

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

May 8, 2015

Chairperson and Members
Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii

Land Board Members:

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAI'I, THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE HAWAI'I ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS CONCERNING COLLABORATION ON FORESTRY RELATED PROGRAM DELIVERY

BACKGROUND:

In September 2008, the National Association of State Foresters, National Association of Conservation Districts, United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) signed a five year national Memorandum Of Understanding (National MOU) to strengthen cooperation between the Partners for the delivery of forestry-related conservation assistance on private land. In support of the National MOU, state-level partners in Hawaii entered into a similar "Joint Forestry" Memorandum of Understanding (Hawaii MOU) in May 2011. The Hawaii MOU was developed by leaders in Hawaii forestry, including NRCS, the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), USFS, and the Hawai'i Association of Conservation Districts (HACD) hereafter collectively referred to as the "Partners," with the intention of increasing cooperation and improve forest management on privately-managed lands across the state. The Hawaii MOU enhances public benefits received from health and well-managed forests by integrating technical skills, fields of expertise, and strengthening interagency delivery of forestry assistance to privately-managed lands.

In September 2013, the National MOU (Exhibit A) was renewed to continue cooperation between the Partners and coordinate interagency delivery of forestry and agroforestry-related conservation assistance. The intent of the National MOU is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's private working lands - forest land, cropland, pasture, and rangeland, and to collaborate on the shared responsibilities of the Partners as identified in the 2014 Farm Bill. Similarly, the Hawaii Partners are seeking renewal of the state-level initiatives developed under the Hawaii MOU. With the multitude of threats facing Hawaii's forest resources, many state programs do not provide the full range of benefits that they are capable of providing, including numerous ecosystem services,

water and nutrient cycling, native wildlife habitat, and various timber and non-timber forest products. Furthermore, private forest landowners and managers often do not have regular access to resource experts and rely on technical assistance provided by the Partners to improve their management of the forest and address threats of invasive species, habitat degradation, and soil loss. Through the Hawaii MOU, the Partners are committed to improving the coordination of this technical and financial assistance to private forest lands. Without an updated MOU, forward movement and coordination on private landowner assistance programs such as the Forest Stewardship and Conservation Reserve Enhancement programs will be hindered.

DISCUSSION:

Since execution of the 2011 Hawaii MOU, the Partners have accomplished a number of goals that promote forestry-related management and conservation assistance, including:

- Collaborated on and awarded a Conservation Partners grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation that provides additional conservation planning staff focused on forest restoration projects under the Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.
- Funded a USFS and DOFAW joint position (1.0 FTE) working on both public and private forest land management issues in Hawaii, providing outreach to private landowners and the public on the benefits of well-managed forests.
- Provided trainings internally for Partner staff on technical forestry management and externally to landowners interested in forest management. The Partner's held or participated in two "Forest Stewards" workshops for private forest landowners and two workshops to train prospective forestry consultants in forest management plan writing.
- Conducted regular meetings, approximately quarterly, to discuss the progress and Partner's needs in delivering forestry assistance to private lands. Participated in the various Partner's annual and/or quarterly advisory committee meetings to facilitate collaboration between forest management initiatives and projects.
- Updated partner guidelines, handbooks, planning tools and public information documentation to facilitate streamlined delivery of forestry technical and financial assistance. This has allowed the Partners to reduce program implementation costs while better serving clients
- Created a Hawaii Joint Forestry website that describes the Hawaii MOU, accomplishments, upcoming training opportunities, and related forestry resources.

The purpose of the Hawaii MOU (Exhibit B) is to continue to enhance public benefit from the sustainable management of forestry resources in Hawai'i. This agreement is intended to integrate technical skills, fields of expertise, and strengthen interagency delivery of forestry assistance to privately managed lands across the state, as well as increase technical capacity within the Partners to improve deliverability of forestry-related programs.

Specifically, the Hawaii MOU details actions associated with:

- Promoting integrated and streamlined delivery of the Partners' forestry related programs to allow consistent, expeditious, and user friendly interactions for landowners and land managers interested in forestry-related practices on their land.
- Identifying critical and priority forest landscapes for outreach, engagement, and targeted service to landowners and land managers to enhance the health and productivity of working forested lands.
- Identifying national, regional, or local initiatives that may enhance forest land management across jurisdictional boundaries and for which the Partner's may be able contribute to or benefit from.
- Collaboration with the Partners in providing financial and technical assistance to privately-managed forest lands.
- Developing a communication plan for the Partners to further the implementation of forestry-related initiatives and administrative issues as described under this MOU in a consistent manner.
- Participation in meetings at least once every 12 months or more frequently as desired or needed to enhance the Partners' interactions and cross-training efforts.
- Practice good faith efforts to realize the above described purposes and to further mutual interests by contributing resources to the successful implementation of forestry related programs and the benefits derived from such cooperation.

Responsibilities specific to DLNR under the proposed Hawaii MOU include:

1. Support the development of forest stewardship management plans through the Hawaii Forest Stewardship program and direct applicable projects to NRCS for funding under their available programs;
2. Assist with training to expand forestry expertise and capacity within Partner agencies;
3. Provide technical assistance to private forestry participants;
4. Collaborate on the identification of important forest landscapes, and
5. Provide outreach and education to private landowners, communities, and the public on forestry related initiatives.

The significance of and challenges facing Hawaii's forests are more thoroughly discussed in Hawaii's State-Wide Assessment and Resource Strategy (Hawaii Forest Action Plan, http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/forestry/files/2013/09/Hawaii_Statewide_Forest_Assessment_and_Strategies_

2010.pdf) and the Hawaii Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS, <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wildlife/cwcs/>). A collaborative approach, such as is afforded under the Hawaii MOU, is needed to address and managed for many of these challenges. Each of the State-level Partners have reviewed and agreed to the responsibilities identified in the proposed Hawaii MOU. Board approval and authorization of the Chairperson to execute the Hawaii MOU is requested prior to the finalization of the Hawaii MOU by the Partners.

CHAPTER 343 - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

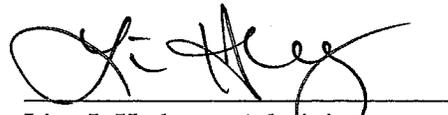
Hawaii Administrative Rules §11-200-5(D) provide that for agency actions, Chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), exempts from applicability any feasibility or planning study for possible future programs or projects which the agency has not approved, adopted, or funded. The Hawaii MOU only involves State staff and resources for planning and coordinating the various goals, programs and/or projects, and further any specific project or program developed under the Hawaii MOU will be evaluated individually for its compliance with Chapter 343, HRS. Thus this Board action does not trigger review under Chapter 343, HRS.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board:

1. Approve and authorize the Chairperson to finalize and execute the “Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the Hawai‘i Association of Conservation Districts Concerning Collaboration on Forestry Related Program Delivery in the State of Hawai‘i” subject to review and approval as to form by the Department of Attorney General.

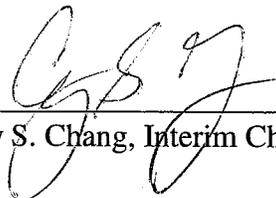
Respectfully submitted,



Lisa J. Hadway, Administrator
Division of Forestry and Wildlife

Attachments: Exhibits A & B

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



Carty S. Chang, Interim Chairperson

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
AND THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS
AND THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
AND THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by and between the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD); National Association of State Foresters (NASF); the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (FS), hereinafter referred to as "the Parties."

