

Summary of Public Comments on the Preliminary Alternatives

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park General Management Plan/Wilderness Study and Environmental Impact Statement

February 2012

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Subject Areas	5
Ainahou	5
Air Tours.....	5
All Alternatives	6
Alternative Concepts	6
Bikes	6
Boundaries	7
Campgrounds.....	7
Chain of Craters Road (upper section, includes Mauna Ulu, Kealakomo)	7
Chain of Craters Road (end of road and lower coastal area).....	8
Climate Change	9
Commercial Services	9
Crater Rim Drive.....	10
Cultural Resources.....	11
Facilities	11
Hilina Pali	12
Interpretation	12
Jaggar Museum and Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (HVO).....	13
Kahuku	14
Kilauea Military Camp	20
Kilauea Visitor Center.....	20
Mauna Loa Road.....	20
Natural Resources.....	21

Ohia Wing	21
Ola'a Rainforest (large and small tracts)	22
Park Entrance	22
Partners and Neighbors	23
Planning Process	24
Research	25
Thurston Lava Tube (Nahuku)	25
Trails	26
Transportation and Access.....	27
Visitor Experience	28
1877 Volcano House.....	29
Volcano House	29
Wilderness	30
Other Comment Topics	31

Introduction

In developing alternatives for the *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park General Management Plan/Wilderness Study and Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/Wilderness Study/EIS)*, the National Park Service (NPS) released a set of preliminary alternatives to the public for review and comment in the fall of 2011 (August 1, 2011 – January 2, 2012). This comment report summarizes the comments received during this 155-day public comment period and includes an appendix of all comments, organized alphabetically by topic.

The goal of this public comment period was to solicit comments and encourage public participation in the development of preliminary alternatives for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park GMP/Wilderness Study/EIS. The objective was to establish a clear and open dialogue with the public and to provide a forum for the public to review, and provide feedback on, preliminary alternatives developed for this plan in anticipation of defining alternatives and selecting a preferred alternative for the draft GMP/Wilderness Study/EIS. This comment period also served as official scoping for the Wilderness Study which was added to the scope of the GMP. A Notice of Intent to expand the scope of the GMP to include the Wilderness Study was published in the *Federal Register* (vol. 76, n.232, pp. 75557-58).

The public comment period was initiated on August 1, 2011 with the publication and mailing of the Preliminary Alternatives Newsletter which was distributed by mail to approximately 750 individuals on the park mailing list. This newsletter outlined the GMP planning process, introduced the Wilderness Study, and explained the concepts and actions of the preliminary alternatives. It also outlined a number of ways in which the public could comment on this stage of the planning process. Individuals were invited to submit a paper comment form (included in the newsletter); mail or email the Superintendent; submit a comment online on the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website; and/or attend a talk-story session and share comments with park staff. In total, the park held a series of five talk-story sessions with the public between August 22 and August 24, 2011, three of which were held for the general public and two of which were organized for park science partners and commercial user groups. All five sessions were organized as open forums, with a series of "stations" that the public could visit focusing on the proposed alternatives and the Wilderness Eligibility and Study. Each station included a poster about the preliminary alternative or wilderness study, a large notepad for taking notes, and at least one park representative who could answer questions and take comments. Approximately 65 people attended these talk story sessions.

In addition to the 280 comments received at the talk-story sessions in August 2011, 65 commenters returned mail-in forms (14), submitted comments via the PEPC website (40), or wrote letters (six letters and three emails) to the Superintendent. The park also received one petition that was signed by 39 individuals. All correspondence received was reviewed and analyzed by the planning team.

Commenters touched on a wide variety of topics. Each alternative, including the no-action alternative, had supporters and detractors. Many commenters expressed support for individual actions in different alternatives and suggested their own combination of those actions. No particular alternative emerged as a clear favorite. The following summary addresses the subject areas which received the highest number of comments, listed in alphabetical order. Representative comments are included within each subject area to provide an example of the comments received. The PEPC correspondence number and comment identification number are included in parentheses following each comment.

Subject Areas

Ainahou

A number of commenters addressed management of Ainahou Ranch. Some provided more information about the history, significance, and purpose of the ranch. Others expressed interest in the restoration of the natural and cultural landscapes surrounding the ranch, and others suggested various volunteer groups assist with the maintenance of the structure and grounds. Commenters expressed a broad range of opinions with regard to access: while some wanted more access to the area and increased interpretation, others suggested limiting access in order to protect endangered nene.

Representative Comments:

“The main purpose of Ainahou is historic preservation and Nene recovery. Grounds maintenance and guided tours could take place when there are no conflicts with Nene presence. If Nene use discontinues or strategies for Nene recovery accept accommodation to human presence, the use of the house for tours or other functions could be expanded.” (46|238333)

“While Ainahou is my favorite space in the park, I respectfully visit only a few times a year.” (56|238411)

“Ainahou Ranch should remain open on months that visitors don't conflict with nene recovery activity. Maintain non-paved road to Ainahou.” (23|240325)

“Ainahou: protect geese, guided public use. Balance public interest & nene mgmt.” (12|237367)

Air Tours

Several commenters noted the preliminary alternatives did not address air tours over the park. Most commenters wanted the GMP to provide some general guidance for air tour activities in addition to the more detailed guidance is being provided in a separate Air Tour Management Plan.

Representative Comments:

“Why are the preliminary alternatives silent on air tours? GMP should address air tours even if doing an Air Tour Management Plan.” (65|240147)

“Commercial air tours are an incompatible use over wilderness (as seen in east rift wilderness).” (64|240107)

“The massive air tour nuisance problem that is devastating our park and the surrounding neighborhoods was completely ignored. And this is despite the fact that emphatic pleas to include this issue in the General Management Plan were received in the initial public scoping period. It is important that these ideas are included because two Presidents of the United States of America ordered this issue to be dealt with, HVNP was chosen to be the first park in the nation to develop an Air Tour Management Plan, and more than a decade later the problem has become far worse.” (38|235489)

All Alternatives

A few commenters expressed their appreciation for the actions common to all alternatives – particularly those actions that are fundamental to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park operations such as interpretation, resource protection, and maintenance of facilities.

Representative Comment:

“This list is reassuring, reminding us that stewardship of natural and cultural resources and maintenance of existing facilities will continue, as well as current visitor recreational and educational opportunities, regardless of the various alternatives described for visitor developments. I support all the actions/objectives common to all alternatives.” (46|238308)

Alternative Concepts

Quite a few commenters voiced general support for various alternatives, and many suggested the combination of actions in one alternative with those of another. Some commenters voiced support for a balanced approach and identified Alternative B as aligning with this goal. Others voiced support for Alternatives C or D, stating that they provided the most protection or least amount of development; however, some commenters express concern about the restrictiveness of these alternatives. Several commenters also suggested combining alternatives C and D, finding commonalities in both alternatives. Each alternative was identified by at least one commenter as the preferred alternative for one proposed action or another.

Representative Comments:

“I was impressed by the bravery of your planning staff in developing three action alternatives. The themes of Alternatives C and D were especially ambitious. I did see occasionally a glimpse of the theme of traditional Hawaiian land management in Alternative C; that was a lofty theme and goal. The park as a refuge and stewardship themes were more obvious in actions proposed in Alternative D. How about combining the themes and many of the actions proposed in Alternatives C and D into a single alternative? It might make for a clearer presentation, keep your reviewers more engaged, and simplify the analysis process.” (46|238336)

“I did not consistently favor one alternative over the other three. My preferred alternative would combine various elements from all four alternatives.” (46|238309)

Bikes

A number of commenters addressed bike access in their comments. Many of those that wrote in expressed support for creating a separate bike trail around Crater Rim Drive – citing safety concerns, sustainable transportation, visitor experience, and congestion. Others expressed concerns about the impacts of building such a trail.

Representative Comments:

“Your idea about the biking trail along Crater Rim Drive is a very wonderful, awesome, graceful idea. Please try to make that happen.” (36|240365)

“Constructing a pedestrian trail (or a bicycle trail, p. 13) paralleling Crater Rim Drive corridor is commendable...However, I would be concerned about the impacts, especially to tree roots and trees adjacent to the road if fill is added...or this trail is paved.” (46|238319)

“I like the idea about the separate bike trails. It would be safer.” (37|240376)

“Your idea about the separate bike trails is a good idea.” (30|240344)

Boundaries

Most of the commenters who wrote in about proposed boundary adjustments expressed support for those areas listed in the Newsletter, particularly the Great Crack and the Kapapala Forest Reserve. One commenter voiced opposition about the Great Crack acquisition. Another suggested the lands off-shore of the Kalapana Extension be considered for inclusion in the park.

