

**Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
Comprehensive Management Plan/
Environmental Impact Statement**



**PLANNING UPDATE:
Draft Management Prescriptions and Alternatives**

**Prepared by:
Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Planning Team
National Park Service – Pacific West Region
United States Department of the Interior**

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to stakeholders on the planning process for the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (ALKA) Comprehensive Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (CMP/EIS). The project was initiated in August, 2002, and a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register on April 8, 2003. This action officially launched the project and the public scoping meetings, which were conducted in an “open house” format at nine locations along the 175-mile designated corridor of the Ala Kahakai NHT. These meetings were advertised through the local newspapers, flyers posted in each community, and through a mailing list.

Meeting participants browsed through a series of information panels, viewed a slide presentation, directed questions to the ALKA staff, and provided formal input through the *Mana‘o Form*, a questionnaire about how the trail should be managed. Over 200 people representing the general public, private landowners, trail advocacy groups, native Hawaiian organizations, and state, county, and federal agency representatives attended the open house meetings. Approximately 25 *Mana‘o Forms* were returned to the trail office and the results were analyzed for public opinions and advice regarding the trail. Additional insights were developed through numerous discussions with individuals, community groups, private landowners, and government agency representatives.

This public input was considered along with legislative mandates in the preparation of the purpose and significance statements, trail mission goals, draft management prescriptions, and draft management alternatives included in this report.

These draft alternatives are meant to initiate discussion about how they should be further refined, evaluated, and eventually produce a preferred alternative for implementation upon completion and a Record of Decision on the final CMP/EIS. Each alternative will include a number of “givens” that are consistent in each alternative. These are mandates from the enabling legislation, the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Act (Public Law 106-509), and other laws and regulations relevant to the Ala Kahakai. The diversity of survey responses and meeting discussions provided the foundation to prepare distinct and meaningful alternatives for the management of the Ala Kahakai NHT.

This review is intended to solicit comments from the public, private landowners, and government agency representatives on the interpretation of the input received at the public scoping meeting series. Comments are requested by June 25, 2004.

The next step in the planning process is to convene a series of public meetings to provide a forum for review and comment on the draft alternatives. The public review period for these draft alternatives is 90 days, beginning March 27, 2004 through June 25, 2004. Comments from the draft alternative review meetings will be considered during the preparation of the alternatives for the draft Ala Kahakai NHT CMP/EIS. The draft CMP/EIS is scheduled for distribution and open review in the fall/winter of 2004.

TRAIL PURPOSE

Projects and programs need to directly relate to the Ala Kahakai trail's purpose, significance and mission goals indicated in the enabling legislation. These givens will be used to frame decisions for the future management of resources and visitor use along the trail. The purpose of the Ala Kahakai NHT is:

1. to perpetuate, restore, interpret and celebrate the culture of native Hawaiians;
2. to commemorate historic events that occurred along the designated trail corridor;
3. to facilitate a high quality visitor experience for native Hawaiians, local residents, and visitors to the island; and,
4. to identify, preserve and interpret sites, routes, natural features and history of ancient and historic coastal trails on Hawai'i Island.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRAIL

Significance statements describe why the trail was determined to be eligible for designation as a National Trail. The Ala Kahakai NHT is significant because:

1. it contains the oldest and best remaining example of the Ala Loa, the major land route connecting the coastal reaches of most *ahupua'a* (traditional land divisions) on the island of Hawai'i, and includes remnants of several other historic shoreline trails;
2. its use played an influential role in Hawaiian history and is associated with numerous historic and pre-historic events, royal centers, housing areas, resource gathering, inter- and intra-regional trade, temples, and natural resource areas; and,
3. it has been continuously used since the leeward and southern coasts of the island were inhabited by native Hawaiians and continues to be used as an accessway today for inter- and intra-ahupua'a travel.

