



NĀ ALA HELE
Hawai'i Trail & Access System

Nā Ala Hele Hawai'i Island Advisory Council Minutes

Approved: August 20, 2025

Revised:

MEETING DATE: June 18, 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
 - Christopher Seymour

- Voting Members Absent Excused:**
- Kawehi Ryder
 - Jeffrey Yaumachi
 - Roger Kaneali'i Jr.
 - Moana Rowland

- Voting Members Absent Unexcused:**
- none

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

- Invited Guest:**
- none

- Public:**
- Joy Yoshina
 - Alyssa Miller
 - Larry Hunter
 - Keola Childs

I. Call to Order: 6:07 pm

II. AC CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

The Office of Information Practices advises that all meeting participants must give their name before speaking and meeting participants stick to the agenda items on the floors. Requests for new agenda items can be made at end of meeting. 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 April 10, 2025 meeting

a. David motioned to accept the April 10th minutes. Nani seconded. No discussion. David motioned to approve the minutes. Nani seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous..

IV. PUBLIC TESTIMONY - none

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

PBR Hawai'i held an online Virtual Open House on May 21, 2025 to review the first program update since 1991. Over 50 people attended from all over the state. Most of the time was spent in break-out groups discussing areas where the program could be improved. There is an open comment period. Weblink is [Na Ala Hele Program Plan Update Comments](#) until July 20th.

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. Will be working to have portable toilets put into place initially.
- ii. Muliwai Trail/Waimanu Campground [36] – Jackson said that continued testing for Little Fire Ants are negative. 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.
- iii. Upper Waiākea ATV & Dirt Bike Riding Area (Terrence) [27] – Appear to have more dirt bike rider than ATVs. Jackson asked Terrance 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.
- iv. Kūlanihāko'i Mountain Bike Park (Chris) [78] – Chris said there has been little rain and observed some unseasonal defoliation. Doesn't understand why when there should be growth, not leaf fall. Lots of damage from pigs as well. Chris said mahalo to NAH program for helping to clear the trash and garbage dumped. Have been working with Eagle scouts to assist with signage, etc.

- 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. Kawehi will be helping with that effort and already has Ulu Pono at Keaau High School participating. 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. Will be holding a community outreach event with cleanup and educational booths and talks,
 - vi. Other program trail updates – things are moving pretty smoothly on other program trails.
 - b. Historic Trails updates – NAH had National Trails Day event on June 8th with the Ala Kahakai National Historical Trail and the E Mau Nā Ala Hele non-profit organization at the Kauhale I Ke Kula Uka housing project on Hina Lani St. below Costco. Had great attendance. Did several trail talks on the trail as well as lectures, and then also had some outreach and education booths as well. It was great to be working with that particular housing development because the residents now have a better appreciation for the trail that runs through that property. NAH is looking forward to working with them closer.
 - 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 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 have begun work. Waiting on results.
 - c. Access updates
 - i. Kaupakuea Access to Hilo Forest Reserve (Nani) [49] – Nani said she now has the attention with the county Planning Department and feels like things are now moving. She will contact Jackson with updates.
 - d. Administrative Tasks update – had a Nā Ala Hele Statewide Advisory Council meeting. Terrence attended representing Hawai’i island and the OHV community. The project table, which included all of this island’s current trails, was approved to bring the NAH Program into compliance with federal grants and enable continued federal grant funding.
 - e. Other NAH program updates – program trails are running smoothly. Two new staff people have been hired, Brianna Ninomoto, GIS Technician and Cheyanne Rapoza, Trails and Access Specialist.

- 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)- trail planners will be coming in mid-July a site visit and to do additional outreach, 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 – had a site visit with Forest Solutions a few weeks ago, as well as a second round of site visits going along the leeward side in Kona and Ka‘u meeting with different communities. Had a strategic planning/input gathering meeting afterwards as well. Both had good turnouts with alot of excellent feedback and dialogue. So that plan is coming along with a draft anticipated in the next few months in the hope of finalizing by the end of the year. 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 a “green fee” being proposed for hotels that could benefit the NAH Program. It’s possible the current federally-funded trails stewardship grant program which expires at the end of 2026 could be replaced with funds from the green fee program.

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

Currently in the field working on the lower part of Ka‘awaloa trail to repair the earthquake damage. The opening ceremony was on June 16th and work will be on-going over the next two weeks. NAH staff attended. Rick encourages anyone who is interested in kokua to come down. Chuck shared that the County Council had approved three grants to the Ala Kahakai Trail Association for stewardship of three different areas.

E. Subcommittee Updates:

- a. OHV Subcommittee (Terrence, John Howerton) – Terrence asked if Jackson had learned of any potential locations. Jackson said there was a possibility of some synergy between the subcommittee’s vision and the proposed Mauna Loa Challenge Course.
- b. Waipi‘o Valley Access Road Subcommittee (Terrence, Nani, Debbie Chang) [64]
Nani said the letter to the Mayor had been sent requesting a meeting to discuss public access, but there’s been no response so far.