Representative Comment:

“I support the inclusion of the Great Crack in the park boundary. The Great Crack is worthy of being in the park. It is a great feature people should know about and have access to.” (68|240263)

“So as Kalapana has jurisdiction ¼ mile out in the ocean, can we have that at the Kalapana Extension?... Hawaiian lands should go 3 miles out to the sea.” (62|238491)

Campgrounds

A number of commenters addressed campgrounds in the park. Many commenters requested that the park add additional campgrounds, both ADA accessible front-country camps and back country camps. Others urged the park to maintain current campgrounds.

Representative Comments:

“Please have more campsites.” (36|240369)

“Our campsites at HAVO need attention. Lots of haole koa taking over. The shelters are infested with carpenter bees, need repairs and tender loving care. All shelters at Kaaha, Keauhou, Halape, and Pepeiao. Roaches are in the water catchment.” (62|238487)

Chain of Craters Road (upper section, includes Mauna Ulu, Kealakomo)

A number of commenters addressed Chain of Craters road and the areas surrounding Mauna Ulu. Some suggested adding trails or a network of trails along the road to connect mauka to makai. Others suggested improving current pull-outs, creating more pull-outs along the road, or reducing traffic through a shuttle system. All of those that wrote in about whether the park should reopen the road in the potential even of a closure due to volcanic activity requested that the road remain open to the ocean, even if only for more primitive road access. A few commenters suggested that Mauna Ulu be further developed with a larger parking area and/or visitor contact station, and a couple commenters expressed a desire for more defined road pull-outs or trails to access features along Chain of Craters Road including the tree molds, 1969 lava flows, and trail between Keahou and Kipuka nene.

Representative Comments:

"I think that we should maintain the current experience and opportunities along Chain of Craters road." (23|240324)

"One of the goals of park management should be to get visitors to get out of their cars, walk, and learn. This could best be done by developing a network of short loop or connecting trails, most or all with self-guiding interpretation. Some of my favorite areas off the Chain of Craters Road are the 1974 Keanakako`i lava flow, Kipuka Kahali`i, and the dry forest elements on the face of Holei Pali. Trails would have to be sensitively placed in these sites to minimize impacts of the trail and trail users. If the road were covered by lava, continue the recent practice of rebuilding the road, at least to the coast." (46|238330)

Chain of Craters Road (end of road and lower coastal area)

Many commenters addressed issues and proposals related the end of Chain of Craters Road. Quite a few commenters requested more picnic tables, shelters/pavilions, toilets, and water stations, and a few expressed their support for a visitor center (mobile) or covered kiosks. However, some felt increased development would create problems, such as increased litter. Several of these commenters also suggested interpretive topics for this area: cultural resources, fishing village, ocean, weather, sky, coastline, geological processes, and safety. A few commenters expressed a desire to maintain, if not increase, access to cultural and scenic resources at the end of the road. Another important concept commenters brought up, including Native Hawaiians, was the concept that Chain of Crater Road is the mauka to makai connection which is important culturally as well as for visitors.

Several commenters also encouraged the park to construct a bike/hike trail to Kalapana – citing emergency access concerns and former agreements between the community and the park. A few commenters requested that the Kalapana community be involved in the decision-making process about the section of the park commonly known as the Kalapana Extension.

Representative Comments:

"Whatever temporary or moveable facilities are placed along the coast, interpretive themes of geological processes, viewing safety, and settlement patterns should be stressed. A picnic area with moveable infrastructure, separate sites for different family groups, set in a natural area, and more than 100 feet of the luaus, is long overdue." (46|238331)

"Concerning the CofC Road: it is crucial to think about access to the coast as a main consideration--for both Native Hawaiians coming from Kalapana and for visitors. I don't support the option described in Alt. C (allowing it to become a trail) as it stands. Access to the views from the pali, to the petroglyph field, and to the coast are just as important a part of the visitor experience as access to the summit area in my opinion. Kalapana Hawaiians shouldn't be expected to have to come down to the coast on horseback on a trail to exercise their fishing rights. Even if the flow into the eastern part of the Kalapana Extension ends and a road can be built from Kaimu west into the park to allow access to the coast and coastal plain that way, I still wouldn't favor allowing the CofC road to turn into a trail." (10|237313)

"Alt. C: Kalapana Community should have a say...on any changes in the Kalapana Extension both on roads, trails, mobile VC" (62|238483)

“Alt. D: Use coconut grove areas for picnic” (62/238484)

Climate Change

The park received a few comments about climate change and sustainability, all of which voiced support for park efforts to become a leader in sustainability. Comments urged the park to take action to mitigate climate change, increase recycling practices, and use green technologies, among others.

Representative Comments:

“Serve as model for climate change with forest restoration...solar powered, park vehicles, hybrids, etc.” (58|238460)

“The pasture reforestation project could yield positive benefits for the park, not only for its restoration value but also for its carbon sequestration value.” (46|238315)

Commercial Services

The park received a broad range of comments that addressed commercial services and concession operations at HAVO. A number of commenters expressed a desire for amenities/services such as food services, bars, guided tours (bike, horse, etc.), ecotourism, and a community center. Several of these commenters suggested local communities could offer these services (inside and outside the park), and many of the suggestions were tied to a place such as Volcano House, the caldera, and Kahuku. One commenter recommended that the park allow a commercial operation to pasture cows at Ainahou for resource management. Other commenters raised concerns about the size of concessions and their compatibility with the rest of the park. These commenters requested that the park not increase commercial use in the park, nor give these users preference in access to resources.

Quite a few commenters addressed Kahuku specifically with regards to commercial services. Comments ranged from requesting that no commercial use be allowed in Kahuku to requesting that the park allow concessions for horseback riding, bike tours, lodging, and food. One commenter expressed a desire to see a paniolo experience in Kahuku through the use of concession operations. Some commenters expressed concerns about limiting access to only concession operations in Kahuku.

Representative Comments:

“Don't become a commercial park or don't prioritize commercial users over private.” (64|240082)

“Do not improve commercial access or commercial bus access to the park.” (64|240042)

“We need to have some type of store that sells materials or tools for visitors like hiking poles, rain gear, boots. This could be for rent or for sale. Needs to be in both units: Kilauea and Kahuku.” (68|240257)

“Need food in the park. Concessions in the future.” (68|240289)

“Limits must be maintained on size of buses, how commercial buses are operated and comply with noise, emissions and vehicle safety regulations. What occurred a few years ago, where operators purchased larger busses without consultation with the park and then tried to insist that the park clear vegetation in the fern forest section of the Crater Rim Drive so they could pass through without damage

to their vehicles. Staffing must be developed to adequately regulate and communicate commercial activities. While the Kahuku provides opportunity for commercial services to augment park programs, care must be given to ensure they are compatible with park values and goals and that there is sufficient staffing to monitor any activities approved.” (7|237297)

Bicycle tours at Kahuku would be great. Can get mountain bikes in places cars can't go. Allow (commercial) guided bicycle tours by NPS or Friends of Hawaii National Park but not above the green gate. (66|240151)

“I am concerned about providing only guided access to Kahuku. If someone wants to day hike into Kahuku, they couldn't do this under alternative B.” (68|240251)

Crater Rim Drive

The park received a number of comments concerning Crater Rim Drive and Halemaumau. Many of the commenters that wrote about Crater Rim Drive discussed transportation alternatives such as one-way traffic, shuttles, parking, and bike/pedestrian accessibility. Several commenters expressed support for one-way traffic on Crater Rim Drive, but there was a wide range of opinions about shuttles and accessibility for private vehicles. While some liked the idea of buses or some form of shuttle service (some people even suggested keeping sections of the road open for bikes and pedestrians only), others requested that access for private vehicles be maintained. For those that voiced support for a shuttle, many had questions about where it would stop and how many shuttles would run. Quite a few commenters requested that there be a bike/pedestrian trail around Crater Rim Drive, but others raised concerns about the impacts of such a path. A few individuals requested that the park maintain the historic character of the road and its “green tunnel”.

