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GOVERNOR | KE KIAʻĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIAʻĀINA

DEPT. COMM. NO. 248

STATE OF HAWAIʻI | KA MOKUʻĀINA ʻO HAWAIʻI
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA ʻOIHANA KUMUWAIWAI ʻĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

December 2, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,
President
and Members of the Senate
Thirty- Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura, Speaker
and Members of the House of
Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

For your information and consideration, I am transmitting a copy Hawaii Statewide Trail and Access System “Na Ala Hele” report as required by Section 198D-9, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). In accordance with Section 93-16, HRS, a copy of this report has been transmitted to the Legislative Reference Bureau and the report may be viewed electronically at https://files.hawaii.gov/dlnr/reports-to-the-legislature/2026/FW26-NAH-Report-FY25.pdf

Sincerely,

DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson

Enclosure

REPORT TO THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
STATE OF HAWAIʻI
2026 REGULAR SESSION

HAWAIʻI STATEWIDE TRAIL AND ACCESS SYSTEM
"NĀ ALA HELE"

Prepared by:

THE STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE

Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program

In response to Section 198D-9, Hawaiʻi Revised Statutes

Honolulu, Hawaiʻi

December, 2025

HAWAIʻI STATEWIDE TRAIL AND ACCESS SYSTEM

"NĀ ALA HELE"

INTRODUCTION

The Hawaiʻi Statewide Trail and Access Program, known as Nā Ala Hele (NAH), was created in 1988. Section 198D-2, HRS, directs DLNR to plan, develop, and acquire land or rights for public use, as well as to build, restore, and coordinate efforts to implement a trail and access system in Hawaii. The program operates within the DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife. This report has three sections:

- Program Functions
  - Staffing
  - Funding

- Program Highlights
  - Maintenance Activities
  - Volunteers
  - American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding
  - Administrative Rules Revision
  - Nā Ala Hele Program Plan Update
  - Other Capital Improvement Projects
  - 2025 Legislative Session

- Looking Ahead

This report addresses the requirements of the Nā Ala Hele Program's enabling legislation. NAH falls under the Outdoor Recreation Section of the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, which oversees a broader range of responsibilities, including trails, roads, and other recreational facilities that are not officially designated as NAH program features.

PROGRAM FUNCTIONS

STAFFING

Professional level staffing through FY25 included:

- Forester VI, Statewide Program Manager
- Abstractor VII (Vacant)
- Trail and Access Specialist V (4 - one each for the Kauaʻi, Oʻahu, Maui, and Hawaiʻi Branches)
- Trail and Access Specialist IV (4 - one each for the Kauaʻi, Oʻahu (vacant), Maui, and Hawaiʻi Branches)

- Forestry and Wildlife Technician (4 - one each for the Kauaʻi, Oʻahu, Maui, and Hawaiʻi Branches)

Across the state, available labor for program maintenance and management work is handled in different ways at the Branch level:

- Hawaiʻi Branch has labor available one week per month through the Branch Operations Section. This includes three work crews of three to four staff members each, led by a crew leader (Forestry and Wildlife Worker III) and supported by crew staff (Forestry and Wildlife Worker II). Additionally, mechanized heavy equipment operators and professional carpentry staff are available for program project needs.
- On the Maui Branch, five Forestry and Wildlife Worker II positions are part of the Outdoor Recreation/NAH section. They work directly under the supervision of the Forestry and Wildlife Technician.
- On the Oʻahu Branch, there is one Forestry and Wildlife Worker III and one Forestry and Wildlife Worker II position, both working directly under the Trail and Access Specialist V. Assistance from other Division programs, including Forestry, Wildlife, and Native Ecosystem Protection and Management, is available as needed.
- On the Kauaʻi Branch, there is one General Laborer position in the Outdoor Recreation/NAH section, working directly under the Trail and Access Specialist V. Additional Forestry and Wildlife Workers III and II, one of each, are assigned to the program from the Branch Operations Section administratively.

FUNDING

Federal funding for the NAH currently comes from the Federal Highways Administration's Recreational Trails Program, which is supported by national fuel tax dollars. Funding allocated to the states is distributed based on a set formula. In FY25, Hawaiʻi's share was $950,859.

The program also receives funding from state fuel tax dollars, fees for commercial use, camping fees, and donations. In FY25, this amounted to $270,000.

$2,000,000 in general funds is allocated in the LNR804 budget line item for FY25 specifically to support trails and access, projects and programs. Below is a breakdown of how the funds were used for specific projects:

- $108,680 for contract services for planning efforts to bring trails on Hawaiʻi Island to sustainable trail standards at Makāula-ʻOʻoma Trails, Koaiʻa Tree Sanctuary Loop Trail, and Kalōpā Trails. Also includes planning for a new trail within the Koaiʻa corridor, just outside Waimea, Hawaiʻi Island. Anticipated plan completion November 2025.
- $150,000 for contract services to develop final plans and designs for the Pololū parking and lookout area at the "Mule Station" parcel.

- $752,193 for contract services encumbered for major repair and regrading of the Waikamoi Ridge Trail, Maui, to bring it up to Sustainable Trail Standards. Anticipated repair completion June 2026.
- $160,000 for contract services to develop a comprehensive trail plan for the Kamehamenui Forest Reserve, Maui. Anticipated plan completion is June 2026.
- $138,217 for contract services to remove hazardous trees along various trails on Maui, especially in the Kula and Waikamoi areas.
- $84,678 for contract services to clear roads and trails on various Oʻahu trails, especially on Poamoho Road access and Honouliuli Road and Trail.
- $25,075 for contract services to produce safety, hazard warning, and orientation signs to be installed on various Oʻahu trails.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

Routine trail maintenance activities continue across Nā Ala Hele and other recreation program features throughout the state, including trails used for hiking, mountain biking, and horse riding, as well as roads, off-highway vehicle parks, and mountain bike parks. The Division of Forestry and Wildlife recreational trail inventory currently lists over 1,600 trails and roads (features), with 167 of those officially designated as Nā Ala Hele program features.

Maintenance needs are ongoing. The Division continues to develop sustainable maintenance standards for quality and frequency. A mix of contract and in-house services is used for routine work and to respond quickly to storm damage, blowdown tree removal, and other urgent needs.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers continue to be a valuable resource for maintenance and restoration efforts on program assets. Highlights include:

- A small but dedicated group of volunteers leads maintenance and restoration efforts on specific trails on Kauaʻi.
- Multiple volunteer groups have assisted in maintaining trails on Oʻahu, including: Hawaiʻi Ultra Race Team (HURT), Hawaiʻi Trail and Mountain Club (HTMC), Honolulu Hiking Club (HCC), Kapiolani Community College Ecology Club, Makiki WAI Group, Independent Energy, Halau Ku Mana, Air Force 735 AMS, Lyon Arboretum, and KUPU.
- Dedicated volunteers on Hawaiʻi Island organize and oversee maintenance of the Upper Waiākea OHV Park, the Kulanihākoʻi Mountain Bike Park, and the ʻOʻoma-Makāula Trails.

- Trail maintenance, vegetation management, and conservation/restoration work at multiple sites in Maui, including the popular Waiheʻe Ridge Trail in West Maui and Kahakapao Recreation Area in the Makawao Forest Reserve.

The program used RTP funding to hire Volunteer Coordinators at each Branch to manage volunteers statewide.

The island-specific reports submitted by Branch staff are appended to this report for further details.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING (Continued from FY24)

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), managed by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), allocated a total of $3 billion to help communities across the country recover and rebuild stronger by accelerating the economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and developing local economies that can withstand future economic shocks. Funding through ARPA was distributed to each state based on a per capita formula, and the governor of each state had the authority to decide which state agency would receive and oversee the funds locally.

The funding was distributed through six different types of grant opportunities, and the EDA issued Notices of Funding Opportunities, or NOFOs, for each. One of these was the Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation NOFO. The Department prepared a presentation for the Governor expressing our strong belief that DLNR would be the suitable agency to receive and manage this funding, which for Hawaiʻi was $14.2 million. The Governor decided to have the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism oversee the funding through the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority. Part of the decision included a directive for the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority to collaborate with DLNR in developing a series of proposed projects and to share the funding.

DLNR and HTA formed a working group, led in part by NAH staff for DLNR, and collaborated with other Divisions within the Department to develop project proposals. Through a careful and thorough process, working closely with our partners at the HTA, we finalized a series of projects and created a Grant Application Package. Funding from this grant is available through December 2026.

Several projects eventually approved by the EDA for funding are Nā Ala Hele-driven, including:

- **Nā Manu ʻElele Stewards Program $3,850,000 Statewide**
    - This program employs 20 paid stewards statewide, hired through our close partnership with KUPU. They will be stationed at popular trailheads and other key locations to provide information on local cultural and natural resources, health and safety for both users and resources, monitor user numbers and trail or resource conditions, and promote proper user

behavior. Nā Ala Hele oversees this program. ***NOTE: This program will need to secure new funding to continue beyond December 2026.***

- **Nāpuʻu Recreation Plan $400,000 Hawai'i Island**
  - Funding for this plan will enable contracting professional planners to develop a recreation-specific plan for lands managed by the Division of Forestry and Wildlife. These lands include two large, neighboring ahupua'a on Hawai'i Island, Pu'u Anahulu and Pu'u Wa'awa'a, which together cover over 110,000 acres of state land.
- **Ala Kahakai Interpretive Plan $300,000 Hawai'i Island**
  - Funding will be allocated to hire a consultant to develop a comprehensive Interpretive Plan in collaboration with communities and descendants within the Ala Kahakai Trail Corridor, in coordination with the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail. It will include template and content design for interpretive signage, digital content, and other features.
- **Statewide Trail Capacity Study $1,100,000 Statewide**
  - Increased use of program features strains resources and nearby communities. Data on current usage, acceptable change limits, tangible community impacts, and other socio-environmental factors are essential for effective resource protection, management, and planning. This study, conducted by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Natural Resources and Environmental Management Program, aims to create decision tools for statewide trail management. These tools will help determine use capacity based on natural and socio-environmental factors, along with standardized methods to evaluate resource conditions, user satisfaction, and community support for trail resources.

