



# **Preliminary Study Findings and Alternative Concepts**

**September 2020**





## Rota SRS Public Engagement Video

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Host will play video on screen.



Image from the Rota SRS Public Engagement Video



## Presentation Agenda

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- ❑ Welcome and Background
- ❑ Special Resource Study Criteria and Process
- ❑ Preliminary Findings for Resource Significance, Suitability, Feasibility, and Need for National Park Service (NPS) Management
- ❑ Preliminary Alternative Concepts
- ❑ Next Steps
- ❑ Questions & Comments



Gampapa Latte Village



## Rota Special Resource Study (SRS) Background

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### **National Defense Authorization Act passed in December 2014 (P.L. 113-291)**

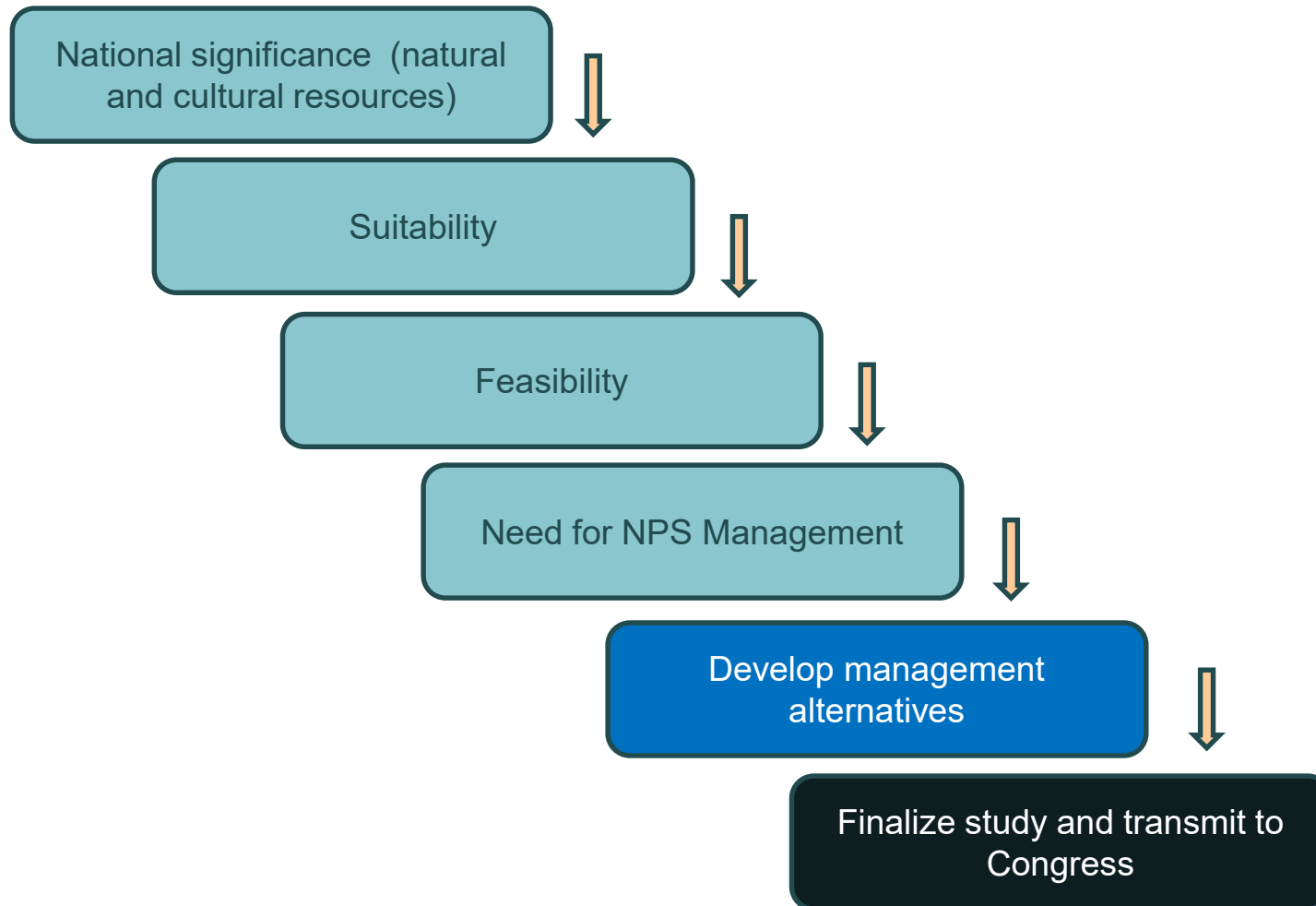
Congressman Sablan introduced legislation which the US Congress passed, authorizing a study to evaluate the “prehistoric, historic, and limestone forests sites on the island of Rota” for potential inclusion in the National Park system.



