

Planning Department

25 Aupuni Street, Room 109 • Hilo, Hawaii 96720 • (808) 961-8288

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Mayor

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RECEIVED

December 30, 1991

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OFC. OF ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY CONTROL

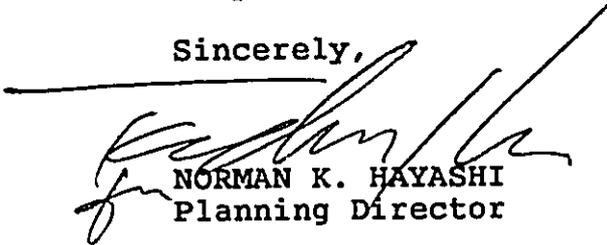
Office of Environmental Quality Control
220 South King Street, 4th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

Gentlemen:

Notice of Determination and Environmental Assessment
Applicant: Papillon Hawaiian Helicopters
TMK: 5-2-1:Por. of 6

Enclosed please find four copies of an Environmental
Assessment-Negative Declaration for a proposed helistop at Akoakoa
Point, North Kohala, Hawaii for publication in the OEQC Bulletin.

Sincerely,


NORMAN K. HAYASHI
Planning Director

ASL:smo
4141D
Enclosures

cc: Papillon Hawaiian Helicopters

244

1992-~~01-23~~
01-23-HI-FEA-Papillon Hawaiian Helicopters ^{landing} ~~had~~ site

FILE COPY

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Applicant: Papillon Hawaiian Helicopters
P. O. Box 55
Kamuela, HI 96743

Approving Agency: Hawaii County Planning Commission
through the Planning Department
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo, HI 96720

Consulting Agencies:

County: Department of Public Works
Department of Water Supply
Civil Defense Agency
Police Department
Fire Department
Real Property Tax Office

State: Department of Land and Natural Resources
Department of Health
Department of Education
Department of Agriculture
Department of Transportation-Airports Division

Federal: Federal Aviation Administration
Soil Conservation Service

Other: Kohala Community Association

Class of Action: Establishment of a helicopter facility

PROPOSED ACTION

The applicant, Papillon Hawaiian Helicopters, proposes to establish a helicopter landing site on 2,500 square feet of land. The site is located at Akoakoa Point, Makapala-Makanikahio 1st, North Kohala, Hawaii, TMK: 5-2-01:06. The property is owned by Kamehameha Schools/Bernice P. Bishop Estates, who has consented to the submittal of this request.

Soc-1a1
The site would be used a maximum of two times per week for a one-hour picnic stop for helicopter tours originating from the Waikoloa heliport. The applicant has stated that the stop would be in conjunction with special tours as requested by clients. The stop would not be associated with a particular flight path. Any tour involving a flight time of more than one and a half hours will require a stop at an approved heliport for refueling.

tech.
The landing site would be established on land which is now used only for cattle grazing. The site would be used "as is". No construction or land clearing activities would take place on the property.

STATE AND COUNTY LAND USE POLICIES

The property is situated within the State Land Use Agricultural District. The applicant is requesting a Special Permit to allow the proposed use. The General Plan Land Use Pattern Allocation Guide (LUPAG) Map designates the area for intensive agriculture use. The property is situated within the County Agriculture - 20 acre (A-20a) zoned district.

The site is within the Special Management Area (SMA). After this Environmental Assessment has been filed, a determination will be made whether the project may be issued an SMA Minor Use Permit or whether it will be processed as a Major Permit.

The area is designated on the Land Use Concept Map of the North Kohala Community Development Plan as an "Open" area. Akoakoa Point is identified in the North Kohala CDP as a "Site of Natural Beauty".

The Hawaii County Planning Commission, on January 16, 1985, granted a Special Permit (SP 570) to Kona Helicopters, Inc., the predecessor to the applicant, to establish a helipad and rest stop on the subject property for a period of one year. The Planning Commission subsequently granted three time extensions to extend the permit to April 5, 1991. The current request to continue the use was not received until after the permit had expired. Therefore, a new application for Special Permit was submitted.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The site is a portion of a 44-acre parcel of land. The site is on a cliff approximately 120 feet above sea level. The proposed landing site is approximately 500 feet from the edge of the sea cliff.

The property was previously used for sugar cultivation. There are no rare or endangered species of plant or animal associated with the subject or surrounding area. There are no known historic sites in the vicinity of the proposed landing site.

