

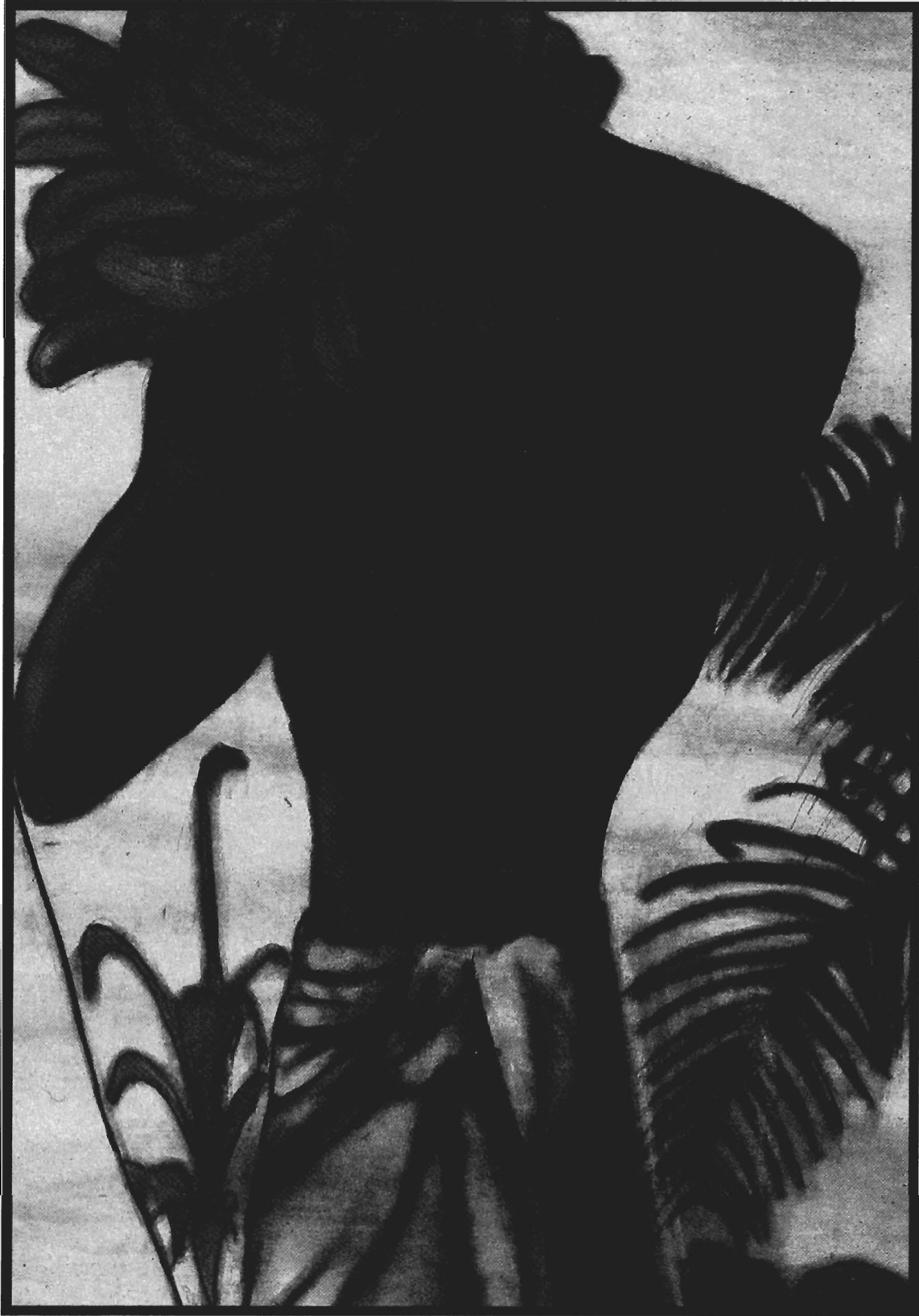
# General Management Plan

# NATIONAL PARK OF AMERICAN SAMOA

Territory of American Samoa



October 1997



"The young Samoan man carrying the *au fa'i* (banana bunch) on his shoulder is reflective of the Samoan way of life. Just as Samoans through the years have tended their bananas, I, too, have grown up on my grandfather's plantation where I help plant, cut and carry the *au fa'i*. So this picture that I painted represents not only Samoans generally but myself personally."

Brandon Avegalio  
Senior, Leone High School  
American Samoa

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# INTRODUCTION

The National Park of American Samoa was authorized in 1988 by Public Law 100-571. The purpose of this national park, the fiftieth to be so designated by Congress, is to "preserve and protect the tropical forest and archeological and cultural resources of American Samoa, and of associated reefs, to maintain the habitat of flying foxes, preserve the ecological balance of the Samoan tropical forest, and, consistent with the preservation of these resources, to provide for the enjoyment of the unique resources of the Samoan tropical forest by visitors from around the world."

The following requirements by Congress<sup>1</sup> give additional direction to the National Park Service with regard to the management and use of the National Park of American Samoa:

Traditional Samoan customs are to be maintained within the national park. Subsistence uses of park lands and waters are provided for. Agriculture, gathering, or fishing uses within the park are to be confined to native American Samoans and will be very limited in scope and location. They are to be carried out with traditional tools and methods. The National Park Service is expected to work with village leaders to clarify and reach agreement as to the rules which are to be imposed regarding these uses.

The National Park Service is required to administer the park in accordance with the 1916 Act to establish the national park system and such other authorities the Service has to protect the natural and cultural resources of the park.

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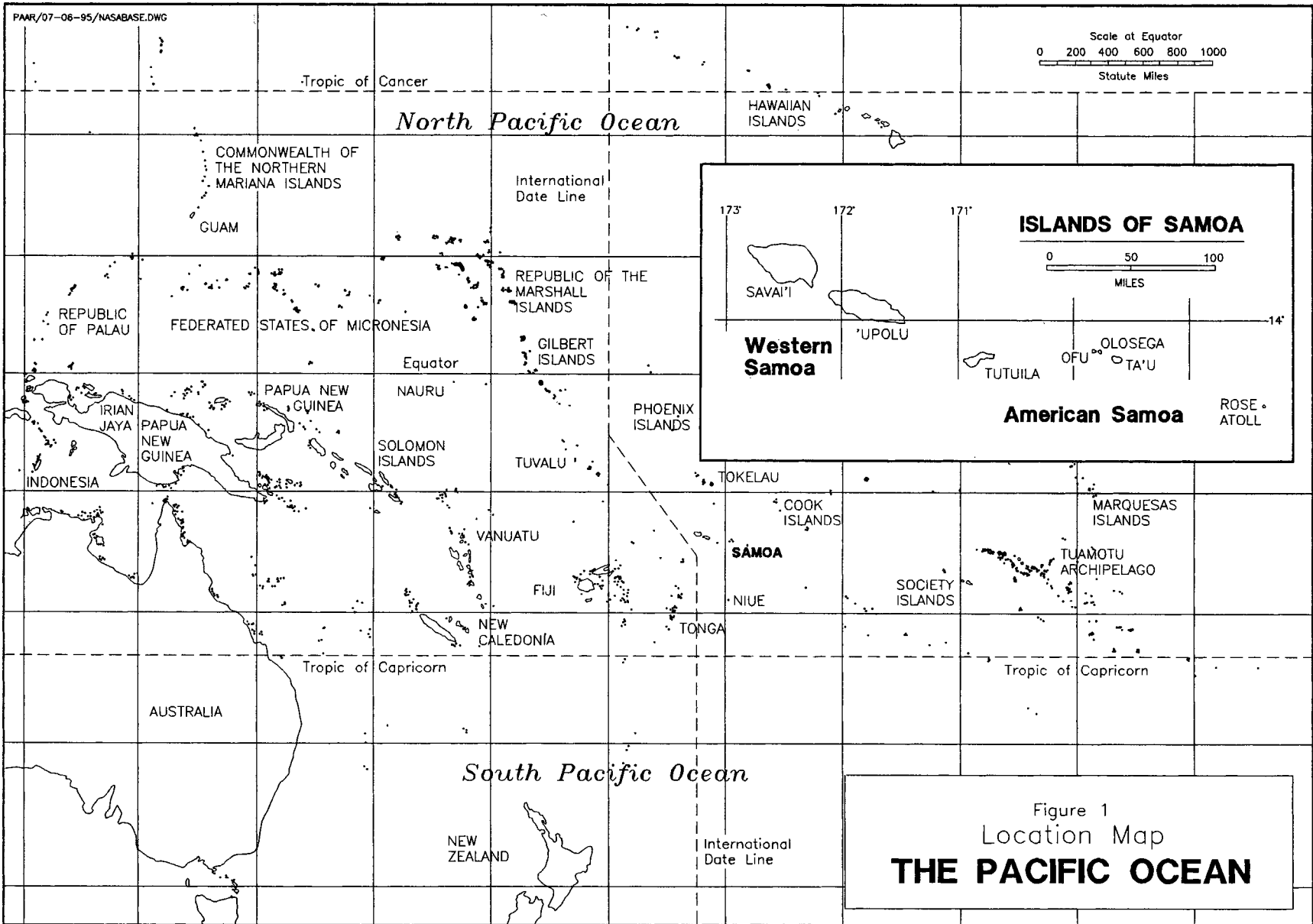
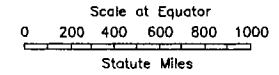
<sup>1</sup> House Report No. 100-916, September 13, 1988.

The National Park of American Samoa is comprised of three widely separated units on the islands of Tutuila, Ta'u, and Ofu in the Territory of American Samoa. Tutuila, the largest island and American Samoa's commercial and governmental center, is separated from the islands of Ta'u and Ofu by approximately 60 miles of open ocean.

Five of the seven islands comprising American Samoa are the eastern portion of a 300-mile long chain of volcanic islands stretching across the South Pacific Ocean in a west-northwest direction between 168 and 173 degrees west longitude and a latitude between about 13 and 15 degrees south. From west to east, these islands are Tutuila, its smaller neighbor Aunu'u, and the three islands of the Manu'a Group, Ofu, Olosega, and Ta'u. The two remaining islands of American Samoa are Rose and Swains, both of which are coral atolls. Rose Atoll is about 100 miles east of Olosega and Swains Island is about 200 miles north-northwest of Tutuila. The independent country of Western Samoa, comprised principally of the larger islands of Savai'i and Upolu, constitutes the western portion of the Samoan archipelago.

The Tutuila unit of the National Park of American Samoa comprises approximately 2,500 acres of land and approximately 1,200 acres of offshore waters. This unit of the national park is located on the north-central part of Tutuila between the villages of Fagasa on the west and Afono on the east. The national park boundary goes around the upland edges of Vatia village and extends approximately one-quarter mile offshore from Tutuila's northern coast. The southern boundary follows along the crest of the Mt. Alava-Maugaloa ridge line above Pago Pago Harbor from Fagasa Pass to Afono Pass.

The island of Ta'u, located about 60 miles east of the island of Tutuila, contains the Ta'u unit of the national park comprising approximately 5,400 acres of land and approximately 1,000 acres of offshore waters. The national park on Ta'u comprises the southeastern half of that island, with its northern boundary high in the summit area of the cloud forest. On Ta'u, the national park boundary also extends into the Pacific Ocean about one-quarter mile along that island's eastern and southern coasts. The Ta'u unit's western boundary includes the volcanic craters of Olomatimu and Olomanu and runs along the crest of Mataalaosagamai Ridge down to Siufaalele Point and into the ocean.



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Figure 1  
Location Map  
**THE PACIFIC OCEAN**