I'Chenchon Bird Sanctuary



## Study Criteria and Process





## Rota Study Timeline and Status

- 2017: Public and stakeholder engagement on Rota, Saipan, and Guam
- 2018: Research, resource analysis for Significance and Suitability
- 2019: Feasibility analysis and alternative development
- 2020: Public engagement for preliminary findings and alternative concepts
- 2021: Final study submitted to Department of the Interior  
Final study transmitted to Congress



Rota Special Resource Study  
Newsletter #2, Summer 2020





## Rota Major Sites and Resources





## Cultural Resource Significance

### Prehistoric and Historic:

- Archeological Sites
  - Provide material evidence of the Chamorro culture from the pre-Latte period (1500 BC - AD1000), Latte period (AD1000-1521), and historic period (AD1521-1945)
- World War II Japanese Defensive Complexes
  - Ginalagan and Chudang Palii Japanese World War II Defensive Complexes are nationally significant World War II-era Imperial Japanese interior fortifications



Mochong Latte Village Complex



WWII Chudang Palii, Defensive Gun





## Natural Resource Significance

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### Limestone Forests

- One of the largest acreages of tropical Pacific limestone forest. 4428.5 hectares (10,943 acres) on Rota are limestone forest, approximately 52% of the total island area
- Retains a functioning ecosystem, including 24 federally listed Threatened and Endangered species, 16 of which require limestone forests



Threatened Mariana Fruit Bat



Significant Limestone forests and cliffs



## Resource Suitability

- Nationally significant resources identified in the study are suitable for inclusion in the National Park System
- They represent resource types that are not adequately represented in the system or comparably protected elsewhere for public enjoyment by other agencies or the private sector



Ginalagan World War II Japanese  
Defensive Complex



As Nieves Latte Quarry



Limestone forest



## Feasibility

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### Current and Potential Use of Study Area and Surrounding Lands:

- Designated conservation areas
- Other public lands
- Limited proposed homestead or farmstead lands

### Land Ownership Patterns:

- CNMI constitution states only people of Northern Marianas descent can own land in CNMI
- Lease or cooperative agreements allowed

### Costs and Socioeconomic Impacts:

- Evaluating effect of designation on tourism and the local economy
- Preparing a cost estimate to operate a park on Rota
- Costs of a lease or cooperative agreement



Looking west towards Songsong





## Feasibility Continued

### Public Enjoyment Potential and Site Access

- Future potential visitor experiences could include a trail system, education, and cultural tours

### Access

- Charter flights to Rota from Saipan and Guam
- Primarily dirt roads to key sites

### Current and Potential Threats to Resources

- Rota has not been impacted by invasive nonnative species that have severely impacted Guam and Saipan

### Level of public support

- General public support from elected officials and stakeholders
- Concerns include limiting traditional practices – hunting and agriculture.



