

Kāneʻohe Bay Regional Council Meeting
Meeting Minutes
August 26, 2025
6:00 PM-8:00 PM

1. Call to Order (Non-Action Item)

Participants present:

Brian Neilson – DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources (DLNR DAR), Chairperson
Cedric Bertelmann – Kāneʻohe Bay Fishing Panel, voting member
Elena Bryant – Kāneʻohe Neighborhood Board, voting member
Joseph Pickard – Kāneʻohe Bay Commercial Operators, voting member
Fred Reppun – Hawaiʻi Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB), voting member
Liko Kaluhiwa – Kāneʻohe Bay Recreational Boaters, voting member
Jarrett Keone Machado – Kahaluʻu Neighborhood Board, voting member
Aunty Rocky Kaluhiwa – Aha Moku Council
Kristi Kaluhiwa – Koʻolaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club
Rallen Caya – Captain Bobʻs Snorkel Cruises
Kūʻike Kamakea-ʻŌhelo – Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA)
Kendall Tucker – DLNR DAR
Olivia Boucher – DLNR DAR
Hoaka Thomas – DLNR DAR
Casey Ching – Heʻeia NERR
Brent Kakesako – Hawaiʻi Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED)
Corin Thornburg – Hawaiʻi Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED)
Merri Keliʻikuli - Hawaiʻi Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED)
Nick Sinchek
Paulette Tam
Wayne German
Spark

Meeting called to order at 6:05pm by Chair Neilson.

Chair Neilson explained the purpose of the meeting being to continue the process of reviewing the Kāneʻohe Bay Master Plan with a single non-action agenda item to address specific topics of water quality control, water quality monitoring, and erosion and sediment control.

2. Designation of Temporary Committee members to review recommendations pertaining to the following topics – Water Quality Control, Water Quality Monitoring, and Erosion & Sedimentation Control. (Non-Action item)

Brent Kakesako explained the purpose of this meeting being not to revise the Kāneʻohe Bay Master Plan (KBMP), but to look at the recommendations under the topics that were selected at the previous meeting and check on their progress and what is further needed for implementation.

Overview of the previous meeting

- Casey Ching walked through Chapter 3 at the last meeting which outlined the area covered by the KBMP
- Participants discussed clarifications to check on with DLNR DAR and Department of Health (DOH)

- The closure and access of military exclusion zones need to be clarified
- Progress made since the the KBMP was created included public designations of certain parts of Kāneʻohe Bay. Participants discussed where public designations could be implemented elsewhere.
- Participants walked through recommendations listed under “Long Range Planning”, Chapter 5 of KBMP
 - Participants celebrated the existence of KBRC established from KBMP
 - Participants suggested getting more participation and engagement from OHA and Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD)
 - Participants recognized that Brian Neilson is doing a great job as the Chair, but asked if there is a way to rotate the position to another person
 - Participants celebrated implementation of a Makai Watch program
 - Participants suggested engaging DLNR further with the Ka Paʻakai analysis
- Participants suggested prioritizing recommendations under the following headings: Water Quality Control Recommendations, Water Quality Monitoring Recommendations, and Recommendations to Control Erosion and Sedimentation.
- Additional votes were received to review: Public Open Space and Access Recommendations, Education Recommendations, Stream Recommendations, and Proposed State Land Use District Changes
- A last meeting will be held before the holidays, then the planning team will loop in agencies for the next round of committee meetings next year.

Member Reppun reminded participants that the purpose of these meetings is only to review the KBMP. They are publicly noticed due to Sunshine Law requiring all meetings to be open to the public, given that more than 3 KBRC members were interested in attending. These meetings are considered Temporary Committee Meetings of KBRC after this process being voted on during previous meetings.

Wayne German asked if there has been any interface with people that are testing water. Casey Ching replied that could be a next step in this process to find out what information we need to know.

Brent Kakesako shared the spreadsheet used to combine recommendations from both Chapters 4 and 5 of KBMP.

- Many recommendations overlap, but some have different agencies listed for implementation.
- Each recommendation will be reviewed to determine whether it has been accomplished, needs more input, or nothing has yet happened
- Notes will track needed actions in the future or agencies that should be engaged pertaining to each recommendation.

The group started with reviewing **Water Quality Control Recommendations**.

Wayne German suggested cesspool issues being the first and foremost to be addressed as an impact on water quality, especially considering cesspool changeover is required by 2050, which will be expensive for homeowners.

