

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement
Newsletter # 1 Public Scoping, Spring 2009



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Hawai'i Volcanoes Begins General Management Plan

Dear Friends,

Please join us in creating the future of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is an astounding place that encompasses the summits and rift zones of two of the world's most active volcanoes, Kilauea and Mauna Loa. Nearly two million visitors each year venture out across lava flows, explore tropical rain forests, peer into sulfur-venting craters and witness the formation of spectacular volcanic features. The forests are alive with the sounds of Hawaiian honeycreepers and thrushes. Happyface spiders nestle on the undersides of fern fronds. Hawaiian hawks circle overhead and white-tailed tropicbirds ride the wind updrafts in steep-walled craters. Visitors are enchanted by the park's rich history as demonstrated by performances of traditional Native Hawaiian hula, exploration of petroglyphs and heiau, and the charm of the park's cultural landscapes and historic buildings. Hawai'i Volcanoes embraces the spiritual significance of this place to the Native Hawaiian culture, perpetuating a cultural link to Hawai'i as it was hundreds of years ago. The park's global recognition as an International Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site attests to the compelling values that this park's unique resources hold for people worldwide.

This is your opportunity to help create a vision for the future. We need your participation to develop a new General Management Plan (GMP) that will guide Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park for the next 20 years.

It has been more than 30 years since the previous park master plan was completed. Since that time, the park has experienced numerous volcanic eruptions, the loss of buildings and roadways, boundary expansions, increased visitation, as well as great advances in our knowledge about ecological and cultural resources. In 2003, the

park grew by 116,000 acres with the acquisition of the Kahuku unit on the southwest slopes of Mauna Loa Volcano, increasing the park acreage to 333,086. The park's general management planning effort will develop a strategic vision for the entire park, including Kahuku. As we move forward, this is also a perfect time to position the park as an environmental leader in creating climate-friendly and sustainable park operations, reducing our carbon footprint for a healthy future.

This is why we need you...

We are reaching out for your kōkua and input as we develop this new General Management Plan. Starting in late April, the National Park Service (NPS) will host five open houses on Hawai'i Island, one on O'ahu, and one on Maui. We hope you will join us at one of these open houses to learn more about the General Management Plan, meet the planning team, and share your ideas, concerns and thoughts about this special place.

If you have questions or comments at any time in the planning process, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Your input, coupled with NPS resource expertise, combine to maximize the potential of this special place. As the park looks to its 100th anniversary in 2016, we are excited to create a collective vision to prepare the park for its next century.

Mahalo,

Cindy Orlando
Superintendent
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park



You're Invited to an Open House!

Come and meet the planning team, learn more about the GMP planning process, and discuss your ideas and concerns about the future of the park. We look forward to hearing from you!

OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE:

Volcano

Sunday, April 26

6:30 am-9:00 am (Morning)
Cooper Center Farmer's Market
(Information Table)
19-4030 Wright Road

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Sunday, April 26

6:30 pm-8:30 pm (Evening)
Kilauea Visitor Center
1 Crater Rim Drive

Hilo

Monday, April 27

5:00 pm-8:00 pm
Auntie Sally's Lū'au Hale
799 Pi'ilani Street

Nā'ālehu

Tuesday, April 28

5:00-8:00 pm
Nā'ālehu Community Center
95-5635 Māmalahoa Highway

Kailua-Kona

Wednesday, April 29

5:00-8:00 pm
Keauhou Beach Resort
78-6740 Ali'i Drive

O'ahu

Thursday, April 30

5:00-8:00 pm
East-West Center
Hawai'i Imin Conference Center
Koi Room
1777 East-West Road
Honolulu

Maui

Friday, May 1

3:00-7:00 pm
Maui Community College
Pilina Building/Multi-purpose Room
310 Ka'ahumanu Highway
Kahului

E no'ono'o mua kākou i ka piha makahiki haneli o ka paka Hawai'i Volcanoes

“Let's all look forward to Hawai'i Volcanoes' 100th year”

What is a General Management Plan?

A General Management Plan will answer “What kind of place do we want this park to be?” It will serve as a guidebook for the future to help managers make decisions about how to protect resources, what levels and types of uses are appropriate, what facilities should be developed and how people should access the park. Everything in the plan must be consistent with the park’s purpose and significance and the legislation that established the National Park Service in 1916, providing for protection of the park’s natural and cultural resources while inviting appropriate visitor use and enjoyment of the park.

The plan will not include detailed building designs or be able to guarantee funding, but it will serve as a blueprint that the NPS intends to follow for the next 15-20 years. The GMP will include an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the various alternatives will be analyzed in the EIS.



