Appendix 3: Biology Report

General Botanical Survey and Vertebrate Fauna Assessment, Barry Property, Hawaiian Paradise Park, Island of Hawai'i

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May 2018

Introduction

This biological survey concerns a 0.51-acre property owned by the Barry Family Trust, identified by TMK (3) 1-5-059:059, as shown on Figure 1 (the "property").

The objectives of the botanical survey component of this survey were to 1) describe the vegetation; 2) list all species encountered; and 3) determine the likelihood of the presence of rare, threatened or endangered plant species, and to identify the locations of any such individuals found. The area was surveyed by Ron Terry on one day in May 2018. Plant species were identified in the field and, as necessary, collected and keyed out in the laboratory. Special attention was given to the possible presence of any federally (USFWS 2018) listed threatened or endangered plant species, although, with one exception discussed below, the habitat did not indicate a high potential for their presence.

The work also included a limited faunal survey of birds and introduced mammals, reptiles, or amphibians observed during the botanical survey. Also considered in this report is the general value of the habitat for native birds and the Hawaiian hoary bat. Not included in the survey were invertebrates or aquatic species or habitat, although it should be noted that the property is adjacent to the sea and that no streams, lakes or ponds are present.

Vegetation Type and Influences

The property is located on the flank of Kilauea, an active volcano, in the District of Puna, in the *ahupua'a* of Kea'au. The property receives an average of about 124 inches of rain annually, with a mean annual temperature of approximately 75 degrees Fahrenheit (Giambelluca et al 2014; UH Hilo-Geography 1998:57). The lava flows of this area are all derived from eruptive vents on Kilauea volcano's East Rift Zone, located as close as eight miles east of the project site. The specific lava flow that underlies the project site consists of pahoehoe erupted between 200 and 750 years (Moore and Trusdell 1991).

Soil in the area is classified as Opihikao highly decomposed plant material, 2 to 20 percent slopes. This is a very shallow, well-drained soil that formed in a thin mantle of organic material and small amounts of volcanic ash overlying pahoehoe lava (U.S. Soil Conservation Service 1973).

Prior to the use for agriculture, ranching, and lot subdivision, the natural vegetation of this part of the Puna shoreline (the site of a less than 400-year-old lava flow) was mostly coastal forest and strand vegetation, dominated by naupaka (*Scaevola taccada*), hala (*Pandanus tectorius*), 'ōhi'a (*Metrosideros polymorpha*), nanea (*Vigna marina*) and

various ferns, sedges and grasses (Gagne and Cuddihy 1990). Some locations on the coastline also host a rare plant found only in the Hilo and Puna Districts: *Ischaemum byrone,* a State and federally listed endangered grass known to grow on pahoehoe close the edge of sea cliffs, where salt spray may limit other plants.

Aside from the road verge, the lava flow on the site does not appear to have been ripped by heavy equipment or otherwise disturbed, although the heavy vegetation makes that difficult to ascertain. Large ironwood (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) trees previously grew on the site and appear to have been felled, and this has provided a substrate for dense vine growth.

Environmental Setting: Flora

In terms of vegetation, the long, narrow rectangular property is divided into four basic zones, as illustrated in the photographs of Figure 2. The lava shelf zone consists of about 50 feet of nearly bare pahoehoe, with scattered, low clumps of akulikuli (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*) and mau'u 'aki'aki (*Fimbristylis cymosa*), two common indigenous herbs. Occasional surges from large waves during storms scour this zone and keep it largely vegetation free. The shoreline shrub zone just behind, heavily affected by constant sea spray and roughly 60 feet in depth, is dominated by the common indigenous shrub naupaka. Also present are ironwood, coconut palms, the indigenous sedge pycreus (*Cyperus polystachyos*), and various non-native grasses, vines, herbs and ferns.

No individuals of *Ischaemum byrone* were found. The extremely heavy sea spray in the makai edge of the lot might tend to discourage this grass, salt-tolerant though it is. Mauka of here the vegetation is so dense with naupaka and other plants that clusters of this grasses would not tend to thrive. No other rare, threatened or endangered plants are present. Although dominated by common native plants, with no rare species, the lava shelf zone and shoreline shrub zones represent native habitat with at least some conservation value.

The majority of the property – varying from about 180 to 200 feet in depth – contains the other two vegetation zones. The narrow road fringe is dominated by Guinea grass (*Megathyrsus maximus*) and a number of other weedy grasses, herbs and vines. The interior of the property is a secondary growth of almost entirely non-native grasses, shrubs, trees, herbs, vines and ferns. Prominent among them are lantana (*Lantana camara*), Guinea grass, red tower ginger (*Costus comosus*), sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica*), sword fern (*Nephrolepis multiflora*), autograph tree (*Clusia rosea*), and maile pilau (*Paederia foetida*). A few native hala trees appear to be encroaching on the property from a neighbor's landscape. Seedlings of the highly invasive albizia tree (*Falcataria moluccana*) are emerging in various locations. There is little of value for biological conservation in the areas behind the shoreline shrub zone. A full list of plant species detected on the property is found in Table 1.

