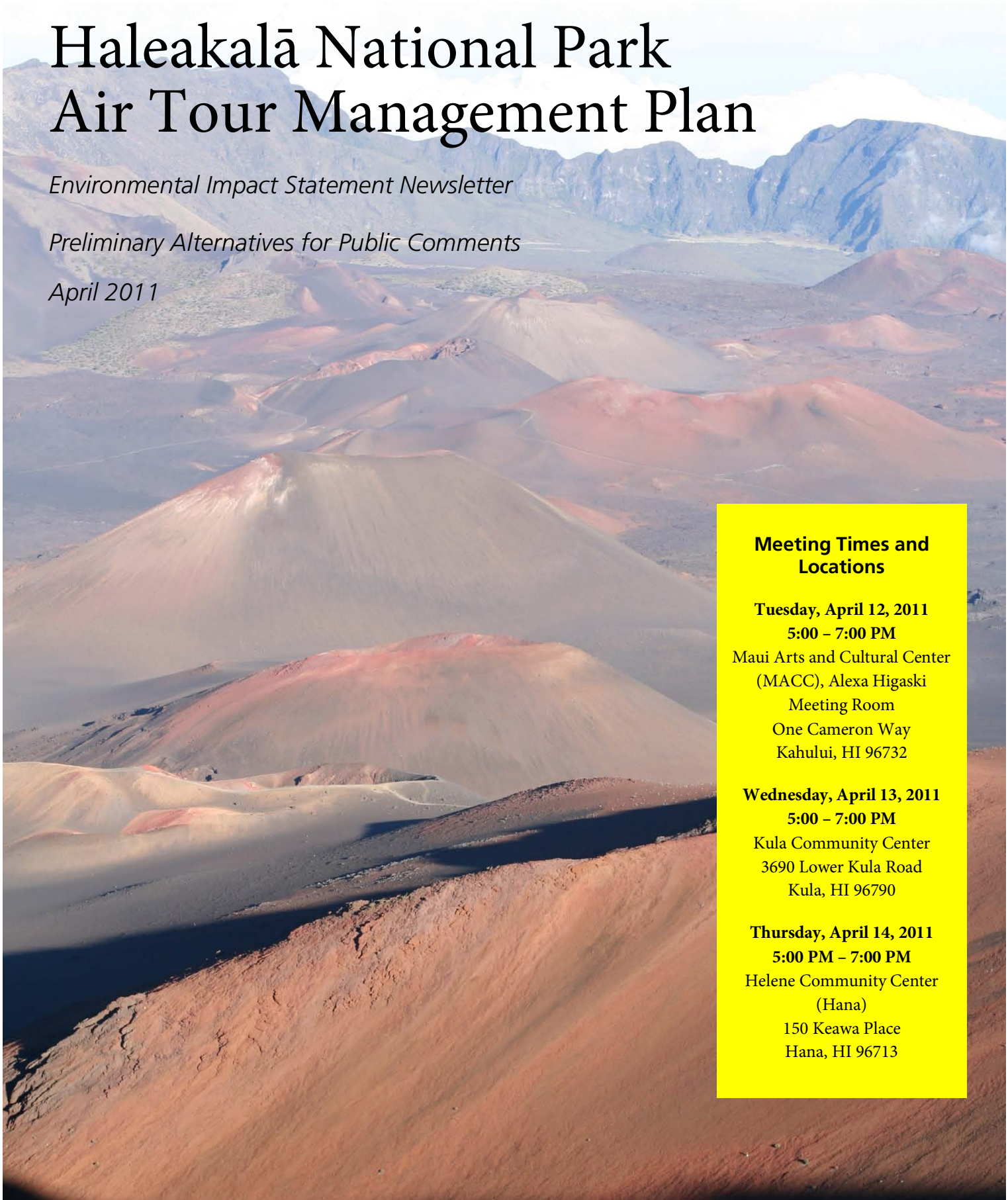
National Park Service
Federal Aviation Administration

Haleakalā National Park Air Tour Management Plan

Environmental Impact Statement Newsletter

Preliminary Alternatives for Public Comments

April 2011



Meeting Times and Locations

Tuesday, April 12, 2011
5:00 – 7:00 PM
Maui Arts and Cultural Center (MACC), Alexa Higaski Meeting Room
One Cameron Way
Kahului, HI 96732

Wednesday, April 13, 2011
5:00 – 7:00 PM
Kula Community Center
3690 Lower Kula Road
Kula, HI 96790

Thursday, April 14, 2011
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Helene Community Center (Hana)
150 Keawa Place
Hana, HI 96713

Haleakalā National Park Air Tour Management Plan Update

In 2004, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and National Park Service (NPS) invited your comments on an Air Tour Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) related to managing commercial air tour overflights at Haleakalā National Park. In 2006, the project was upgraded to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Since 2007, a planning team composed of FAA, NPS and Volpe National Transportation Systems Center staff has been working on preliminary alternatives.

Why has it taken so long?

The planning process was delayed due to differences in FAA and NPS policy and analysis of how to best integrate the environmental compliance guidance of both agencies into the air tour management planning process.

Many of you commented during public meetings and in correspondence for both the EA and the EIS scoping efforts. We would like to share our progress on this project over the past several years and encourage your renewed involvement. This newsletter contains a summary of the preliminary alternatives for the Haleakalā Air Tour Management Plan (ATMP) for your review and comment. This newsletter also includes a description of expected tasks during the coming months, including additional opportunities for you to provide input. Thank you for your continued interest and involvement.

The purpose of this document is to present preliminary alternatives for the Haleakalā National Park ATMP EIS for public and stakeholder input. It is important to emphasize that final decisions have not been made on any of the alternatives and elements of the alternatives, and no detailed analysis of environmental impacts has been performed yet. After public and stakeholder input are received, the alternatives and elements of the alternatives may be refined, dismissed from further consideration, or new alternatives may be considered. Alternatives carried forward will be analyzed in the Draft EIS. As required by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Draft EIS will be circulated for public comment.