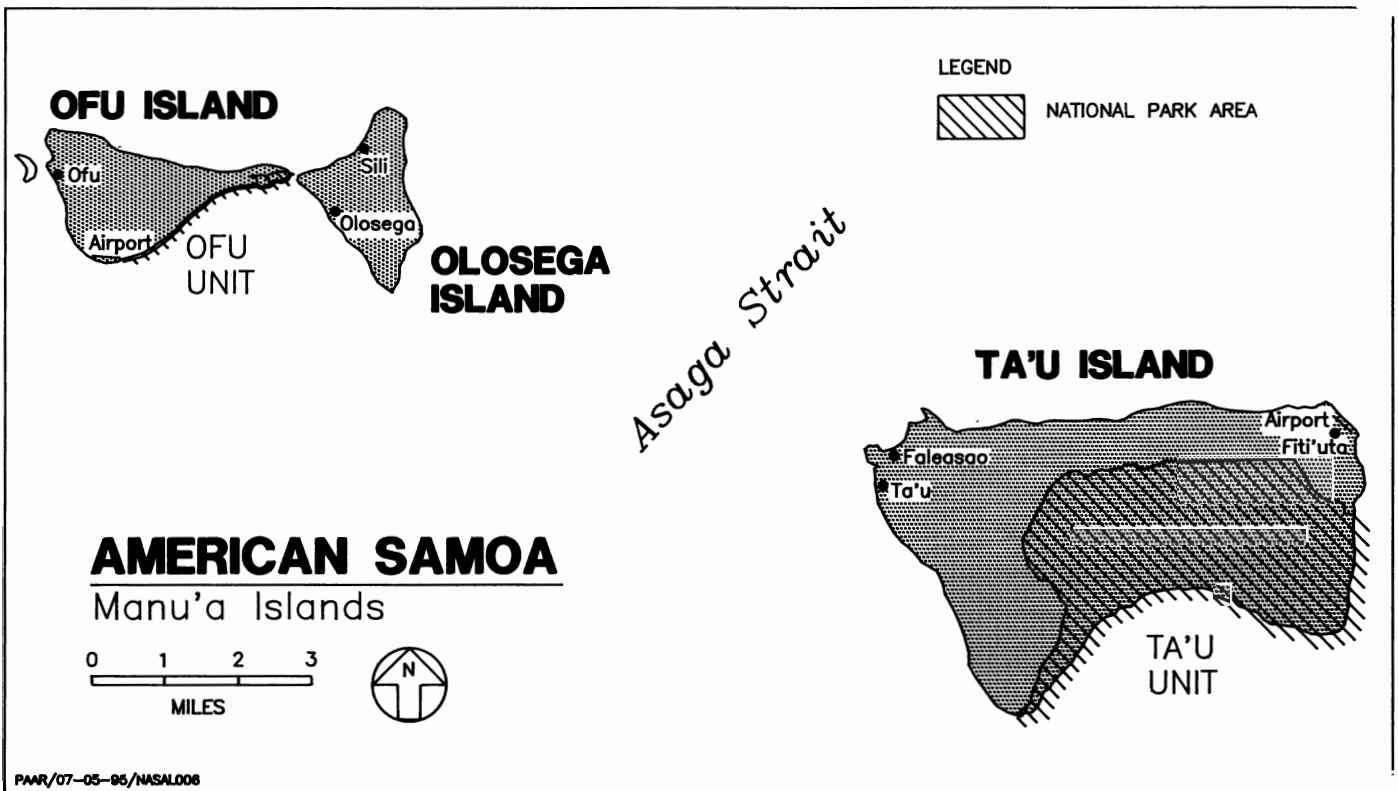
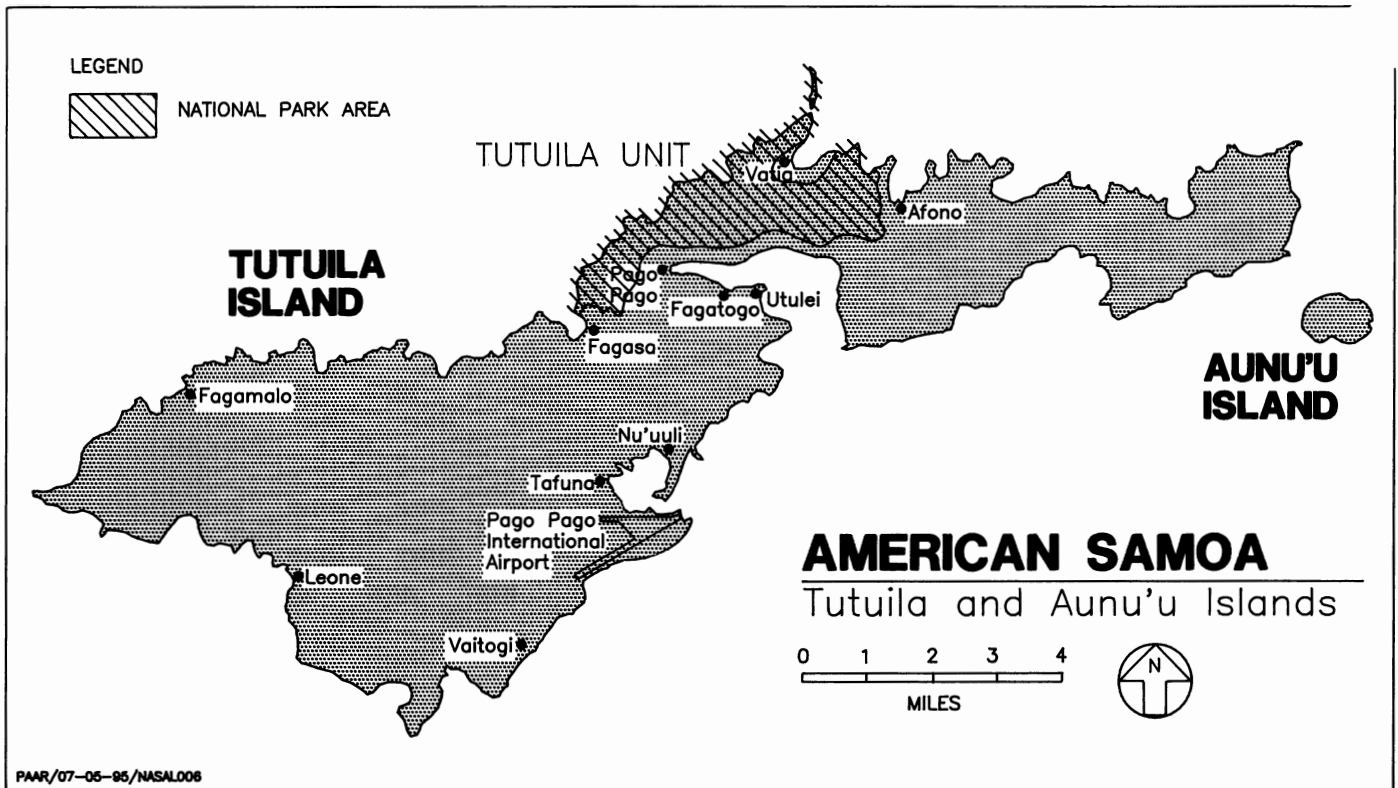
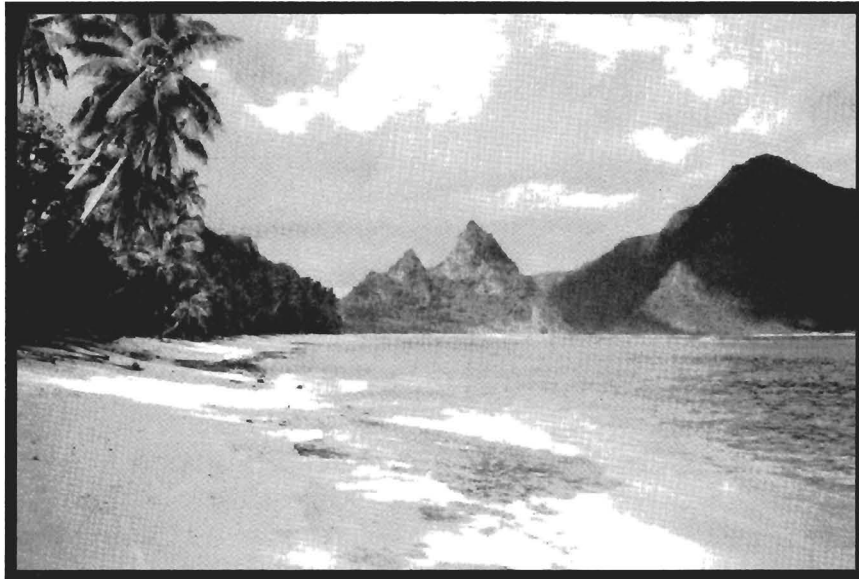


Figure 2. Major islands of American Samoa and park units of the National Park of American Samoa.



On Ofu island, about 10 miles northwest of Ta'u, is the Ofu unit of the national park. This is the smallest unit with about 70 acres of land and approximately 350 acres of offshore waters. The national park boundary follows along the southern shoreline of Ofu from Fatuana Point west to Asaga Strait, including in the white sand beach south of the road and extending approximately one-quarter mile offshore together with all of the fringing reef there. The national park on Ofu also includes the southern slopes of Sunuitao Peak.



The Ofu unit of the national park encompasses a beautiful, two-mile long, white sand beach and one of the most intact coral reef ecosystems in all of the Samoan archipelago.

In September 1993, a 50-year lease agreement was signed between the Governor of American Samoa, acting on behalf of village landowners, and the National Park Service (NPS). In accordance with Section 2.(a) of Public Law 100-571, the National Park of American Samoa becomes legally established with the lease signing, thereby providing NPS with the authority to begin managing lands and waters within the leased premises for national park purposes. The leased premises consist of lands belonging to the villages of Afono, Fagasa, Pago Pago, and Vatia on the island of Tutuila; Faleasao and Fitiuta on the island of Ta'u; and Ofu and Olosega on the island of Ofu. Lands within the authorized boundaries of the national park belonging to Ta'u village on the island of Ta'u are not yet part of the leased premises and therefore are not managed by NPS as a part of the national park at this time.

The leased premises also include lands and waters owned by the American Samoa Government (ASG). The ASG lands consist of 21 acres within the Tutuila unit located at the summit of Mt. Alava. Included within the leased premises on the top of Mt. Alava is the upper terminal of the aerial tramway which crosses above Pago Pago Harbor. The nearby electrical power poles and transformers, TV transmitter towers and the equipment building are not included within the leased premises. The leased waters consist of approximately 2,550 acres comprising the offshore portions of the three units of the national park.

The lease agreement authorizes NPS to manage and use the leased premises in accordance with the purpose of the park as stated in Section 1.(b) of Public Law 100-571. The lease agreement also gives NPS, its duly authorized agents, and the general public the rights of access to the leased premises.

Following the signing of the lease agreement, minor modifications were made to the boundary of the Ta'u unit. These modification to the park boundary consisted of removing certain lands from the Ta'u unit located on the periphery of Fitiuta south of the village proper. These lands were excluded from the national park when it was learned that major portions were being used to grow commercial crops; also, the park superintendent wanted the boundary to follow a recognizable natural feature (a stream bed) as much as possible.

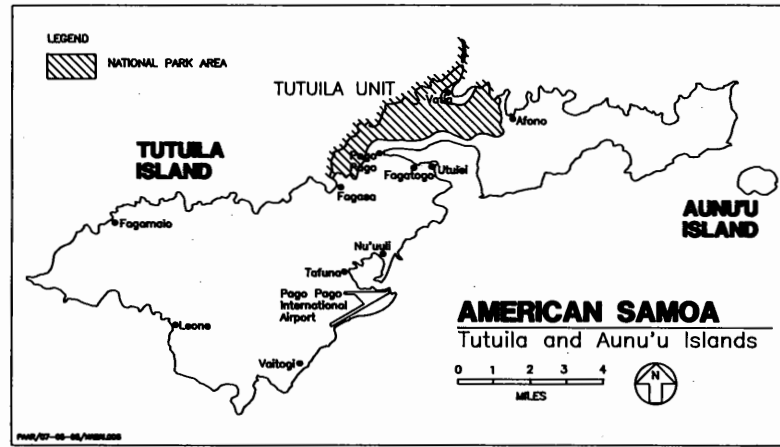
Following the signing of the lease agreement, the following areas were excluded from the leased premises:

About 18 acres of the Amalau Valley below the paved road to Vatia and two one-acre parcels nearby above the road. These lands are within the village of Vatia.

About 11 acres in the Matape Hill/Craggy Point area and a separate two-acre parcel located near Afono Pass. These lands are within the village of Afono.

About eight acres near Fagasa Pass. These lands are within the village of Fagasa.

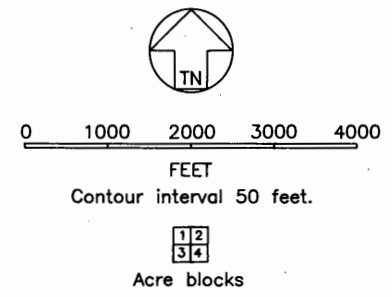
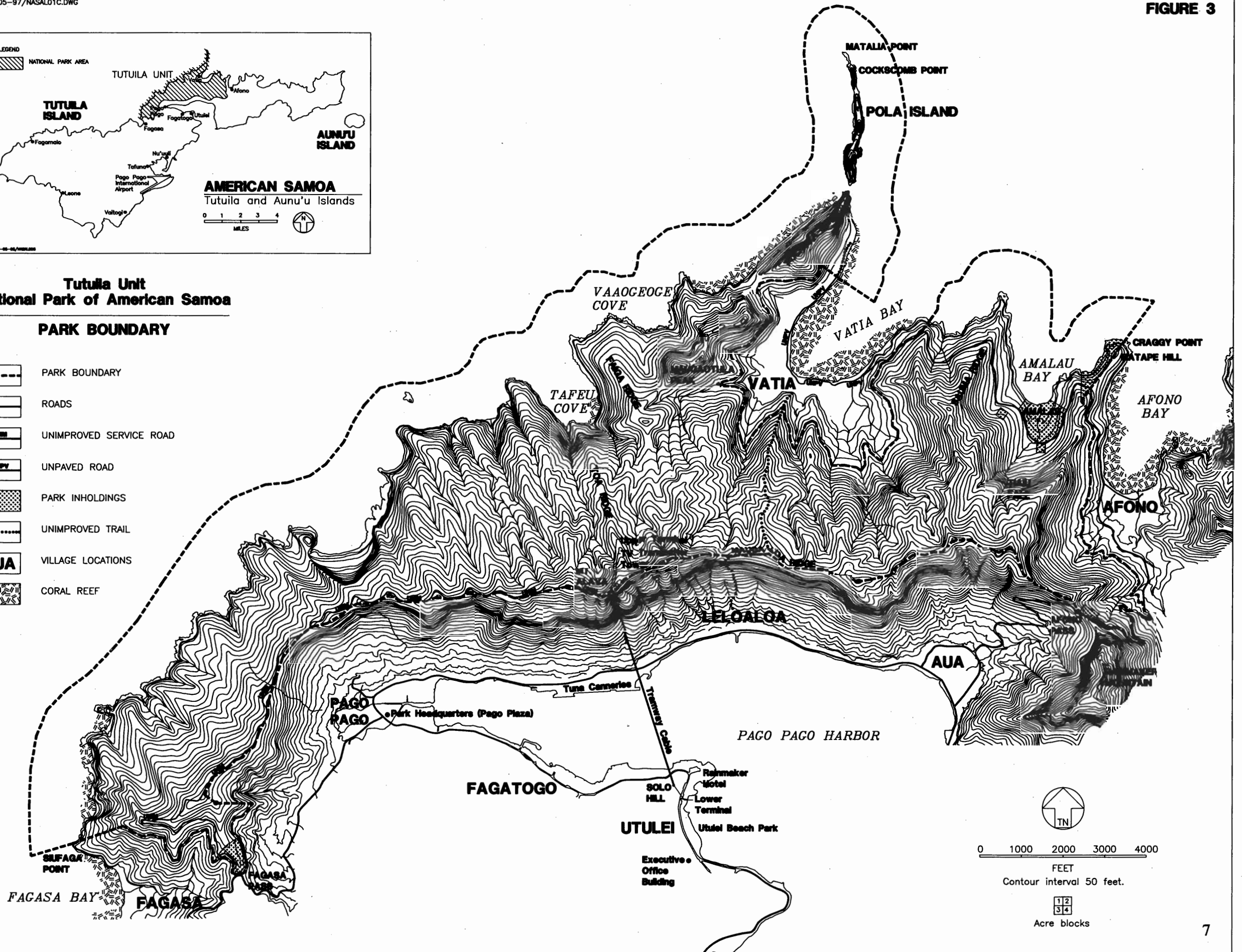
Less than one acre within the Ofu Unit. These lands are within the village of Ofu.

