

From: [Chipper Wichman](mailto:Chipper.Wichman)
To: ["Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov"](mailto:Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov); ["Paul.J.Conry@hawaii.gov"](mailto:Paul.J.Conry@hawaii.gov);
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CC: ["canen@pacificlightandpower.com"](mailto:canen@pacificlightandpower.com); ["Curt.A.Cottrell@hawaii.gov"](mailto:Curt.A.Cottrell@hawaii.gov); ["Dan.Quinn@hawaii.gov"](mailto:Dan.Quinn@hawaii.gov); "Dennis Esaki"; "NJBudd-Law"; "Ron Agor"; ["Russell.Y.Tsuji@hawaii.gov"](mailto:Russell.Y.Tsuji@hawaii.gov);
Subject: RE: Koke`e Advisory Council
Date: Wednesday, October 07, 2009 4:18:00 PM
Attachments:

Hi Laura,

This is a great idea and I would think that all of the outreach you have done to build support for the RR Plan A really in a way started to build this State Park constituency. The network of land trust is also a good source of people who understand the legacy value of our State Parks. I really like the way this conversation is going as we will need a state-wide group to push for any change in terms of how we care for and fund our parks. I am way too over extended already but ... will do whatever I can to help with this effort. I think the KAC will also be very interested in this idea and want to support it. I will bring this up at our meeting this Thursday.

In regard to the Legacy Land Commission what is interesting – as you point out – is that we often add land to our State Parks inventory without any source of funding to support it. At NTBAG we are approached nearly every year both locally and nationally to acquire new property. We have developed a detailed matrix to evaluate land acquisition proposals and a critical component of that matrix is determining where the funding for the operating and maintenance costs will come from. We have turned down several significant properties in Hawaii because of this. The only acquisition we have made in the last decade was via the Legacy Land Fund. As Dale will remember, NTBAG acquired a very important property in Hana with legacy land funding but what he does not know is that before we could even apply to the LLC I had to first demonstrate to our Board why this property was important and how we were going to maintain it. I know that it hurts all of us to not accept legacy lands into our State inventory but if the State keeps accepting property like the Pupukea lands as a “Park Reserve” without corresponding commitments of an increased budget from the Legislature it will hurt all of the existing parks in the system. Without knowing any of the details on these acquisitions I would say that if they come without money (which they all will) they

should be accepted as Forest Reserves not Park Reserves and everyone needs to realize there is no commitment for recreational facilities unless new dedicated funding becomes available specifically for that property.

I will be interested to hear what Dale has to say. In the meantime count me in if I can be of help – but I can't head a Kaua'i chapter! J

Aloha, Chipper

Chipper Wichman, Director and CEO
NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

From: Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov [mailto:Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, October 07, 2009 8:07 AM
To: wichman@ntbg.org; Paul.J.Conry@hawaii.gov; dale@mauicoastallandtrust.org
Cc: canen@pacificlightandpower.com; Curt.A.Cottrell@hawaii.gov; Dan.Quinn@hawaii.gov; 'Dennis Esaki'; 'NJBudd-Law'; 'Ron Agor'; Russell.Y.Tsuji@hawaii.gov
Subject: RE: Koke`e Advisory Council

Don't apologize for going on too long Chipper. Your email simply illustrates why I like to talk with you. You're a very thoughtful person.

DLNR welcomes the discussion at the legislative level on the need to support parks. But we also need to keep moving other means forward due to the current status and the decline of support for parks over the past decade. But a positive effect of our action is many people are starting to think about the role of parks, which they haven't done for some time (hence the decline in support).

I'm copying Dale Bonar and Paul Conry because I think they may be interested in this next idea.

I'd love to see a statewide advocacy group, like a Friends of State Parks, formed. We have so many groups dedicated to one park or one island. That is a zero sum game, since they end up fighting over slices of pie and the time of limited park staff. What we need is a group to advocate on behalf of parks in general.

It would be great to have a statewide organization, with members nominated from island chapters. So you have a Friends at the island level to coordinate volunteer efforts, planning, support at those specific parks. The island chapter is automatically members of the statewide organization, and each island board

nominates a member for the statewide board. The balance of all islands on the statewide board would help keep people focused on the purpose of parks across the state and help bring that perspective to the administration and legislature.

