



U.S. ARMY

ARMY TRAINING LAND RETENTION AT PŌHAKULOA TRAINING AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Army prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) on the island of Hawai'i. The Proposed Action is to retain up to approximately 23,000 acres of State-owned land at PTA.

The Army prepared the Draft EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), guided by the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA implementing regulations in Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Parts 1500–1508, and Army NEPA implementing regulations in Title 32 C.F.R. Part 651. The Draft EIS also complies with Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 343 and Hawai'i Administrative Rules Chapter 11-200.1, collectively referred to as the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA). Both NEPA and HEPA require government agencies to fully consider the environmental impacts of a proposed major action and to take appropriate steps, where necessary, to mitigate potential adverse effects.

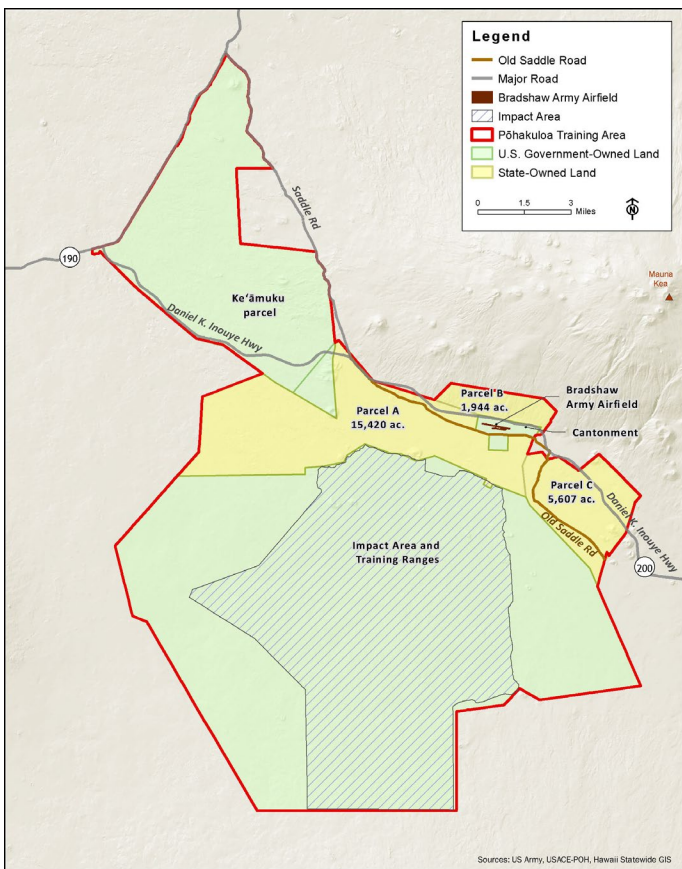
PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The Draft EIS evaluated the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of three reasonable alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the Proposed Action, which is to retain up to approximately 23,000 acres of State-owned land at PTA in support of continued military training to meet ongoing training requirements. Alternatives analyzed in the EIS include: (1) Full Retention (of approximately 23,000 acres); (2) Modified Retention (of approximately 19,700 acres); and (3) Minimum Retention and Access (of approximately 10,100 acres and 11 miles of roads and training trails). The No Action Alternative (no retention of State-owned land after 2029) was also analyzed. Comments received on the Draft EIS will help shape updates and a preferred alternative for the Final EIS.

BACKGROUND

PTA consists of approximately 132,000 acres between the volcanic mountains of Mauna Loa, Mauna Kea, and Hualālai on the island of Hawai'i. United States Army Hawaii (USARHAW) conducts training at PTA to meet its federally mandated mission of readiness. Training offered at installations such as PTA supports the Army's fulfillment of its role in the Nation's defense. Users of PTA, including the Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army Reserve, Hawaii Army National Guard, Hawaii Air National Guard, State and County of Hawai'i first responders and firefighters, Hawai'i Civil Defense Agency, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, State Office of Homeland Security, Hawai'i Police Department, and others, rely on the installation to fulfill agency-specific mission and readiness requirements. PTA is the largest contiguous live-fire range and maneuver training area in Hawai'i and is considered a premier military training center in the Pacific region. It is the only training area in Hawai'i where USARHAW units can complete all mission essential tasks, and the only installation in Hawai'i that can accommodate larger than company-sized units (i.e., battalion and brigade) for live-fire and maneuver exercises.

The U.S. Government leases approximately 23,000 acres at PTA from the State. The 65-year lease expires on August 16, 2029. Over the past six decades, the State-owned land has been the keystone of PTA, supporting numerous training facilities and capabilities essential to USARHAW and other military services and local agencies. The State-owned land contains maneuver area and key training facilities, some of which are not available elsewhere in Hawai'i, and provides access between major parcels of U.S. Government-owned land at PTA. Loss of this land would substantially impact the ability of USARHAW and other service components and local agencies to meet their training requirements and mission of readiness.