Mochong Latte Village Complex



## Need for National Park Service (NPS) Management

- People of Rota have preserved these resources for centuries
- CNMI and Rota Municipal governments have limited capacity
- Existing services and programs would continue but likely not expand under current management
- NPS in partnership with the CNMI and Rota could enhance opportunities to preserve resources, and to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the significant archeological sites, WWII, and limestone forest resources



Māya Latte Site Complex



## Preliminary Findings Summary

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Four required criteria for National Park Service designation:

### 1 Significance

- Natural resources appear to be significant
- Cultural resources appear to be significant

### 2 Suitability

- Resources appear suitable
- Resources not found in NPS

### 3 Feasibility

- Conditionally feasible as a NPS unit dependent upon support and legal agreement with the CNMI government

### 4 Need for NPS Management

- NPS management could enhance visitor services, education and preservation



Lommok (pestle), Mochong Latte Village Complex

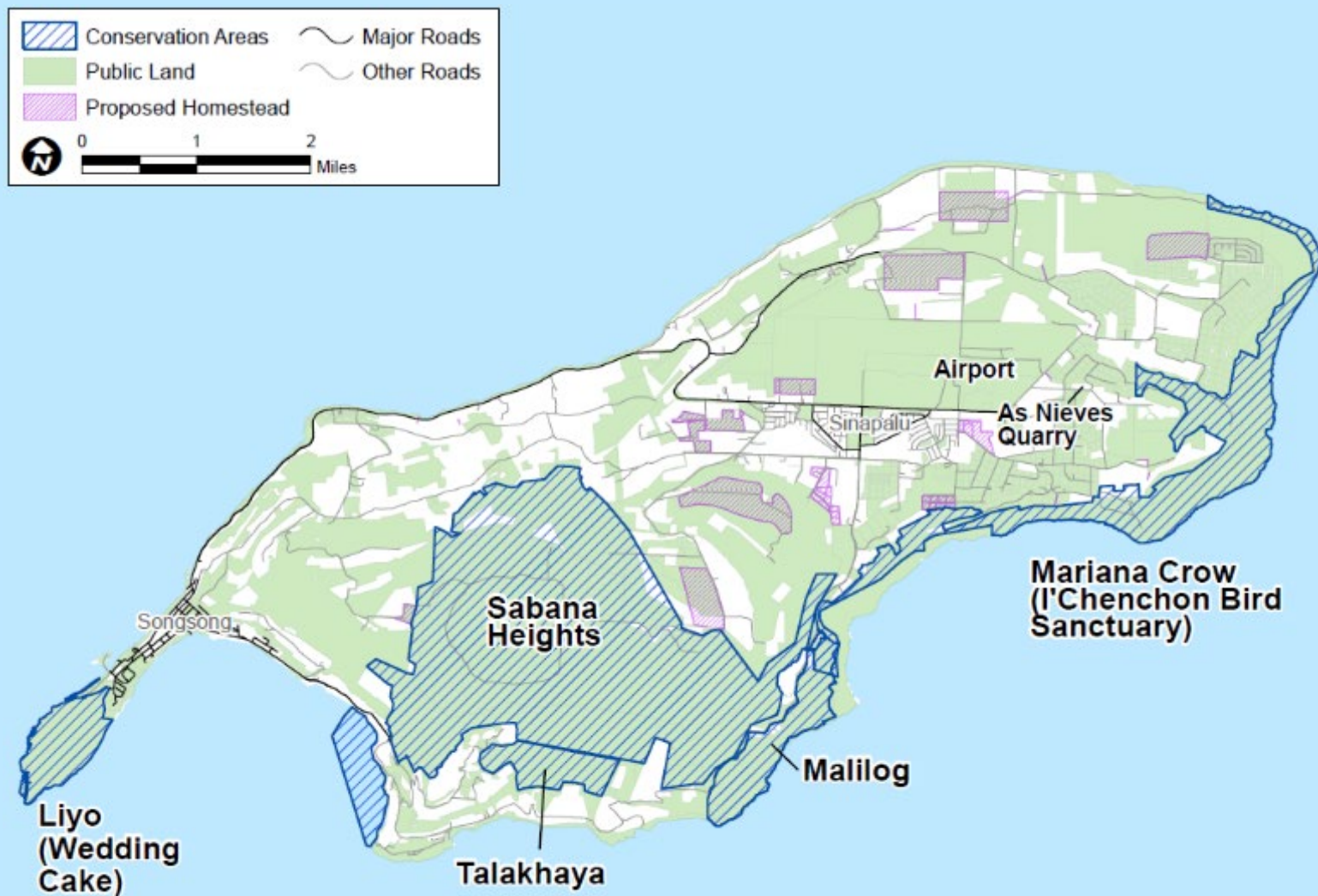


# Rota Special Resource Study

National Park Service  
Department of the Interior



## Continuation of Current Management





## Preliminary Alternative Concepts

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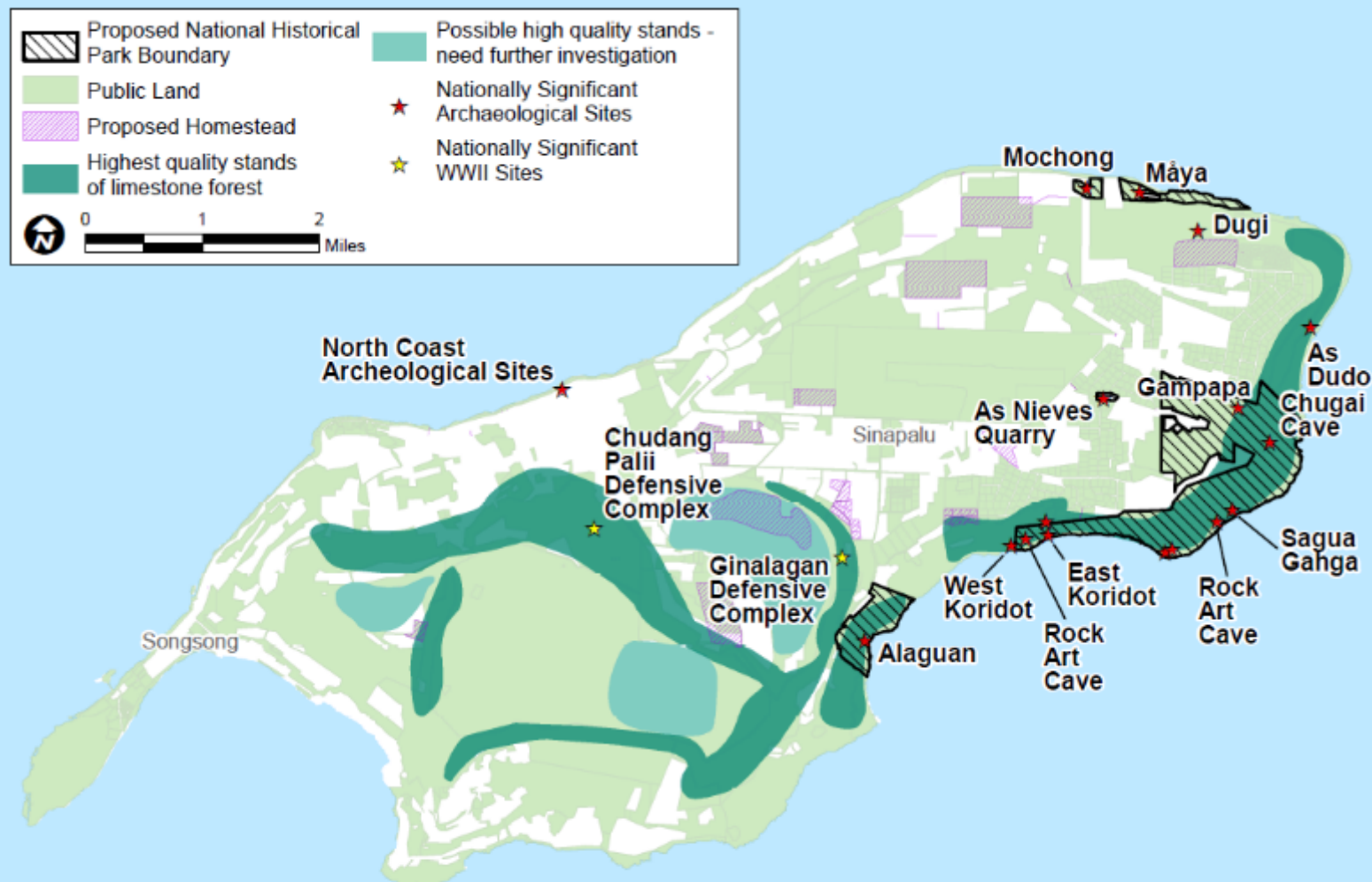
- Preliminary concepts:
  - Illustrate different means to provide protection and public enjoyment of sites that meet the evaluation criteria
  - Demonstrate a variety of options and serve as a starting point for discussion and public input
- Common factors:
  - Only public lands are included in these concepts
  - Emphasize cooperative management and partnerships
  - Would require support by CNMI and Rota municipal government
  - Would require lease or agreement for management of lands