Under NEPA, alternatives must meet the purpose (i.e., objective) and need for the action. Under the National Parks Air Tour Management Act (NPATMA), an ATMP needs to be established "for any national park or tribal land for which such a plan is not in effect whenever a person applies for authority to a conduct commercial air tour operation over the park." The objective of an ATMP as defined by NPATMA "shall be to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial air tour operations upon the natural and cultural resources, visitor experiences, and tribal lands." Commercial air tour operations are defined as any flight conducted for compensation or hire in a powered aircraft, where a purpose of the flight is sightseeing over a national park, within a ½-mile outside the boundary of any national park, or over tribal lands during which the aircraft flies below 5,000 feet above ground level (AGL).

An ATMP will incorporate the following:

- **Reporting requirements** - There will be a requirement for commercial air tour operators to provide regular reporting of air tour flights approved under the ATMP.

- **FAA airspace authority** - The FAA has authority for all airspace matters, including any enforcement actions for violations under the ATMP, which will be processed in accordance with existing FAA procedures and regulations.

- **Competitive bidding** - NPATMA states whenever an ATMP limits the number of commercial air tour operations during a specified time frame, a competitive bidding process is triggered. Since the number of flights would be limited for Alternatives 3, 4, 5, and 6 (see below), competitive bidding would be required.

- **Minimum altitudes** - It is unlawful to operate any aircraft within 1,000 feet AGL of any humpback whale in the vicinity of the HawaiianIslands. All altitudes below 1,500 feet AGL for fixed wing aircraft must be 500 feet above the altitudes listed for helicopters.

- **In-flight deviations** - In-flight deviations from routes and corridors may occur when necessary due to weather or other safety issues.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:
Please comment on any alternative and/or alternative element described below. Comments that describe why something will or will not work, or provide new ideas or factual information to correct or adjust assumptions made, as opposed to just expressing like or dislike, are particularly helpful.

Alternative 1: No Action, Interim Operating Authority (IOA)

Objective: Required by the CEQ and NEPA regulations.

Description: The No Action Alternative is a continuation of what is currently flown and allowed under existing law including, but not limited to, each company's IOA as granted by the FAA (Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 194, October 7, 2005, page 58778), applicable regulations that govern air safety found at Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 136, Appendix A (formerly Special Federal Aviation Regulation 71), and any FAA deviations issued to individual operators as outlined by the Hawai'i Air

Tour Common Procedures Manual (HI Manual). Seven helicopter operators (Aris doing business as Air Maui Helicopter Tours, Alexair Helicopters, Blue HawaiianHelicopters, Hawaiʻi Helicopters, Makani Kai Helicopters, Rainbow Pacific Helicopters, and Sunshine Helicopters) and three fixed wing operators (Call Air doing business as Eco Air Tours, Maui Island Air doing business as Volcano Air Tours, and Paragon Airlines) have IOA to fly a total of 26,325 (25,872 helicopter and 453 fixed wing) air tours annually over Haleakalā National Park and within a ½-mile buffer below 5,000 feet AGL. The actual number of air tours annually may fluctuate dependent upon demand, but cannot exceed the IOA amount authorized. Based on acoustical monitoring data gathered in 2008, the NPS believes that 12,796 helicopter and 0 fixed wing air tours are currently flown annually by operators that have IOA over the park and within a ½-mile buffer below 5,000 feet AGL. Air tours originate at the Kahului Airport/Heliport and Kapalua Airport on Maui and the Honolulu Airport on Oahu.

There are no mandatory flight routes or no fly-zones. The actual flight path of air tours can vary due to operator preference, safety considerations, and weather conditions at the time of the tour. There are flight routes and a fly zone that helicopter operators currently follow on a voluntary basis under 1998 and 2002 letters of agreement between Haleakalā National Park and the Hawaiʻi Air Tour Association, Maui. There are also temporary, voluntary no-fly periods for cultural events which occur occasionally. The attached map for this alternative shows where commercial air tour operations are generally being or have historically been flown by operators that have IOA over the park and within a ½-mile buffer below 5,000 feet AGL.

Operators have been granted deviations to fly below 1,500 feet AGL over Haleakalā National Park and within a ½-mile buffer provided they meet certain requirements and limitations set forth by the FAA in the HI Manual. Areas where operators are allowed to fly below 1,500 feet AGL are shown on the maps in the HI Manual.

Alternative 2: No Park Air Tours

Objective: This alternative seeks the greatest protection for the purpose, resources, and values of the park including: the summit of Haleakalā (meaning rim and crater) as a Traditional Cultural Property with spiritual and cultural significance to Native Hawaiians; threatened and endangered species and other wildlife sensitive to noise; Congressionally-designated Wilderness; ground-based visitor experience; Hawaiian traditional cultural practices; scenic qualities, and natural sounds.

Description: Commercial air tour operations would not be allowed over Haleakalā National Park and within a ½-mile buffer below 5,000 feet AGL. An unlimited number of air tours originating from the Kahului Airport/Heliport and Kapalua Airport on Maui and the Honolulu Airport on Oahu, would still continue to fly outside of the park and within a ½-mile buffer below 1,500 feet AGL in accordance with the HI Manual. Aircraft will also probably fly above 5,000 feet AGL over certain areas of the park. The actual flight path of air tours would vary due to operator preference and weather conditions at the time of the tour. There would be no mandatory flight routes or no fly-zones. The attached map for this

alternative shows where commercial air tour operations would most likely fly based on current air tour activity.

Alternative 3: Southern Route

Objective: This alternative examines the impacts of limiting helicopter air tours to the south side of the park on a popular current air tour route. This route, which provides a view into Haleakalā Crater, is part of a commonly booked, hour-long air tour around East Maui.

Description: Commercial helicopter air tour operations would fly at 500 feet AGL on the existing southern route that helicopter operators currently follow on a voluntary basis under 1998 and 2002 letters of agreement between Haleakalā National Park and the Hawai'i Air Tour Association, Maui. This route includes a 1-mile wide fly zone through the Waimoku Falls area at Kīpahulu. Consistent with current conditions, no fixed wing commercial air tour operations would be allowed over the park and within the ½-mile buffer below 5,000 ft AGL. The attached map for this alternative shows where commercial helicopter air tour operations would fly.

Caps on numbers of flights allowed annually: This alternative would analyze a range of numbers of flights between 75% (9,597) and 25% (3,199) of the current condition of 12,796 air tours.

