



July 2025 PMKCA Newsletter

Reducing Risks of Dangerous Dog Attacks

Report from our recent “Talk Story” meeting.

Ruth Bennett
President, PMKCA

Residents of mauka Pa’auilo and Kalōpā have been experiencing an alarming number of incidents of harassment and attacks on people and animals by dogs. In our January newsletter, we reported on nine attacks in recent months in which at least 47 animals (sheep, goats, a cow and calf, poultry, and pet cats) were killed. We also received reports of attacks by dogs on people walking or hiking, and on forestry staff working in our forest reserves.

Since that article, five more incidents occurred involving the death of eleven more sheep, and many earlier attacks were also documented.

Vicious dog attacks are a real and ongoing threat on our roads, in our pastures, and around our homes.

While we are not the only community on the Hāmākua Coast dealing with this crisis, we have been working within our own borders to understand and find some solutions for this distressing problem.

On Saturday, May 31, members of our mauka communities, and others, gathered within the calming and supportive walls of St. Columba Church in Pa’auilo to talk about our concerns and find solutions. We met with County Council Representative Heather Kimball and our local Community Policing Officer Michael Sailer, to learn about and discuss our “dogs” problem and to come up with some concrete actions and solutions.



Map of the mauka Pa'auilo and Kalōpā communities showing the locations of dog attacks (red pins) and loose dog sightings (blue pins).

To highlight the extent of the problem, we showed a large map of our rural community marked to identify the general locations of attacks on people and animals (red pins) and of sightings of dogs roaming free (blue pins). The effect of the pins marking so many incidents was stark and sobering.

Early in the meeting, three members of our community reported on the impact of dog attacks on their animals and the toll those attacks took on themselves. One resident reported that, *on the day before the meeting*, he witnessed the killing of a ewe and lamb on his property by two dogs. Another woman talked about her friend who lost nine sheep in an attack in February. Their stories rang alarm bells with so many of us.

But even under the heavy emotional weight of those tragedies, the meeting was uplifting, resulting in a long list of potential solutions and future actions.

Our experts (Rep. Kimball and Officer Sailer) informed us about current and future changes to County and State code regarding Dangerous Dogs. The new county Animal Control and Protection department, seriously understaffed at the moment, is taking on the responsibility (from the Police Department) of containing dogs that have been determined to be dangerous.

While we learned quite a lot from the experts, we also spent time talking about what we could do for ourselves. We identified several important practical

solutions, We encourage you, especially if you live in mauka Pa'auilo and Kalōpā, to help.



How do we know what kind of problem we have if we aren't keeping track of verifiable incidents?

Answering this question led us to a new section of our PMKCA website to bring attention to our concerns. The new "Dangerous Dogs Project" will collect and display information, recommendations, and community actions to reduce the risk of dog attacks in our community.

Within the "Dangerous Dogs Project" section, we are introducing two interactive report forms to allow our residents (and others elsewhere) to document and share verified information, including photos (if they are submitted) about sightings of stray dogs ("Loose Dog Report") and about incidents of harassment or injury to people and animals ("Dangerous Dog Report").

The reports are intended primarily for residents of our community and surrounding areas, but we would be happy to share what we are learning with other communities.

You will find the forms on our website, www.PMKCA.org, under the new “Projects” menu option. From the “Projects” page, click on the “Dangerous Dog” image to go to that section.

You can also reach the “Dogs” project pages on your smart phone or other mobile device by pointing your camera at this QR code:



Our intent in collecting information is to learn about our risks by looking into the details of past incidents. *We are not displaying any personal information or locations, and we aren't about tracking down “bad” dogs and their owners; if any actions are contemplated, PMKCA is leaving that up to the victims of attacks at their discretion.*

As you travel our roads or walk and hike in our community, we hope that you will help by documenting loose dogs with photos and details. If you, your family, or your neighbors sustain an attack by a dog on your livestock or pets, we hope that you will share information with our team so that we can raise awareness and reduce attacks.

What more can we do to help protect residents and vulnerable animals from attacks?

Dealing with the problem is not only about understanding our dangerous dog situation. We recognize that many of our residents need help, guidelines, and resources to strengthen their defenses against harassment or attacks. An action group is forming that will look into fencing and surveillance tools, self-defense deterrents for walkers, neighborhood awareness and support. We'll be keeping our Dangerous Dogs Project webpages current with what we're finding.



Attendees listened intently as others described incidents or made suggestions for protection of animals or defenses for walkers.

Finally, we have no reason or intention to criticize all dog owners.

We recognize and are friends with responsible hunters and understand their investment in and care for their dogs. We are working with dog trainers, ranchers, and our neighbors who own dogs for all the reasons that make dogs “man’s best friend”. We know that sometimes situations exist within

households which cause the care of dogs to lose priority. We want everyone to be treated fairly on all sides of this complicated issue.

There is nothing more distressing than seeing the scar on a child's face from a dog attack or ending the life of a dying sheep that has been brutally mauled by a dog or finding the remains of your pet. We hope that you who are reading this will support us and make use of our tools and information to help reduce the risk of dog attacks.

~~~~~ COMING UP! ~~~~~

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Thursday, July 10, 2025, 6 PM**  
**At Denning's house – 44-3220 Kula Kahiko Rd.**  
*(All members are welcome to attend.)*

**Annual Potluck Membership Meeting in the Park!**  
**Saturday, August 9, 2025, 11 AM**  
***Kalōpā Park Pavilion***

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