The EDA grant also funded projects in DLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources and Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement.

Additionally, Nā Ala Hele staff at the Hawai'i Branch secured a $600,000 competitive grant to improve the Nā Manu ʻElele Stewards Program on Hawaiʻi island.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES REVISION

This effort is ongoing, and we look forward to completing this critical process in FY26.

PROGRAM PLAN UPDATE

Several years ago, the Legislature approved $450,000 in funding for a Capital Improvement Project to hire a planning firm to update the 1991 Nā Ala Hele Program Plan. In the second half of FY23, Governor Ige released the funds, and NAH secured PBR Hawaiʻi as its planning consultant for this project. Work plan development began, with Program staff working closely with PBR Hawaiʻi to design a process that will run

through 2026 and ultimately present a revised Program Plan for review and approval by the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

A thorough and thoughtful information-gathering process has been developed and launched, taking a gradual approach to engaging agency and community stakeholders and partners, including:

- Questionnaires and/or interviews with DLNR leadership, division heads, and forestry and wildlife professional and technical staff.
- Other agency partners that interact with the Program. Among them:
  - Federal Highways Administration
  - Hawai‘i Department of Transportation
  - Hawai‘i Tourism Authority
  - Other public and private agencies and landowner stakeholders
- Island Advisory Council members.
- Targeted individuals with historical and current knowledge of the program.

Following this initial phase will be:

- Legislator briefings.
- A public engagement process that includes a stakeholder database, website and mapping tools, and community meetings.
- A compilation of all this effort into an Existing Conditions Analysis and a Financial and Organizational Staffing Analysis.
- Lastly, Draft and Final Plan Update development, vetting, completion, and submittal to the BLNR for consideration of approval.

The updated plan provides the program with a solid, modern framework for the next decade, including a scheduled update.

OTHER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- **Pololū Trailhead Planning, Hawai‘i Island**
  - $500,000. Townscape Inc. has completed its initial community outreach to help identify options for managing the significant increase in visitor traffic to this trail. This planning and outreach effort is ongoing. The final Environmental Assessment and Plan are available at this website: https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/recreation/nah/hawaii/pololu-planning-project/
- **Ka‘iwa Ridge (Lanikai Pillbox) Trail Master Plan and Environmental Assessment**
  - Total funding amounts to $1,300,000: $400,000 allocated for planning and compliance, and $900,000 for construction. These funds were designated to develop a Master Plan and Environmental Assessment aimed at improving the Ka‘iwa Ridge Trail, also known as the Lanikai Pillbox Trail, in Windward O’ahu. The Plan and EA are completed and have been

reviewed for approval and publication in the OEQC Environmental Review. This begins the public review and comment period. Afterward, we will prepare to submit the Plan for approval by the Board of Land and Natural Resources. More information about this plan and EA is available at: https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/recreation/home/ka%CA%BBiwa-ridge-trail-management-plan/

OTHER PLANNING AND ACCESS INITIATIVES

- **Kamehamenui addition to the Kula Forest Reserve, Maui**
  - A planning effort has been ongoing to develop various recreation opportunities for the recently acquired 3,400-acre extension to the Kula Forest Reserve in the ahupua'a of Kamehamenui. Private funding is being used to create this plan, with community input. This remarkable property ranges from approximately 3,700 feet in elevation in Kula to nearly 9,500 feet near the summit of Haleakalā. The long-range plan includes protecting high-quality ecosystems at upper elevations, reforesting former pasturelands, and establishing a robust recreation component, including hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails for public use.
- **Historic Trail Access, Maui**
  - Staff on Maui continue to collaborate with private landowners on issues regarding ownership of public trust resources, primarily historic trails and pathways protected by law as public trails. Two of these have been particularly active recently, and NAH staff is actively working with the Department of the Attorney General to ensure those public resources stay accessible. They include:
    - Hoʻolawa Trail on the north side of Maui.
    - Haleakalā Bridle Trail on the upper west slope of Haleakalā.
  - The legal process is progressing smoothly, and the historical evidence remains clear.
  - Ensuring legal access to these historic pathways is a core part of the Nā Ala Hele program's mission, and we are dedicated to protecting these routes for public use.

- **Forest Reserve Access, Moloaʻa, Kauaʻi**
  - Similarly, NAH staff is working with a private landowner on Kauaʻi, in the Moloa'a area on the eastern side of Kaua'i, where title documents require public access to nearby Forest Reserve lands. However, the title language is vague regarding the specific alignment. NAH staff is collaborating with the Department of the Attorney General to find a resolution.

These ongoing efforts are a key part of Nā Ala Hele's main mission – to protect and preserve valuable community resources for everyone's enjoyment and use.

2025 LEGISLATURE

New recurring funding of $2,000,000 annually was included in the FY24-25 budgets, along with four new positions for the Program. Those positions include:

- Three new Trail and Access IV positions for the Kauaʻi, Oʻahu, and Maui Branches.
- One new Forestry and Wildlife Technician IV position for the Kauaʻi Branch.

The 2023 legislature reinstated a previously eliminated Forestry and Wildlife Technician IV position for the Oʻahu Branch. As of now, all these positions have been filled and will bring the program staff on the branches to a level comparable across the state, with two professionals and one technician on each branch.

LOOKING AHEAD

We continue to make progress with several large, multi-year projects:

- Administrative Rules Update.
- Program Plan Update, ongoing with an anticipated completion date of December 2026.
- EDA-funded projects, such as the multi-year Trail Capacity Study and the Nā Manu ʻElele Stewards Program.
- Hiring Volunteer Coordinators at each branch to enhance the positive impacts volunteers have, not just in their work but also in building community.

Collaborating with others to ensure resource protection, public access and use, working with the Department of the Attorney General to resolve legal challenges satisfactorily, and partnering with the visitor industry to develop and nurture relationships—aiming to improve mutual awareness of each other's missions and goals while ensuring resources are protected—remains a top priority.

The NAH program continues to work with DLNR's Human Resources Office to complete the delegated reorganization process, which enables the recruitment and hiring of six newly approved positions. This will help build the professional staff capacity essential for this vital public resource management program. The new staffing will greatly assist in safeguarding resources and encouraging responsible public use.

Respectfully submitted by:

Outdoor Recreation | Nā Ala Hele

DLNR, Division of Forestry and Wildlife

ISLAND REPORTS:

FY2025 Hawai‘i Island Update:

During Fiscal Year 2025, the Hawai‘i Island Branch is halfway through major planning projects. Full implementation of the Nā Manu ‘Elele Trail Stewards Program, trail surveys, access improvements, and maintenance of historic and program trails has been completed. The Hawai‘i Island Branch increased its engagement with the community through events and volunteer opportunities. An increased number of personnel, staffed through Kupu and RCUH programs, played a central role in many achievements this fiscal year; however, these positions are grant-funded, and the future capacity of the program remains uncertain. A key position within the Hawai‘i Island Branch, the Trails and Access Specialist, has been filled after several hiring delays. The Hawai‘i Island Advisory Council continues to provide invaluable guidance to the Branch.

Overall, this year's planning and preparation projects will enable the Hawai‘i Island Branch to offer many new or improved recreation opportunities for the public in the coming years.

Planning Projects

To gather community input and encourage thoughtful, community-supported decisions for managing public trails and recreation resources, the Hawai‘i Island Branch has concentrated on developing formal plans for the following:

Pololū Trailhead Management Plan

Funded by Capital Improvement Project (B-20-479 20112013-LNR)



A CROWD OF VISITORS GATHERS AT THE VALLEY OVERLOOK AT POLOLŪ TRAILHEAD

Pololū Valley, Trail, and Trailhead in North Kohala have long faced challenges from heavy visitor traffic. However, overcrowding at the sacred site reached a critical point in recent years, with nearly 1,500 visitors in a single day — a new high. The Pololū Trailhead Management Plan is being developed in partnership with the North Kohala community to address issues caused by high visitation. Planning services were contracted through Townscape, Inc., to help engage the community during the planning process and to create the formal Management Plan. Extensive community involvement and communication laid a strong foundation throughout FY23 and FY24. In FY25, the planning was finalized, resulting in the final Pololū Trailhead Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, which can be viewed at the link below: Pololū Trailhead Management Plan website.

Pololū Trailhead Engineered Plans and Designs

Funded by FY25 LNR804



VIEW FROM THE "MULE STATION" AREA, TO BE THE NEW LOOKOUT AND PARKING AREA.

Funds for the final plans and designs to implement the Pololū Trailhead management plan were allocated in FY25, and the plans will be completed by June 2026. These plans will incorporate the recommendations from the 2025 Management Plan and EA to create a shovel-ready plan for the donated "Mule Station" Parcel. ***Construction funds will need to be secured to implement and finalize this project.***

Nāpuʻu Recreation Plan

Funded by U.S. Economic Development Administration, American Rescue Plan Act grant



FIGURE 1 LOCAL CUB SCOUTS HIKE THE POPULAR TRAIL UP TO THE TOP OF PUʻUWAʻAWAʻA.

