 - Jeffrey Yamauchi
 - Christopher Seymour

- Voting Members Absent Excused:**
- Kawehi Ryder
 - Moana Rowland
 - Roger Kanealii Jr.

- Voting Members Absent Unexcused:**
- none

- Ex-Officio:**
- Jackson Bauer, Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program

- Ex-Officio Absent:**
- Rick Gmirkin, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trails

- Invited Guest:**
- none

- Public:**
- Deborah Chang
 - Noah Gomes
 - Diane Ware
 - Andrea Gill

- I. Call to Order: 6:01 pm
- II. AC CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

The Office of Information Practices received a complaint that all meeting participants must give their name before speaking and meeting participants stick to the agenda items on the floors. 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.

III. Review DRAFT MINUTES of December 11, 2025 meeting

- a. Approval of the December 11, 2025 meeting minutes was deferred during the February 12, 2025 council meeting to give Chuck an opportunity to review the Zoom video to verify a change requested by Nani regarding whether the council voted to send a letter to the new mayor on public access on the Waipio Valley road. Chuck verified Nani was correct that the Council had voted to approve a letter similar to the one previously sent to Mayor Roth be sent to the new Mayor Alameda. He submitted the amended minutes to the council. David motioned to accept the amended December 11th minutes. Nani seconded. No discussion. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. Unanimous vote to approve.

IV. Review DRAFT MINUTES of February , 2025 meeting

- a. Chuck made motion to approve the February 12, 2025 meeting minutes. Jeff seconded. No discussion. Motion to approve passed by unanimous roll call vote.

V. PUBLIC TESTIMONY

None.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

PBR Hawai'i will be holding an online Virtual Open House, tentatively schedule for May 21, 2025 at 5pm to review the first program plan update since 1991. An announcement will be e-mailed out for distribution to the general public as well as stakeholders such as the Council. .

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] – Land donation process is well underway. It may be completed by the Council's next meeting. \$1 million budget request for developing the parking and overcrowding situation is in the Conference Committee. Jackson encourages people to submit testimony in support of the Capital Improvement Project budget item #LNR804, which is the NAH program budget item. Will be working to have portable toilets put into place initially. The draft Environmental Assessment for the Pololū project has been released and comments are being accepted through April 23, 2025.
 - 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 routine maintenance trip will be in May. Additional fire ant testing will be done then as well.

- iii. Upper Waiākea ATV & Dirt Bike Riding Area (Terrence) [27] – Terrence said their volunteer group cleared trees that had blown down in the last windstorm. He said they were also going to flatten out the first part of the trail because it was getting rutted out. Jackson asked Terrence to let him know when they were planning to do the roadwork and he would try to get equipment up there to assist. The county now owns the road from Stainback Road to Kulani and has widened and paved that portion so it is now safer to use. They also held a ATV training.
- iv. Kūlanihākoʻi Mountain Bike Park (Chris) [78] – Chris shared that they had another dumping of waste material in the same spot near the beginning of the trail. Looks like someone torn down their chicken coop and dumped the planks, siding, and roofing material there. Volunteers have pushed everything into one area so pick-up at later date can be easier. Otherwise, the massive volunteer effort to clear the trees and debris from the last two storms is just about finished. All of the trails are opened up, but there are still some issues with some of the roadways. James Ellis is working with the Chris and Jackson to have clearly identified place where people who get lost can go with a safe road access for getting people out if injured or having some other health emergency. Jackson is working to get some Eagle Scouts to assist with getting signage up and will coordinate with Chris and Jackson. Iso have some rough spots.
- 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 with people going way around and trespassing on adjacent properties, so NAH is planning to build a kipaipai, traditional stone causeway. SHPD has the plan and we are waiting for approval to proceed. NAH is reaching out to schools to kokua. Kawehi will be helping with that effort and already has Ulu Pono at Keaau High School willing to participate. More information about this post-graduate skills development program can be found at [Ulupono project-based learning](#). 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.