TRAIL MISSION GOALS

The mission goals of the trail are a bridge between the servicewide mission goals stated in the National Park Service Strategic Plan and the goals of a specific park unit. These mission goals draw from the trail-specific information in the trail's purpose and significance statements. These goals state what is required by law but are general enough so that a range of legitimate alternatives can be considered through the planning process. The trail mission goals for the Ala Kahakai NHT are:

- to provide opportunities to restore, interpret and perpetuate the culture of native Hawaiian;
- to commemorate historic events that occurred along the trail corridor;
- to enhance and preserve the numerous archaeological sites and other cultural resources associated with the trail;
- to contribute to the sustainability of natural resources accessed by the trail;
- to enable public access to the trail through agreements and certification of trail sections within the designated corridor;

- to provide a visitor experience that accurately depicts the route of the Ala Loa, other coastal trails, and the native Hawaiian culture in general as it varies through the communities the trail crosses; and,
- to provide facilities, where appropriate, to allow long distance hiking if and when substantial continuous segments of the Ala Kahakai have been certified as open to the public as a National Historic Trail.

MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

Management prescriptions are used to specify the desired resource conditions for different segments of the trail. They describe the anticipated visitor experiences based on resource management concerns except where they preclude use. These prescriptions can also be used to ensure a diversity of experiences for trail visitors. There are two types of management prescriptions: trail-wide and zone-specific prescriptions.

Trail-wide Management Prescriptions

Trail-wide management prescriptions apply to a particular resource wherever it occurs along the entire trail corridor. These types of prescriptions tend to be those things that must be accomplished at all trail locations, regardless of how it might be zoned. Most trail-wide prescriptions do not involve a decision and are acknowledged as part of the overall trail concept. They are included as an important part of the trail's CMP, but they are not generally addressed as part of the planning alternatives. These are the "givens" that are derived from the mandates and other regulations that do not vary from alternative to alternative.

For the Ala Kahakai NHT, the draft trail-wide management prescriptions are:

- Threatened and endangered species are protected under law and habitats are sustained in quality and coverage.
- Historic features are integral to the existence of the Ala Kahakai NHT and subject to review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.
- Boundary modifications are proposed and promoted by the public, and are subject to Congressional approval.
- Support facilities along the designated corridor are to be constructed with an emphasis on long-term sustainability.