Partnerships are a critical way of building a community of stewardship.

Developing a Foundation for the Plan

Planning and park management are based on a shared understanding of the park’s purpose, significance, resources and values. This shared understanding serves as a foundation for everything we do at the park.

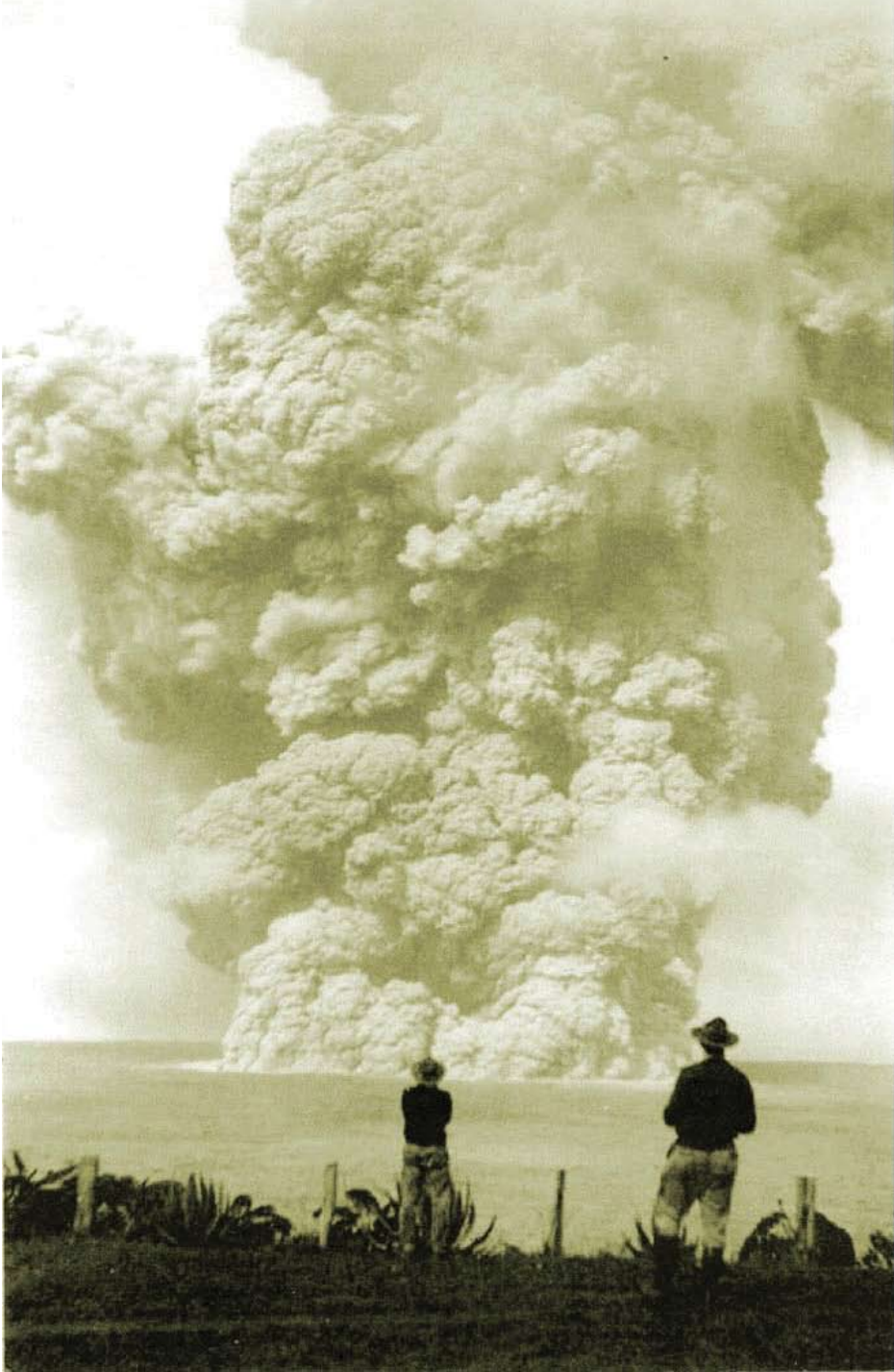
Park Purpose : Why Congress established the park.

Park Significance: Why the park’s resources and values are important enough to warrant national park designation. The park significance is linked to the park purpose.

The following park purpose and significance statements were developed by park staff based upon park legislation and an analysis of park resources. Please let us know if we have accurately captured what is most significant about Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park.

