



Friends of Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge  
Strategic Plan  
2019-2023





# Introduction

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This document should be used to inform new board members and potential funders of the Friends of Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter referred to as FoHI) strategic plan for 2019-2023. It will also be referred to as needed to keep FoHI on track with its mission. Through our strategic planning process, we have examined our organization's strengths and weaknesses, and the trends affecting the environment in which we operate to determine our priorities and programmatic and financial needs. This document is intended to guide us as we work to achieve our mission.





# History

The Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge (NWR or Refuge), encompassing more than two-thirds of the Hawaiian archipelago and stretching over 900 miles northwest of the main Hawaiian Islands (Figure 1), consists of some of the most remote islands on the planet and hosts a rich, varied, and genetically unique biological and historical legacy of global significance.

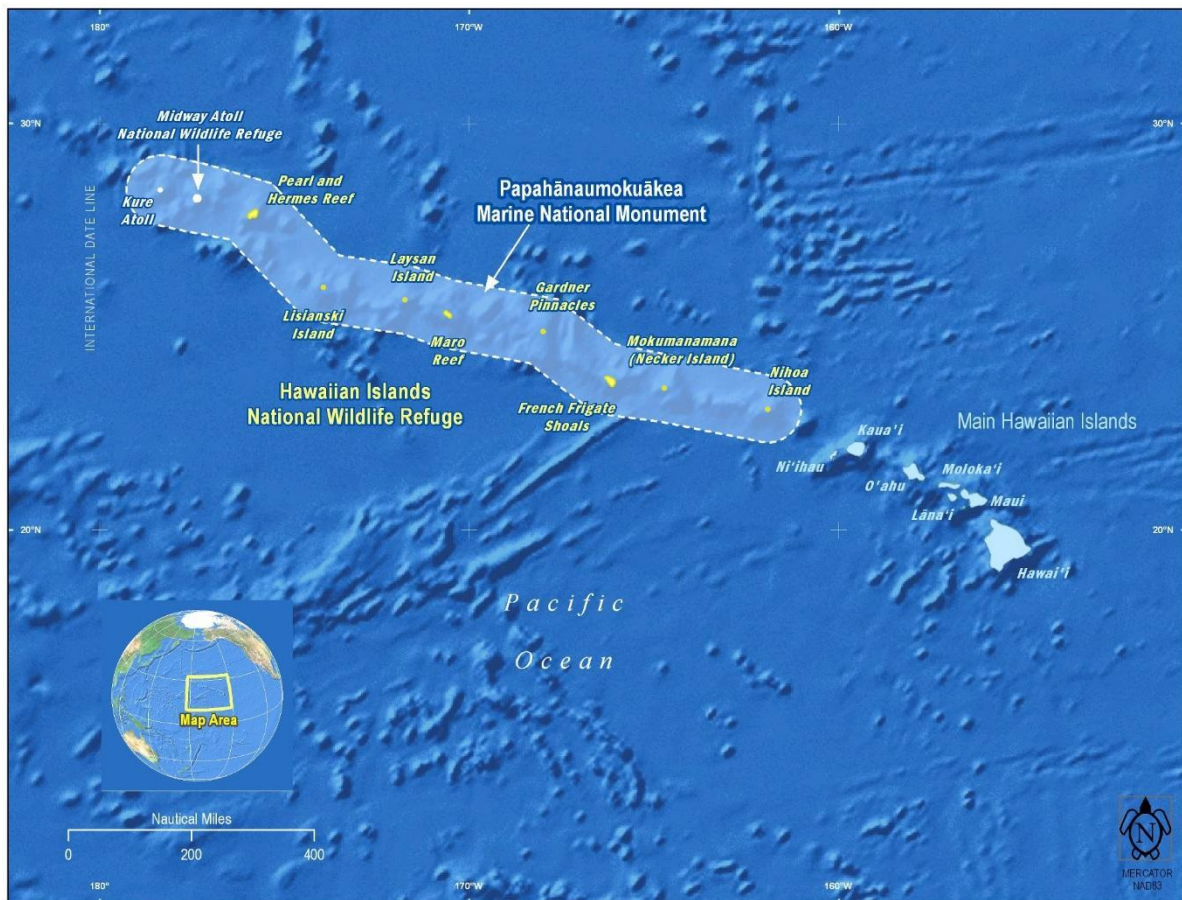


Figure 1. Map of Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, part of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

The Hawaiian Islands NWR was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909 to provide legal protection for the seabirds living on these remote islands and atolls that were once slaughtered for their plumage and eggs. The Refuge includes the islands of Nihoa, Mokumanamana, French Frigate Shoals, Gardner Pinnacles, Maro Reef, Laysan, Lisianski, and Pearl and Hermes Atoll. In 2006, the Hawaiian Islands NWR became part of the larger designated Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM or Monument).

