



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

INFORMATION SHEET

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

ALLAN SMITH
INTERIM CHAIRPERSON
Phone: (808) 587-0401
Fax: (808) 587-0390

THE HAWAII EXPERIMENTAL TROPICAL FOREST

The Hawaii Experimental Tropical Forest is dedicated to long-term research on such important issues as global warming, invasive species and how land cover change affects Hawaiian Island forests and watersheds. It will also be a focal point for improving the management, protection, and restoration of tropical forests.

Research will focus on tropical forestry, hydrology, conservation biology, invasive species control, native forest restoration and ecology, and sustainable commercial timber practices, along with education, training, outreach and preservation of cultural values.

Establishment of the experimental tropical forest is intended to fulfill goals of the 1992 Hawai'i Tropical Forest Recovery Act and the 1994 Hawai'i Tropical Forest Recovery Action Plan.

This multi-year collaboration represents among the most important and significant events in the history of the long and close relationship between the DLNR and Forest Service.

Researchers and Hawai'i citizens will participate in, and benefit from, the results of important scientific studies of forested watersheds, and the associated economic, ecological and cultural values they provide

The purposes of the Hawai'i Experimental Tropical Forests are:

To provide information to land managers so they can better restore, preserve and sustainably manage native tropical forests, streams, and entire watersheds.

Become a center for demonstration, education, training and outreach on tropical forestry, conservation biology, and natural resources management;

Provide sites dedicated to long-term research on tropical forestry, ecology, hydrology, conservation biology, and natural resource management; and

(More)

Promote cooperation and collaboration between state and federal agencies, universities and other institutions involved in Hawaiian tropical forest research and education

Serve as an early warning signal detecting how global climate change may affect Hawaii's forest and water resources.

The designated sites encompass remarkable gradients of climate, forest, soils and resource history, and will be among the most unique experimental forests on earth.

The Laupahoehoe forest site is about 12,343 acres and contains magnificent examples of wet forest and rainforest ecosystems. It is also home to many endangered plant and animal species. Located upslope of former sugarcane lands, the site also contains timber plantations, degraded pastures and numerous streams. Its location and size make it an ideal global location for global climate change research studies of native forest restoration, invasive species control, and watershed management

The Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a site, is about 38,885 acres, and is a tropical dry forest, which is among the world's most endangered forest types. There are no other experimental tropical dry forests in the U.S. and very few worldwide. Research at this site will focus on overcoming barriers to dry forest re-establishment, restoring rare and endangered species, halting wildfires, controlling invasive species, and managing wildlife.

In selecting the Big Island sites, DLNR and the Forest Service officials considered several scientific, ecological and administrative factors. They also held public meetings and worked with other state and federal agencies. Other participants included the University of Hawai'i, the Hawai'i Association of Conservation Districts, Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a Advisory Council, Natural Area Reserves Commission and local residents.

Evolution of the Hawaii Tropical Experimental Forest

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Hawai'i Tropical Forest Recovery Act (Public Law 102-574, 1992), to promote the recovery of Hawai'i tropical forests.

The act brought recognition of the value that Hawai'i tropical forests provide to the nation. It authorized the establishment of the Hawai'i Experimental Tropical forest to serve as a center for long-term research and a focal point for developing and transferring knowledge and expertise for the management of tropical forests.

On February 24, 2006, the Board of Land and Natural Resources approved the report of findings for the establishment of the Hawai'i Experimental Tropical Forest and recommended to the Governor the establishment of the Hawai'i Experimental Tropical Forest on approximately 12,343 acres of state lands of Laupahoehoe Natural Area Reserve and Laupahoehoe Forest Reserve in Hamakua, Hawai'i and 38,885 acres in the ahupua'a of Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a, Kona.

The Board also gave its approval for the Department to develop a memorandum of agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to establish and administer the proposed sites as the Hawai'i Experimental Tropical Forest.

Governor Linda Lingle concurred with the recommendations of the Board, and on March 6, 2006, transmitted the report of findings and state recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture and requested he take the necessary actions to establish the first experimental forest in Hawai'i at Laupahoehoe and Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a.

The Hawai'i Tropical Forest Recovery Act provided that the Secretary shall, at the request of the Governor, establish and administer the Hawai'i Experimental Tropical Forest in Hawai'i.

DLNR and the Forest Service met and consulted with affected communities, the Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a Advisory Council, the Natural Area Reserves Commission and respective staffs to develop the cooperative agreement. The language and form were jointly developed with the assistance of a federal solicitor and Deputy Attorney General.

The cooperative agreement was signed by DLNR's chairperson Peter Young and the Chief of the Forest Service Dale Bosworth in December 2006.

The 12,343-acre Laupahoehoe Experimental Forest in North Hilo and 38,885-acre Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a Experimental Forest in North Kona were formally established on state land when a federal register notice (72 F.R. 13740) was published, on March 23, 2007, in which the Secretary of Agriculture designated the units of the Hawaii Experimental Tropical Forest

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