b. Historic Trails updates

- i. Judd Trail – no update since last meeting. 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 Hoʻokena 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 spoke with Kevin Sullivan in the Planning Department. Kevin made a site visit with Jackson and they noted that another access was being developed via public use that is not documented. Nani said this documents public interest is accessing the forest reserve. Kevin told Nani he was still working on the easement issues. This is Jackson’s understanding as well.
 - 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. He said it’s been challenging because of the number of trails, roads, and public accesses on different maps, but he is getting close to completing the letter. Jackson asked Chuck if he had any update. Chuck said he did not, but asked if a member of the public who was on the Zoom meeting, Diane Ware, to provide comments since she has been following this subdivision and issues the landowner is facing with other properties in Ka’ū . Diane said the subdivision remained “in limbo” as far as she knows, but that county Planning Director Darrow has given tentative subdivision approval. Jackson asked if Nani could reach out the hunting community to see there is anyone with knowledge of public access associated with this subdivision and the forest reserve on the mauka side of the property. Terrance asked where it was located, so Jackson screen-shared a satellite view of the subdivision and showed where the forest reserve and known roads and trails are located. Jackson said this was a good opportunity for the Council to recommend condition for final subdivision approval to guarantee public access. Jackson would like to hear from hunters and other users of public access in and around the subdivision to make sure those routes are documented and protected. Debbie Chang wanted the Council to know that subdivisions with 6 lots or more and which abut the ocean and/or forest reserves are required to conform to County Code Chapter 34, which requires public access be identified and protected. Debbie wanted to make sure the subdivision contained one large mauka lot that abutted the forest reserve. Jackson said this subdivision was a consolidation and resubdivide application and so there are lots abutting the forest reserve. There are several kuleana lots owned by the same person which is how they have been able to consolidate and resubdivide even though there are pre-existing lots of record. Jackson noted that the land to the west of the subdivision is Department of Hawaiian Homelands owned and public access has already been worked out with DHHL. There also a large land area leased by the state and the entire area is traversed by public accesses that existed in 1892 and prior, so are protected by the Highways Act of 1892. Chuck pointed out that and the Ka’ū Community

Development Plan Action Committee had agendized this subdivision at their January 2025 and there was considerable opposition from kanaka maoli lineal and cultural descendents about whether this subdivision had clear titles. Chuck noted that the Hawai'i county council, at the recommendation of the Planning Department, amended the subdivision code to address pre-existing lots of record that had title transfers between the 1940s and 1999, specifically title transfers that were recorded at the Bureau of Conveyances, but not the Land Court. Chuck will request a copy of the tentative subdivision approval in order to see what conditions are in place. Terrance asked if Chuck would be interested in drafting a letter to address these concerns. Chuck said he would make a sincere effort to draft a letter for the next meeting. Nani asked who the letter would be addressed to the Planning Department and the subject would be a request to ensure public access be identified and protect prior to final subdivision approval be given. Chuck said he would work with Diane Ware and Debbie to draft a letter. Jackson asked Nani to send any information she was able to gather to him and he would pass it on to Chuck to avoid Sunshine Law issues.

- d. Administrative Tasks update
- e. Other NAH program updates – program trails are running smoothly. Two new staff people have been hired. Brianna Ninomoto has been hired to replace Jacob in the GIS map-making position. Cheyanne Rapoza was hired to fill the Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Specialist position. So all positions are filled for the first time in several years. Also, NAH has hired trail planners to look at the Kawaihae trail system, which is not yet part of the NAH Program trail system, but which the Council voted to recommend to become a part of the trail system. The t They came out a few weeks ago to familiarize themselves. The trail is very eroded in some places, so reroutes are being developed. Once the reroutes are sufficiently identified, NAH will go to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to have the Kawaihae trail become an official NAH trail. They also looked at the Makāula-O'oma Forest Reserve Trails and are looking at some reroutes on these. NAH is having a volunteer day this Saturday, April 12th to do some of that work. The consultants are coming back in August to look at the Kalōpā and Koai'a trails and look at rerouting those again. The Council voted to recommend these become a part of the NAH program as well, but NAH is waiting for the reroute recommendations before submitting these to the BLNR. They're also going to look at a planning a new trail, and this would be above the Koai'a sanctuary in the pasture there, between the Koai'a sanctuary and the forest land. Terrance asked that Moana be provided this information for the tracking tool. Jackson said she would be able to use the minutes as a reference to update. NSH is planning another series of trail management trainings like the one Chris participated in last year. It'll be the week of July 21st to 25th. Jackson invited Council members and/or volunteers who may be interested to contact him to sign up for the training. All of NAH staff did the training, which is basically in sustainable trail design management.

- i. Nā Manu 'Elele Trail Steward Program – no significant changes. NAH has 20 stewards state-wide through this program.
- ii. Nāpu'ū Recreation Plan (Forest Solutions/Nā Ala Hele Staff)- trail planners will be coming to do additional outreach and moving closer to draft plan. Have gotten excellent input from different constituencies, including descendants of the area. Have developed some great working relationships.
- iii. Ala Kahakai Interpretive Plan – will be having more site visits with the consultants. Have developed some great working relationship with communities.
- iv. Statewide Nā Ala Hele Program Manager – the position still remains posted and open. It's listed as a Forester VI, even though it is not for a forester position. Jackson continues to serve a temporary administrator.

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

No update, other than the Pololū improvements CIP funding request for the design, planning, and construction for Pololū.

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

Rick was unable to attend today's meeting. Terrance asked how the AKNHT may have been affected by the grant freezes and National Park Service personnel losses. Jackson said that two staff employees were initially laid off, but have been reinstated. Terrance said he believed they would be in place until April 16th. However, it is a very unsettled working environment given the chaos within the federal government and on-going litigation, so potential long-term impacts to AKNHT are unknown at this time.

