NĀ ALA HELE
Hawai'i Trail & Access System

Hawai'i Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council

Minutes

Approved: September 17, 2026

Revised:

MEETING DATE: **July 23, 2026**

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
- Roger "Maha" Kaneali'i Jr.
- Jeffrey Yaumachi
- Chris Seymour

Voting Members Absent Excused:
- none

Voting Members Absent Unexcused:
- none

Ex-Officio:
- Jackson Bauer, Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program
- Jenna Masters, Acting Program NAH Manager

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

Invited Guest: Theresa Dean , PBR Hawai'i
Mareé Medeiros, PBR Hawai'i

Public:
- Deborah Chang

- Phyllis Chung
- Diane Ware
- Keola Childs
- Travis
- Taffi

I. Call to Order and Roll Call (6:10 pm)

II. AC CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS – Terrence welcomed everyone. .

III. Review DRAFT MINUTES of April 2, 2026 meeting

a. Terrence asked for a motion to accept the Apri 2, 2026 minutes. David moved to accept the minutes. Nani seconded. Chuck pointed out that there were several unsubstantive grammatical changes in the narrative of the PBR presentation and asked that the Chair allow Chuck to make those changes and resubmit the corrected minutes to Jackson. Terrence said that it was the policy of the NAH Council to allow this. Jackson said he would send the draft formatted minutes to Chuck so that he could make the corrections and resubmit the minutes using "track changes" so to facilitate the final approved minutes being completed and sent out. Terrence asked for a motion to accept the April 2, 2026 meeting minutes with the unsubstantive changes to be made. David made the motion to approve. Chris seconded the motion. Roll call vote was unanimous in favor.

IV. PUBLIC TESTIMONY (Three minutes maximum) – Jackson let everyone know that anyone could ask to be recognized at any point during the meeting as long as there comments related to the agenda item being discussed. No public testimony was received.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Program Plan update (Nā Ala Hele staff) Jackson thanked everyone who had submitted comments and noted that there had been great participation. Phyllis Chung was recognized and asked if the deadline to submit comments is July 31st. Jackson confirmed that was the deadline.

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

a. Program Trails updates

i. Pololū Trail [54] – have been working with the private owner. They have successfully subdivided the large property. The Mule Station area has been subdivided out at the trailhead and is being donated.

ii. Muliwai Trail/Waimanu Campground [36] – damage from the Kona low storms has been most cleared and the campground and trail are looking good, except for a small portion which will be worked on in the next couple of weeks. There will be another work week scheduled in September.

iii. Upper Waiākea ATV & Dirt Bike Riding Area (Terrence) [27] – Terrence said this area needs to be cleared with the keiki area being the priority. Jackson said he will work with Terrence to have coordinate the staff to all are going Will be getting up there

iv. Kūlanihāko‘i Mountain Bike Park (Chris) [78] – Jackson acknowledge Terrence and Chris as “star volunteers” for the bike park. The Board of Land and Natural Resources approved the Memorandum of Understanding with the Big Island Mountain Biking Association to be the stewards of the park. The BLNR chair expressed his appreciation. Chris gave a big mahalos to Jackson, Steve Bergfeld, Riley Smith, and Rep. Mattias Kusch. Jackson congratulated Chris on this successful effort. Chris thanked all who’ve been involved starting in 2018 to facilitate this successful outcome. There was a lot of impact from the storms, but “the menehune” showed up and made a lot of progress. There will be another trail clean-up scheduled for the end of August and Chris will coordinate with Jackson for that. He noted that it is hurricane season and they are concerned that as soon as they get trails cleared, another storm will hit.

v. Puna Trail [12] – going smooth. Work continuing on the kipaipai, traditional stone causeway, with traditional practice experts across the very muddy portion of the trail where a secondary outlet from the loko’ia is. Will be bringing in Kea’au High School students after semester begins.

vi. Other program trail updates – Jackson noted that in 2023, this advisory council approved adding three trails, Koai‘a Loop Trail, Koai‘a Corridor Trail, and Kalōpā Trails. They should be going before the Board of Land And Natural Resources in the next month or so, requesting that they are approved to be Na Ala Hele trails. The NAH trail up to the Mauna Loa Observatory which had been covered by lava is open once again. NOAA graded out a gravel road. It is not yet paved.

b. Historic Trails updates

i. Ala Kahakai Trail allignments, South and North Kona sections - NAH and a local community group, Huaka’ila, have been working to determine the Ala Kahakai Trail alignment. As the sections are identified, they are added to the documented alignment.

ii. Other historic trail updates – Terrence asked about the encroachments on the Judd Trail. Jackson said the county has said they will not be taking action against the property owners who’ve encroached on the buffers. The State Historic Preservation Division and the Land Division have not replied to Jackson’s outreach. It is the last parcel at the makai side has not been given a TMK yet.

c. Access updates

i. Kaupakuea Access to Hilo Forest Reserve (Nani) [49] - The Planning Director directed Nani to a planner, Bethany Morrison, and said that Bethany would be providing Nani with an update, but Nani has not yet heard from her.