Kendall Tucker shared in response to recommendations 35 and 36, that converting Kāneʻohe Sewage Treatment Plant to a pumping station is in progress or already converted with additional capacity being added. She does regulatory reviews for DLNR DAR and received notices that upgrades were being done. However, the moratorium in recommendation 36 is no longer in effect. Wayne German added comments regarding a leach field below a parking lot and voiced that a new sewer or pumping station is the only way to mitigate future impacts.

Aunty Rocky Kaluhiwa shared concerns about the showers put in near He'eia Pier on June 1978 that were recently taken out. She added that they have been used as a washdown station for paddlers, kayakers, and everyday people at the beach and should not have been taken away from the general public. She shared that the water quality of Kāne'ohe Bay is bad and a health problem, so a washdown area is needed.

- Member Reppun suggested getting an update from the Harbor Master, Tanya Borabora.
- Participants discussed the possibility of DOBOR being involved in the decision, as the water bill has been an issue at other harbors from homeless using the showers
- Participants overall were not sure who is in charge of putting facilities in or who would manage permits surrounding this issue
- All agreed it would be a good thing to follow up with DOBOR or Department of Planning and Permitting.

Regarding recommendation #38 pertaining to HIMB, Member Reppun was unaware of anyone at HIMB doing comprehensive monitoring to address this recommendation.

Aunty Rocky Kaluhiwa shared that given that these are all state facilities, we should be working together on behalf of the community.

Brent Kakesako noted that most of the Water Quality Control recommendations will require follow-up with DOH, especially those addressing septic systems, leaching, and the treatment plant.

Chair Neilson shared a general suggestion for the future to put formal requests for information from these departments into letters on behalf of KBRC, which may help get responses back. He added that many of the listed agencies have limited capacities and it would be helpful to identify partners that can provide additional support for water quality. For example, DAR, He'eia NERR, and other community groups, given that DOH is spread thin.

Participants moved on to discuss **Water Quality Monitoring recommendations.**

Member Reppun suggested looping in DLNR Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM), given their authority to regulate water quantity and quality in streams and they may be able to provide updated information on stream monitoring and status. He also agreed with Chair Neilson that like many other agencies, they are stretched thin and may require more funding than they have available for additional monitoring.

Member Reppun suggested asking legislative representatives to meet with KBRC to see if any existing legislative initiatives support funding for water quality monitoring, in which case KBRC could also lend support, or if alternatively, if new legislation needs to be introduced.

- Aunty Rocky Kaluhiwa agreed with Member Reppun, suggesting that KBRC meets with legislative representatives before session begins to align with legislative priorities. She added that the Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club also does this and that KBRC should reconvene their legislative committee to work on this.

Wayne German shared that Blue Water Task Force takes water samples every 2 weeks and sends results to the State, but is unsure if results are sent to DOH or another agency. He added that Surfrider Foundation may also be involved, but this proves how samples are being taken to provide a baseline of data that is not through the State or C&C.

- Kū'ike Kamakea-Ōhelo asked how a comprehensive monitoring plan is defined.

- Member Reppun responded that Blue Water Task Force is only monitoring for fecal indicator bacteria, enterococcus, which can live in soil for a long time and wash into the ocean easily. It is generally present and not the best indicator of fecal contamination in tropical environments.
- Wayne German agreed that pig farms and other factors also contribute to contamination and can influence enterococcus readings.
- Kendall Tucker confirmed with the Blue Water Task Force and Surfrider Foundation website that they only test for enterococcus, but have multiple locations in Kāneʻohe Bay.
- Auntie Rocky Kaluhiwa suggested they come to one of our meetings to share information with the group. Wayne German replied that he is married to one of the samplers and would try to get her to come to the next meeting.
- Member Reppun added that there is a need to get additional data for Kāneʻohe Bay and to have a discussion on what other monitoring is needed and useful.

Participants moved on to discuss **Erosion and Sedimentation recommendations.**

Brent Kakesako noted recommendations tied to adding staff and enforcement. He also noted agencies associated with these recommendations included Department of Public Works (DPW), the Hawaiʻi State Legislature, and DOH.

Regarding recommendation #55, Wayne German shared about building permits where residents are required to acknowledge their responsibility for erosion and silt fences and an inspector needs to sign off on the permit. As a contractor, he has dealt with these issues and seen a lack of follow up by Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) during heavy rains.

