



# GREENLEAF

The Newsletter of The Outdoor Circle

“What you see is what we protect”

## TOC Toughens Stance on Transit

The board of directors of The Outdoor Circle voted to oppose the Honolulu Transit project. From the time the current project was presented, through the planning phase and finally during the environmental impact statement process TOC's position had been one of moderation.

While the organization had serious concerns about the project's impacts on hundreds of trees, island view planes and the character of communities, the board chose to work within the planned project to minimize the foreseeable impacts. Five years later the impacts are becoming more obvious and the board decided in October that TOC has to do more to protect the beauty of O'ahu.

“The board initially thought that outright opposition to the project was not in Honolulu's or TOC's best interest so it agreed to work with the City,” said CEO Mary Steiner. “However, as the project has evolved it has become



*An aerial perspective of the proposed Waipahu Transit Center.*

apparent that the cost to our visual environment and the livability of our communities is just too great. Consequently the board's position has evolved.”

For more than a year TOC's staff has been working with the city regarding the disposition of hundreds of trees in the project's first segment which runs from Kapolei to Pearl Highlands. Nearly 150 trees have been transplanted to other State Department of

Transportation highways and interchanges. That collaborative work will continue despite TOC's new, tougher stance opposing the project.

“Until stopped by legal action or some other directive, it's business as usual,” said Director of Environmental Programs Bob Loy. “We still have hundreds of trees to safeguard as the work on Transit continues.”

To review TOC's position on transit and the work it has done over the last five years go to [www.outdoorcircle.org](http://www.outdoorcircle.org).

## TOC Board Resolution on Transit

The Outdoor Circle's resolution on the Honolulu Transit project will guide its future action on the issue. TOC's previous position did not condemn the project outright. Instead it directed the staff to work to protect trees along the transit route and for mitigation for damage to Honolulu's visual environment. The board's new resolution rejects the project while understanding that traffic is a concern to many residents and a properly planned transportation system is needed.

### Resolution of the Board of The Outdoor Circle

**Whereas, The Outdoor Circle recognizes the benefits of public transportation, and**

**Whereas, The Outdoor Circle considers it essential that protecting the visual environment must be a priority in the planning, construction and operation of any transit system, and**

**Whereas, The Outdoor Circle has been deeply involved in the Honolulu Transit Project Environmental Impact Statement process,**

**Now therefore be it resolved that The Outdoor Circle does not support the Honolulu Transit Project as proposed.**

## Possible Next Steps

TOC's position opposing Transit is more than just a philosophical statement, it lays the groundwork for how the organization will proceed on the transit issue. Possible action resulting from the new position includes outreach to TOC members, the media, like-minded organizations and possibly becoming involved in legal action against the City.

TOC staff and Board members already have been drafting an editorial detailing our revised position that eventually will be offered to local newspapers. If legal action is deemed necessary, expenses may be paid from the newly created Outdoor Circle Legal Defense Fund. This fund rolls over donations left from our previous legal battles to prohibit aerial advertising in Hawai'i, the “Save Our Skies” fund.

## President's Message

In these tight fiscal times The Outdoor Circle is working to keep operating costs to a minimum while remaining steadfast to our mission to keep Hawai'i "clean, green, and beautiful."

Facing the end of its lease TOC staff began looking for an alternative office site. The staff conducted an exhaustive search but was unable to find anything that met their needs yet was affordable. Ultimately they worked with their current landlord to keep TOC's office at its current location. The ensuing construction reduced the size of the office and significantly lowered the annual rent.

In the renovations we lost our conference room but CEO Mary Steiner arranged to hold TOC meetings next door at the Hawaii Kidney Foundation. In return, TOC donated its board table to the Foundation. Other office improvements accomplished during the renovation include a new telephone system and computer upgrades. Mahalo to our dedicated staff for their outstanding effort and for everyone's cooperation during the settling-in process.

Planning for TOC's 100th Anniversary Celebration in 2012 continues. An exciting Centennial Anniversary Kick-Off event is being planned for February 2012. We need everyone's full support and creative energy for this important historic milestone celebration to be a success. I look forward to hearing from our branches about the events they're planning in their communities.