The Branch hired a professional planning firm, Forest Solutions Inc., to develop a recreation-specific plan for the Puʻuwaʻawaʻa Forest Reserve and Puʻuʻuanahulu Game Management Area, collectively known as Nāpuʻu, which covers over 110,000 acres of state land. This project will include analysis and research, involvement of the public, stakeholders, and community members, creation of the recreation plan, interpretive and signage planning, and environmental compliance review. The plan will evaluate the feasibility and appropriateness of recreation activities such as hiking, backpacking, car camping, cabin camping, equestrian activities, mountain biking, four-wheel driving, and off-highway vehicles, working collaboratively with the descendants' ʻohana of the area.

Nā Manu ʻElele Program

Funded by U.S. Economic Development Administration, American Rescue Plan Act grant

The Nā Manu ʻElele Steward Program is a statewide partnership between Kupu, a nonprofit focused on conservation and environmental workforce development, and DLNR, with grant funding through December 2026 from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The program aims to educate and connect people with Hawaiʻi's cherished *wahi pana*—its legendary places and natural sites. In December 2023, Hawaiʻi Island welcomed its first group of Nā Manu ʻElele Stewards to trails across the island, including Pololū Trail, Puʻu Huluhulu Trail, Puʻu ʻŌʻō Trail, Kaulana Manu Trail, Kaūmana Trail, Onomea Trail, Donkey Trail, and Puna Trail. The Hawaiʻi Island Branch also managed the statewide implementation of the program. A major goal in the upcoming fiscal year will be to secure ongoing funding for the program.



A NĀ MANU ʻELELE STEWARD EDUCATES VISITORS BEFORE THEY BEGIN THE HIKE INTO POLOLŪ VALLEY.

Funding to continue this program past December 2026 needs to be identified.

Koaiʻa, Kalōpā, and Makāula-ʻOʻoma Trail rehabilitation.

Funded by FY25 LNR804

This planning involved working with experts in sustainable trail design to realign these three trail networks. The goal of this project is to:

- Plan the realignment of the Koaiʻa Loop Trail. This involves flagging the new route on the ground so crews can implement it. (completed)
- Plan the realignment of the Makāula-ʻOʻoma Trail Network. This involves marking the realignment on the ground to prepare for crews to execute. (completed)
- Plan the realignment of the Kalōpā Trail Network, including marking the new route on-site for crews to follow. (expected completion November 2025)
- Develop a design plan for a new mountain-bike trail upslope from the Koaiʻa Loop Trail, located below the Puʻu o ʻUmi NAR. This plan may include flagging and a high-resolution GPS track of the new trail for mechanized crews to follow. (expected completion: November 2025)

Once these plans and route flagging are complete, we can deploy our expanding team of volunteers, in-house crews, staff, machine operators, and/or contractors to develop these trail realignments.



TRAIL PLANNERS SURVEY KOAIʻA LOOP TRAIL.

Maintenance of Program Trails and Infrastructure

The Hawaiʻi Island Branch oversees and maintains 75.4 miles of trails, 120.8 miles of unimproved roads, nine campsites, eight composting toilets, and one cabin. FY25 maintenance activities included installing interpretive and hazard signage, applying herbicide, maintaining trail tread, installing boot brushes, removing vandalism, and caring for other infrastructure.

The maintenance of program trails is handled by the Hawaiʻi Island Nā Ala Hele Branch staff. It is primarily done in collaboration with the DOFAW Hawaiʻi Island Branch Operations Section, which, when all positions are filled, includes three work crews of three or four staff members each, with a crew leader (Forestry and Wildlife Worker III) and crew staff (Forestry and Wildlife Worker II).

Off-highway vehicle and mountain bike user organizations, along with other long-term community volunteers, play a vital role in carrying out routine maintenance of recreation features they frequently utilize, such as the Upper Waiākea OHV Park, the Kulanihākoʻi Mountain Bike Park, and the Makāula-ʻOʻoma Trails.



TRAIL CREWS PERFORM MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS TO TRAILS.

Volunteering and Community Engagement

Our RCUH Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator (funded by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program grant) conducts community engagement activities that have helped the Branch expand the program's impact. The Branch has participated in community outreach events and has led guided hikes, volunteer workdays, outdoor education experiences, and presentations, with the following outcomes:

Total Volunteers	197
Total Volunteer Hours	1,200
Volunteer Value*	$44,934

* THE PAY VALUE OF THE VOLUNTEERS WORKING ON THIS PROJECT IS BASED ON THE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME REPORT BY INDEPENDENT SECTOR.

Event Type	# of Events	# of Participants
Outdoor Education Experience	5	340
Guided Hike	3	46
Volunteer Workday	30	183
Community Outreach Event	7	5600
Presentation	6	120



VOLUNTEERS, LED BY NĀ ALA HELE STAFF, WORK TOGETHER TO MAINTAIN A TRAIL.

Staffing

The Hawai‘i Island Branch has three civil service positions: (1) Trail and Access Specialist V, (1) Trail and Access Specialist IV, and (1) Forestry and Wildlife Technician. The Trail and Access Specialist IV position was filled in April 2025. Despite having a small staff, the Hawai‘i Island Branch effectively uses grant funding to supplement staff through nonprofit organizations like Kupu and the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai‘i. The Branch hosts two positions from the Research Corporation, including (1) Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator and (1) GIS Specialist. In FY25, the Branch also hosted two Kupu ‘Āina Corps staff positions.

Advisory Council

The Hawai‘i Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council continued to offer the Branch valuable guidance. For FY25, the Council met five times to discuss trails and access issues, provide recommendations, and offer opportunities for public testimony. A full list of meetings and minutes is available at the link below: Hawai‘i Island Nā Ala Hele Advisory Council website.

FY2025 Maui Nui Update:

Summary

In FY25, the Maui Nā Ala Hele (NAH) program successfully managed and maintained a broad network of 37 recreational trails & access roads totaling 68 miles across Maui Nui.

A new addition during this fiscal year was the clearing of Hanawana Bay Access Trail on the north shore of Maui. This 0.66-mile hike provides access to a beautiful, secluded coastal cove. It also allows users to obtain a permit to park a vehicle inside the gated area.

Waihe'e Ridge Trail continues to be one of the most heavily used hiking-only trails on the island, with the parking lot typically filling before 10 am. Due to rainfall and the steep nature a ridge trail, erosion remains an ongoing challenge that the maintenance crew must regularly monitor and address.

The Kahakapao trail system in Makawao Forest Reserve also experiences substantial multi-use activity from hikers, cyclists, and equestrians. Notably, mountain biking use continues to increase, particularly among youth riders who are new to the sport. Of the three bicycle skills areas at Kahakapao, the most advanced course, Akamai, receives the highest traffic, showing the significant progression of rider skills within Maui's cycling community.

Overall, the Maui Nā Ala Hele program continues to balance recreational access with safety and protection of cultural and natural resources. Monitoring trail conditions, maintaining safe access, and working with community partners remain core priorities.

These efforts supported safe access for hikers, equestrians, and cyclists, while addressing environmental concerns such as erosion and invasive vegetation.



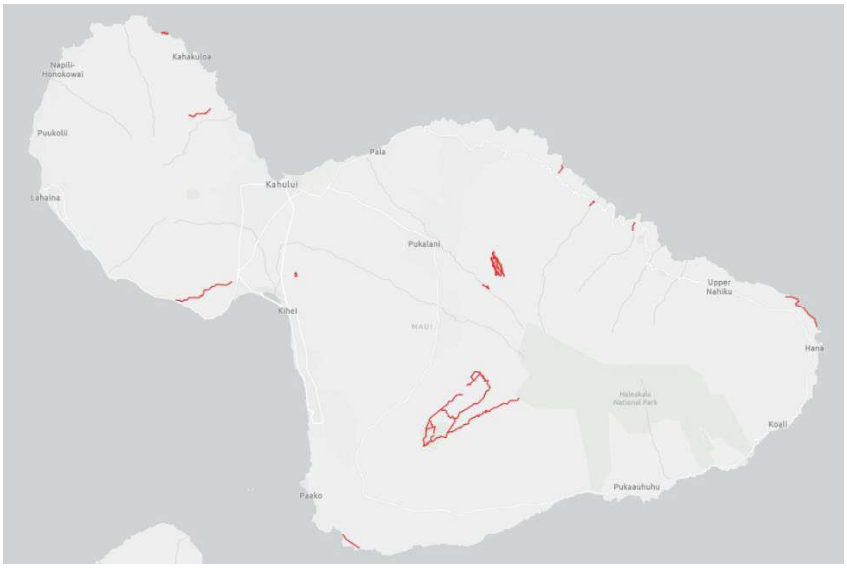
View from Hanawana Bay Access Trail

Personnel

Several hires occurred this fiscal year allowing the program to fill much needed vacant positions. For state civil service positions, Maui's NAH program was able to hire a Trails and Access Specialist II (May 2025), a Forestry and Wildlife Technician IV (May 2025), and two Forestry and Wildlife Worker II positions (December 2024 and February 2025).
Additionally, we filled the two NAH Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) – Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (PCSU) positions for a Trail Community Outreach and Education Associate (June 2025) and a GIS Research / Data Technician (February 2025). An 89-day emergency hire was also employed to fill one of our vacant Forestry and Wildlife Worker II positions (December 2024).

NAH utilized internships to help supplement the workload. A Student Conservation Associate (SCA) intern was sponsored by a generous anonymous donation starting in November 2024, who worked alongside our trail crew. Three Kupu Na Manu Elele positions served for three months from July 2024-September 2024 as trail stewards. Unfortunately, three unfilled Kupu internships remained vacant this year due to a lack of interested candidates through the recruitment periods.

Trail User Mileage Managed



Maui NAH manages 68 miles of vastly diverse trails, split among 37 individual trails. There are

62.86 miles available to hike, 42.03 available to bike, 17.39 miles for equestrian use, and 10.3 miles for off highway vehicle use. Above is a map highlighting the Maui's trails in red with tables below of mileages for each trail and use type. (Note: User types overlap.)