A number of commenters also addressed alternatives for Halemaumau and the parking lot in that area. While some commenters voiced support for protecting this area as a sacred site, others questioned the proposal to minimize the size of the lot – voicing questions about the success of such actions and the need for maintaining a large lot in the event of more volcanic activity. Quite a few commenters stated that they wanted more access to the caldera, although some acknowledged the challenge of managing the area for the public and the plume.

Representative Comments:

“Crater Rim Drive: Alternative B is a good compromise for conflicting use.” (7|237280)

“Adapt elements of Alternative C & D. The Jaggar Museum and Crater Rim Drive should be open only to buses and bicycle traffic to minimize impact. No second entrance to Crater Rim Drive.” (42|238269)

“Crater Rim Drive: A. No action. I love the biking and hiking idea, though. Maybe construct a cinder single track trail between the caldera and the road?” (52|238386)

“INCLUDE: Limiting both private and commercial vehicle access to park roads beyond Jaggar Museum.” (63|238432)

“Crater Rim Drive: Alternative B. Once lava is disturbed it is impossible to make it look natural again. Therefore, reducing the size of the Halemaumau parking area will not improve it. If a parking area of this size was necessary in the past, it seems logical that it will be necessary in the future.” (61|238467)

“Above all, the historic alignment, width and character of this road should be maintained as a “green tunnel” under interlocking Ohia canopy on the windward side of its alignment.” (47|238344)

Cultural Resources

In general, commenters shared their support for the protection of cultural resources. Quite a few of the comments that addressed this topic suggested the interpretation and protection of specific cultural resources such as ahupuaa, Ainahou, the Ohia Wing, the Japanese internment history at KMC, sacred sites, lava tubes/caves, petroglyphs, and other archeological sites. Some commenters also suggested creating cultural facilities such as cultural pavilions or a natural and cultural history museum, and a few requested more access to cultural and/or archeological sites in the park. Several commenters also voiced support for maintaining an on-going connection with Native Hawaiians – whether through gathering oral histories, creating park signs in the Native Hawaiian language, maintaining access for Native Hawaiians to sacred/traditional sites, or consulting with groups like the Kalapana Fishing Community when making decisions that impact their use and access to the park. One commenter stated that this connection with Native Hawaiians is a cultural resource in and of itself.

A few commenters also provided some information about cultural resources in the park and questioned the use or success of proposed actions in the preliminary alternatives such as separating the uses of the Jaggar Museum and USGS or limiting access to lava tubes or caves. These commenters suggested that the park use tools such as interpretation or education to protect valuable cultural resources rather than limit access or remove current infrastructure.

Representative Comments:

“Maintaining a living cultural connection to the park by local Native Hawaiians is a protected resource in itself.” (7|237295)

“Not sure if the park wants to start on a course of action that removes valid facilities and use from the crater rim for cultural reasons. I believe a more practical and beneficial approach would be to identify the major cultural areas around the rim and through education and interpretation provide the visitor with the knowledge to visit the whole area with respect and understanding.” (7|237282)

Facilities

Most of the comments related to facilities addressed biking, campgrounds, and hiking trails and were therefore separated into these respective topics elsewhere in this summary. Please see: “Bikes,” “Campgrounds,” and “Trails” for a summary of comments on these topics. Other facilities that commenters addressed include pavilions and outdoor classrooms. Many commenters voiced their support for pavilions, stating that such facilities could be used as cultural centers or interpretive/educational sites (outdoor classrooms) and would provide shelter from the elements. Another commenter said these could be used for service opportunities. One commenter expressed concerns that they would limit wildlife viewing opportunities, and several commenters urged the park to limit new development in general.

Representative Comment:

“Mauka to makai outdoor educational pavilions: outdoor classrooms where kids could camp. It would provide shelter from weather.” (67|240231)

Hilina Pali

A few individuals commented on Hilina Pali and the surrounding area. Most of these comments urge the park to maintain, if not improve, access along this road such as adding pull-outs, developing interpretive waysides, and fixing water catchment systems. While some commenters voiced support for one of the action alternatives, some commenters would like to see no changes to Hilina Pali, just on-going maintenance. A couple of commenters requested that access be maintained even if covered by lava.

Representative Comment:

“Hilina Pali Road. Develop short, self-guided interpretive pullouts with waysides and short trails. It may not be practical to restrict use to pedestrians and bicyclists on certain days or time of day when there will be continued administrative, car camper, and backpacker use. Repave road if short segments covered by lava, primarily for backpacker access to the coast and secondarily for administrative access.” (46|238332)

Interpretation

The park received a broad range of comments about interpretation and education programs at the park. While many people voiced the need for interpretation and emphasized its importance, commenters differed greatly with regards to their preferred interpretive topics or stories. While some urged the park to focus on the cultural history within the park, others stated that the park should focus on the geology, volcanology, and science/research at the park. Still others suggested that interpretive themes revolve around biology. One commenter suggested that the park interpret biology around the KVC and geology around Jaggar. Another suggested that interpretive themes be based on the historic foundation of the park.

Commenters also suggested a number ideas for interpretive media or facilities for the park. Some suggestions involved facilities such as a cultural resources museum, visitor center at end of Chain of Craters road, an amphitheater at Jaggar museum, outdoor pavilions, and improvements at the Jaggar museum. A few other commenters suggested self-guided hikes or ranger led hiking and 4x4 tours. A few others urged the park to hire more interpretive staff, or locate staff in specific areas such as at Jaggar Museum, Thurston Lava Tube, or the end of Chain of Craters road.

Representative Comments:

“Encouraging more education opportunities will help people take care of our environment. If you teach people about the native plants and animals then they will want to help take care of them.” (28|240339)

“One of the goals of park management should be to get visitors to get out of their cars, walk, and learn. This could best be done by developing a network of short loop or connecting trails, most or all with self-guiding interpretation.” (46|238330)

“Strive to inform visitors of the park’s ‘cultural significance and sacredness.’ The land and native species are rare and [d]eserve the utmost care and respect. The recent improvement to park signs with primary interpretation in Hawaiian with English translation is truly appreciated and very well done. Continue to highlight the spiritual, cultural and historical significance of the area.” (56|238412)

“I would like to see more info on the rainforest-how it developed, exists and it covers half of Crater.” (In response to question #5) (53|238404)

“Education on Park resources and issues is always my focus. The Park’s Interpretive Division does a good job but additional educational resources need to be organized, developed and tapped as noted in response #2.” (12|237372)

“Ongoing education about wilderness areas increases public understanding of their uniqueness and value.” (12|231914)

Jaggar Museum and Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (HVO)

Commenters who wrote about the Jaggar Museum and HVO addressed two primary issues: how to currently manage the site and what to do with the structures in the event of increased volcanic activity. Many commenters voiced support for an outdoor amphitheater, but a few questioned the consistency of this action with other stated goals (decreasing development in this area, removing structure or uses away from the edge of the caldera, etc.). Others voiced general enthusiasm for improving and/or increasing interpretation at this site (such as improving/expanding the museum), and many liked the idea of Jaggar serving as the first stop for the public. A few commenters urged the park to not expand the site or at least acknowledged the potential impact of such actions on Native Hawaiian cultural significance of the site.

Commenters also disagreed about what the park should do in the event of increased volcanic activity in the area. While some requested that the park not rebuild the facilities, others stated that they saw no reason to not rebuild (unless volcanic activity returned to its 18th century patterns). One person recommended that the park and HVO work together to relocate library collections. One individual also commented that the partnership between Jaggar and HVO is a cultural resource.

