



# PTA EIS Info Paper

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U.S. Army Hawai'i understands and deeply respects the views expressed by community members, cultural practitioners, and environmental advocates regarding the Army's presence and activities at Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA). Through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, the Army has been able to share some of its efforts working with the community, learning from and cooperating with cultural practitioners, and protecting and enhancing the ecosystems at PTA. The Army is committed to being a valuable member of the community and continuing our stewardship of PTA.

We are highly sensitive to the cultural and environmental significance of this land and commit substantial resources to its care. U.S. Army Hawai'i has established natural and cultural resource stewardship programs focusing on restoration and protection of the land we use. Our natural and cultural resource programs are fundamentally shaped by, and dependent upon, the guidance and partnership of the Hawai'i Island community. We actively collaborate with Native Hawaiian organizations, environmental groups, and local experts.

- The Army's Natural Resource Staff, guided by community input, manages and protects over 26 federally-listed threatened and endangered plant and animal species at PTA, including six species found only at PTA.
- The Army's Cultural Resource Staff, working closely with cultural practitioners, protects over 1,200 identified archaeological sites.
- Ongoing wildfire prevention and suppression efforts are informed by local knowledge and expertise.
- Mandatory environmental and cultural resource training for all military units helps ensure respect for the land.

U.S. Army Hawai'i values the Hawaii Island community and recognizes our role in contributing to the greater good of the island and the state.

- PTA is used by the Active Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Army Reserve, Hawai'i Army and Air National Guard, as well as state and local government agencies, such as the Hawai'i Police Department (HPD), Hawai'i Civil Defense Agency, State Office of Homeland Security, Hawai'i Emergency First-Responders, and the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency.
- Over the last five years, approximately 300 HPD officers trained at PTA.
- Hawai'i Fire Departments from all islands (350 firefighters + new recruits) conducted more than 13,000 hours of training at PTA.
- PTA provides ambulance and fire/emergency first response on the saddle road region (Mauna to Mauna).
- PTA employs more than 230 Hawai'i Island residents.

- PTA contributes more than \$50 million directly to the Hawai'i economy each year.
- PTA has a hunting program open to Hawai'i Island residents.

The Army's effort to retain state-owned land at PTA triggered an EIS because it represents a proposed federal action with potentially-significant environmental impacts.

- Legal Foundation: The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to analyze the environmental impacts of proposed actions. Similarly, the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA) requires environmental reviews of actions involving state lands.

- Purpose of the EIS:

- The EIS process identifies potential environmental and cultural impacts of different alternatives
- The EIS process informs decision-making by providing a comprehensive analysis of those impacts
- The EIS process ensures transparency and public involvement in the decision-making process

- EIS Stages: The process includes scoping (with public input), drafting the EIS, releasing the Draft EIS for public comment, addressing those comments, and finalizing the EIS. The Final EIS was published on April 18, 2025, which started a 30-day wait period before a Record of Decision (ROD) can be issued.

- Joint Process: This EIS is a joint NEPA/HEPA document. The EIS satisfies the requirements of both federal and state laws, thus streamlining the review process.

- Focus of this EIS: This EIS focuses on what land (i.e., where and how much) to retain, but not on how to retain it (e.g., lease, purchase, or exchange). The Army and the State of Hawai'i will negotiate how the Army will retain the specified land after the ROD is signed.

This statement is provided for context and to demonstrate the Army's commitment to a collaborative and responsible future at PTA. We value the ongoing dialogue with the community and look forward to continuing to help protect the unique cultural and environmental resources of Hawai'i Island.