



NĀ ALA HELE
Hawai'i Trail & Access System

Hawai'i Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council

Minutes

Approved: February 4, 2026

Revised:

MEETING DATE: December 3, 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
 - Charles "Chuck" Flaherty, Secretary
 - David Rietow
 - Christopher Seymour
 - Roger "Maha" Kaneali'i Jr.
 - Jeffrey Yaumachi

- Voting Members Absent Excused:**
- Kawehi Ryder

- 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:**
- Andrea Gill
 - Cindy (as identified)
 - Deborah Chang
 - Yuko Barretto
 - Travis Wise
 - Sunny Seal
 - Christine Moore
 - Max L. (as identified)

I. Call to Order: 6:30 PM (quorum achieved)

II. AC CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

Terrence requested for new agenda items can be made at end of meeting. Terrence said he would be expediting the agenda due to the late start of the meeting. He announced that that any members of the public in attendance can speak at any time during the meeting, but requested that they place to request to be recognized in the chat to assist in maintaining order and to expedite the meeting as well. He noted that changes to the Sunshine Law now allow meeting participants, other than the Council, to identify as they see fit. Also, attendees do not have to identify any other people who may be in the room from which they are participating virtually.

III. Review DRAFT MINUTES of August 20, 2025 meeting

a. David motioned to accept the August 20th minutes. Nani seconded. No discussion. David motioned to approve the minutes. Chris 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) - no update. Work on the plan continues.

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] – Still waiting on the land donation. Going through the county process. NAH hosted the National Association of State Foresters, which was holding a conference here in September. The tour showcased the trail and the cooperative efforts among local, rural, Indigenous communities that have been achieved and how managing these are being managed or coordinated.
- ii. Muliwai Trail/Waimanu Campground [36] – had a big maintenance project effort from September 29th through October 3rd. Also did a day maintenance trip on the Z trail working in from Waipi'o Valley.
- iii. Upper Waiākea ATV & Dirt Bike Riding Area (Terrence) [27] – Staff (Travis) is clearing weekly. Terrance went up and saw that there is a lot of activity occurring. He plans to go up next month to work on the keiki trail, interior trails, entrance, and turning areas.
- iv. Kūlanihāko'i Mountain Bike Park (Chris) [78] – Had a great event to replace all of the sign markers throughout the trail working with a local Eagle Scout group. He specifically acknowledged Eagle Scout Gavin Wagner. Chris wanted to also acknowledge DLNR/NAH for contributing the signs. Chris thanked Yuko Barreto and Max Lonesbury for attending the meeting. Yuko is part of a mountain bike coalition on O'ahu working with NAH program there. Chris thanked Max for all of his work for the Big Island Mountain Biking Association. Trails keep getting better and better with dozens of volunteers. Chris and Jackson also thanked

James Eller. Over 250 volunteer work hours were logged. New trailhead kiosk sign has been ordered. Next project is to make a nice entrance sign.

- v. Puna Trail [12] – NAH held a trail event with the Society of Hawaiian Archaeology in association with their conference. Tour included the archaeology and history of the trail and a talk-story with Uncle Tom English, a descendant of the area. 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 with incremental improvements, such as signage.
- b. Historic Trails updates - with regard to other historic trails, .
- i. Other historic trail updates
Surveys are done and are waiting on completed survey reports on the Judd trail in Kona town and the Ala Nui from Keauhou down to Ka’awaloa and Ho’okena. Once the surveys completed, the plan then is to divide all of these into their own distinct parcels, as state-owned trails, per the Highways Act, and then fold those in as NAH program trails. Since the Council already approved these, the next step would be to go to the BLNR. Debbie Chang asked for the name of the contractor for the project. Jackson said ASM is the contractor with the surveying subcontracted to Wes Thomas. Jackson also updated work on the Honokōhau trail. He and archaeologists walked the portion between the Ane Keohokālole Hwy to the quarry and identified and documented intact portions of the trail, including curb stones.
- c. Access updates
- i. Kaupakuea Access to Hilo Forest Reserve (Nani) [49] – no update. Jackson said the county meeting was cancelled.
 - ii. Other access update – NAH staff, Cheyenne, has been going along the South Hilo and Hāmākua coast to document the accesses to the forest reserves and see what is lacking or is needed, if there's paper roads, or there are additional tasks.
- d. Administrative Tasks update –no update.
- e. Other NAH program updates – program trails are running smoothly. Two new staff people have been hired. Focus has been on Puna trail as well as others.
- i. Nā Manu ‘Elele Trail Steward Program – no significant changes **or** update. NAH has 20 stewards state-wide through this program. NAH is hoping that green fees will replace federal funding that ceases at the end of 2026. During the up-coming legislative session, Jackson will be submitting e-mail notices for important items of public interest regarding the NAH program. Jackson encourages Council members to testify personally as well as member of the public. Hearing notices are very last minute, so emails frequently. Jackson encourages the public to