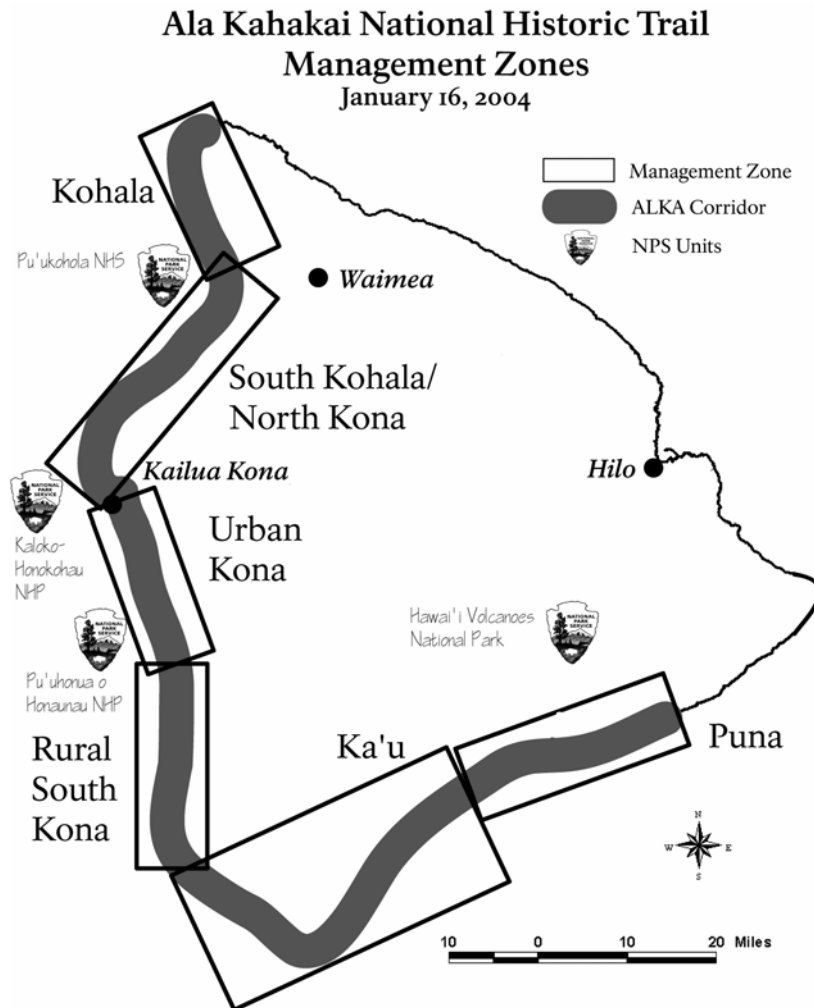
SPECIAL MANDATES

Special mandates are administrative commitments that are a separate category of "givens." Special mandates for the Ala Kahakai include:

1. A map generally depicting the trail corridor shall be on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.
2. No land or interest in land outside the exterior boundaries of any federally administered area may be acquired by the U.S. for the trail without the consent of the owner of the land.
3. Communities and owners of land along the trail, native Hawaiians, and volunteer trail groups are encouraged to participate in the planning, development, and maintenance of the trail.
4. Affected federal, state and local agencies, native Hawaiian groups, and landowners shall be consulted in the administration of the trail.

Prescriptions by Management Zone

Management prescriptions that apply to specific geographic areas along the trail are called management zones. These prescriptions establish detailed resource and experience goals for each distinct region along the trail, help to ensure a diversity of appropriate visitor experiences, and help guide carrying capacity decisions. The management zones are part of the prescriptive process that specifies desired future conditions rather than existing conditions. The management zones that have been identified for the Ala Kahakai NHT are similar to the traditional and contemporary district boundaries on the island. They are defined on the following map.



The significant differences among the various zones include: geology, vegetation cover, population levels, land use, proximity to visitor accommodations and attractions, and level of development.

Management prescriptions by zone are described in three categories: trail condition, support facilities, and visitor experience. Based on the physical characteristics of the area, the sacredness of the land, and the viewpoints of the community in each area, these prescriptions guide the management of each district into the future. Management prescriptions by zone for the Ala Kahakai NHT are:

North Kohala

- *Trail Condition:* Representative of a Hawaiian trail utilizing local and traditional materials, shaded areas, and follows original routes, if known. Loop trail in Mo‘okini-Lapakahi region. Through trail between Lapakahi and Kawaihae. Some opportunity for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant facilities and trail surfaces.
- *Support Facilities:* Low level of new facilities sited at nodes of expected moderate visitation between Mookini Heiau and Lapakahi State Historical Park.
- *Visitor Experience:* Moderate level of solitude, high local use/moderate visitor use. Most signage north of Lapakahi. Moderate level of hiker comfort based on expected use levels and facility development.

South Kohala/North Kona

- *Trail Condition:* Ancient and historic coastal trail sections are maintained at a high quality level. Connector trails are developed in a traditional design style. Opportunity for ADA compliant facilities and trail surfaces in some locations.
- *Support Facilities:* Existing support facilities through resorts are maintained with help of community and NPS. New facilities exist at short intervals between Anaeho‘omalu and Kaupulehu, and Makalawaena to Kailua.
- *Visitor Experience:* Moderate level of solitude in areas away from resorts, moderate local use/high visitor use. Prominent signage around resorts, less in remote reaches. High level of hiker comfort based on expected use levels and facility development.

Urban Kona

- *Trail Condition:* Trail through urban areas is clearly marked on paved sections. Undeveloped areas are clear of vegetation. Opportunity for ADA compliant facilities and trail surfaces.
- *Support Facilities:* Facilities are developed in non-urban areas in partnership with private landowners.
- *Visitor Experience:* Low level of solitude in urban areas; higher in areas south of Keauhou. Moderate local use/high visitor use. Prominent signage in urban areas/resorts, less in remote reaches. High level of hiker comfort based on expected use levels and facility presence.

Rural South Kona

- *Trail Condition:* Ancient and historic coastal trail sections are maintained and clear of vegetation. Connector trails are developed in a traditional design style.

- *Support Facilities:* Fewer support facilities in back country. Maintained with help of community and NPS.
- *Visitor Experience:* High level of solitude, high local use/low visitor use. Discrete warning signage where necessary; fewer signs in remote reaches. Moderate level of hiker comfort based on expected use levels and new facility development.