# Rota Special Resource Study

National Park Service  
Department of the Interior



## Rota National Historical Park Concept



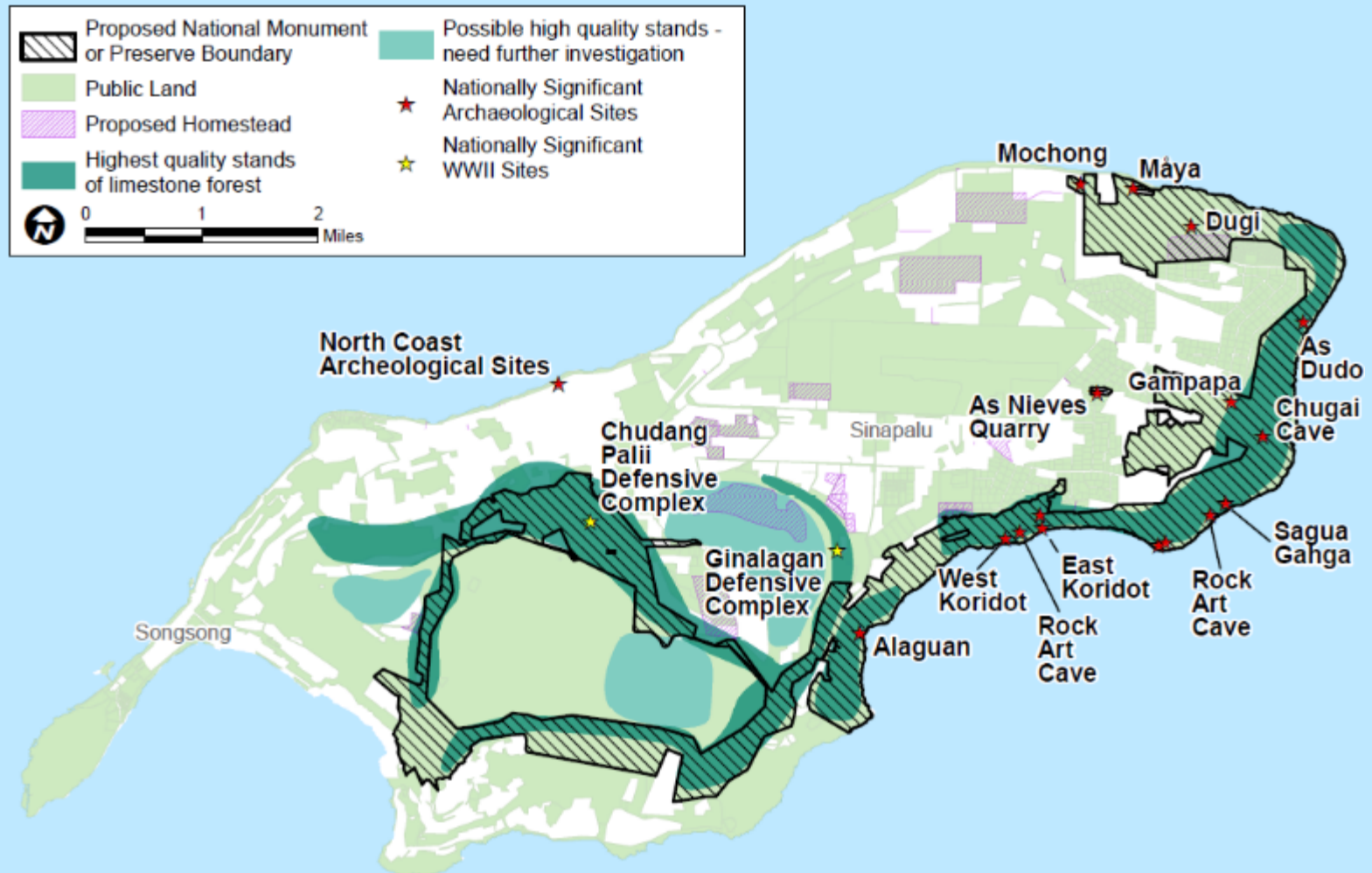


# Rota Special Resource Study

National Park Service  
Department of the Interior



## Rota National Monument or Preserve Concept





## Next Steps

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### **August – October 2020:**

- Public comment period
- Comments due October 26, 2020

### **2021:**

- Prepare study report
- National Park Service and Department of Interior review of study report
- Transmit study to Congress
- Release study report to public



## Contact Us

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- **Study website:** <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/rotastudy>
- **E-mail the study team:** [Rota\\_study@nps.gov](mailto:Rota_study@nps.gov)
- **Written comments may be returned to:**
  - **Rota:** Mayor's Office
  - **Saipan:** Saipan Mayor's Office or American Memorial Park Visitor Center
  - **Guam:** War in the Pacific National Historical Park Visitor Center (Sumay) or 135 Murray Blvd, Hagåtña (Skinner Plaza)
  - **Other location:** National Park Service Planning & Compliance Program  
333 Bush Street, Suite 500 San Francisco, CA 94104

**Thank you!**  
**Si Yu'us måase'!**  
**Ghilisou!**

Mochong Latte Village





## Ground Rules for Question/Comment & Answer Session

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- To share your comments and questions, please click on the **“raise hand” button**. We will call on your name, and ask the host to unmute your microphone, you will then be able to speak your comment.