Trail Name	Hiker Miles	Biker Miles	Equestrian Miles	Off Road Vehicle Use Miles	Trail Length Miles
ʻAkahi Skills Area		0.08			0.08
Akamai Skills Area		0.1			0.1
Boundary Trail	3.19	3.19			3.19
Fong Ridge Connector	0.07	0.07	0.07		0.07
Fong Ridge Road	1.8	1.8	1.8		1.8
Haleakalā Ridge Trail	1.2				1.2
Hanawana Bay Access Trail	0.66				0.66
Hoapili Trail	1.33				1.33
Hulopoʻe-Huawai/Fisherman's Trail (Lanaʻi)	1.75				1.75
Kahakapao Loop Trail	4.74	4.74	4.74		4.74
Ke Ala Loa O Maui / Piʻilani Trail	3.44				3.44
Keanae Arboretum Walk	0.56				0.56
Lahaina Pali Trail	4.5				4.5
Lower Waiohuli	1.16				1.16
Māmane Trail	1.25				1.25
Maui Motocross Park				0.5	0.5
Maunahui-Makakupaʻia Road (Molokaʻi)	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8
ʻOhai Loop	1.14				1.14
Paʻahao Road	0.98	0.98	0.98		0.98
Pauma Pump Track		0.2			0.2
Pineapple Express		1.78			1.78
Plum Trail	1.82				1.82
Polipoli Trail	0.59				0.59
Ravine Trail		0.71			0.71
Redwood Trail	1.5				1.5
Renegade Trail		1.47			1.47
Secret Trail		0.2			0.2
Skyline Trail	7.3	7.3			7.3
Tie Trail	0.48				0.48
Tweener Trail	0.22	0.22			0.22
Upper Waiakoa Trail	2.33	2.33			2.33
Upper Waiohuli Trail	3.95	3.95			3.95
Waiakoa Loop Trail	2.43	2.43			2.43
Waiheʻe Ridge	2.15				2.15
Waihou Spring Trail	1.03				1.03
Waikamoi Ridge Trail	0.81				0.81
#5 Access Road	0.68	0.68			0.68
Totals	**62.86**	**42.03**	**17.39**	**10.3**	**67.9**

Program Highlights

1. **Hanawana Bay Access Trail** – Permit Reservation System for Day Use Parking

    - A permit system was setup for reservations to park inside the Koʻolau State Forest Reserve, Hanawana Section on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays between the hours of 6:00 am and 7:00 pm. Access to Hanawana Bay was established by clearing vegetation from an existing access road and signage was installed. A one vehicle parking stall within the parcel allows users to access the gate by an assigned combination, park, and continue to access the bay by hiking a 0.66-mile trail. This has expanded access and recreational opportunities in the area.



Map of Hanawana Bay Access Trail & Access Road (TMK#29011012).

2. **Maui Motorcross Track** – Off Highway Vehicles (S-262)
    - Maui Motorcross Association (MMA) continued to have vandalism at the track due to a damaged, aging fence around the property. Phase 1 of a boundary fence project was completed using 4 feet high hogwire for a total 1,100 feet of fence installed including one drive through vehicular gate. NAH staff continued to support the Maui Motocross Track, including fuel and equipment service.



MMA fence project before and after.

3. **Haleakalā Bridle Trail** – Court mandated orders
    - Two new gates were installed for hiker access to parts of this trail that were obstructed by Haleakalā Ranch's internal fences. Two new trail signs were also installed at both ends of the trail.



Installation of a pedestrian gate and signage at Haleakala Bridle Trail.

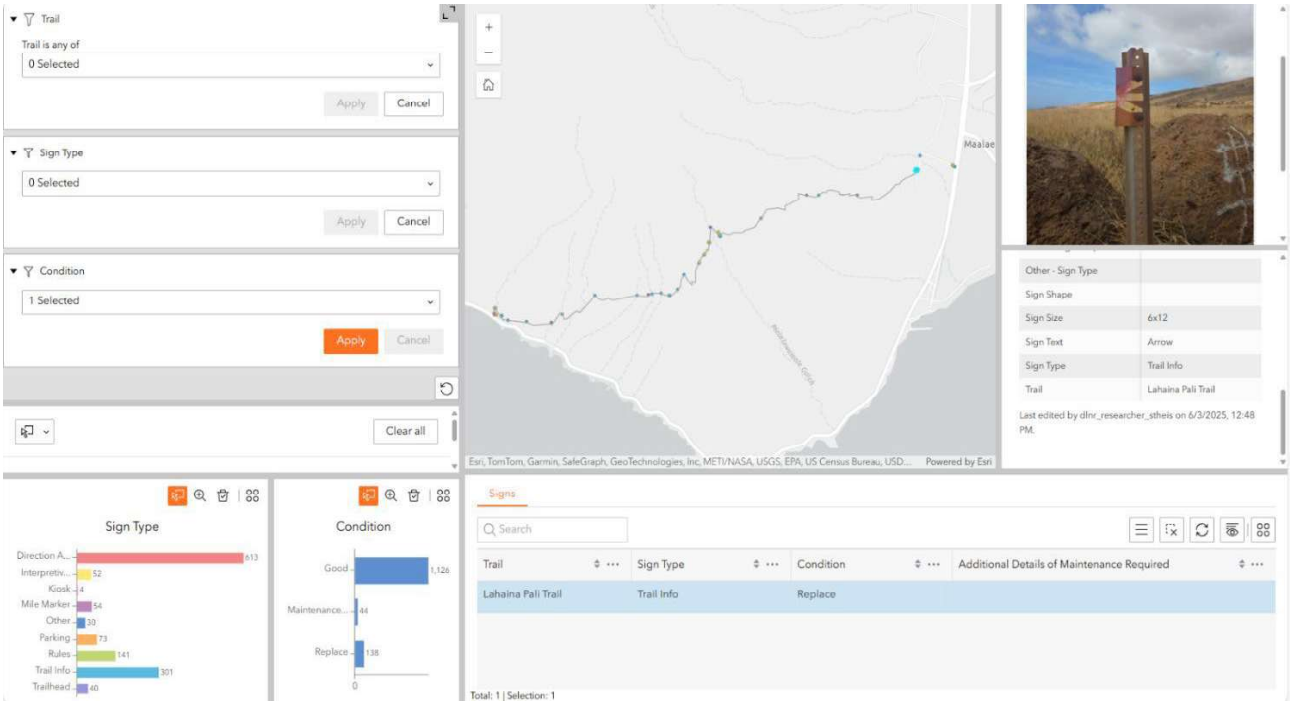
4. **Hoʻolawa Trail** – Metes and bounds survey (G-084)
    - A licensed professional surveyor was contracted to conduct a metes and bounds survey for Hoʻolawa Trail that described the centerline of the trail corridor for the trail to Hoʻolawa Landing that was approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR).

5. **Upper Waiohuli Trail and Māmane Trail Repair** – Kula Forest Reserve (G-084)
    - A severe storm event caused safety hazards and impassible sections on both Upper Waiohuli and Māmane Trails making them unusable by both hikers and bikers. Flow Farm was contracted to repair 3.75 miles of trail to sustainable trail standards.



Flow Farm conducting trail repair in Kula Forest Reserve.

6. **Sign Inventory and Replacement Project** – for all NAH Program Trails (S-262)
    - A Maui wide trail sign inventory was completed collecting geographic information, condition, size, and a photograph of each sign. A total of 1,308 signs were inventoried with 138 in poor/replace condition and 44 in need of maintenance. Information was organized and accessed in a convenient online geodatabase. New signs, along with replacement signs, were created. Deployment of these signs will occur in Fiscal Year 2026.



An online GIS dashboard improves NAH staff's ability to manage signs, featuring quick search options providing location and attribute information simultaneously.

Trail	# Signs Inventoried	# Signs Cleaned	# Signs Installed
ʻAkahi Akahi Skills Area	6		
Akamai Skills Area	4		
Boundary Trail	23		
Haleakalā Bridle Trail			2
Fong Ridge Road	43		
Haleakalā Ridge Trail	11		
Hanawana Bay Access Trail	3		3
Hoapili Trail	21		
Kahakapao Loop Trail	523	7	
Ke Ala Loa O Maui / Piʻilani Trail	14		
Keanae Arboretum Walk	85		
Lahaina Pali Trail	61		2
Lower Waiohuli Trail	12		
Māmane Trail	12		
Mokulēʻia Stair Access	11		
ʻOhai Loop Trail and Overlook	16		
Paʻahao Road	31		
Pauma Pump Track	4		
Pineapple Express	83		
Plum Trail	9		

Polipoli Trail	10		

Ravine Trail	26		
Redwood Trail	23		
Renegade Trail	55		
Secret Trail	8		
Skyline Trail	14		
Tie Trail	5		
Tweener Trail	3		
Upper Waiakoa Trail	15		
Upper Waiohuli Trail	13		
Waiakoa Loop Trail	26		
#5 Access Road	8		
Waiheʻe Ridge Trail	74		
Waihou Spring Trail	27		
Waikamoi Ridge Trail	29		
Grand Total	**1308**	**7**	**7**

Routine Trail Maintenance

Kahakapao Recreation Area – Equestrian, Hiking, and Biking (S-262)

- **Routine trail and corridor maintenance:** 1,161,216 sq ft
- **Tread repaired:** 2,400 sq ft
- **Hazard mitigation:** 118 trees removed.
- **Infrastructure:** 2 access road gates repaired; 7 signs cleaned
- **Narrative:** Kahakapao Recreation Area (KRA) required a large share of resources this year as winter storms caused significant damage to many of the trees. In addition to the routine maintenance, 37 workdays were used to address hazard trees.