Time of day and day of week restrictions: Flights would be allowed Monday through Friday (exception for quiet technology helicopters noted below) from approximately 1 hour after sunrise to approximately 1 hour before sunset (that is, 7:00 – 18:00 from April to September and 8:00 – 17:00 from October to March). Only quiet technology flights would be allowed on Saturdays. No flights would be allowed on Sundays over the park and within the ½-mile buffer below 5,000 ft AGL.

Quiet technology incentives: NPATMA requires that the ATMP include incentives for the adoption of quiet technology by air tour operators. This alternative would lessen day of week restrictions for quiet technology helicopters by allowing them to fly on Saturdays from approximately 1 hour after sunrise to approximately 1 hour before sunset (that is, 7:00 – 18:00 from April to September and 8:00 – 17:00 from October to March). Use of quiet technology helicopters would also be one of the factors evaluated in the competitive bidding process.

Interpretive training and education: Air tour operators would need to attend a NPS provided or approved mandatory training highlighting the purpose, resources, and values of the park. NPS believes this would provide operators with accurate and current information about the park, as well as explanations as to why flights are limited to some park areas. Training would include: 1) an annual ½-day class for pilots; and 2) distribution of educational NPS guidebooks/brochures to air tour clients.

Restrictions for particular events: Mandatory temporary no-fly periods for cultural and other special events when scheduled, or with no less than two weeks notice, including:

- Ceremonies associated with Makahiki, the HawaiianNew Year, from October through March (up to 5 non-consecutive days at the summit of Haleakala and up to 5 non-consecutive days at Kīpahulu from sunrise to sunset);
- Annual bird surveys (up to 3 consecutive days in August in Haleakalā Crater from sunrise to sunset for nēnē and up to 4 consecutive weeks between March and April in Kīpahulu and other rainforest areas from sunrise until noon for forest birds); and
- Other events to be identified (typically once or twice a year).

Adaptive Management: Adaptive management is a systematic approach for achieving identified outcomes through time (see Department of Interior, Departmental Manual 516 DM 4.16). It sets desired conditions, develops monitoring criteria, and identifies thresholds for action when desired conditions are not met. This alternative would use an adaptive management strategy for adjusting the number of flights allocated annually for an air tour operator, so that overall desired conditions are not exceeded.

Alternative 4: Letters of Agreement Routes

Objective: This alternative examines the impacts of helicopter air tours based on the 1998 and 2002 letters of agreement between Haleakalā National Park and the Hawai'i Air Tour Association, Maui, and fixed wing air tours.

Description: Commercial helicopter air tour operations would fly at 500 feet AGL on the existing northern and southern routes that helicopter operators currently follow on a voluntary basis under 1998 and 2002 letters of agreement between Haleakalā National Park and the Hawai'i Air Tour Association, Maui. This includes along the southern route, a 1-mile wide fly zone through the Waimoku Falls area at Kīpahulu. Commercial fixed wing air tour operations would fly at 1,000 feet AGL on the southern route flown by fixed wing operators. The attached map for this alternative shows where commercial air tour operations would fly.

Caps on numbers of flights allowed annually: This alternative would analyze a range of numbers of helicopter flights between current condition of 12,796 air tours and 50% (6,398) of the current condition. This alternative would also analyze a range of numbers of fixed wing flights between IOA (453) and 50% of IOA (227).

Time of day and day of week restrictions: Flights would be allowed Monday through Friday (exception for quiet technology helicopters noted below) from approximately ½ hour after sunrise to approximately ½ hour before sunset (that is, 6:30 – 18:30 from April to September and 7:30 – 17:30 from October to March). Only quiet technology flights would be allowed on Saturdays and Sundays.

Quiet technology incentives: There would be no day of week restrictions for quiet technology aircraft. Quiet technology aircraft would be allowed to fly Monday through Sunday from approximately ½ hour after sunrise to approximately ½ hour before sunset (that is, 6:30 – 18:30 from April to September and

7:30 – 17:30 from October to March). Use of quiet technology aircraft would also be one of the factors evaluated in the competitive bidding process.

Interpretive training and education: Mandatory and as described in Alternative 3 above.

Restrictions for particular events: Mandatory and as described in Alternative 3 above.

Adaptive Management: As described in Alternative 3 above.

Alternative 5: Southern and Coastal Routes

Objective: This alternative examines the impacts of placing quiet technology helicopter air tours on the south side of the park on a popular current air tour route, and limiting non-quiet technology helicopters to coastal areas of the park.

Description: Commercial quiet technology helicopter air tour operations would fly at 500 feet AGL on the existing southern route that helicopter operators currently follow on a voluntary basis under 1998 and 2002 letters of agreement between Haleakalā National Park and the Hawaiʻi Air Tour Association, Maui. This route includes a 1-mile wide fly zone through the Waimoku Falls area at Kīpahulu. Commercial non-quiet technology helicopter air tour operations would fly at 500 feet AGL on the existing coastal route flown by helicopter operators based on current air tour activity. Consistent with current conditions, no fixed wing commercial air tour operations would be allowed over the park and within the ½-mile buffer below 5,000 ft AGL. The attached map for this alternative shows where commercial helicopter air tour operations would fly.

Caps on numbers of flights allowed annually: This alternative would analyze a range of numbers of flights between 125% (15,995) and 75% (9,597) of the current condition of 12,796 air tours.

Time of day and day of week restrictions: There would be no time of day restrictions other than those imposed by existing FAA regulations. There would be no day of week restrictions.

Quiet technology incentives: Quiet technology helicopters would be allowed to fly a popular current air tour route. Use of quiet technology helicopters would also be one of the factors evaluated in the competitive bidding process.

Interpretive training and education: Voluntary and as described in Alternative 3 above. While the training is voluntary, participation by air tour operators would be one of the factors evaluated in the competitive bidding process.

Restrictions for particular events: Voluntary and as described in Alternative 3 above. While the no-fly periods would be voluntary, participation by air tour operators would be one of the factors evaluated in the competitive bidding process.

Adaptive Management: None.