draft letters in preparation for submitting written testimony. If any member of the public would like assist, please contact Jackson.

- ii. Nāpu‘u Recreation Plan (Forest Solutions/Nā Ala Hele Staff)- Plan development is moving forward nicely. Have gotten excellent input and data from different constituencies, including descendants of the area. Have developed some great working relationships.
- iii. Ala Kahakai Interpretive Plan – a draft plan was sent to NAH for review. Hoping to have a final plan by the end of this year or beginning of next. Consultants will be making a presentation to Council
- iv. New Koai‘a Trail- just north of Waimea. Draft EA will probably be released in January 2026 after which there will be a comment period. The pasture area is where the proposed trail would be located. Could possibly be a mountain bike optimized trail. Jackson welcomes feedback and comments.
- v. Statewide Nā Ala Hele Program Manager – Jenna Masters has now been assigned to the position for November and December, possibly into January, and is doing great work. This frees Jackson to be 100% focused on this island. The staff had a GIS training and mechanized trail. Currently doing wilderness first aid training and ATV training.

C. Budget/Legislative Update (Nā Ala Hele staff) – no update.

D. Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Update (Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail staff) – no update.

E. Subcommittee Updates:

a. OHV Subcommittee (Terrence, John Howerton) –Jackson said there was a possibility of some synergy between the subcommittee’s vision and the proposed Mauna Loa Challenge Course. There is an issue with fencing. Jackson asked if a route could be proposed from the subcommittee. Terrence will present map at next meeting. Terrance explained that the OHV Subcommittee is seeking a location for an area for OHV course in the Kona area.. Primary issue has been no one wants it in their backyard. Struggling with finding area that is not in conflict with other users. Chris asked if state Conservation district timber management areas could be considered. Jackson explained this has been considered, but have always faced public concerns.

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

Nani said she would like to have drafted a letter to Heather Kimball’s subcommittee but didn’t believe the Council has a consensus yet. Debbie and Nani both said the issue continues to be very complicated. Nani thanked Debbie for notifying her of the Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee meeting at which council member Heather Kimball gave a report on the status of the Waipi‘o Valley Access Road planning. Most importantly, Heather acknowledged that it is indeed a public access. Nani learned from that meeting that Heather is drafting a bill to address road access. Conditions may

include requiring that all road users, including valley residents, to have a permit to access the road along with other conditions and guidelines. Jackson said the proposed legislation proposes restricting pedestrian access to 9am-3pm, among other conditions. He pointed out there are state lands on the Muliwai Plateau, as well as the campgrounds, state lands, private lands in Waimanu. Nani asked for the Council's thoughts. Jeff said he thinks 9am-3pm is too restrictive. David also asked who would be restricted from 6-9am and 3-6pm? Jackson said pedestrians would be prohibited during those times under the proposed bill. He believes that tourist autos are more of a problem than pedestrian. Debbie said it appears that the Council and the public do not yet have enough information to draft a letter at this time. Jackson and Debbie said they thought it was a good idea to invite Heather to give a presentation to the Council. (Chuck dropped out of meeting at 7:17pm and rejoined at 7:21pm). Terrance said the constitutional issues regarding public access need to be determined.

Chuck said it would help if the Council could get the date of the Hāmākua CDP AC meeting because it is on YouTube, so then Council members could watch Heather's presentation themselves. He asked what information the Council believes it needs in order to draft a letter.

