



Koa Forest Policy

Preamble

While the koa tree, as a species, is not officially endangered, it is estimated that native koa forest ecosystems have shrunk to less than ten percent of their former area. The exploitation of koa forested lands for urban development, ranching, koa and hapu'u logging continues. The severe impacts of introduced weed and animal species are escalating. The remaining koa forests represent a last haven for many rare, threatened or endangered species of endemic birds, insects and plants.

Policy Statement

It shall be the policy of Sierra Club, Hawai'i Chapter, to foster the protection of koa forest ecosystems. Further, the Chapter encourages the reforestation of koa in areas previously occupied by koa, in areas where koa still remains and in key watersheds.

Position Statements

1. The Chapter urges a moratorium on the purchase of koa furniture, panelling and adornments for public and commercial buildings, including hotels, banks and all government facilities, until such time as these items are available as products of an environmentally sound koa forest industry.
2. The Chapter strongly opposes logging in state owned native koa ecosystems.
3. The Chapter encourages its members to patronize local woodworkers who use non-native, locally-grown woods, such as mango, Norfolk Island Pine, ironwood and eucalyptus, in place of koa (provided that the planting and harvesting of such species do not cause adverse impacts to native ecosystems and key watersheds).
4. The Chapter calls for the implementation of tax reforms and other economic incentives to encourage the use of private land for environmentally sound forestry (where appropriate), conservation and watershed purposes.

5. The Chapter supports the conversion of state controlled grazing leases and other agricultural lands in the “Koa Belt” to environmentally sound forestry (where appropriate), conservation and watershed purposes.
6. The Chapter urges that the wood products industry, in conjunction with the Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, the U.S. Forest Service and concerned citizens, develop a consumer labeling system to ensure that wood products are extracted from appropriate areas in an environmentally responsible manner.
7. The Chapter urges all woodworkers and consumers of koa to seek information on the sources of the wood and logging methods to determine whether this wood was extracted from appropriate areas utilizing sound forestry practices. If such information is not available, the Chapter urges artists, woodworkers and consumers not to purchase woods so extracted.
8. The Chapter calls urgently for stronger state and private control programs for introduced species (plant and animal), such as banana poka, which have destructive impacts on koa forest systems.
9. The Chapter supports the rights of na kanaka maoli to have access to forested land for subsistence gathering and traditional practices.
10. The Chapter, in the absence of environmentally effective management programs and labeling initiatives, will encourage its members, and others, to refrain from purchasing either unfinished or finished koa products, including souvenirs, panelling and furniture, until such time as these items are available as products of an environmentally sound forest industry.

This Koa Forest Policy was approved by the Sierra Club Hawai‘i Chapter Executive Committee at its quarterly meetings held October 29-31, 1993.