

HWUT's Progress on Innovative Projects to Expand Hawaii's Wood Product Markets



The Hawai‘i Wood Utilization Team (HWUT) is a group of experts implementing innovative, cross-sector projects to expand wood product markets in Hawai‘i. The Team includes members from forestry, architecture, design, engineering, wood products, construction, finance, marketing, research and Hawaiian cultural practices. HWUT has several ongoing projects and activities being coordinated by Joseph Valenti, founder of the Albizia Project.

HFIA took the lead in creating the HWUT website with an online [Hawai‘i Forest Products Directory](#), which is designed to increase connectivity within the state’s wood industry. The Directory connects Hawaii’s forest products businesses with buyers and sellers of a variety of wood products and services. HFIA encourages forest industry related business to create a listing in the Directory. So far there are 262 vendor listings in the Directory.

Businesses that create a listing in the Directory will be on the State’s distribution list for notification of available resources statewide such as wood, request for proposals, and other wood-related resources and opportunities.

The HWUT’s 400 sq. ft. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is on schedule to be built in 2020. DLNR’s Division of Forestry & Wildlife has harvested the eucalyptus saligna and southern yellow pine from the Koke‘e Timber Management Area on Kaua‘i. It has been transported to O‘ahu for milling and prefabrication of parts. The ADU prototype will be built in Honolulu to showcase innovative uses of Hawai‘i grown wood with quality architectural millwork and vernacular design. Follow updates on the [HWUT Instagram page](#) and [facebook page](#).

Another project is the design of an education center to be constructed at MānāPlain wetlands on Kaua‘i under the leadership of Sheri S. Mann, DOFAW Kaua‘i District Manager. The state-managed MānāPlain wetlands on the western coast of Kaua‘i are a popular destination for tourists and schools. The presence of a number of rare bird and plant species has drawn an increasing number of visitors and created a need for a permanent structure. The Albizia Project is working on the design and will coordinate with DOFAW on the planning of the 800 sq. ft. education center utilizing Hawaii’s timber resources. The design will be influenced by the innovative wood technologies and research developed from the ADU prototype to demonstrate the state’s commitment to sustainable building and tourism.



ADU design by The Albizia Project and Kevin Miyamura Architects.

The HWUT is working with G70 Design + Kaiser Group to test the termite resistance of mass timber assemblies using the most promising technology in preservative treatments. This project aims to increase industry confidence in mass timber products in regions with high termite risk such as Hawai‘i, Florida, and other southern states. They are encouraging our local Hawai‘i building officials to adopt the latest ICC-approved changes to the upcoming 2018 and 2021 IBC that codify mass timber construction.

The HWUT has also sponsored educational activities including a “Timber in Hawai‘i Talk”, “Forest to Frame: Mass Timber from a Hawai‘i Perspective” workshop, and a Wood Kiln Drying Short-course.



Instructor and students preparing lumber for the Wood Kiln Drying Short-course at Kamuela Hardwoods.

The HWUT also sponsors the annual “Innovation + Imagination (I+I) Student Challenge”, a component of Hawaii’s Woodshow that challenges students to construct artwork using a mixture of donated Hawai‘i-grown wood and other materials of their choice.

HWUT is funded through the US Forest Service’s Wood Innovations Grant program, which aims to expand wood products and biomass markets. In a proposal planning and writing collaboration, DOFAW, HFIA and the Albizia Project, supported by the HLPA, were awarded the state’s first grant from this nation-wide, highly competitive program. Out of 119 proposals, Hawai‘i’s was one of 34 projects selected to receive a grant. The goals of the effort are to facilitate and coordinate new and innovative approaches for the use of locally-grown wood; reduce the risks of wildfires; analyze resource and market conditions for local woods; and increase the visibility and demand for Hawai‘i-grown wood products.



I+I Challenge student Crysta Alcantar’s “Deeper” featured at Hawaii’s Woodshow.

Learn more about the HWUT on the [HWUT website](#).