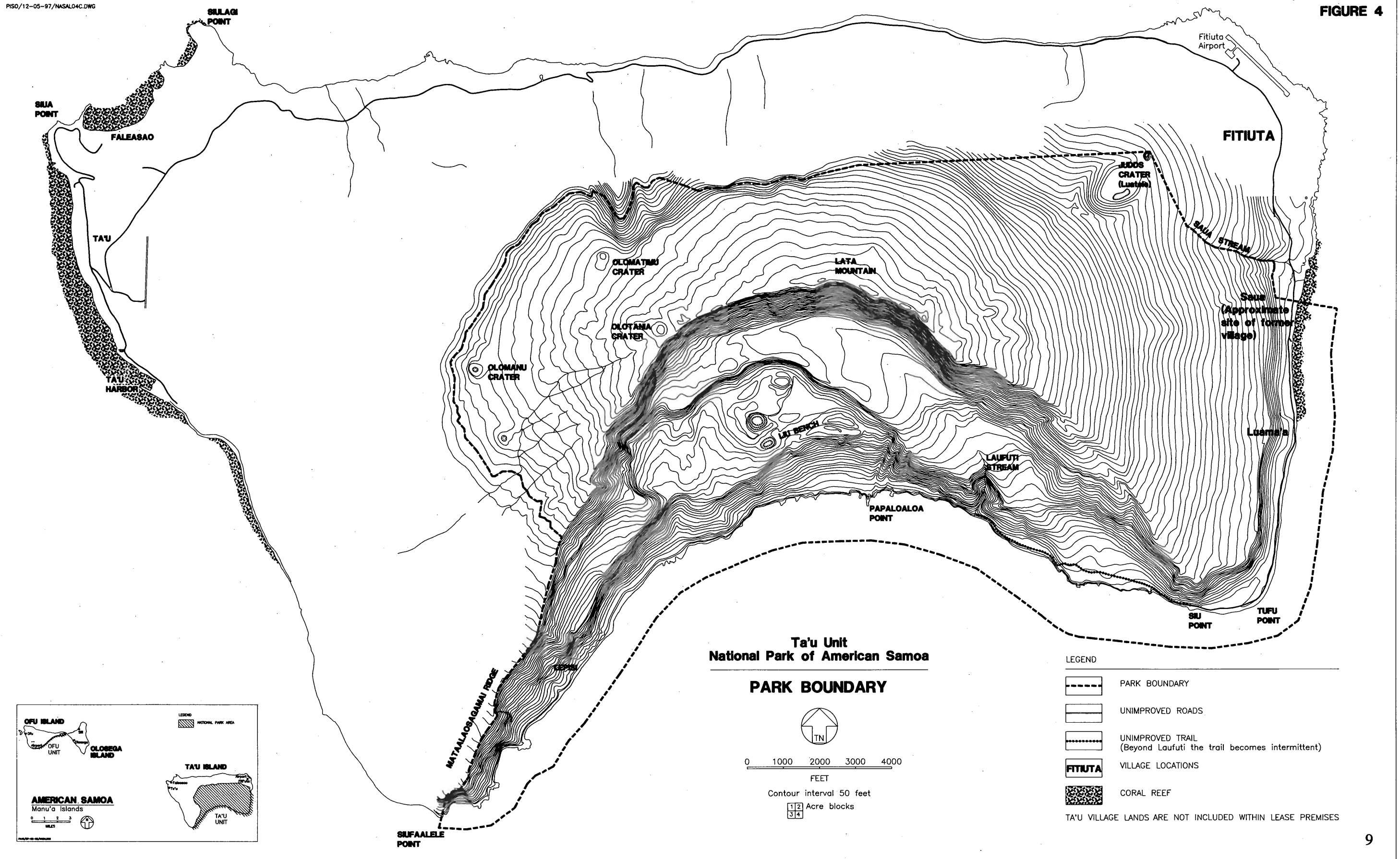


**Tutuila Unit  
 National Park of American Samoa**

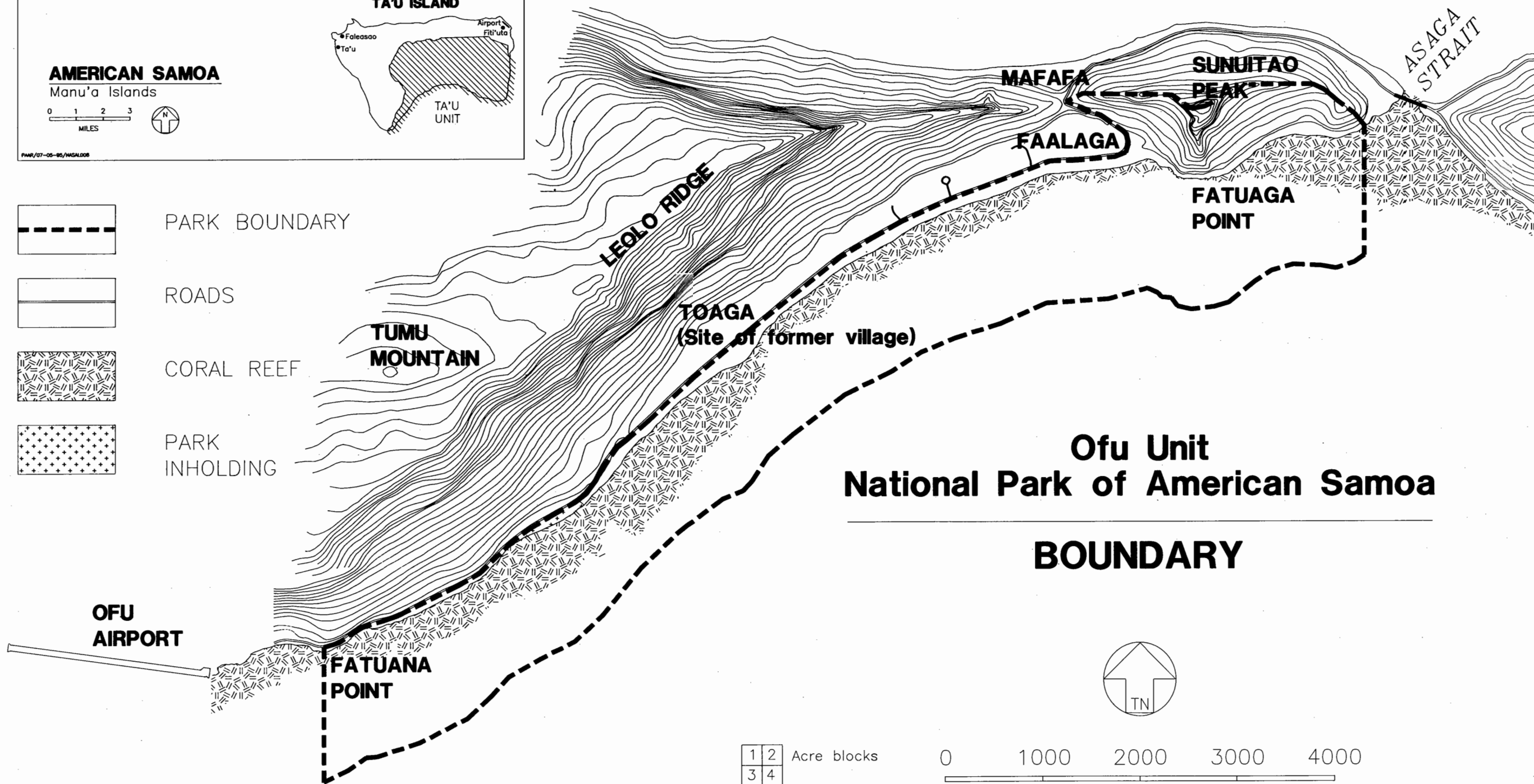
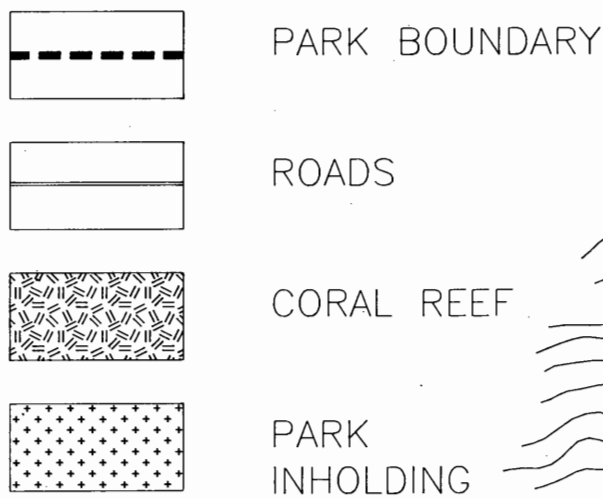
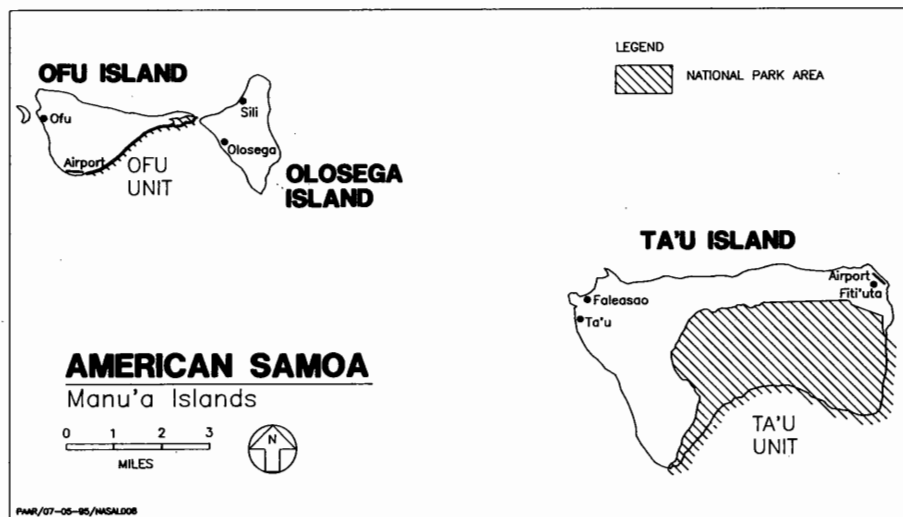
**PARK BOUNDARY**

- PARK BOUNDARY
- ROADS
- UNIMPROVED SERVICE ROAD
- UNPAVED ROAD
- PARK INHOLDINGS
- UNIMPROVED TRAIL
- VILLAGE LOCATIONS
- CORAL REEF





**FIGURE 5**



The above land parcels were excluded from the leased premises at the request of the landowner. These lands remain within the national park, but are not part of the leased premises at this time. They are regarded as inholdings within the national park.

Section 2.(d)(2) of Public Law 100-571 gives the High Court of American Samoa "exclusive jurisdiction" to determine the amount of compensation to be disbursed to those villages, families, and individuals with lands located within the boundaries of the national park. In order to carry out its responsibilities under Section 2.(d)(2), the High Court directed NPS to conduct an appraisal of lands within the authorized boundaries. Based on the signing of the lease agreement, the High Court established assessment proceedings consisting of court hearings to certify payees. The hearings were followed by court orders issued to direct payment of rental compensation. Based on provisions contained in the lease agreement and in accordance with the court orders, the Governor of American Samoa then disbursed payments to the village payees.

Lease payments have been disbursed by the Governor to the certified payees within the villages of Afono, Fagasa, Pago Pago, Vatia, Fitiuta, Faleasao, Ofu and Olosega.

Section 3(e) of Public Law 100-571 calls for NPS to "establish a program to train native American Samoa personnel to function as professional park service employees,..". The park superintendent is to give high priority to identifying and nurturing native American Samoans who have demonstrated an interest in acquiring the academic background, skills, and experience needed to operate and manage national parks. This goal is to be achieved in two basic ways: (1) by hiring qualified native American Samoans with background, education, and experience in national park-related fields to fill professional positions at the National Park of American Samoa; and (2) hiring and training native American Samoan students to pursue and complete professional degrees in national park-related fields.

The hiring and training of American Samoan students is to be carried out under the Federal Cooperative Education Program. The purpose of this program is to provide the selected students with part-time employment at the national park. When students have successfully completed their degree requirements, they can be converted to permanent full-time NPS employees in professional positions at the National Park of American Samoa. These

individuals will have advancement potential throughout the national park system.



# **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESOURCES**

Geographically and biologically, American Samoa is at the end of an extension of islands and archipelagos beginning in New Guinea and extending through the Solomons, Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa, a distance of approximately 3,500 miles. Beyond American Samoa, many terrestrial and marine species disappear. In this context the National Park of American Samoa is not only significant, but also unique in the U.S. national park system because of its paleotropical (old world) ecosystem. It is also important regionally (the South Pacific) as an end point in the process of ecological filtering that begins in Southeast Asia.

The primary significance of the National Park of American Samoa is that it contains the only mixed species paleotropical rainforest under the jurisdiction of the United States' National Park Service. This national park is also only one of three national parks with rainforest.

The rainforests within the National Park of American Samoa are diverse and remain largely intact, and they extend uninterrupted from sea level up to cloud forests on mountain summits. All are ecosystems with forest trees pollinated and dispersed by two species of native flying foxes.

The National Park of American Samoa has miles of pristine and scenic coastline, a stretch of lovely white sand beach rimmed with coconut palms and, within its offshore waters, coral reefs containing a multitude of marine resources.

The cultural resources of the National Park of American Samoa are of major significance. These cultural resources have their origin in the continued existence and vitality of the ancient Polynesian culture that has characterized the Samoa islands for nearly 3,000 years. The values and traditions of this culture are intertwined with the natural resources of the national park. Even today, Samoans retain close ties to the rainforest, as evidenced by communal ownership of forested lands, the status which ownership



gives to the family and the village, and the desire of Samoans to protect the integrity of the forest.



The National Park of American Samoa is the fiftieth such place in our nation to be so designated by the United States Congress. For more than three millennia, the people of these Polynesian Islands have esteemed and cared for their lands. This esteem and care stem from the name they long ago gave to these islands...SAMOA. The word means "sacred earth." According to one ancient Samoan legend, sacred earth originated from the genesis of the earth and the human race. For Samoans, the creator of heaven and earth was Tagaloa, and the god of the earth was Salevao. Tagaloa oldest son was Moa, who was born from the center of the earth. Just before Moa's birth, Salevao saw movement from the center (**moa**) of the earth, so Tagaloa gave the name Moa to the newborn baby. Following Moa's birth, Salevao made sacred (**sa**) the water, the earth, and everything that grew upon the earth. Hence, the name. The National Park Service will ensure that this sacred earth, the national park, is to be cared for in a manner which is consistent with **fa'asamoa**, the Samoan way.

# **PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PLAN (ISSUES)**

This is the first general management plan to be prepared for the National Park of American Samoa. The purpose of the plan is to guide the future operation, development, visitor use, and natural and cultural resource management of this national park. The National Park of American Samoa is a new park. No facilities have yet been developed by NPS to provide access for visitors to this national park's natural and cultural attributes. Baseline data are being accumulated on the park's tropical forest, flying foxes, coral reefs, and on its archeological and ethnographic resources, but actual resource management is just now getting underway.

There are minimal visitor use facilities and an interpretive program has yet to be fully developed. Staffing is incomplete — presently, a superintendent, chief ranger, wildlife biologist, an archeologist hired under the Cooperative Education Program, and several volunteers make up the entire staff. Additional personnel are needed to operate this national park and carry out resource management, administrative, interpretive, and maintenance activities.

The preparation of a general management plan for the National Park of American Samoa is mandated by Section 3(f) of Public Law 100-571, the park's authorizing legislation. Section 3(f) states that the general management plan is to be developed in cooperation with the Governor of American Samoa and "shall contain specific measures for the protection and preservation of tropical forest resources, and archaeological and cultural resources of the park, including but not limited to, protection of flying foxes and measures to enhance visitation to the park from throughout the world, to the extent consistent with the protection and preservation of such resources."

As noted, the National Park of American Samoa was legally established in September 1993 when the Governor of American Samoa, acting on behalf of village landowners, and NPS signed a 50-year lease agreement. Upon the completion of the High Court's assessment proceedings and landowners being duly compensated, NPS assumed management authority over national

park lands and waters within the leased premises. The development of a general management plan allows the National Park of American Samoa to begin the next phase of its development.

## **SCOPING MEETINGS**

In October 1994, the NPS planning team held scoping meetings in American Samoa for the purpose of receiving input from key ASG officials and the councils of the villages with lands in the national park on the issues they believed should be addressed in the general management plan. The initial meeting was held with the Governor of American Samoa. The Governor gave his full support to the development of the National Park of American Samoa. The planning team then met with the High Court of American Samoa to discuss undertaking the preparation of the general management plan. Following these meetings, the planning team met separately with the councils in each of the eight villages with lands presently included within the leased premises. NPS team members stressed at each of the meetings that the general management plan for the National Park of American Samoa was to be prepared in an open manner and that throughout its development the views and advice of the village councils would be sought.

During the scoping meetings, village council members raised several concerns and asked questions related to the plan's development. These tended to be specific in nature and, in summary, consist of the following:

- the need to locate and clearly identify and mark national park boundaries;
- asking whether national park lands could be used for subsistence purposes and whether certain plants within the park could still be grown for medicinal purposes;
- what happens when lands in the national park are cleared by village members "unnecessarily";
- what kinds of economic opportunities will the national park offer to the villages;
- the remains of ancient villages are located within what is now the national park and there are still graves in these

abandoned villages — these are regarded as special places;

- what "nuisances" related to village lands within the park should be handled by NPS and what "nuisances" should be handled by the village councils;
- entrance fees, and who would be able to charge them;
- being able to select individuals from the villages to assist NPS in trail construction;
- bringing in exotic animal species to the national park; and
- asking NPS to consider paying the villages from five to 25 years in advance for the leasing of their lands.

The last four issues were judged to be unrelated to the preparation of a general management plan. These were either answered at the scoping meetings or were subsequently addressed separately by the park superintendent.

At the village scoping meetings, there was general agreement by all the councils that NPS should proceed with the preparation of a general management plan for the National Park of American Samoa. Further, it was agreed at each village meeting that the council would appoint a committee of two to three individuals to represent them at future meetings to discuss village matters related to the general management plan and the National Park of American Samoa. Committee members would report back to the council and then pass on to NPS the thoughts, opinions, or blessings of their respective council on national park related matters.