I. BACKGROUND

Joint Forestry Team Progress

The Joint Forestry Team (JFT) was established by an MOU in September 2008. Since then, the JFT has actively facilitated implementation of the MOU at all levels and with other cooperators, including but not limited to State and local forestry agencies and non-governmental organizations. The JFT accomplished a number of actions targeted at removing challenges to improve the delivery of forestry-related conservation assistance. The highlights include:

- Provided comments to NRCS, at their request, on its Forestry Futureing Team Report which includes recommendations about what should be NRCS' future role and staffing to efficiently deliver technical assistance in forestry and agroforestry;
- Provided input to the FS as the agency updated the Forest Stewardship Program Standards and Guidelines based on the 2008 Farm Bill;

- Developed a strategy to integrate NRCS and FS planning and accomplishment databases to allow for sharing of relevant information and to streamline landowner participation in NRCS financial assistance programs;
- Provided input in the common forest management plan template for use by FS, NRCS, and partners. The template is the primary guidance provided to NRCS forestry technical service providers (TSP);
- Provided input to NRCS on streamlining the TSP process;
- Surveyed members of the four parties of the MOU to assess the level of progress in overcoming the challenges to cooperation identified in the 2008 MOU;
- Used Web resources to share success stories of State-level MOUs to encourage closer partnerships in the delivery of landowner assistance in the States;
- Hosted a national Web conference focusing on differences and advantages of various agreements (e.g., MOUs, cooperative agreements, and contribution agreements);
- Helped increase the number of agreements in States to 34 (an increase of 13 agreements from 2007);
- Increased Conservation Title funding in many States for management activities on private forests due, in part, to these agreements; and
- Created the Two Chiefs' Partnership Award to recognize partnership efforts toward improvements in delivering forestry programs and services.

Importance of Private Forest Lands to the Nation's Welfare

The Parties recognize that healthy forests are a critical component of our Nation's landscape. Forest lands, as well as trees and forests on other working lands, provide clean air, carbon sequestration, and climate change buffering; flood protection; wildlife habitat; and recreation and aesthetic enjoyment. Healthy forests are also vital to clean and abundant supplies of water. Approximately two-thirds of the Nation's freshwater resources originate on forested lands. Fifty-seven percent (429 million acres) of America's forests are privately owned land, and 10.3 million family forest owners¹ account for 42 percent of the Nation's forest lands (2003). Some 180 million people in over 68,000 communities rely on these forested lands to capture and filter their drinking water.

Water quantity and quality are threatened by changes in climate, population, and land use. Wildfires, insect and disease outbreaks, and invasive species also affect the ability of forests to store and filter the water we drink. Forests and forest products provide economic, energy, and other benefits. The parties recognize that privately owned forests make up a substantial share of the forest resource base and that these forests are increasingly being divided into smaller ownership parcels or converted to other uses. Currently, 90 percent of owners control less than 50 acres. Only 4 percent of the 10.3

¹ Family forests include lands that are at least 1 acre in size, 10 percent stocked, and owned by individuals, married couples, family estates and trusts, or other groups of individuals who are not incorporated or otherwise associated as a legal entity.

million family forest owners have a written management plan, and only 14 percent have sought management advice.

The Parties further recognize that our Nation's forest resources are threatened and do not provide the full range of benefits they are capable of providing. Some of the risks to our forests include²:

- **Land use conversion.** Economic returns from commercial forestry are often insufficient or very long-term, and as a result, landowners are increasingly pressured to convert their forest land to other uses;
- **Landscape fragmentation.** Fragmentation of landscapes and changes in land use will continue to stress forest and rangeland health;
- **Increasing wildfires, drought, storm, insect, and disease outbreaks.** The area burned by wildfire in 2012 was the largest in the last 52 years (all lands). All of these threats are expected to continue or increase;
- **Increased invasive species damage.** The spread of invasive insects, diseases, and plants is expected to continue as a result of travel and trade associated with globalization of the world economy, stressed forest ecosystems, and changing climate impacts; and
- **Climate change.** Climate change may lead to land cover and land use changes, increases in atmospheric pollutants such as ozone and nitrous oxides, and potential expansion of invasive species, as well as weather extremes and impacts.

Many of these threats have been identified by multiple planning processes. These plans delineate priority rural and urban forest landscape issues and area, e.g., States completed their Forest Action Plans in June 2010, and management activities are now underway.

Collaborating to Meet Customer Needs

The Parties recognize the owners of all nonindustrial private forest land (NIPF) are key customers for our programs/activities. Increased coordination and collaboration is essential so that we can provide assistance to a changing customer/owner base and to respond to priorities identified in each State's Forest Action Plan and other national, regional, and local planning priorities.

On the increasing number of smaller forest land parcels, as well as on parcels that intentionally integrate trees and shrubs into crop and animal production systems, it is critical that landowners are able to obtain information and assistance about implementing conservation practices that will maximize natural resource benefits and address concerns on their forest land. Twenty-seven percent of the family forest

² From *Interim Update of the 2000 Renewable Resources Planning Act Assessment*, FS-874, April 2007; and Butler, B.J.; Leatherberry, F.C. 2004. America's family forest owners. *Journal of Forestry*, Oct/Nov: 4-14.

owners, who account for 58 percent of the family forest land acreage, commercially harvest trees from their land (2011).

The Parties believe that a strong partnership among them will make it possible to be more effective in assisting NIPF landowners, thereby increasing natural resource benefits from working lands. The Parties also recognize that strong citizen participation, as well as stakeholder-based partnerships and community-based organizations operating at the local, State, Tribal, regional, and other geographic scales are fundamental to successful conservation of natural resources.

Each Party delivers to private landowners and land managers technical and financial assistance through their various conservation programs and activities. Increased coordination and collaboration can result in synergistic effects that enable broader success in achieving conservation goals. The mission, types of assistance provided, and processes for each Party are summarized in the Appendix A.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to strengthen cooperation among the Parties, resulting in coordinated interagency delivery of forestry-related conservation assistance to private landowners in order to enhance, protect, and conserve America's private working lands—forest land, cropland, pasture, and rangeland. The Parties have a long-term commitment to the conservation and stewardship of the Nation's natural resources that will endure beyond the life of this MOU. The first JFT National Leadership meeting was held on December 7, 2006, in Washington, D.C. between the FS, NRCS, and NASE. A summary report that identified barriers to better cooperation and program delivery was prepared. These barriers, and the desire to overcome them, resulted in a draft JFT charter in early 2007 between these three organizations. Later in 2007, NACD was asked to join the team, and a 2-year charter was finalized and approved on November 29, 2007. A 5-year MOU was entered into on September 29, 2008, and the charter was extended for 5 additional years until December 31, 2014.

The following challenges were identified following the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill. Progress has been made; however, these challenges still remain.

1. The availability of technical expertise and assistance to NIPF landowners is insufficient to meet the need.
2. The lack of integration of planning and other administrative issues between the Parties, making it difficult for private landowners to participate in forestry and conservation programs.
3. Funding devoted to forestry and agroforestry is inadequate and inconsistent.
4. Forestry needs to be a priority for State Technical Committees.
5. Coordinated delivery of disaster recovery assistance is not yet fully realized or developed.
6. The lack of landowner knowledge and understanding on how to participate in available forestry related programs.