The statewide organization should probably have a position on the Legacy Land Commission as well, since some of those acquisitions/easements go to Parks (Pupukea Park Reserve; Lapakahi Historic Park).

The Legacy Land Commission has been requiring applicants to detail how they plan to financially support the management of lands acquired. However, for the most part, people do not think about those costs when they put title to land in the state.

So the large efforts to "save" open space do not come with longer-term support. A prime example is the acquisition of Pupukea-Paumalu Park Reserve. Not one cent was provided to Parks to manage about 4,000 acres of land. That's just one example, and there are dozens of others.

We need to require some identification of the long-term costs to manage these areas - including the planning you reference in your email - when we acquire them.

We also need to identify funding sources for those costs. Plans developed without identifying costs and funding sources merely set everyone up for frustration because they don't get implemented at all or the lower-cost alternatives implemented are disappointing.

I know everyone is busy and is already active in other organizations. But I think we need to have a group at the state level tackle the issue of state parks. Doing it at the island level is like writing a plan without identifying the costs and revenue streams. The group is only focused on "their" parks. The DLNR State Parks won't have the resources to do what each island wants and care for all the parks. But I think if we had a group with a state perspective work with us, we could develop realistic strategies to do the best job with what we have now, and build support and understanding in the broader population for parks for a brighter future.

Dale? Chipper? Any volunteers for Maui and Kauai?

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"Chipper Wichman" <wichman@ntbg.org>

10/06/2009 10:07 PM

Please respond to <wichman@ntbg.org>

To <Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov>

cc <Annette.L.Kahalewai@hawaii.gov>, <canen@pacificlightandpower.com>, <Curt.A.Cottrell@hawaii.gov>, <Dan.Quinn@hawaii.gov>, "Dennis Esaki" <dennis@esakimap.com>, "NJBudd-Law" <nbudd@njbudd-law.com>, "Ron Agor" <ron@ronagor.com>

Subject RE: Koke`e Advisory Council

Hi Laura,

Thanks for allowing me to share your emails with the full council. I look forward to being able to discuss all these issues in person with you and the PIG members and others on this email that are interested. I will keep my fingers crossed that Annette can find some time for you to come to Kaua'i on November 16th and meet with the PIG.

I am sorry that my email left you confused. While we had a good dialogue about several important issues and indeed reached agreement that Koke'e is a unique and special area one that deserves preservation as an "unmodified natural environment" the members of the PIG left the meeting feeling your primary focus was the financial crisis you are dealing with – that parks would be closing if more money was not generated soon to support them and that you were determined that this would not happen under your watch. It is not surprising that we left with different perspective on the meeting as we are working at this problem from two very different viewpoints. We are focusing on the Master Planning and you are focusing on how to keep our parks state-wide alive. One of the common elements that overlap these two perspectives is revenue generation and especially the role that parking fees or entrance fees play in supporting park operations.

As you have pointed out I am very aware of the essential role entrance fees play in the operations of NTBG's various gardens. A good example is that of Limahuli Garden which is located in the Conservation District just like Koke'e and H•ena State Parks. To properly operate Limahuli it first took a lot of in depth planning and

proper permitting. While earned revenue from paying visitors was, and is, very important, we did not charge any entrance fee at Limahuli prior to the development and approval of the Master Plan for Limahuli Garden and Preserve (by both our board and the DLNR). As part of that Master Plan we clearly established self-imposed limits on the number of paying visitors that could come to the garden on any given day – these numbers were much much lower than the number of visitors who came to Hō'ena State Park or to other visitor destinations on the island. These limits were established during our planning process to minimize the impact to the site itself and to preserve the ambience of the garden and the experience each person who came would have while they were there. The planning process also allowed us to properly size and locate the required infrastructure needed to accommodate the visitors. The result has been very successful and has helped to produce about a third of the operating costs each year. Not all of the revenue generated at Limahuli stays there as we recognize that NTBG provides a lot of support and services so about 25% currently goes back to help support NTBG.