In March 1995, additional scoping meetings were held in American Samoa on the preparation of the general management plan. These meetings were held with appropriate agencies of the ASG and the local representatives of U.S. government agencies to solicit their views on what issues needed to be addressed during the development of a general management plan. Concerns raised at these meetings included the following:

- the recent increase in the feral pig population in the uplands of Tutuila and Ta'u and the damage being

caused by these pigs to the native forest and subsistence agriculture.

- the absence of any drinking water standards in the villages adjacent to the national park.
- the opportunities for undertaking cooperative research projects with NPS on native forest birds, inshore fisheries, native snails, and flying foxes.
- the possible use of ASG hunting and fishing regulations within the national park.
- the importance of the National Park of American Samoa in the implementation of the Tourism Task Force's 5-Year Tourism Action Plan.
- the need to remove the unsightly trash dump chute within the national park on the outskirts of Vatia village.
- the mutual benefits produced by the national park interacting with the American Samoa Community College.

## **PLAN ISSUES**

Broadly, issues that are to be addressed in the preparation of this general management plan are: (1) development of park access and facilities, (2) caring for park resources, (3) interpreting park resources for visitors, and (4) ensuring the continuation of the traditions and customs of the Samoan culture within the park.

### **Development of Park Access and Facilities**

The issue here is the location, type, and extent of the access and facility development to be proposed for the national park. Access must be provided that is safe for visitors and appropriate in that it does not adversely affect park resources. Similarly, any facilities that are developed within the national park should not adversely affect park resources. Also, facilities should not interfere with traditional village subsistence activities and therefore should be kept to a minimum and carefully sited.

As this is a new national park, no facilities, including access, have yet been developed by NPS. In order to become fully operational, facilities are needed for visitor services and safety, resource management, and park maintenance and administration.

Existing access to the Tutuila unit is primarily via the paved road that runs along the perimeter of the upper end of Pago Pago Harbor. Lateral roads lead to Fagasa Pass at the national park's western end and to Afono Pass at its eastern end. The latter lateral road also leads to the nearby villages of Afono and Vatia. From the Fagasa Pass national park entrance, visitors can hike to the top of Mt. Alava via an unpaved road originally built to service the TV transmitters located there and still being used for that purpose. Additionally, there was once a foot trail over Maugaloa Ridge from Leloaloe village on the Pago Pago Harbor side to the village of Vatia. However, since the completion of the road to Vatia several years ago, this trail has become overgrown with vegetation and is presently impassable. Previously, access to the TV transmitters was possible also via the aerial tramway that runs from Solo Hill across Pago Pago Harbor up to the top of Mt. Alava. Presently, this aerial tramway is in a state of disrepair and has been inoperable for several years.

Access to the Ta'u and Ofu units is available via commercial interisland air carrier from Tutuila's Pago Pago International Airport. Air service to Ta'u and Ofu consists of several daily flights. From the airport located next to the village of Fitiuta, access to the Ta'u unit is via the unpaved road running south through the village. South of the village and within the national park, the unpaved road narrows. Beyond Siu Point, the unpaved road becomes a foot path used only occasionally by village subsistence farmers to get to and from their crops.

From the airport on the island of Ofu, access to the Ofu unit is accomplished by an easy walk or ride to the east via the unpaved road extending along the south coast of the island.

The only usable development presently within the national park is the structure described in the lease as a "Guest Fale" located atop Mt. Alava within the Tutuila unit. Office space for park headquarters is presently being leased through the General Services Administration. The present park headquarters office, located in the village of Pago Pago outside of the national park, is regarded

to be a temporary location for visitor contact until a suitable and permanent facility can be found.

### **Caring for Park Resources**

The issue that needs to be addressed here is how to carry out the legislative purpose of the national park to "preserve and protect the tropical forest and archaeological and cultural resources... and of associated reefs, to maintain the habitat of flying foxes," and "preserve the ecological balance of the Samoan tropical forest..." The legislative requirement that traditional subsistence agriculture, cultural, gathering, and fishing uses are to be permitted in the park also needs to be addressed in the context of overall NPS resource management.

Through the Cooperative Park Studies Unit (CPSU) at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, studies of the park's botany, flying foxes, archeology, ethnography, and marine and coral reef resources have been undertaken. Most of these studies are now complete. Base maps of the national park have been prepared and recorded on computer aided design and drafting (CADD) and geographic information systems (GIS). These maps contain information on topography, vegetation, and land use for the entire park and the Ofu reef has been mapped on large-scale GIS. Detailed infra-red aerial photo coverage of the Tutuila, Ta'u, and Ofu unit was obtained in October 1994. There is also available aerial photo coverage of the park taken in 1984 and 1990. These photos are to be analyzed and used in managing the park resources, particularly subsistence uses of park lands and waters. Studies prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and ASG's Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources are available and contain useful information related to the natural resources of the national park. All of the above provide NPS with sufficient baseline information needed to begin the preparation of a general management plan for the preservation and protection of the park's natural and cultural resources.

As part of the ethnographic overview and assesment prepared for the national park, knowledgeable local individuals were interviewed so that NPS may learn more about the kinds of traditional uses that once existed within the national park, as well as those which presently exist. At this time NPS does not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the extent and nature of

subsistence uses now occurring within the national park to determine the impact, if any, on the park's native ecosystem.

Many contemporary Samoans possess an impressive knowledge about the natural world. This knowledge has been acquired by direct observation and folk wisdom passed on from generation to generation. In managing the resources of the national park in accordance with legislative requirements, NPS will gain important insights into the workings of the native ecosystem by seeking out and listening to Samoans with this kind of expertise.

A resource management plan, the first, has been prepared for the national park. It contains detailed project statements proposing specific actions for dealing with what are presently thought to be the park's most pressing natural and cultural resource issues.

Within the National Park of American Samoa, natural and cultural resource values are intertwined and cannot be separated into two distinct categories. The tropical forest, which once covered practically all of the land surface of the islands of the archipelago, is part of and woven into the Samoan culture. Within the national park, natural resources and processes are to be protected and preserved. Similarly, cultural and archeological resources and their settings are to be preserved and protected. Because of this complex interrelationship of natural and cultural values, resource management at the National Park of American Samoa will be both challenging and unique.

### **Interpreting Park Resources for Visitors**

The issue to be addressed is the carrying out of the legislative requirement that says... "consistent with the preservation of these resources, to provide for the enjoyment of the unique resources of the Samoan tropical forest by visitors from around the world." Since this is a newly established national park located a great distance from the U.S mainland and other major points of origin, visitation is still very low. The number of tourists presently visiting American Samoa has averaged a little over 8,000/year over the past five years. However, this will undoubtedly change as the National Park of American Samoa becomes better known.

As a new national park not yet fully operational with limited facilities for providing visitor services, the general management plan needs to identify the park's broad interpretive themes,



propose locations for informational and interpretive facilities, identify a range of visitor needs, and establish direction for an interpretive program, including the kinds of interpretive services that will need to be provided. The identification of visitor services will be based on assumptions regarding the kinds and numbers of visitors the National Park of American Samoa is likely to receive in the coming decades. Visitation to this national park will be international, U.S., and local. In the foreseeable future, visitation is expected to remain comparatively low, but the number of visitors is expected to increase at a slow but steady rate as this national park becomes better known and as visitor use facilities are developed.

The purpose of interpretation at the National Park of American Samoa is to instill in the visitor an understanding and an appreciation for the park's significant and unique resources, including the Samoan culture, and to provide necessary information and orientation to ensure that all visitors will have a safe and enjoyable experience. At this national park, interpretation needs to provide local users, including school groups, with educational information to permit a better understanding of the park's resources and the national park system as a whole.

In addition, since the intent of Congress is "to provide for the enjoyment of the unique resources of the Samoan tropical forest by visitors from around the world", it is incumbent upon park management to devise and develop interpretive media and devote appropriate financial resources to help achieve this global objective. Park staff must interface not only with the tourism community of American Samoa, but also with the tourism communities of the United States, nearby South Pacific island nations and other countries of the world (notably Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France).

### **Continuing the Traditions and Customs of the Samoan Culture**

The concern to be addressed here is that during the development of this general management plan and beyond, NPS needs to be mindful not only of providing for the continuation of subsistence uses within the park by native American Samoans, but also that we are the caretakers of someone else's lands. The purpose of the Act of 1916 to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic

objects and the wildlife therein" is consistent with the traditional Samoan way of caring for forest lands and marine resources.

The national park idea and the desire of Samoans to protect the integrity of their rainforest and their traditional way of life, called **fa'asamoa**, are compatible and, in fact, reinforce each other. This has been evidenced several times. At one of the village scoping meetings, a high talking chief stated that, in his view, the assessment proceedings leading to NPS's assuming management authority over park lands had served to strengthen the traditional and customary authority of the village council over undeveloped and forested village lands, adding that he was glad that the national park would be helping to preserve **fa'asamoa**. In a letter to NPS, the Governor of American Samoa noted that one of the many benefits of the National Park of American Samoa has been the strengthening of the authority of the village councils. The governor called this an unexpected benefit and one that reinforces Samoan customs.

# **GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **DEVELOPMENT OF PARK ACCESS AND FACILITIES**

The proposed action calls for the development of those facilities needed to operate the National Park of American Samoa. Facility development proposed within the national park is to be limited. Whenever and wherever possible, NPS will attempt to utilize existing facilities located outside park boundaries. These facilities will be leased for a reasonable period of time in order to achieve park objectives.

Visitor access to the national park's natural and cultural attributes is to be developed in ways that do not adversely affect park resources or unduly interfere with existing village activities, including traditional subsistence uses. In providing for visitor access to the national park, every attempt will be made to take advantage of existing facilities.

In conjunction with developing access, NPS will clearly identify and mark with road signs all major entrances to the three units of the national park at those locations where access already exists or is to be developed. Also, at certain locations the boundaries of the national park will be marked with sign posts.

NPS proposes that the development of facilities within the park be limited only to those necessary to care for the park's resources, to permit visitor enjoyment of those resources, and to carry out required park maintenance activities. It is proposed that no new roads be built in the park. For the foreseeable future, the existing road within the national park from Afono to Vatia is to be maintained by ASG. There is to be no widening of the pavement or other additions within this road corridor. Only those improvements that are connected with safety are to be made.

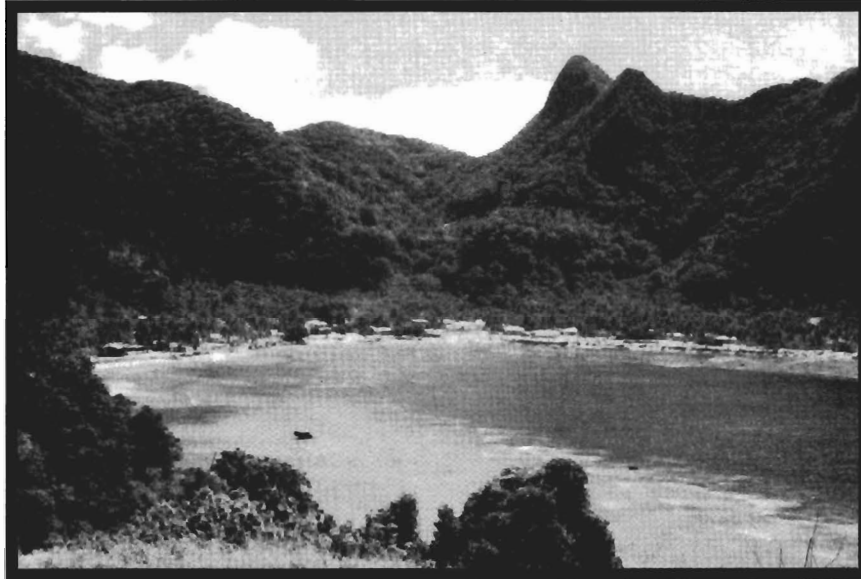
Within the national park, visitor access is to be primarily via a system of hiking trails. In addition to hiking trails, proposed access to the Tutuila unit will be via an aerial tramway to the top

of Mt. Alava. In some cases, existing trails will be used and upgraded to NPS standards. In other cases, where needed, new trails will be built. With the exception of small, lightweight, narrow-axle utility vehicles to be used by NPS for resource management, patrol, emergency, or maintenance purposes, no motorized vehicles, including those with 4-wheel drive, will be allowed on trails within the national park. The only exceptions to this policy will be (1) the subsistence farmers from the villages of Pago Pago or Fagasa who are presently using the existing dirt road along the Mt. Alava ridge, or those farmers from Fitiuta village who are using the existing dirt road within the Ta'u unit to carry out traditional subsistence agricultural activities, and (2) the use of ASG vehicles on the dirt road to Mt. Alava to be limited to those carrying out needed maintenance and repair work on the TV transmitters that cannot be done using the aerial tramway. Any work on the Mt. Alava road must first be approved by the national park superintendent.

No overnight lodging facilities are proposed for construction within the national park. Instead, NPS proposes that visitors — those from the U.S. and internationally — look to the villages located near to the national park to provide food and lodging as a part of their "national park" experience. It is believed that visitors to the national park will appreciate and enjoy being able to spend some time in a village to learn firsthand about the Samoan culture in a traditional setting.

Consequently, it is proposed that some of the visitor services usually provided in national parks by NPS through concession operators be furnished instead by the villages — that these villages, if they so choose, act as "gateways" to the national park. Such services might consist of making guest *fale* (traditional Samoan structures) within the villages available to visitors as overnight accommodations — perhaps even offering "bed and breakfast" services. Other services might include offering traditional Samoan food and beverage service, the sale of Samoan handicrafts, and the provision of NPS-trained village guides to lead visitors to nearby places of interest within the national park. This service could be in the form of walking tours or boat tours.

Those visitor services provided by village people will be a source of economic benefit to that village. NPS will work with ASG and the village councils to help establish fair and reasonable rates for those visitor services to be provided by the villages.

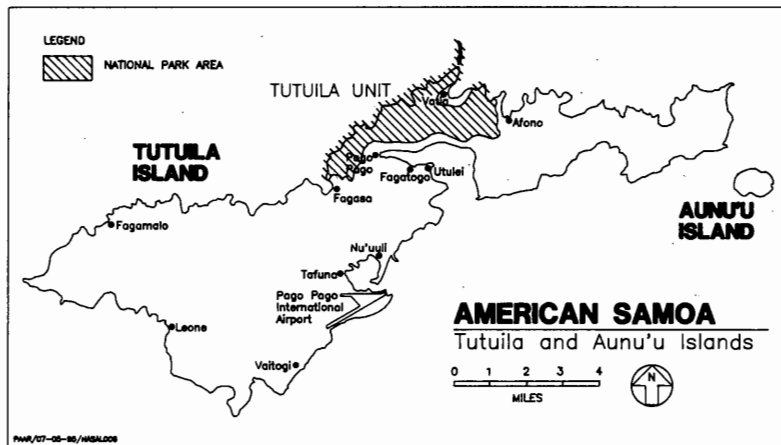


The picturesque village of Vatia is nestled on three sides by the Tutuila unit of the national park. Vatia and other villages located near the park would have the opportunity to provide different kinds of services to national park visitors — overnight accommodations, the sale of traditional handicrafts, and guided tours.

The provision of any of these services would, of course, be up to each of the villages. In keeping with having these services be a part of the visitor's national park experience, NPS will train village guides to become familiar with applicable Service policies and regulations. Tours will be kept low-key — walking tours will be in small groups and boat tours along the north shore of Tutuila or along the southern coast of Ta'u will be in small craft with properly licensed operators.