One last note, many of our members, especially those on O'ahu, have inquired about TOC's position on the controversial Honolulu Transit project. The Public Affairs Committee was recently asked to review and revisit TOC's position on Transit. In October the board of directors passed a resolution clarifying our position. Please see the resolution and other stories about the Honolulu Transit project on pages 1 and 5 of this issue of *Greenleaf*.

Aloha and Happy Holidays,




JOEL KUROKAWA

## TOC-HECO Protecting Trees and Utility Lines

They are not a good mix, trees and power lines. Yet across Hawai'i it's easy to find examples where trees have grown so tall that they threaten and sometimes damage the ubiquitous utility lines that unfortunately are as much a part of Hawai'i's landscape as mountains and ocean. But where once there was conflict about how to handle this situation now there is cooperation.

"In recent years the dialog has gone from combative to collaborative," said Director of Environmental Programs Bob Loy.

It's clear why this mix of public utility and environmental

protection can come into conflict. Overgrown tree branches can damage equipment and knock out power to homes and businesses. But cutting tree branches too severely can make beautiful trees ugly and may even compromise the trees' health.



Trees and power lines are in conflict throughout Kapiolani Park.

In 2011 TOC met numerous times with HECO subcontractors hired to clear tree branches that hang over or are growing into power lines in some of Oahu's most sensitive areas—Diamond Head, Kapiolani Park, Nuuanu and others. The consultations are nothing new. However, what is new is the fact that they are occurring without acrimony or even raised voices.

"We appreciate that HECO has made a real commitment to improve its relationship with us and we have been happy to return the respect," said Loy.

Ultimately, the redefined relationship has resulted in less aggressive limb pruning in many areas and at the same time HECO says it is pleased with the level of protection it has been able to provide to its infrastructure. That literally means more reliable power to the people and a more beautiful island for everyone.



Power lines and Kiawe trees on Diamond Head Road.



Careful pruning is required on protected Kalakaua Avenue Mahogany Trees.

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The *Greenleaf* contains information of interest to our members and supporters about the organization's environmental education, conservation and beautification programs throughout the State of Hawai'i.

# Hali‘a Aloha

Donations from July 1, 2011 – November 1, 2011

## Bequest received by The Outdoor Circle

Estate of Louisa R. Lindow

## Leadership Circle Members (have made provisions in their Wills/Trusts for The Outdoor Circle)

Diane Anderson  
Frank Damon  
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## Inner Circle Members (have pledged at least \$500/year for 5 years)

Larry Adams, Aloha Petroleum  
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Orchids of Olinda, Hale Judson III

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## Legal Fund

Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle

## Tree Planting & Preservation Fund

*In loving memory of Helen Davis*

Cathy George

Mel & Gene Yukumoto

*In loving memory of Marion Haines*

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*In loving memory of Richard Steiner*

Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle

Teresa L. Trueman-Madriaga

## Renewed Members

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Victoria Cannon

Gerry Ching

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Polly & Keith Steiner

Teresa L. Trueman-Madriaga

Laurita P. Turner

Arthur Varaday

Naomi T. Weinstein

## Celebrating a Century of Protecting Hawaii

The Outdoor Circle will mark its 100th Anniversary in 2012. A year of events will kick off on February 18 with a reception from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Pacific Club in Honolulu. We hope you will save the date and plan to attend.

Centennial events also will include tree plantings — one at historic Washington Place, an exciting Annual Meeting in May and an event honoring TOC founder Cherilla Lowrey. Information will be provided as TOC branches hold events in their respective areas.

# TOC Celebrates Arbor Day With Students

Passing showers gave way to sunshine recently in Pearl City providing another perfect morning for The Outdoor Circle to celebrate its favorite holiday—Arbor Day.

Many of the 400-plus students at Pearl Highlands Elementary School wore green shirts as they gathered in the school's courtyard—thrilled that they were assembled to help with the ceremonial planting of a tree to replace one lost last year during a storm. The replacement tree is a beautiful Dwarf White Tecoma which will grow to be the perfect size for its new home near the entry to the school's cafeteria.