7. The need to improve the consistency of technical standards, policy interpretation, and program delivery across States and agencies.
8. The need to improve on information sharing and data transfer and performance reporting between Parties.

The Parties are committed to address and resolve these challenges and work to overcome them through both joint and separate actions.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This MOU commits the Parties to increase cooperation at the local, State, Tribal, regional, and other geographic scales to ensure coordinated and improved interagency delivery of forestry-related conservation assistance to private landowners and land managers. The actions taken under this MOU enable the Parties to mutually coordinate and implement programs for technical and financial assistance for an all-lands approach, while accomplishing their individual and collective conservation goals and missions more effectively. This is accomplished by the guidance in the State Forest Action Plans and other national, regional, and local planning priorities.

The Parties recognize the following unique and complementary role each Party brings to the partnership:

- State forestry agencies have the leadership role and responsibility for delivery of forestry programs on State and private lands which are guided through State Forest Action Plans;
- Conservation districts carry out natural resource management at the local level and act as a liaison between private landowners, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other entities providing assistance programs;
- NRCS and FS are sources of interdisciplinary expertise and funding for forestry and natural resource conservation;
- NASF and NACD have the opportunity and authority to advocate to Congress, Administration, and agencies in the interest of their constituencies and the 11 million NIPF owners;
- USFS and NRCS are authorized to provide technical information and expertise, data, and other supporting materials regarding the status and needs for existing and additional programs and assess to their partners and the public;
- Private landowners voluntarily request assistance from the signatories and are the decisionmakers for their land; and
- All of the parties to this MOU have the authority to independently and mutually coordinate and cooperate with other entities not party to this agreement to advance their purposes and programs.

The Parties will work to address the challenges through the following joint and individual organization actions:

A. Jointly, NASF/State forestry agencies, NACD/conservation districts, NRCS, and FS will, as appropriate:

Planning/Processes

1. Periodically review and revise State Forest Action Plans and other national, regional, and local planning documents to work towards implementation of those plans on all forest lands in keeping with national, State, regional, and local priorities.
2. Utilize and provide outreach for the newly developed and revised requirements/standards/procedures for NRCS Conservation Plans and Forest Stewardship Program Stewardship Mapping and Reporting Tool.
3. Share data and information as it pertains to developing necessary planning tools and products.
4. Make recommendations to ensure utilization of these integrated plans/processes to facilitate landowner access to forestry-related technical and financial assistance.

Partnerships/Information Sharing

5. The partners active in each State are encouraged to undertake an analysis which identifies the relative importance of forest, agriculture, wildlife, and other related natural resource conservation issues relevant to the partners' responsibilities, and to use this analysis as the basis for establishing priorities for agency activities and funding.
6. Provide advice to ensure funding allocations for management activities on private forest land at the State level and consistent with various State Action Plans.
7. Promote the delivery of timely, coordinated interagency forestry and agroforestry assistance to landowners through actions such as co-location of agency staff at field and State offices, jointly funded positions, increased use of TSPs and technology, and related actions that increase assistance for working lands.
8. Share information regarding priorities for conservation of private forest lands and other working lands that could benefit from the application of agroforestry practices. Share information with State and Federal environmental agencies on water/air quality, wildlife habitat, resource education, urban forestry, and other priorities.
9. Invite the partners of this MOU and other forestry interests to participate in appropriate State, regional, and national meetings and conservation initiatives.
10. Coordinate to ensure each Party's conservation programs are complementary and not inadvertently in conflict or competition.

11. Share updated information regarding conservation policies, programs, voluntary conservation agreements, and procedures related to providing forestry assistance to private landowners and land managers.
12. Utilize Forest Action Plans and other national, regional, and local planning priorities to assist in focusing resources (e.g., priority watersheds/landscapes, resources of concern) for setting priorities and developing and implementing conservation agreements or strategies, plans, or other programs and projects.
13. Collaborate with other appropriate entities, including TSPs, to facilitate development and implementation of conservation plans and agreements on forest lands and to promote agroforestry on other working lands.
14. Collaboratively identify research studies needed to support sustainable management of working lands and utilize the science to improve conservation programs and activities and to enhance preparation, resilience, and adaptation in the face of disasters and climate change.
15. Coordinate with the Forest Resources Coordinating Committee on shared priorities.
16. Share databases in regards to performance and implementation of conservation programs and services.

Employee Training/Education

17. Invest in training employees and TSPs to provide them tools to deliver conservation assistance to an increasing number of NIPF owners in a changing landscape.
18. Collaborate to deliver agroforestry training for natural resource professionals and develop technical information to support technical assistance to NIPF landowners.
19. Cooperate, as necessary and appropriate, with outside partners to provide training to educate each other about our respective organizations and processes.
20. Engage with NRCS Plant Material Centers on native plant propagation, gene conservation, and other areas of common interest.

MOU Implementation

21. Review existing MOUs, TSP agreements, and other partnerships at the regional, State, Tribal, and local levels to determine whether they have resulted in improved services to private forestry landowners.
22. Identify States without MOUs, TSP agreements, and other partnerships to understand whether challenges exist to their development. Encourage the development of MOUs, TSP agreements, and other types of partnerships (e.g., at regional, State, Tribal, and local levels) to facilitate implementation of this MOU.

23. Annually review and report to the JFT allocation of funding and other assistance for forestry activities in each State and recommend options for addressing inconsistencies among States.
24. Encourage parties at the State level to jointly pursue innovative pilot projects/demonstration areas and share and publicize success stories consistent with the objectives of this MOU and consistent with priorities identified in the Forest Action Plan and other regional and local planning documents.
25. Monitor and report on implementation of this MOU as challenges are being addressed.

B. NASF will, as appropriate, encourage State forestry agencies to:

Planning/Processes

1. Consider and take appropriate action on recommendations from the Parties to integrate NRCS conservation plans/processes with Forest Stewardship plans/processes to facilitate landowner participation in forestry-related technical and financial assistance programs.
2. Coordinate with State Technical Committees, State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committees, NRCS, FS, conservation districts, and other entities as appropriate in the update of Forest Action Plans and other planning documents.
3. Coordinate with State Conservationists and conservation districts as NRCS Strategic Plans are developed and updated in each State.

Partnerships/Information Sharing

4. Invite and encourage NRCS and conservation districts to be involved on State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committees (SFSCC) and associated subcommittees. Appoint a State Technical Committee representative to the SFSCC.
5. Actively participate on their NRCS State Technical Committee, local working groups, and subcommittees as appropriate.
6. Through State Technical Committee meetings and other venues, provide information about State-administered programs that can assist in planning and implementing forestry-related conservation practices in priority watersheds/landscapes identified by NRCS and other cooperators.
7. Coordinate with State Technical Committees, State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committees, NRCS, FS, conservation districts, and other entities as appropriate in the updates of the Forest Action Plans and other planning documents.
8. Provide forest land and resource information to NRCS (e.g., forest inventory, forest health risk and condition, and fire regime/condition class) to support Rapid Watershed Assessments.

9. Request that State Conservationists utilize Forest Action Plans and other planning documents in the development of program ranking processes.
10. Inform NRCS and conservation district employees about State-administered forestry and conservation programs through training and education.
11. Foster and guide the development and implementation of MOU documents between FS and State forestry agencies with State soil and water conservation agencies and individual conservation districts.