What I meant to convey in my email yesterday was that I believe this is the same kind of planning process that needs to happen at both Koke'e and Hō'ena State Parks. We need to plan how we will protect the site, accommodate recreational use, and determine what is the appropriate commercial use and where it should be located. I also believe the planning process should address where and how the funds generated by these parks will be used. This is important as I believe the island-wide community is expecting a significant percentage of the revenue generated at these parks to stay and support them and the realization of their master plans. Certainly the current draft of the master plan for Koke'e implies the revenue projections for the park will be used to operate and build out the park in the future.

To establish a practice of charging admission at Koke'e and Hō'ena State Parks prior to the completion of their master plans and to establish a policy that the admission revenue generated at those parks will, for the most part, not stay in those parks, and probably not even on Kaua'i, is a potentially slippery slope that will be hard to reverse in the future once it is started. It is also a significant deviation from what the master plan for Koke'e implied.

On top of this, my personal concern is that the Legislature will see this as just one more reason not to allocate adequate funds for our Parks. Instead of providing adequate general funds they will tell the Chair of the DLNR to just increase entrance fees or visitor numbers or to institute entrance fees at more Parks around the State as a way to support basic maintenance. That to me is an abdication of responsibility. The State should find a way to adequately support our parks with general funds as these parks are legacy properties that deserve protections and proper care and management. We should not put this burden on the Chair of

DLNR! This responsibility belongs to all of the residents of our state. The national park system is not funded by gate revenue it is funded by tax payer dollars. We pay to support parks that we may never visit because they are important legacies to our nation. The current system in Hawaii is clearly not working as DLNR's consistently declining budget documents. DSP's budget crisis should not have to be fixed by DSP or even DLNR – it has to be fixed by all of the tax payers in Hawai'i and that involves the legislature and the governor. It is heroic of you to try and fix this in-house but I honestly feel the problem can't be fixed in-house it has to be a bigger solution.

As an example of what could be a possible solution, I just got back from a Board meeting in Chicago and it cost an arm and a leg to have it there due to their 20% excise tax. Check out the attached Avis car rental receipt that included a 20% city tax. Then look at the Avis receipt from HNL that includes 4.712% State excise tax and a \$4/day State surcharge. The point of this is that Chicago gets away with a HUGE tax to support things important to them. In spite of this tax people flock to Chicago. Hawaii on the other hand is quite reasonable even with a \$4/day State surcharge on top of the state GET. Just think if the legislature approved a rental car surcharge dedicated to taking care of our state parks. That would generate a dedicated revenue stream for our parks that would not be dependent on park visitation. To get such a surcharge passed by the legislature it will take a grass roots effort from people on every island who appreciate their parks and do not want to see them closed or poorly maintained. The rental car companies will lobby hard against it but in the end they will just pass it along to the folks renting the cars. While this might not have been possible before, the current economic crisis has created new opportunities that did not exist before. We need a paradigm shift on how we fund our parks and we think that the time has come to think outside of the box and turn these opportunities into resources that will help our parks.

Related to this, I thought your idea of maximizing revenue generation from commercial lands (not parks) owned by DLNR was a good one and that is the kind of thing the PIG wants to explore more with you – finding revenue generating sources outside of the boundaries of our parks that will help to support Koke'e and H'ena State Parks so that they can be properly planned for and operated according to the hierarchy of DLNR – environment first; public recreation second; commercial third.

I admire you for attacking this issue head on and not sitting back and saying that the economy and the legislature has dealt you a bad hand and it is beyond your control. You are trying to be creative and save all of the unique and special parks state wide – and that is a challenge of Herculean undertaking. I also think it is ok that we have different opinions and ideas on how to solve this problem. As we work

through this together we find we come up with many good ideas that would otherwise be left unexplored.

I know that it seems we do not have the luxury of adequate time to plan and implement – it feels like the economy has robbed us of that. However, Koke`e and H`ena State Parks are unique and special places and our community hold them dear – in fact sacred to many of us. We need to think carefully about how we proceed least we act under the economic pressure we face today and make mistakes that will impact our sacred `iina and our mo`opuna who will follow us.

Sorry for going on so long ... but as you can see this is a passionate issue for us as it is for you. I look forward to continuing our dialogue in person in the not too distant future.