  Flow Farm continued its contract to maintain trails within the recreational area, with an emphasis on the biking trails. They provided monthly and quarterly inspections of features making repairs as needed. They visually inspected the riding surfaces for any lumber damage and hazards monthly. Quarterly physical inspections were done on features to find loose boards and hardware that might have loosened from usage. All frame and footing connections were physically inspected annually to ensure the connections remain tight. Any damage that was noted was repaired by them.







Top: Maintenance along Fong Ridge Road to improve erosion. Bottom Left: Common tree damage in KRA obstructing a trail. Bottom Right: Chainsaw work along Kahakapao Loop Trail to clear a hazardous tree.

Kula Forest Reserve – Hiking, Biking, and Motorized

- **Routine trail and corridor maintenance:** 1,423,488 sq ft
- **Tread repaired:** 38,924 sq ft
- **Hazard mitigation:** 82 trees removed.
- **Narrative:** Kula Forest Reserve had a large-scale project to repair many of the trails (including Polipoli, Plum, and Haleakalā Ridge Trails). This not only increased user experience and safety, but also improved emergency responses, with trails wide enough for ATV access. Continuous trail totaling 38,924sq ft of was repaired and

widened using the trail dozer and hand tools to accomplish this goal. Additionally, seven days were allocated working on specific, problematic spot areas using hand tools. Tree damage from winter storms resulted in trail closures until the crew was able to clear the hazard trees.



Waiakoa Loop Trail tread repair before and after.



Root ball from storm damaged tree obstructing Plum trail, before and after.



Trail dozer tread work on Plum Trail in KFR.

Lahaina Pali Trail - Hiking

- **Routine trail and corridor maintenance:** 381,966 sq ft
- **Tread repaired:** 400 sq. ft
- **Erosion mitigation:** 6 controls installed
- **Stairs:** 21 stone steps installed
- **Trash collected:** 74 lbs. collected throughout 4 trips focused on the parking lots that are approximately 12,000 sq ft
- **Narrative:** The Lahaina Pali Trail received extensive corridor and tread maintenance. A notable project was completed during a hands-on training session, which included a new staircase and numerous erosion controls installed near the Lahaina side trailhead. Trash continues to be an ongoing issue in parking lots at both trailheads and requires regular attention.



Staircase project on Lahaina Pali Trail before, during, and after.

ʻOhai Loop Trail - Hiking

- **Routine trail and corridor maintenance:** 94,928 sq. ft.
- **Trash collected:** 17 lbs. (3 trips)
- **Narrative:** Routine corridor maintenance continued. Trash at this trail, particularly in the parking area, continued to be an ongoing issue that required regular visits.

Ke Ala Loa O Maui / Piʻilani Trail - Hiking

- **Routine trail and corridor maintenance:** 287,232 sq. ft.
- **Narrative:** Routine corridor clearing was continued on this trail. A need for improved signage has been identified.

Waiheʻe Ridge Trail - Hiking

- **Routine trail and corridor maintenance:** 193,992 sq. ft.
- **Trash collected:** 23 lbs. (3 trips)
- Waiheʻe Ridge Trail, one of the program's most popular hikes, received routine corridor management and trash collection. A need for significant tread work was identified. Trash in the parking lots has been an ongoing issue, especially at the lower lot; three trips were made solely for trash cleanup.

Waihou Spring Trail - Hiking

- **Routine trail and corridor maintenance:** 126,720 sq. ft.
- **Tread repaired:** 4350 sq. ft.
- **Hazard mitigation:** 33 trees removed
- **Narrative:** Waihou Spring Trail received extensive tread repairs and hazard mitigation efforts due to winter storm damage combined with stress from the 2023 fires.



Storm damage assessment with FEMA after large scale winter storm.





Large trees affected by fire in 2023 have been failing regularly even with the proactive management of removing dead/dying ones.

Waikamoi Ridge Trail - Hiking

- **Routine trail and corridor maintenance:** 101,376 sq. ft.
- **Fence:** 40’ fence installed
- **Narrative:** Routine vegetation maintenance at Waikamoi continued. Additionally, a 40-foot section of fence was installed at one of the lookouts to keep trail users at a safe distance from a steep drop-off. Further trail safety measures are planned for the upcoming year.



Routine corridor maintenance using hedge trimmers.





Section of fence installed at lookout aimed to increase trail safety.

Summary of Trail Maintenance:

	Vegetation Management on Trail				Tread Work		Erosion Control		Facility Vegetation Management			Boundary Management
Trail	Tree Mgt (ft)	Grass Mgt (ft)	Brush Mgt (ft)	Herbicide (sq ft)	Surface Work (sq ft)	Stair Work (steps)	Maintenance	Construction	Parking Lots (sq ft)	Access Road (sq ft)	Picnic Area (sq ft)	Gates or Fencing
Akamai Skills Area			1,320									

Boundary Trail	69,696	29,568	62,304									
Haleakalā Bridle Trail												2 gates installed

Fong Ridge Road	2,640				1,600			2 (rolling grade dips)				
Haleakalā Ridge Trail	8,976				7,500							
Kahakapao Loop Trail	88,704	32,736	2,640									
Kahakapao Recreation Area	12,672			8,256				9 (rolling grade dips)				repaired 2 gates
Ke Ala Loa O Maui / Pi'ilani Trail		39,600	7,920									
Lahaina Pali Trail		87,672			800	21 (install)		6 (rock waterbars)	6,656			
Lower Waiohuli Trail	7,392											
Māmane Trail	9,504		9,504									
Maui Motocross Park												1100' installed + 1 gate
Mokulē'ia Stair Access & Lot		3,512	2,456	1,000								
'Ohai Loop Trail		26,400	13,728	1,157					2,000			
Pa'ahao Road	2,640		3,696									
Pineapple Express	25,344	16,896	8,448		800							
Plum Trail	8,976	17,952	8,967		22,500							
Polipoli Trail	3,168				4,700							
Ravine Trail	2,640											
Redwood Trail	5,280		8,967									
Renegade Trail	13,728	7,762	7,762									
Secret Trail	1,056											
Skyline Trail												
Tie Trail	2,640											
Tweener Trail	1,056											
Upper Waiakoa Trail		21,648			4,224		7					
Waiakoa Loop Trail	36,960	18,058	18,058									
Waihe'e Ridge		33,000		38,016					11,456	76,000		added 2 8' panels

Waihou Spring	5,808	5,438	17,424	13,9392	4,350							
Waikamoi Ridge	3,696	8,448				1 (repair)				21,120	9,000	40' installed
Total	**312,576**	**348,690**	**173,194**	**187,821**	**46,474**	**22**	**7**	**17**	**20,112**	**97,120**	**9,000**	

Total Trail and Corridor Maintenance for FY25:

Trail	Total Square Feet Maintained
ʻAkahi Akahi Skills Area	4,224
Akamai Skills Area	4,224
Boundary Trail	540,672
Fong Ridge Connector	4,224
Fong Ridge Road	76,032
Haleakalā Ridge Trail	101,376
Kahakapao Loop Trail	595,584
Kahakapao Recreation Area Parking Lots	8,256
Ke Ala Loa O Maui / Piʻilani Trail	287,232
Lahaina Pali Trail Parking Lots	1,836
Lahaina Pali Trail	380,160
Lower Waiohuli Trail	50,688
Māmane	54,912
Mokulēʻia Stairs	12,672
ʻOhai Loop Trail	92,928
ʻOhai Loop Trail Parking Lot	2,000
Paʻahao Road	42,240
Pauma Pump Track	8,448
Pineapple Express	228,096
Plum Trail	152,064
Polipoli Trail	25,344
Ravine Trail	29,568
Redwood Trail	63,360
Renegade Trail	126,720
Secret Trail	8,448
Tie Trail	21,120
Tweener Trail	16,896
Upper Waiakoa Trail	194,304
Waiakoa Loop Trail	304,128
#5 Access Road	88,704
Waiheʻe Ridge	185,856
Waiheʻe Ridge Trail Parking & Access Road	8,136
Waihou Spring Trail	126,720
Waikamoi Ridge Trail	101,376
Grand Total	**3,948,548**

Total trail & corridor maintenance was calculated using trail length, average trail width, average corridor cleared, and number of rounds of maintenance. (Example: Plum Trail: 9504'

long x (4' trail width + (2 sides of corridor x 2' width)) average corridor cleared x 2 rounds of maintenance = 152,064 sq ft).

Outreach and Education

Outreach continues to be a vital component in advancing the mission of the Nā Ala Hele program. Through active engagement with the local community, these efforts help raise awareness about the importance of preserving and maintaining Maui's trails and access roads. Outreach initiatives not only encourage volunteer participation and strengthen partnerships with community organizations but also serve as an educational platform for both residents and visitors. By highlighting the ecological and cultural significance of these trails, outreach supports a collective sense of 'aloha 'aina stewardship and provides valuable community feedback that informs ongoing program development.

Outreach for NAH aims to raise public awareness, promote responsible trail use, build partnerships, gather feedback, and foster stewardship among locals and visitors. In contrast, volunteer recruitment focuses on attracting and retaining willing participants to assist with trail maintenance projects and stewardship. Additionally, education provides the public with training and information to improve knowledge and skills related to trail management, conservation, and the responsible use of our public recreational areas.

