

PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN – ACTION COMMITTEE
Malama I ka `Aina Subcommittee
Report for AC meeting of July 15, 2010

Malama I ka `Aina Subcommittee considers the waste water issue in Puna Makai to be of great importance, but simply has not found time to gather sufficient information to prepare even a preliminary action plan to deal with the issue. We intend, however, to sharpen the focus of our discussion on long term solutions to the impact of human settlement on deterioration of water quality. We understand the focus often shifts toward promoting a waste water treatment facility for the Kapoho Beach Lots settlement, but we intend to consider this as merely an alternative to mitigating the problem of water contamination. We must bring into our discussions the sustainability and cost benefit of a fixed water treatment facility, situated in an unstable environment which is unusually near to sea level. We recognize our proposed action item title specifies a waste water treatment facility for Kapoho Beach Lots, but intend to explore the greater issues of deteriorating water quality resulting from human settlement upon a highly fluid aquifer, with the understanding that a waste water treatment facility is a problematic alternative.

The Subcommittee reports progress toward formulating an action plan for a Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone for the Volcano Community. On July 8th a meeting of interested persons was held in Volcano to review the Steering committee Working Group report on this issue, and to make changes that might be necessary. The Subcommittee found no fault with the Working Group paper, and added four additional items to be considered in a BRBZ. The summary of the subcommittee meeting is appended to this report.

These two issues constitute our recommendation for the two highest priority action items, and submit these as our proposals for Priorities #1 and #2.

Other proposed action items remain as previously indicated:

- #3: Enable funding for the County Cultural Resources Commission
- #4: Assemble a working group to develop a shore area management program
- #5: Implement special zoning and development controls for Kapoho shore area that will mitigate subsidence issues
- #6: Prepare a comprehensive watershed management plan for the volcano village to Mountain View and Hawaiian Acres to Orchidland areas to address localized flooding
- #7: Amend the County grading ordinance to require consultation with the Historic Preservation Division and County Historic Preservation Commission prior to the issuance of a grading permit
- #8: Amend the county bulding code in order to accommodate traditional Hawaiian building design and construction methods for structures not intended for dwellings\

--Dan Taylor, subcommittee chair

PCDP – Malama I ka `Aina Subcommittee – BRBZ issue
Cooper Center, Volcano
Summary of the meeting on July 8, 2010

Present: Renate Gassmann, Kim Tavares, Marilyn Nichol森, Diane Ware, Fred Fogel, Dan Taylor (Chairperson)

Purpose of the meeting: Review Working Group Summary of Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone issue and define next steps forward toward County designation

Purpose of the BRBZ

- a) Support national park's MAB designation (International Biosphere Reserve)
 - avoid isolation of park's ecosystem from mesic forests of Puna
 - enhance value of park's attraction to visitors
 - enhance value of Pu'u Maka'ala and Kahauale'a NARs
- b) Enhance quality of the living environment of Volcano and greater Puna
 - highlight native Hawaiian forest in an environment dominated by humans
 - avoid trend toward high density, suburban environment
 - promote Puna mauka as a highly desirable destination for visitors and residents

Process

- a) Secure formal designation for a Volcano BRBZ by County Ordinance
- b) Acceptance by nomination to National Commission for UNESCO for formal inclusion

Goals

- a) Retain natural forest ecosystem in settled areas in order to protect biological linkages to the park and to neighboring NARs
- b) Guide development for Volcano and vicinity

Objectives

- a) Secure formal County designation by (date)_____?
- b) Select local oversight board or commission, who will:
 - Oppose subdividing parcels into smaller units
 - Promote retention of native forest canopy throughout Volcano
 - Minimize building density
 - Promote consolidation of parcels of natural forest through creative planning tools, such as redistributing density, Transfer of Development Rights, etc

Recommendations (from Working Group list)

- a) Establish Special District designation for Volcano BRBZ (Ordinance by County Council)
- b) Refuse applications for subdividing forested parcels (Planning Director)
- c) Refuse new permits for grading and grubbing
- d) Secure property tax break for compliant land owners (Dir of Finance)
- e) Incorporate TDR, land pooling (or other land transfer means) into County Planning code

- f) Refuse permits to change zoning toward higher density or more intensive land use
- g) Prohibit removal of mature native trees or stands for other-than-normal homestead development
- h) Establish standards for building footprint (as in VCA [Building in the Forest Brochure](#))
- i) Phase out cesspool and leach field septic systems for waste water ; promote alternative systems, such as composting toilets, central waste water treatment, etc.
- j) Enable process for small scale development without having to obtain special permits, as in locally planned Village Center design
- k) Develop a comprehensive flood water management plan
- l) Consider converting unencumbered State land East of Wright Road (behind Cooper Ctr) to be added to NAR system

Additional recommendations (from Subcommittee)

- m) Secure support from Volcanoes National Park
- n) Secure support from Councilman Enriques
- o) Forestall intrusive commercial development, such as upward-directed night lighting, noise, annoying odors, unsightly vistas or degrading existing vistas, etc.
- p) Disclose BRBZ status to prospective land buyers

Discussion

Chairperson Taylor would discuss with County Planning Assistant, Larry Brown, procedures for moving this agenda forward. It was learned on July 13 that County will encourage development of an action plan through a worksheet format, and that this procedure will apply to all action items that come from this and other subcommittees. The Action Plan will describe the proposed action in brief, the anticipated sequence of steps that will be required and actions needed to proceed, and will identify progress indicators, lead and supporting partners, anticipated timeframe for each action, and who will undertake each action item.

Next meeting of the subcommittee will articulate the immediate steps that need to be undertaken and assign responsibilities. We will henceforth be identified as the Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone Subcommittee, and understand participation will vary depending on the stage of progress. Two of the earliest tasks will be to formally notify Councilman Enriques and Superintendent Orlando of our intent and to seek their support for this action and to support any of their interests that are related. In the case of Councilman Enriques, we will propose that he sponsor a Resolution before the County Council in support of a BRBZ for the greater Volcano community, as described in the Puna Community Development Plan.

In addition, the BRBZ subcommittee will hear a summary from AC member, Tim Tunison, about BRBZ in mainland areas where formal designation has been achieved, and how we might learn from these areas how to best proceed.

Next meeting might be in late-August or early-September, when both Taylor and Tunison are back from summer travels and have had time to collect more information.