Park Purpose

Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park protects, studies, and provides access to Kilauea and Mauna Loa, two of the world’s most active volcanoes; preserves endemic Hawaiian ecosystems; and perpetuates the traditional Hawaiian culture connected to these landscapes.



Viewing volcanic activity at Hawai’i Volcanoes, 1924.

Park Significance

Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park:

- Preserves, protects, and interprets the largest and most continuously active shield volcanoes in the United States, and provides the best physical evidence of island building processes that created the 2,000 mile long Hawaiian archipelago.
- Serves as a living laboratory for scientific investigations that began over a century ago and continue to advance global understanding of volcanic processes.
- Protects and restores unique and diverse ecosystems that are the result of over 30 million years of evolution on an active volcanic landscape, wide climate variation, and the extreme isolation of the Hawaiian Islands.
- Encompasses the largest and most ecologically diverse wilderness in the Pacific Islands.
- Embraces the Native Hawaiian spiritual significance of this landscape and interprets related cultural traditions.
- Encompasses sites, structures, objects and landscapes that document over 600 years of human life and activities on an active volcanic landscape.
- Provides access to two of the most active volcanoes in the world, and opportunities to understand and appreciate the distinctive geology and natural and cultural adaptations to the land.



Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park is globally recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Reserve--linked with the planet’s most cherished and endangered treasures, and protected for people worldwide.

What Opportunities and Challenges Face Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park?

Hawai‘i Volcanoes is a park with diverse resources, a dynamic landscape, changing visitor patterns, and many decisions to make in the next decades. The planning team has identified some preliminary issues that we think may be valuable to consider in this planning effort. Because the General Management Plan is a long-range vision for the park, the issues are broad and conceptual. Please let us know your thoughts on these issues and if you have additional suggestions or recommendations.

Park Visitation and Visitor Facilities

What types of visitor experiences, activities, and facilities should be available in different areas of the park? How can the park adapt over time to address visitor demand, resource sensitivity, and unpredictable volcanic activity?

Approximately 1.6 million people visit the park each year. Since 1986, lava flows have destroyed a number of facilities including a visitor center, campground, ranger residences, and covered cultural sites, trails and miles of highway. Changes in volcanic activity require creative management.



Bicyclists share the road with buses, cars, and pedestrians as they cycle and explore along Crater Rim Drive.



Hikers enjoy over 150 miles of hiking trails within Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park.

Transportation, Circulation, and Congestion

What transportation methods and options could meet visitor needs, protect resources, and allow for changing conditions due to volcanic activity?

Current transportation options and infrastructure do not meet the needs of many visitors and result in congestion at several popular destinations, including sections of Crater Rim Drive and the Thurston Lava Tube (Nāhuku) area. Volcanic events have led to closures of park roads and may continue to disrupt established travel patterns.

Natural Resource Preservation, Restoration, and Research

How can Hawai‘i Volcanoes sustain the activities needed to insure viability for natural resources , provide for future stewardship opportunities and promote scientific investigation?

The park is home to an amazing diversity of life, including 54 species that are federally listed as rare, threatened or endangered. Invasive species are an overriding concern at the park—they degrade natural ecosystems, reduce the richness of native flora and fauna, and threaten the survival of the park’s unique biodiversity. There is an on-going need for staffing, funding, and facilities. The park is also home to pioneering research studies and an

active research community. The GMP will explore stewardship and research opportunities throughout the park.



Fronds of hāpu‘u pulu, a giant tree fern, rise from the misty rainforest.

Cultural Resource Protection and Management

What are the opportunities for protecting and managing the diverse cultural resources at Hawai‘i Volcanoes and integrating natural and cultural resource management? How should the park incorporate Native Hawaiian values into the preservation, management, and interpretation of resources?

The park has many significant cultural landscapes, historic structures, archeological sites, ethnographic resources and museum collections. There are also many places in the park that are culturally significant to Native Hawaiians for ongoing traditional use. Managing these resources presents challenges, such as protection from visitor impacts, weathering, and vandalism, as well as insuring funding for preservation and education. Incorporating Native Hawaiian values and ongoing traditional use into future planning for the park will be discussed in the GMP.

Climate Change

How should the park respond to the effects of global climate change?

The effects of global climate change are anticipated to include changes in local weather patterns, wildfire and hurricane frequency, sea levels and ocean resources, distribution of plant and animal communities, and increased avian disease. Pro-active planning and management actions can help the park adjust to these changes and reduce the effects on park resources, operations, and visitors.

Sustainable Operations and Facilities

How should the park address facilities lost to volcanic activity? What are the strategies the park can employ so that operations can respond to changing conditions?

