



US Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Memorandum

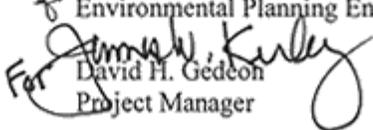
Subject: INFORMATION: Categorical Exclusion
Hawaii PLH HAF0 10(1)
Keanakolu Road

Date: DEC 16 2003

From: Larry C. Smith
Division Engineer
Lakewood, CO

In Reply Refer To: HFHD-16

To: Central File – HI PLH HAF0 10(1) – Keanakolu Road

THROUGH: 
Richard J. Cushing
Environmental Planning Engineer

For David H. Gedeon
Project Manager

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Central Federal Lands Highway Division, in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the County of Hawaii, is proposing to rehabilitate deteriorated road conditions along approximately 8.0 miles of Keanakolu Road on the Island of Hawaii. Due to rough and hazardous conditions and the need for a more stable road to access the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge, the FWS in 2000 requested and secured discretionary funds for road improvements through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. As administrator of federal transportation funds, the FHWA is the lead federal agency for this proposal.

The proposed undertaking begins 4.55 miles northeast of the junction of Keanakolu Road and John A. Burns Way (Mauna Kea observatory road), and extends to the compound entrance of the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) (Figure 1). The proposed undertaking is entirely outside the refuge boundary. The road surface is typically about 12 feet wide with existing cut and fill slopes (disturbed width) ranging from 16 to 24 feet.

Purpose and Need

Current driving conditions are complicated by a severely deteriorated driving surface consisting predominantly of cinder and soil, with steep grades, hazardous crests, and several gulch crossings that wash out during heavy or prolonged rain. The purpose of the project is to create a safe, all-weather road to the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge.



Proposed Project

Due to the limited funding available, only the most severe problems will be addressed.

Rehabilitation efforts will consist of the following spot improvements:

- Constructing low water crossings of ephemeral drainages along an 8-mile section of road from milepost 4.55 to milepost 12.55. Concrete work will be confined to the existing roadway template or prism. About 50 feet of each road approach to the low-water crossing will be paved with asphalt. A cut off wall will be constructed on the existing Pahoehoe streambed on the upstream and downstream side of the low water crossing to protect against scouring. These improvements will reduce the level of maintenance required by the County of Hawaii after major storms, and will provide a passable roadway for road users, including Refuge staff that must travel to and from Hakalau Forest NWR as part of their daily business.
- Paving short segments of steep grades with asphalt to provide improved traction for vehicles traversing Keanakolu Road. The existing road is frequently rough due to rock protruding through the existing surface, and can be slick from frequent rains or mist. Paving certain steeply graded segments will allow vehicles to more easily climb steep grades and wet surfaces as well as reduce erosion from moisture and spinning tires. The existing road width will be maintained.
- Widening the roadway an approximately 5 feet at the top of several vertical crests to provide sufficient width for two approaching vehicles to safely pass in order to mitigate for poor sight-distances. The sites proposed generally require minimal or no excavation and will be surfaced with aggregate material.
- Replacing cattle guards and paving the approaches to them with asphalt. The road crosses through several leased ranching operations, and a number of the cattle guard crossings exhibit badly eroded gaps at the roadway/cattle guard interface.

These improvements will not result in any foreseeable increase in traffic volume and vehicular speed or changes to the current land use.

Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

The project will have no known involvement with the following issues:

1. Wild and scenic rivers
2. Floodplains
3. Wetlands
4. Waters of the U.S.
5. Hazardous Materials
6. Air Quality
7. Right-of-Way
8. Section 6(f)

The project will have no significant effect on the following issues:

1. **Threatened and Endangered Species:** A biological assessment was performed resulting in determinations of *May Effect but Not Likely to Adversely Affect* for the 'Io, two species of the 'Oha wai, 'Akiapola'au, Hawaiian hoary bat, Hawai'i Akepa, Hawaiian creeper, and the Nene. To secure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) concurrence with these determinations, the FHWA has committed to the following measures:
 - a. Mamane trees will be neither destroyed nor removed; and
 - b. The construction contractor will be notified of the possible presence of Nene (Hawaiian goose) nesting in the area and instructed on appropriate actions should any Nene nest in the construction zone.

2. **Historic Properties:** A cultural resources inventory was performed resulting in the identification of five potential historic properties in the vicinity of the proposed project. Four of the properties were determined to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Only one of the properties, the historic Keanakolu Road, site number 22939, will be affected by the proposed project. Through consultations with the State of Hawaii, State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD), and Native Hawaiian Organizations and individuals, the FHWA has issued a finding of *Adverse Effect* to Keanakolu Road. Any action alternative to rehabilitate the road will cause adverse effects to the property due to general construction activities such as gravelling, paving, running heavy machinery across the surface, and scheduled maintenance by the county following the federal undertaking. Likewise, the no action alternative would also constitute an adverse effect to the property because neglect and irregular county maintenance will cause the further deterioration of the cobbled roadbed. The FHWA, SHPD, and County of Hawaii have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to implement a data recovery treatment plan that addresses the adverse effects to the historic property and any mitigation measures. The main features of the data recovery treatment plan methodology include:

- a. historical research of the development of the road corridor
- b. historical research of engineering design standards and specifications
- c. oral history interviews
- d. archeological excavation and recordation (including photographs) of two locations on the roadway in order to record the stratigraphic cross section of the road
- e. recordation of the grades, turning radii, and other features for roads and trails in the corridor

The FHWA will ensure that the SHPD, County of Hawaii, FWS, and Department of Hawaiian Home Lands will receive a copy of the final data recovery report, and the report will be made available at a local public library. In addition, information gathered shall be made available to the public through interpretive materials in a brochure or panel format.

3. **Section 4(f):** The final Section 4(f) evaluation for the historic Keanakolu Road is attached. Keanakolu Road, site number 22939, is a historic property that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
4. **Water Quality:** Best management practices will be used to reduce erosion during construction. A Clean Water Act Section 404 permit (Fill into Waters of the U.S.) is not required; and therefore, a Clean Water Act Section 401 permit (State Water Quality Certification) is not required. New disturbance will exceed 1-acre; therefore, a Clean Water Act Section 402 permit (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) will be obtained.
5. **Noise:** Construction noise will be temporary, and the contractor's equipment will be properly muffled. No churches, schools, residences, or campgrounds will be affected by construction noise.

Determination

Based on the above information, I have administratively determined that this project is a Class II action, falling within the definition of Categorical Exclusion as defined at 40 CFR 1508.4. The project is categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis, as provided for in the Nationwide Action Plan, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, and the Federal Highway Administration's Regulations at 23CFR 771.117(d)(1), "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures; Final Rule."

Attachments

Bc w/attachments:

S. Popiel (signed original)

D. Gedeon

R. Cushing

A. Blair

B. Johnson

G. Budd

S.Greenwell

Reading file

Central File – HI PLH HAFO 10(1) – Keanakolu Road

SPOPIEL:sp:12/4/2003:L:\ENVIRONM\WP\HI HAFO Hakalau Forest\catex.doc