Educational Presentations				
Date	School	Length of Time (hours)	Number of Participants	Content and Topics
11/7/2024	Kamehameha Preschool	1	30 Students 5 Teachers	DOFAW duties and responsibilities, forest health, Nā Ala Hele trails
11/20/2024	Maui High School	1.25	21 Students 2 Teachers	DOFAW duties and responsibilities, forest health, Nā Ala Hele trails
11/20/2024	Maui High School	1.25	17 Students 2 Teachers	DOFAW duties and responsibilities, forest health, Nā Ala Hele trails
11/20/2024	Maui High School	1.25	32 Students 2 Teachers	DOFAW duties and responsibilities, forest health, Nā Ala Hele trails
11/20/2024	Maui High School	1.25	29 Students 2 Teachers	DOFAW duties and responsibilities, forest health, Nā Ala Hele trails
12/11/2024	Kīhei Elementary School	2	19 Students 2 Teachers	DOFAW duties and responsibilities, forest health, Nā Ala Hele trails

Organizations Contacted for Volunteer/Education

Between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, Nā Ala Hele has actively fostered collaborative relationships with several community organizations to support its mission of environmental stewardships and trail management. Throughout the year, NAH maintained close communication with the Maui Mountain Biking Coalition (MMBC), the Sierra Club, the Mauna Kahālāwai Watershed Partnership (MKWP), Haleakalā Waldorf High School, and Maui's Girl Scout community to coordinate and facilitate meaningful volunteer events. In addition, outreach efforts for educational engagement during Fiscal Year 2025 extended to institutions such as

Kamehameha Schools Maui Preschool, Maui High School, and Kīhei Elementary School, with the goal of promoting environmental awareness and cultivating a sense of kuleana (responsibility) in the next generation.

Organization Name	Type	Purpose of Contact
Maui Mountain Biking Coalition (MMBC)	Community User Group Organization	Volunteer Events
Sierra Club	Environmental NGO	Volunteer Events
Mauna Kahālāwai Watershed Partnership (MKWP)	Conservation Group	Volunteer Events
Haleakalā Waldorf High School	Educational Institution	Volunteer Events
Kamehameha Schools Maui Preschool	Educational Institution	Educational Opportunities
Maui High School	Educational Institution	Educational Opportunities
Kīhei Elementary School	Educational Institution	Educational Opportunities

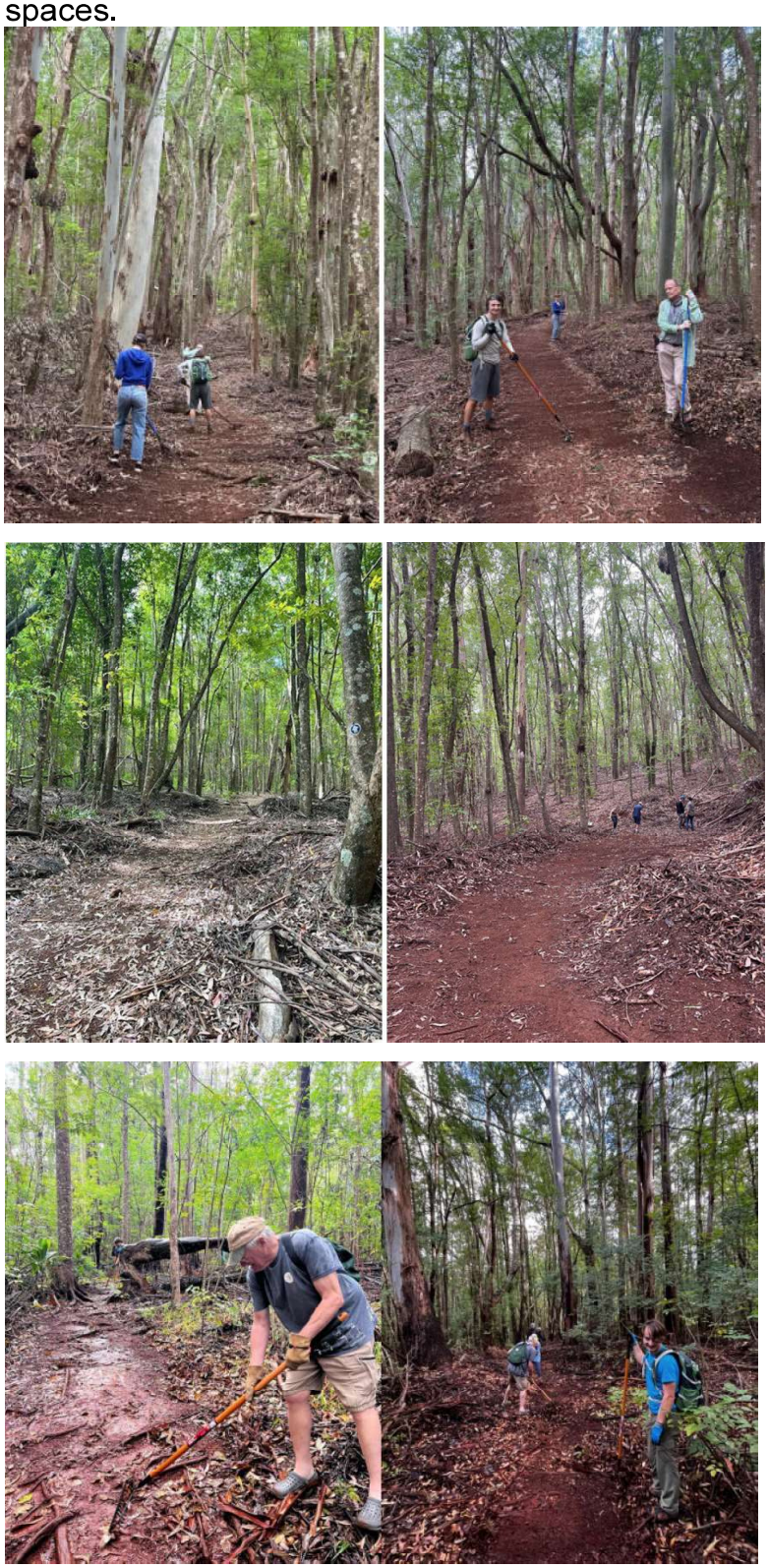
Volunteer Events

Within Maui's expansive trail network, the Kahakapao Recreation Area – located in the heart of the Makawao Forest Reserve – serves as a central hub for mountain biking and outdoor recreation. This area is supported through a strong partnership among the Maui Mountain Biking Coalition (MMBC), the Sierra Club, and Nā Ala Hele (NAH), all working together to preserve and enhance this vital community resource.

Every second Saturday of the month, MMBC and the Sierra Club host volunteer workdays focused on maintaining the area's bike-centric trails and skills features. These monthly events play a crucial role in ensuring the trails remain safe, sustainable, and enjoyable for riders of all skill levels. Both organizations may also host additional events outside of the regular schedule.

Volunteer tasks vary each month and can include raking and clearing trail tread, repairing and compacting pump tracks and jumps, managing overgrown vegetation, and addressing trail grade to improve ride flow and reduce erosion. These efforts not only support ongoing recreation but also promote environmental stewardship and community involvement in one of Maui's most cherished outdoor

spaces.



Volunteer trail work days at Kahakapao Recreation Area.

Outside of the Kahakapao Recreation Area, other volunteer events were conducted on two different trails: the Upper Waiakoa Trail in the Kula Forest Reserve, and the Waiheʻe Ridge Trail in the West Maui Forest Reserve.

On the Upper Waiakoa Trail, volunteers from Haleakalā Waldorf High School participated in traditional trail grade rehabilitation. Their efforts improved trail conditions, reduced erosion risk, and supported long-term trail sustainability in this sensitive upland environment.

At Waiheʻe Ridge Trail, NAH partnered with the Mauna Kahālāwai Watershed Partnership (MKWP) to carry out vegetation management and outplanting of native species. These activities contribute directly to the ecological restoration of the area and enhance the visitor experience by maintaining a healthy and scenic trail corridor.

Together, these projects highlight the ongoing commitment to stewarding Hawaiʻi's natural resources through education, community involvement, and strategic partnerships.



Haleakalā Waldorf High School students performing trail work on Upper Waiakoa Trail in Kula Forest Reserve.

Advisory Council (AC)

During fiscal year 2025, Maui's NAH AC held three island meetings. The current council consists of seven councilmembers and two vacancies.

Ongoing/Recurring Problems

- **Hazard Trees** – Persistent weather-related damage necessitates continual clearing and maintenance on and near trails. Notably, the trails of Kula Forest Reserve, Kahakapao Recreational Area, and Waihou Spring Forest Reserve require the most resources to remain safe.

Trail Name	Large Trees (≥12"diameter) Removed	Small/Medium Trees (<12" diameter) Removed
Boundary Trail	3	3
Kahakapao Loop Trail	54	64
Pineapple Express	13	21
Plum Trail	3	15
Polipoli Trail	1	7
Ravine Trail	1	0
Redwood Trail	6	7
Renegade Trail	3	2
Tie Trail	1	1
Upper Waiakoa Trail	2	0
Waiakoa Loop Trail	9	2
Waihou Spring Trail	23	10
Grand Total	**119**	**132**

- **Trash, Abandoned Vehicles, and Vandalism -** Both Lahaina Pali Trail and Waiheʻe Ridge Trail frequently experience significant amounts of trash in their parking lots, which remains an ongoing problem. Additionally, vehicles at Waiheʻe Ridge Trail have been the target of numerous break-ins and acts of vandalism.

Trail	Pounds of Trash	Number of Site Visits for Trash Pickup
Lahaina Pali Trail	74	4
Mokulēʻia Stairs	9	2
ʻOhai Loop Trail and Overlook	17	3
Waiheʻe Ridge Trail	23	3
Grand Total	**123**	**12**



Abandoned vehicles left at NAH trailheads and parking areas.



Vandalism at Waihe'e Ridge Trail parking lot and gate.