Representative Comments:

“The chance of an eruption destroying or badly damaging the facilities there is finite but small. But what about a fire? Either facility could be badly damaged by fire unrelated to volcanic activity. According to Alternative B, that could trigger relocation. I don’t believe that would be desirable. That site is certainly the best from which to view the caldera, and I see no reason not to rebuild there if the damage is accidental. If eruptive conditions change to those of the late 18th century, then it would be prudent to relocate. I think the wording of the Alternative should be changed to reflect these two different scenarios. I think you need to be careful in bringing in the issue of cultural significance to this matter. HVO and later Jaggar have developed their own cultural significance by their very presence at the site.” (14|237377)

“An outdoor amphitheater at Jaggar is a good idea, but it should have a roof and a barrier against the trade winds. For many visitors, it could be a cold experience to sit rather than stand in strong wind and rain.” (14|237378)

“If either or both structures are to be moved if damaged, adding an amphitheater to a culturally significant site seems unwise. This amphitheater would need to be either very large or built into the ground in the old Greek style in order to provide shelter from the wind. If it were built above ground it would be obtrusive on the landscape. If it were built in ground it would be too permanent in a culturally significant area.” (61|238469)

Kahuku

In their general remarks about Kahuku, most commenters expressed an enthusiasm for increased access to this unit and the desire to protect the resources at the same time. Several commenters identified threats to the unit such as volcanic activity, enforcement issues, commercial services, damages to resources (introduction of invasive species), and over-development. Many commenters stated that the public should be able to access Kahuku seven days a week; very few requested limiting access.

Representative Comments:

“Q3: C or D; opening up Kahuku seems to me the most important gain we can get from a major revision.” (4|224655)

“Since I live in Ocean View, I like the improved assessment and development of the Kahuku Unit. Since I am 80, I like the idea of being able to drive to the Resources.” (53|238403)

“Allow limited access only to Kahuku Unit.” (57|238418)

“DOFAW also supports increased public access to upper Kahuku; however, NPS planning should take into account the increased sensitivity of the natural and cultural resources found in this area (e.g. allow public non-vehicular use only, implement sanitation protocols for boots, require permits for access/camping).” (17|237387)

Kahuku Buildings

While some commenters voiced their support of the proposal to maintain and adaptively reuse structures in Kahuku for park operations (such as a visitor center, museum, administrative offices, housing, maintenance, and an outdoor education center that can accommodate students overnight similar to the Keakealani Outdoor Education Center), others suggested adding low impact infrastructure and possibly locating park operations outside of the Kahuku unit. One commenter suggested that the park may want to delay any decision about the use of structures in Kahuku and instead create a Development Concept Plan outside the scope of this GMP. A few commenters raised concerns about the safety of these structures in the event of a fire or earthquake.

Representative Comments:

“We perceive access and development of visitor use and interpretive facilities at Kahuku as the most critical park development need and planning challenge, although adaptive reuse of current road and building infrastructure can keep costs and impacts modest.” (47|238342)

“Make Kahuku welcoming but don’t overdevelop. Avoid visual pollution in Kahuku. Make facilities blend with surrounding.” (68|240261)

“Kahuku: Use existing houses at entry for park. They could be fixed up to be very old time Hawaii. Don't spend money on something fancy.[B]” (8|237298)

“Kahuku Use of Existing Buildings: DOFAW supports Alternative D, which provides increased opportunities for the public (visitors and residents) as well as researchers, volunteers and educational groups.” (17|237390)

Kahuku Campgrounds

A number of commenters requested the addition of campgrounds and campsites in Kahuku, although their requests differed greatly in type and scale. While some commenters requested ADA car campgrounds like Namakanipaio with food, showers, and toilets, others requested small, remote cabins in the backcountry. Other commenters wanted to see dispersed, small-scale camping, and still others wanted a mix of drive-in and walk-in sites. Several commenters raised concerns about siting campgrounds near crucial habitats and sensitive species.

Representative Comments:

“I like the idea of a campground in Kahuku, something like the Namakanipaio. Provide food, showers, and a composting toilet.” (68|240249)

“I want to see access in upper Kahuku. I want people to be able to safely camp while protecting sensitive resources. Provide semi-established camps.” (68|240273)

“Please have more campsites.” (36|240369)

“Campgrounds: DOFAW prefers alternative B. In general, DOFAW supports increased public camping opportunities that include a wide-range of users. DOFAW would appreciate additional input when NPS is developing plans for specific locations for camping. Campsites near Alala release sites may not be compatible because birds may be attracted to human activity. Other campsites could be located close to Ka'u Forest Reserve which would provide a broader range of possible recreational uses.” (17|237393)

Kahuku Cultural Resources

The park received three comments that addressed cultural resources including cultural landscapes and resources in Kahuku. One person questioned the legality of cattle grazing if proposed in Kahuku, and another suggested that many of the lower pastures be designated for forest restoration. One person requested access to more archeological sites.

Representative Comment:

“If in “Cultural Landscapes” section the phrase “maintain some significant ranching landscapes or contributing elements” (in all the alternatives) means to have some cattle grazing, I believe this would be contrary to law. I believe cattle grazing is illegal in national parks unless expressly authorized by Congress (such as at Grand Teton). There is no such provision of law at Hawaii Volcanoes.” (16|233470)

Kahuku Entrance

A number of groups and individuals commented on the proposal to change the entrance to Kahuku. While a number of commenters expressed their support for keeping, and possibly improving, the current entrance to Kahuku with signs and possibly pavement, many others voiced their support for constructing a new entrance – citing safety concerns and the sense of arrival. One person expressed “major” objection to the idea of creating a new entrance. Some of the opposition to a new entrance cited concerns about the damage to resources. A few people suggested variations to the two entrances such as using one for administrative use, or having one as the entrance and the other as the exit.

Representative Comments:

“The first step is development of a safe access road with minor impacts leading to welcoming and informative visitor orientation, interpretation, and contact facilities. A strategy for addressing the access road alignment and use of existing ranch facilities in the GMP may be to characterize the alternatives in the plan, and defer a decision until an engineering and environmental assessment could be made of the three options for the access road. ... The most affordable alternative with the least environmental impact, of course, would be to use the existing access road and former ranch barns and houses. With some strategic vegetative screening and a thoughtful placement of visitor information and contact facilities, the existing access alignment and facilities could be utilized, while providing an open air, welcoming, informative visitor arrival and Kahuku orientation and interpretation location.” (46|238310)

“I like the idea of using the old highway as an entrance to Kahuku. It's a good introduction that would exemplify Kahuku, as opposed to the current mowed entrance.” (68|240250)

“Kahuku. Keep existing entrance, but ask County to install permanent signs on highway. Add kiosk with large lanai for visitor center. Pave all roads up to 6700 feet. Maintain wilderness areas intact, but look into trail system.” (52|238395)

Kahuku Interpretation

A number of commenters voiced their support for increased interpretation in Kahuku and recommended the addition of a number of interpretive media, programs or facilities such as a visitor center, museum, self-guided trails, and ranger led hikes. Commenters also recommended a number of alternative topics including, but not limited to: ranch history, paniolo lifestyle, WWII, restoration, and environmental education themes.

Representative Comment:

“Kahuku: The visitor orientation or contact area and the main road could provide access to a system of preferably loop, self-guided interpretive trails utilizing the themes of ranch history, forest recovery and restoration, relict dry forest ecosystems, and others.” (46|238312)

“Whichever access road is selected, visitors should "arrive" at self guiding or staffed interpretation and orientation facilities. Some of the lowest pastures could provide interpretation of historic paniolo lifestyle and cattle ranching era.” (47|238342)

Kahuku Range of Recreational Activities

While some commenters requested more access for hikers and birders in Kahuku, most comments that related to the range of recreational activities in Kahuku addressed biking and/or equestrian use. There was a range of opinions on both. While some thought one or both of these uses should not be allowed in Kahuku, others expressed their desire to have one or both of the uses throughout the entire unit. Others provided options within that spectrum such as only permitting bikes on existing ranch roads and limiting equestrian use to below the green gate. A few referred to creating different trails for different users. Several commenters, even if they wanted 4 wheel-drive access in upper Kahuku, stated that off-road vehicles would damage resources to unacceptable degrees.

Representative Comments:

"I question including equestrian use in Upper Kahuku: this is not a traditional use and has more needs/impact than bicycles; other places to do it; okay with horses in the lower pastures where it is a more appropriate use (in lower Kahuku, on the ranch road system)." (64|240060)

"Allow for bike and horse trails up to and beyond reservoir." (68|240259)

"Mountain biking and horseback riding would be good for commercial guided eco-tourism destination in Kahuku. Non-motorized commercial use in Kahuku." (68|240291)

"Kahuku: Recreation should be 7 days a week. [B]" (8|237300)

"Kahuku: Do not allow mountain biking they tear stuff up!" (15|237383)

"Range of Recreational Activities NPS should provide access to Kahuku for camping and a mix of day use recreational activities seven days a week." (17|237395)

Kahuku Restoration

A number of commenters provided specific recommendations about restoration practices in Kahuku such as: allow ranching to continue in certain areas, use volunteers and educate the public about restoration efforts, establish fences in upper stretches of Kahuku, and plant native species in some areas and eradicate invasive species in others. A number of these commenters expressed concerns about the proliferation of mouflon and the need to restore species such as mamane.