Ka'u

- *Trail Condition:* Ancient and historic coastal trail sections are clearly marked and regularly maintained and clear of vegetation. Connector trails are developed in a traditional design style.
- *Support Facilities:* Fewer support facilities in back country are maintained with help of community and NPS.
- *Visitor Experience:* Moderate level of solitude, high local use/moderate visitor use. Discrete warning signage where necessary; fewer signs in remote reaches. Moderate level of hiker comfort based on expected use levels and new facility development.

Puna

- *Trail Condition:* Ancient and historic coastal trail sections are regularly maintained and clear of vegetation. Connector trails are developed in a traditional design style.
- *Support Facilities:* Fewer support facilities in back country are maintained with help of community and NPS.
- *Visitor Experience:* Moderate level of solitude, high local use/moderate visitor use. Discrete warning signage where necessary; fewer signs in remote reaches. Moderate level of hiker comfort based on expected use levels and new facility development.

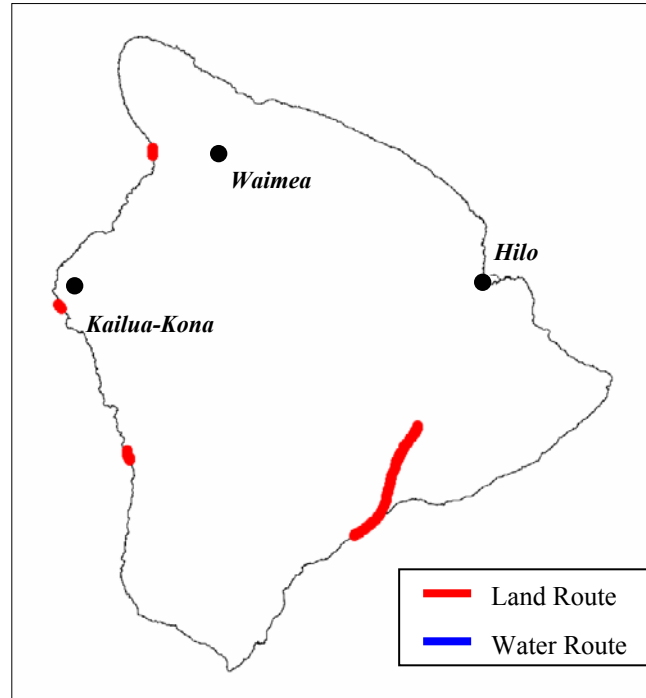
DRAFT MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The following Draft Management Alternatives were derived from information provided in the 1998 Trail Study, the Ala Kahakai NHT Act of 2000, input received at the public scoping meetings held in 2003, responses from Mana‘o Forms received, agency consultations, meetings held with native Hawaiian organizations, private landowners and individuals, and the draft management prescriptions. We are seeking public comments on the draft alternatives prior to formally adopting the alternatives to be evaluated in the draft CMP/EIS, which we plan to have out for public review in the winter 2004.

Alternative A: “No Action”

It is customary in planning and environmental review documents to establish a base line to which all other alternatives are compared. As there are existing segments of what is considered to be the Ala Kahakai NHT in each of the four National Parks, they would retain NPS management with assistance provided by the ALKA staff.

There would be extremely limited implementation of the Ala Kahakai NHT as designated by Congress in this alternative. Management of trail segments by the state and county would continue to be limited by shortages in funding and manpower. Opportunities for NPS to work with landowners, communities, and other regulatory agencies to provide consistent, cooperative management and protection of natural and cultural resource would be limited to the existing National Parks. Coastal trail sections under the jurisdiction of the State would be managed by the Na Ala Hele Trail and Access System. Historic resources will be monitored through the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD), and other resources will be managed by the appropriate state and federal agencies.