- If you prefer to type your comment, you can use the **chat** function. During the session, our chat moderator will collect these comments and share them with the group.
- We will hold time at the end of the presentation to unmute the phone lines, for those of you listening in to share your comments.
- Please keep comments brief to allow time for everyone who wants to speak.
- Please be respectful in your comments, keep your microphone on mute when not speaking, and help make this a successful virtual meeting! If needed, our hosts can mute individual microphones.



## Questions & Comments

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are your thoughts on the preliminary study findings about resource significance, suitability and feasibility?</li><li>2. What are your thoughts about the preliminary alternative concepts?</li><li>3. What aspects of the preliminary alternative concepts do you like?</li><li>4. What suggestions do you have for modifying or improving the preliminary alternative concepts?</li><li>5. What other thoughts or ideas would you like to share with us?</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Håfa siha hinaso-mu pot i primera na sineda' inestudia pot i siknifikåasion-ña i frenkas, yan kåo umafakcha' yan kåo siña mã kompli?</li><li>2. Håfa siha hinaso-mu pot i primera na ede-hun akomparasion?</li><li>3. Håfa na banda gi halom I primera na akomparasion ede-hu mas yamu?</li><li>4. Håfa siña un pruponi anai para tana' mas mãolek i primera na akomparasion ede-hu?</li><li>5. Håfa otro siña un hasso na ede-hu nai malagu' hão para un ofresi ham?</li></ol> |
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