



Hawai'i Volcanoes News Release

March 10, 2008

Park Seeks Public Input on Plan to Protect and Restore Native Ecosystems by Managing Non-native Ungulates

The National Park Service will prepare a draft plan/EIS to Protect and Restore Native Ecosystems by Managing Non-native Ungulates (hoofed mammals) within Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

The purpose of the plan is to refine strategies for managing non-native ungulates to support long-term ecosystem protection; promote recovery and restoration of native vegetation and other natural resources; and protect and preserve cultural resources.

The public is invited to provide input that will assist the National Park Service in preparing the EIS. Comments may be submitted at upcoming public scoping meetings, electronically on the web, or in writing by mail.

The project website for Protecting & Restoring Native Ecosystems by Managing Non-native Ungulates Plan/EIS is at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/HAVO>

"Public input is essential," said Superintendent Cindy Orlando. "The expression of the desires, expectations, values, and concerns of our neighbors, visitors, and partners will help ensure that the National Park Service understands and considers the interests of our island community."

Hawai'i supports a rich diversity of native plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. Many of these unique species are rare and in danger of becoming extinct. Ungulates are an issue of concern because Hawaiian ecosystems evolved without large mammalian herbivores and are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of non-native ungulates.



Rare and endangered, hau kuahiwi (Hibiscadelphus giffardianus) thrive in an area of the park free of ungulates
Photo by Thomas Belfield

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Feral goats, pigs, sheep, mouflon sheep, and cattle destroy habitat; degrade watershed; inhibit native forest regeneration; cause loss of sensitive native species, including state and federally listed threatened and endangered species; and have potential to damage archeological sites and cultural landscapes.

The park has actively managed non-native ungulates since the 1920s, allowing for the recovery of native species in many areas of the park. However, impacts from ungulates continue to be a concern in other parts of the park, including the recently acquired 116,000 acre Kahuku addition.

The park's current EIS addressing ungulate control is more than 30 years old. A refined and updated plan will help ensure park actions are scientifically defensible and consistent with federal laws, regulations, and NPS management policies. It will consider the challenges of new invasive species as well as available strategies for managing ungulates.

Public scoping is the critical first step in the preparation of the EIS to Protect and Restore Native Ecosystems by Managing Non-native Ungulates.

Meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, April 29 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm at UH-Hilo, University Classroom Building, Room 100; Wednesday, April 30 from 5:00 to 8:00 pm at Na'alehu Community Center; and Thursday, May 1 from 5:00 to 8:00 pm at the Kona Outdoor Circle Educational Center. Directions to these locations are posted on the project website.

Written comments can be submitted electronically at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/HAVO> or mailed to Superintendent, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, RE: Protecting & Restoring Native Ecosystems by Managing Non-Native Ungulates Plan/EIS, P.O. Box 52, Hawaii National Park, HI 96718

All written responses must be postmarked or transmitted no later than May 19, 2008.



Pig-infested rain forest



Same photo point three pig-free years later

These paired photos demonstrate the ability of the Hawaiian forest to regenerate after feral pigs are removed

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