Employee Training/Education

12. Encourage State forestry agency employees to increase their knowledge of NRCS conservation programs through training and education.
13. Provide forestry-related training and education to NRCS, TSPs, and conservation district employees.

C. NACD will, as appropriate, encourage conservation districts to:

Partnerships/Information Sharing

1. Cooperate and coordinate with State forestry agencies in the delivery of forestry assistance to private landowners.
2. When appropriate, invite FS, NRCS, NASF, and State forestry agencies to participate in their regional and national meetings and conservation initiatives and encourage State associations to invite the Parties to State meetings.
3. Cooperate with NASF, State forestry agencies, NRCS, and FS in the identification of needs for forestry and agroforestry assistance on private lands and participate in the delivery of this assistance.
4. Partner with the State associations and the Parties in landscape or watershed scale planning and implementation, providing a locally-led component for these activities.
5. Provide opportunities for the Parties to interact with NACD leadership, Natural Resources Foundation Committee, and the Forest Resources Policy Group.
6. Partner with State associations to provide the Parties with contacts for landowners/managers whose participation in conservation planning has identified the need for technical or financial assistance.
7. Foster and guide the development and implementation of MOU documents between FS and State forestry agencies with State soil and water conservation agencies and individual conservation districts.

Employee Training/Education

8. Encourage conservation district employees to increase their knowledge of FS and State forestry agency programs through training and education.

9. Encourage individual districts to hire and train employees with experience in forestry matters.

D. NRCS will:

Strategic

1. Incorporate in its national Strategic Plan an increased emphasis on providing forestry assistance to NIPF landowners to help them address resource concerns and increase the emphasis on applying agroforestry on working agricultural lands.
2. Incorporate priorities identified in each State's Forest Action Plan and other planning documents into strategic direction prepared by State Conservationists in consultation with the State Technical Committee and its appropriate Forest Sub-Committee.

Funding/Resources

3. Encourage State Conservationists to collaborate with State forestry agencies, conservation districts, and FS to allocate appropriate resources to address resource concerns on NIPF land identified in each State's Forest Action Plan and other local planning documents to help meet landowner needs for technical and financial assistance in forestry and agroforestry.

Planning/Processes

4. Create flexibility and mechanism to apply technical standards, programs, and policies across State lines to enhance funding opportunities.
5. Consider and take appropriate action on recommendations from the Parties to integrate NRCS conservation plans/processes with Forest Stewardship plans/processes to facilitate landowner participation in forestry-related technical and financial assistance programs.
6. Incorporate NIPF land and resource information into its Rapid Watershed Assessments, as appropriate.

Partnerships/Information Sharing

7. Cooperate and coordinate with State forestry agencies in the delivery of forestry assistance to private landowners.
8. Invite and encourage State forestry agencies, conservation districts, and FS to be involved on State Technical Committees, Forest Stewardship Committees, and associated subcommittees, as well as local working groups, to provide expertise in forestry and agroforestry relative to program priorities, ranking processes, and practice standards.

9. Utilize Forest Action Plans and other planning documents in determining State priorities for providing technical and financial assistance.
10. Provide information about NRCS conservation programs that can assist in planning and implementing forestry-related conservation practices in priority landscapes/watersheds identified by their State forestry agency and other cooperators through State Technical Committee meetings and other venues.
11. Jointly produce and promote agroforestry technology, training, and educational resources in cooperation with FS, where appropriate.
12. Engage Plant Materials Centers with FS, State forestry nurseries, and conservation districts on native plant propagation, gene conservation, and other areas of common interest to improve coordination and share expertise.

Employee Training/Education

13. Encourage NRCS employees to increase their knowledge of forestry concepts and programs through training and education.
14. Provide training and education to State forestry agency, conservation district, TSPs, and FS employees about NRCS conservation programs.

E. FS will:

Planning/Processes

1. Consider and take appropriate action on recommendations from the Parties to integrate FS Forest Stewardship plans/processes/strategic plans with NRCS conservation plans/processes to facilitate landowner participation in forestry-related technical and financial assistance programs.

Partnerships/Information Sharing

2. Cooperate and coordinate with State forestry agencies in the delivery of forestry assistance to private landowners.
3. Participate on NRCS State Technical Committees and subcommittees as appropriate.
4. Participate on State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committees and subcommittees as appropriate.
5. Provide information about FS-administered programs that can assist in planning and implementing forestry-related conservation practices in priority watersheds/landscapes identified by NRCS and other cooperators through State Technical Committee meetings and other venues.
6. Provide information from its National Woodland Owner Survey to help the Parties design and deliver effective assistance programs to landowners and address priority resource concerns on NIPF land.

7. Provide land and resource information to NRCS (e.g., forest inventory, forest health risk and condition, and fire regime/condition class) to support Rapid Watershed Assessments.
8. Encourage National Forest System line officers (Regional Foresters, Forest Supervisors, and District Rangers) and Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry (S&PF) line officers (Area Director and Field Representatives) to collaborate with NRCS, conservation districts, and State forestry agencies to address critical resource concerns in the Forest Action Plans and other national, regional, and local planning documents that include national forests and private lands.
9. Engage the Reforestation, Nurseries, and Genetic Resources team with NRCS Plant Material Centers, State forestry nurseries, and conservation districts on native plant propagation, gene conservation, and other areas of common interest to improve coordination and share expertise.
10. Conduct research and jointly produce and promote agroforestry technology, training, and educational resources in cooperation with NRCS through FS S&PF and research and development.
11. Provide status updates regarding the Forest Resource Coordinating Committee meetings and share completed committee projects with the JFT.
12. Engage the JFT in helping to set priorities for research and development.

Employee Training/Education

13. Encourage FS employees to increase their knowledge of NRCS conservation programs through training and education.
14. Provide forestry-related training and education to NRCS and conservation district employees.

IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. This MOU takes effect upon the signatures of the Parties and remains in effect for 5 years from the date of execution. In the event of termination by one of the parties, the other parties may initiate a new MOU between them.
- B. This MOU is not intended to, and does not create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity, by any party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.
- C. This MOU does not affect or modify existing regulations or agency responsibilities and authorities. It specifically does not commit any agency activities beyond the scope of its mission and authorities under its organic statutes.
- D. NRCS, FS, NASF, NACD, and their respective officers will handle their own activities and utilize their own resources, including expenditures of their own

funds, in pursuing the purposes of this MOU. Each party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.

- E. Nothing in this MOU shall obligate NRCS, FS, NASF, or NACD to expend or transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and offices of the Parties will require execution of separate agreements and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all statutes and regulations.
- F. Any information furnished to NRCS and FS under this agreement is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 § U.S.C. 552).
- G. All activities and programs conducted under this MOU shall be in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions contained in Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-250); and other nondiscrimination statutes namely, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. They will also be in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7 C.F.R. 15, Subparts A & B), which provide that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance from USDA or any agency thereof.
- H. All activities conducted under this MOU shall be in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D).

V. DEFINITIONS

Working Lands – Privately owned forest land, cropland, pasture, and rangeland.

Nonindustrial Private Forest Lands – Rural lands that:

1. Have existing tree cover or are suitable for growing trees.
2. Are owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe, or other private legal entity so long as the individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe, or entity has definitive decision making authority over the lands. Corporations whose stocks are publicly traded or owners principally engaged in the primary processing of raw wood products are excluded.