E. Subcommittee Updates:

- a. OHV Subcommittee (Terrence, John Howerton) – Terrance spoke with PBR to keep the potential for an OHV park in the Nāpu'ū Recreation Plan active. He said he was working with Jackson to identify other potential Westside locations as well. The consultants are planning to come in late May or early June, so the issue will be raised again at that time.
- b. Waipi'o Valley Access Road Subcommittee (Terrence, Nani, Debbie Chang) [64]
 Nani referred the Council to the draft letter that had been sent out with the agenda from the Council to newly-elected Mayor Alameda requesting an opportunity to meet to discuss questions and concerns about the Wai'pio Valley Access Road. Chuck made a motion to accept the letter as drafted by Nani and Debbie. Chris seconded the motion. David suggested an edit of the letter that changed the order of the paragraphs in order to better capture the Mayor's attention. David noted there are seven paragraphs and asked that they be reordered. He presented the revised order. Nani restated the order requested by David. Debbie and Chuck agreed the revised order was better. Jackson asked Nani to read the letter with the paragraphs in their revised order. Nani read the letter in the revised order. Jackson suggested the original paragraph 2 be deleted from the letter entirely. Nani and Debbie agreed with Jackson's

suggestion. Terrance asked that language be included to let the Mayor know that the Council had sent a letter to former Mayor Roth and to include the date of the letter. Nani and Jackson said they would work together to redraft the letter per the recommended amendments. Debbie asked that the letter be clear as to contact information. Chris noted a grammatical error to correct. All edits were noted. Terrance closed discussion and asked for a motion to approve the draft letter as amended. David made the motion to approve the draft letter as amended. Chuck seconded the motion. Terrance took a roll call vote. The vote to approve was unanimous. Jackson commended the Council's effort.

Jackson followed up with the Council's concerns about DLNR not having a representative to serve county council member Heather Kimball's Wai'pio Valley Access Road long-term planning committee and that he is now serving in that capacity on the committee. He told the Council there had been one meeting of the committee and that there seems to be good momentum for resolving the public access issues. The high emotions seemed to have simmered down and the county is making plans for request for proposal to make improvements to the road that would include a designated pedestrian access path. Terrance asked if there was any discussion of the stabilization of the hillside. Jackson said there was no discussion of that issue.

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

Terrance asked Chris and Nani for a report.

Nani said she didn't have an update. Terrance said the community is noting that the public has begun to stop parking in the community and has increased parking on the side of the county road adjacent to that access point of entry.

Chris asked Jackson to provide him with the county map showing the owners and parcel numbers of land in the area so that he could complete a presentation to the Council. Jackson said he would provide that information. Chris pointed out the great weather and said he could be available on either April 15th or 16th if any subcommittee and community members, such as Noah, would like to join him for a hike to the lookout. Nani said she'd like to go. Jackson said he would help coordinate the hike.

- F. HAR 13-130 Rule Revision Update (Nā Ala Hele staff) – this effort remains on hold since the Bill Stormont left to be executive director of the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority.

- G. Hawai'i County General Plan (Charles)

Chuck thanked Debbie, Jackson, and the rest of the Council for their assistance and involvement in drafting and approving the letter to the Windward and Leeward Planning Commissions suggesting recommended amendments to the county Final Draft General Plan 2045. Chuck said he was able to attend the February 24, 2025 Leeward Planning Commission's meeting via Zoom to give a three-minute testimony giving a brief description of the letter, its contents, and purpose. He said he was unable to attend the Windward Planning Commission meeting. The Leeward Planning Commission asked

Chuck several questions about the contents of the letter after his testimony, showing that they had read the Council's letter. The Leeward Planning Commission then passed a motion that read "'Add the language related to public access, trails, recreation and scenic resources that were present in the Draft General Plan released by the Planning Department in 2019 as suggested by the Hawai'i Island Na Ala Hele Advisory Council in their enclosed letter to the Commission dated February 18, 2025". Chuck did not have time to watch the Windward Planning Commission's March 19th YouTube video prior to the Council's meeting, so he did not know if the Windward Planning Commission considered the Council's letter during that meeting. He will report on it at the Council's next meeting. Chuck asked if the Council wanted to send letter to the county council with the same content as the Council's February 18th letter to the Planning commissions. After discussion, the Chair asked if there was any objection to the Council sending a cover memo to the county council attaching the Council's February 18th letter to the Planning Commissions and the Leeward Planning Commission's favorable recommendation of the Council's recommended amendments. No objections were made. Jackson said he would draft the memo.

H. Council member trail experience sharing

Jackson noted that Nani is a frequent user of the Puna trail. Nani shared that it is a beautiful hike every time.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Set next meeting agenda – Terrance requested the agenda include Nā'ālehu Hills subdivision letter is included on the agenda, subcommittee reports, memo to county council regarding Final Draft General Plan 2045.
- B. Set next meeting date – Wednesday, June 18, 2025.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – 7:31 PM