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RG:0031

Office of the Director

December 20, 1976

MEMORANDUM

TO: Randal Jackson
Recreation Resource Planner, DLNR

FROM: Doak C. Cox *Doak C. Cox*

RE: Review of Recreation Resource System Plan, Oahu, and Outline of
Statewide Trail and Access System

The Environmental Center review of the above cited plans has been prepared with the assistance of Alvin Saake (Health and Physical Education), Ruth Gay (Botany), Heinz Spielmann (Agricultural and Resource Economics), Allan Sommarstrom (Geography), and Dan Burhans and Mae Kato Pattison (Environmental Center). The following comments are submitted for your consideration.

RECREATION RESOURCE SYSTEM PLAN, OAHU

Page 2, Part II. In the reviewing process an attempt should be made to include a wide range of community input. Groups and organizations such as the Hawaii Recreation Association, National Park Service, Chamber of Commerce, Hawaii Visitors Bureau, Trail and Mountain Club, Sierra Club and Outdoor Circle should be consulted. More importantly an attempt should be made to include the general public in the review process through the news media and public informational meetings so as to provide individual residents as well as organized groups the opportunity to contribute input to the proposed plans. The Department of Education might also be consulted especially in regard to the use of the facilities for school camping.

Page 3, Part III. Background information associated with the specific acquisition, development, management and usage problems should be provided for each of the proposed recreation areas. Such information is necessary to provide a basis for rational selection of certain proposed sites over others.

For example, some of the beaches suggested, i.e., Ft. DeRussy, would require considerable access structures to be useable in the future. We refer particularly to the development of parking and beach facilities to serve an increasing population. However, at Ft. De Russy Beach where conditions are particularly crowded such parking facilities may not be feasible.

Also, included in the list of potential recreation areas are beach areas now owned by the military and not open to the public, i.e., Ulupau (No. 16). This is a potential recreation area only insofar as the military is willing to relinquish it to the public. The likelihood of such a transaction occurring may preclude it from being even a potential recreation area.

Page 3, Section A. This section should include a statement of intent to preserve and protect the natural state and environment of the proposed recreation areas, especially those ecosystems which are unique to Hawaii. Nos. 14, 18, 19, and 23 in particular are areas which could experience serious environmental effects if appropriate conservation measures are not taken. We recommend that prime consideration be given to the achievement of an ecological balance between recreational development and preservation in the proposed areas.

Page 12, Section C. We consider the establishment of a system of priorities as an excellent proposal. However, the criteria used to establish the priority system should be included.

Page 19, No. 2. What is the purpose and intent of the option that access is all that is required for use of streams and rivers? It is unclear whether this option precludes the environmental assessment of the development of the proposed streams and rivers as recreational areas. We are concerned about the potential impacts on endemic species found in the streams and rivers. We recommend that an assessment be made of the streams and rivers which support natural species so as to determine the possibility of their becoming "endangered" as a result of extensive recreational use of the areas.

Page 19, Section E. It is not clear what lands are being referred to in the proposed hunting area which is to include all of "Oahu Forest Reserve". There are several forest reserves on Oahu and it is our understanding that all public lands in these reserves are already open to hunting, excluding parks and closed water reserves. It would seem that the stated objective of increasing hunting opportunity might be met by opening to hunting the parks, closed water reserves, and private lands in the forest reserves. It should be stated clearly how the explicit objective of the proposed policy change is to be met.

Other objectives which might be served by the proposal should also be considered including the extension of Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) hunting regulations to private lands, and the control of pig populations. Extension of DLNR regulations to private lands would impose controls on hunting where none may now exist. Pig populations should be ascertained to determine whether increased control measures are indicated. The extent of pig damage outside the present hunting area, if any, and the areas where the problem is found to exist should be identified in order to determine where the extension of hunting pressures would be most useful.

The impacts of expanding the existing hunting area must also be considered in light of the already high, and projected higher population density on Oahu and the use of forest areas by hikers and campers. The conflict between providing recreation areas for hikers, campers and nature lovers on the one hand and hunters on the other could be a serious one. The peace, quiet and natural environment sought by the former group of users would be substantially spoiled by the hunting activity of the latter group. Another consideration would be the safety and protection of forest users and the prevention of death and injury resulting from hunting accidents. A plan should be carefully developed which would consider the safety, motives and desires of all potential forest reserve users and which would achieve a balance and compatibility among the various proposed uses of the areas.

Page 21, Part IV. Although each of the Divisions has defined their responsibilities, it is not clear where Forestry responsibility ends and Fish and Game begins and similarly for State Parks.

Page 21, Section A, No. 2. Maintenance plans for the trails should be discussed in more detail. In particular how will trails on privately owned lands be maintained? If maintenance of recreation areas by the Forestry division is restricted to State-owned lands, alternative possibilities for the provision of maintenance to recreation areas on privately-owned lands should be discussed such as State acquisition of such lands.

Page 26, Section C. The recreational activities of back-country motorcycling and hang gliding are not included. Do these activities come under the jurisdiction of the plan?

Page 27, Chart. Under Features and Recreational Activities, rewording of references to "plant collection" to "plant observation" would be less ambiguous.

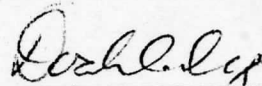
STATEWIDE TRAIL AND ACCESS SYSTEM

Page 5. Who would be responsible for the process of having the proposals environmentally assessed? Since such an assessment should be done in the early planning stages, that responsibility should be assigned here.

Page 5, 6. The staff of the State Trail Authority and the Island Trail Councils should include someone with expertise in outdoor recreation.

Page 6. Who elects the group representatives to sit on the Steering Committee?

Thank you for the opportunity to review these plans. We will appreciate your consideration of our comments.



Doak C. Cox, Director