Table 1. Plant Species Observed on Barry Property

Scientific Name	Family	Common Name	Life Form	Status*
Ageratum houstonianum	Asteraceae	Ageratum	Herb	A
Allamanda cathartica	Apocynaceae	Allamanda	Vine	A
Canavalia cathartica	Fabaceae	Maunaloa	Vine	A
Casuarina equisetifolia	Casuarinaceae	Ironwood	Tree	A
Centella asiatica	Apiaceae	Asiatic Pennywort	Herb	A
Chamaecrista nictitans	Fabaceae	Partridge Pea	Herb	A
Clusia rosea	Clusiaceae	Autograph Tree	Tree	A
Cocos nucifera	Arecaceae	Coconut	Tree	PI
Costus comosus	Costaceae	Red Tower Ginger	Shrub	A
Crinum asiaticum	Amaryllidaceae	Spider Lily	Herb	A
Cyperus halpan	Cyperaceae	Cyperus	Sedge	A
Cyperus polystachyos	Cyperaceae	Pycreus	Herb	I
Desmodium triflorum	Fabaceae	Tick Clover	Herb	A
Digitaria ciliaris	Poaceae	Henry's Crabgrass	Herb	A
Digitaria insularis	Poaceae	Sour Grass	Herb	A
Dracaena marginata	Agavaceae	Money Tree	Tree	A
Emilia fosbergii	Asteraceae	Lilac Pualele	Herb	A
Euphorbia hirta	Euphorbiaceae	Garden Spurge	Herb	A
Falcataria moluccana	Fabaceae	Albizia	Tree	A
Fimbristylis cymosa	Cyperaceae	Mau'u 'Aki'aki	Herb	I
Ipomoea triloba	Convolvulaceae	Little Bell	Vine	A
Kyllinga brevifolia	Cyperaceae	Kyllinga	Herb	A
Macaranga tanarius	Euphorbiaceae	Macaranga	Shrub	A
Megathyrsus maximus	Poaceae	Guinea Grass	Grass	A
Mimosa pudica	Fabaceae	Sleeping Grass	Herb	A
Nephrolepis multiflora	Nephrolepidaceae	Sword Fern	Fern	A
Paederia scandens	Rubiaceae	Maile Pilau	Vine	A
Pandanus tectorius	Pandanaceae	Hala	Tree	I
Paspalum conjugatum	Poaceae	Hilo Grass	Herb	A
Phymatosorus grossus	Polypodiaceae	Maile Scented Fern	Fern	A
Scaevola taccada	Goodeniaceae	Beach Naupaka	Shrub	I
Schefflera actinophylla	Araliaceae	Octopus Tree	Tree	A
Sesuvium portulacastrum	Aizoaceae	Akulikuli	Herb	I

A=Alien E=Endemic I=Indigenous PI Polynesian Introd END=Federal and State Listed Endangered

Environmental Setting: Vertebrate Fauna

Very few birds were observed during the site visit, which took place in rainy, windy conditions at mid-day, during the summer season, a month after most migratory birds had already departed for the Arctic. At other times of the day or year, a variety of resident or migratory shorebirds could be present. These include the Pacific golden-plover or kolea (*Pluvialis fulva*), ruddy turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), and wandering tattler (*Heteroscelus incanus*), which are often seen on the Puna coastline feeding on shoreline resources. They would be unlikely to make much use of most of the property, which is densely vegetated and offers no habitat for them. The seabird black noddy (*Anous minutus melanogenys*) was observed flying near the cliffs and over the nearshore waters, as it frequently does in cliffed coasts of the main Hawaiian Islands. It nests in crevices

and caves in lava (especially pahoehoe) seacliffs; no black noddy nests were observed on the cliffs in front of the property, but openings in the rock might offer areas for nests.

Although no land birds were seen, during previous reconnaissance of shoreline properties in the Puna District, Geometrician Associates has noted a number of non-native land birds. These include common mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*), northern cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), spotted doves (*Streptopelia chinensis*), striped doves (*Geopilia striata*), Kalij pheasants (*Lophura leucomelanos*) Japanese white-eyes (*Zosterops japonicus*), and house finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), among other birds.

It is unlikely that many native forest birds would be expected to use the project site due to its low elevation, alien vegetation and lack of adequate forest resources. However, it is likely that Hawai'i 'amakihi (*Hemignathus virens*) are sometimes present, as some populations of this native honeycreeper appear to have adapted to the mosquito borne diseases of the Hawaiian lowlands.