Aloha, Chipper

Chipper Wichman, Director and CEO
NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

From: Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov [mailto:Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, October 06, 2009 5:08 PM
To: wichman@ntbg.org
Cc: Annette.L.Kahalewai@hawaii.gov; canen@pacificlightandpower.com; Curt.A.Cottrell@hawaii.gov; Dan.Quinn@hawaii.gov; 'Dennis Esaki'; 'NJBudd-Law'; 'Ron Agor'
Subject: RE: Koke`e Advisory Council

Hi Chipper,

Yes you may share my email with the group.

However, I have to say I'm a bit confused by your message below. When we met, I thought the PIG recognized that Parks need to generate revenue to improve the operations in the manner we all desire. During that meeting, I thought we had agreement that provided the parking or entry fee were collected in an unobtrusive manner that did not change the character of the park, and the revenues went to support the parks vs the general fund (although we disagreed on the distribution between parks), that was O.K.

It appears from your email below that I had the wrong impression.

The Land Board voted to approve the parking fees, and to begin public hearings on the entrance fees which may be substituted for the parking in the future. These are not stop-gap actions. As we shared with you, the general funding for the parks has been in decline for **a decade**. We are not just reacting to the current fiscal climate - we have been in a downward spiral for years due to lack of general fund support.

I'm a bit perplexed at how the head of the Tropical Botanical Gardens can take a position that charging an entry fee for a park which requires maintenance, improvements and care, can say that this would have a negative long-term impact on the park. Apparently we need to spend more time talking this over, which I look forward to, since you're such a pleasure to talk with. As you know, I absolutely respect the character of our state parks and want to maintain that. It's frustrating to keep being accused of looking at the parks as an ATM machine in one breath, and then to be criticized for the lousy condition of the parks in the next breath. NTBG is able to use entry fees AND maintain beautiful sites that respect the environment, character and culture. I believe our State Park system can do so as well.

I know your next point is going to be that NTBG uses the entry fee for that park. But the difference is you charge everyone, including residents, and you charge at every park (as does the National Park Service). But we can leave that discussion for another day. We are not planning on charging residents, nor are we charging at every park.

I need to check with Annette on my schedule, but we'll look for a time the week of November 16 and get back to you.

Laura H. Thielen
Chairperson
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"Chipper Wichman"
<wichman@ntbg.org>

10/05/2009 07:19 PM

To <Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov>, <Dan.Quinn@hawaii.gov>, <Curt.A.
Cottrell@hawaii.gov>, <Annette.L.Kahalewai@hawaii.gov>
cc <canen@pacificlightandpower.com>, "Dennis Esaki" <dennis@esakimap.
com>, "NJBudd-Law" <nbudd@njbudd-law.com>, "Ron Agor"
<ron@ronagor.com>

Subject RE: Koke`e Advisory Council

Please respond to <wichman@ntbg.org>

Thanks Laura. Let's see if we can find a date in November to meet. How does the week of November 16th look for you? There might be a few other days that month but for the most part that is the only week that works for me as I have another long trip scheduled to raise funds for the Garden the first two weeks in November – as you know we are facing a very difficult year and are currently furloughed one-day per week. The only way to close our budget shortfall this year is to visit our donors face-to-face so ... "on the road again" ... is my theme song for the next few months.

We have a council meeting this Thursday and I would like to share our email exchange with them. To do this I will need you to release us from the confidentiality statement at the bottom of your email. Please let me know if this is possible.

Thank you also for your answers and comments. Per your point #2 below, I want to assure you that we (the PIG) will reaffirm with the full Advisory Council our vision and recommendations for ways to amend the Master Plan – as that was one of the mandates we received from the legislature. We are planning a transparent process that will allow the public to participate in the discussions on our recommendations so that we can determine if we have broad community support with the direction we are going in.