VI. AGENCY/ORGANIZATION CONTACTS

NASF: Executive Director
NACD: Chief Executive Officer
NRCS: Associate Chief
FS: Associate Chief

Appendix B lists the Program Contacts for each Party. The appendix may be updated without formal modification to this MOU.

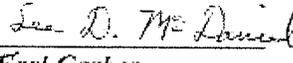
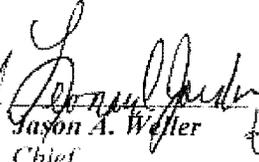
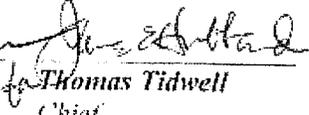
VII. AUTHORITIES

This MOU is entered into in accordance with the following laws, organization policy, and Executive Order:

1. The Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, Public Law 103-354, 7 U.S.C. 6901-7014.
2. Secretary's Memorandum 1010-1, Reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, dated October 20, 1994.
3. Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, Public Law 95-313, 16 U.S.C. 2101-2114 (As amended through Public Law 171-108, June 16, 2002 and Public Law 110-246, June 18, 2008).
4. Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, Public Law 74-46, 16 U.S.C. 590a-f; Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977, Public Law 95-192, 16 U.S.C. 2001-2009.
5. NASF By-Laws and Constitution.
6. NACD By-Laws.
7. Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, Presidential Executive Order 13352 of August 26, 2004.
8. USDA Department Regulation, 5600-003, USDA Roles in Market-Based Environmental Stewardship, dated December 20, 2006.
9. Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

APPROVAL

The undersigned parties hereby agree to the terms and conditions specified above.

			
<i>C. Randy Dye</i>	<i>Earl Garber</i>	<i>Jason A. Weller</i>	<i>Thomas Tidwell</i>
President	President	Chief	Chief
National Association of State Foresters	National Association of Conservation Districts	Natural Resources Conservation Service	U.S. Forest Service

APPENDIX A – ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

A. NASF

NASF is the non-profit organization that represents the directors of all 50 State forestry agencies, the 8 U.S. territories (American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Northern Marianas Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and the District of Columbia. Through public-private partnerships, NASF seeks to discuss, develop, sponsor, and promote programs and activities which will advance the practice of sustainable forestry, the conservation and protection of forest lands and associated resources, and the establishment and protection of forests in the urban environment.

State forestry agencies are responsible for administering a wide range of programs which ensure the protection, health, and sustainability of forests in communities and on State and private lands. As discussed above, State forestry agencies cooperate with the FS to deliver S&PF programs and with NRCS to deliver forestry assistance to private landowners. Many State forestry agencies are the primary source for forestry assistance and fund programs that provide technical and cost-share assistance to private landowners for forestry and agroforestry practices.

State forestry agencies are required to establish a State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee for consultation on key program and project actions that are necessary to deliver Cooperative Forestry programs.

State forestry agencies are responsible for comprehensive forest resource planning within their States. These plans are developed with input from partners and the public.

B. NACD

NACD is the nonprofit organization that represents America's 3,000 conservation districts and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. Conservation districts are local units of government established under State law to carry out natural resource management at the local level and act as the liaison between private landowner/managers and government assistance programs. Districts work with millions of cooperating landowners and operators to help them manage and protect land, water, and air resources on working landscapes, both on private lands and in partnership with public lands managers throughout the United States and its territories.

The association was founded on the philosophy that conservation decisions are best initiated at the local level, utilizing technical and financial assistance from Federal, State, and local governments and the private sector. As the national voice for conservation districts, NACD encourages and supports voluntary, incentive-driven natural resource conservation.

Conservation districts are often the first place landowners go for assistance with practices on their land. The districts are able to offer, or point the way to, the whole array of conservation services available from Federal, State, and local governments and private sources. These range from forestry to soil conservation, wildlife habitat to clean water, or simply making working lands esthetically pleasing or more profitable. Districts initiate or participate in collaborative processes with a wide variety of interested parties and stakeholders in their efforts to serve as a locally based delivery system for natural resources conservation and management.

C. NRCS

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and land managers who voluntarily agree to apply conservation practices on their land for conservation and improvement of natural resources.

NRCS has this long-term combined objective for grazing and forest land in its national strategic plan (2005-2010). "By 2010, farmers, ranchers, and private non-industrial forest landowners will apply management that will maintain or improve long-term vegetative condition on 150 million acres of grazing and forestland."

NRCS provides technical assistance in planning and applying agroforestry and forestry practices on private lands. NRCS conservationists and foresters in field offices provide direct technical assistance in five agroforestry practices: windbreaks/shelterbelts, riparian forest buffers, alley cropping, silvopasture, and multi-story cropping. Depending on the NRCS field office staff's expertise, conservation planning and application assistance is provided to landowners on their forest land including tree/shrub establishment, tree/shrub site preparation, forest stand improvement, fuelbreak, and several other practices.

Since 1995, NRCS has cooperated with the FS to support the National Agroforestry Center (NAC) in Lincoln, Nebraska. NAC accelerates the application of agroforestry through a national network of partners by conducting research and training, developing technologies and tools, and supporting demonstrations. NRCS also cooperates with the FS and other Federal agencies, through the Cooperative Soil Survey, to develop and support forestry and agroforestry soil and ecological interpretations.

NRCS field staff often work through partners – normally State forestry agencies and conservation districts – to provide technical assistance to private landowners for forestry activities on forest lands when the NRCS staff lack the expertise or time to provide such assistance. NRCS has agreements in some States where the State forestry agency serves as a TSP for planning and implementing forestry practices on private land.

NRCS provides financial assistance to private landowners to implement forestry and agroforestry related practices through Farm Bill and discretionary conservation programs. Assistance is also provided for multi-year and permanent easements to conserve forest land to meet program goals. NRCS determines many of its priorities and ranking processes for conservation assistance (including forestry) at the State level

through the State Technical Committee. The State Technical Committee and local work groups play an important role in developing and providing recommendations to the NRCS State Conservationist regarding the implementation of NRCS conservation programs.

In 2005, NRCS began to promote agency-wide use of Rapid Watershed Assessments (RWAs). RWAs provide initial estimates of where conservation investments would best address the concerns of landowners, conservation districts, and other community organizations and stakeholders within a watershed. These assessments help landowners and local leaders set priorities and determine the best actions to achieve their goals. RWAs contain summaries of resource concerns and opportunities that are useful for a number of activities. RWAs can be used to identify agroforestry resource concerns and identify agroforestry related practices that could be used to address the resource concerns. RWAs provide information that can be used in a conservation district's annual and long-range plans or can be used to provide a foundation for watershed, area-wide, or site-specific planning.

D. FS

The FS, through its S&PF mission area, provides expert advice, technology, and financial assistance to help landowners and resource managers sustain the Nation's forests and protect communities and the environment from wild land fires.

Through grants and cooperative agreements, State forestry agencies and other partners deliver the majority of this landowner assistance through three S&PF "umbrella" program areas that receive annual Federal appropriations: Forest Health Management; Cooperative Fire Protection; and Cooperative Forestry. Forest Health Management assistance includes conducting suppression, prevention, and management activities on native and non-native insect and disease forest pests and invasive plants.

