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#### *About the Institute*

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

HONOLULU

March 29, 1971

JOHN A. BURNS  
GOVERNOR

Dear Dr. Van Schaack:

Your letter of March 6 about the sale of timber from the Laupahoehoe section of the Hilo Forest Reserve has been received. Let me assure you that I am as much concerned as you are about the preservation of our Hawaiian heritage. I hope that upon reading this letter you will conclude that the situation is not quite as described and that this Administration is acting responsibly about it.

The 3,700-acre tract to which you refer is by no means a virgin forest in the usual meaning of that term. Feral cattle entered this area at least 150 years ago and during the following century modified it drastically. The monument which marks the spot where the famous botanist, David Douglas, was killed by a wild bull in 1834 is situated here. In 1904, Territorial Forester Hosmer estimated that around 500 head of wild cattle roamed through this area. Three hundred acres of non-indigenous trees were planted within the unit during the period of the C.C.C. to cover some of the larger openings created by the cattle.

Feral pigs are abundant in the Laupahoehoe tract. These by their rooting keep the ground continually disturbed. They both kill native plants and create conditions for the invasion of exotic plants. During the 1930's, banana poka, a vine in the passion fruit genus, entered the area and has been spreading aggressively since that time. It climbs shrubs and trees and creates a heavy shade over the crowns of even tall trees. Pigs by eating the banana-like fruits scatter the seeds with fecal material. It seems ironic that some of the more vocal objections to entering this tract came from hunters who are anxious to maintain a heavy population of pigs for their own purposes.

The unhealthy condition of the forest and the rapidly spreading banana poka vine were the primary reasons why our

foresters decided to act. Koa regenerates very vigorously from seeds in the soil wherever ground under the tree crowns is disturbed and exposed to light. Thus, the foresters have reason to believe that logging will stimulate the establishment of healthy young koas. This, accompanied by a determined campaign to suppress the poka vines, should create a better forest than is there now. Admittedly, this plan is not absolutely certain to succeed but to do nothing would simply allow further deterioration.

The Laupahoehoe section contains some 11,635 acres. Before reaching the decisions concerning its management, the entire tract was surveyed and mapped. Then it was subdivided:

Natural area	6,020 acres
Buffer zone	1,425 "
Research area	1,120 "
Logging and stand improvement	<u>3,070</u> "
TOTAL	<u>11,635</u> acres

Only the portion where banana poka infestation is most severe was proposed for logging. The best of the area from the standpoint of least disturbance to the natural ecosystem is the portion designated for a natural area. The buffer zone and research area are almost equally good but adjoin the entrance road and have been exposed to some disturbance from that source.

A comment should be made about Professor Iltis' reference to extinct birds. No Hawaiian bird is known to have become extinct since 1935 and in recent years a few supposedly extinct ones have been "rediscovered." As a result of almost 70 years of protection by our Division of Forestry, our forest reserves are in better condition than they were at the beginning of the century. Some biologists believe that our population of endemic birds may be increasing.

I have given you this rather lengthy explanation because we believe that persons in positions such as yours should have a better understanding of the situation. It appears that you may not have had all the facts available upon which to base your opinion.

As a further evidence of responsible action, I can report that a public hearing was held by the Board of Land and Natural Resources on February 26. On the basis of the

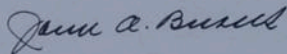
evidence submitted, the Board has ruled that the timber sale contract shall contain several safeguards and will be limited to an experimental harvest area of 500 acres and a term of two years, revocable after one year should there be indications that the objectives sought are not being met. The ruling also requires the Division of Forestry to monitor the effect of harvesting on koa regeneration and infestation of noxious plants and the Division of Fish and Game to inventory the pig and bird populations of the area before harvesting begins, and to monitor the population during the harvesting.

In closing, let me say that our foresters and biologists are dedicated conservationists. They are subjected to conflicting demands from numerous interests and they cannot satisfy everyone all the time. We do not have enough land to give each interest group exclusive use of as much area as it wants.