“The Department of Education told us about the Shower tree that was struck by lightning and ultimately had to be removed,” said CEO Mary Steiner. “It just made sense to make the beautiful Pearl Highlands campus whole again.”

To celebrate the new tree a group of students presented a program to help their classmates understand the importance of trees to the environment. Then representatives from each classroom stepped up to place mulch around the trunk of the tree to help it retain moisture and get a healthy start in its new Pearl City home.

The Outdoor Circle has sponsored Arbor Day Tree plantings that have resulted in dozens of trees being added to City parks and public schools across O’ahu. TOC was aided again this year by arborist Mark Leon who had the



tree delivered from Waimanalo to Pearl City and consulting arborist Steve Nimz who provided planting services as he has for many years.

Mahalo to all for another wonderful Arbor Day in Hawaii!



## Transit Tree Removals Continue...More To Come

Despite the fact that the project has not received final approval or funding from the Federal government, the first phase of the Honolulu Transit project is moving ahead full-speed. Dozens of trees already have been removed for pre-construction work. Most of the trees have come from the median of Farrington Highway. Many of them have been transplanted at State Department of Transportation interchanges and highways—especially Nimitz Highway where dozens of Palms have been relocated.



*Trees removed from Farrington Hwy in Waipahu are now in the median of Nimitz Hwy.*

In the entire first phase from Kapolei to Pearl City the city says at least 366 trees eventually will be removed. To date the city has removed nearly one-half that number:

- 366 total trees in first phase
- 143 trees removed and transplanted
- 13 trees destroyed
- 4 trees removed for “repurposing” (wood to be used by craftsmen)

## Kauai Branch Works To Save Historic Monkeypod Tree

The Kauai Branch of The Outdoor Circle has been in consultation with preservation experts over the future of a large, mature Monkeypod tree on the grounds of the historic U.S. Post office in Lihue.

Postal officials in California want the tree removed. They claim the tree’s roots are lifting sidewalks creating safety hazards and they are concerned that the roots eventually will reach the building itself and damage the foundation. And Kauai County says it wants a decision to be made quickly so it can include sidewalk repair work in next year’s budget.

But Kauai Outdoor Circle President Maureen Murphy, a certified consulting arborist, has inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy. She has reported that concerns about the invasive roots can be managed without removing the historic tree.



## Nimitz Highway Gain Is Waipahu’s Loss

While the Palm tree now planted on Nimitz Highway look great Farrington Highway in Waipahu is being transformed from a lush, scenic strip to a barren construction zone through the heart of town. And there are no concrete plans about how the people of Waipahu will be mitigated for their loss.

The City says mitigation for the loss of trees will come later when transit stations are built. It claims that landscaping near the stations will compensate for the loss of trees on Farrington Highway. TOC contends that the City’s failure to provide mitigation violates the Federal environmental impact laws that require compensation for lost resources. To date, the City’s response has



*Farrington Hwy in Waipahu now being stripped bare for Transit.*

been akin to “Trust us.” But TOC believes the time for trust has passed and that a more transparent, detailed mitigation plan should be produced before the project proceeds.

## Trees To Be Protected At Punchbowl

Trees in an area slated for construction of a new memorial at the National Cemetery of the Pacific will be protected during the project.

A new Vietnam memorial will be added to the iconic monument that honors U.S. soldiers from all Asia-Pacific conflicts at the cemetery widely known as Punchbowl. The project itself will be under the direction of the National Battlefield Memorial Commission.

TOC has been involved in the pre-construction discussions and has secured promises that there will be no net loss of trees from the project and that the landscaping of the memorial will be restored to its original design.



# Super TOC Supporters Spend Day In Country

Windward O'ahu weather cooperated as members of our Inner & Leadership Circles gathered in a remote corner of Waimanalo Valley for a unique look into permaculture farming and aquaponics at Olomana Gardens. The members of these groups are among The Outdoor Circle's most committed and generous supporters. They have pledged substantial annual contributions and/or have made provisions for TOC in their estate planning.

To say "Mahalo" for their support, TOC annually hosts the members on field trips and unique behind-the-scenes



tours of some of Hawaii's more interesting and innovative places. Previous events have included a boat trip to the Coconut Island research center at Kaneohe, a private tour of Honolulu's Exceptional Trees and a visit to the country home and gallery of famous Hawai'i artists.