Cooperative Fire Protection programs focus on the urgent need to reduce the threat of wild land fires in wild land-urban interface areas. Assistance is provided to complete community wildfire protection plans and to implement high priority hazard mitigation projects identified in those plans, which often includes NIPFs.

Cooperative Forestry programs provide technical and financial assistance to complete a long-term multi-resource forest stewardship plan. Assistance is provided to forest landowners for conservation easements and other mechanisms to conserve private forests. From 2003 to 2006, the Forest Land Enhancement Program (enacted with 2002 Farm Bill) provided cost-share assistance to private landowners for forestry and agroforestry practices; however, new funding for the program ended in fiscal year 2006.

The FS manages public lands, known collectively as the National Forest System, located in 44 States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The lands comprise 8.5 percent of the total land area in the United States. The natural resources on these lands are some of the

Nation's greatest assets and have major economic, environmental, and social significance for all Americans. The National Forest Management Act of 1976 requires every national forest or grassland to develop and maintain an effective Land Management Plan (also known as a *Forest Plan*). Managers of individual forests and grasslands conduct sustainability evaluations within an area large enough to consider broad-scale social, economic, and ecological factors and trends over large landscapes. Consideration of private lands and collaboration with State Foresters and NRCS are critical to this all-lands approach to forest health and sustainable use of the Nation's forest resource.

As stated above, the FS cooperates with NRCS to support the work of the NAC and through the Cooperative Soil Survey, to develop and support forestry and agroforestry soil and ecological interpretations.

Through its Research and Development (R&D) mission area, FS scientists carry out basic and applied research that result in science-based applications and tools that support management of all the Nation's forests, including lands in private ownership. In cooperation with State forestry agencies, private landowners, and others, the FS R&D organization manages the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA). FIA surveys, analyzes, and reports on the status and trends in forest area and location; in the species, size, and health of trees; in total tree growth, mortality, and removals by harvest; in wood production and utilization rates by various products; and in forest land ownership.

FS R&D also is responsible for the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS), which is the official census of forest owners in the United States. It is aimed at increasing our understanding of private forest/woodland owners. NWOS summary information is used by people who provide, design, and implement services and policies that affect forest owners, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, including landowner organizations, private service providers, forest industry companies, and academic researchers.

Appendix B - Point of Contacts

National Association of Conservation Districts:

Mike Beacom
NACD Forestry Specialist
Office: (715) 340-0681
mike-beacom@nacdnet.org

National Association of State Foresters:

Brent Keith
Director of Forest Policy
Office: (202) 624-5977
bkeith@stateforesters.org

Natural Resources Conservation Service:

Russ Hatz
Acting National Forester
Office: (503) 273-2428
russ.hatz@nrcs.usda.gov

U.S. Forest Service:

Maya Solomon
Program Coordinator
Office: (202) 205-1376
mayasolomon@fs.fed.us

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN THE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

AND THE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

AND THE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
FOREST SERVICE

AND THE

HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

CONCERNING COLLABORATION ON FORESTRY RELATED PROGRAM DELIVERY IN
THE STATE OF HAWAII

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into by and between the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts (HACD). These entities comprise the Hawaii Joint Forestry Team and are hereinafter referred to as the "Partners."

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to enhance public benefit from the sustainable management of forestry resources in Hawaii. This agreement is intended to integrate technical skills, fields of expertise and strengthen interagency delivery of forestry assistance to privately managed lands across the state, as well as increase technical capacity within the Partners to improve delivery of forestry-related programs. For the purposes of this MOU, "privately managed lands" shall include: Privately owned lands, and private or public lands under lease, license or other terms that meet applicable assistance program eligibility requirements.

Specifically, this MOU details actions associated with:

A. Identifying the Partners' roles in providing financial and technical assistance for forest landowners and land managers on privately managed lands, and associated collaboration between the Partners on the delivery of such assistance.

B. Promoting integrated and streamlined delivery of the Partners' forestry related programs to allow consistent, expeditious and user friendly interactions for landowners and land managers interested in forestry-related practices on their land.

C. Identifying critical and priority forest landscapes for outreach, engagement and targeted service to landowners and land managers to enhance the health and productivity of working forested lands.

D. Developing a communication plan between the Partners to further the implementation of forestry-related initiatives and administrative issues as described under this MOU in a consistent manner.

E. Participation in meetings once every 12 months or more frequently as desired or needed to enhance the Partners' interactions and cross-training efforts.

F. Identifying national, regional, or local initiatives that may enhance forest land management across jurisdictional boundaries and for which the Partner's may be able contribute to or benefit from.

Under this MOU the Partners agree to practice good faith efforts to realize the above described purposes and to further mutual interests by contributing resources to the successful implementation of forestry related programs and the benefits derived from such cooperation.

II. BACKGROUND

Hawaii Joint Forest Team Progress

Since execution of the initial Hawaii-level MOU in May 2011, the Partners have accomplished a number of actions to promote forestry-related conservation assistance in Hawaii, including:

- Conducted regular meetings, approximately quarterly, to discuss the progress and Partner's needs in delivering forestry assistance to private lands.
- Created a Hawaii Joint Forestry website that describes the Hawaii MOU, accomplishments, upcoming training opportunities, and related forestry resources.
- Provided trainings internally for Partner staff and externally for participants in various forestry-related conservation assistance programs, including two "Forest Stewards" Workshops for private forest landowners and two workshops to train prospective forestry consultants in forest management plan writing.

- Completed development of various Partner guidelines, handbooks, planning tools and public information documentation updated to facilitate streamlined delivery of forestry technical and financial assistance.
- USFS and DOFAW jointly funded a position (1.0 FTE) to work 50% on public and 50% private forest land management issues to provide outreach regarding the benefits of well-managed forests to forest landowners and land managers on privately managed lands as well as the general public.
- Collaborated on a Conservation Partners grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation that provides additional conservation planning staff focused on forest restoration projects under the Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. .
- Participated in the various Partners' annual and/or quarterly advisory committee meetings.

Importance of Private Forest Lands to Hawaii's Welfare

In September 2013, the National Joint Forestry Team comprised of the National Association of State Foresters, the National Association of Conservation Districts, the NRCS and the USFS renewed a national Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix A). That MOU continues cooperation between the Partners at the national level for coordinated interagency delivery of forestry and agroforestry-related conservation assistance to privately managed lands. The intended result is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's private working lands - forest land, cropland, pasture, and rangeland, especially as they relate to the shared responsibilities identified in the 2014 Farm Bill.

The Partners recognize that Hawaii's forest resources are subject to a multitude of threats and many do not provide the full range of benefits that they are capable of including but not limited to ecosystem services, timber products, and non-timber forest products. The significance and challenges for Hawaii's forests are more thoroughly discussed in Hawaii's State-Wide Assessment and Resource Strategy (Hawaii Forest Action Plan) and the Hawaii Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, many of which can be addressed through a collaborative approach that is strengthened by the assets and expertise provided by each of the Partners.

A. Landscape fragmentation and conversion to non-forest uses. Incremental conversion of natural areas by urbanization and intensive agricultural practices have had a significant negative impact on the quantity of forest land area and forest resources in Hawaii – particularly at lower and middle elevations on all the major islands.