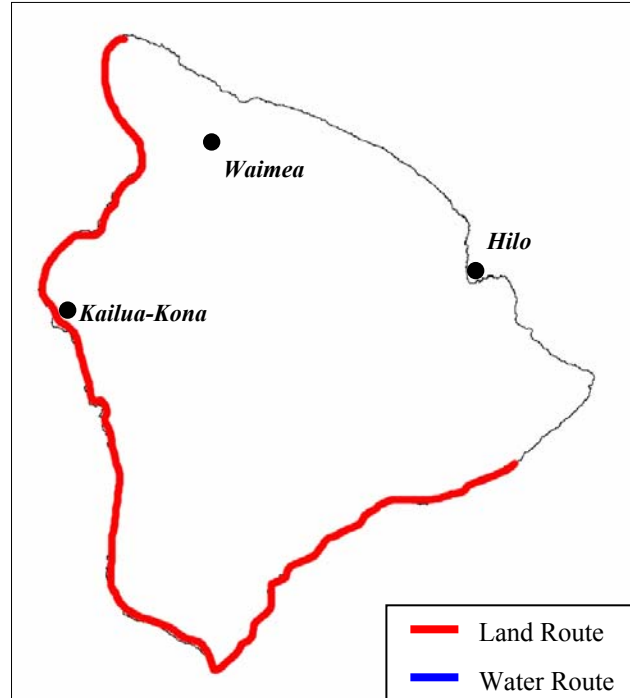
Summary of Alternative A: “No Action”

- Single trail alignment: four separate segments of coastal trail
- Trail would be certified only within existing National Park boundaries
- No connector trails would be built
- Canoe routes within National Park Service jurisdiction only
- Other coastal, mauka-makai (mountain-to-sea) trails would not be included
- Cooperative management between ALKA and other National Parks
- Discontinuous opportunity for the coordination and protection of coastal and lowland habitats
- Very limited representation of traditional trail systems
- Low potential for multi-modal use

Alternative B: Single Ala Kahakai Trail

This is the basic concept of the Ala Kahakai NHT as one trail along a designated travel corridor between Upolu Point in North Kohala and Waha'ula Heiau in Puna. Traditional travel was not focused along the coastline; however this alternative provides the opportunity for interpretation of a large region of the Island of Hawai'i, as well as coordinated cultural and natural resource protection.

This alternative is a continuous on-the-ground trail that follows the route of the Ala Loa where it exists, and other historic and modern trails and roads as necessary to achieve a continuous trail route. The National Park Service would provide management on federal lands and provide technical assistance and oversight of certified components of the trail on state, county and privately-owned land. Trail markings and interpretation would be consistent along the entire route of the Ala Kahakai NHT, with trail and site management conducted by NPS, state, county and volunteer community groups. This represents connection of only the coastal portions of ahupua'a trails, and does not illustrate the importance of mauka-makai trails in traditional travel patterns.



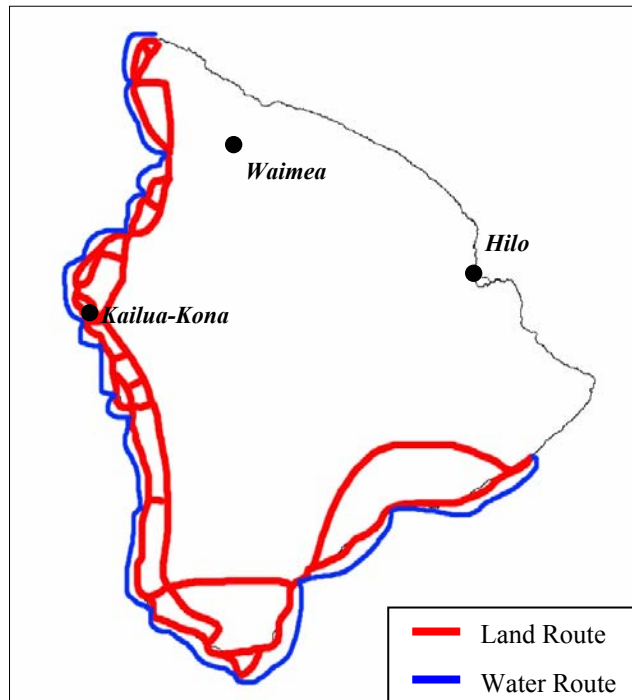
Summary of Alternative B: Single Ala Kahakai Trail