I also want to confirm we are painfully aware of the funding crisis that our State

Parks face. While we recognize that new gate revenue from some of our parks is a potential source of funding to use as a good stop-gap measure to keep our parks across the state alive during this economic crisis – we are also very concerned about the long-term impact of your proposal on the parks that are being asked to provide this revenue. It is a slippery slope and once you go down it will be hard to change the course. It is also a concern that DSP is in the process of producing and approving master plans for both Koke'e and H•'ena and it seems counter to good planning to install revenue generating stations before these master plans are finalized and approved for implementation. It also remains a significant concern that the majority of the funding generated by Koke'e and H•'ena will not stay in these parks or even on this island. But ... these are discussion better left to a meeting than carried on by email. Just know we understand the difficult situation you are in and hope that our efforts will lead to a sustainable long-term solution for Koke'e.

Aloha, Chipper

Chipper Wichman, Director and CEO
NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

From: Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov [mailto:Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov]
Sent: Monday, October 05, 2009 4:39 PM
To: wichman@ntbg.org; Dan.Quinn@hawaii.gov; Curt.A.Cottrell@hawaii.gov; Annette.L.Kahalewai@hawaii.gov
Cc: canen@pacificlightandpower.com; 'Dennis Esaki'; 'NJBudd-Law'; 'Ron Agor'
Subject: Re: Koke`e Advisory Council

Aloha Chipper,

I trust you have returned safely from your journey. Thanks for your e-mail, and thanks for the meeting with Dan, Ron and I. I enjoyed that afternoon.

Unfortunately I will not be able to join you in October. I will be on Maui several days one two separate occasions this month for Water Commission hearings and site visits relating to in-stream flow standards on West and East Maui and have a

commitment for a trip to the Big Island.

Let me know some possible dates for November and I can try work those on my schedule. Please make sure to cc Annette since she handles my schedule and can help keep times open.

I wanted to address a few points you raised in your email.

1. Different revenue projections in the materials you attached.

I looked at the materials, and one projection is based upon actual visitor counts at a \$1 per person; the other is based upon vehicle counts at \$5 per car with no charge to residents. So the numbers may be consistent since they're both based upon the HTA survey, but different totals since they use different possible fee structures.

2. Lodge/visitor center at Waimea Canyon and Advisory Group input.

Just to be clear, I didn't ask you to get input just on Canen's Waimea Canyon proposal. I asked you to go back to the group and verify if they supported the PIGs approach that you understand the need to generate revenue to improve the operations of state parks provided that we are guided by maintaining the character of the parks and minimize the impacts of any built environment. The Waimea Canyon proposal was only one example.

I wanted the PIG to talk this over with the Advisory Group because the minutes I had read from the prior meeting were extremely contentious and it appeared the PIG had moved beyond what was reflected in the prior meeting. Before we invested further time in more detailed discussion with the PIG on any one or another option, I wanted to make sure you had the support of the Advisory Council in this effort.

3. Alternative sources of revenue.

I'm not clear what you may be referring to as alternative sources of revenue to replace park entry fees. All that was mentioned at the meeting was a possible alternative energy project somewhere that may generate \$2 million per year for parks. While this would be nice, I've been involved in a lot of project proposals that do not pencil out.

As we discussed and in the figures we shared with you, state parks are literally dying. We have no money and are faced with the prospect of closing parks this year if we do not generate new revenue. To be extremely blunt, we simply can't afford to wait to lobby the legislature, build new projects, wait for project approvals, or hope that revenues will materialize in a year or two. Our parks are in disgraceful condition, in many cases they are unsafe and an embarrassment. We need to fix

them up now.

Park entry fees are used to support parks in all 50 states, nationally and internationally. They are a benign way to generate a modest amount of revenue from the people visiting the parks who, in many cases, appreciate being able to provide the support and value the experience. We are proposing to keep visits for Hawaii residents free of charge and only charging the nonresidents.

While we would welcome creative ideas, we require certainty and speed to keep Hawaii's parks and the treasures they contain open, safe and maintained.

Thank you again for your dedication and I look forward to hearing from you.

Laura H. Thielen
Chairperson
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"Chipper Wichman"
<wichman@ntbg.org>

09/15/2009 08:03 PM

To <Laura.Thielen@hawaii.gov>

cc "NJBudd-Law" <nbudd@njbudd-law.com>, <canen@pacificlightandpower.com>, "Dennis Esaki" <dennis@esakimap.com>, "Ron Agor" <ron@ronagor.com>

Subject Koke`e Advisory Council

Please respond to <wichman@ntbg.org>

Hi Laura,

Thank you for your recent letter. I have not received it as I am traveling but Canen told me about it. I am writing as a follow up to the meeting we (Permitted Interaction Group for the Koke'e Advisory Council (KAC)) had with you on August 26th. On Friday the 4th of September the P.I.G. met again to discuss options that we would like to explore further with the full council. In order to proceed further with this discussion we need clarification from you about what the goals are for revenue generation for the Park.