Debbie suggested that the Council prepare a list of questions for Heather and ask that she give a presentation to the Council addressing those questions. She said a lot of great questions had come up during this meeting and that she is willing to draft a list of questions for Heather. Jackson suggested that Heather also be asked to propose solutions in any presentations as well.

After further discussions, the Council noted that the subcommittee was already authorized to do additional research in order to draft a letter to express the AC's recommendations on the access road. The subcommittee agreed to contact Heather Kimball to request information about the draft bill regarding Waipi'o Valley access, including the possible timeline for introduction, as well as any details impacting public access. The subcommittee will also find out whether or not Heather is willing to present at the next Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council meeting.

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

Due to time constraints, Chris said he will defer his presentation to the next meeting.

- d. Nā'ālehu Hills Subdivision Subcommittee (Charles, Nani, Terrence, Keola Childs)

Chuck said he has not received any response from the Planning Department on the letter by the Council. Nani pointed out that the county Game Management Commission, which was copied on the Council's letter to the Planning Department, expressed support for the Council's recommendation. Jackson said he will ask the Planning Department for the status of the Council's recommendation at his next meeting with them.

F. HAR 13-130 Rule Revision Update (Nā Ala Hele staff) – close to getting the final draft completed. Jackson hopes to have a draft to present at next meeting.

G. Hawai'i County General Plan (Chuck) – update

Chuck said that there was no update because the county council Planning Committee had not taken up consideration of the Council's recommendations, which were also recommended by the county Leeward Planning Commission, and was also reconsidering the draft General Plan 2045 as presented by the Planning Department. Council member Ashley Kierkiewicz, chair of the Planning Committee, and her staff had prepared and introduced a massive Excel spreadsheet that compared the current draft General Plan 2045 to the General Plans adopted in 1971, 1979, 1989, and 2005. Terrance asked if this should remain as an agenda item because the Council had been informed that the Sunshine Law prohibited from keeping "placeholder" agenda items. Chuck said he believes it should remain on the agenda for the next meeting because Ashley, her staff, and county Corporation Counsel were proposing revisions to the draft General Plan 2045, but Ashley had not given a timeline of when the revisions would be introduced.

H. Council member trail experience sharing

Jeff joined the Society of Hawai'i Archaeologist Conference on their Puna Trail and coastal trails outings. There was a lot of positive feedback with many of the attendees from O'ahu. He said it was a great hike and experience and thanked Jackson and the NAH staff for their work. He said he was at Kalaupapa and heard that the Pali trail was damaged, so he will be reporting on repairs being made. Nani went on the Kaulana Manu trail. It was a gorgeous hike with a lovely forest filled with birds. She also hiked on the Ala Kahakai near Spencer Beach and said it was a great hike.

I. Council Attendance Policy (Terrence) Terrence pointed to the Hawai'i Administrative Rules that govern the Council, specifically section 139 governing quorum. He pointed out the difficulty the Council had in establishing quorum for the meeting. While the Council is authorized to have 9 members, there are only 8 seated members at this time. David wants to retire, subject to a replacement being found and confirmed. Kawehi has been absent. Terrence led a discussion as to whether or not the Council should adopt an attendance policy to be enforced by the Chair. He proposed a policy that members upon being confirmed, agree to attend a minimum of 3 meetings in a term year and that if a member does not attend two consecutive meetings, they will be automatically removed. He noted AC members served 1-year terms and that membership is renewed upon the agreement between the member, the AC chair, and the DLNR chair. Terrence proposed that the AC set a number meetings in which an AC member could have unexcused or excused absences within a year before not being recommended for term renewal. He then gave each AC member an opportunity to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions. The AC reached a consensus agreement that Terrence would draft a proposed council attendance policy to be presented at the next meeting for discussion and decision-making by the AC.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Set next meeting agenda: 1) Waipi'o Valley access road draft letter discussion and decision-making, 2) council attendance policy.

- B. Set next meeting date – Wednesday, February 4, 2025 at 6PM.
- VII. ADJOURNMENT motion made by Chuck, seconded by David. Adjourned at 8:00PM

DRAFT