By 2010, the Monument was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on behalf of its natural and cultural significance. It is home to endemic, endangered species of wildlife and plants, and holds a wealth of knowledge and history of the Hawaiian people in the cultural sites found on Mokumanamana and Niho. While the Hawaiian Islands NWR is part of the State of Hawai'i, and is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), it still remains unfamiliar to the majority of the people of Hawai'i. With recent budget cuts, USFWS researchers and volunteers have a limited ability monitor the health of seabird populations, remove marine debris from imperiling the life of marine creatures, or restore native plants. Over time, these setbacks will have detrimental impacts to the cultural and environmental resources of the Hawaiian Islands.

The formation of FoHI began in 2012 when wildlife volunteers identified the need for community outreach to raise awareness about the Refuge, its unique significance and its need for preservation. After several years of discussion amongst dedicated volunteers across different states and disciplines, the common goal to provide the Refuge a helping hand in the form of a nonprofit organization became a reality when the Friends group received its official 501(c)3 status in June 2015.

Since 2016, USFWS budgetary and programmatic changes to the Hawaiian Islands NWR shifted the focus of projects that the Friends group originally strived to accomplish. However, the overall goal to increase understanding of the globally significant resources of the Refuge remain intact. In some respect, those goals are broadening as FoHI begins to work with other Hawaiian and Pacific refuges to increase public awareness of the importance of all Pacific refuges and their interconnectedness throughout the Pacific region, as well as build partnerships among ecological and cultural stakeholders throughout the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

This document outlines the strategic plan for FoHI's role in the current environment of the Refuge.

# Mission

## Official Mission

**Connecting you with the nature and culture of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands through education and outreach in support of Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, part of Papahānaumokuākea.**

## Abridged Mission

**Connecting you with the nature and culture of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands through education and outreach.**



# Vision

**Every person is empowered to take action and continue the story of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.**

# Goals and Objectives

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## I. External Strategic Plan Components

### 1. Curriculum Goal

Educate the children in Hawai'i about the nature and culture of the Hawaiian Islands NWR so they will grow up to support and protect them. Although the Hawaiian Islands NWR comes from the same hotspot as our main Hawaiian Islands, many children in Hawai'i grow up without hearing about these remote atolls. It is important that children in Hawai'i are knowledgeable of the nature and culture of the Hawaiian Island NWR. With this knowledge and responsibility, they will grow up to support the protection of the NWR and will hopefully become active participants in preserving the nature and culture of these islands.

There is a great opportunity to use the Hawaiian Islands NWR as a base to develop curriculum for primary education. We will achieve our goal by creating curriculum that educators can use as a supplement to their own lessons.

Teachers will request curriculum from our website. Lesson plans will satisfy common core standards, while also exposing students to the Hawaiian Islands NWR.

Teachers will request classroom visits from FoHI volunteer educators. Volunteers will sign up to be a FoHI educator for the school year and specify which of the main Hawaiian islands they can service. Our website will act as a liaison to pair volunteer educators with classrooms and the volunteer educator will present a lesson plan that

may incorporate props such as marine debris, albatross boluses, or the opportunity to question a scientist or artist live or through video conferencing. This will provide another layer of hands-on learning and give supporters of FoHI a chance to get involved in the community.

### **Curriculum Objectives**

Year 1	Utilize our partners to find teachers interested in participating in the pilot program
Year 2	Survey educators to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify existing curriculum</li><li>• Learn what their needs are</li><li>• Understand what tools they use best</li></ul>
Year 3	Identify sources of and apply for funding Develop curriculum Develop evaluation tools for success of educational program Recruit and train volunteers to conduct classroom visits
Year 4	Execute and monitor pilot program
Year 5	Implement evaluation and review program

## **2. Outreach and Advocacy Goal**

Build a cohort of vocal supporters for the Hawaiian Islands NWR through dynamic outreach that will create an awareness and passion for nature and culture of the islands. It is increasingly vital for people to be educated and unified in supporting the protection of our environmental and cultural resources. We will work to create educated advocates for the Hawaiian Islands NWR by informing citizens of the steps they can take when issues arise, as well as keeping the public abreast of pertinent issues to be aware of.