The Soil Survey Report, published by the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service, classifies the land as Kohala silty clay (Kha). The Kohala series consists of well-drained silty clays that formed in material from basic igneous rock influenced by volcanic ash. Permeability is moderately rapid, runoff is slow, and the erosion hazard is slight. This soil is used for sugarcane. The Land Study Bureau's Overall Master Productivity Rating System classifies the soils as "B" or "Good". The land is classified as "Prime Agricultural Land" according to the State Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Lands of Importance to the State of Hawaii (ALISH) Map.

According to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the project site is determined to be in Zone "X" (outside the 500-year flood plain).

Surrounding lands are zoned A-20a. Surrounding lands are used for cattle grazing. The nearest residence is located approximately 2,500 feet to the south of the proposed landing site. The site is

situated approximately 100 feet to the east and the west of the State Land Use Conservation District boundary, which lies along the shoreline in a band approximately 150 feet deep.

The site is approximately 1.2 miles north of the Hawi-Niulii Road. Access is available via a gravel road. However, no vehicular access is proposed under this request.

Neither water nor sanitary facilities are available at the site. No other services are available or proposed for the site.

AGENCIES' COMMENTS

The Department of Land and Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division has stated that, since the parcel has been in sugar cultivation and no land alteration is planned, the proposed use is expected to have "no effect" on historic sites. The Office of Conservation and Environmental Affairs has stated that helicopter landing within the State Land Use Conservation District is prohibited.

The Department of Health recommended that sanitary facilities be provided.

No other consulted agencies had any comments or objections to the request.

OTHER COMMENTS

The Kohala Community Association requested that the Special Permit application to allow the landing site be denied. Following are excerpts from their comments:

"We ask that you deny this and other applications until such time as the County of Hawaii is able to develop a balanced policy with regard to tour helicopter operations. That policy should reflect the need for environmental protection as well as economic opportunity for helicopter operators. Our state and federal governments have been unable to effectively regulate this industry as evidenced by the current situation on the north coast of Kauai.

"We believe an environmental impact statement should be required of the applicant. Proposed landings and takeoffs will have significant impact as will the flights themselves over our natural wildlife areas."

A letter, dated March 30, 1990, from the State Parks Administrator, Ralston Nagata, to Mr. Ken Boche of Kapaau, Hawaii was submitted by the President of the Kohala Community Association. Mr. Nagata discussed the proposed establishment of a major state park for the Akoakoa Point-Pololu area based on the exceptional heritage and wildland recreation values of the Kohala Cliff and Valley. It was stated that Akoakoa Point would be the developed section of the proposed park. At the time a land appraisal was being conducted in anticipation of possible acquisition.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND MITIGATING MEASURES

The proposed landing site is not expected to have significant environmental impact on the resources of the area. The site is not an identified habitat for any rare or endangered species of plant or animal. The project site is not known to contain historic sites. Since no land alteration is proposed at the site, the Historic Preservation Division has stated that the proposed use will have "no effect" on historic sites. The possible future use of the site as state park land will not be affected by the proposed helicopter use, provided a time limit to the special permit is imposed.

The use of the landing site for the limited time periods proposed will not affect beneficial uses of the environment. The use will not affect access to or use of the shoreline. Existing pasture use will not be affected. The site is approximately 1/2 mile from the nearest residence.

The site is over one mile from the Hawi-Niulii Road and not visible from the road. Occasional helicopter landings will not impact viewplanes from the road or along the road.

Degradation of environmental quality and public health due to lack of toilet facilities is unlikely since the flight time will not

exceed one and a half hours without a stop at a heliport with sanitary facilities.

The site is not within an environmentally sensitive area such as a flood plain, tsunami zone, geologically hazardous land, or fresh or coastal waters.

IMPACTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED

Ambient noise levels in the immediate vicinity of the site will be negatively affected. The increased noise levels of landing and take-off will affect lands within the State Land Use Conservation District and the Special Management Area. Elevated noise levels could negatively impact pasture use at the site during use. However, given the frequency of use proposed, such impact is not determined to constitute a significant environmental impact.