- Member Reppun inquired if the issue is that people need to adapt best practices or more enforcement is needed to support these rules.
- Wayne German responded that enforcement seems to be the issue.
- Participants discussed practices currently in place, such as dust screens, green socks, silt fences, and planting of vegetation.
- Participants agreed that practices are in place, but should be part of permit conditions through DPP.
- Kendall Tucker added that DAR can only make recommendations to other agencies, but have no authority in this case.
- Recommendation #55 was marked as accomplished.
- Other recommendations were noted to need follow up with DPP

Wayne German brought up another concern with how building structures can change the nature of the parcel, for instance, with grading and how much dirt can be taken out or bulldozed.

- Member Reppun added that it sounded like adding staff and establishing training as mentioned in recommendation #54 and suggested that could be a next priority. With the rules in place, how do we monitor and continue inspections to ensure they are practiced.

Referring back to Water Quality Monitoring, Member Bertelmann shared that after observing dead fish in Kāneʻohe Bay, Casey Ching told him about readings from a buoy nearby that measured low salinity. He suggested deployment of a buoy or something similar for constant monitoring.

- Member Reppun shared that there are certain locations where measurements are taken for various projects. NERR has some in Heʻeia stream. He volunteered to follow up with HIMB to better understand what might be possible at different places.

- Kendall Tucker added that HIMB has various monitoring locations, but they are not compiled or easily accessible.
- Member Reppun added that some monitoring projects only occur for a few years before the project ends.

Member Reppun referred to Recommendation #56 pertaining to wetlands. He added that Kāko‘o ‘Ōiwi currently holds a long-term lease, but inquired if other places are protected as wetlands and who has jurisdiction to manage wetlands.

- Kendall Tucker responded that DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) manages wetlands, but water is CWRM, so it is a challenging to say who’s jurisdiction it falls under.
- Kristi Kaluhiwa requested clarification regarding “prohibit construction of new offsite wetlands”, but participants were unsure if this was in relation to replacing wetlands and/or creating new ones.
- Participants were unsure of the different levels of protection for wetlands.
- Kristi Kaluhiwa suggested Army Corps as a start to answer those questions, and offered to invite a Kāne‘ohe resident who is part of the US Army Corps of Engineers to the next meeting.
- Aunty Rocky Kaluhiwa suggested having a future presentation on this so the group can learn together.

Brent Kakesako noted the different agencies mentioned during this discussion being DPP, DOFAW, CWRM, and US Army Corps of Engineers.

Participants moved on to discuss **Stream recommendations.**

Member Reppun shared that he has heard support for the expansion of the current riparian buffer zone, but was unsure what the mechanism is due to residents in those zones. The long-term goal would be to slowly restrict building in those areas.

- Wayne German added that DPP could be included to address that issue.
- Member Reppun added that at another meeting about flooding, a suggestion came up to put in requirements to raise houses to avoid channelization of the stream as well as catastrophic damage to houses.
- Aunty Rocky Kaluhiwa clarified that there is a 100ft buffer zone on both sides of He‘eia and Waiāhole.
- Wayne German added that there is uncertainty with how to measure the distance, whether it is from the center of the stream, or the high water mark (which is now an issue because of king tides).
- Participants discussed construction restrictions due to these buffer zones delineating certain distances from streams in order for various building or grading can occur.
- Brent Kakesako noted that follow up with DPP and CWRM may be needed.

Member Bryant shared that CWRM is actively working on the Haiku Stream project, but hasn’t spoken to anybody recently. She volunteered to follow up with Dean Uyeno or Aaron Strauch at CWRM, but requested other folks from the community to reach out as well.

- She added that the ongoing project with BWS and CWRM is exploring bulkheading the water tunnel so Kāko‘o and Paepae can benefit from increased stream flow.
- Member Reppun agreed that it would be good to request an update from CWRM, given that this could relate to recommendation #69 to increase median stream flow.
- Aunty Rocky Kaluhiwa also agreed that KBRC should receive a report of what is happening in He‘eia at the next meeting.