Alternative 6: Southern Route, Interim Operating Authority

NPS preliminary acoustic assessment indicates that noise from commercial air tours at levels currently being flown at Haleakalā National Park, which is approximately 50% less than IOA being analyzed here, may be at or approaching NPS-determined significant adverse impacts in some situations. The FAA has not performed any assessment of this alternative.

Objective: This alternative examines the impacts of limiting helicopter air tours to the south side of the park on a popular current air tour route at IOA levels.

Description: Commercial helicopter air tour operations would fly at 500 feet AGL on the existing southern route that helicopter operators currently follow on a voluntary basis under 1998 and 2002 letters of agreement between Haleakalā National Park and the Hawai'i Air Tour Association, Maui. This route includes a 1-mile wide fly zone through the Waimoku Falls area at Kīpahulu. Consistent with current conditions, no fixed wing commercial air tour operations would be allowed over the park and within the ½-mile buffer below 5,000 ft AGL. The attached map for this alternative shows where commercial helicopter air tour operations would fly.

Caps on numbers of flights allowed annually: Operations would be allowed up to 25,872, the IOA number for helicopters as granted by the FAA.

Time of day and day of week restrictions: There would be no time of day restrictions other than those imposed by existing FAA regulations. There would be no day of week restrictions.

Quiet technology incentives: NPATMA requires that the ATMP include incentives for the adoption of quiet technology by air tour operators. Use of quiet technology helicopters would also be one of the preferential weighting factors evaluated in the competitive bidding process.

Interpretive training and education: Voluntary and as described in Alternative 3 above. While the training is voluntary, participation by air tour operators would be one of the factors evaluated in the competitive bidding process.

Restrictions for particular events: Voluntary and as described in Alternative 3 above. While the no-fly periods would be voluntary, participation by air tour operators would be one of the factors evaluated in the competitive bidding process.

Adaptive Management: None.

NEXT STEPS

The planning team expects to complete the following tasks in the coming months:

- Hold open-house public meetings to solicit comments on preliminary alternatives; these meetings will be at the following times and locations:

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM	**Wednesday, April 13, 2011** 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM	**Thursday, April 14, 2011** 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Maui Arts and Cultural Center (MACC), Maui Arts & Cultural Center Alexa Higashi Meeting Room One Cameron Way Kahului, HI 96732	Kula Community Center 3690 Lower Kula Road Kula, HI 96790	Helene Community Center (Hana) 150 Keawa Place Hana, HI 96713

- Collect comments by June 6, 2011

- Revise alternatives as needed

- Complete noise impacts modeling

- Complete and distribute Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for public and agency comment

