

# Friends of Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge



Volume VII, December 2010

## Annual Membership Meeting – Jan. 29, 2011

Plan to attend the annual general membership meeting for Friends of Hakalau Forest to be held in the Conference Room at the Pacific Islands Institute of Forestry, 60 Nowelo Street, Hilo at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday January 29, 2011. Rick Camp (USGS-BRD Wildlife Biologist) will discuss forest bird population trends at Hakalau Forest and Colin Phifer (2010 recipient of the Jack Jeffrey Conservation Education Grant) will talk about his research on plant pollinators and seed production, his efforts to train students to assist with data collection and the development of Hawaii-specific pollination lessons to share with local K-8 teachers. The 2010 accomplishments by the Friends will be highlighted by President Dick Wass and Refuge Manager Jim Kraus will give an update on the major happenings at Hakalau Forest NWR. The business will include election of up to seven board members for the 2011-12 term. Meet the new board members, enjoy the refreshments and buy a Friends t-shirt!

### Mini-Biographies: Nominees for Board of Directors, Friends of Hakalau Forest

Mililani Browning, Alala Outreach Coordinator, Hawaii State Division of Forestry and Wildlife. Mililani graduated from the University of Hawaii at Hilo with a degree in Agroecology and Environmental Quality.

Deighton Emmons, Science Instructor, Hawai'i Preparatory Academy. Deighton has taught at the Academy for eighteen years and currently serves as the science department chairman.

J. B. Friday, PhD, Extension Forester, Cooperative Extension Service, CTAHR, UH Mānoa. J.B. currently works with landowners, tree farmers, and professional foresters throughout the state on management of both native forests and tree farms.

Creighton M. Litton, PhD, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Creighton is a forest ecologist specializing in forest ecosystem ecology, invasive species ecology, disturbance ecology, and restoration ecology.

Emily Needham, Registered Nurse, retired. She has a background in working with philanthropic organizations, particularly their newsletters. She currently serves as Newsletter Editor for FOHF and as Secretary for the Board.

Liba Pejchar, PhD, Asst. Professor, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, Colorado State University (CSU). Liba has an active research program in Hawaii focused on the conservation and restoration of bird and plant communities

Robert Shallenberger, PhD, Hawaii Island Conservation Director, The Nature Conservancy. For the last eight years, he has been the Hawaii Island Conservation Director for the Nature Conservancy. Rob has extensive management and research experience focusing on Hawaii's diverse seabird and waterbird species.

## Hakalau Forest NWR Manager's Update - December 2010

**Staff Changes:** We have 4 “new” fence/ungulate crew members on board now undergoing training and orientation to the refuge and refuge system. Kawika Waxman, Tristan Resurreccion, Byron Iida, and Josh Peiratt have joined our staff as Term employees. We are thrilled to have a full field crew in place again. They will be involved in the refuge’s invasive weed control, feral ungulate management and fence maintenance work under Andy Kikuta’s direction. Hakalau forest has 50 miles of fence lines to patrol each month for breaks, digouts, treefalls, etc. Any breach in the line becomes an easy avenue for pigs and cows to re-enter the refuge and undermine 25 years of forest restoration work. Whenever the refuge is short on staff these fence checks are correspondingly limited in frequency and as we all know pigs in particular are very prolific and they reproduce quickly enough to re-colonize an area much faster than most people would think possible.



Hapu’u Scene

The refuge is currently recruiting for a staff **Wildlife Biologist** (GS-11/12), recently vacated. We are also recruiting for a **Wildlife Refuge Specialist** (GS-5/7/9), a management series trainee position. These are both permanent full-time positions. Persons interested in these great opportunities at Hakalau Forest are strongly encouraged to contact the refuge manager to discuss the jobs. This is a rare chance to join the team at Hakalau and contribute to front line conservation work to conserve native forests and the Big Islands rare species.



Koa and Ohia Blossoms

**Maulua Cabin:** We hope to arrange a site visit with the Friends to the Maulua Cabin in the near future to assess the cabin for rehabilitation and potential use in our volunteer/resource management/visitor services program. This would make excellent quarters for seasonal volunteers, field researchers or refuge contractors. Using the cabin as a Visitor Contact station for the public on weekends is also feasible. The refuge currently has no point of contact location for the public aside from the Hilo office, 1 ½ hours away from Hakalau Forest. What is needed initially is a major cleanup effort of the site and a serious assessment of its condition and cost estimates for the needed rehab. Hopefully the Friends of Hakalau will find this to be a desirable project for the future.

**Kona Forest:** Refuge staff is currently very busy with Kona Forest matters involving road access improvements and \$1.2 million in dedicated funding for fencing the 5300 acre unit in south Kona. Meetings were held with the State Department of Highways and Federal Highways in Hilo in November as well as an onsite pre-bid meeting and Q&A session in December with invited contractors to begin the process that will lead to a fence project within the next year. This is all contingent on obtaining state approval and making the necessary safety improvements to the road easement access point where our one and only highway access occurs.