- Member Bryant shared that BWS is supposed to be giving quarterly updates to the community, but haven't done that in quite some time.
- Member Reppun shared that BWS had 2 years to conduct a study about He'eia Ha'ikū tunnel, but it was extended to 3 years. They just released the report sharing that bulkheading was not feasible, but the next step is for the Water Commission to determine interim and minimum stream flow to release water from the tunnel to the stream. It hasn't been put on the Water commission agenda yet, so it needs pressing.
- Member Reppun suggested drafting a letter from KBRC to provide an update on this issue, since it has been 2 years beyond when they were supposed to make the decision. Other participants agreed.
- Brent Kakesako noted that DOH, BWS, and CWRM agencies should be looped in to tackle specific recommendations and reiterated Chair Neilson's suggestion of KBRC sending agencies request for updates to create more urgency for responses.

Member Reppun shared that numerous studies have been done by CWRM, He'eia NERR, and DAR in reference to Recommendation #71, so no major new action seemed needed.

Regarding Recommendation #70, Member Reppun shared that funding restrictions could influence the stream gauge issue. It may involve legislative action to move this recommendation forward to improve monitoring of water flow of Kāne'ōhe Bay.

For Recommendation #72, Member Reppun asked if BWS was required to do an EIS in 1988 and if they are required to update it periodically depending on how much they are pumping.

- Brent Kakesako noted to flag BWS for follow up on this recommendation.

Member Reppun suggested with the remaining time, to have an open discussion about community concerns in terms of water quality within Kāne'ōhe Bay and link those concerns with current recommendations to prioritize which to follow up on.

Brent Kakesako summarized some high level points of discussion so far.

- Follow up with DOH and DOBOR regarding Water Quality Control recommendations addressing leaching, septic tanks, and cesspool.
- Follow up with DOH, DOBOR, and CWRM for Water Quality Monitoring recommendations
- Explore options for constant monitoring within Kāne'ōhe Bay per Member Bertelmann's suggestion

Jarrett Machado shared support for testing of Kāne'ōhe Bay water during storms, torrential rains, and flooding. He spoke about seeing the bay change color during heavy rains and voiced that testing during those times is crucial to find the highest level of contaminants entering the bay. He suggested that those who are testing the water push for testing to occur during these times to learn the high and low extremes of the data.

- Wayne German agreed.
- Member Bertelmann added that knowing baseline numbers would be good because the news only reports the high trends. Housing this somewhere for the public to find out this information would be helpful.

Member Bertelmann shared that he has witnessed unpermitted work being done on the shoreline and that it would be helpful to have an easier way to report it. It is unclear where and to who to report these types of activities. He suggested DPP make it easier for anonymous reports to be made for them to look into.

- Wayne German and Paulette Tam shared a line they've used in the past to report any concerns. <https://www.honolulu.gov/csd/report-a-concern/>

Member Bryant shared information regarding water quality testing that started after KBMP was authored.

- DOH has a 303D report they issue every 2 years, with the most recent one released in 2024. The report outlines water quality testing of inland water, streams, and coastal waters, with different points in Kāneʻohe Bay that are being actively tested.
- The purpose is for DOH to develop total daily maximum loads (total amount of contaminants that can be in the water) and keep to those limitations.
- Development of these limitations has been a low priority, but KBRC may be able to advocate for DOH to establish those limits or do further testing.
- Member Bryant volunteered to follow-up regarding the 2024 report.

Nick Sinchek shared support of previous suggestions to increase testing of Kāneʻohe Bay at various locations, such as each stream, and after large storm events.

Wayne German suggested looping in UH to do studies that may contribute to this effort, including locations offshore, near the sandbar, and MCBH.

Member Reppun summarized that monitoring is occurring, but the information isn't ready available and thereby, it is best to engage with the handful of agencies that can provide a starting point for understanding how bad certain areas are and what we can do better.

- This may include KBRC engaging with legislative representatives for funding to these agencies to help with these recommendations.

Aunty Rocky Kaluhiwa suggested receiving an updated report from BWS regarding the water tunnels and streams feeding into Kāneʻohe Bay at the next meeting. In addition, she shared that many emergencies are coming from illegal businesses and questioned whether they have the same requirements as the permitted tour operators. She asked that DLNR enforcement do a better job of regulating the illegal businesses.

Brent Kakesako shared that the next categories addressed will be Education, Educational Touring, and Proposed Land Use. Member Reppun added that after this next meeting, agencies will be looped in to provide information on the recommendations.

Participants decided that the next Temporary Committee Meeting will occur on 9/23, a week after the scheduled KBRC meeting on 9/16.

3. Adjournment