Representative Comments:

"This special place should be allowed to rest and recover from the 300 years of ranching that impacted it. Restore the Koa forest here." (15|237382)

"Restoration Activities DOFAW prefers Alternative C, which involves the community in restoration efforts, particularly the Native Hawaiian community." (17|237396)

"The further and higher one gets, the more valuable the resources become, and the more careful you are to keep it that way. This can be reinforced by volunteer groups to maintain pristine areas, to remove any refuse, prevent erosion, retard any invasive plants, and so on." (40|238262)

"Public involvement in the restoration process will help gain public support and understanding of the parks restoration goals. The successes at Kipuka Ki and the lower parts of the Mauna Loa Strip road

are a great example of how the restoration work can pull public support. Before and after documentation of this area is a "wow, that's what it is supposed to look like" a real eye opener." (7|237293)

"Kahuku has tons of potential for native forest and bird restoration in upper sections but also in lower pasture as well. Lower pasture vegetation could be improved to encourage forest bird recovery like iiwi, Elepaio, and omau (extinct in Kona - but could allow for bridge to recolonize Kona). If the lower Kahuku lava flow on the west side is considered for SEA, Kipuka and lama (forest) should be expanded in southwestern Kahuku. Restoration in lower pastures could be more of a public demonstration area. Fence needs guided interpretation or signage. There is tremendous regeneration in those enclosures (lower Kahuku)– share this with the public. Need to restore understory of trees in pastures or will lose them due to old age." (67|240214)

Kahuku – Road Access in Lower Kahuku

Commenters provided a wide range of feedback and suggestions about road access in lower Kahuku. While some said that the park should not restore roads or make them accessible to bus tours, others voiced their desire to access, at least, the area as high as the reservoir with four-wheel drive vehicles. Other commenters offered more moderate suggestions such as maintaining some roads for the public and administrative use or varying the condition and accessibility of the road based on use and condition of resources.

Representative Comments:

"At Kahuka consider adding enough additional public access roadways (using existing roads) to those shown for 2-wheel access so as to include one or more one-way loop public roadways." (16|233469)

"Limit large buses, keep access for private cars, limit access by any vehicles in Kahuku Unit." (57|238423)

"Mauka access on roads in Kahuku should be allowed by 4x4 private vehicles." (64|240101)

"I like the idea of having minimal access along roads in Kahuku because of introduction of weeds." (67|240240)

"Vehicular access is needed on the current mauka-makai, main ranch road through the length of the pastures to utilize the recreational resources of Kahuku and to provide administrative access for invasive species control in the wild/primitive zone and forest restoration in the old pastures at Kahuku. A single lane, 2 W-D, gravel or paved road with turnouts would be adequate. The main road should extend to the upper reservoir area or even to the 1950 lava flow for hiker access to the backcountry. There would be only marginal value to including a lower loop for buses because of the paucity of the typical short stop attractions for bus tours such as lava tubes or easily accessed recent lava flows. The roads in the pastures should be minimally maintained for administrative use to facilitate forest restoration. As paddocks are restored, access roads leading to them could also be restored, except for those that become part of the trail system." (46|238311)

Kahuku Trails

Many commenters addressed the trail network and facilities in Kahuku. While many recommended developing (interpretive) trails along or near the old road network, others requested backcountry access

to neighboring lands (Ainapo Trail, Kapapala Forest Reserve, HOVE, etc) and specifically, to Mauna Loa. Many of these commenters also requested that the park install facilities for backcountry users such as water catchment systems and huts along the trail.

Representative Comment:

"I am excited about the potential for a trail system in Kahuku. Hook it up with the Ainapo trail. Create new trail from Mauna Loa summit to connect with lower Kahuku trails and have them go through geologic features." (67|240222)

"A lot of remaining roads in Kahuku could be easily maintained as trails by mowing. This would allow access without creating new infrastructure and would easily be hiking trails." (68|240252)

"I propose you have a trail and/or a rock-cairn safe route from the Mauna Loa summit cabin to the highest road head point at Kahuku. Whether or not you do this -people will try this hike anyway (I have) and it is extremely dangerous trying to find a safe route. A marked route would prevent damage to sensitive sites along the way and promote public safety." (16|233472)

"Create a loop trail in lower Kahuku to interpret stories about people and changes over time." (44|238280)

Kahuku – Upper Kahuku Access

While a few commenters requested that all access to Upper Kahuku be limited to non-vehicular use, several commenters requested access to this area via 4 wheel drive, and in some cases 2 wheel drive, vehicles. Stating that they valued access to Upper Kahuku, none of these commenters seemed to oppose park-imposed mitigation actions such as decontamination stations for invasive species and permits for overnight use. A few commenters expressed concerns about the availability and accessibility of permits to the general public.

Representative Comments:

"I want to see self-guided hiking, equestrian and vehicular access in upper Kahuku and overnight camping; need to provide water and restrooms (luas). There are not significant hazards for visitors in this area. I am concerned about limiting access in upper Kahuku. Think/suggest you can have cleaning stations and manage for exotics with public general use. I would be okay with a permit system for the public with rules; don't make permits impossible. Think about methods that force any vehicle through a cleaning station, for example: use a pool of chemicals to cleanse tires as they drive through." (64|240051)

"Mauka access on roads in Kahuku should be allowed by 4x4 private vehicles." (64|240101)

"Include in preferred alt: Access to upper Kahuku-pedestrian and commercial bike and horse access." (44|238279)

"I would like to be able to access a trailhead at 6000-8000' in Kahuku by driving." (64|240096)

"Create greater access for birders to high elevation. Want access above green gate for birding and could go higher. Rare birds are along the south east boundary road. There are very few places on island for world class birding." (67|240215)

"I like the idea of having minimal access along roads in Kahuku because of introduction of weeds." (67|240240)

Kilauea Military Camp

Several people wrote comments about the Kilauea Military Camp (KMC), most of which addressed the interpretation of KMC to the public. A couple of commenters expressed support for preliminary alternative B's approach to the complex, although one commenter believes it is difficult to discuss management of KMC if it is going to change in a few years. One individual commented that the military use of KMC should be shut down and use returned to civilians.

Representative Comments:

"I support the thinking for KMC and the possible future options." (64|240048)

"I like honouliuli Japanese project with KMC. Build on that partnership to interpret/let public learn about other history, for example the CCC, WWII internment, old koa forest history." (64|240076)

Kilauea Visitor Center

A few commenters addressed the Kilauea Visitor Center (KVC) and surrounding area. Some comments voiced support for the KVC as the first stop and interpretive center for biology and culture, in particular. A few commenters voiced their support for creating an integrated visitor experience at KVC and offered suggestions about how to create a sense of arrival, such as constructing a large open air pavilion at KVC. Several other commenters addressed use of the buildings in the KVC area. Some liked the idea of adapting current facilities to address volcanic activity. Others liked the idea of separating administrative uses from the KVC, and others questioned the practicality of proposed actions – like moving the administrative offices to Hilo.

Representative Comments:

"We support elements of the four alternatives about rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the facilities at Kilauea summit to enhance the visitor experience and interpretive opportunities. These include removing administrative offices from the visitor center and rehabilitating and adaptively using the visitor center to accommodate the throngs of visitors in the middle of the day; using the `Ohi`a wing of the Volcano House as a cultural museum, and possible changes in the traffic flow patterns on Crater Rim Drive." (47|238344)

"KVC Campus: I like the idea of an integrated visitor experience, but I would like someone to study that and report to Cindy Orlando as to its feasibility. KVC: B. It would be good for admin to have their own building. It can be very disruptive, i.e. interp's daily huddle, talking in hallways, etc. ...I love the kiosk idea it would be inexpensive and take some pressure off of the desk." (52|238376)

Mauna Loa Road

Commenters seemed to prefer either preliminary alternatives B or C with regards to proposed actions along Mauna Loa Road. Several commenters expressed support for closing the road to vehicle use on specific days, but some raised concerns about access for visitors who traveled a long ways to come to the park. One person suggested adding waysides and turn-outs along the road. A few other

commenters requested that trails along the road be improved, restored, and/or created such as trail connections to Kahuku, the Ainapo trail, and Kau wilderness.