To learn more about how to show your support for The Outdoor Circle through the Inner Circle and Leadership Circle, please call Development Director Taylor Boyd at 593-0300.



## TOC IN ACTION

### Kaiser Permanente's Image

Kaiser Permanente, Hawaii's largest managed care provider, has called on TOC to offer suggestions about making its facilities more visually pleasing without running afoul of the law. The upgrades will include graphics and photography on the exterior walls of some facilities as well as enhanced signage. Kaiser asked TOC to provide advice on sign laws and to render opinions on plans to transform many of its concrete-gray facilities to structures that are more welcoming and appealing.



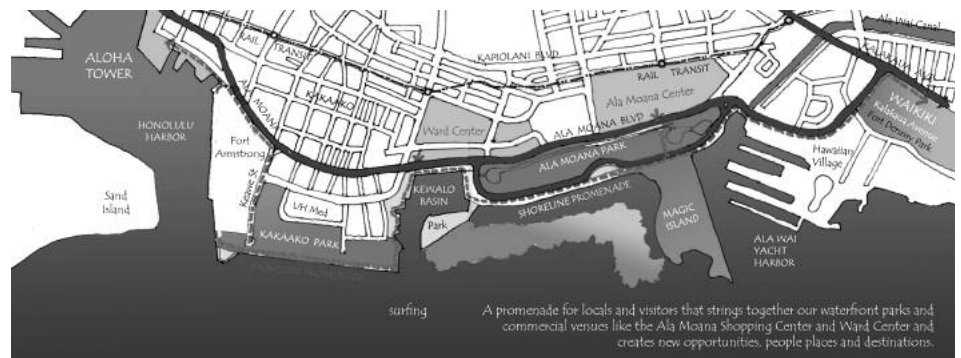
### International Marketplace Makeover

Developers of the International Marketplace recently met with TOC to discuss the latest iteration of the head-to-toe makeover planned in coming years for the Waikiki landmark. TOC has worked with the developer and its arborist to create a plan to ensure that the Marketplace's Exceptional Banyan tree and other significant trees are not harmed during the planned upgrade. The project's architects say they are creating a culturally and environmentally sensitive dining and shopping complex built around the trees.



### Honolulu Promenade

It's such a simple idea. TOC recently provided input into the brainchild of a local architect who has proposed a promenade that would wind along the Honolulu's south shore from Aloha Tower to Waikiki. The proposed Shoreline Promenade has been considered by many Honolulu residents, planners and others for years. But architect Michael Toma has actually created a rendering for such a walkway that he is showing to interested parties throughout Honolulu. Toma's vision starts at Aloha Tower, snakes its way around Kakaako, across the Ala Moana Beach Park waterfront and eventually ends at the Hilton Hawaiian Village. He



### Tobacco Signs

The Outdoor Circle continues to work closely with island youth who are dedicated to thwarting the tobacco industry's influence in their communities. This is the third year that TOC has consulted with the group, called REAL, which fights to remove tobacco advertising aimed at young people. Much of the advertising is in the form of illegally posted signs. TOC helps to educate REAL members on how to recognize illegal advertising and to use local laws to force removal of the signs.



### Dillingham Airfield Trees

TOC has been facilitating discussions to resolve a battle on O'ahu's North Shore. For years an argument has raged between skydivers at Dillingham Airfield and nearby residents. The dispute involves tall, mature Ironwood trees that line Farrington Highway and whether they create wind currents that put skydivers at risk. After years of arguing, TOC has succeeded in encouraging the Department of Transportation to bring all parties together to find a solution. Possible remedies include the removal of many Ironwood trees and replacing them with trees that may have less influence on wind around Dillingham field.



says he realizes it will be years before he can convince the right people to buy into his dream but he says he is committed to seeing his grand plan for the south shore come to fruition.

A promenade for locals and visitors that strings together our waterfront parks and commercial venues like the Ala Moana Shopping Center and Ward Center and creates new opportunities, people places and destinations.



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Lani-Kailua, O'ahu



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