### **Tutuila Unit**

Road signs clearly marking entrance points to the Tutuila unit are proposed near the existing trailhead at Fagasa Pass and also at Afono Pass. Park road signs marking entrance points will also be placed along the Afono/Vatia road near Craggy Point/Matape Hill and on that same road above Vatia Bay. Sign posts to mark the national park boundary will be erected at regularly spaced intervals above Vatia village and along the base of Polauta Ridge. Sign posts will also be erected along the national park side of Fagasa Bay to mark the national park boundary from the ridge top down to Siufaga Point. The park boundary next to Afono village will be marked in the vicinity of Afono Pass and above the village's western side. All existing inholdings will be clearly marked with sign posts.

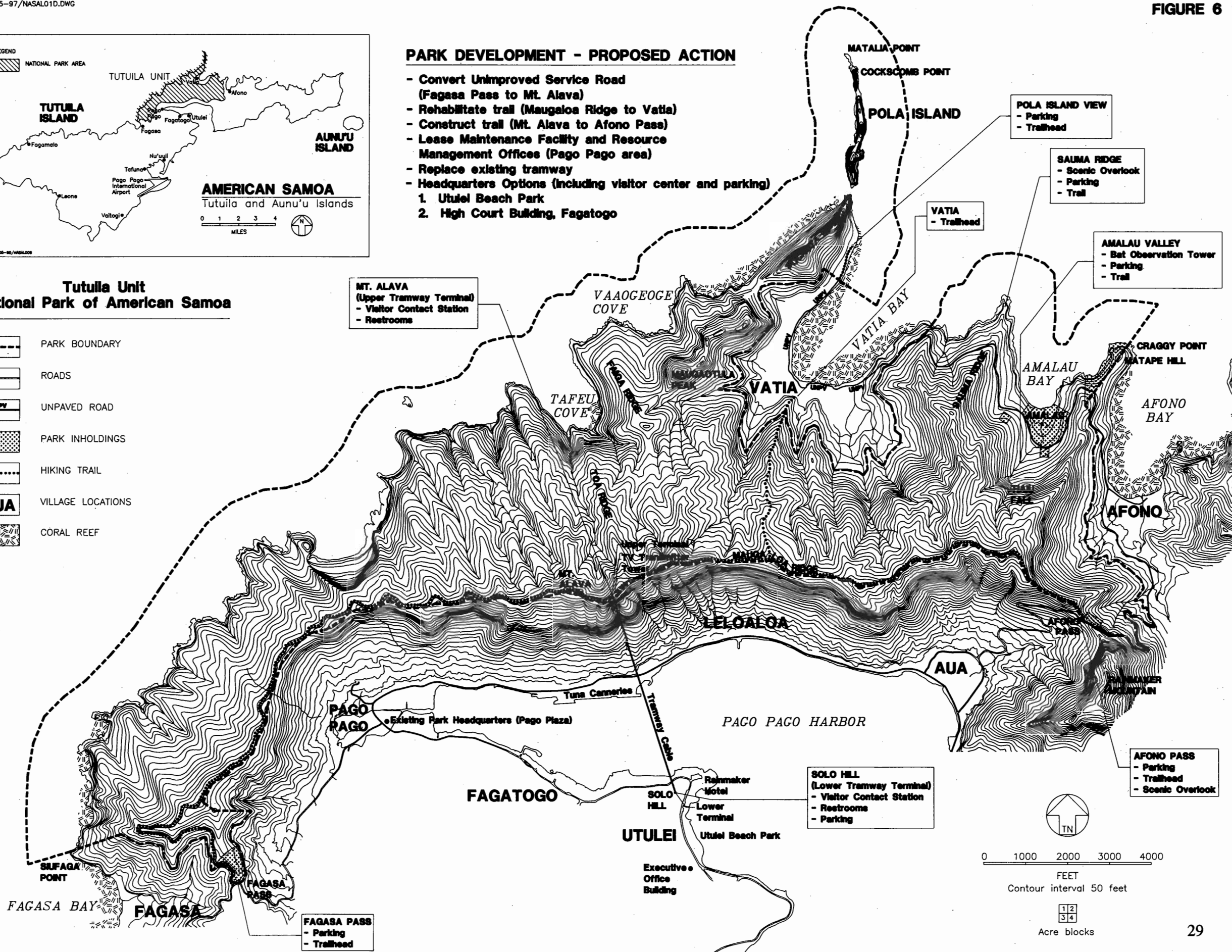


**PARK DEVELOPMENT - PROPOSED ACTION**

- Convert Unimproved Service Road (Fagasa Pass to Mt. Alava)
- Rehabilitate trail (Maugaiea Ridge to Vatia)
- Construct trail (Mt. Alava to Afono Pass)
- Lease Maintenance Facility and Resource Management Offices (Pago Pago area)
- Replace existing tramway
- Headquarters Options (including visitor center and parking)
  1. Utulei Beach Park
  2. High Court Building, Fagatogo

**Tutuila Unit  
National Park of American Samoa**

- PARK BOUNDARY
- ROADS
- UNPAVED ROAD
- PARK INHOLDINGS
- HIKING TRAIL
- VILLAGE LOCATIONS
- CORAL REEF



**MT. ALAVA**  
(Upper Tramway Terminal)  
- Visitor Contact Station  
- Restrooms

**POLA ISLAND**  
- Parking  
- Trailhead

**SAUMA RIDGE**  
- Scenic Overlook  
- Parking  
- Trail

**AMALAU VALLEY**  
- Bat Observation Tower  
- Parking  
- Trail

**VATIA**  
- Trailhead

**CRAGGY POINT**  
- Matape Hill

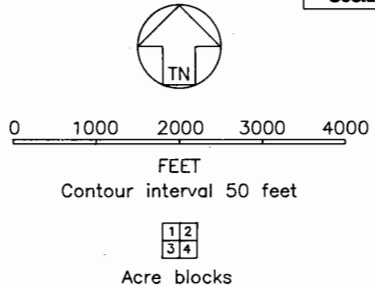
**AFONO BAY**

**AFONO**

**SOLO HILL**  
(Lower Tramway Terminal)  
- Visitor Contact Station  
- Restrooms  
- Parking

**AFONO PASS**  
- Parking  
- Trailhead  
- Scenic Overlook

**FAGASA PASS**  
- Parking  
- Trailhead



On Tutuila, ASG will maintain the existing paved road from Afono to Vatia within the park. This road is to be held to its present width for motor vehicles and maintained to NPS standards. A scenic overlook is proposed along this road on the ocean side of Sauma Ridge to provide visitors with views and interpretation of Pola Island and its seabirds. The overlook will consist of a covered, railed platform containing wayside exhibits. Visitors will access the overlook via a short foot path. Parking will be developed adjacent to the road.

At Amalau Valley, a covered observation platform is proposed a short distance from the road. The raised, railed platform will allow visitors to view the flying foxes who frequent this area. The observation platform will be sited so as to not disturb the feeding habits of the flying foxes. Parking will be developed adjacent to the road.

The existing coastal forest trail leading to close-up views of Pola Island will be upgraded and maintained to NPS standards. In consultation with the Vatia village council and with their approval, a trailhead with parking and a vehicle turn-around will be developed at the end of the unimproved road.

The existing unpaved, service road leading up to the TV transmitters atop Mt. Alava will be narrowed, reconditioned, and rehabilitated into a hiking trail. Portions may be rerouted in order to take advantage of scenic views or to avoid environmentally fragile or unsafe areas. At appropriate locations scenic overlooks will be installed along the trail to provide views of the rugged, pristine north shore and of Pago Pago Harbor to the south. Rehabilitation measures will include allowing the native vegetation along the route of the road to grow thereby narrowing the present tread and corridor width, and improving the drainage and reducing erosion by installing water bars and other appropriate corrective measures. This trail will be used primarily by visitors to hike up to the top of Mt. Alava, and also by village subsistence farmers and gatherers and NPS resource management and maintenance personnel. Except for NPS-operated utility vehicles, ASG vehicles doing required maintenance or repair work on the TV transmitters, and vehicles used by subsistence farmers to tend their existing agricultural plots, no motor vehicles will be allowed on the Mt. Alava trail.



The general management plan proposes to make the unpaved service road from Fagasa Pass to the top of Mt. Alava a hiking trail for visitors. Trail crews will install water bars to restore the natural drainage, eliminate standing water, and remove trash.

Visitor parking for vehicles will be improved on the edge of the national park at Fagasa Pass where a trailhead is proposed. Capacity for the parking facility here will be for no more than four to six cars. A trailhead is also proposed at Afono Pass requiring the construction of a visitor parking area there. The existing terrain and the inholding here limits the capacity of this facility to only a few cars. The Afono Pass trailhead will be the terminus for a proposed hiking trail to be constructed from the top of Mt. Alava east along the crest of Maugaloa Ridge down to the pass, a distance of about two and one-half miles. The exact routing of this proposed trail will depend upon NPS obtaining additional information regarding flying fox habitat, native vegetation, and cultural resources in this particular area.

It is proposed to rehabilitate that portion of the cross-mountain trail from the crest of Maugaloa Ridge down to the village of Vatia. This trail, which originally ran from Leloaloe on the Pago Pago Harbor side up over the ridge crest and down into Vatia, is now overgrown with vegetation and nearly impassable. Portions of this trail may have to be re-routed at the Vatia end so as to not disturb village residents. At the Vatia end, a trailhead is proposed on village lands outside of the national park. The exact location for this trailhead is to be determined at a later date following consultation with the Vatia village council.



The aerial tramway that now crosses above Pago Pago Harbor to the top of Mt. Alava is to be replaced with a new system to be used to bring national park visitors into the Tutuila unit. Use of the tramway is part of NPS's and the public's access rights under the lease agreement. NPS believes the tramway provides an ideal way to bring large numbers of visitors into the Tutuila unit without adversely affecting park resources — that is, no new roads will need to be built within the national park to access prime scenic views and park resources. The operation of the tramway also permits the closing off of the unpaved road to the top of Mt. Alava to most of the ASG 4-wheel drive vehicles who now must use it to maintain and service the TV transmitters located there (ASG vehicles will be allowed on the rehabilitated hiking trail only to do work on the TV transmitter that cannot be performed by using the tramway or during emergency conditions when the tramway is not in operation).

The tramway would also enhance the visitor experience by providing them with a spectacular view of the entire Pago Pago Harbor and the Mt. Alava-Maugaloa Ridge summit area of the national park. Instead of returning via the tramway, visitors could choose to hike down on trails leading to Fagasa Pass, Afono Pass, or Vatia village, with the option of either returning to their hotel in Pago Pago on an **aiga** bus (small, individually-owned, multi-passenger vehicles modified for public transport) or staying overnight in one of the villages and returning to Pago Pago the next day.

The tramway, now administered by the ASG's Office of Public Information, has not been in operation for some time. It is presently in a serious state of disrepair and has been judged to be unsafe for public use. In July 1995, under interagency agreement, the condition of the existing aerial tramway was assessed on-site by a U.S. Forest Service tramway engineer to determine the nature and extent of the work needed to bring the tramway system up to federal safety standards for public use. As a result of the on-site inspection, the tramway engineer concluded that the condition of the tramway had deteriorated to the extent that it needed to be replaced by a completely new system. Consequently, it is proposed that the existing aerial tramway be removed and a new system installed.

The removal of the existing aerial tramway and the installation of a new system should be funded by ASG or their cooperators. NPS

will contribute to the funding for the design engineering of a new tramway system.

ASG believes restoring the operation of the tramway is of vital importance to the future of tourism in American Samoa and the governor has included a funding request for the upgrading of the tramway in ASG's capital improvement program. Should the existing aerial tramway be replaced, it is anticipated that, at least in the initial phases of its operation, the new tramway would continue to be operated and maintained by ASG. In order for national park visitors to use the tramway, it will need to be operated and maintained to federal safety standards. ASG should charge a reasonable fee for the ride and provide measures required by NPS for ensuring passenger safety and the 24-hour security of the tramway infrastructure.

In conjunction with the construction of a new aerial tramway system by ASG, it is proposed that NPS provide improved access/parking and new restroom facilities at Solo Hill (the lower terminus of the tramway) for national park visitors. Further, it is proposed that the existing pavilion structure located at the top of Solo Hill be torn down and, using the existing concrete base, a new one constructed. This new facility will provide scenic views of the Pago Pago Harbor and the national park. Interpretive exhibits will be installed within the reconstructed pavilion. New restrooms will be constructed nearby. The existing access road to the lower tramway terminal will need to be improved to allow the local **aiga** buses easy access to the proposed parking/turn-around area. The land on which the above improvements are proposed is owned by ASG, but outside of national park boundaries.

It is proposed that NPS enter into a long-term cooperative agreement with ASG prior to the expenditure of funds to develop any of the above facilities. Water and electricity are available on-site and a newly-installed sewer line runs nearly all the way up the Solo Hill access road. Following construction, pedestrian walkways will be installed and the area landscaped.

The existing pavilion ("guest fale") located a short distance from the tramway's upper terminus on Mt. Alava is proposed for upgrading for visitor interpretation. Upgrading will consist of raising the roof-line to improve views of the national park and the harbor area below plus the installation of interpretive exhibits inside. No potable water is presently available at the summit area.

A self-contained, composting type of restroom facility is proposed near the pavilion. Access also will be improved to the "guest fale" located on the far side of the TV transmitter facilities. The electronic transmission and reception facilities will be fenced off and screened with plantings. Following construction activities, the summit area will be cleared of debris and landscaped with native plantings.



The National Park Service proposes the modification of the pavilion or "guest fale" located atop Mt. Alava for future use by visitors as an interpretive center. Interpretive exhibits illustrating the natural and cultural resources of this national park will be placed here.

For the Tutuila unit, the Rainmaker Hotel provides the most convenient, large-scale, overnight accommodations for visitors to the national park. Additionally, there are several other existing facilities offering overnight accommodations in the Pago Pago Harbor area. It is anticipated that a great many of the visitors to the Tutuila unit will choose to utilize the aerial tramway as their means of access to the national park. Solo Hill, the lower terminus, is located just a short distance from the Rainmaker Hotel. The colorful, individually-owned and operated **aiga** buses providing public transportation throughout Tutuila could easily provide a reliable, regular shuttle service for national park visitors between the Rainmaker Hotel and other points of departure and the aerial tramway at Solo Hill.

It is expected that the Tutuila unit will receive the greatest number of national park visitors. American Samoa's international airport

is located on Tutuila, as are most of the commercial establishments related to tourism such as hotels, restaurants, and car rentals.

A central visitor center is needed on Tutuila to provide basic information and orientation services for all visitors to the National Park of American Samoa. The proposed visitor center will also provide information to visitors about other tourist attractions located throughout American Samoa and in Western Samoa as well. This facility needs to be located in close proximity to the national park in a central location with convenient, easy access for visitors.

A visitor center/headquarters structure needs to be large enough to provide basic information, orientation, and interpretive services to park visitors and house park management and administrative staff. An entrance lobby area containing an information counter large enough for the display and sale of educational publications and materials is needed. Space is also needed at the visitor center for the display of museum objects and exhibits related to the national park and the Samoan culture.

It is anticipated that eventually the visitor center might logically serve as a repository for Samoan archeological and ethnographic collections. This function would require additional space. At the proposed visitor center, offices and work spaces will be needed for the superintendent, chief ranger, administrative staff, interpreters, a park curator of museum collections, and cooperating association personnel. Space also will be needed to store publications, supplies, and equipment. Visitor restrooms are needed, and the building must be made accessible to disabled and elderly visitors. Adjoining the structure or nearby, additional space will be needed for visitor parking. A minimum of 20 spaces for cars and 4 spaces for buses will be needed and a loading/offloading area for visitors.