- Table 1-3 on page 1-11 in the Executive Summary of the Master Plan (see attachment) outlines the revenue goals for the programs in the master plan. The two revenue goals that we think are relevant to our discussion are the Entry Fee at \$725,000 (based on \$5/car) and Concession \$226,101 – together these are about \$1.0 million per year. The Entry Fee is a new source of revenue while the Concession revenue is an existing revenue stream from the lodge.
- Table 5-9 on page 5-62 in the Analysis chapter of the Master Plan shows some very different revenue projections including Concessions at \$69,000 and Entry Fee \$350,000 (based on \$1/person).

While there is lack of consistency in these numbers what is clear is that significant on-going revenue needs to be generated to support improvements and proper maintenance of the Park. However, based on the many years of public testimony and the personal feelings of the majority of the KAC members, the most offending aspects of the Master Plan are the commercialization and development of the Park via an entry station, permanent concessions at the lookouts and additional built development in the meadow area. The immediate challenge is how to resolve this conflict between ways to generate revenue and the impact these methods have on the character and ambiance of the Park.

I want to state that the members of the KAC PIG acknowledge the importance of revenue generation for the Park. While the Master Plan clearly envisions the

revenue generated by the Park as being essential to any future realization of the Master Plan, the KAC PIG believes that revenue generation should not be the primary goal of the master plan and I believe you agreed with this as well. The vision for the mountain and supporting goals must be worked out first, then methods of support that are consistent with this vision should be actively sought. As you stated in your recent letter to us we are in mutual agreement that Koke'e is a unique and special area one that deserves preservation as an "unmodified natural environment".

At our meeting with you on the 26th we discussed in general terms the idea that Canen proposed of creating a lodge/visitor center by the Waimea Canyon Lookout to avoid the need to build out infrastructure for increased overnight accommodations in the park and locate revenue generating concessions in an area that will not negatively impact the character and ambiance of the Park. You suggested that we go back and make sure we have support for this from the full KAC and the larger community before we discuss this more with you and Ron and Dan. We will indeed discuss this at our next meeting of the full KAC.

However, it is imperative that we are in agreement on a fundamental point. That is: If the KAC can come up with an alternative revenue generating plan that will produce an amount of revenue equal to that proposed in the Master Plan IT HAS TO BE IN LIEU OF the revenue generating methods (e.g. concessions at lookouts, entry gate for the whole park, development at the meadow such as visitor center, park headquarters, new lodge, etc.) currently in the Master Plan. We need your agreement on this as we do not want to spend time generating ideas and solutions and seeking community input if they will be looked upon as new ideas that can be added on top of the revenue generating ideas that already exist in the plan.

I know that you understand this concern so please let us know asap your commitment to this so we can move forward with our dialogue with the community. Then, at our next meeting with you we can discuss what is "appropriate development" and where it should be located. Once that is done I am sure we can come up with a proposal that meets our mutual goals.

I am currently on the east coast for meetings and will not be back before the end of the month. I talked with Canen this evening and we would like to see if you are able to come and meet with us and undertake a site visit on Tuesday-Friday of the week of October 26th. If one of these days works for you please email me so we can nail a date down that works for everyone.

Many thanks. Aloha, Chipper

Chipper Wichman, Director and CEO

NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

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The mission of the National Tropical Botanical Garden is to enrich life through discovery, scientific research, conservation, and education by perpetuating the survival of plants, ecosystems, and cultural knowledge of tropical regions.

[attachment "Page 11 from 01 MP_EXEC SUMMARY_FINAL.pdf" deleted by Laura H Thielen/DLNR/StateHiUS] [attachment "Page_5-62_from 05 MP_ANALYSIS_FINAL.pdf" deleted by Laura H Thielen/DLNR/StateHiUS]

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