



Opening Remarks

Lloyd Jones, President, Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

On behalf of the association and our co-sponsors (the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources; the Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, U.S. Forest Service; the Cooperative Extension Service, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawai'i; Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate; the Hawai'i Agriculture Research Center; and the Hawai'i Chapter, Society of American Foresters) it is my privilege to welcome you to our annual symposium, this year titled "Koa: A Decade of Growth."

It is gratifying to see the wonderfully diverse community of interest in koa and our forests represented here today. Each person's attendance and participation enriches this symposium. I would like to particularly welcome our distinguished guests.

First, let me acknowledge the presence of one of the pioneers of koa forestry, Roger Skolmen. For many years he has been the definitive word on forestry in Hawai'i, has written the definitive work on forest trees of Hawai'i, and although he is enjoying a well-earned retirement, we know he will make a great contribution to this symposium.

We are honored to have with us the national president of the Society of American Foresters, Mr. Robert Bosworth. Mr. Bosworth will be more formally introduced later, but I want to welcome him and thank the Society of American Foresters for their support of this symposium.

A number of government leaders have shown their support for the forest industry and intended to be with us. Unfortunately, scheduling conflicts have prevented Senator Inouye, Senator Akaka, and Lorraine Akiba, the Director of the Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, from being here in person. However, we are pleased to welcome, in person, Mike Wilson, the Director of the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources. Mike has been a friend of HFIA and is an enthusiastic supporter of forestry. Thank you for joining us.

And I would like to acknowledge the hard-working committee that organized this meeting. Many people were involved and contributed to this meeting. In particular I will introduce some special people to be recognized for their extra efforts: Mike Robinson, chairman of the organizing committee, Wayne Ching, Nick Dudley, Bart Potter, Paul Scowcroft, and Peter Simmons.

Two people deserve special mention. They are Lisa Ferentinos and Andie Beck. The University of Hawai'i's Department of Agronomy and Soil Science, under Dr. Samir El-Swaify, has been most supportive of this symposium. Lisa Ferentinos has led their efforts in putting together all the documentation, including your booklets, and has put in countless hours. After the symposium, the Department of Agronomy and Soil Science (and Lisa) will produce the proceedings.

Andie Beck, the Executive Director of HFIA, is the person who has pulled all the details of this symposium together. She has worked extremely hard over the last few weeks, and we are all grateful over the next two days for her outstanding organizing skills.

I invite everyone, not only the speakers, to be an active participant in this symposium. You will find, as we have at previous symposiums, that some of the best benefits will come from informal discussions among the participants. The meetings are structured to permit time for discussion (never *enough* time, of course), and the informal reception this evening will provide further opportunity to enhance that dialog.

Koa: A Decade of Growth. Why that topic? Let me give you a quick overview of why HFIA considered this to be the most important topic to be discussed in this, our 5th, annual symposium.

Ten years ago the first of a series of koa symposiums was held in Hilo. At that time there was a recognition that koa as it had been known had come to the end of an era. For generations, koa had been plentiful. Koa forests were cleared to make way for other agricultural uses of the land. It was cheap—landowners received only loose change for their koa resources. But all that



was changing. Ten years ago there was a recognition that nurturing and managing our koa forests needed to be accelerated and would have advantages for many sectors of society—economically, environmentally, and culturally. So a lot of efforts were initiated and some actions proposed.

This symposium is going to look at what efforts have been started in the ensuing ten years, what results we have seen, what we know now, and where we might be going in koa forestry in the context of Hawai'i's cultural and economic future.

In the years immediately prior to that 1986 conference, forestry was not a significant issue to Hawai'i economically or politically. Prior to that time, forestry was meaningful in terms of forest preservation or watershed management, but was a peripheral issue to most people. But in the last ten years we have seen increased recognition by society, expressed in legislation, that forestry is to be encouraged. Some examples of supportive governmental acts are:

1991 saw the creation of Forest Stewardship and Natural Area Partnership programs. These provided avenues by which one could apply forest management techniques, be it for commercial or preservation use.

1992 saw the revision of the Tree Farm Bill. This served as an important link in the effort to improve forest planning and management.

In 1992 the Governor's Agriculture Coordinating Committee funded a study to quantify the size of the existing forest industry in Hawai'i.

Senator Akaka's Tropical Forest Recovery Act passed in 1993. This was a strong expression of support for forestry in Hawai'i by the federal government.

In 1994 the Right to Harvest Bill was passed. This, in effect, states that a landowner has the right to harvest "new" trees grown after 1990.

In 1995 the State prepared a Forestry Investment Memorandum to encourage commercial-scale investment in forestry in Hawai'i.

In 1996 the County of Hawai'i revised their real property tax structure to encourage native forests.

This year an initiative has been started to recognize the contribution that forestry can make to recovery of economically impacted rural areas. This initiative has been funded by the federal government and is receiving strong state government support

So you can see that we have a decade of legislative direction to enhance forestry by the federal, state, and

county governments.

The last decade also saw the formation and growth of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association, a body of mostly private-sector interests dedicated to the nurturing of sustainable forestry in Hawai'i.

There has also been a decade of research. The scientific community has made great strides in applying genetic knowledge to koa. Also, we have had meaningful scientific work done in the areas of ecology, restoration, and the management of koa.

The last decade has seen an evolution in the public perception of the forest and man's relationship to it. We have seen new awareness of the many parties that have a stake in the forest. Also, we have seen an broadened understanding of the complexity of forest management. Unfortunately, we have also seen examples of the law of unintended consequences at work, where well-meaning inaction has been harmful to the health of the forests.

The private sector has been impacted in the last ten years by change in the price of koa. In the last decade the stumpage paid for koa has increased tenfold, and the retail price of koa wood has increased threefold. Yet this may be the savior of our koa forests. As sophisticated landowners learn that the growing of koa can be the highest return that they can have from their land, we may see the restoration of koa acreage happening.

Today, commercial forestry in Hawai'i is still a koa industry, and, despite the shortage of koa, the industry continues to grow. Now, approximately a thousand people owe their jobs to koa, people growing, harvesting, processing, crafting, selling, and advancing koa. This industry wants to know what the future holds. Public planners want to know what opportunities exist for jobs. And we all want to know what the prospects are for healthy native forests.

So HFIA has structured this symposium to try to shed some light on these issues. This symposium is designed to share knowledge that has been developed over the past decade, to assess where koa is today, and to look to future opportunities. We trust that you will find it an interesting and rewarding two days, and we will all have a better understanding of what the future holds for our koa forests.