

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of State Parks
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

October 28, 2011

Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO DESIGNATE INTERIM CAMPSITES AREAS PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 13-146-51, HAR, AT A SHORELINE PORTION OF THE KĪHOLO STATE PARK RESERVE AND TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE DEPARTMENT TO DESIGNATE FUTURE CAMPING AREAS FOR THE STATE PARK SYSTEM.

INFORMATION

Project Name: Kīholo State Park Reserve

Project Location: North Kona, Hawai'i

Land Ownership: State of Hawaii - DLNR - Division of State Parks, and approximately 82 acres of private land in-holdings

Tax Map Key: 7-1-02: 02, 08; 7-1-03: 02, 07

Land Area: 4, 357 acres

Background

In January 2002, the Board transferred responsibility for managing the lands in Pu'uwa'awa'a and Pu'uanahulu ahupua'a to the Divisions of Forestry and Wildlife (lands mauka of Queen Kaahumanu Highway) and State Parks (lands makai of the highway). The makai lands were set aside from the Land Division to the Division of State Parks by Executive Order Nos. 3890 in 2002 and 4161 in 2006. The park reserve boundaries are defined by Queen Kaahumanu Highway on the east, the Pu'uwa'awa'a - Ka'ūpūlehu district boundary on the south, the shoreline on the west, and the Pu'uanahulu - 'Anaeho'omalū district boundary on the north. Kīholo State Park Reserve is a 4360 acre coastal lava plain reserved for park status due to its high wildland coastal recreational value and because all land, except for approximately 100 acres is State managed. Natural, cultural, and recreation resources include good swimming beaches at Kīholo Bay and Keawaiki Bay, Akahu Kaimu anchialine pools, Luahinewai Pond, portions of the historic coastal trail, and numerous archaeological features.

ITEM E-1

A Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was funded by Act 213, SLH 07 and in March 2010, a consultant contract was awarded to Planning Solutions, Inc. to initiate the master planning process, including the preparation of an EIS. This process is now underway.

Public Recreational Use

For years prior to being transferred to the jurisdiction of the Division of State Parks, residents have used this area of Kiholo as an informal campground. During the past decade, as a result of a land exchange to acquire a private in-holding to add to the State Park Reserve, an informal agreement was made that a gate along the existing unimproved access road that leads to the shoreline and gravel parking areas, be open during the day for public vehicular access to facilitate day use along this section of the shoreline. The access road also provides access to several homes that are private parcels within the Park Reserve boundary – that are serviced by a second gate. Over the ensuing 10 years, public recreational use has escalated and has become problematic. The public has been using this section of the Kiholo Park Reserve for both day and consistently increasing amounts of unauthorized nighttime use. There have been greater numbers of vehicles driving and parking on, and pulverizing, the ili'ili stone beach, along with frequent camping, large groups of occasional squatters, and on occasion, large, overnight group parties. The public has created new vehicular access routes to the beach and then camp wherever they can find space. On 3 day weekends, it has been reported that upwards to 400 people and ancillary vehicles camp along the beach and through-out the kiawe forest fronting the main Park Reserve access road.

The lack of adequate restroom capacity (there are currently only a few portable toilets) has created a human waste and mounting potential public health issue. Also, the unauthorized camping has contributed to the inadvertent decay of archaeological sites in close proximity and impacts to the coastal kiawe forest. These impacts of unaccountable campers now makes intervention of this pre-existing and unauthorized use now critical and necessary. Due to such large proportions, particularly on 3 day weekends, camping must either be eliminated or managed.

Interim Camping Action Plan

This interim management action will enhance the preservation of the resources that qualified Kiholo to be designated as a State Park Reserve. Archaeological resources are being degraded due to the public driving on the beach and indiscriminately moving rocks and cutting vegetation for camping. Also, the basic aesthetic enjoyment and the natural peace of a wilderness experience are destroyed by uncontrolled public use. Under Park Reserve status, the 4,362 acres of land is intended to be preserved for the public's future, with only day use until a comprehensive study and plan is prepared to determine management and various public uses for the entire parcel. The current Master Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process will guide the Division in determining future public use and management of the cultural and natural resources on site. Meetings to gather public input are being conducted on the island of Hawaii.