DETERMINATION

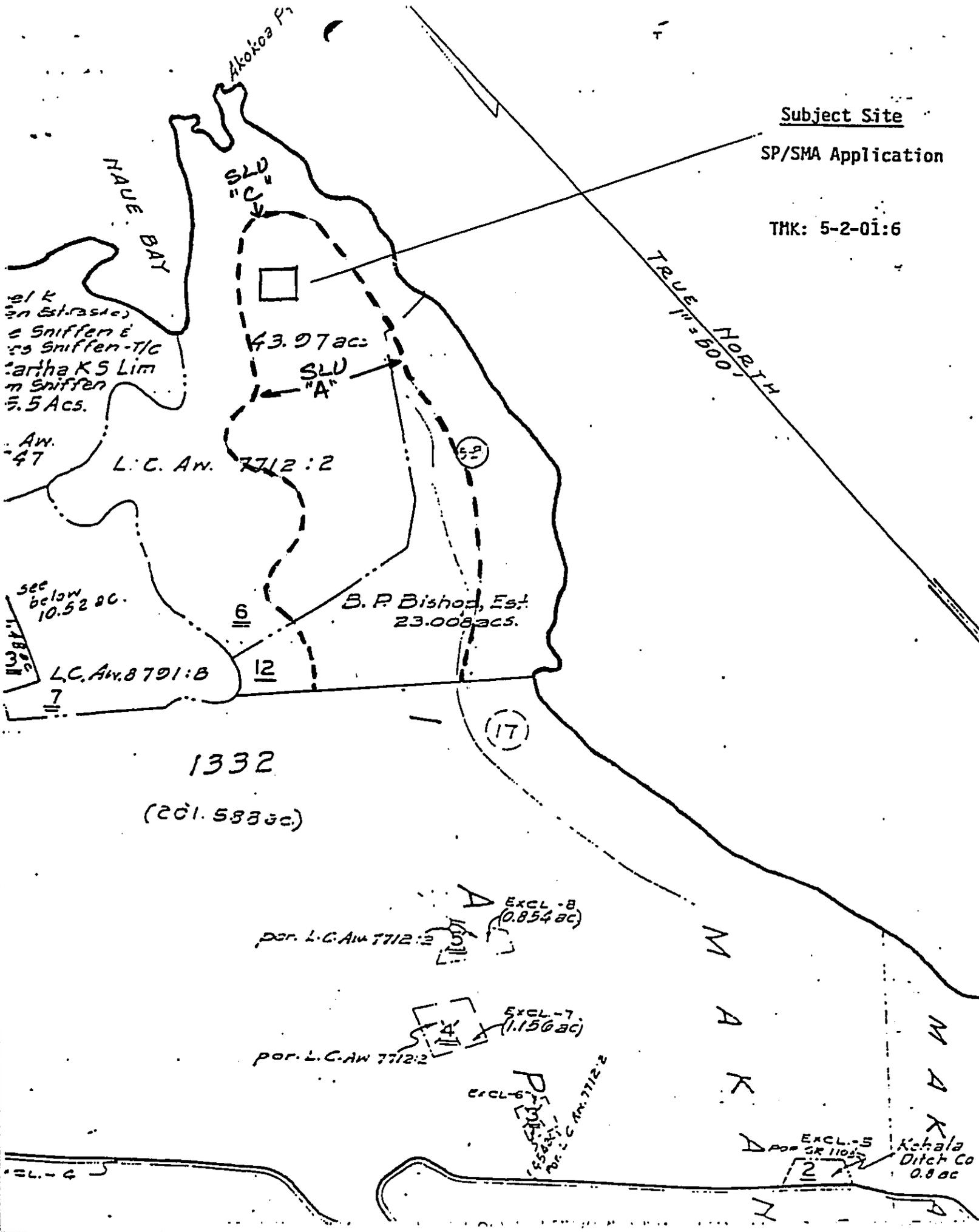
Based on the above, it is determined that the proposed helicopter landing site will not have significant impact upon the environment. Therefore, a notice of negative declaration is now being filed with the environmental assessment.

Subject Site

SP/SMA Application

THK: 5-2-01:6

TRUE NORTH
111° 50'



see below
10.52 ac.

5.5 Acs.
Sniffen &
Sniffen-T/C
K S Lim
Sniffen

Av.
47

L.C. Av. 7712:2

see below
10.52 ac.

L.C. Av. 8791:8

B. P. Bishop, Est.
23.008 acs.

1332

(201.588 ac)

EXCL-B
(0.854 ac)

por. L.C. Av 7712:2

EXCL-7
(1.156 ac)

por. L.C. Av 7712:2

EXCL-6
(1.156 ac)
por. L.C. Av 7712:2

EXCL-5
(0.8 ac)

Kahala
Ditch Co
0.8 ac