The management of a park that encompasses two active volcanoes presents many challenges. Volcanic activity has destroyed a number of operational and maintenance facilities. Today, these functions are scattered throughout the park, often in structures that were not intended for these uses and may not be sustainable or efficient. The uncertainty of future volcanic activity and concerns about health and safety require operational and emergency procedures that are flexible and responsive to changing conditions.

Partnership Development

How can the park foster flexible, productive relationships that expand resource stewardship and visitor opportunities?

Partnerships, both inside and outside park boundaries, have profoundly expanded the capacity of the park to meet its mission and have greatly

enhanced the quality of services provided. The park is currently working with private entities, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations. Local, regional, and landscape-level conservation partnerships include the park’s involvement in the Three Mountain Alliance and close relationship with the USGS Hawaiian Volcano Observatory and Pacific Island Ecosystem Research Center. Non-profit organizations also provide a range of services within the park, including guided tours, educational programs, and cultural and natural resource stewardship projects.

Business Relationships

What types and levels of commercial activities are necessary and appropriate for Hawai‘i Volcanoes?

Commercial service operators provide a range of visitor amenities within the park, including food service, lodging, guided tours, and educational programs. How can the park improve visitor experiences and promote services that are necessary and appropriate to support visitor needs?



Approximately 250,000 people visit the park on commercial bus tours annually.

Park Boundary

Does the current park boundary adequately protect resources and values fundamental to the purpose of the park?

Activities adjacent to the park’s boundaries have the potential to impact sensitive park resources. Resources don’t stop at the park’s boundary. The ‘Ōla’a rainforest area is managed by the NPS, but is not contiguous with the official park boundary. The GMP allows us to think ahead about how to best protect the park’s resources, and will evaluate whether any boundary changes should be recommended.

Kahuku Unit

What is the vision for land management and visitor experiences in the Kahuku Unit?

Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park increased in size by over 50% in 2003 when the 116,000 acre Kahuku area was added to the park. There are currently no visitor facilities at Kahuku, and highway access needs to be analyzed. Resource inventory and monitoring has begun. A wilderness eligibility assessment for the Kahuku unit, as required by NPS management policy, will be included in the GMP. Planning for the Kahuku unit will be included as part of a cohesive vision for the entire park.



The park’s Kahuku unit is home to spectacular rift zone features and evidence of five historic Mauna Loa eruptions.



A group of visitors explores the rainforest on a ranger-guided walk (1920s).

It is hard to keep silent before such marvelous views, and yet silence is about the best description of such awe inspiring wonder. I hope the national government will acquire and adequately maintain Kilauea and the large volcanic tract surrounding her as a great park for all the people for all time.

