



USFWS Draft Restoration and NEPA Evaluation for O'ahu Sugar Site: West Loch, Pearl Harbor

fws.gov/project/oahu-sugar-site-restoration-middle-loch-pearl-harbor

Refuge Background

The ponds and tidal flats at Pearl Harbor Naval Base were recognized as one of four areas of major importance for endangered waterbirds on O'ahu. In 1972, a Cooperative Agreement with the Pearl Harbor Naval Base established the Waiawa unit as part of Pearl Harbor National Wildlife Refuge to protect, provide habitat, and aid in recovery efforts for four of Hawai'i's endangered waterbirds: ae'o (Hawaiian stilt), 'alae ke'oke'o (Hawaiian coot), 'alae 'ula (Hawaiian gallinule), and koloa maoli (Hawaiian duck).

Restoration Goals

The USFWS-led Draft Restoration Plan proposes improvements to the Waiawa Unit of the Pearl Harbor National Wildlife Refuge, which will enrich such habitat as was injured near the former pesticide mixing plant.

Proposed Actions

- The Service proposes to contract wetland engineers to determine how to improve the impoundments, reduce evaporative salt build-up, and access and distribute fresh water.
- The Service may also consult with the engineers regarding the possibility of transitioning the Makai pond to a saltwater tidal flat as an adaptive strategy to sea-level rise.
- The Service proposes to implement appropriate impoundment improvements that will include building up roads/dikes, replacing infrastructure, and relocating the artesian well.
- To benefit waterbirds, the Service proposes habitat management activities which may include mowing, herbicide application, and rototilling to control dense contiguous patches of pickleweed (*Batis maritima*), California grass (*Brachiaria mutica*), marsh fleabane (*Pluchea* spp.), California bulrush (*Scirpus californicus*), water hyssop (*Bacopa monnieri*), or cattail (*Typha* spp.).
- Habitat restoration efforts will include planting native species. Beaked tasselweed (*Ruppia maritima*) can tolerate a wide range of salinity and has physical adaptations that enable plants to adjust to changing salinities



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Public comments on the USFWS plan may be submitted in writing to:

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You may send comments by email to oahusugarnrdar@fws.gov. Please include "Draft RP/NEPA Evaluation for O'ahu Sugar Site" in the title.

All comments must be received on or before February 25, 2025.

