



## **Natural Areas Working Group**

William T. Stormont, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

The Natural Areas Working Group (NAWG) began as a means of involving various community interests in discussions regarding the management of state-owned Natural Area Reserves on the Big Island. Through monthly facilitated group meetings, coupled with community meetings, the NAWG published a report in March 1995 outlining its process of issue identification, recommendation development, and specific action formulation. A primary action taken has been the development of regionally-based groups having the same functional

representation as the NAWG. Hunters, land managers, resource users, environmentalists, researchers, landowners, and elected officials now make up two separate regional groups: the Kohala Forest Management Group and the Upper Puna Volcano Regional Forest Management Advisory Council. These groups represent what may be the cutting edge of public land use planning. At a minimum, they offer an opportunity for dialogue and shared information exchange.