Jackson is now the Nā Ala Hele representative on county council member Heather Kimball’s Wai’pio Valley Access Road long-term planning committee.

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

Terrence asked Chris and Nani for a report. Nani said her children went up and had a great time. They used the proper access. It seems that internet online traffic about the location has decreased. Public seems to be using proper access more and not going through the community.

- F. HAR 13-130 Rule Revision Update (Nā Ala Hele staff) – no update

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

Chuck said the county council's Policy Committee on Planning, Land Use, and Economic Development had issued a proposed schedule to begin its discussions and decision-making on the draft General Plan 2045. Jackson said the memo to the county council approved at the Council's last meeting had not been drafted or sent. The first meeting is scheduled for July 15th and the Collaborative Biocultural Stewardship section of the GP2045, so Chuck asked that the memo be sent to the county council as soon as possible. Keola suggested that the memo be sent the county council chair, Hokeka Inaba, and that language be added to that specifically requests it be considered a Communication for the PCPLUED for the GP2045 special meeting on July 15th. Jackson will work with Chuck to complete this task.

- H. Council member trail experience sharing

Nani hiked the botanical gardens donkey trail at Onomea, but found it was a loop. She wondered if the trail is cutoff and is supposed to go further. Nani says she goes to jogs trails every other day, but has had to avoid the part of the Puna trail where the guy has been harassing her, she goes straight down to Kalele Bay and then over to Paki Bay. She wondered where the public access is since waves come crashing into the trees, so where is the high water mark? It's confusing, but she noted that the homeless people in the area have built a beautiful stone trail that reminds her of the Ala Kahakai trail on the other side of the island. She believes there should be a historic trail to Haena. Jackson clarified that the Puna trail is the historic trail, but the area around the trail is private. So the high water mark is the cliff where there are cliffs. Nani noted that fisherman and other members of the public do access the private land. Jackson said they have been generous in the access they allow. He also said the donkey trail is a mauka-makai trail that does go up beyond the highway. Terrence was in Massachusetts recently and went hiking on some trails. He noted that they used symbols rather than signage and he was surprised how informative and useful they were.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Establish new subcommittee regarding Nā'ālehu Hills subdivision

- a. Discuss establishing subcommittee to research and report to the Advisory Council matters regarding the proposed Nā'ālehu Hills subdivision – At its April 10th meeting the AC had asked Chuck to draft a letter to address the public access concerns involving the proposed Nā'ālehu Hills subdivision. The draft letter was to be addressed to the Planning Department with the subject being a request that protected via a public access easement through the proposed Nā'ālehu Hills

subdivision. Chuck apologized for not drafting a letter prior to this June 18th meeting. The AC's discussions during this meeting determined there is a mauka public access route used by hunters and other users. It is not formally established to the best of the AC's knowledge. The ACI would be requesting the Planning Department to use the subdivision approval process to establish a public access easement to protect the route for users. The Department of Hawaiian Homelands has already established the public access on their portion of the route going into Nā'ālehu Hills. The public access entering from the other side of the property from a government road already exists as well. Establishing the public access easement through Nā'ālehu Hills would prevent the access to the Ka'ū Forest Reserve from being cutoff. Nani has already contacted the Planning Department and they are waiting for a map that identifies the public access. Keola suggested that Hans Santiago in the Planning Department be consulted. Nani said that hunters also like to have a map for reference

- b. Vote to approve establishment of said subcommittee, if motioned. Chuck made a motion to establish the Nā'ālehu Hills subcommittee. Chris seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous. The members of the subcommittee are Chuck, Nani, Terrence, and Keola. Nani will be the point person working with the Planning Department.
 - c. Discuss drafting a letter the Hawaii County Planning Department regarding the Nā'ālehu Hills subdivision.
 - d. Vote to approve the subcommittee's delegation to draft said letter, if motioned. The Council was concerned that the Planning Department may be waiting on the Council's letter. Given the subdivision application has been submitted and tentative subdivision approval could be given by the Planning Department prior to the AC's next meeting, discussion focused on whether or not the AC should authorize the subcommittee to draft, approve, and send with the AC's recommendation for a public access easement through the proposed subdivision. Chris made a motion that the Na'ahelu Hill subcommittee be authorized to draft and submit a letter to the Planning Department with the AC's recommendation that the public access easement be established.
- B. Set next meeting agenda – Terrance requested that AC attendance and the State Hawai'i Administrative Rule project. Chuck requested the General Plan remain on the agenda.
 - C. Set next meeting date – Wednesday, August 20, 2025 at 6PM.

VII. ADJOURNMENT motion made by Chuck, seconded by David. Adjourned at 7:49PM