ii. Other access updates – no updates.

d. Administrative Tasks update – no updates.

e. Other NAH program updates

i. Nā Manu ʻElele Trail Steward Program - the steward program has obtained funding another $1 million from the legislature which funds the program through April 2028. This was funding from the "green fee", so it's hoped that will be an annual source of revenue.

ii. Nāpuʻu Recreation Plan (Forest Solutions/Nā Ala Hele Staff) – it has been decided that the plan is to refocus away from recreation to access and stewardship and what activities are appropriate for the area. Good feedback from ʻohana and user groups being obtained. Slated to be completed by the end of the year.

iii. New Koaiʻa Trail – located just north of Waimea. Working on draft Environmental Assessment to include a Cultural Impact Assessment. Archaeological Inventory Survey has been completed. Draft EA will be released after which there will be a comment period. The pasture area is where the proposed trail would be located.

iv. Statewide Nā Ala Hele Program Manager – Jackson was happy to announce that Jenna Masters will become the new Program Manager and that a deputy position has also been approved so that the NAH program will have great administrative leadership moving forward. Still seeking to replace Moana's former abstractor position. Issue is the level of pay for the amount of kuleana required.

C. Budget/Legislative Update (Nā Ala Hele staff) – Legislature approved $1 million for the Capital Improvement Project at the Mule Station area at Pololū Trail. Engineering and construction are funded, so moving forward nicely. Laurel and Brianna, which are NAH's Volunteer Outreach Coordinator and GIS Technician positions now are funded for another two years. The legislature did reduce the $2 million from the state General Fund that has been provided over the past few years. Strategy is to focus on "the year of the trails" and see if additional funding can be obtained through this increase awareness of trails in Hawai'i. The ask for the next legislative session will be to get $5 million statewide to have all positions funded by the General Fund, which would free up matching funds for additional grants.

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

E. Subcommittee Updates:

a. OHV Subcommittee (Terrence, John Howerton) – there was great representation of the OHV community at the state-wide NAH Advisory Council meeting. Jackson is grateful for Terrence and other OHV volunteers that have achieved so much for Hawai'i island.

b. Waipiʻo Valley Access Road Subcommittee (Terrence, Nani, Debbie Chang) [64]. Terrance asked for a motion to accept the letter drafted by Debbie and Nani. David made the motion. Chuck seconded. Terrence suggested several changes to the letter to provide further clarification. Deborah supports his suggestions that the actual rule be quoted in the first paragraph and that "state" be place

before “constitution”. Jackson asked that the letter be expanded to acknowledge that property owners and users in lands surrounding and beyond Waipiʻo Valley, such as Waimanu, are also involved. Terrence pointed out that as long as the changes to the letter only involve “spirit and intent” and not the substance, the NAH can move to approve the letter with the suggested changes. Chuck asked that the specific sections of the state constitution, Article IX, Section 10 “Public Safety” and Article XII, Section 7 be referred to and included. There was an extensive discussion as to whom the letter should be address and “cc: ed”. Chris supported the letter’s request that the NAH AC have a seat at the table and to clarify where that table is, that is, with the mayor’s office, council member Kimball, etc. A member of the public, Keola Childs, made suggestions. Discussion was ended and Terrence asked for a motion. Chuck moved that the Waipiʻo Valley Access Road Subcommittee be authorized to make the amendments to the letter that have been agreed upon by the NAH AC during its discussion and that the Chair be authorized to review, sign, and deliver the amended letter as indicated within it. Jeff seconded. Vote to approve was unanimous. Terrence thanked the subcommittee for its hard work.

c. Wailuku River Confluence Lookout Access Subcommittee (Terrence, Nani, Jeff, Chris, James Eller) [74] – Chris gave a brief history of the effort to identify an appropriate place name for the Wailuku River Confluence in order to correct the name that had been circulated on the internet. Chris recounted his extensive effort to determine how to approach the issue, as well as how to move forward with it. Chris was able to acquire historic maps of the area, which have been sent to the NAH AC prior to the meeting. He asked Jackson to share screen the maps, oldest first. The first map shown was from 1846. It showed 5 streams going into the same area, but none of the names, such as the second stream from the bottom Keanalepo, exist today. Chris believes that In 1898, after the second overthrow when land rights and titles were changes, the Wailuku River was continued up to Mauna Kea on maps. He asked Jackson to put up the next map and referred everyone to the area named “Pu’u Loa”, which is essentially the same area as the lookout. He then pointed out several falls shown on the map that can be seen from Pu’u Loa. They are Kauwehu Falls, Puka Maui Falls, and Lauiole Falls. Chris gave the pronunciation that Kumu Pila Wilson shared for Kauwehu Falls. The falls flow in the Confluence Lookout. To the mauka side of Lauiole Falls is a “natural bridge. Chris referenced Pukui’s book of Hawaiian place names as being were where Puka Maui comes from and that in her book, that is the translation of that area. So there was a natural bridge that crossed over the Wailuku at that spot, on a trail. Chris went to the last map drawn out in the 1930s of the fields mauka-makai and pointed out the “Pukamaui Intake”. He said this was where an ancient trail crossed. Chris said these maps and the