B. Increasing costs associated with wildfire control and threats to Hawaii's native, ecosystems including threatened and endangered species. Wildfires in Hawaii place communities at risk, destroy native species and ecosystems, promote invasions of invasive species, destroy irreplaceable cultural resources, cost taxpayers money, negatively impact drinking water supplies and human health, increase soil erosion, and impact near shore and marine resources.

C. Increased invasive species damage from non-native plants, mammals, insects, and diseases. Encroachment by invasive plant species, forest pathogens, invasive invertebrates and feral ungulates seriously threaten forest resources and the ecosystem services they provide at all

elevations. A variety of techniques to reduce and suppress invasive species needs to be applied across boundaries and landscapes in order to realistically prevent or limit damage to forest ecosystems in Hawaii.

D. Reduction in sustainable habitat for native species and native ecosystems. Hawaii is home to the greatest number of threatened and endangered species in the United States. The decline in native species is mirrored by the loss of native habitat, with less than 40% of the land surface covered with native-dominated vegetation. To avert the continued decline of Hawaii's rare species, partnerships that work strategically are crucial tools to protect and restore unique habitats that are critical to species survival and that provide benefits to human society.

E. Forest production and management. A well-managed forest products industry could provide employment, forest resources for markets in and outside of Hawaii, recreational and cultural opportunities, and landscape level ecosystem services. Encouraging a sustainable forest products industry in Hawaii will contribute to local, national, and international sustainability targets to improve environmental conditions, economic opportunities and societal benefits.

F. Climate change. Projected threats to Hawaii forest resources due to climate change include changes in: Drier rainfall patterns; reduced available water quantity and quality; increased temperatures; increases in extreme weather events; increased wildfire frequency and intensity; sea level rise, and; declines in native ecosystems and biodiversity. Monitoring these changes over time will provide information that will in turn guide adaptive management regimes and focus management in strategically important ecosystems.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Partners share a commitment to stewardship and conservation of Hawaii's natural resources. The actions undertaken within this MOU will enable the Partners to accomplish collective conservation goals and continue to fulfill their individual organizational conservation missions, resulting in a greater cumulative impact on the sustained health, diversity and productivity of Hawaii's privately managed forest lands. The Partners recognize the following unique and complementary role each partner brings to the partnership:

- DLNR has the leadership role and responsibility for delivery of forestry programs on State and private lands which are guided through the Hawaii Forest Action Plan.
- HACD carries out natural resource management at the local level and acts as a liaison between private landowners, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other entities providing assistance programs.
- NRCS and USFS are sources of interdisciplinary expertise and funding for forestry and natural resource conservation.

All of the Partners have the authority to independently and mutually coordinate and cooperate with other entities not party to this agreement to advance their purposes and programs. The Partners will work to address barriers through joint and individual actions.

Jointly, the Partners will:

A. Work together to integrate existing programs, reduce duplication and confusion among the Partners and private landowners, and promote sustainable forestry and agroforestry management on privately managed lands by providing financial and technical assistance to identified forested or formerly forested lands under programs authorized for Hawaii. The Partners will develop, provide training for, and utilize the most current tools and technical materials to support delivery of forestry assistance, with reporting tracked in systems such as NRCS ToolKit or USFS Stewardship Mapping and Reporting Tool. Forestry assistance programs in Hawaii include, but are not limited to, Hawaii Forest Stewardship Program (FSP), Natural Area Partnership Program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Agricultural Management Assistance, Forest Legacy Program, and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

B. Identify critical forest landscapes for collaborative outreach to lands within those identified areas. Critical forest landscapes shall initially include all current and formerly forested lands and those lands identified as priority areas in the Hawaii Forest Action Plan and/or the Spatial Analysis Project. The Partners shall periodically review and refine these and other relevant Hawaii forestry planning documents or analyses as needed. The Partners will strive to work across landowner boundaries and across landscapes by engaging State land managers and other large acre landowners to reduce costs and expand management efforts and efficiencies.

C. Consult with each other on the development of program ranking criteria, permissible cost-share rates and application evaluations for forestry related projects. The Partners will advocate that forestry-related projects receive a representative allocation of total available conservation technical and financial assistance, as appropriate from federal, state and county funding sources.

D. Collaborate on the development and implementation of a communication plan between the Partners, including all appropriate agency staff and other forest conservation interests, to further forestry-related initiatives in a consistent manner. The communication plan should include, but is not limited to: sharing of records, material and information, and especially program guidelines; communication channels between the Partners, and; dissemination of information to all agency staff involved in MOU initiatives.

E. Participate in Partner meetings, including work groups, committees, and councils, among others, to enhance the Partners' interactions and cross-training efforts, as well as to recognize and integrate local, regional and national initiatives.

F. Collaborate on outreach and education to private landowners, communities, and the general public on forestry-related initiatives, sustainable management, best management practices and other activities. Where appropriate coordinate outreach efforts with state and federal agencies, as well as with the Hawaii Forest Industry Association and/or other non-profit or special interest groups.

G. Subject to the availability of funds, enter into Contribution Agreements to further initiatives under this MOU, which may include, but are not limited to, jointly funded new position(s) focused on:

- 1) Increasing forestry outreach to privately managed lands;
- 2) Assistance in management plan development and/or enrollment in financial assistance programs for projects on privately managed lands;
- 3) Providing technical assistance for implementation of forestry practices;
- 4) Providing training (workshops, webinars, site visits) and materials for private land managers, potential forestry consultants, and Partner staff, as appropriate, and;
- 5) Other objectives that further the protection and enhancement of forest resources.

The Partners agree to enter into a separate agreement(s) from this MOU to facilitate initiatives. Contribution Agreements will include goals for the project(s) or position(s) that must be met in order to continue any cost-share funding under the agreement, as appropriate.

H. Promote the control of and limit future establishment of non-native invasive species in the Hawaiian Islands. Specifically, NRCS and USFS will comply with Executive Order 13112 limiting the use of federal funds for activities with the potential to introduce or spread invasive species (Appendix B), and DLNR and HACD will voluntarily follow similar principles. The Partners will use the Hawaii-Pacific Weed Risk Assessment for initial screening of potentially invasive species. The Partners will work together to identify funding support for this effort, as needed.

I. Participate in an annual interagency review of initiatives under this MOU to share data and gauge the need for modifications or improvements to the MOU or initiatives under the MOU and/or agency-specific programs.

NRCS will:

A. Authorize the use of approved Hawaii Forest Stewardship Program management plans as forest management plans for the purposes of funding under EQIP or other appropriate NRCS programs as detailed in Section III. A.

- 1) NRCS will work with DLNR and the USFS to revise and update the Forest Stewardship Program's management plan template to include information required for NRCS program contract agreements. Forest Stewardship management plans following this revised template and approved by the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee will be a complete plan containing all information required for entry directly into NRCS planning and programs contracting software.

- 2) NRCS will work with DLNR to periodically coordinate the review and update the FSP project proposal template and other FSP documents to ensure adequate coverage of NRCS planning and program requirements.
- 3) NRCS will provide an annual summary of funded projects that had an approved Forest Stewardship Management Plan.

B. Ensure that forestry-related projects, including those with approved Forest Stewardship management plans, receive a representative allocation of total available conservation technical and financial assistance each year.

C. Assign NRCS staff to serve on the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee convened by DLNR, and local or state work groups hosted by Partners, as appropriate.

