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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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FEB 28 1992

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OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
QUALITY CONTROL

DOFAW

Mr. Brian Choy, Director  
Office of Environmental Quality Control  
465 South King Street, Room 104  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Mr. Choy:

Enclosed is a Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife's agency action determination of Negative Declaration for the construction of a work cabin and Nene propagation pens at Honomalino, Hawaii. The site is currently zoned "Agriculture".

We are submitting this declaration for action as required in Environmental Quality Commission - Environmental Impact Statement Regulations.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM W. PATY

Enclosure

cc: Hawaii District

1992-03-23-HI-PEA Honomalino Work Cabin & Nene Pens  
MAR 23 1992

DETERMINATION NOTICE OF NEGATIVE DECLARATION  
FOR  
WORK CABIN AND NENE PROPAGATION PENS  
AT  
HONOMALINO, SOUTH KONA FOREST RESERVE  
TMK: 8-9-01: 02

- I. PROPOSING AGENCY: DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
- II. APPROVING AGENCY: DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
- III. AGENCIES CONSULTED: DLNR, DIVISION OF LAND MANAGEMENT, USFWS, IPIF, DOCARE, TNC
- IV. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION:

The Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) has plans to construct a work cabin and Nene propagation pens on the Honomalino parcel, Tax Map Key 8-9-01:02, Island of Hawaii. This proposed development site is located 33 miles south of Kailua, Kona. The area is zoned "Agriculture", but the zoning is expected to be changed to "Conservation" within one or two years.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
FOR  
WORK CABIN AND NENE PROPAGATION PENS  
AT  
HONOMALINO, SOUTH KONA FOREST RESERVE

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT FOR HONOMALINO FOREST

I. SCOPE:

This environmental assessment will address only the area that will be directly involved in the construction of a work cabin and Nene propagation pens for which funding have been received. Reference to the conceptual management plan for the newly acquired Honomalino parcel will be mentioned to establish a need for the proposed projects.

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

1. History of the Honomalino Forest Parcel

On February 23, 1990, the Board of Land and Natural Resources approved the addition of four (4) parcels of unencumbered State lands to the South Kona Forest Reserve. The Honomalino parcel contained 2,701 acres and was the largest of the four (4) parcels. State and County of Hawaii's regional plans for West Hawaii recognize the need

for more forested lands, especially native forest, to increase the forested watershed area, for more areas for forest recreation and wildlife, and for more accesses to forest reserve lands that have no access. This parcel of land was first leased by the State for cattle grazing in 1950 and continued until 1974.

2. Project's Environment:

The area selected for the work cabin and the Nene propagation pens is a 30-acre grass area at 3,400 feet elevation. Long ago, sometime in the early 1960s, a large dozer was used to clear the area of all existing vegetation, and the area was planted with kikuyu and pangola grasses. Fortunately, this type of intensive pasture improvement was limited to about 200 acres. The 30-acre grass area is surrounded by "a'a" lava flows on the south and north, a dense native forest exist along the west, and private property adjoins on the east.

3. Work Cabin Project:

This project will entail the use of a D-7 dozer to remove kikuyu and pangola grasses, level an area to accommodate the construction of the work cabin and a 5000-gal. water tank, and grade a 30-foot access road to the cabin from an existing gravel road. The cabin will be of post-and-pier construction having 864 square feet of floor space.

4. Nene Propagation Project:

The Nene propagation pens will be an open-top construction complex to accommodate 4 breeding pairs of Nene. The project will entail the construction of a woven wire fence around a 3-acre site to exclude pigs, dogs, cattle, and other large animals. Additional fencing with small mesh woven wire within the 3-acre enclosure will be constructed to build 4 open-top Nene breeding pens containing approximately 1,200 square feet per pen.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT FROM PROPOSED PROJECTS:

1. Biota

There will be little, if any, adverse impact to the native biota. The vegetation that will be displaced are exotic grasses that were planted for

pasture improvement in the 1960s. The native biota will be protected and preserved to enhance the Nene propagation complex. The remaining grass area will be reforested with native plant species with emphasis placed on plants that will provide food for the native forest birds, but this future project will be addressed at a later date.

2. Unavoidable Adverse Effects

The proposed projects will require management personnel to increase access to the area. The Nene could be an agent that will introduce exotic plant species to the Nene propagation pens and adjoining areas. The Nene propagation complex will attract rodents and other wildlife predators. DOFAW will initiate a rodent and wildlife predator control program at the project site. The area will be developed to achieve forest and wildlife management goals to establish and improve wildlife habitat and to establish and increase the Nene population in the wild.

3. Long Range Effects

Long range effects may include an expansion of the endangered wildlife species propagation complex at Honomalino. Vandalism of State property will be increased because of the remoteness of the area.

The work cabin will be the investment that will attract other projects to the Honomalino forest and other State lands that are in close proximity to the cabin because the cabin will be utilized for logistical support purposes.

4. Relationship of Projects to Management's Goals

DOFAW has a responsibility to increase the native forest area in West Hawaii, engage in endangered species protection and propagation, provide forest recreation, and improve and protect forest watersheds. The two proposed projects are consistent with the DOFAW's programs and goals.

III. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECTS:

A. Alternative Sites

There are other sites where such a management proposal would be feasible, but they are less desirable. This site was chosen because the two projects, when completed, will have established the foundation to accomplish several of DOFAW's goals for West Hawaii.

B. No Action

A "no action" plan cannot be accepted. DOFAW has the responsibility, by State law, to manage and protect natural resources in forest reservations.

IV. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES:

Labor, vehicle and equipment, some construction materials and capital will be irretrievable commitments to these projects. The development of the area is not irreversible since the cabin and fencing materials can be removed, and the area can be replanted with pasture grasses. If these two projects are not completed this year, the funding for these two projects will be lost and will be irretrievable. X

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF PROJECT'S IMPACT:

A. Management of Native Endangered Species

The Nene propagation program will have been increased on the Big Island. The remoteness of the area will be beneficial and desirable for the Nene. It is expected that the Nene will introduce exotic plant species to the Nene propagation pen complex because of their feeding habits. Management will have to monitor and address the control of the exotic plant species. The lower portion of the Honomalino forest parcel is infested with exotic plant species such as Christmas berry and lemon guava.

B. Increase Forest and Wildlife Projects for Honomalino

The work cabin will attract other forest and wildlife projects to the Honomalino forest because the cabin will be utilized for logistical support. The remoteness of Honomalino forest, from Hilo, makes it difficult and expensive for management to complete many of the needed projects that will benefit the natural resources in the area.

C. Litter

An increase in litter is expected at the development site. Management will address this problem as part of the development cost for the area.

VI. REASON FOR FILING A NON-IMPACT STATEMENT:

The construction of a work cabin and a Nene propagation complex that is not expected to have a significant impact on the native biota does not need to be addressed with a formal environmental impact statement. The proposed projects will replace about 1,800 square feet of kikuyu and pangola grasses. The two projects will not replace or destroy native forest resources but will benefit those resources.