- Single trail alignment along coastline
- Certification of trail between designated end points of corridor
- Build connector trails where no historic sections exist
- Land-only route
- Other coastal trails, mauka-makai trails not included
- Eventually a continuous link of all National Parks on the island
- Cooperative management between NPS, State, County, landowners and general public
- Continuous opportunity for the coordination and protection of coastal and lowland habitats
- Partial representation of traditional trail systems
- Low potential for multi-modal use

Alternative C: Ahupua‘a Trail Systems

This alternative recognizes the existence and importance of multiple alignments in traditional trail use. These alignments include inland portions of the Ala Loa, trails that run lateral to the shoreline, and connects these routes with historic and modern mauka-makai trails that exist in each ahupua‘a. This alternative provides deeper realization of the traditional use of trails and effectively enhances the visitor experience through loop trail routes.

This alternative expands cultural and natural resource coverage to mauka-makai connector trails that would otherwise be omitted. Greater historic accuracy is achieved through the inclusion of certified water routes that facilitate the traditional use of canoes in long-distance travel. On-the-ground management would be conducted primarily by local volunteers and land managers in each ahupua‘a, with technical assistance provided by NPS. Although signage and markings will feature the Ala Kahakai NHT logo, markings specific to the ahupua‘a will also be featured to evoke a unique sense of place. Trails other than the primary lateral route may or may not undergo full certification, but will be considered as far as impacts on adjacent areas, resources and activities.



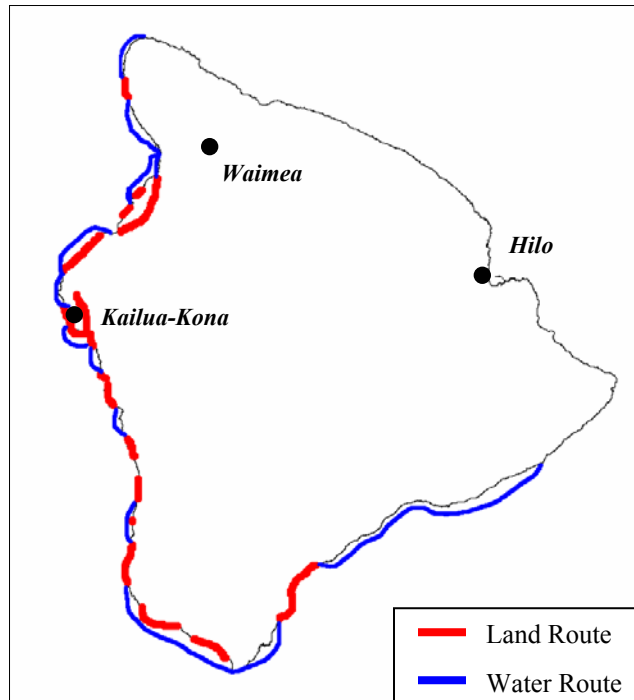
Summary of Alternative C: Ahupua‘a Trail Systems

- Multiple coastal and mauka-makai trails as part of traditional system
- Certification of trail between designated end points of corridor
- Build connector trails to link historic segments, loop trails
- Land and ocean (canoe) routes [water routes indicated on map with a blue line]
- Other coastal and mauka-makai trails included
- Cooperative management between NPS, State, County, landowners and general public
- Best representation of a traditional trail system for ahupua‘a & long distance travel
- Continuous opportunity for the coordination and protection of coastal and lowland habitats
- Potential for multi-modal use

Alternative D: Historic Trail Clusters

This alternative calls for restoration and certification of authentic historic trail segments only. This alternative does not include the construction of non-historic connector trails that would result in a continuous coastal trail. Although not continuous on-the-ground, historic segments on both private and public lands would be connected by documented historic water routes designated for canoe travel.

Certification priority would be on public lands and through agreements developed with willing private landowners. Although historic accuracy would be emphasized in this alternative, the trail would only represent the shoreline reaches of traditional trail systems, and the interconnection between the mountains and the sea as is the case in the Hawaiian culture would not be sufficiently addressed. The potential for long-distance travel would be limited by the availability and coordination of links over historic canoe routes.

