

**Testimony of  
Robert W. Hobdy  
SLUC Docket No. A10-787 Maui R&T Partners, LLC.**

In the Matter of the Petition of Maui R&T Partners, LLC. to Amend the State Land Use District Boundary of Lands Situated at Kihei, Island of Maui, State of Hawaii, Consisting of 253.05 Acres from the Agricultural District to the Urban District,  
Tax Map Key Nos. (2) 2-2-024: 016 and 017, and (2) 2-2-002: 054 (por.)

My name is Robert Hobdy and I am an environmental consultant and I prepared the *Botanical and Fauna Surveys for the Maui Research and Technology Park Proposed Urban Zoning Expansion Project* (October 2008) (included as Appendix C-1 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement). I have been conducting biological surveys in Hawaii since 2003. A copy of my resume is attached.

My report summarizes the findings of a flora and fauna survey of the proposed Maui Research and Technology Park (MRTP) project site which was conducted in October, 2008. The objectives of the survey were to determine the potential effects of the proposed development on biological resources on the project site and in the general project area. A primary goal of the surveys was to determine whether there were any plant, bird or mammal species on or immediately adjacent to the subject properties that were currently listed as endangered, threatened, or proposed for listing under either Federal or State of Hawaii endangered species statutes. I will briefly summarize the findings of the surveys.

**Botanical Survey**

A walk-through botanical survey method was used following routes to ensure maximum coverage of the many areas of this large property. Areas most likely to harbor native or rare plants such as gulches or rocky outcroppings were more intensively examined.

The project site was originally populated with dry native forest/scrubland plant species. These species have gradually diminished over the past 150 years as the area has been used extensively for cattle grazing. Introduced Axis deer and human-resultant fires have further reduced the native plant population. The site is now dominated by two (2) non-native species: *kiaue* trees and buffelgrass. A total of fourteen (14) species were noted during site surveys, of which two (2) were native to the Hawaiian Islands: *'ilima* and *'uhaloa*. Both of these species were rarely observed on the property, and are widespread and common in Hawaii in general.

No Federally listed Endangered or Threatened native plants (USFWS, 1999) were encountered during the course of the survey nor were any species that are candidate for such status seen.

No special habitats or rare plant communities were seen on the property. Because the vegetation is dominated by non-native plants, and no rare or protected species occur on or adjacent to the property, there is little of botanical concern and the proposed land uses are not expected to have a significant negative impact on the botanical resources in this part of Maui.

Because much of Kihei is a flood plain and because the soils on the property are subject to erosion, it is recommended that during any land clearing work special care be taken to use accepted contouring and terracing techniques to avoid significant soil runoff. It is also recommended that native dryland plants known to occur in this area be incorporated into the landscape design of the completed project.

### Fauna Survey

A walk-through survey method was conducted in conjunction with the botanical survey. All parts of the project area were covered. Field observations were made with the aid of binoculars and by listening to vocalizations. Three (3) mammalian species were noted in the surveys: cattle, Axis deer, and feral cats. Fourteen (14) non-native bird species were recorded as well. Using sight survey and a bat listening device, the surveys found no evidence of the Hawaiian hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus semotus*). The bat is the only land mammal native to the Hawaiian Islands. I also found no evidence of the Blackburn's sphinx moth (BSM). The BSM (*Manduca blackburni*) is Hawaii's largest native insect. The bat and the moth are on the Federal List of Endangered Species.

No native forest birds occur anywhere in the vicinity of this property. All of the other bird species are widespread and common and of no particular environmental concern. It is noted that while the threatened Newell's Shearwater (*Puffins auricularis newelli*) and endangered Hawaiian Petrel (*Pterodrom phaeopygia sandwichensis*) were not observed on the property during the site visits, these seabirds are known to occur and use habitats high within the mountains of Maui. They fly over lowland sites during the breeding season (March through December) to access their burrows in the mountains. It is recommended that the following mitigation measures be implemented to minimize potential impacts to these seabirds:

- Lights within the project area to be shielded so the bulb is not visible at or above the bulb height.
- No night construction associated with the development of the project during the peak fallout period September 15 to December 15.
- Disseminate information about seabird fallout to all staff working on site prior to initiation of work.
- In the event that a downed seabird is found alive, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within 24 hours.

- If the seabird is found alive, place the bird in a kennel and contact the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources Biologist or the National Park Service Biologist for instructions on where to bring the bird.

No Federally Endangered or Threatened species were encountered during the course of the survey and no special habitats were identified. The proposed changes in land use should have no significant negative impact on the fauna resources in this part of Maui. No special recommendations are deemed necessary or appropriate with regard to the fauna resources on this property.

Robert W. Hobdy  
Environmental Consultant  
2560-B Pololei Place Haiku Maui, Hawaii 96708  
hm ph 573-8029 d.o.b. 09/06/42 email: [hobdyr001@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:hobdyr001@hawaii.rr.com)

Education: Bachelor of Forestry, Oregon State University – 1965

Employment: State of Hawaii  
Department of Land and Natural Resources  
Division of Forestry & Wildlife  
37 ½ years  
Highest Position – District Manager / Maui County

#### Botanical Experience

- Exposure to a distinguished botanist at the age of 15 (1957) where I developed a personal interest in plants.
- Undergraduate courses in botany in college.
- Worked with and managed forest resources throughout my career with special focus on native and Endangered species and their ecosystems, watershed management, timber species, invasive weeds and plant pests and disease management
- Collaborated with sister resource management agencies and organizations, universities, museums and visiting scientists.
- Made extensive collections of plants for the Bishop Museum and other institutions documenting native plants and weeds and their distribution. Discovered twelve new species of native plants, two of which I described in scientific publications and five of which were named after me by other botanists.
- Serving on the Maui County Arborist Advisory Committee for over 30 years.
- Serving on the Board of Directors of the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens
- Served on a Federal Weed Risk Assessment advisory committee
- Serving on the Maui Invasive Species Committee since 1991
- Opened an environmental consulting business in 2004, specializing in flora and fauna surveys, wetland surveys and site evaluations.

#### Wildlife experience

- Worked alongside professional wildlife biologists throughout my career, participating in game species census and forest bird surveys.
- Worked alongside entomologists, malacologists, and aquatic and marine biologists doing species documentation and making habitat assessments.
- Administered public hunting programs, pest species eradication programs and forest bird and Endangered Species habitat management and recovery programs.

#### Other

- Have personal expertise in all the islands in Maui County with regard to names, places, terrain, natural resources, land ownership and people.
  - Am familiar with government systems, jurisdictions and people.
  - Have experience in public relations, collaboration, consensus building and conflict management
  - Am familiar with environmental Laws and rules and their application.
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