



Summary: Koa Stewardship

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Hawai'i County . . . sugar transition . . . no more sugar, sugar's out . . . what's coming in? We have diversified ag; we have eucalyptus plantations. You might think initially that the eucalyptus plantations have nothing to do with koa, but I think you'd be mistaken. The kinds of quality scientists that have come in to analyze the project have been interested in our koa. These are people of worldwide reputation, soils people, harvest people, stewardship people, people that have seen other acacias. I'm very excited about the potential of them coming in and stirring our pot a little bit.

Mauka Kona . . . cattle industry transition. Thousands and thousands of acres that used to be stuffed to the gills with cattle are not anymore. What's going to happen to those lands? Transition. We've got 1400 different species of grasses we've brought into the state of Hawai'i over the years. Kikuyu grass is the main one that's left up there . . . a fire hazard; how are we going to handle it? What about grass competition in our koa? The state of Hawai'i made a start at a transition at Kapapala. They stopped, then they started again, now they've stopped. They need to start it up again and get that model going.

Maui County . . . I sense from the presentation by Bart that there's a growing interest. We see Maui Land and Pine and Haleakala Ranch . . . Ulupalakua Ranch was mentioned as someone who has investigated and done a little bit of work . . . and of course the National Park dominates the natural resource over there.

O'ahu . . . transitional? I hope not. The fear I have is that the koa dieback from whatever pathogen (if the right one's been identified) could be extremely serious business. Some are now looking at the economics of fiber and are looking at water problems. The two-spotted leaf hopper is giving us problems in the 'uluhe.

Kaua'i sugar land . . . again, we heard that koa is currently not the replacement crop of choice. Primarily for genetic reasons, that we don't have a reliable seed source that will produce high-quality koa in a short time, but I hear that some experimentation is possible. And then again, transition at Koke'e—it sounded a lot more

positive than I expected. So that's my stewardship round-up.

Comments

Stephanie Whalen: The sugar industry took a massive decline in a very short period of time which was, I think, unexpected by much of the community. We're now in a crisis mode and it allows us to make some changes. It took 20 years to get some tax changes; when the sugar land became available, it precipitated a change. I think that is giving us an opportunity. It seems like our systems, whether private or public, all resist change. If you look at any organization, it never makes a change until there's a crisis to deal with. This crisis is what's allowing an opportunity right now for the forest industry. There's a "window of opportunity," and I hope that we can meet the challenge and take some steps in this crisis to make some changes that are needed.

Michael Buck: I'd like to make one comment, because I think I heard a couple of guffaws when people talked about eucalyptus plantations. We've had a hundred years of monoculture, clear-cut-and-burn agriculture, and I can't believe some people say, "You're not going to plant those eucalyptus in monocultures and harvest them every six years!" It took us over 300 years to deforest that land, and putting trees on the ground is the first step. I think we're looking for a strategic mix of both short-term and long-term, but if we don't get something growing in that ground, you will have houses. So I think it's important that people be realistic about the mix of trees as they come on. Forest restoration is not something that happens overnight, so people need to be realistic about who's going to pay for these trees, and let's start pushing for a strategic mix of trees that get on the ground in the sugar lands.

Peter Simmons: One other thing I heard, maybe the phrase is overused but it's "over-regulated and under-managed." Anyone who's trying to do business in Hawai'i knows how those two work. I think in this time



when we have an opportunity for a new beginning that there shouldn't be guidelines and that we should allow things to run wild. It's a time for creativity, a time to try new things. We'll be encouraging a lot of our lessees on the integrated, diversified ag to try high-value trees as their windrows. That's something that we haven't done in the past, and that's just one example of trying to become a little more innovative. It may be more complicated to write up the lease in terms of who owns the milo, kamani, kou, and koa if it's a shorter-term lease, because they need windrows and we need hardwoods. So it's a time to be creative and look at creative solutions and opportunities. One of my fears when we saw the CZM presentation was that the potential for over-regulation is with us, also.

Mike Tulang: I'm going to ask a question to, maybe, Peter. If I was a landowner, and I was to plant, say, eucalyptus or even koa in agricultural land, and say the trees come up and they provide a jump-off area for endangered species, and I've invested 40 years of my time and 40 years of my dollars. What do you think about the idea for industrial forestry zoning in agriculture? Do you think investors would be willing to look upon that as a positive move? Maybe Paul can also add in.

Paul Brewbaker: I'll just comment that the way economists look at the economy, there are several wedges in the right hand corner of the pie chart that we collectively label goods-producing industries. They are agriculture, forestry, fisheries, manufacturing, and construction. There's a sense in which we ought to see them all in the same framework, and that ought to be part of the way we regulate them. I don't know if we need to industrially zone ag land, forested land, but maybe we should recognize that what it's there for is to produce goods and not have any misconceptions about that.

Peter Simmons: I think that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's recent administrative rules allow that kind of thinking, where you can basically make a contract, with the federal government anyway, that secures a certain part of the risk. Several of us, I hope all of us, will be working on the state law so that we can have some continuity. I think your point is a good one, Mike.

Comment from the audience: Peter, you mentioned windbreaks. After listening to Holly's presentation about

nitrogen fixation in koa trees, I'd like to suggest that you also encourage your lessees to use an alley cropping system using koa rows and farming between them until the trees are big enough, eventually harvesting the trees, being able to produce the trees and cropping together at the same time.

Peter Simmons: I think that's a really good idea. I think it comes under the gross heading of agroforestry, and it's an idea that takes both a willing landlord and an innovative lessee.