

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
Engineering Division  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

June 9, 2016

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

REQUEST ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
AND APPROVAL FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT  
IMPACT (FONSI) FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES, KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK PHASE II IMPROVEMENTS, NORTH  
KONA, HAWAII

BACKGROUND:

The State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of State Parks (State Parks) is planning to continue its facility improvements at Kekaha Kai State Park, which encompasses 1,642 coastal acres in Kona on the Island of Hawai'i. Kekaha Kai State Park was envisioned as one jewel in a string of parks along this coast, a low-key park to preserve the natural landscape of this Kona shoreline. Park development should provide increased recreational opportunities, support the development of cultural and educational programs, and preserve and enhance valuable natural and cultural resources. To this end, infrastructure and facility development has been planned to be relatively small and dispersed.

For planning purposes, the park was divided into three sections along ahupua'a boundaries: the Mahai'ula Section (which also includes lands in Kaulana Ahupua'a); Awake'e; and Manini'owali (which also includes lands in Kūki'o Ahupua'a). Different levels of use were envisioned for each of these sections, which allows for slightly different park experiences. Each section has a mauka-makai access/trail and is crossed by the lateral coastal trail system known as the Ala Kahakai.

Kekaha Kai State Park has an annual visitation of 235,700, with 73,400 visiting the Mahai'ula Section and 162,300 visiting Manini'owali. It is estimated that 57% of these park visitors are from out-of-State and the other 43% are Hawai'i residents. There is a need for additional improvements at Kekaha Kai State Park to safely, equitably and efficiently accommodate the existing level of use at these parks, in keeping with the low-key character of the park. The project is not intended to increase visitation, but rather to better accommodate existing use and enhance visitor's experience at the park.

ITEM L-4

Request Acceptance of  
FEA Approval For FONSI  
DLNR Kekaha Kai State Park  
North Kona, Hawaii

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:

The Kekaha Kai State Park is bounded by the sea on the west, by Queen Ka‘ahumanu Highway (State Highway 19) on the east, by Kona International Airport lands on the south, and by luxury residential lots on the north. In addition, the privately owned ahupua‘a of Makalawena separates the two State-owned park areas. The Park is in State Land Use Conservation District. The Park TMK’s are listed below in the Project Summary table.

The project scope of work for the Mahai‘ula section of the park involves minor repair and safety improvements to roadways and parking, a new storage and water tank building to provide water for cleaning and maintenance, installation of new or refurbished accessible picnic tables and BBQ pits, and miscellaneous other features and actions. The scope of work for the Manini‘owali includes construction of a stairway to replace a dilapidated ramp, installation of two showers, several new or refurbished accessible picnic tables and BBQ pits, and miscellaneous other features and actions. The project avoids surface water, significant historic sites and threatened or endangered species. State Parks will incorporate mitigation measures to ensure that there are no adverse effects to these resources. A few activities are located by necessity in the shoreline area. Permits will be obtained to ensure that no inappropriate use of, or harm to, shoreline resources occur.

The DLNR, Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL) has been consulted with regarding the need for a Conservation District Use Permit (CDUP). It was determined by OCCL that a CDUP was not required based on the scope of work for this project.

The Draft Environmental Assessment has been published by the State of Hawaii, Department of Health, Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC), in the October 23, 2014 bulletin and is posted on the OEQC website at [http://oeqc.doh.hawaii.gov/Shared%20Documents/EA and EIS Online Library/Hawaii/2010s/2014-10-23-HA-5B-DEA-Kekaha-Kai-State-Park-Phase-II-Improvements.pdf](http://oeqc.doh.hawaii.gov/Shared%20Documents/EA%20and%20EIS%20Online%20Library/Hawaii/2010s/2014-10-23-HA-5B-DEA-Kekaha-Kai-State-Park-Phase-II-Improvements.pdf) . Attached for your information is the Final Environmental Assessment.

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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Project:	Kekaha Kai State Park Improvements
Agency:	Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of State Parks 1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 310 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Consultant:	Okahara & Associates, Inc. 200 Kohola Street Hilo, Hawaii 96720
Tax Map Key(s):	(3rd) 7-2-05: 02, 03 & 07; 7-3-43: por. 01; 7-2-04: 03, 09, 17 & 19
Proposed Action:	Minor repair and safety improvements to roadways and parking, a new storage and water tank building to provide water for cleaning and maintenance, construction of a stairway to replace a dilapidated ramp, installation of two showers, install new or refurbished accessible picnic tables and BBQ pits, and miscellaneous other features and actions.
Land Area:	1,642 acres
State Land Use District:	Conservation
Existing Land Use:	DLNR State Park
Present Zoning:	State Land Use Conservation District
Special Management Area:	Yes
Permits That May be Required:	Shoreline Setback Variance; Special Management Area Use Permit; Building Permit (County of Hawaii).