We plan to develop content that shares evidence-based knowledge with the public and to facilitate discussion as well as action from the public. We will make advocacy an approachable task for citizens of all educational backgrounds.

### **Outreach and Advocacy Objectives**

Year 1	Work with partners to identify local outreach events <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan annual calendar</li><li>• Identify ways to promote event information</li></ul>
Year 2	Identify sources of funding and apply Establish formal membership program Develop evaluation tools for success of educational program Recruit and train outreach volunteers
Year 3	Execute and monitor pilot program

Year 4	Implement evaluation and review program
Year 5	Continue program with adjustments

## II. Internal Strategic Plan Components

### 1. Board Development Goal

An effective board of directors is necessary to achieve our mission. FoHI will maintain an active board of directors with a wide variety of skills. Our aim is to provide an environment that enriches board members' experience, while utilizing the skills each board member contributes to advance the organization toward its mission. Board evaluations will reveal gaps in skills as well as highlight strengths of the current board. This will aid in retaining as well as recruiting board members by identifying the best niches for each member.

#### Board Development Objectives

Year 1	Evaluate current board strengths and needed skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop board turnover and officer succession plans</li> <li>• Build calendar of skills training opportunities</li> </ul>
Year 2	Create action plan to address needed skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop evaluation tool for board success</li> <li>• Participate in trainings</li> <li>• Recruit new board members</li> </ul>
Year 3	Establish regular face-to-face meetings in Hawaii for board members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise funds needed to attend meetings and trainings</li> </ul>
Year 4	Evaluate success of board development goals and continue to build board skills and develop future goals
Year 5	Evaluate success of board development goals and continue to build board skills and develop future goals

### 2. USFWS Relationship Goal

Our relationship with USFWS is a critical component to operations. Our mission to connect the public with the natural and cultural resources of the Hawaiian Islands NWR is not possible without timely project updates from USFWS. FoHI board members will familiarize themselves with the USFWS organizational chart in order to contact the most appropriate staff member and maintain efficient communication. The effort to establish two-way communication means USFWS is kept up-to-date on FoHI's projects, while FoHI is informed of the latest news from the Service.



A supportive relationship between USFWS and FoHI also affords board members the opportunity to participate in trips to PMNM when possible. Participating in these trips will: 1) expose board members to the NWR they are promoting, 2) give board members an opportunity to collect stories and media to share with the public, and 3) provide volunteer help on USFWS projects.

We strive to remain informed by establishing a strong relationship with USFWS to foster exchange of information and promote opportunities through email, phone, and in-person meetings.

### **USFWS Relationship Goals**

Year 1	Understand FWS structure and hierarchy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a regular communications schedule and protocol</li> <li>• Develop evaluation tools or goals for success of relationship</li> <li>• Build calendar around joint meeting and trainings</li> </ul>
Year 2	Participate in joint meetings and trainings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise funds needed for participating</li> <li>• Attend Friends Academy at NCTC</li> </ul>
Year 3	Evaluate success of relationship and methods of communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to foster relationship and develop future goals</li> <li>• Volunteer within the refuge when possible</li> </ul>
Year 4	Continue to foster relationship and develop future goals Volunteer within the refuge when possible
Year 5	Continue to foster relationship and develop future goals Volunteer within the refuge when possible

### **3. Partner Collaboration Goal**

Strong partnerships with pertinent organizations will allow us to leverage resources to reach shared missions. The first step in creating valuable partner collaborations is to identify the groups we should collaborate with. In the same way a good relationship with USFWS informs our organization, maintaining regular communication with partner organizations will keep us abreast of news from other outlets. Partner collaborations can range from sharing online posts to working on joint projects that benefit both organizations.

### **Partner Collaboration Objectives**

Year 1	Identify and establish communication with partners that have shared mission and goals
Year 2	Leverage resources to reach shared missions and develop evaluation tools for success of partnerships

Year 3	Create joint projects and possible fundraising partnerships as appropriate
Year 4	Evaluate success of partnerships and continue to foster and build effective partnerships
Year 5	Evaluate success of partnerships and continue to foster and build effective partnerships