

THE HAWAIIAN PARADISE PARK ALBEZIA ERADICATION PLAN

I. Introduction:

Albezia Trees (*Falcataria molluccana*) are a non-native, fast-growing, soft wood tree species first introduced into native forests in Hawaii in the 1920's and '30's and probably introduced to Hawaiian Paradise Park (HPP) in the '70's. It is known for its astonishing growth and aggressive ability to over top and overwhelm our native forest habitats. According to the USDA Forest Service, Albezia invasion results in widespread mortality of our primary native tree, Ohia, and encourages other unwanted invasive species to proliferate. The brittle wood and fast growth of Albezia make it a safety hazard around our roads and homes. Recently, County Ordinance 64 was passed, acknowledging the safety hazards of Albezias. The law provides a legal route to have Albezias removed when trees from an adjacent lot threatens the safety/well-being of a lot owner.

Unfortunately, Albezia trees have spread to all areas of HPP. Lot owners (especially absentee lot owners) are often not aware of the potential threat this tree poses, and how aggressive and fast-growing it can be on their lot. They also are often unaware of the high cost of removing mature trees that can grow to 150+ feet; arborists charge \$2000 to \$5000 to safely cut down large individuals. As a consequence, mature Albezia tree may diminish the value of a lot by at least 20%, as lots must be cleared before a safe house-pad can be established. Clearing mature Albezias from lots before construction adds thousands to initial building costs.

The Hawaiian Paradise Park Owners Association (HPPOA) is committed to educating lot owners as well as developing a plan to entirely remove this species from HPPOA common property. The

presence of Albizias on commonly owned properties and adjacent developed properties present a significant barrier for future development.

II. Action Plan:

A. Albizia Removal Procedures:

Aggressive removal of Albizia trees is the main solution for this problem.

Warning: Utilize the skills of an arborist when dealing with mature trees that may pose a threat to buildings and their occupants (i.e., “hazard trees”).

- 1) Small plants can be pulled out by the roots.
- 2) Girdling of the tree (removing bark in a 4-6 inch strip around the tree) has been the “traditional” method for killing the tree. Unfortunately, this method is slow and sometimes results in re-growth below the girdling area. Trees sometimes take 6 months to a year to die or begin serious deterioration.
- 3) Because of the inconsistent effectiveness of this method, the U.S. Forestry has looked for a chemical application that would eliminate this invasive pest. Saplings and more mature trees that do not pose a danger to buildings or other infrastructure can be killed most quickly and effectively via simple application of “Aminopyralid” or “Milestone®”. “Milestone®” application to kill Albizia trees is endorsed by the USDA Forest Service. While the product contains toxins and should be used within the guidelines described on accompanying labeling, the minute amounts applied directly to each tree minimize effects to the environment. Application uses a Nalgene or glass drip bottle filled with 100% “Milestone®”. For application, place 1 milliliter into each of the incisions or cuts made by a machete or hatchet every 6 inches around the trunk of the Albizia tree. In a small tree less than 6 inches in circumference, one to two incisions/cuts is sufficient. Very large trees may require incisions every 3

inches – with 1 milliliter of “Milestone®” in each incision – to kill the tree effectively.

- 4) It takes approximately 3 weeks for the tree to die after an application of “Milestone®”. The trees will lose the majority of their leaves within that period. In approximately 3 months, the limbs will begin to rot and drop. The larger limbs and trunks may persist as upright snags for more than a year.

B. Lot owner Efforts: Individual lot owners are actively encouraged to aggressively remove Albezia trees from their lots.

- 1) Lot owners are encouraged to initiate information-sharing with neighbors and any known absentee lot owners. Lot owners will benefit from “buyer club” or collective formation to purchase “Milestone®”, dividing the product to offset cost, as one quart costs approximately \$110.
- 2) Lot perimeter larger trees should only be removed by an arborist if they infringe on another lot and pose a hazard to that lot. Lot owners with safety issues caused by neighbor’s Albezia tree(s) should contact the Office of the Mayor (per County Ordinance 64) to determine whether the County will intervene to have such hazard trees removed.

C. HPPOA Strategies:

Albezia trees currently populate the commonly owned properties of the Association including the six HPPOA owned combined 20-acre property dedicated to schools and parks. Additionally, the HPP Association owns the easements dedicated to 134 miles of roadways. Albezia trees commonly seed into these road easements, causing safety obstructions and destruction of the

roadways themselves. Also, areas in HPP dedicated to future business development are populated with Albezia trees. The presence of Albezia infested areas not only compromises safety of residents but also - in the cases of the commonly-owned large properties - it diminishes the value of these plots because of the costs associated with removal. “Milestone®” should be used to kill smaller trees with professional removal used for larger trees that pose a threat to safety in high use areas.

- 1) Our first priority should be to keep all road easements clear of Albezia trees, and further top priority should be control of Albezia along major feeder roads. Other roads should be prioritized for Albezia removal based upon traffic patterns and relative use.
- 2) Common properties owned by HPPOA should be cleared of Albezia trees, with first priority being the area nearest the office and meeting hall buildings. Other properties should be cleared “from the inside out” using Milestone and saws as needed. Large trees bordering roads will likely need to be removed by a professional arborist. The cost of removal is expensive.
- 1) The Association will have to prioritize which trees pose the greatest threat and begin a deliberate, planned removal. Initial removal should begin with those large trees encroaching on roadways.
- 2) Removal from developed-owned 20 acre plots in HPPOA must be coordinated with the owners. Educating the owners and convincing them of not only the economic benefits of Albezia removal, but also the need to prevent continued spread of this invasive species to other lots in HPP.
- 3) The HPPOA Board must push for active efforts to remove this hazard. HPPOA must utilize the services of both staff (primary responsibility for removal/coordination of removal efforts) as well as volunteers to rid HPP of this species.

III. Conclusion:

To contain or control the *Albizia* “invasion”, HPPOA must continue to educate owners to the real issues and threats posed by allowing *Albizia* trees to flourish and spread in HPP. Owners must be made aware of safety issues as well as the economic impact this plant has on their properties. Owners must be made aware of the safest and most economical strategies to eliminate this invasive species from designated areas.

Knowledge of control must then be translated into realistic and achievable strategies. Each owner must be aware of the best “tools” to control on their lots and where and how to apply such tools. In addition, HPPOA as an association has an obligation to eliminate this species from common properties for the overall long-term good of the subdivision. As HPP grows and matures, elimination of this invasive species will improve both safety and increase property values for us all and will insure that our common properties retain the potential for more viable uses.

Approved, HPPOA Board

January 15, 2014