- Hold public meetings/hearings to solicit comments on the DEIS

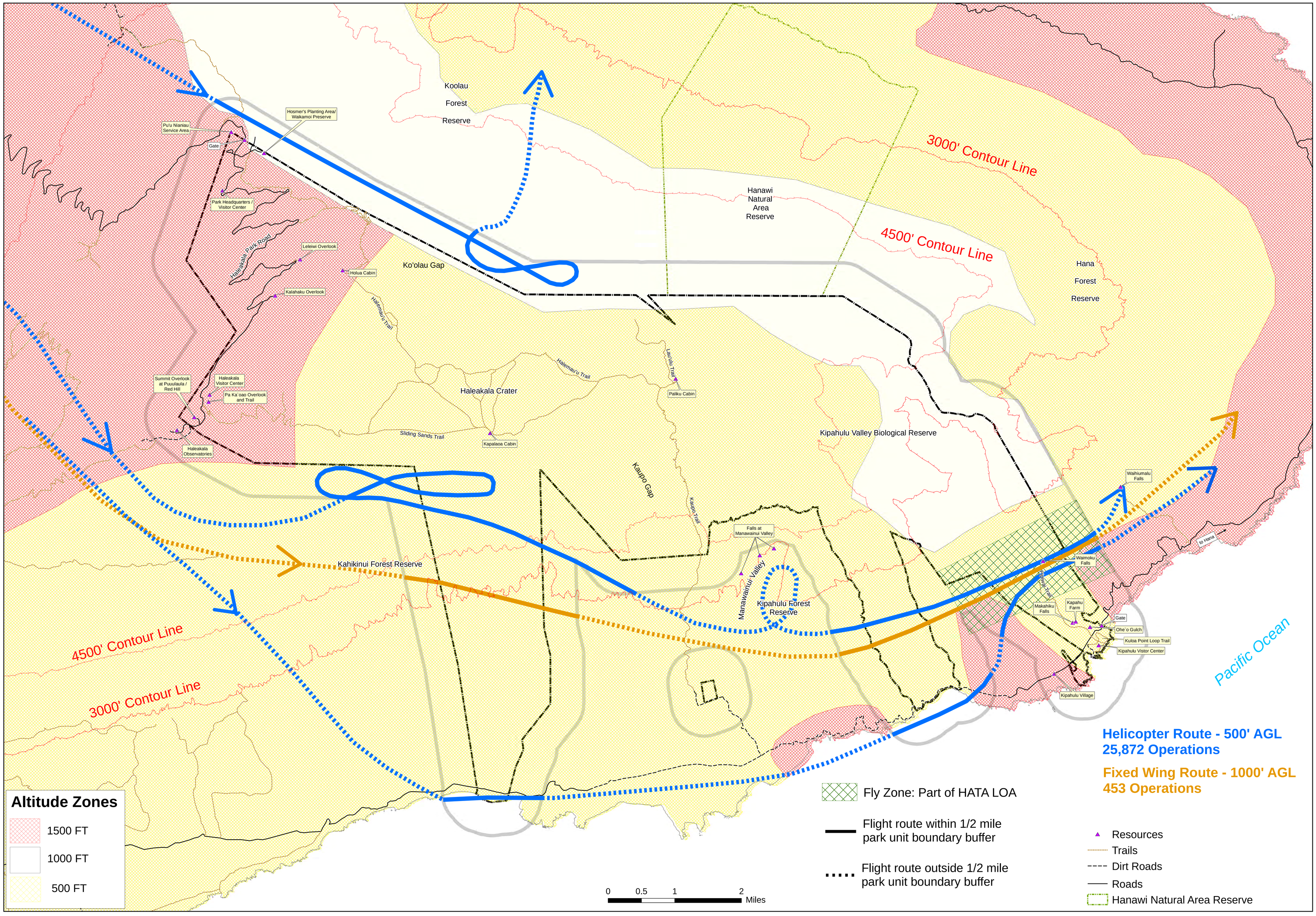
Draft Alternatives Summary Matrix

Alternative	1 – No Action	2 – No Park Air Tours	3 – Southern Route	4 – Letters of Agreement Routes	5 – Southern and Coastal Routes	6 - Southern Route IOA
General Description	What is currently flown and allowed under existing law	No air tours within ATMP planning area	Helicopter air tours on south side of park only	Makes permanent existing voluntary agreements and allows fixed wing air tours	Provides preferred route for QT helicopters	Helicopter air tours on south side of park only at IOA
Objective	Required by the Council on Environmental Quality and NEPA	Examines impacts of no air tours below 5,000' AGL within the ATMP planning area	Examines impacts of flights south of crater rim	Examines impacts of 1998 and 2002 Letters of Agreement and fixed wing flights	Examines impacts of QT flights south of crater rim and non-QT flight along coast	Differentiates between Alternative 1 and Alternative 3
Annual Number of Flights	IOA: 25,872 helicopter, 453 fixed wing Current condition within ATMP planning area: 12,796 helicopter and 0 fixed wing	Unlimited outside ATMP planning area	Helicopter Range: Between 75% (9,597) and 25% (3,199) of current condition within ATMP planning area	Helicopter Range: Between current condition (12,796) and 50% (6,398) of current of condition ATMP planning area Fixed wing range: Between IOA (453) and 50% (227) of IOA	Helicopter Range: Between 125% (15,995) and 75% (9,597) of current condition within the ATMP planning area	IOA: 25,872 helicopter
Number of Operators	IOA: 7 Helicopter, 3 Fixed wing	Unlimited	Based on competitive bidding process	Based on competitive bidding process	Based on competitive bidding process	Based on competitive bidding process
Routes	Northern helicopter route, Southern helicopter route, Coastal helicopter route, Southern fixed wing route		Southern helicopter route	Northern and Southern helicopter routes and Southern fixed wing route	Southern helicopter route and Coastal helicopter route	Southern helicopter route
Minimum Altitudes	Per FAA HI Manual	5,000' AGL within park and 1/2-mile buffer	500' AGL	500' AGL helicopters and 1000' AGL fixed wing	500' AGL	500' AGL
Time of Day	Per existing FAA regulations	Per existing FAA regulations	7:00 - 18:00 April to Sept, 8:00 - 17:00 Oct to March (approx. 1 hour after sunrise to approx. 1 hour before sunset)	6:30 - 18:30 April to Sept, 7:30 - 17:30 Oct to March (approx. 1/2 hour after sunrise to approx. 1/2 hour before sunset)	Per existing FAA regulations	Per existing FAA regulations
Day of Week	Monday-Sunday: all aircraft	Monday-Sunday: no fly within ATMP planning area	Monday-Friday: all helicopters Saturday: QT helicopters only within ATMP planning area Sunday: no fly within ATMP planning area	Monday-Friday: all aircraft Saturday-Sunday: QT aircraft only within ATMP planning area	Monday-Sunday: all helicopters	Monday - Sunday: all helicopters
Quiet Technology Incentives			Relief from day of week restrictions	Can fly all days of week	Can fly popular existing southern route	Preferential weighting factor for competitive bidding
Interpretative Training and Education			Mandatory	Mandatory	Voluntary	Voluntary
Restrictions for Particular Events	Voluntary temporary no-fly periods for cultural events		Mandatory temporary no-fly periods for cultural and other special events	Mandatory temporary no-fly periods for cultural and other special events	Voluntary temporary no-fly periods for cultural and other special events	Voluntary temporary no-fly periods for cultural and other special events
Adaptive Management			Adjustment of number of flights allocated annually, so that overall desired conditions are not exceeded	Adjustment of number of flights allocated annually, so that overall desired conditions are not exceeded		

Haleakala National Park

Alternative 1 - No-Action (IOA)