FINDINGS AND REASONS SUPPORTING ANTICIPATED DETERMINATION:

Chapter 11-200-12, Hawai'i Administrative Rules, outlines those factors agencies must consider when determining whether an action has significant effects. Significance criteria evaluation of the proposed project indicates that there will be no significant adverse effects to the environment. The factors are discussed below.

1. *The proposed project will not involve an irrevocable commitment or loss or destruction of any natural or cultural resources.* No valuable natural or cultural resources would be committed or lost. Improvement of the park will itself enhance a cultural resource. State Parks archaeologists have determined that the project will have no effect on significant historic properties, a finding with which SHPD has concurred.
2. *The proposed project will not curtail the range of beneficial uses of the environment.* The proposed project expands and in no way curtails beneficial uses of the environment.
3. *The proposed project will not conflict with the State's long-term environmental policies.* The State's long-term environmental policies are set forth in Chapter 344, HRS. The broad goals of this policy are to conserve natural resources and enhance the quality of life. The project is minor, environmentally beneficial, and fulfills aspects of these policies calling for an improved social environment. It is thus consistent with all elements of the State's long-term environmental policies.
4. *The proposed project will not substantially affect the economic or social welfare of the community or State.* The project will benefit the social welfare of the community by enhancing important recreational resources.
5. *The proposed project does not substantially affect public health in any detrimental way.* The proposed project will benefit public health by increasing access to healthful recreational activities and improving sanitation.
6. *The proposed project will not involve substantial secondary impacts, such as population changes or effects on public facilities.* No secondary effects are expected to result from the proposed action, which would simply improve recreational facilities in an existing park and would not induce in-migration or affect public facilities.
7. *The proposed project will not involve a substantial degradation of environmental quality.* The project is minor and environmentally benign, and would thus not contribute to environmental degradation.

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8. *The proposed project will not substantially affect any rare, threatened or endangered species of flora or fauna or habitat.* The project site supports mainly non-native vegetation. Some endangered waterbirds and other rare fauna are present in the park, but the improvements will not produce impacts to rare, threatened or endangered species of flora or fauna, given standard mitigation.
9. *The proposed project is not one which is individually limited but cumulatively may have considerable effect upon the environment or involves a commitment for larger actions.* The project is not related to other activities in the region in such a way as to produce adverse cumulative effects or involve a commitment for larger actions.
10. *The proposed project will not detrimentally affect air or water quality or ambient noise levels.* No adverse effects on these resources would occur. Mitigation of construction-phase impacts will preserve water quality. Ambient noise impacts due to construction will be temporary and restricted to reasonable daytime hours.
11. *The project does not affect nor would it likely to be damaged as a result of being located in environmentally sensitive area such as a flood plain, tsunami zone, erosion-prone area, geologically hazardous land, estuary, fresh water, or coastal area.* Although the project is located in an area with tsunami, volcanic and seismic risk, the entire coastal area of the Island of Hawai'i shares this risk, and the project is not imprudent to construct, and employs design and construction standards appropriate to the flood and seismic zones.
12. *The project will not substantially affect scenic vistas and viewplanes identified in county or state plans or studies.* No scenic vistas and viewplanes identified in the Hawai'i County General Plan will be adversely affected by the project.
13. *The project will not require substantial energy consumption.* Construction and maintenance of the improvements would require minimal consumption of energy. No adverse effects would be expected.

For the reasons above, it is anticipated that the proposed project will not have any significant effect in the context of Chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes and Section 11-200-12 of the State Administrative Rules.

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North Kona, Hawaii


June 8, 2016

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Land and Natural Resources:


1. Accept the Final Environmental Assessment for the improvements at the Kekaha Kai State Park in North Kona, Hawaii.
2. Approve the issuance of a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the proposed project. Based on the review of the Final Environmental Assessment and the comments received during the 30-day period in addition to Geometrician Associates LLC responses, find that the project will not have a significant effect on the environmental and cultural resources of the area.
3. Authorize the Chairperson to publish a FONSI for the proposed project in the Office of Environmental Quality Control's The Environmental Notice. Such other terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the Chairperson to best serve the interests of the State.

Respectfully Submitted,



CARTY S. CHANG,  
Chief Engineer

Approved for Submittal:



SUZANNE D. CASE  
Chairperson

Attachment