Challenges

- **Staff Shortages** – As the number of trails under management steadily increases, so do the workload and responsibilities placed on our current staff, making it increasingly difficult to meet the growing demands of our trail system. Under current constraints, we cannot continue to manage effectively and beneficially with the available staff and resources. Growth requires proportional increases in staff and budget. More personnel are needed to maintain safety, quality, and efficiency.
- **Equipment Needs** – Modern tools, equipment, and vehicles are essential for safe and efficient operations. Many current machines and equipment are outdated, damaged, or inadequate, which significantly slows fieldwork. Proper resources will lessen staff strain and enhance program results.
- **Wildfire Response –** Brush fires are occurring more frequently, and DOFAW's increased firefighting efforts are strained by limited resources. This has disrupted NAH scheduling, leading to a backlog of work and delays. Routine vegetation and trail maintenance becomes more challenging due to gaps in regular maintenance schedules.

- **Hazard trees** - Storms that cause significant damage tend to impact the entire island. Surveying the NAH trail system, while inspecting for and addressing hazard trees post-storm events, takes time to do safely. A significant amount of trail workdays was spent mitigating hazardous trees. As the forests continue to mature, this will become increasingly challenging.

Trail Name	# Workdays Spent on Hazard Tree Mitigation
Boundary Trail	4
Fong Ridge Road	2
Haleakalā Ridge Trail	2
Hoapili Trail	1
Kahakapao Loop Trail	21
Kahakapao Parking Lots & Access Road	3
Lower Waiohuli Trail	3
Māmane Trail	2
Pa'ahao Road	4
Pineapple Express	9
Plum Trail	6
Polipoli Trail	5
Ravine Trail	2
Redwood Trail	5
Renegade Trail	5
Secret Trail	1
Tie Trail	2
Tweener Trail	1
Upper Waiakoa Trail	1
Upper Waiohuli Trail	1
Waiakoa Loop Trail	7
Waihou Spring Trail	9
Waikamoi Ridge Trail	2
Grand Total	**98**

- **Forest Reserve and Trail Closures** – Storms, landslides, wildfires, and flooding often cause sudden closures that are difficult to anticipate or plan for. Closures prevent residents and visitors from enjoying public lands, reducing opportunities for recreation, cultural practices, and community engagement. Frequent or prolonged closures can cause frustration among community members, leading to dissatisfaction with the program's ability to deliver access.

Trail	Close Date	Open Date	Close Date2	Open Date2	Close Date3	Open Date3	Total Days Closed	Reas
Boundary Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025			34	1. Crater Road F 2. KFR closed infrastructure repairs maintenan
Haleakalā Ridge Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	9/19/2024	10/11/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025	56	1. Crater Road F 2. Trail Maintenan 3. KFR closed infrastructure repairs maintenance wo
Lower Waiohuli Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025			34	1. Crater Road F 2. KFR closed infrastructure repairs maintenance wo
Māmane Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025			34	1. Crater Road F 2. KFR closed infrastructure repairs maintenance wo
Plum Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	9/19/2024	10/11/2024	2/7/2025	5/1/2025	109	1. Crater Road F 2. Trail Maintenan 3. Storm damage, tr maintenan
Polipoli Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025			34	1. Crater Road F 2. KFR closed infrastructure repairs maintenance wo
Redwood Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	2/7/2025	5/1/2025			87	1. Crater Road F 2. Storm Damage, tr maintenan
Skyline Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025			34	1. Crater Road F 2. KFR closed infrastructure repairs maintenance wo
Tie Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	2/7/2025	5/1/2025			87	1. Crater Road F 2. Storm Damage, tr maintenan
Upper Waiakoa Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025			34	1. Crater Road F 2. KFR closed infrastructure repairs maintenance wo
	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025			34	1. Crater Road F

Upper Waiohuli Trail								2. KFR closed infrastructure repair maintenance w
Waiakoa Loop Trail	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025			34	1. Crater Road 2. KFR closed infrastructure repair maintenance w
#5 Access Road	7/12/2024	7/16/2024	4/1/2025	5/1/2025			34	1. Crater Road 2. KFR closed infrastructure repair maintenance w
Akamai Skills Area	7/15/2024	9/1/2024					48	1. Completely rebuilt to increase safety and rider experience
Lahaina Pali Trail	10/28/2024	10/31/2024	#######	11/18/2024			7	1. Lahaina side parking clos 2. Brushfire in Maal
Waihou Spring Trail	1/31/2025	2/18/2025					18	
Keanae Arboretum Walk	10/28/2024	12/1/2024					34	

- **Lack of Sustainable Trail Standards on Existing Trails** – Erosion control is needed on trails with limited equipment access and harsh environments. Steep trails do not follow sustainable trail standards, create difficult work conditions, and require extensive maintenance (ex. Lahaina Pali Trail and Waihee Ridge Trail).

FY2025 O‘ahu Update:

O‘ahu’s NAH program remains committed to maintaining and improving its trail systems while encouraging community participation and environmental responsibility. As recreational use increases, the program is working to boost staff capacity to handle the growth and to address issues related to overuse and misuse of recreational features and facilities.

One challenge is handling the increasing inventory of vital trail maintenance and improvement projects. Trail upkeep remains a top priority, emphasizing public safety and improving the overall user experience. This includes tasks like maintaining directional signs, clearing overgrown vegetation, removing fallen trees, and repairing hazards such as washouts.

Trail maintenance efforts involve a coordinated team of in-house staff, volunteers, and contractors who often face tough conditions—including long hikes with equipment and supplies, bad weather, and the need to protect sensitive native plant habitats along the trails.

Update on Recreation CIP and GIA projects:

- Halemano - RTP S262 – Public use planning
  - Stakeholders review of public opportunities for the area
  - Forest improvements in progress

- Honouliuli – RTP 262 - Permitted public access and management
  - Trail and road restoration nnd maintenance in progress.
  - Public access permit system pending

- Kaiwa Ridge (CIP) Plan: https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dofaw/oahu/plans/
  - ✓ SMA Approved - Accomplished
  - ✓ Contractor selected - Accomplished
  - ▫ SOW Modification – Pending
  - ▫ Reservation system implementation - Pending

- Maunawili Falls (CIP) Plan: https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/recreation/files/2023/03/Maunawili-Creed-EA.pdf

- Kamananui Valley (GIA) http://www.moanaluamanagementplan.com
  - Review of draft management plan

- Watershed Improvements Contract (G804)
  - Poamoho Road improvements
  - Honouliuli Road and Trail improvements

Oahu Commercial and Activity Trail Permits:

- 6 Active Commercial Trail Tour Activity Permits (CTTA)

- 7 Trails and Access Activity Permits, primarily for running races
- 6 Film Permit Review and approval

Stewardship, Volunteers and Outreach:

- Nā Manu Elele
    - This fiscal year, four new trail stewards joined the program, bringing the total on Oʻahu to six. Stationed primarily at high-traffic trails and supporting site-specific education, the stewards played a key role in educating the public about issues such as Little Fire Ant (LFA) infestations and Forest Reserve closures. They monitored trails by answering questions, reminding users of rules, and providing guidance, which helped reduce congestion and enhance visitor safety. Stewards also ensured commercial tour groups were properly permitted and using the reservation on the Nā Ala Hele website. Since the start of the program, their efforts have contributed to safer trail experiences for both the local community and visitors.
    - Trail Stewards Data as of 7/2024 to 9/2025:
        - *Most of the data is a reflection of our high-use trails, such as Mānoa Falls and Kaʻiwa Ridge Other trails include: Kamananui, Hauʻula, Papali, and all of the trails in the Makiki/Tantalus area.
            - # of Surveys = 1,054
            - # of Unique Surveys = 1,024
            - Avg. # Users Per Survey = 187.7
            - Total # Users = 197,859



FIGURE 2: O'AHU TRAIL STEWARDS AS OF 6/2025[1]



FIGURE 3: O'AHU TRAIL STEWARDS' TRAILHEAD SET UP.

- KUPU ʻĀina Corps Interns (KAC)
  - 2 Kupu Service members continue support the Oʻahu NAH program throughout the year, assisting with various trail maintenance, signage, and special projects.
- Hawaiʻi Youth Conservation Corp
  - At Makiki WAI, the Hawaiʻi Youth Conservation Corps (HYCC) helped with major restoration and maintenance projects. These included fixing and repainting the shelter, cleaning the roof and gutters, regrading the trail leading to the shelter, and removing debris and invasive plants. HYCC also assisted with bridge repairs by replacing rotten posts, pressure washing, and repainting. These efforts improved safety, accessibility, and the overall visitor experience at the site.
  - At Mānoa Falls, HYCC contributed to trail improvements by clearing vegetation, restoring benches along the Trail, maintaining water diversions, cutting back encroaching plants, and reopening the viewing area near the Mānoa Falls pool. These efforts improved trail conditions and enhanced the visitor experience at this highly visited site.
  - At Maunawili Ditch Trail, HYCC assisted in removing invasive weeds along the equestrian trail corridor, helping to maintain clear passage.



FIGURE 4: HYCC GRUBBING THE PU‘U ‘ŌHI‘A TRAIL



FIGURE 5: HYCC GROUP 2024

- Volunteers:
  - Continued to administer eight Volunteer Trail Clearing Permits
  - Makiki WAI Restoration Area
    - BWS Grant Deliverable met for $40,000
    - Accomplishments include:
    - Update of six interpretive signs, renovation of thirty-three plants signs, conducted 4 service-learning trips in the restoration area, harden the trail with a topcoat of gravel, out planting 400 native species, and maintaining the weeds in the area.