The Master Planning/EIS process has included archeological surveys of the Park Reserve providing documented knowledge that the area has a rich history of Hawaiian culture still in place that must be protected.

DSP has determined that in the meantime – Kiholo must now be the subject of interim management so that both the natural and historic resources are not further degraded. But, also in recognition of the community's significant and increasing need for recreational coastal camping, interim camping authorization will allow for managed and controlled use to insure the quality of the experience and our resources. If the public does not honor this attempt to allow for some form of authorized camping – then more strict measure must be considered in the near future.

From October 1 to approximately November 17, 2011, the makai gate along Queen Kaahumanu Highway (near mile-marker 83) will be closed to vehicular access. This closure of the gate still allows for pedestrian access but eliminates public vehicles during an extensive coastal area clean-up and to prepare for more restricted and managed vehicular access and camping by permit. By mid November, 2011, permits for camping at Kiholo State Park Reserve will allow for authorized and managed use.

The Division is in collaboration with and gaining considerable support from the community non-profit organization that has a Curator Agreement with DSP for Kiholo State Park Reserve. Hui Aloha Kiholo with DSP staff will remove discarded debris and rubbish, construct and install additional new gates, create natural and constructed vehicle barriers, clarify and clear existing footpaths and erect camping area signs at currently used but undesignated campsites.

The interim camping action plan will allow for permitted camping in only the newly designated areas, appropriately situated to avoid impacts to cultural sites. The sites now being authorized have already been in use for decades. So camping is a pre-existing non-conforming use. Other sites that will be closed and not authorized. Management action includes using boulders, large, dead kiawe logs and installing bollards and additional gates on the existing access road to prevent vehicle access and further damage to the beach. Division staff and volunteers will be clearing and removing rubbish, debris and brush to clarify the existing pathways and installing signage to designate the 8 sites that have been selected to eliminate impact to cultural sites in the adjacent areas. Rocks will be placed at the identified camp sites to create temporary designated fire locations. Additional portable toilets will be brought in to accommodate the authorized use. Maximum authorized use under this interim action will be 80 people per night.

Authority: Chapter 13-146-51, Hawaii Administrative Rules

§13-146-51 Camping permits. (a) The following provisions shall apply to camping:

- (1) Camping and the use of recreational trailers or other camper units is only permitted at locations designated by the board or its authorized representative.
- (2) The board or its authorized representative may establish check-in

- and check-out times for camping facilities.
- (3) The installation or construction of permanent camping facilities is prohibited except as authorized by the board or its authorized representative.

Pursuant to the 13-146-51, the Board or its authorized representative designates camping locations. The Division is requesting that the Board designate the sites in Exhibit 1 and to also delegate this authority to the Chairperson to facilitate future campsite designations. The Division has determined that the flexibility to designate camp sites is necessary for responsible management and that this action is appropriate for the Chair's approval, rather than the Board.

Chapter 343, HRS Compliance

Pursuant to the Division's Exemption list, this action falls within Exemption Class I: "operations, repairs or maintenance of existing structures, facilities, equipment or topographical features involving little or no expansion or change of use beyond that previously existing". As there are pre-existing sites in numerous locations and the use as described has reached a large threshold, the Division is now substantially reducing camping capacity and authorizing a more limited area with signage at the pre-existing sites.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Designate the 8 interim campsites at Kiholo State Park Reserve;
2. Delegate the authority to the Chairperson to designate all Division of State Park campsites in the future and;
3. Find that this interim action is exempt from Chapter 343, HRS environmental compliance.

Respectfully submitted,



DANIEL S. QUINN
State Parks Administrator

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:


WILLIAM J. AILA, JR., Chairperson

for
Exhibit 1: Map of campsites

Kiholo State Park Reserve Proposed Camp Sites



AREA CURRENTLY BEING
UTILIZED FOR ILLEGAL
CAMPING (SHADED)

PROPOSED
CAMPSITES

Beach Road/
Trail

Keanalele
Water Cave

Access Roads