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ACCESSIBILITY REQUESTS

Please contact Michael Donnelly, External Communications

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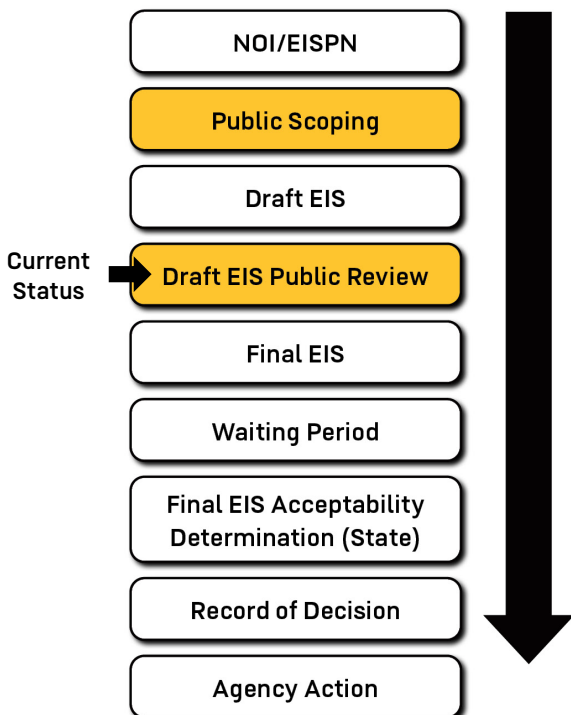
NEPA/HEPA PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The first step in the NEPA/HEPA public notification process is to alert the public of the intention to prepare an EIS. On September 4, 2020, the Army published the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register, which started the 40-day public scoping period. On September 8, 2020, the Army published an EIS Preparation Notice (EISPN) in the State Environmental Review Program's publication, The Environmental Notice. On September 23, 2020, the Army amended the NOI.

The second step in the public notification process is to prepare a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS. On April 8, 2022, the Army published the NOA in the Federal Register. The publication announced availability of the Draft EIS and the start of the public review and comment period. Additionally, the publication provided information on ways in which the public can review and comment on the Draft EIS. After written comments on the Draft EIS have been reviewed and considered, the Army will prepare a Final EIS.

The NEPA/HEPA process graphic (below) shows opportunities for public input in gold. The Public Scoping period ran from September 4, 2020 to October 14, 2020. The Draft EIS is available and is currently in the Draft EIS Public Review period, which began on April 8, 2022 and ends on June 7, 2022.

NEPA/HEPA PROCESS



DRAFT EIS PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

The intent of the Draft EIS Public Review process is to provide the public with information and the opportunity to review the Draft EIS and provide their comments in order to affect changes that may be implemented in the Final EIS. The Draft EIS describes alternatives for the Proposed Action and assesses impacts, which are subject to public review over a 45-day period. Among other things, input from the public can aid the Army in determining a preferred alternative that will be presented in the Final EIS.

The Army provided notification of the availability of the Draft EIS to Native Hawaiian organizations; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; and other stakeholders. The Draft EIS and informational materials are available on the EIS website at: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/PTAEIS>. Furthermore, the public may also review the Draft EIS at the following local libraries:

1. Hawai'i State Library, Hawai'i Documents Center
2. Hilo Public Library
3. Kailua-Kona Public Library
4. Thelma Parker Memorial Public and School Library

The Draft EIS public review process began April 8, 2022, with publication of the NOA in the Federal Register. Federal, State, and local agencies; Native Hawaiian organizations; and the public are invited to participate in the Draft EIS public review process. The 60-day public comment period ends on June 7, 2022.

OPTIONS TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

The Draft EIS Public Comment period is April 8 – June 7, 2022.

- In-person: attend a public meeting
- EIS website: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/PTAEIS>
- Email: atlr-pta-eis@g70.design
- Phone: (808) 470-8884 (April 25-26 only)
- Mail: ATLR PTA EIS Comments
P.O. Box 3444
Honolulu, HI 96801-3444

Note: All comments will be valued equally, regardless of how they are submitted. Personal contact information will not be published in the Final EIS. Personal contact information will be maintained for the project record and will not be released unless required by law.

DRAFT EIS PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings will take place at the following locations on the following dates and times:

1. 'Imiloa Astronomy Center on April 25, 2022 from 6-8 PM HST
2. Waimea District Park on April 26, 2022 from 6-8 PM HST

The public will have the option to watch the Draft EIS Public Meetings in real time via a live stream that can be accessed on the EIS website at:

<https://home.army.mil/hawaii/index.php/PTAEIS>.



Scan with smartphone to be directed to the PTA EIS website.

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