mana'o he obtained from many people in their 70s, 80s, and 90s who crossed the Wailuku in this area helps us to understand the place names of the area. He noted that people were deterred from entering the area after it was designated as a watershed area. Chris provided a great deal more historical information. After extensive discussion, the Council asked Chris to a draft a letter to the Hawai'i State Board on Geographic Names containing all of his research, interviews, context, etc. in orderthat would be presented to the Council for review and approval. It was clarified that the Council would not be seeking to have a trail added to the NAH program. The purpose of the letter would be to request that the State Board assign a formal place name for the lookout area in order to mitigate the cultural impact of the inappropriate place name that tour guides and online sites have used. The Council thanked Chris for his dedication and passion to protect, preserve, and restore kanaka maoli culture. Jackson asked Chris to share the information that he has collected with Noah Gomes, who is doing his dissertation on this area.

d. Nā'ālehu Hills Subdivision Subcommittee (Charles, Nani, Terrence) – no update. No update from Planning Department as to status of reconsolidation and subdivision application approval. Jackson asked if this agenda item could be removed moving forward. Chuck agreed.

F. HAR 13-130 Rule Revision Update (Nā Ala Hele staff) – NAH will work to have draft available this Summer for a public meeting prior to submission to the Board of Land and Natural Resources. Attorney General is currently reviewing the draft rules.

G. Hawai'i County General Plan (Charles) – Chuck said the county council had passed the draft General Plan 2045 without amendments. Interim amendments may be introduced in the future, but Chuck said this could be taken off the agenda for now

H. Council member trail experience sharing – Jackson went on a family trip on the mainland and went on many trails. Saw lots of wildlife, including bears. Was interesting to have first-hand experience the blind have when going hiking with others. Jackson said the trip really increased his appreciation of all of the trails here in Hawai'i and how our history is brought to life on them. Nani got to go on an ATV experience in Pu'uanahulu in the Game Management Area to do a goat count for hunters. The goat population is way down. There was disappointing forest loss from recent storm damage and fires, but the views were gorgeous. Nani also went up the road trail to the summit of Mauna Loa. Really impressed with the regeneration of the forest on the way up to the trail. Had terrible forest loss from fires, but native forest is growing back. Jeff shared his experience working on a project around Kalaupapa, Molokai. He said there is a lot of controversy around access, in that it is the only national park without public access. There were educational tours being given, but the gentleman who was hosting them passed away and so they've been shut down. Jeff believes Kalaupapa is one of Hawai'I's most important historical sites, so he hopes the access issues can be resolved. Jackson said that the Kalaupapa trail was one of Moana's last projects and that she was able to document that it is an ancient trail, so public access should be allowed.

I. Proposed New Punahoa State Park (Chris) –Representation Matthias Kusch has brought forth the idea of making this trail, which is just makai of the Wailuku River Confluence, as a state park. Chris requested that the agenda item be deferred until the next meeting in order to gain additional information and to invite Representative Kusch to present to the Council.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. New Advisory Council applicant: Topher Fast. Nani requested that this matter be deferred until the applicant is present to introduce himself and answer any questions the Council may have. Chris made motion to defer the agenda item to the next meeting. Chuck seconded the motion. Terrance did a roll call vote and the motion was unanimously approved.

B. Statewide , Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council meeting, July 31, 2026. (Terrence) Set next meeting date was set for July 23rd, 6pm. Terrence gave some background information and shared that the statewide meeting is a requirement of the Recreational Trails Program, which is a federal grant to states for building, maintaining, and improving nonmotorized and motorized recreational trails and related facilities. 30% goes to OHV and the remainder to the other recreational trails and related facilities. The statewide Council gives its mana'o on which trails should be on the list, but it is up to the NAH Program to make final decisions. Jackson has been a great advocate for Hawai'i island and he expressed his appreciation for the support that the Hawai'i island Council gives him. The testimony given at the statewide meeting was controversial at times due to a lack of understanding. There were a lot of questions in the meeting about why funds are going here or there. Terrence expressed his appreciation for the Hawai'i island NAH Advisory Council because it is the most active, committed, and effective in the state. Jeff asked why land mass was not the basis for allocation of funding. Jackson said that the way in which funds are allocated has been debated since the RTP was first started in 1988 and today there is a consensus. The NAH Program operates like an 'ohana. Jackson discussed how funding works in the program and shared some of the names from the other island Councils and NAH Program staff.

C. Set next meeting agenda. Will remove Na'alehu Hill subdivision and county General Plan. Nani requested that the Honamu Forest Reserve access be placed on the next agenda. Chris's proposed letter to the Geographic Board will be on the agenda.

D. Set next meeting date. Next meeting is September 17, 2026.

VII. ADJOURNMENT at 8:39pm.