- Edwin Dinwiddie, Volcano House
Historic Guest Register
November 16, 1917

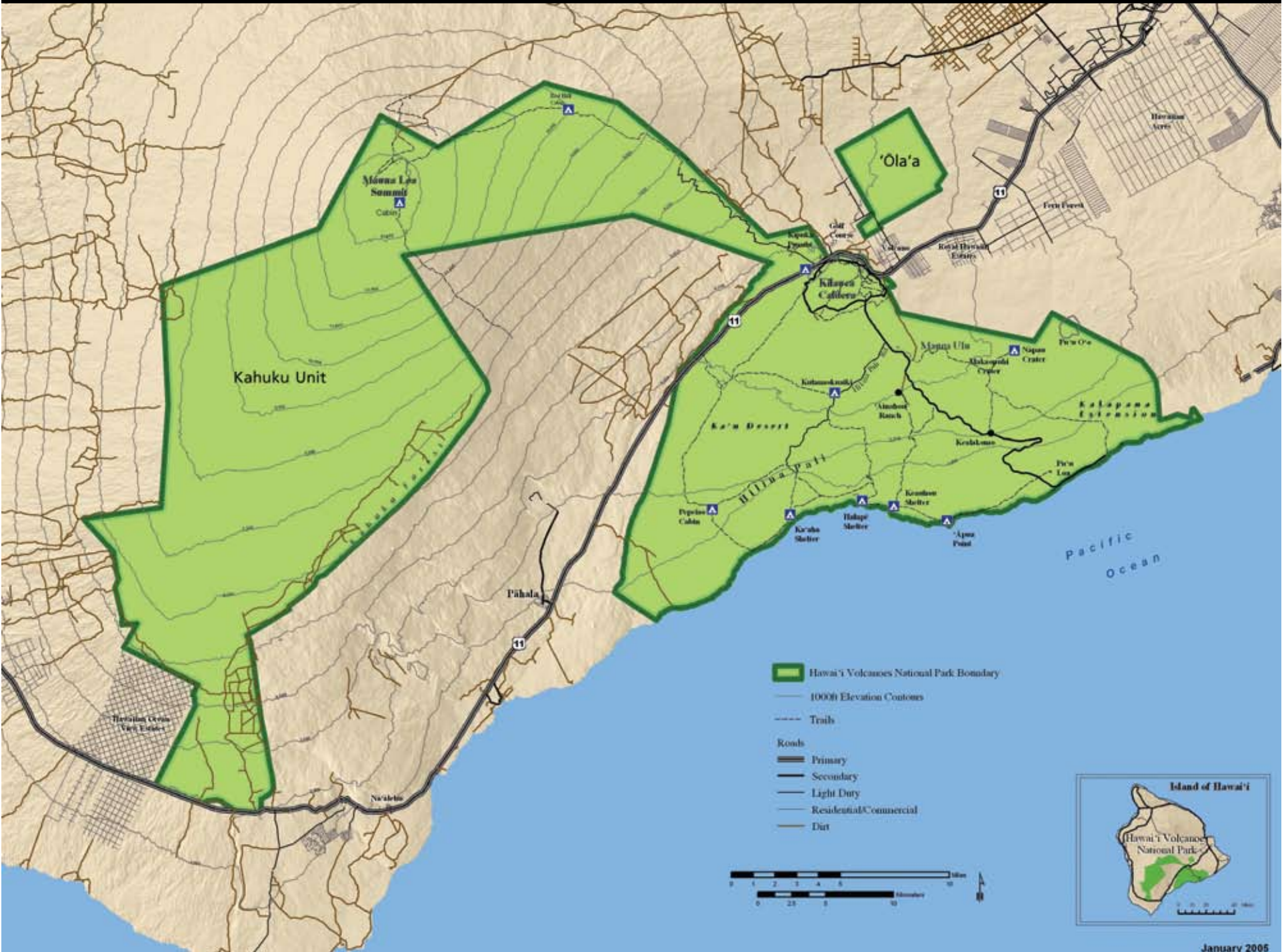


Did You Know?

- Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park was established on August 1, 1916 as the 15th national park in the national park system.
- Park geologic features include two active volcanoes, calderas, pit craters, cinder cones, spatter ramparts, fumaroles, solfataras, pāhoehoe and 'a'ā lava flows, tree molds, lava tubes, black sand beaches, sea arches, thermal areas and rift zones.
- The park is home to 54 federally listed rare, threatened and endangered plant, insect, bird, bat, and sea turtle species.
- The park includes more than 120,000 acres of Congressionally-designated wilderness.
- The park contains more than 300 historic structures.
- The park's museum collection houses more than 380,000 items which include natural history collections, oral histories, photographs, a series of fine art paintings, and archival documents such as the written entries of early Volcano House guest registers.



Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park



Hawai'i Volcanoes GMP Schedule

Estimated Time Frame	Planning Activity	Public Involvement Opportunities
Spring 2009	<p>Conduct Public Scoping—Identify goals and issues that need to be addressed. Host public meetings with the public, park partners, agencies, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>* We are currently at this step.</p>	<p>Review Newsletter and send us your ideas and concerns using the response form.</p> <p>Attend public meetings and voice your ideas and concerns. Meet the planning team.</p>
2010	Develop Preliminary Alternatives—Based on public scoping results, develop a draft outline of different possible futures for the park. Provide opportunities for review and comment by the public, park partners, government agencies, and other stakeholders.	<p>Review newsletter and send us your ideas and concerns using the response form.</p> <p>Attend a public meeting to learn more about proposed draft alternatives.</p>
2011	Prepare and Distribute Draft GMP/EIS—Revise alternatives based on comments from the public, park partners, government agencies, and other stakeholders. Provide additional details on each alternative, analyze impacts of the alternative, and identify a preferred course of action.	<p>Attend public meetings and voice your ideas and concerns.</p> <p>Review Draft GMP/EIS or summary newsletter and provide written comments.</p>
2012	Revise GMP/EIS and Prepare a Final GMP/EIS	Review the Final GMP/EIS.
2013	Distribute and implement the Approved GMP/EIS—Prepare and issue a Record of Decision and implement the plan as funding allows	Work with the park to implement the plan.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

General Management Plan

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Contact Information:

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Project Website

For current project information and to submit
comments online:
www.nps.gov/havo/parkmgmt/plan.htm

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SEND COMMENTS BY: June 30, 2009

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