Representative Comment:

“Mauna Loa Rd: Alternative C. Although closing the road to traffic is a terrific idea for those of us who live here, I personally would not want to come from afar on such a day. This is a drive through park for the most part. The weather is beautiful on the Strip 99% of the time, and pavilions would only obscure the birds.” (61|238475)

“Q1: Mauna Loa Road close to traffic & institute hike/bike days.” (12|237368)

“Mauna Loa Road: B. Low cost, but great for hikers and birders. So it shouldn't get overused either.” (52|238396)

Natural Resources

The park received a number of comments related to natural resources in the park. While a number of comments urged the park to get rid of invasive and non-native plants like wasps, faya, mouflon, Christmas berries, etc., many offered suggestions for restoration and management of these resources such as being more focused with koa restoration and planting it only in areas where it's natural. Ideas included, but are not limited to: planting native plants, using volunteers to pull invasive species and protect cave resources, developing backcountry management policies to decrease the dispersal of seeds on clothing, working with partners, and providing native seedlings to local residents to decrease theft and harvesting of native materials in the park. A few commenters provided information about past management practices and natural resource management practices of neighboring land owners. Several commenters urged the park to protect natural resources such as the silversword, canopy, and forest understory.

Representative Comments:

“I think we should pick invasive plants. Classes could come learn and do new things. We should promote community and school involvement in traditional practices and environmental service projects.” (29|240340)

“Integrate western science and native Hawaiian ecological knowledge to enhance restoration techniques and practices.” (13|237375)

Ohia Wing

Several people addressed the Ohia Wing in their comments to the park. Many of these comments expressed support for the proposal to use the Ohia Wing as a cultural museum; however, one person raised concerns about the structure and security of the building.

Representative Comments:

“I prefer a new construction, state of the art museum for cultural resources over the Ohia Wing. The Ohia Wing has too many needs to make it secure for collections (issues with mold, mildew, etc); it would not be environmentally sustainable and would have a big carbon footprint to make the Ohia Wing

a museum. Don't give it back to Volcano House either. It isn't good for overnight accommodations either. Need a different use for Ohia Wing, but I'm not sure what. Museum is a great concept and very important, but I am concerned about bringing artifacts to Ohia Wing and having them mold/decay. With use of Ohia Wing, think about dollar costs, sustainable/carbon footprint, and limited opportunities for expansion.” (65|240129)

“Ohia Wing Cultural Museum: None exists in this richly diverse cultural environment. Showcase various cultures that have impacted the Park. Display and interpret the long-“hidden” archive of paintings & artifacts.” (12|237365)

Ola'a Rainforest (large and small tracts)

Several of the commenters who submitted feedback about proposed actions in Ola'a expressed a desire to increase access to this area. Some suggested constructing a minimal trail; others suggested constructing a boardwalk; and few stated that they would like to see guided interpretive trails in the area. While several commenters raised concerns about the impacts of such development and some requested no development in this area, even those who wanted to see trails or development in Ola'a expressed concerns about illegal use and the introduction of weeds. A few of those who requested more access to Ola'a cited the benefits of education and interpretive topics, such as rainforest ecosystems.

Representative Comments:

“Continue to manage Ola`a Forest for native species and rain forest ecosystems, seeking legislation for inclusion within the legislated park boundaries but without establishing formal trails or overnight camping. (I could see allowing the one or two hardy theoretical backpackers per year as long as they camped in Large Tract at least ½ mile from Wright Road.) Establish a short, self-guided (or ranger-led small groups that carpool to the site) interpretative trail on boardwalk with minimalist parking in Small Tract, Ola`a. The park has very little rain forest interpretation and certainly no rain forest interpretive trail; Ola`a might provide the best opportunity.” (46|238335)

“Would like to see more public education access, limited and guided, in Ola'a.” (66|240192)

Park Entrance

Several commenters addressed entrance fees and the proposal to add a second entrance to the park. Comments related to entrance fees ranged from requests for discounts/free entrance for locals, to increased entrance fees for commercial users and the general public. Those that commented on the proposed second entrance generally seemed in favor of the idea (a few commenters were not in favor), but differed over who would use the entrance: commercial groups, buses, delivery trucks, locals and non-tourists, park and observatory staff, and/or the general public. Those that did not like the idea of a second entrance brought up concerns about visitor orientation, safety, fee collection infrastructure, and staffing needs.

Representative Comments:

“Increase entrance fees for commercial users and consider raising entrance fees for the public but not passes. Also people walking or biking should pay less.” (64|240117)

“It is a good idea to separate the entrance to the park for different users like buses and employees.” (64|239995)

“Park Entrance: KMC Exit would be good for emergency to evacuate park if anything happens.” (62|238480)

“Park Entrance: Alt C and D: Note Mauna Loa Road entrance would be dangerous. Would require major construction and congestion of traffic.” (58|238436)

“Park entrance-A. There doesn't seem to be a congestion problem and it's easier for visitors to orient themselves with only one entrance.” (52|238368)

“As convenient as the Mauna Loa Road connection to Crater Rim Drive was for administrative use prior to the establishment of the fee program in 1986, I am skeptical about opening this road as a second entrance to all visitors. This would require road and fee collection infrastructure and staffing. There may be some value in reducing congestion at the current entrance by routing buses and administrative use through the Mauna Loa Road connection, if this is feasible from a traffic engineering perspective.” (46|238317)

Partners and Neighbors

A numbers of individuals and organizations submitted comments about partnerships, neighboring communities, and volunteering/stewardship opportunities.

One commenter voiced their support and appreciation of Hawaiian Volcano Observatory and USGS operations in that current facility. Another commenter requested that the park partner with Friends of Aiehou to manage and maintain that resource. Several commenters suggested that the park use and improve its partnerships to address management concerns and provide more visitor services.

A number of commenters also addressed the park's relationship with neighboring agencies and communities. A few of the park's neighboring agencies and communities provided information about current plans and upcoming actions that could impact, but mostly just align with, goals outlined in the preliminary alternatives. A few requests were made as well. For example, the DOFAW suggested that the park consult the DOFAW when designing campgrounds and trail networks in order to create better links between the adjoining properties. The Volcano community also requested that the park consider constructing more multi-use trails between the park and community to improve connectivity with the adjacent community. Several residents of Hawaii Ocean View Estates also expressed a desire to be involved with park operations. Commenters suggested that the park allow local businesses to provide visitor services in and outside of the park, such as ecotourism opportunities. Some commenters suggested that the park employ residents of the local community to do work such as trail maintenance or interpretation in Kahuku, and others suggested that the park construct an entrance from HOVE that could be used by local residents. Several other commenters stressed the importance of relationships between the park and Native Hawaiians, many of who also recommended management decisions that would further and improve these relationships. The Kalapana Fishing Council specifically asked to become a park partner.

The park also received a number of comments that suggested using volunteers and students to clean up the park, control erosion, remove invasive species, protect caves, etc. Many of these commenters felt that such opportunities benefit the park and volunteers alike.

Representative Comments:

“Expand relationships with island neighbors of all ages and income levels. Our park is sometimes viewed as an exclusive club that remains aloof from community concerns. Work on a sense of welcome, involvement and input both from and to our local population.” (39|235500)

“It is critical that park neighbors do not feel shut out and excluded from the Kahuku unit. Good neighbors are half the battle of protecting the park. If they feel part of it and have a vested interest in the park lands then they will be vigilant to protect those interests and help the park prevent illegal and resource degrading activities.” (7|237290)

“Interact more with neighboring lands owners like KS, DLNR, TNC, and elements at HOVE.” (64|240037)

“I want the partnerships that promote community and environmental service. Projects I think people will like that.” (35|240359)

“Full plan needs a more robust discussion on biosphere reserve and effort of Volcano community to be included in the biosphere reserve boundary.” (64|240050)

“What does it take to be a partner with the park? (Kalapana Fishing Council) Kalapana Fishing Council should be a partner with the park and is concerned about wilderness that is designated or proposed within the area of the Kalapana Extension; also for marine area or proposed extension. Identify the Kalapana extension on the maps.” (65|240118)

Planning Process

A number of commenters praised the park for the GMP planning process and voiced their appreciation for the opportunity to comment. A few others critiqued the park for not listening to specific pieces of advice. A few commenters expressed concerns about the scope of the plan, timing of implementation, and cost of alternatives.