Presently, NPS is leasing commercial office space in Pago Pago. Although adequate as a park headquarters to house the existing limited staff, this facility will not meet future space or location needs for a national park visitor center. During the development of this general management plan, several existing buildings and unimproved sites in the Fagatogo and Utulei areas were inspected in terms of their suitability as a visitor center.

Existing buildings looked at as possible national park visitor centers included the Rainmaker Hotel's guest foles, the Territorial Registrar's Office, the Jean P. Hayden Museum, the Courthouse building, the Pago Pago Yacht Club, and the building housing the ASG Tourism Office which, at that time, was also the headquarters of the South Pacific Mini-Games. All of these buildings are outside of national park boundaries, owned by ASG, and all but the Rainmaker Hotel foles are historic properties on the National Register of Historic Places located within the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila Historic District.

None of the existing structures examined appeared to be both suitable and feasible to meet future visitor center needs. Inadequate visitor parking was a major concern at the Rainmaker Hotel, the Registrar's Office, and the Hayden Museum; the Registrar's Office also did not meet the space requirements for a visitor center. The Yacht Club was not available and the Tourism/Mini-Games building appeared to be structurally unsound and no longer in a condition where rehabilitation and modification for future use as a visitor center was judged to be feasible. The latter two buildings are located along the Utulei shoreline within the beach park.

The Courthouse appeared to be feasible--adequate parking was available nearby and the building was spacious enough for use as a visitor center and an administrative headquarters--but at the time of the inspection there was no indication that the building would be vacated by the courts and thus available to NPS in the foreseeable future. In the future, if the Courthouse becomes available, NPS could enter into a long-term lease with ASG. The building could then be renovated to meet the needs for a visitor center and administrative offices for the national park. Any modifications would be undertaken in a manner so that the architectural integrity of the historic building was not degraded.

Unoccupied spaces along the Utulei beach park shoreline were also inspected as potential sites for the construction of a visitor center. The Utulei beach site has several advantages: excellent location - it is next to the Rainmaker Hotel where many national park visitors would stay and near Solo Hill where visitors could take the aerial tramway up to the top of Mt. Alava; there is easy access from the main road; the site affords spectacular views of Pago Pago Harbor, the Mt. Alava-Maugaloa ridge, and Mt. Pioa (Rainmaker Mountain) beyond; utilities (water, sewer, and

electrical) are all available nearby; the land is owned by ASG; and many local people use the park.

There are several concerns connected with the Utulei beach site which need to be addressed before a visitor center could be constructed there. Utulei Beach Park is one of the few parks in Tutuila available for public use. The beach park was built by the U.S. Navy in the 1940's by filling in a marshy area along the Pago Pago Harbor shoreline. The park now consists of an open, grassy area planted with scattered trees, picnic sites, parking, and restrooms. Two historic buildings remain in the park (the U.S. Navy originally built four structures here in the 1940's). The Pago Pago Yacht Club occupies the southernmost building and the ASG Tourism Office the northernmost. The canoe club has built a canoe shed next to their building and this portion of the beach is utilized as a landing and storage area for Samoan racing canoes. A paved parking lot is located next to the yacht club building.

The beach park is used for recreational activities such as picnicking and volleyball and as a gathering place for social activities and events. The waters fronting the beach are used for canoe racing, wind surfing, and kayaking. Proposed future uses of the beach park include constructing a permanent stage for cultural events. The two remaining historic buildings are proposed for refurbishing.

During the past 10 to 15 years, it is estimated that as much as 20 feet of beach front has eroded away despite additional sand being brought in several times to stabilize the shoreline. Beach erosion continues at the rate of approximately one foot per year. The shoreline instability is apparently due to the modifications made to the shoreline and the offshore reef flat, causing an alteration of the natural sediment equilibrium. Studies have been conducted on different ways to stabilize the beach at Utulei. Recommendations include supplying sand nourishment to the beach on a periodic basis and structural improvements. The construction of a visitor center along Utulei beach would be conditioned upon the prior stabilization of the adjacent shoreline.

Utulei beach is located within the Pago Pago Harbor Special Management Area. This designation limits developments to those which are water-dependent, water-related, or are for recreational activities or a public use. Consequently, before a national park visitor center could be built here, the proposed structure would

have to be evaluated to determine its compatibility with the Coastal Management Program for American Samoa (See section on Coastal Zone Management).

If the Utulei beach site proves to be feasible, NPS could enter into a long-term lease agreement with ASG to utilize lands here to build a visitor center structure, parking, and an entrance road. Less than one acre of land would be needed. Another option would be for ASG to build the structure on the condition that NPS agree to enter into a long-term lease arrangement with ASG, thereby guaranteeing a return on their investment. Regardless of whether the proposed visitor center is built by NPS or ASG, the structure would be designed and constructed according to NPS standards.

A park maintenance facility and resource management offices and working labs are also needed in order to carry out those aspects of national park operations for the Tutuila unit. These both need to be located as close as possible to the park's resources, but should be in a different location than the visitor center. The Tutuila unit's resource management and maintenance operations could be co-located. Sufficient space is needed for offices and for the storage of material, equipment, and supplies. These spaces should be secure and suitable for the storage of hazardous materials such as paint, solvents, and petroleum products. Additional space will be needed to permit the secure parking of the park's maintenance and resource management vehicles and for outdoor storage of larger material and equipment.

### **Ta'u Unit**

An entrance sign for the Ta'u unit will be placed along the dirt road at the park boundary line where it extends down to the ocean just to the north of Saua. Boundary marker sign posts will be placed at spaced intervals along the 50-foot contour line above and parallel to the park entrance road.

Within the Ta'u unit, visitor access is to be via hiking trail. No vehicles, except those now being used for subsistence agriculture purposes, are to be permitted within the national park. The existing unpaved road to Saua and beyond is to be maintained to its existing condition. At Siu Point, a vehicle turn-around is proposed. Beyond Siu Point, along the south coast, the dirt road becomes a walking trail. This entire route is to be maintained and,

where necessary, rehabilitated to NPS standards for use by visitors as a hiking trail. Sections of this trail may require rerouting and upgrading for visitor safety.

Saua is very important to the Samoan culture and should be interpreted for visitors. Further south, the level, grassy area near one of the historic wells is proposed for development as a day-use area. However, any visitor use facilities developed by NPS in these areas must not interfere or be inconsistent with the cultural significance of this area — it is a site sacred to Samoans. All developments will be sited a suitable distance from areas of cultural significance.

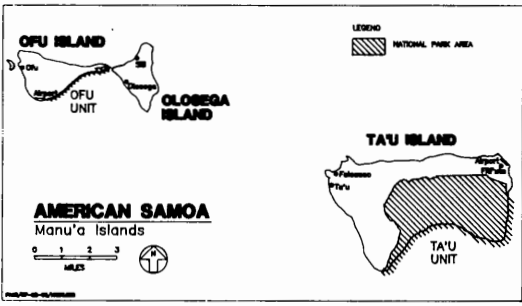
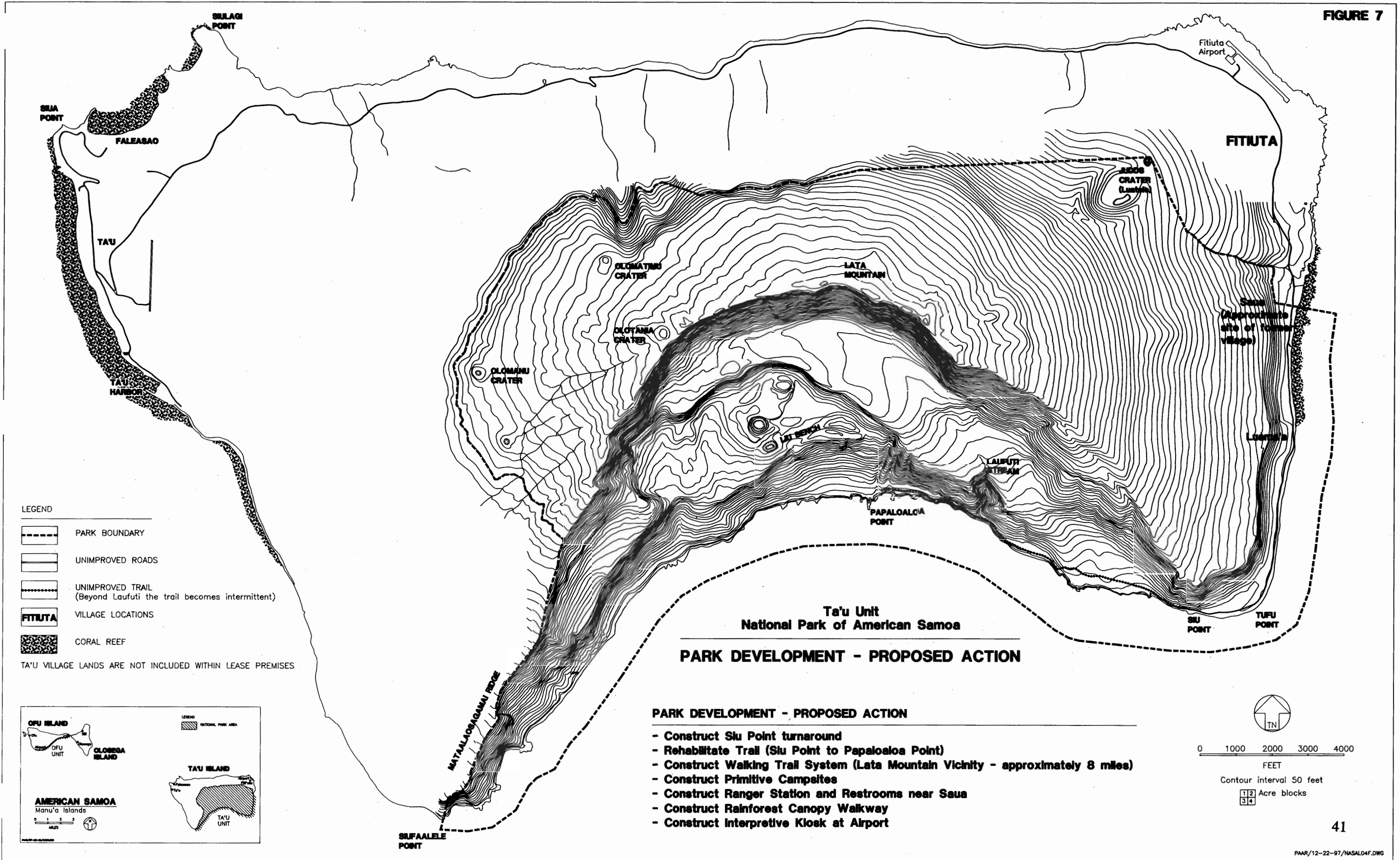
A NPS ranger station is proposed in this general area. This structure is to be low-key and unobtrusive and will serve a number of functions. The multi-purpose facility will be used to support resource management and park maintenance activities and to provide visitors with basic information and orientation to the Ta'u unit. The structure will include space for the storage of materials and equipment. Restrooms are also proposed in the general vicinity. The proposed restrooms will be a self-contained, vault type so that no wastes enter the substrate.



The rugged, scenic shoreline and the unspoiled upland forests of the Ta'u unit of the national park offer visitors a true wilderness experience.

At a suitable location (where trees are large and tall), a suspended, elevated, railed, canopy walkway is proposed to help educate visitors about the rainforest by bringing them closer to the tropical





forest canopy. The proposed elevated walkway will allow visitors to experience the different and diverse species — epiphytes, birds, insects — of this national park. Benches and wayside exhibits will be placed along the walkway.

In order to provide visitors with opportunities to gain access up into the cloud forest environment, a new hiking trail is proposed leading up the slopes of Lata Mountain. Additional trails are proposed in this general area to give visitors access to places like Judds Crater and other significant geologic features found in this rugged upland area. The exact routes of these proposed trails are to be determined at a later time when additional information becomes available about the nature, extent, and fragility of the natural and cultural resources found in these areas. No trails are to be constructed in places where they will adversely affect the natural and cultural resources of the national park. No trails are to be constructed in these upland areas until visitation levels have increased enough warrant their development.

Within the Ta'u unit, limited overnight camping opportunities will be provided for visitors. Appropriate sites will be identified for primitive campsites, pending the securing of additional information on national park natural and cultural resources. These proposed campsites will not be located in areas where important national park resources such as flying fox habitat and archeological features are found. Access to these campsites will be only via hiking trails. Visitors will be expected to carry in all necessary equipment and supplies, including drinking water; no open fires will be permitted. Other than pit toilets, no facilities will be provided by NPS at these sites and maximum occupancy at each site will be six people. Visitors to the upland portions of the national park on Ta'u will be encouraged to use NPS-trained village guides.

As noted, lands within the national park belonging to the village of Ta'u are not part of the leased premises at this time. Consequently, NPS does not possess any leased rights of access to lands belonging to the village of Ta'u. Until the Ta'u village council agrees to lease their lands for national park purposes, NPS will not develop access or facilities on these lands. National park visitors should seek permission from Ta'u village before accessing these lands.

## **Ofu Unit**

Road signs marking the entrance to the Ofu unit will be placed at both the airport and Olosega ends of the national park. The existing boundary of the Ofu unit runs from the ocean side of the coastal road from the top of the beach ridge crest down the beach slope and out beyond the seaward edge of the reef flat. Lying between the beach slope and the sandy road is a narrow band of vegetation. Boundary marker sign posts will be placed at intervals along the ocean side of the existing unpaved road that runs along the south coast of Ofu island.

A modest visitor contact station and restroom facilities are proposed on the inland side of the coastal road. The visitor contact station will provide visitors with information about the coral reef, including potential safety hazards associated with snorkeling and the fragile nature of the marine resources. The proximity of these fragile marine resources preclude visitor use facilities from being developed within national park boundaries. Therefore, these facilities will be located outside of the existing national park boundary on lands owned by families of the village of Ofu. Agreements will need to be worked out with the owners to allow the construction of the proposed visitor contact station and restrooms on their lands. An unused structure exists nearby and may be suitable, with modification, for the storage of resource management and park maintenance materials and equipment. This structure would be leased from the owners.

