

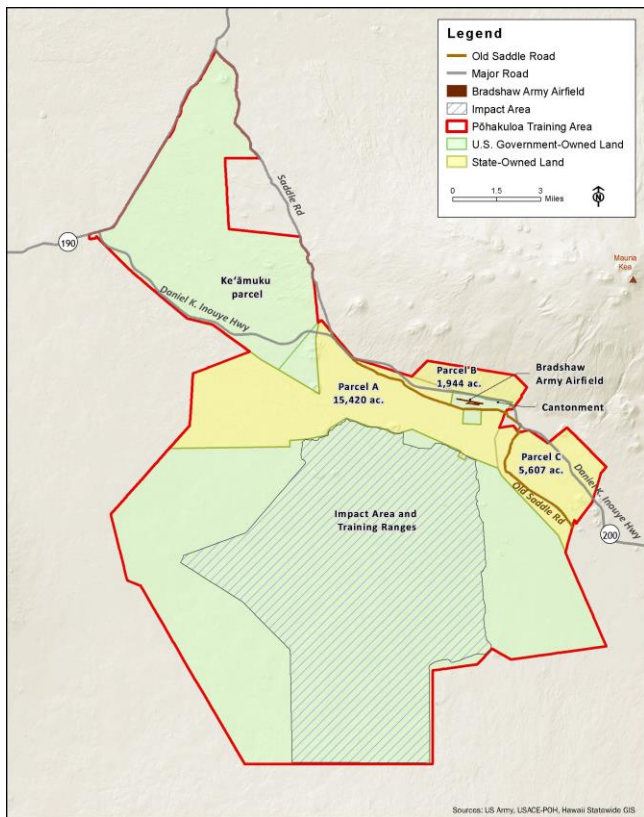


ARMY TRAINING LAND RETENTION AT PŌHAKULOĀ TRAINING AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

In 2022, the Army published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Army Training Land Retention at Pōhakuloā Training Area (PTA) on the island of Hawai'i. Based on comments received during the public comment period, the Army decided to refine the Proposed Action and alternatives and develop a Second Draft EIS. The Proposed Action has been revised to retain up to approximately 22,750 acres of the 23,000 acres of State-owned land at PTA; additional studies and analysis have also been incorporated into the Second Draft EIS.

The Army prepared the 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 (CFR) Parts 1500–1508, and Army NEPA implementing regulations in Title 32 CFR Part 651. The Second 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 action and to take appropriate steps, where necessary, to mitigate potential adverse effects.



PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The Second 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 22,750 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) Alternative 1: Maximum Retention (of approximately 22,750 acres); (2) Alternative 2: Modified Retention (of approximately 19,700 acres); and (3) Alternative 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. The Army's Preferred Alternative is Alternative 2: Modified Retention. Comments received on the Second Draft EIS will help shape updates 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 among 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 USAG-HI PAO, NEPA
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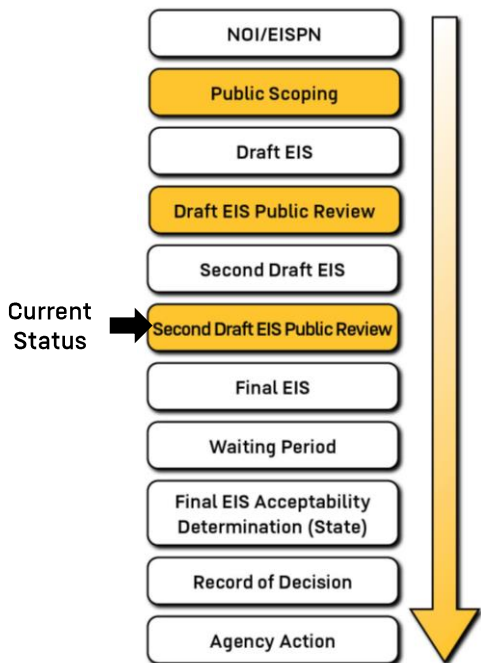
NEPA/HEPA PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The NEPA/HEPA process graphic (below) shows opportunities for public input.

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 to modify the public scoping process due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 could review and comment on the Draft EIS. With critical evaluation of comments on the Draft EIS, the Army determined a Second Draft EIS is warranted. A NOA for the Second Draft EIS was published in the Federal Register on April 19, 2024, initiating the public review period.

NEPA/HEPA PROCESS



Opportunities for public input are shown in yellow boxes.

SECOND DRAFT EIS PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

The intent of the Second Draft EIS public review process is to provide the public with additional information and changes since the Draft EIS, and the opportunity to review the Second Draft EIS and provide comments in order to affect changes that may be implemented in the Final EIS. The Second Draft EIS describes alternatives for the Proposed Action and assesses potential impacts, which are subject to public review from April 19 through June 7, 2024.

The Army provided notification of the availability of the Second Draft EIS to Native Hawaiian organizations; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; and other stakeholders. The Second Draft EIS and informational materials are available on the EIS website at: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/ptaais/project-home>. Furthermore, the public may also review the Second 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 Second Draft EIS public review process began April 19, 2024, with publication of the NOA in the Federal Register. Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Native Hawaiian organizations; and the public are invited to participate in the Second Draft EIS public review process. The comment period is April 19 through June 7, 2024.

OPTIONS TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

The Second Draft EIS public comment period is April 19 – June 7, 2024.

- In-person: Attend a public meeting
- EIS website: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/ptaais/project-home>
- Email: ATLR-PTA-EIS@g70.design
- Phone: (808) 515-5518 (May 6 - 7 only)
- Mail: ATLR PTA EIS Comments
P.O. Box 3444
Honolulu, HI 96801-3444

Note: All comments will be reviewed 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.

SECOND DRAFT EIS PUBLIC MEETINGS

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

1. Waimea District Park on May 6, 2024, 6:00–8:00 PM
2. 'Imiloa Astronomy Center on May 7, 2024, 6:00–8:00 PM

The public may review the meeting materials and will have the option to watch the Second Draft Public Meetings in real time via a live stream that can be accessed on the EIS website at: <https://home.army.mil/hawaii/ptaais/project-home>.



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