Representative Comments:

“We welcome this long overdue planning effort and the Park's intent to deal with the many, often interrelated planning challenges such as access and development of visitor facilities at Kahuku, congestion at Thurston Lava Tube, adaptive reuse of facilities at the Kilauea summit, use of Ainahou Ranch house and grounds, and the development of cultural resource interpretative resources. Your planning staff should be commended for the clarity of their presentation, considering the complexity of the alternatives and the large number of Park sites and Park program areas addressed in the preliminary alternatives. We also respect the emphasis on adaptive reuse of current structures and facilities, rather than development of high impact new facilities.” (47|238337)

“GMP development is a time-consuming process over many years. In the meantime, park management at Kahuku has sometimes been unclear. Some neighbors (initially positive in 2003) are becoming confused and annoyed.” (39|235502)

Research

Three individuals commented on research activities in the park. Two commenters voiced a preference for preliminary alternative B – citing the value of Hawaiian Volcanoes Observatory, and the other expressed general support for research projects in the park.

Representative Comment:

“Research: Alternative B is preferred. USGS Hawaiian Volcanoes Observatory has been a leader in extending its scientific studies to the community. The park and the community depend on this ongoing science program to ensure safety, health of the community as well as understanding the impacts active volcanism can have of social and economic well-being of the island. The USGS has been very proactive in this outreach program and should be considered by all science programs based in or carried out in the park and adjacent lands.” (7|237296)

Thurston Lava Tube (Nahuku)

The park received a number of suggestions about how to improve congestion at Thurston Lava Tube. Several commenters stated that they did not want to see parking expanded at various parking lots due to resulting impacts to the area and increased visitation in the lava tube. A couple of other commenters liked the proposal to expand parking at Kilauea Iki and Thurston, and some suggested expanding parking at Puu Puai, with improved trail connections between the three areas. Other commenters requested that the parking lot at Thurston remain open to private vehicles (if not closed to buses), and several liked the idea of implementing time of day closures. A few commenters raised the issue of congestion in the lava tube itself. One person thought the current congestion in the parking lot might have a beneficial impact on limiting the number of people in the lava tube at one time, and another expressed concern about the use of shuttles in forcing people to experience the resources in a group setting. One commenter requested that the park limit access to the cave due to cultural resource concerns.

A number of individuals also commented on opening other lava tubes, although there was no consensus on the matter. While some wanted more lava tubes opened to the public (such as near Mauna Ulu), others felt that doing so may not relieve congestion. A few commenters requested that the park open the dark side of the cave, even if only for guided access. A couple of other commenters requested that the park improve trails, infrastructure, and interpretation at Thurston.

Representative Comments:

“I do not approve of removing private parking at Thurston. We use that lot often, at off-hours, to walk the trails on both sides of the road.” (1|237248)

“Maybe the vehicle congestion at Thurston is self-limiting and vehicles move on when the parking lots are full. Do we want more people at the lava tube? Maybe not fixing the parking problem is the way to limit the number of people at Thurston.” (46|238326)

“Open up more lava tubes in the park in order to reduce congestion. You wouldn't have a bottle neck if you open 2-3-4.” (64|240000)

Trails

A number of commenters requested that the park enhance the current trail infrastructure, particularly with short, loop trails. Maintenance and improvement of hiking trails, as well as trail connections, including more multi-use trail connections to the Volcano community, was clearly important to many commenters. Many commenters provided suggestions for specific trails. Suggestions include: an escape route from Chain of Craters to Kalapana Extension, access to Ainapo and Kau wilderness, a trail from Mauna Loa to KVC, a trail from Kahuku to Mauna Loa, a pedestrian and/or bike trail along Crater Rim Drive, a trail to the caldera, a trail from Thurston to Puu Puai, a trail between Pua Ulu and Ola'a, a trail from the bird park to Mauna Loa, and trails to the 1974 Keanakakoi lava flow, Kipuka Kahalii, and Holei Pali from Chain of Craters road.

In addition to regular hiking trails, commenters also mentioned adding ADA accessible trails, self-guided interpretive trails, nature walks, and a long distance hiking trail with a series of overnight huts. A couple of commenters requested that trails be carefully sited to reduce impact to the native biota.

A number of commenters also requested that the park maintain the current trail infrastructure before adding additional trails. A few other commenters requested that the park reopen, or clarify the status of, the trail from Keauhou to Kipuka nene. Some requested that the park add or improve signage along the trails, citing safety concerns.

Representative Comments:

"Trails and trailheads: Alt. D: Concentrate on our trails at HAVO first. ... Our trails have been neglected for years, even people complain about getting lost on the trail and nothing has been done about it." (62|238488)

"Provide more loop trails and trail connections, examples include connecting Thurston with Devastation Trail and Kilauea Iki so you can hike around the summit." (64|240040)

"There should be handicapped access trails." (36|240372)

"Q1: An enhanced trail system with loop trails of different lengths. If traffic warrants it, a shuttle system." (11|228774)

"Q1: Increase and upgrade trails and trail management throughout Park including Kahuku." (12|237366)

"Q1: An enhanced trail system with loop trails of different lengths. Loop trails are more fun and easier to coordinate since you end up back at your starting point." (13|237373)

"Extend the Mauna Loa Trail to the Kilauea Visitor Center and connect the main park trail system. Construct a new trail from Kahuku to Mauna Loa." (42|238272)

"Chain of Craters Road. One of the goals of park management should be to get visitors to get out of their cars, walk, and learn. This could best be done by developing a network of short loop or connecting trails, most or all with self-guiding interpretation." (46|238330)

“Connecting Trails. A stated goal of the Volcano Long-Range Plan is to establish a system of multi-use trails that would connect the Volcano neighborhoods and provide access to the National Park. The Escape Road provides a trail from Volcano Village at the end of Old Volcano Road. There may be potential for trails at connecting Crater Rim Trail at Thurston or through the Volcano Golf and Country Club (VGCC) subdivision, depending on National Park and private landowner cooperation. A maze of illegal mountain bike trails is in the park in the vicinity of the VGCC. These may be managed better by designating a trail in this area. The GMP alternatives do not specifically address connecting trails to the community and for new trails emphasize loop trail or using existing alignments. Volcano community members may want to discuss connecting trails with the National Park in the future.” (47|238349)

Transportation and Access

A number of commenters addressed issues related to transportation and access in the park. Most either referred to the proposed shuttle service or issues related to emergency access.

Many commenters seemed in favor of a voluntary shuttle service that would run frequently with a number of stops in the park. One person stated that shuttles should be hybrid or electric vehicles, and others suggested a number of hubs that could be used as stops/staging areas such as the KMC ballfield, Devastation parking area, and Mauna Ulu, or on private land outside the park in Volcano. A number of commenters also raised some concerns about shuttle use. These commenters did not want to see the shuttle commercially operated. They did not want to see the use of buses or large commercial bus tours. They raised concerns about the clarity of day of week closures and questioned whether or not visitors would have access to the park during not-peak hours if the shuttle was not running. Several commenters voiced opposition to mandatory shuttles and the use of buses in the park. One person commented that the road should be used for car and not tour buses.

A few commenters addressed emergency access within the park. One commenter suggested creating an escape route to Kalapana down lower Chain of Craters Road. Another expressed their support for the maintenance of the current Escape Road to the Volcano community, and others requested that the park reopen road and trails if covered by lava.

A few commenters requested that the park improve ADA accessibility on trails and in campgrounds.