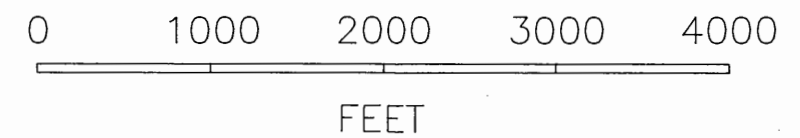
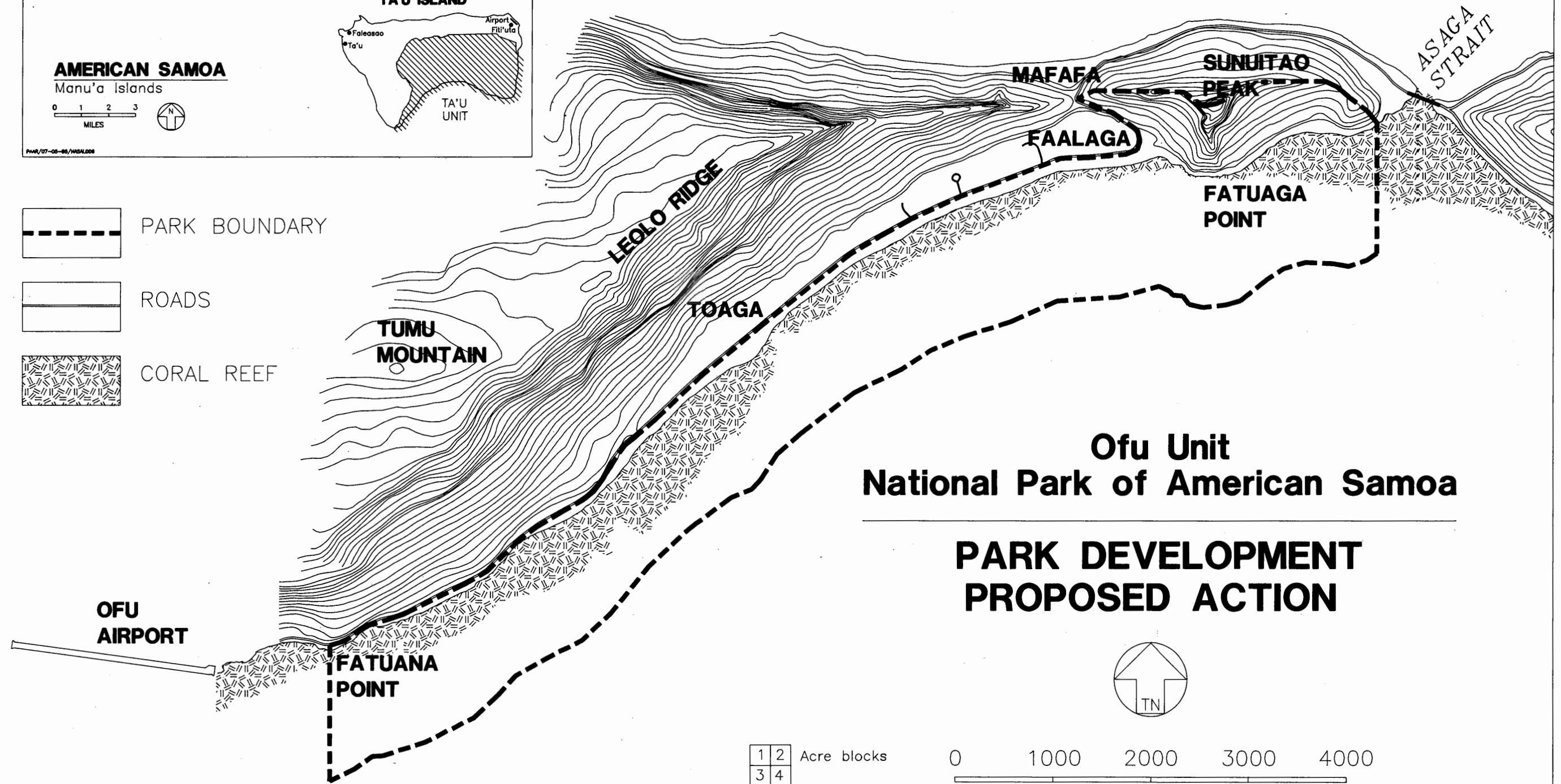
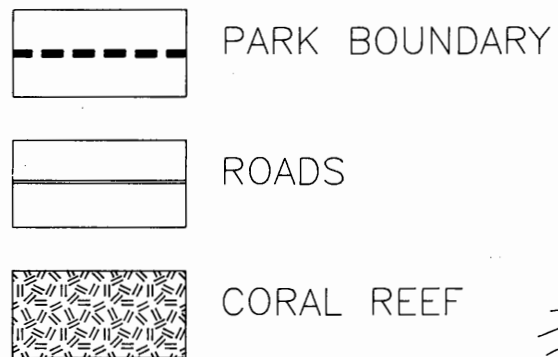
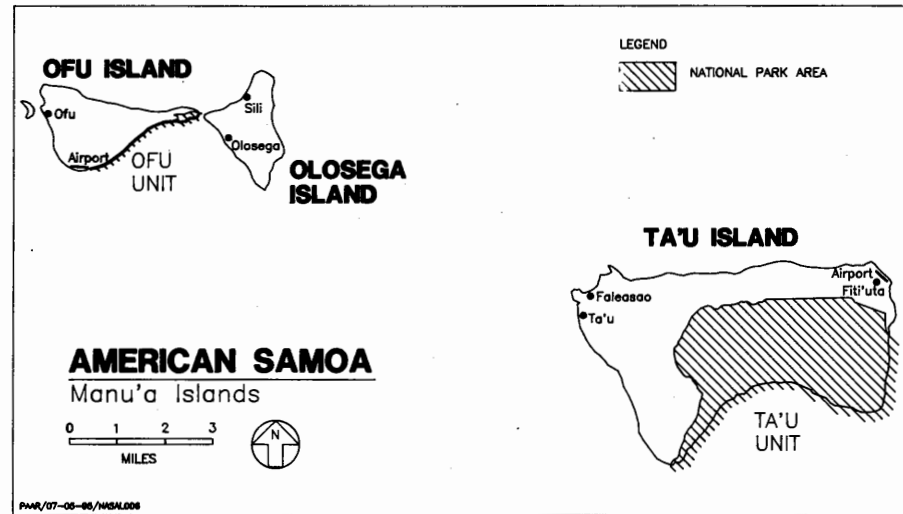
Restroom facilities need to be sited and designed so as to minimize any detrimental effects to marine resources resulting from the presence of waste material, especially during periods of extreme weather. A self-contained, vault system is to be utilized for the disposal of wastes. Since wastes are contained, none would reach the ocean and damage the adjacent coral reef habitat.

No visitor parking facilities are proposed for the Ofu unit. Visitors will likely be coming either directly from the airport or from the Vaoto Lodge or other nearby places offering overnight accommodations. The airport and the Vaoto Lodge are both located within easy walking distance of the Ofu unit. The operators of other overnight accommodations located in the villages of Ofu or Olosega could provide transportation for their guests to the national park.

**FIGURE 8**

**PARK DEVELOPMENT - PROPOSED ACTION**

- Visitor contact station and restrooms
- Interpretive kiosk at airport



Contour interval 50 feet

## **CARING FOR PARK RESOURCES**

Taking care of the natural and cultural resources of the National Park of American Samoa is to be based on the following direction provided by Congress to NPS in Public Law 100-571:

"preserve and protect the tropical forest and archeological and cultural resources..., and of associated reefs, to maintain the habitat of flying foxes, preserve the ecological balance of the Samoan tropical forest..."

"(a)gricultural, cultural, and gathering uses shall be permitted in the park for subsistence purposes if such uses are generally prior existing uses conducted in areas used for such purposes as of the date of enactment of this Act and if such uses are conducted in the traditional manner and by traditional methods. No such uses shall be permitted in the park other than for subsistence purposes."

"(s)ubsistence uses of marine areas of the park shall also be permitted."

At the National Park of American Samoa, implementation of resource management strategies, both natural and cultural, is to be based on scientific data gathered through active research programs. That is, a natural and social science research program is to be established to provide a scientific basis for resource management decisions. Through scientific research, NPS will continue to accumulate data on the natural and cultural resources of this national park and will regularly monitor those resources in order to detect or predict any changes in their condition.

As noted, studies are underway or have already been completed to accumulate baseline information and data on the park's botany, flying foxes, archeology, ethnography, and coral reefs. The ASG Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, in the form of study reports, has accumulated considerable scientific knowledge and baseline information on the terrestrial and marine resources of American Samoa. As NPS continues to undertake studies and research to acquire needed additional baseline information on national park resources, coordination and consultation with this and other ASG agencies will take place. In those instances where there is a recognized shared benefit, NPS will undertake cooperative

research and resource management activities with the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources and other agencies.

In all resource management matters involving endangered or threatened species, NPS will follow policies and procedures covering Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Section 7 consultation will include any actions proposed under this plan that may affect a listed species, a species considered to be a candidate for listing, or a species of concern.

With regard to cultural resource management strategies identified in this general management plan, NPS, pursuant to Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act, will coordinate and consult with the local historic preservation officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. For those actions proposed in this plan involving surface or subsurface disturbance with potential to affect historic properties, NPS will consult with the historic preservation officer prior to any construction activities taking place. Further consultation with the historic preservation officer will take place at the appropriate time on those proposed actions which would require additional site planning and design work.

Although there are presently no listed National Register sites located within the national park, NPS, at the appropriate time and working with the historic preservation office and the affected landowner, will take steps to identify and evaluate historic properties for possible future listing.

At the National Park of American Samoa, natural and cultural resource management issues and the strategies leading to their resolution are often interrelated. In caring for the park's resources, NPS is to be mindful of Samoan cultural traditions such as communal land ownership, the continuance of oral traditions, protecting the integrity of the land, and the status which land provides to a family and village. The degree of success in preserving and protecting the resources of this national park depends greatly on the park superintendent keeping village councils, through their representatives, fully informed in all resource-related matters.

## Natural Resources

Major long-term objectives for taking care of the natural resources of the National Park of American Samoa consist of:

Managing native terrestrial and marine ecosystems with the long-term goal of re-establishing those general conditions found within the national park prior to European contact.

Maintaining, monitoring, and preserving the native tropical forest ecosystem, with emphasis on the populations and habitat of native flying foxes and other rare or sensitive native wildlife.

Controlling recently introduced alien species (species introduced since and as a consequence of European contact) found to threaten native terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

Maintaining species diversity and the existing population structure of the national park's marine and coral reef ecosystems.

Listed below are natural resource management issues that have been identified thus far and the strategies proposed to deal with them.

**Issue.** Native species of flying foxes or fruit bats, whose populations have declined from historic levels, play an important role in the park's ecosystem. Also, preliminary findings suggest that native species of partulid snails are rapidly disappearing due primarily to the onslaught of a predator snail brought into Samoa to control the African tree snail. The four native species of pigeons and fruit doves found within the national park are of particular concern as they are becoming increasingly rare, but are still being hunted for recreational purposes. The Pacific boa, found only within the Ta'u unit, is rarely seen and its population as well as nomenclature status is unknown. Seabird colonies have declined throughout much of the Pacific Islands. Colonies within the national park may represent a significant contribution to their conservation in the region, but at present little is known about them. Also, there is evidence the park's marine resources on Tutuila and Ofu are being over used and that sea turtles utilize portions of these shorelines for nesting.

**Strategy.** Establish baseline inventories and determine population status for native animals which are dependent on the national park's habitats. Give emphasis to flying foxes, tree snails and other native invertebrates such as butterflies, rare native birds such as pigeons and fruit doves, sea turtles, and the Pacific boa. Based on identifying the location of sea turtle nesting sites within the national park, consider closure during the season to protect nests.

**Issue.** The two species of native Samoan and Tongan flying foxes found in the national park act as pollinators and seed dispersers for many of the native plant species and are therefore important to maintaining the health of the tropical forest. Without them, the character and biodiversity of the tropical forest would be seriously impaired. According to the ASG Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, there are approximately 1000 of the Samoan flying fox remaining in American Samoa. While it presently has no formal status under the federal Endangered Species Act, it is likely to be proposed for listing in the near future.

**Strategy.** Monitor flying fox populations, their distribution, and threats to their habitat. Since hunting is not a subsistence activity permitted within the national park, the ASG regulation against the hunting of bats is to be extended permanently within the national park.

**Strategy.** Conduct scientific research to better determine the biological and physical attributes of prime roosting and feeding habitat, to better understand patterns of daily and annual movement of individuals, to better understand the patterns and cause of roost shifting, and to develop more accurate and sensitive methods for population monitoring.

**Issue.** The Ofu unit of the national park is composed of one the best examples of a healthy, intact coral reef in all of the Samoa archipelago and is a unique resource within the U.S. national park system. Though relatively small in size, it is estimated to contain about 150 species of coral, three times the number found in the Caribbean. It is suspected that subsistence overuse may be degrading this resource, and that in the future increased visitor pressure may also contribute to its degradation.



**Strategy.** Refine baseline data and develop monitoring protocols to identify threats, including terrestrial, to the Ofu reef.

**Issue.** Little is known about the coral reefs within the Tutuila and Ta'u units. Surveys of the Tutuila unit's coral reefs is presently taking place. No quantitative data are presently available for either of these areas. The coral reefs within the Tutuila unit may be being impacted by overfishing and sedimentation.

**Strategy.** Continue underwater surveys of the Tutuila unit and begin surveys of the Ta'u national park coastlines to determine the extent, nature, and condition of the coral reefs found there. Begin the compilation of quantitative data.

**Issue.** Laufuti stream, on Ta'u, may be the only perennial stream within the national park. It is known to contain fish and eel species. These may prove to be endemics due to the stream's isolated location in the Samoan archipelago.

**Strategy.** Survey freshwater habitats within the national park, with emphasis on the Laufuti stream, to determine species composition and their vulnerability.

**Issue.** There is considerable evidence that a feral pig problem exists in certain parts of the national park. The rooting activities of this animal are damaging both the native forest and subsistence agriculture plots within the national park.

**Strategy.** Utilizing available expertise, survey pig infested areas to determine the nature and extent of the damage.

**Strategy.** Where needed, and in conjunction with the village councils or their representatives, develop appropriate measures to control feral pigs within the national park.

**Issue.** Aggressive alien plant species have begun to make serious inroads into parts of the national park. Two species, the mile-a-minute vine and Koster's curse, are particularly common within the park. The former is one of the few introduced species that occurs in undisturbed native forest and also threatens crops in disturbed areas. The latter also occurs

in low density throughout the native forest, is a dominant species in sunny places in montane forest, and has become a very serious problem in the cloud forest on Lata Mountain. Preservation of the rainforest requires early diagnosis of alien plant invaders, prompt control measures, and continuous monitoring of the tropical forest.

**Strategy.** Develop biological measures, including the use of tested biocontrol agents, to control the spread of common, aggressive, and harmful alien plant species such as mile-a-minute vine and Koster's curse.

**Strategy.** Develop a long-term alien plant control program to detect the initial entry of identified problem species, to direct control measures where relevant, to monitor the rainforest for signs of any reinvasion of the controlled alien plants, and to map the distribution of these plants in the native forest as a basis for the sustained control of the most aggressive species. Prior to the implementation of any direct control programs, consult with the appropriate village councils.

**Issue.** There is presently a general lack of information on invertebrates within the national park. Preliminary findings suggest that the native partulid snails are rapidly disappearing due mainly to the onslaught of a predator snail brought into Samoa to control the alien African tree snail. This alien predatory species is leading to the demise of native tree snails. On Tutuila, native species are essentially absent except on some isolated islets. The predatory snail was inadvertently introduced on Ta'u with construction material after Hurricane Tusi in 1987 and has since become a serious problem.

**Strategy.** Develop measures to control the introduced predatory snail.

**Issue.** Population explosions of the crown-of-thorns starfish, occurring more than two decades ago, have destroyed coral reefs over much of the Samoa archipelago. It will be many years before these reefs fully recover. At this time, science is not able to definitively say what precipitates these explosions. The Ofu reef was not hit by the infestation. Presently found at the Ofu reef only in small numbers, the

population of this native species has the potential to explode very quickly and could very easily decimate this reef, one of the most pristine in all of Samoa.

**Strategy.** Develop, for immediate implementation, a monitoring protocol and an action plan with environmental compliance should any major outbreak of the crown-of-thorns starfish take place on the Ofu reef.

**Issue.** The Tutuila unit of the national park contains about eight miles of shoreline, the Ta'u unit about six and one-half miles, and the Ofu unit about two and one-quarter miles. Portions of the Tutuila shoreline and benthic resources are receiving heavy subsistence use and the seabirds of Pola Island, the most significant nesting area for seabirds in American Samoa, have been traditionally harvested for generations. There is evidence that non-traditional fish harvesting methods also are taking place along both the Tutuila and Ofu shorelines of the national park. The impacts of these consumptive and destructive uses on fish and other marine organisms along all three shorelines of the national park are unknown.

