



Natural Resources Stewardship Policy

Policy Statement

Preamble

Humankind has historically treated the natural world in which it lives in two different ways: as if the components in that natural world existed only for its convenience, giving no thought to future consequences of present action, or as a steward toward those components, believing that it has a responsibility to the future.

Continued existence of significant elements of the current natural resources of the Hawaiian island chain are dependent upon stewardship. These elements include:

*1,500 kinds of endemic (occurring only in Hawai'i) plants; *more than 25% of the 750 candidate endangered/threatened plants in the United States of America;

*10,000 native species of terrestrial invertebrates, of which 96% are endemic;

*30% endemic marine fish and invertebrates;

*25% endemic freshwater fish (reduced from 100% in the past half century);

*99% endemism in the 1,000 land snail species;

*biological systems illustrating evolutionary patterns of world renown; and

*scenic beauty and geologic features of national and international significance.

Our State Constitution asserts "The State shall have the power to promote and maintain a healthful environment, including the prevention of any excessive demands upon the environment and the State's resources" (Article IX, Section 8). Also, "Each person has the right to a clean and healthful environment, as defined by laws relating to environmental quality, including control of pollution and conservation, protection and enhancement of

natural resources” (Article XI, Section 9). From these provisions, it is clear that the State has the power to take the stewardship role with respect to natural resources.

Even more explicitly, Article XI, Section 1 of the State Constitution directs a stewardship, future-oriented approach: “For the benefit of present and future generations, the State and its political subdivisions shall conserve and protect Hawaii’s natural beauty and all natural resources, including land, water, air, minerals and energy sources, and shall promote the development and utilization of these resources in a manner consistent with their conservation and in furtherance of the self-sufficiency of the State.”

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The Sierra Club, Hawai‘i Chapter, supports a stewardship approach to the natural resources found in the State of Hawai‘i, as called for in the State Constitution (Article XI, Section 1): “For the benefit of present and future generations, the State and its political subdivisions shall conserve and protect Hawaii’s natural beauty and all natural resources, including land, water, air, minerals and energy sources, and shall promote the development and utilization of these resources in a manner consistent with their conservation and in furtherance of the self-sufficiency of the State. All public natural resources are held in trust by the State of Hawai‘i for the benefit of the people.”

This Natural Resources Stewardship Policy was approved by the Sierra Club Hawai‘i Chapter Executive Committee at its quarterly meetings held July 18-20, 1986.