

[EXTERNAL] Comment on Final Audit Report - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Needs To Improve Oversight of Its Friends Program

Debbie Anderson <debbieanderson808@gmail.com>

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To: Info_Coll, FWHQ <info_coll@fws.gov>

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The Honorable Aurelia Skipwith
Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW Washington, DC 20240

RE: Comment on Final Audit Report – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Needs To Improve Oversight of Its Friends Program

Dear Director Skipwith,

As Vice President of the Board of the Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR, please consider my concern that the approach suggested in the OIG's audit threatens both the Service's ability to perform its primary biological mission and Friends Groups' independent volunteer base and their effectiveness to materially support the preservation of the unique and invaluable resources managed by the Service.

Many of the reasons have previously been addressed by the various Friends Groups and the Friend's National Association. In addition from my perspective, as a Board Member, the proposed action seems to dilute and deter the Service from its statutory mission and converts the service and our volunteer Friends Groups into record keeping bureaucracies rather than Groups whose first love is spreading the word of the unique resources in our communities.

While I would willingly elaborate, I believe that this message is sufficiently direct for you to understand my core concerns.

Aloha,
Debbie Anderson
Vice President, Board, Friends of Hakalau Forest NWR

2376 Oahu Ave
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 351-2510