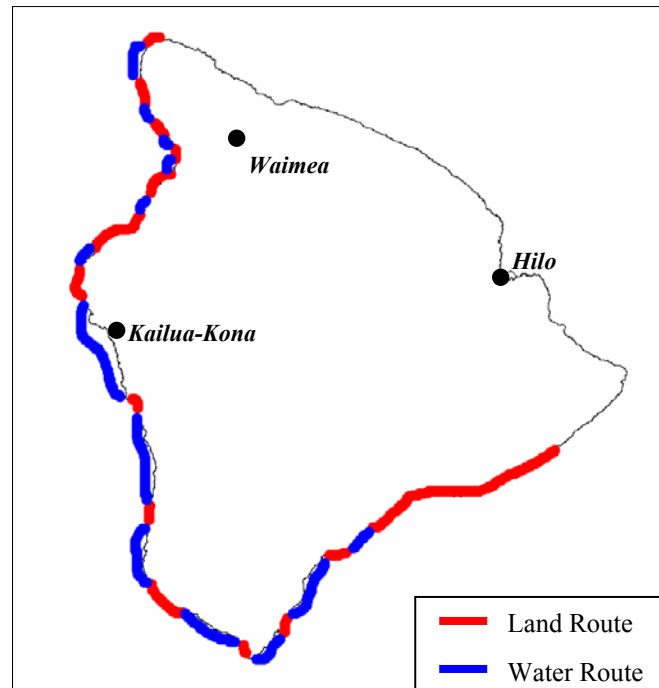


Summary of Alternative D: Historic Trail Clusters

- Several discontinuous trail segments along coast
- Certification of only historic sections between designated end points of corridor
- Build no connector trails
- Historic land routes connected by ocean (canoe) routes, historic mauka-makai trails
- Non-historic coastal trails not included
- Cooperative management between NPS, State, County, landowners and general public
- Partial representation of a traditional trail system
- Discontinuous opportunities for the coordination and protection of coastal and lowland habitats
- No potential for multi-modal use

Alternative E: Public Lands

This alternative complements existing management practices on the federal, state and county level, but does not include private landholdings unless they contain trails managed by local government. This action strengthens the ability of state and local government to provide improved facilities and visitor experience at existing attractions along the designated trail corridor without expanding recreational opportunities. Signage would reflect NPS technical assistance in the form of natural and cultural resource management, and provide consistency among State, County, and existing National Park attractions in terms of signage and interpretation. This alternative features sporadic rather than comprehensive management of resources and would not provide a wide range of visitor experiences.



Summary of Alternative E: Public Lands

- Multiple coastal and mauka-makai trails
- Certification of trail on public lands only between designated end points of corridor
- Build connector trails to link historic segments, loop trails
- Public land segments linked with canoe routes
- Other coastal and mauka-makai trails included within government-owned lands
- Cooperative management between NPS, State, County and general public
- Partial representation of a traditional trail system
- Discontinuous opportunities for the coordination and protection of coastal and lowland habitats
- Some potential for multi-modal use

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following draft criteria by which the alternatives should be evaluated are based on the purpose of the trail, the establishing legislation, and by the ALKA planning team taking into account public scoping comments received so far. These criteria are open for review and comment by the full ALKA planning team. The draft evaluation criteria are as follows:

In general, does the alternative demonstrate that the trail will:

- perpetuate, restore, interpret, and celebrate the native Hawaiian culture?
- commemorate people and events significant to the trail corridor?
- adequately identify, preserve and interpret sites, routes, natural features and history of ancient and historic coastal trails?

What are the expected impacts on existing:

- cultural sites and practices on and around the trail?
- archaeological resources?
- natural resources: plants, animals, invertebrates; habitats; alien vs. native species?
- physical environment: geology, caves, groundwater, anchialine ponds, beaches?
- recreational activities?
- commercial activities and residential areas?
- private landowners?
- visitor experience?

Through this review, one or more alternatives may be eliminated from the list, or additional alternatives may be proposed by private landowners, agency representatives, and the general public. Detailed comments on each alternative are encouraged, so that elements that are desired may be retained while other aspects may be refined. The intent is to receive a thorough review so that the best possible management alternatives are presented in the draft CMP/EIS, which is scheduled for submission in late 2004.

PLANNING TEAM

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