United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park
Post Office Box 52
Hawaii National Park, Hawai'i 96718

IN REPLY REFER TO:
HAVO I.B. (L7617)

August 7, 2012

Dear Interested Party:

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is starting to formally plan how to restore the cattle pastures at Kahuku back to native forest or woodland. An important mission of the National Park Service is to restore disturbed national park lands such as cattle pastures. We would like to seek your comments as we prepare a Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment.

The 131,000 acre Kahuku property became part of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park in 2003. Cattle grazing, mechanical clearing, and pasture grass planting limit natural recovery. These resulted in the loss of local seed sources and dense mats of pasture grass inhibiting native plant seed germination and recovery. Intensive restoration efforts will be needed to reintroduce sources of seeds and suppress pasture grasses. In four fenced exclosures constructed in 2005, park resource managers determined that stimulating koa germination has the potential to suppress grass and facilitate restoration. Additional restoration experiments need to be conducted to determine effective techniques applicable to a large landscape such as the 7,400 acre pasture area.

Restoration of the pastures will take many decades and the park is now embarking on the first phase of restoration in which techniques we tested on a very small scale from 2005-2011 will be refined and applied to the larger landscape. In addition, new techniques to facilitate forest recovery will be tested. The public is invited to comment on the park's intent to develop a Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Kahuku pastures.

If you would like to provide comments or suggestions for us to consider during the development this plan/EA, you may submit comments on-line at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/havo.
You may also mail your comments to the park, Attn: Superintendent, PO Box 52, Hawaii NP, HI 96718-0052. Please send us comments by September 10, 2012.

Before including your address, telephone number, electronic mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comments on any of the projects, you should be aware that your entire comment (including your personal identifying information) may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold your personal identifying information from public review by checking the box "keep my contact information private," we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list or if your contact information has changed, please let us know. You can mail us the updated information or submit it at the following website: http://www.nps.gov/havo/parkmgmt/plan.htm Click on the link near the top for address update/removal.

Sincerely,

Cynthia L. Orlando
Superintendent