I assume that your feelings concerned this subject are shared by numerous associates. It will be appreciated if you will communicate this information to them when the matter is discussed further.

Aloha, and may the Almighty be with you and yours always.

Sincerely,



Dr. George B. Van Schaack  
The Morton Arboretum  
Lisle, Illinois 60532



# THE MORTON ARBORETUM

*Joy Morton, founder*

LISLE, ILLINOIS 60532 Phone: WOODLAND 9-0074

March 6, 1971

His Excellency, John A. Burns, Governor of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Dear Sir:

Let me refer to 'An open letter to the People of Hawaii' written by Dr. Hugh Iltis of the University of Wisconsin, in the matter of the possible transfer of timber rights of some 3700 acres of virgin Koa and Ohia forest (part of the Hawaiian Forest Preserve) to commercial interests. Dr. Iltis sent you a copy of this letter a few days ago. Let me ask you most earnestly and respectfully to regard this letter as among the most important statements you are likely to receive in this matter.

Dr. Iltis argues at length on several points, much better than I can, and I ask you to study carefully these points which he makes so well against the proposed action on the part of the State of Hawaii. But two of his points I wish to adumbrate, and to my remarks I invite your attention. Both of these points are controversial only in regard to one's political philosophy, not in regard to one's knowledge of biology or attitude toward nature. Each of them has often been invoked when the controversy over other aspects of an issue has seemed unresolvable.

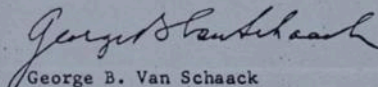
The first of them concerns the matter of precedent--to what extent would the proposed act follow precedent or establish it? May it not be wise when the matter is widely acclaimed as of national concern, even international, neither to follow precedent into further embracing a questioned principle, nor to establish a precedent by doing so? Preservation of the environment has become within a very few years a topic of the most intensive concern, not only among scientists all over the

world, but within the whole world community of informed citizens. Every day new evidence is presented that destruction of virgin resources has led to consequences it was difficult to see ahead of time, and baffling to find any solution for after the event. Conceding to commercial interests the timber rights of the forest in question seems entirely unwise in this regard.

The second point concerns reversibility--can the losses which may follow an action be restored by an additional action? In the matter in question no reversibility of this type is possible. It seems certain that no ecosystem anywhere near as complicated as that to be found in these 3700 acres has ever existed twice--when such a system is once destroyed it is gone forever. I believe we must be sure we can do without it before we destroy it. Dr. Iltis's description of the area and his exposition of its importance would seem to me to indicate that we are still too ignorant to know that we may destroy it without eventual regret.

I plead with you to embrace this opportunity at the beginning of your new term of office to do everything in your power to prevent the transfer of the timber rights I speak of. If these 3700 acres are saved the probability seems great that, considering the accelerating increase of environmental concern, your decisive part in this matter will be gratefully remembered by the People of Hawaii in perpetuity.

Respectfully yours,



George B. Van Schaack

Bibliographer

Dear George -

Magnificent!  
yours is better  
than mine

Love

HJK

March 5, 1971

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

It has come to my attention through a story in the Hilo, Hawaii, Tribune Herald of February 21, 1971 that the State of Hawaii is debating whether it should sell timber rights to Blair Limited for 3,700 acres of virgin Ohia and Koa forest in the Upper Lauaphoehoe Forest Reserve in Hawaii.

The news that such a sale is even contemplated, that it is even discussed seriously in the year of environmental awakening 1971, fills me with terror, sorrow, and trepidations. The feeling will not leave me that our environmental concerns of the last decade are only heroic gestures by a few to counteract the 18th and 19th Century exploitative attitudes which are still prevalent in our civilization, especially in well-meaning but unsophisticated administrative bureaucracies, who have yet to understand the irreplaceable value of wild lands to man, of undisturbed, unpolluted nature, its diverse flowers and animals, its beauty and tranquility! The precedent that such a sale would make is equally terrifying -- one can visualize block after irreplaceable and state-owned block of wild land falling to the chain saws of the lumber speculators.