Representative Comments:

“Tour Buses: Limited access or no access to large commercial tour buses. Congestion and overuse of park roads is of concern. However, a mandatory park shuttle decreases spontaneity and unique personal experiences with the environment. Consider hiking/bicycle access ONLY to certain areas.” (56|238410)

“I like the idea of a shuttle to help with parking and give visitors more options. It would be good to have a green shuttle. This would also help disperse visitor use, help drop off backcountry hikers, would be proactive and a progressive action. Visitors could just stay on shuttle to see park if can't/unable to hike. It would prevent more expansion of parking lots”. (67|240225)

“I like the suggestions. If have shuttles, have a high frequency, on time bus that can handle the crowds without waiting too long. If we have more people than we can handle, call for additional drivers.” (64|240001)

“Limit large buses, keep access for private cars, limit access by any vehicles in Kahuku Unit.” (57|238423)

“Give as much access as possible to this beautiful place. How do you do this balance without destroying the park? Leave only footprints.” (64|240002)

“With a mandatory shuttle, can people access the park in non-peak hours when shuttle isn't running? Need to clarify this. Don't want to have long wait times for shuttles.” (64|240062)

“I have concerns about day of week closures and confusion about when that is.” (64|240073)

Visitor Experience

Several commenters expressed a desire to create/maintain a certain type of visitor experience in the park. A number of these comments addressed historic and current access to the caldera and volcanic activity. These commenters urged the park to open access to these areas for all members of the public so they could experience the dynamic features of this landscape. Another commenter expressed the importance of maintaining access to the ocean for Native Hawaiians and the value of that experience for this user group. Others expressed their appreciation for the wildness of the park and its diverse landscapes and urged the park to protect these types of visitor experiences. Another commenter voiced their support for maintaining the current driving experience along several park roads.

Several other commenters expressed their support for creating experiences in the park such as enhancing the sense of arrival, integrating visitor experiences at KVC and along Crater Rim Drive, and creating connections for visitors to get them out of their cars. A few commenters suggested creating opportunities for ecotourism.

Representative Comments:

“Park should strive to open access to volcanic activity, which has been the tradition for HAVO in years past. Risk is an inherent part of nature and should not be used as an excuse for violating the purpose of the park. Closing parts of the park alienates the people needed to support the Park.” (1|237246)

“Alternative B. We need to connect people to the park to preserve the plants and birds and land. It is people who preserve or destroy. The experience of nature will instill a desire for the knowledge needed to protect it. And nature itself is the best teacher.” (1|237247)

“Encourage public access with publicity, accommodations and programs to encourage locals and visitors in even greater numbers. People who see, learn, enjoy will then love, support and protect our park and by extension the planet.” (39|238246)

“Get people out of cars and walking; more trails and biking; important for the health of the nation.” (64|240057)

“Need more visitor opportunities for hiking and camping.” (67|240219)

1877 Volcano House

A few commenters addressed the 1877 Volcano House in their comments to the park. While some commenters expressed their appreciation for the center and the on-going partnership with the art center, a few commenters suggested that the 1877 Volcano House could have more interpretation or be used for other uses.

Representative Comment:

“The 1877 Volcano House is the ideal venue to explain human history at the summit and interpretation could be expanded inside and outside the building, even with current use by the Volcano Art Center (VAC). Interpretation could be expanded if the building were no longer occupied by VAC.” (46|238329)

Volcano House

Several commenters expressed their overall desire to see the Volcano House restored and used as a restaurant, bar, hotel/historic inn, community center, or visitor center, to name a few. One commenter did not think the restoration was necessary or desirable based on past management practices by the park and concessionaire.

Representative Comments:

“I hope it is possible for Volcano House to be restored, either as it was before or in some new public role. It is a very nice building complex. It would be wonderful if whatever food concession came in provided a cafe with a nice lunch besides the tour food. The airport lounge food area was depressing.” (9|237309)

“I would love to see a restaurant and bar at Volcano House. People actually used to hang out there.” (66|240173)

“Volcano House Alternative A. Every great Park has an historical inn. For Hawaii Volcanoes National Park this inn is Volcano House. Reestablish Volcano House as an overnight experience to visitors and maintain the tradition of lodging at the summit of Kilauea dating back to 1848. Retail is not necessary. Take it back to where it was before the last concessionaire took over. Take it back to being place that will enchant anyone lucky enough to secure lodging, a place with fine but affordable dining and Sunday brunches and a bar with local entertainment for the guest as well as locals. Maybe even bring back the library. The place should ooze history. If destroyed replace it as close as possible.” (61|238464)

“Volcano House: A. Most visitors I've talked to act excited to be able to stay there. It's historic, too. Keep VAC as is.” (52|238379)

“The most intriguing idea for the summit area is that, if the Volcano House concession operations do not continue, then adaptively reuse this facility as a visitor center. Overlooking the caldera, this location is ideal for a visitor center. The size of the structure would provide adequate species for interpreting many park themes, orienting visitors, and providing Hawai'i Natural History sales items. Guests looking for accommodations at the summit would find lodging in the many vacation rentals and B&Bs in Volcano community, as they have during the current closure of the Volcano House.” (47|238344)

“There really is no need for the Volcano House. The services of evening dining, room accommodations etc. are met in the local Volcano Community. Nice, but not necessary. If Volcano House is to be retained as a concession operation, I strongly recommend that the lunch period be limited to sit down table service with no buffet line and no accommodation for bus tours. This would offer a consistent operation of high standard. If the Volcano House concession is not continued, then I feel it is a prime candidate for the Administrative Offices of the park, leaving the rest of the structures in the area for adaptive use.” (7|237279)

Wilderness

The park received a number of comments regarding the Wilderness Eligibility and Study. A number of commenters voiced their support for the wilderness study and wilderness designation, and a few recommended including the Great Crack, the coastline, and areas zoned for wild/primitive use in the preliminary alternatives. A few commenters suggested that specific areas be left out of wilderness designation such as the roads in Kahuku, and several commenters raised potential conflicts with wilderness designation such as administrative access, air tours, need for huts and water catchment systems, and neighboring land management practices. One commenter requested that the park reassess former wilderness designations, as some boundaries seem inappropriate and/or arbitrary (such as wilderness boundaries around Ainahou Ranch and pit craters in the Kau desert). This commenter suggested creating a buffer zone for wilderness in areas in Kahuku that are adjacent to other lands.

Representative Comments:

“Any consideration of designated wilderness expansion should specifically authorize: 1) fences to protect native ecosystems from alien ungulates, 2) research instrumentation and telecommunication essential to continued volcanic studies and warnings, 3) use of helicopters as a minimum tool in serving research instrumentation and control of feral ungulates, and 4) some water catchment shelters in remote waterless backcountry.” (16|233473)

“I encourage and support Wilderness designation for all areas that qualify.” (13|232445)

“It makes sense to exclude the roads in Kahuku from wilderness designation.” (67|240202)

“Wilderness may not mean too many rules. A truly open wilderness experience is good. Not sure the terrain will be accessible without water supplied and huts, etc.” (64|240097)

“Kahuku is largely wilderness and appropriate for this status.” (39|235503)

“A revised wilderness study is very appropriate. The original study for the existing Hawaii Volcanoes Wilderness was rushed and carried out under the political pressure of getting as many qualifying areas in the National Park System included as Wilderness Areas. In the case of Hawaii Volcanoes Wilderness area, mistakes were made. Care was not given to boundaries considering existing and future visitor and administrative needs. Lines were drawn between permanent and recognizable points and did not necessarily define boundaries of wilderness quality areas. Some quality areas were clipped off of wilderness, some existing critical administrative use areas were included. Both have resulted in management challenges. A study of both the existing wilderness and the proposed wilderness in

Kahuku would provide the basis to produce a valid map of the wilderness area and provide for exclusion of areas that are within the general boundaries do not meet wilderness standards. (7|226824)

Other Comment Topics

A number of commenters made suggestions for additional actions not listed in the preliminary alternatives. These suggestions include, but are not limited to: constructing a children's visitor center, offering mandatory ranger talks about safety concerns in the park, building a bridge over the caldera, offering a shuttle between Kahuku and Hilo, hosting a marathon, expanding the natural history museum, and adding access to silversword enclosures. Some commenters also suggested that the park address a number of other topics in the GMP such as ADA accessibility, use of housing above the old volcano house, access for buses and helicopters, and air tours. Other comments also brought up issues related to current management, such as the maintenance of Nanakanipaio cabins, trail maintenance, state of historic water tanks, and staffing needs. One person raised concerns about the legality of the park's agreement with the Kalapana Ohana Fishing Council on the user group's fishing rights.

Representative Comments:

"No mention is made of the housing located above the "old volcano house". This originally was two structures joined together for quarters for the concession manager. The historic integrity of the structures is probably gone and not recoverable. It should be used in some way in this plan." (7|237278)

"There should definitely be a children's visitor center and kids should design it." (36|240375)