As with all of East Hawai'i, several endangered native terrestrial vertebrates may be present in the general area and may overfly, roost, nest, or utilize resources of the property.

The endangered Hawaiian hawk (*Buteo solitarius*) is widespread, hunting throughout forested, agricultural and even residential areas of the island of Hawai'i. It nests in large trees and can be vulnerable during the summer nesting season. However, the property does not contain, nor is it near, large trees suitable for hawk nests, and therefore it would be very unlikely to be affected by activities on the property.

The Hawaiian petrel (*Pterodroma sandwichensis*), the Hawaiian sub-species of Newell's shearwater (*Puffinus newelli*), and the band-rumped storm-petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*) have been recorded over-flying various areas on the Island of Hawai'i between late April and the middle of December each year. The Hawaiian petrel and band-rumped storm-petrel are listed as endangered, and Newell's shearwater as threatened, under both federal and State of Hawai'i endangered species statutes. The petrels and shearwaters hunt over the ocean during the day and fly to higher elevations at night to roost and nest. The Hawaiian petrel and the band-rumped storm petrel are known to nest at elevations well above 5,000 feet on the Big Island, not within the project area. But during its breeding season from April through November, the Newell's shearwater burrows under ferns on forested mountain slopes. These burrows are used year after year and usually by the same pair of birds. Although capable of climbing shrubs and trees before taking flight, it needs an open downhill flight path through which it can become airborne. Although once abundant on all the main Hawaiian islands, most birds today are found in the steep terrain between 500 to 2,300 feet on Kaua'i (https://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/fauna/newellsshearwater.html). The primary cause of mortality in these species in Hawai'i is thought to be predation by alien mammalian species at the nesting colonies. Collision with man-made structures is another significant cause. Nocturnally flying seabirds, especially fledglings on their way to sea in the summer and fall, can become disoriented by exterior lighting. Disoriented seabirds may collide with manmade structures and, if not killed outright, become easy targets of

predatory mammals. These listed seabirds would not directly utilize the property but could overfly it.

Only one native land mammal is present in the Hawaiian Islands, the endangered Hawaiian hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus semotus*). Found in all environments on the island of Hawai'i, this bat roosts in tall shrubs or trees and is vulnerable to disturbance during its roosting season of June 1 to September 15.

Aside from the Hawaiian hoary bat, all other mammals in the Paradise Park area are introduced species, including feral cats (*Felis catus*), feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*), small Indian mongooses (*Herpestes a. auropunctatus*) and various species of rats (*Rattus* spp.). None are of conservation concern and all are deleterious to native flora and fauna.

There are no native terrestrial reptiles or amphibians in Hawai'i. The only reptile observed on the property was an unidentified species of skink (Family: Scincidae). Various gecko species (Family: Gekkonidae) are also known to be present in the area. No other reptiles and amphibians were detected during the survey, but we have observed the highly invasive coqui frog (*Eleutherodactylus coqui*) in the area. It is likely that bufo toads (*Bufo marinus*) are occasionally present.

No invertebrate survey was undertaken as part of the survey, but rare native invertebrates tend to be associated with tracts of native vegetation and are not highly likely to be present. Although no lava tube openings were observed, if caves are present, native invertebrates including spiders and insects could be present, especially if the roots of native trees extend into the caves.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures: Vegetation

Most of the project site is dominated by alien vegetation, with the only native ecosystem on the property being the shoreline vegetation, where common native plants are present. Because of the location and nature of the project relative to sensitive vegetation and species, construction and use of the single-family dwelling and associated agricultural uses are not likely to cause adverse impacts to vegetation or habitat. It is our understanding that any development on the property will be set back outside the lava shelf and shoreline shrub zone, thus avoiding these resources, although some non-native species may be removed, appropriate native species may be planted and a narrow trail to the shoreline may be established, taking care to minimize harm to native species. As such, no adverse impact upon vegetation or endangered plant species should occur.

In order to avoid impacts to the endangered but regionally widespread terrestrial vertebrates listed above, we recommend that the landowner commit to certain standard conditions. Specifically, construction should refrain from activities that disturb or remove the vegetation between June 1 and September 15, when Hawaiian hoary bats may be sensitive to disturbance. The landowner should also shield any exterior lighting from shining upward, in conformance with Hawai'i County Code § 14 – 50 et seq., to minimize the potential for disorientation of seabirds.

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Figure 1. Property Map

Aerial Image Base Map © Digital Globe, HERE (from BING Maps)

Figure 2. Property Vegetation Photos

2a. Lava shelf zone (with shoreline shrub zone on right) ▲

▼ 2b. Shoreline shrub zone

Figure 2. Property Vegetation Photos

2c. Property interior zone ▲ ▼ 2d. Road fringe zone