D. Provide technical support and program training to Partner staff to assure that they understand NRCS programs, conservation planning policy, procedures, structural designs (as applicable), and other practices that are required to meet NRCS standards and specifications.

DLNR will:

- A. In relation to the Hawaii Forest Stewardship Program and management plans:
 - 1) Work with interested managers of privately managed lands to develop a Forest Stewardship Management Plan for their property or project, including providing technical and financial assistance to interested landowners to develop a Forest Stewardship management plan.
 - 2) Support and coordinate the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee, which will be responsible for reviewing and advising the Partners on approval of all Forest Stewardship management plans. DLNR will assure that staff and personnel associated with the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee have adequate knowledge to plan and apply various forestry related practices.
 - 3) Provide authorization and final approval of all Forest Stewardship Management Plans through the State Forester.
 - 4) Direct landowners with approved Forest Stewardship Management Plans to their local NRCS office for possible enrollment into an USDA financial incentive program or to other funding agencies as appropriate. When possible DLNR may provide financial assistance for a portion or the entirety of approved Forest Stewardship management plan. DLNR will provide appropriate funding information to NRCS for projects that are receiving financial assistance through the Forest Stewardship Program in addition to Partner's programs to ensure that assistance funding is being used consistently and appropriately.

B. Work with NRCS to revise and incorporate all necessary information that is required to initiate contract agreements under NRCS financial incentive programs into the Hawaii Forest Stewardship Program Handbook and associated management plan templates.

C. Provide training, in conjunction with USFS, to NRCS and HACD staff on forest stewardship and forestry management practices to expand capacity in the Partners.

D. Continue to provide technical assistance to NRCS forestry participants with approved Forest Stewardship management plans, as requested. DLNR will provide assistance to Partners, as needed, in completing forestry management plans outside of the Forest Stewardship Program.

E. Assign DLNR staff representation to participate on the State Technical Advisory Committee, convened by NRCS, and local/state work groups hosted by Partners, as appropriate.

F. Participate, whenever possible, in annual meetings hosted by HACD and work cooperatively with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts on forestry planning and activities in their districts.

USFS will:

A. Provide annual financial assistance to DLNR for the administration and implementation of the Hawaii Forest Stewardship Program, as well as other State and Private Forestry (S&PF) programs directly or indirectly supporting the management of privately managed lands. USFS will also offer opportunities for additional financial assistance through the S&PF Redesign Competitive Grant process, including providing information about these programs to the Partners.

B. Consult with the Partners to reconcile guidelines for annual accomplishment reporting so that Partners know how to properly report cooperative accomplishments.

C. Facilitate forestry technical assistance to cooperative projects with NRCS, DLNR, and HACD to benefit privately managed lands, from national and regional Forest Service experts and programs including, but not limited to, the Reforestation, Nurseries and Genetic Resources (RNGR) team; Research, especially concerning silviculture; the Forest Health program; Cooperative Fire Assistance program; and forest land taxation specialists.

D. Assign USFS staff representatives to participate on the State Technical Advisory Committee, convened by NRCS, and staff representatives to serve on the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee convened by DLNR, as well as other local or state work groups hosted by Partners, as appropriate.

E. Initiate active correspondences with other USDA agencies, including Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, Forest Inventory and Analysis and Research entities to explore opportunities for collaboration with national and regional Forest Service experts and programs including but not limited to biomass utilization technical experts and the Forest Products Laboratory.

HACD will encourage Hawaii's Soil and Water Conservation Districts to:

- A. Cooperate and coordinate with forestry agencies in the delivery of forestry assistance to privately managed lands.
- B. Invite Partners to participate in regional and national meetings and conservation initiatives.
- C. Assist in identification of forestry needs on a regional basis.
- D. Collaborate with Partners in landscape or watershed planning and implementation.
- E. Encourage Soil and Water Conservation District staff to increase their knowledge of forestry programs.

IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS

This MOU is effective upon the date of the last signature of the Partners and remains in effect for the life of the 2014 Farm Bill (Agricultural Act of 2014). This may be renewed by mutual consent of the Partners.

A. Modification of the scope of this MOU shall be made only by mutual consent of the Partners. Issuance of a written modification must be signed and dated by all Partners, prior to implementation of any changes.

B. This MOU does not affect or modify existing regulations or agency responsibilities and authorities. It specifically does not commit any agency to activities beyond the scope of its current mission and authorities under the statutes by which it is governed.

C. Each of the Partners are responsible for their own activities and will utilize their own resources, including expenditure of funds, in pursuing the purposes of this MOU. Each party will carry out its separate activities in a coordinated and mutually beneficial manner.

D. Nothing in this MOU shall obligate any of the Partners to expend or transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property among the various agencies and the Partners' offices will require execution of separate agreements, and be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This MOU does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of any such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.

E. Any information furnished to the NRCS and USFS under this MOU is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552). Furthermore, any information furnished under this MOU is subject to the State of Hawaii Chapter 92F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, public records law.

F. All activities and programs conducted under this MOU shall be in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions contained in Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Civil rights Restoration act of 1987.

V. AGENCY ORGANIZATION CONTACTS

The following individuals will serve as the Partners' Liaisons for this MOU.

Agency	Primary Contact
Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Forestry and Wildlife 1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325 Honolulu, HI 96813	Irene Sprecher Cooperative Resource Management Forester irene.m.sprecher@hawaii.gov (808) 587-4167
United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service P.O. BOX 50004 Honolulu, HI 96850	Michael Constantinides Forest Ecologist michael.constantinides@hi.usda.gov (808) 541-2600 ext. 122
United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region 1320 Club Drive Vallejo, CA 94592	Sherry Hazelhurst Director shazelhurst@fs.fed.us (707) 562-8920
Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts P.O Box 1411 Wailuku, HI 96793	Michelle Watkins Executive Director hacdhawaii@gmail.com (808) 214-5388

VI. AUTHORITIES

This MOU is entered into in accordance with the following laws, organization policy and Executive Order:

A. Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, Public Law 103-354, 7 U.S.C. 6901-7014;

B. Secretary's Memorandum 1010-1, Reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, dated October 20, 1994;

C. Cooperative Forestry Assistance act of 1978, Public Law 95-313, 16 U.S.C. 2101-2114 (As Amended through P.L. 171-108, June 16, 2002, and P.L. 110-246, June 18, 2008);

D. Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 195F and Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 109;

E. Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, Public Law 74-46, 16 U.S.C. 590a-f; Soil and water Resources Conservation Act of 1997, Public Law 95-192, 16 U.S.C. 2001-2009;

F. NASF By-Laws and Constitution;

G. NACD By-Laws;

H. Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, Presidential Executive Order 13352 of August 26, 2004;

I. USDA Department Regulation, 5600-003, USDA Roles in Market-Based Environmental Stewardship, dated December 20, 2006;

J. Agricultural Act of 2014;

The foregoing accurately reflects the Agreement between the Partners. We indicate our acceptance of this document and the agreement herein by executing this Agreement.

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NATURAL RESOURCE
CONSERVATION SERVICE

Bruce Petersen, Director
NRCS Pacific Islands Area

Date _____

FOR THE STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Carty Chang, Interim Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources

Date _____

FOR THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE UNITED STATES
FOREST SERVICE

Randy Moore, Regional Forester
USFS Region 5

Date _____

FOR THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Brenda Iokepa-Moses, President

Date _____