**Comprehensive Planning:** The 15 year Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) was completed and approved by the September 30, 2010 deadline (just barely) and will help to guide our management direction for the foreseeable future. We thank the efforts of many FWS employees who hung in to complete the project and all of those who provided input to the Service throughout the multi-year planning effort. The Plan is at the printers as we write this and is expected to be distributed to everyone on our mailing list after the new year in early 2011.

**Funding:** Hakalau Forest NWR is seeking \$65,000 from the US Forest Service Forest Health program to continue support for the refuge's weed control program in 2011. \$100,000 was obtained in 2010 to focus primarily on control of Florida blackberry, an invasive species easily seen throughout the upper portions of the refuge but one in need of a serious sustained control effort.

End of year funds (FY2010) from several sources made possible the extension of a fence maintenance and ungulate control contract on 3 of the refuges managed units. Hakalau Forest Refuge funding (\$25K), Ecological Services, Honolulu (\$45K), and Pacific Islands NWR Complex, Honolulu (\$10K) and fast action by regional staff in Portland made the extension possible.

Refuge weed control, ungulate control and fence maintenance programs are achieved through a combination of refuge staff work and contract assistance (provided in FY 2010 by Pono Pacific LLC and Biologicals LLC), thus outside funding is imperative each year to hold our own and continue to make progress against the continuing threat of invasive species.

**Surveys:** A Weed and Ungulate survey was conducted at Hakalau Forest in early November, 2010 for the first time since 2004. Participants included Hakala Forest refuge pest control staff, Pacific Islands Invasive Species Strike Team, and the Three Mountain Alliance. Training and orientation was provided by biologists Jack Jeffrey and Donna Ball. Results are pending but should help us in determining where to prioritize current and near-term control efforts for pigs and invasive weeds. Mahalo to this intrepid crew for getting us back on track with these important surveys.

**Visitors:** We were fortunate to have recent visits by Richard Hannan, our new Deputy Regional Director for Region 1 in Portland, in late October, and from Gary Frazer, our Assistant Director for Endangered Species in Washington, DC, Ecological Services Field Supervisor in Honolulu, Loyal Merhoff, and Regional Refuge Supervisor Robin West from Portland, last week. It is always good to have the chance to share the refuge with decision makers who are trying to balance the needs from many different areas and they always benefit from a first hand view of the refuge when that is possible. Special places like Hakalau Forest (with a little help from the refuge staff and our unique flora and fauna) are their own best ambassadors.

Jim Kraus, Refuge Manager



Nene family

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERCH

by Dr. Richard C. Wass

President "Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR"

### Open House – 2010

Hakalau Forest NWR's annual Open House was a terrific success again this year. The event was highlighted by a celebration of the refuge's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary complete with a huge birthday cake provided by Friends of Hakalau Forest and enjoyed by all (especially the chocolate half). Kumu Moses Crabbe, Kamehameha School, performed a traditional chant (oli) and blessed the event, facilities and participants with sprinkles of water from a koa bowl. We were further blessed by a light mist from the heavens and a glorious day of birding, greenhouse and cabin tours, refuge updates and camaraderie with people who value Hawaii's native forests. Twelve new members were recruited at the Friends table and sales of Friends T-shirts (with the striking "aki" image on the back), bandannas, bird/plant guides, and bird buttons were brisk with income totaling almost \$1,700. About 300 guests attended the Open House and many earned free bandannas by spotting the bird pictured on their button during their subsequent guided bird hike. Mahalo nui loa to the refuge staff, volunteers and visitors for another fabulous day at Hakalau!



Kumu Moses Crabbe chanting a blessing for the Open House and visitors



Birthday cake provided by Friends of Hakalau Forest to recognize the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hakalau Forest NWR.



Refuge Manager Jim Kraus and Kumu Moses Crabbe



The Friends table staffed by Ruth Iwata, Lois Pollock and Deighton Emmons.



## 2010 Friends of Hakalau Forest Tee Shirts

The remaining shirts Friends of Hakalau Forest Tee shirts which sold at Hakalau Forest's Open House 2010 are available for sale. The Friend's akiapōla'au logo is on the back, with Friends of Hakalau Forest, NWR lettering & koa leaf on the front. The sizes are limited as noted below.

Crew neck tee shirts are now available in two colors, denim blue & steel gray in sizes medium to 3X.

The Women's Scoop neck tee is in bimini blue & steel gray sizes large to 3X.

Place your order by emailing us at [friendsofhakalauforest@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhakalauforest@gmail.com) with your selection of style, size, color and quantity.

Sizes are very limited as the sales were very brisk at Open House. For **all orders, please email us your order BEFORE MAILING your check.** We will respond quickly to your email and will let you know what is available regarding your particular order. After you receive a reply from FOHF tee shirt committee then mail your check (see below).

Price for all sizes and styles of tee shirts are \$15 each. Mailing cost is \$5.50 for up to 3 tee shirts (mailed to the same address). Checks should be made out to Friends of Hakalau Forest & mailed to FOHF, P.O. Box 6065, Hilo, HI 96720. Shirts will be mailed flat rate Priority via USPS. We apologize but we cannot take credit card orders. (For those of you living on Hawaii Island or coming to visit we may be able to arrange a meeting place to save you the mailing cost. Tell us where/when we could meet you & include a phone number.)