FIGURE 6: NAH STAFF HARDENING THE TRAIL BY LAYING GRAVEL WITH A MECHANICAL WHEELBARROW



FIGURE 7: MAKIKI WAI RESTORATION PLANT SIGNS THAT WERE INSTALLED



FIGURE 8: MAKIKI WAI VOLUNTEER GROUP INCLUDING KCC ECOLOGY CLUB MEMBERS

- Outreach & Education
  - Opportunities were taken to share information and recruit new volunteers.
  - School Events

        - Three guided hikes were held with school groups, where students participated in mālama ʻāina activities while learning about conservation, watersheds, cultural history, and moʻolelo during service trips at Hauʻula, Kamananui, and Pūʻu ʻŌhia.
    - Community Events
        - Volunteer Groups that assisted Nā Ala Hele staff with trail maintenance included: Hawaiʻi Ultra Race Team (HURT), Hawaiʻi Trail and Mountain Club (HTMC), Honolulu Hiking Club (HCC), Kapiolani Community College Ecology Club, Makiki WAI Group, Independant Energy, Halau Ku Mana, Air Force 735 AMS, Lyon Arboretum, and KUPU.
    - The Makiki WAI Awareness Initiative Group, in partnership with NAH and KUPU interns, co-hosts volunteer workdays on the first and fourth Saturday of each month in the restoration area located along the Kanealole Trail. During these events, volunteers regularly remove invasive weeds, outplant native species, and water out plantings as needed.
    - Our Outreach & Education Associate organizes and facilitates monthly 3rd Saturday Volunteer Workdays on program trails across Oʻahu. These events provide community members with opportunities to engage directly in stewardship, assisting with both special projects and routine trail maintenance. Additional volunteer days are also supported through partnerships with community groups such as HURT and HTMC, where we provide oversight and guidance to ensure quality and safety in the trail work being conducted.
    - The volunteer database was organized utilizing the iVolunteer website. NAH currently has an email list of 91 subscribers.
        - Volunteer Data
            - No. of service trips= 18
            - No. of Volunteers= 224
            - No. of service hours=.1452
            - 1452 volunteer hours = about 48,627 in contributions



FIGURE 9: 3RD SATURDAY VOLUNTEER EVENT AT HAWAIʻI LOA RIDGE



FIGURE 10: 3RD SATURDAY VOLUNTEER EVENT AT WILIWILINUI TRAIL



FIGURE 11: 3RD SATURDAY VOLUNTEER EVENT AT ‘AIHUALAMA

Staffing and Training

- Increases in Staffing
  - New O‘ahu Trail Technician 07/2025
  - New O‘ahu Trail Specialist 09/29/2025

- Training and career development events including:
  - DiSC Training (09/2024)
  - DOFAW staff who participated in this training undergo a personality assessment to better understand self and fellow coworkers, to better improve workplace behavior, communication, and understanding.
  - Wilderness First Aid and CPR Training (11/2024)
  - Aloha Tree Conference (3/2025)
  - Staff who attended learned about hazardous tree assessments, pest the currently threaten significant trees in Hawai‘i
  - Hawaii Conservation Conference (07/2025)
  - Part 2: Trail Master Certification Course (07/2025)
  - A specialized training workshop on sustainable trail with an emphasis on stonework. Twelve participants were enrolled, which included NAH staff, interns, and volunteers.



FIGURE 12: PARTICIPANTS OF PART 2 - TRAIL MASTER COURSE

Signage

- This year Nā Ala Hele inspected, cleaned, and replaced signs as need. Data was collected using ArcGIS (Sign Inventory 2 Survey123)
    - Signs inspected include
        - 97 program signs.
        - 21 Act 86 signs.
        - 25 management signs
        - 6 educational interpretive signs were revamped
            - 13 interpretive sign designs for the Kamananui Access Road were renovated and are currently pending design approval and printing.
        - 4 signs were missing

Social Media/ Website

- Facebook Account
    - Interaction
        - Total interactions = 740
            - That is +289.5% more than previous year.
    - Reactions = 624
    - Comments = 59
    - Shares = 57

    - Followers = 5756
        - That is 1.4% more than previous 365 days.
- Facebook Nā Ala Hele Page
    - The NAH Facebook Page was created to reach more followers.
        - Interactions
            - Total interactions = 330
                - That is +352.1% more than the previous year.
            - Reactions = 238
            - Comments = 64
            - Shares = 28
            - Followers = 3386
                - That is +1.8% more than the previous year.
                - These followers are most likely duplicates from the Facebook Account.
- Nā Ala Hele Website was routinely updated with relevant information such as Forest Reserve closures, pest hazards, pesticide application, safety measures, and helicopter operations.
- Outerspatial App and website have also been investigated and are currently being inspected for accurate content.

Program Trail and Road Maintenance:

- Trails
    - Standard monthly trail and access road inspections and maintenance duties were carried out across the Nā Ala Hele program trails. These efforts included grading, upkeep of water diversion features, tree and brush removal, and sign maintenance. Work was mainly conducted on the seventeen trails found in the Makiki/Tantalus area. Other standard trail maintenance was conducted on: Kealia, Mokulēʻia, Kuaokala, Hauʻula, Papali, Wiliwilinui, Kuliʻouʻou, Hawaiʻi Loa, Waaʻhila, Kamananu, Kulanaʻahane, and Maunawili Trail.
        - 11.95 miles of trail weed whacked. Data was collected from ArcGIS (Aziz's Field Ops Line Data) and does not accurately reflect all of the sections of trails that were cleared and cut this fiscal year.
- Roads
    - Throughout the year, all access roads, structures, and parking lots were regularly maintained to ensure safe and reliable use. Vegetation along access roads leading to trailheads was managed through weed whacking and chainsaw work. Trailhead parking areas were consistently cleared of overgrowth and kept free of litter, providing visitors with clean and accessible entry points to the trail system.
        - 9.27 miles of road inspected and cleared. Data was collected from ArcGIS (Aziz's Field Ops Line Data) and does not accurately reflect all of the road maintenance done this fiscal year.

Other Project Support:

- Wildfire Support - Trail Staff Participated in Wildfire suppression on three wildfires.
- Kuliʻouʻou shelter: In August 2024, the shelter along the trail was fully renovated with new materials, including two 8-foot-long benches, 2 picnic tables, and the roof was replaced with new corrugated aluminum.



FIGURE 14: KULIʻOUʻOU SHELTER BEFORE



FIGURE 13: KULIʻOUʻOU SHELTER AFTER

Monitoring:

- Eco-Counter (Mānoa Falls Trail bridge container Dashboard)
  - An eco-counter was installed at Mānoa Falls to more accurately track the number of trail users. The data collected has supported the Nā Manu ʻElele Trail Steward Program and the UH Trail Capacity Study, while also providing Oʻahu Nā Ala Hele staff with valuable insights to guide management plans and address the needs of the Mānoa Falls Trail.
  - Below is the monthly traffic and data collected by the eco-counter representing 07/2024-07/2025. Environmental and hardware issues of the eco-counter slightly altered the data.

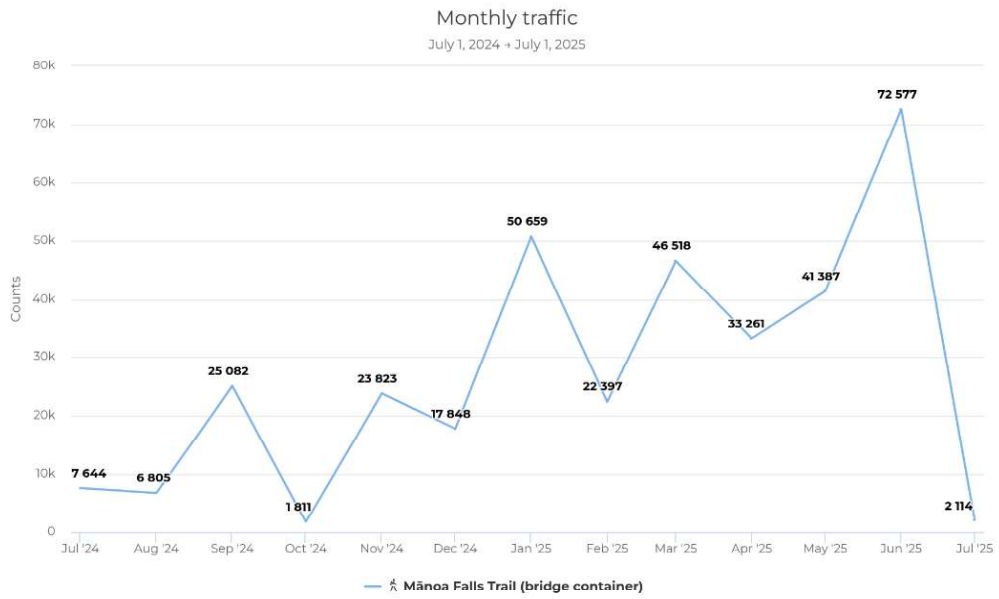


FIGURE 15: ECO-COUNTER DATA REFLECTING MONTHLY TRAFFIC EACH MONTH FROM 07/2024 TO 07/2025

FY2025 Kaua‘i Update:

Motorized

- Maintenance and repairs to all designated motorized roads.
- County of Kauai is waiting to acquire an easement from Grove Farm for Kalepa Forest Reserve to develop a recreational area for dirt bike riding.

Non-motorized

- Remote Clivus bathrooms: maintenance was performed by a private company to pump out waste and clean.
- Trail Shelters: Maintenance and repair of all non-motorized trail shelters, including repaired framing, benches, and painting.

Diversified

- Moalepe Trail: Used an excavator for major repairs. Repairs included fixing ruts and eroded sections caused by heavy rains. Removed brush and installed water bars to divert water off the trail.
- Kuilau Trail: Used an excavator to perform major repairs on the trail. Repairs included fixing ruts and narrowing the trail tread. Brush removal and installation of water bars made it safer for users.
- Koaie Canyon Trail: Removed obstructions such as vegetation, trees, rocks, and brush from the trail tread. Widened narrow sections for safety. Maintained water bars installed previously.
- Puu-Ki/Waialae: Cabin repairs include the roof, frame, sleeping quarters, tables, and benches.
- Trail Shelters: Maintenance and repair of various trail shelters, including framing, benches, and painting.