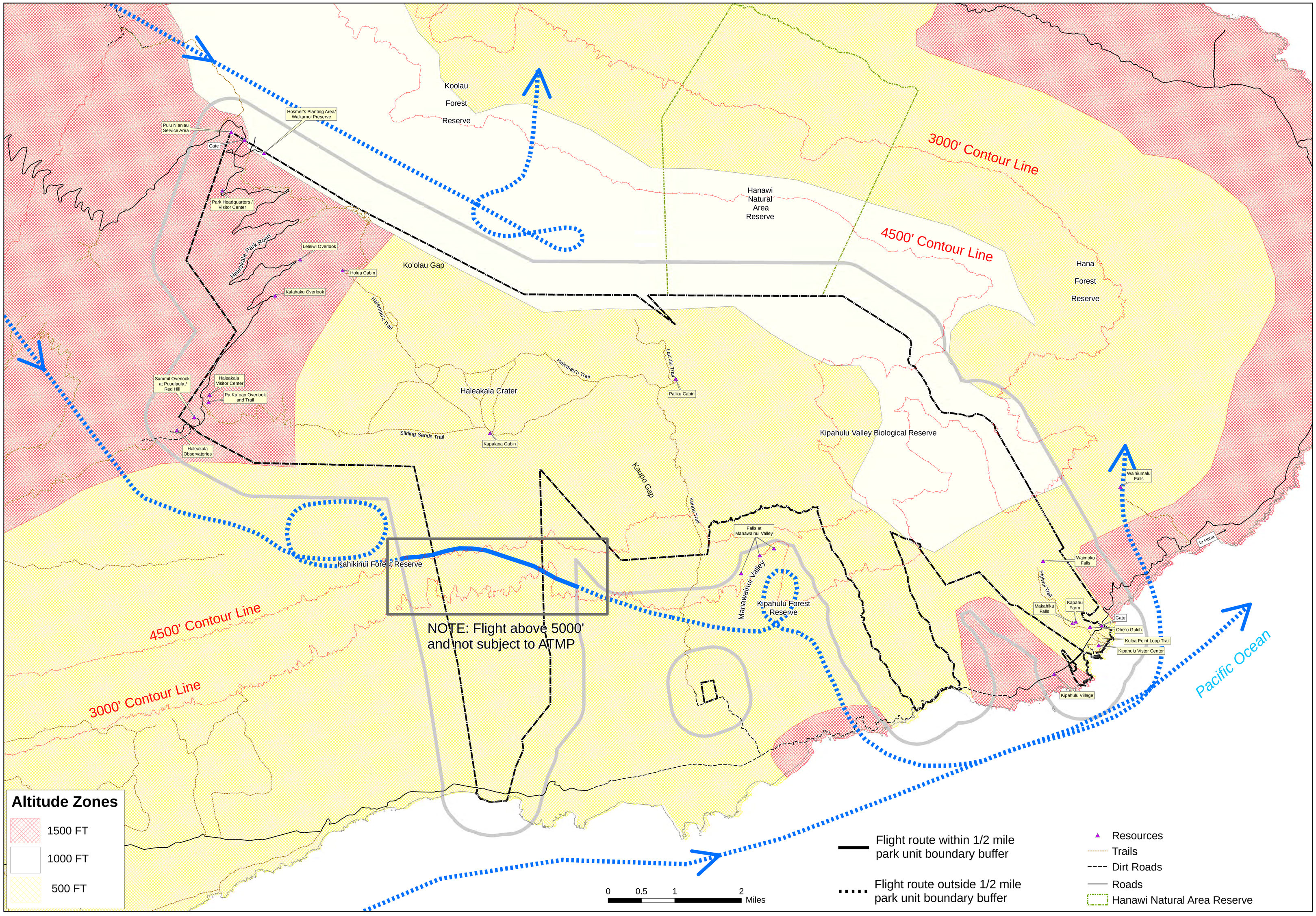
April, 2011



Haleakala National Park

Alternative 2 - No Park Air Tours

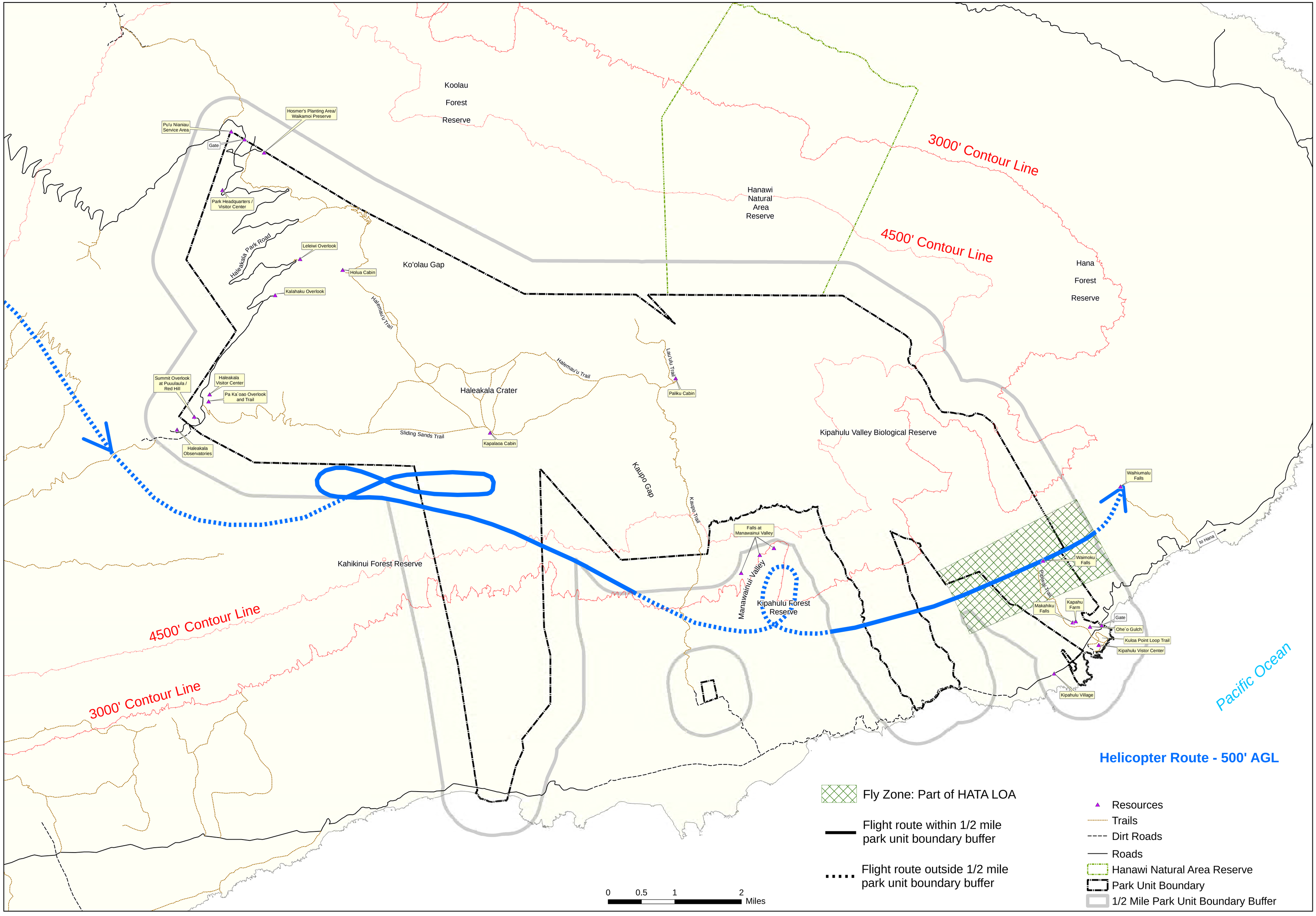
April, 2011



Haleakala National Park

Alternative 3 - Southern Route

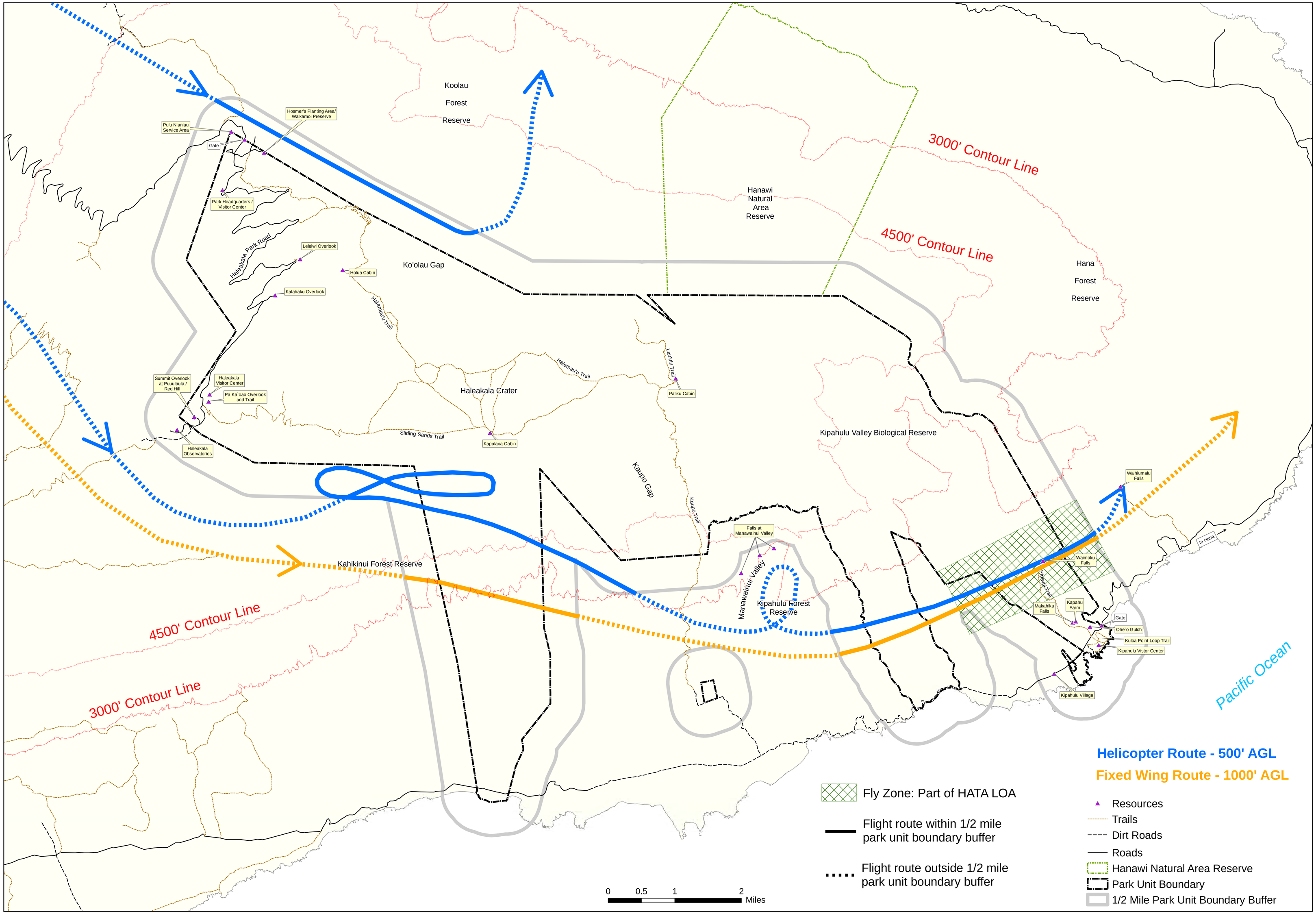
April, 2011



Haleakala National Park

Alternative 4 - Letters of Agreement Routes

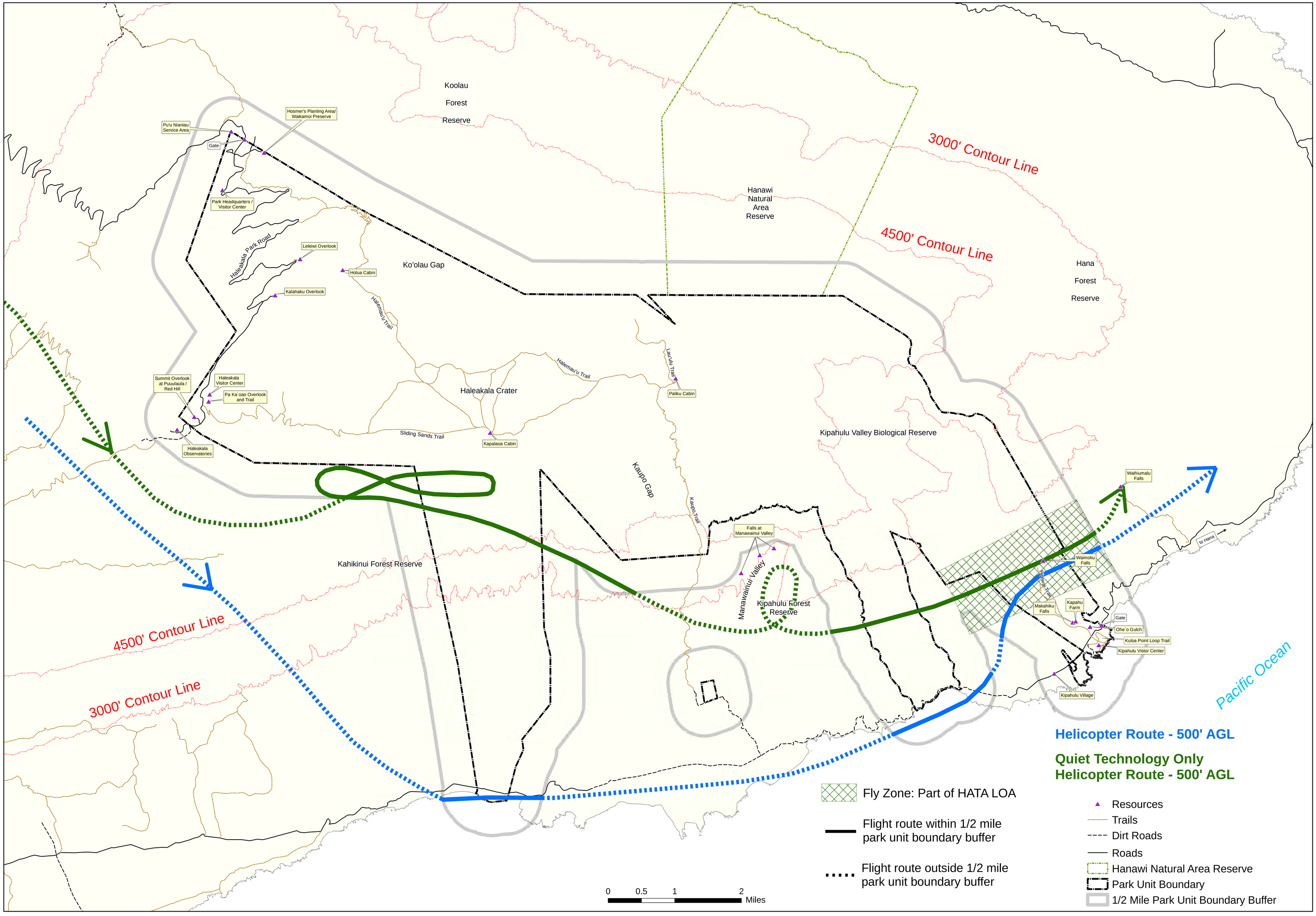
April, 2011



Haleakala National Park

Alternative 5 - Southern and Coastal Routes

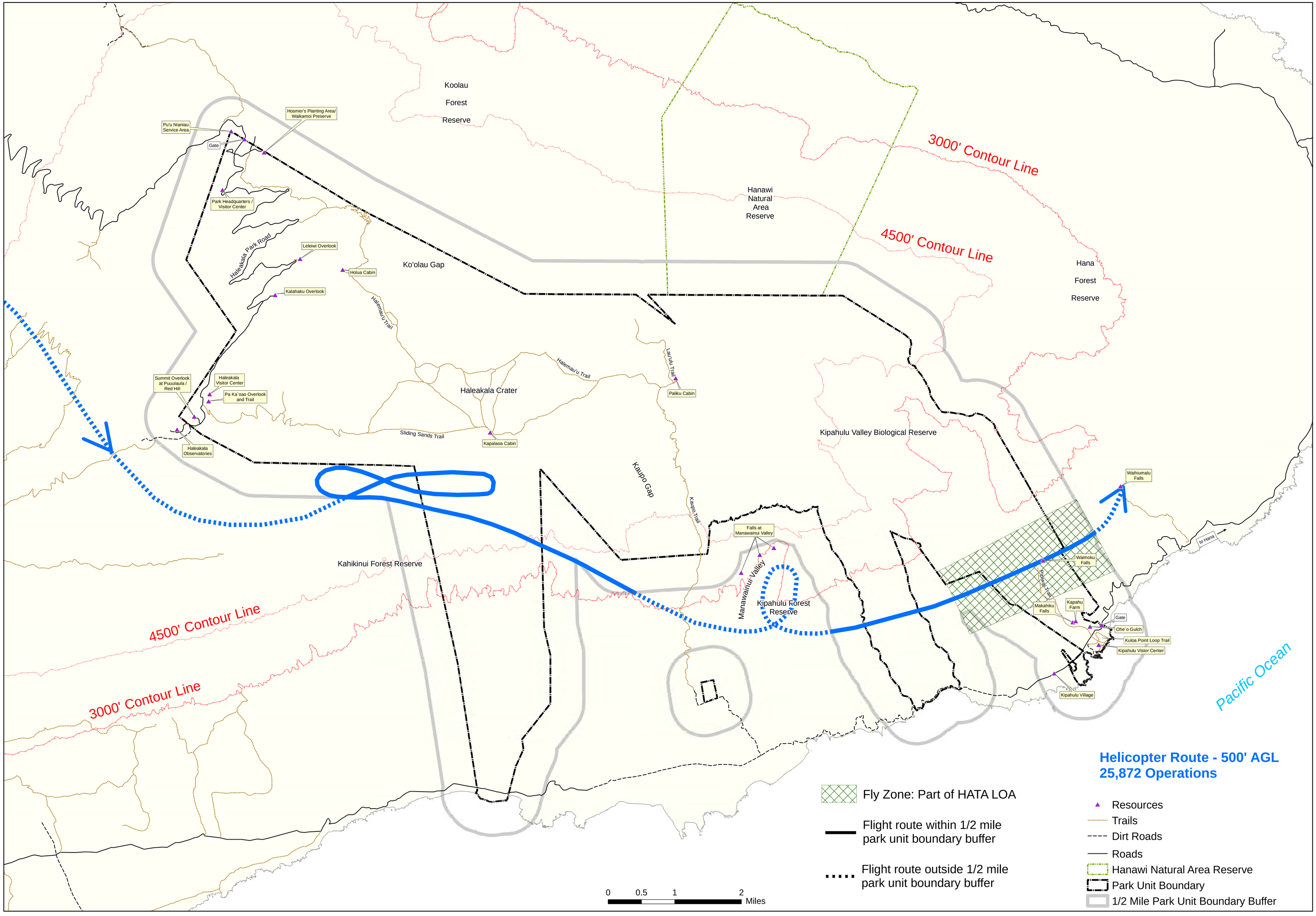
April, 2011



Haleakala National Park

Alternative 6 - Southern Route (IOA- Helicopters)

April, 2011



National Park Service
Federal Aviation Administration

Comment Form

We would like to have your thoughts on this issue. After completing your comments, please fold this form in the middle and tape it closed (please no staples).

You may also respond at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkID=306

Your comments would be most helpful if received no later than **JUNE 6 , 2011**. Thank you.

Volpe National Transportation Systems Center RVT 43
55 Broadway
Cambridge MA 02142

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Frank Smigelski
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center RVT 43
55 Broadway
Cambridge MA 02142

Do you wish to remain on the mailing list for the Air Tour Management Plan ? YES___ NO___

We will send you future newsletters and information concerning the general management planning.
Please print your name and address in the space provided. If the mailing label we used is incorrect, please indicate any correc tions in the space below. To keep our mailing list accurate, please check the boxes below that apply to your wishes.
Thank you for your assistance.

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Organization, if any: _____

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Please fold this form in half, showing the preprinted address on the outside, tape it closed (no staples please), and drop in the mail.