Let me plead for the preservation of this and other wild lands in Hawaii. Hawaii is biologically the most unique island in the world. Of its 8,000 animals and 2,000 plants, over 90% are found nowhere else in the world except on these islands. Plants or animals with such restricted distribution are called endemics. The thousands of the Hawaiian endemics ~~are~~ evolved independently from their ancestors because of the immense geographic isolation of Hawaii. Botanical wonders such as the Silver Sword, zoological wonders such as the 34 species of Honey Creepers, owe their uniqueness to this isolation -- and are found only in Hawaii. Because of their intrinsic interest, they need to be preserved for all times.

But there are thousands of other living species, less well known, but equally rare, many of which grow and fly in Koa and Ohia forests. Just look at the marvellous new book, The Natural History of Hawaii by Sherwin Carlquist (Natural History Press, New York, 1970, \$19.50) and get overwhelmed with the value, the pricelessness of Hawaii's wildlands, their beauty and biological interest.

Hawaiians, you are living in an evolutionary Eden!

Hawaiians, wake up to your responsibilities to preserve for humanity this richness, to protect it against short-sighted rape.

Science, evolutionary research, yes, your children and especially lonely 20th Century man deprived of his proper environment in the giant cities as he is, all need to have these tracts preserved, if for no other reason than to know that they exist, that they can be used for our understanding of nature, for the replenishment of our damaged bodies and souls.

Take these 3,700 acres. Has anyone surveyed in detail this land for its rare flowers and trees which still survive there? Many of the endemic plants on Hawaii are down to nothing, to a dozen plants or less! Does this land have some of the rarest Lobelias, some of the near extinct Honey Creepers? Who knows? Who cares? Honey Creeper birds number 34 species, and all are Hawaiian endemics! 17 of these species are already extinct, never, never ever again to be seen alive by any wondering pair of human eyes. Are we to hasten the day when still other species will be wiped out for ever, because of the avarice and stupidity of man?

Honey Creepers need those big blocks of wild forest to get food, to live in the habitat to which they are adapted. If you cut the forest, you will exterminate these birds. Are there any of these birds left in the cut-over forest lands near the Kulani prison road on Hawaii, devastated by Hawaii's Conservation Department (sic!) in its attempt to raise more lumber?

Hawaii -- a lumber state? Is that the best use of its resources?

Hawaii--~~a~~ eucalyptus plantation from shore to shore? Is that the best use for its unique virgin forests?

Hawaii's Koa and Ohia trees - part of virgin ecosystems, wonders of complexity for 10,000 or more years to come, to gladden human eyes, to feed birds and insects alike? Or just so many veneer logs for bedroom suites and office furniture, to be shipped to Japan, one of the environmentally most culpable civilizations of the 20th Century?

Sooner or later we will have to limit our exploitation of nature. Why not start now, by stopping the continued destruction of wild lands, here or in the Amazon, in Oregon or in the Phillipines.

The state of Hawaii is the legal guardian of one of the most unique ecosystems in the world, a legal guardian of these living things for all of humanity, for all of human time to come.

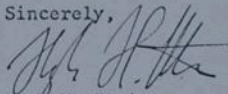
Let the 3,700 acres <sup>not</sup> be cut and set a precedent for continuing rape of state lands! Let these acres, as well as all major wild land blocks yet left, forested or not, be preserved now -- in National or State Parks or Monuments, in preserves to protect forever the uniqueness of the great state of Hawaii.

March 5, 1971

A hundred years from now the world will little care nor long remember whether 10,000 bedroom suites got their veneer from virgin Hawaii Ohia and Koa logs. But they will long mourn the destroyed forest, the extinct birds, the lack of understanding that permitted such waste.

Let us not swap our living gold for a mess of dead porridge!  
Let the forest of Lauaphoehoe live!

Sincerely,



Hugh H. Iltis  
Professor of Botany  
Director of the  
University of Wisconsin Herbarium

HHI/et