**Strategy.** Conduct population surveys of seabirds nesting within the park and monitor populations to determine the effect of subsistence harvest over time. Conduct an overall assessment of the condition of the benthic habitat and harvested species for the Tutuila, Ta'u, and Ofu shorelines with the goal of establishing limits to maintain healthy sustainable populations. Give priority to the Ofu shoreline. Prior to the setting of any bag limits, consult with the appropriate village councils or their representatives.

**Issue.** Recent introductions of alien animal species — cats, black and Norway rats, house mice, jungle and common mynas, bulbuls, African snails, marine toads — have all been observed within the national park. It is important to determine the impacts these species are having on the national park's native species.

**Strategy.** Determine the incidence of feral and pest species within the national park, assess the impact caused by these species, and, based on the damage assessment, determine control measures and priorities.

**Issue.** NPS has the authority under the lease agreement to care for only a small part of the natural resources of American Samoa. The national park does not contain sufficient habitat for wide-ranging species such as flying foxes or fruit doves, both of which are presumed to be strong interactors in the ecosystem. Park management must therefore place a high priority on cooperating with ASG agencies, the village councils, and others to assure the long-term viability of these and other native species.

**Strategy.** Working with ASG agencies such as the Departments of Marine and Wildlife Resources, Samoan Affairs, Public Safety, and Public Works, the Department of Commerce, and others, as well as the village councils or their representatives, establish formal review procedures whereby NPS is to be consulted in any matter related to proposed changes or modifications in land uses within or adjacent to the national park. This review will be carried out under the American Samoa Coastal Zone Management Program.

### **Archeological and Cultural Resources**

The broad, long-term objectives for cultural resource management at the National Park of American Samoa are:

Identification, evaluation, protection, management, and interpretation of archeological and cultural sites and features.

Carrying out the protection, management, and interpretation of cultural resources in accordance with the wishes of the village councils.

The following are the cultural resource management issues that have been identified at this time, along with the strategies proposed for dealing with them.

**Issue.** At this time, NPS knowledge of the nature, extent, significance, and location of cultural resources within the national park is very limited and largely unrecorded. No cultural resource inventories or archeological surveys have yet been conducted by NPS. Based on the limited existing knowledge, we speculate that the national park is very rich in cultural resources, including significant archeological sites and features. Before NPS can make any informed decisions

with regard to caring for these resources, additional information is needed about what they are, where they are, and their significance.

**Strategy.** The first step towards acquiring the needed information is the completion of an archeological overview and assessment. The purpose of this study is to compile all existing studies, reports, and archeological surveys done on lands within the national park as well as relevant data from elsewhere in Samoa, to assess the potential for additional sites to exist within the park, and make recommendations for further studies.

**Strategy.** Based on the findings and recommendations contained in the archeological overview and assessment, design field surveys to investigate those areas of the national park judged to have the greatest potential to add to the cultural resource information base. Such surveys will include both systematic and areal studies, and sample transects. Prior to undertaking any on-site surface archeological surveys of national park lands, the park superintendent will consult with the appropriate village councils and landowners.

**Strategy.** Based on the completion of archeological surveys, determine if detailed subsurface surveys (excavations) are needed as well as the appropriate treatment (preservation, stabilization, or restoration) for the archeological and historical sites and features identified within the national park. Archeological resources of the national park are to be either left undisturbed or preserved on-site in a stable condition to prevent degradation. No treatment (stabilization or restoration) will be given to these resources without the prior approval of the appropriate village council. No ancient burials identified within the national park will be disturbed or archeologically investigated without the prior approval of the village council and the descendants of the interred.

**Strategy.** Although the basic management strategy will be to care for cultural resources in situ — that is, leave them undisturbed — NPS will seek to collect and care for those Samoan archeological and historical objects that contribute directly to the understanding and interpretation of the park's themes for display as museum exhibits. These objects will generally come from existing collections. The purpose of the

display is to aid in the understanding of and appreciation for the traditional Samoan culture among park visitors. These objects will either be acquired by NPS or placed on loan to the Service by the owners.

## **Subsistence Resources**

Major long-term objectives associated with maintaining subsistence resources within the national park consist of the following:

Managing existing traditional subsistence agricultural, cultural, gathering and fishing uses within the national park in their present locations with the long-term goal of neither degrading park resources nor diminishing the existing traditional subsistence uses.

Clarifying and reaching agreement with village councils as to the rules or procedures which are to be followed regarding the continuation of the above subsistence uses.

In maintaining subsistence resources, research will be conducted to determine historic and contemporary subsistence uses of park terrestrial and marine resources. The resulting data will be used to develop long-range, sustainable use strategies so that these national park resources will not be adversely affected.

Issues and strategies related to maintaining traditional subsistence resource uses within the national park consist of:

**Issue.** At present, NPS has only very limited knowledge of the nature and significance of the traditional subsistence uses that are either going on now or have historically occurred in the national park. Knowledge of the nature and extent of non-traditional uses and activities within the national park is also very limited. The relationship of subsistence users to the land base and the resources of the national park have not yet been identified or documented. NPS has not inventoried existing subsistence uses within the park, knows very little about the attitudes and practices of present users, and has no way to monitor future subsistence uses or develop mutually acceptable rules regarding these uses. Any potential conflicts between present and past subsistence uses and the preservation and protection of the tropical forest,

archeological and cultural resources, and marine resources of the national park need to be identified and addressed.

**Strategy.** As a first step towards the resolution of any potential conflicts, prepare an ethnographic overview and assessment to document through oral histories and other means the relationship of subsistence users with the lands and waters of the national park, both present and past, to determine the extent, nature, and significance of historic and contemporary traditional subsistence agriculture, cultural, gathering, and fishing uses occurring within the national park.

**Strategy.** Based on the findings and recommendations of the ethnographic overview and assessment, undertake site specific ethnographic studies to document who is using the park's lands and waters for subsistence uses, their attitudes toward subsistence uses, and the extent of their harvest. Determine those places where the gathering of medicinal plants occurs and what plants have medicinal value. Oral histories, life histories, folk wisdom, legends, and myths will be the principal information sources. Park managers will use the information to manage the national park resources, while taking into account the concerns and sensitivities of the Samoan culture.

**Strategy.** Through professional analysis of aerial photos and discussions with users, determine the scope and extent of the lands within the national park being presently used or used in the recent past for traditional subsistence agriculture. Place this information on computer generated park maps and, through consultations with village councils or their representatives, determine a locational baseline for these subsistence agricultural areas within the national park.

**Strategy.** Based on the above information, meet with village councils or their representatives to formulate, clarify, and establish mutually agreed upon rules or procedures that are to be utilized regarding the maintaining of traditional subsistence uses within the national park. Although there will be a set of general procedures regarding subsistence uses applicable to all villages, it is likely that some rules or procedures will apply only to specific villages in order to fit the particular conditions or circumstances existing there.

**Strategy.** Manage the scope of subsistence agriculture uses so that there would be no loss within the national park of primary or mature secondary forest and no adverse effect on the two species of native flying foxes or other native wildlife.

## **INTERPRETING PARK RESOURCES FOR VISITORS**

The Samoan culture is to be a major focus of visitor interpretation at the National Park of American Samoa. The other major focus for interpretation is to be the significant natural resource values of the park — its tropical forests, flying foxes, and coral reefs. The national park's interpretive program will be developed primarily around these two broad themes. Since most visitors will be local residents or international, interpretation will also focus on providing information on the national park system as a whole.

There are two components of the Samoan culture that are to be interpreted: (1) the tangible — that is, the archeological and historical sites and features of the national park and the places where traditional subsistence uses are taking place; and (2) the intangible — that is, the oral history of the Samoan culture, including its myths and legends. Prior to any interpretation for visitors of either component of the Samoan culture, the appropriate village councils will be consulted.

The following broad interpretive themes represent the most important ideas for visitors to understand about the National Park of American Samoa:

The mixed species paleotropical rainforest the national park protects and preserves is of great importance to the United States and other countries since tropical forests are declining worldwide and due to the immense biological, scientific, and medicinal value of plants found within these forests.

Two species of native flying foxes play an important role in pollinating certain plants found within the Samoan rainforest.

**Fa'asamoa**, simply defined as the traditional Samoan way of life, epitomizes the culture of Samoa, is intricately interwoven with the natural environment, and is largely responsible for the relatively unspoiled condition of the tropical rainforest.



The cultural landscape of the national park — the maintaining of traditional subsistence and gathering uses, and identifying and protecting Samoan archeological and historical resources.

Samoa's communal land ownership and the **matai** system have shaped this society for some three thousand years, and now will help shape its relationship with the national park.

The coral reef at Ofu represents one of the best examples of an intact and healthy coral reef ecosystem in all of Samoa.

The geographic location of the Samoan islands at the far end of a great chain of archipelagos has greatly influenced the evolution of the ecosystem of these islands.

As the fiftieth designated national park, the National Park of American Samoa is now an important part of the national park system dedicated to the preservation and visitor enjoyment of the significant natural and cultural resources values of our Nation.

A basic goal of interpretation at the National Park of American Samoa is to give each visitor the opportunity to come away with a basic understanding of the traditional Samoan culture and how, for some three thousand years, it has successfully interacted with the native forest and the offshore waters so that these resources have become woven into the very fabric of the traditional Samoan culture.

NPS will cooperate and consult with the ASG's Office of Tourism, the Hayden Museum, the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, and others, including tourism officials and national park service counterparts in Western Samoa, in developing its interpretive program for the National Park of American Samoa.

The visitor center proposed in the Pago Pago Harbor area on Tutuila is to be the primary contact point for visitors to the national park. Here visitors will receive their basic introduction to the national park and its many significant and unique natural and cultural resources. At the proposed visitor center, activities will include viewing museum objects and exhibits, purchasing cooperating association publications, and viewing audio-visual interpretive programs. NPS interpreters will be on duty at the visitor center to provide personal services to visitors. Visitors will

also be able to receive information about the Ta'u and Ofu units of the national park here, as well as information on tourist attractions throughout American Samoa and in Western Samoa. Interpretive opportunities are also to be scheduled regularly at the visitor center for local school groups. Information on interpretive walking tours of the Tutuila, Ta'u and Ofu units of the national park will be obtained at the visitor center.

At the Pago Pago International Airport on Tutuila, a bulletin case will be installed to provide arriving visitors with introductory information about the national park. Within the Tutuila unit, interpretive services will be provided at the rebuilt pavilion located on Solo Hill near the lower terminus of the aerial tramway. Similarly, interpretation will take place atop Mt. Alava at the rehabilitated pavilion ("guest fale") located near the tramway's upper terminal.

At the Fitiuta airport on the island of Ta'u, a display is proposed to provide arriving visitors with basic information — directions and orientation to this unit of the national park, transportation and food service options, information on overnight accommodations in Fitiuta, guide services, etc. Interpretive services will be provided within the national park at the proposed ranger station in the vicinity of historic Saua. These will include personal services such as guided walking tours to the natural and cultural attributes of the Ta'u unit by NPS interpreters. Wayside exhibits are proposed to interpret the historic well located at Saua, as well as other significant cultural or natural attributes.

There will be like visitor services provided at the Ofu unit. An information exhibit is proposed at the Ofu airport and a small visitor contact station is proposed next to the national park. NPS interpreters will be stationed at the Ofu unit to provide visitors with information about the coral reef and other attractions found here, including informing visitors about the presence of the *ava*, or channel, located at the outer edge of the reef and its potential danger (the presence of rip currents) to visitors.

The visitation at the National Park of American Samoa will fall into two main categories: international visitors, many of whom will be eco-tourists, and local visitors. In the foreseeable future visitor numbers will likely remain relatively low. However, as has historically been the case throughout the United States, the presence of a national park will very likely attract more visitors to

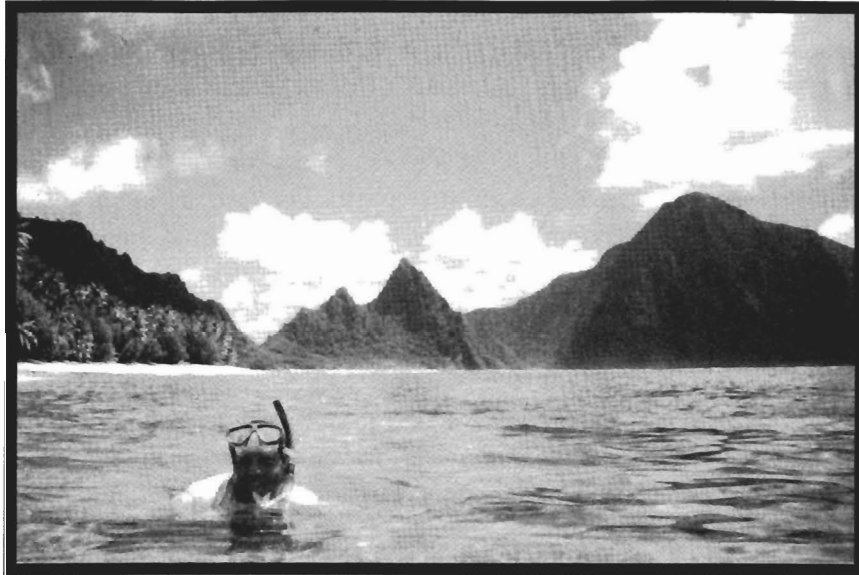
American Samoa. In the coming years, as access and facilities are developed for the national park, it is likely that visitors will be coming to American Samoa as part of commercial tour packages.

As noted, it is proposed that the National Park of American Samoa be developed primarily as a day-use park. Overnight camping will be allowed within the national park only at designated sites within the Ta'u unit. NPS will provide pit toilets at these sites. No other amenities are to be provided. There is to be no overnight camping within the Tutuila and Ofu units.

Visitors are to be provided access to the park's natural and cultural attributes primarily through a system of walking trails. The purpose of this trail system is to provide the visitor with safe and relatively easy access to the park's attributes without adversely affecting its resources. In the upland areas of the national park, visitors will be required to stay on established trails. Cross-country hiking and bushwhacking will not be allowed without permission of the park superintendent and only for approved scientific purposes. All visitor trails will be constructed to NPS standards and appropriately marked with directional signing.

The development of a trail system for visitors will be closely coordinated with the village councils or their representatives. In some instances there may be a need to structure visitor circulation patterns so as to not interfere with traditional subsistence activities going on within the national park. Culturally sensitive or sacred places that villages or families may want to keep private will be avoided and there may be a need to keep visitors away from environmentally sensitive areas such as flying fox roosts or native bird nesting areas.

The flying foxes of the national park and their interrelationship with the plants of the tropical forest will receive special emphasis in the interpretive program. It is proposed that observation platforms, an elevated canopy walkway, and scenic overlooks be constructed at appropriate locations to allow visitors to observe the flying foxes, native forest birds and seabirds without disturbing them. Additional information is needed on the behavior of the flying foxes and native birds before specific sites for these proposed developments can be determined.



The calm, clear waters of the Ofu unit's reef contain about 150 different species of coral, including a highly unusual species 300 years old, and many of the nearly 900 species of reef fish found in Samoa. The reef is easily accessible to snorkelers and offers national park visitors the opportunity to observe firsthand the varied and unique marine life found here.

The Ofu reef provides an outstanding opportunity for visitors to learn about undisturbed tropical reef ecosystems. Opportunities for visitors to snorkel the reef will be provided. However, the coral reef is a fragile resource and an example where in the future visitor use may have to be structured and even limited to prevent damage to marine resources. Continual and careful monitoring will be needed to ensure that this resource is not being degraded by visitors. It is important that a carrying capacity be established for the Ofu reef as soon as possible.

A park-wide signing plan is needed to provide visitors hiking on park trails with clear and concise directional information. Park interpretive signs will be in both the English and Samoan languages. Directional road signs will be standardized in a format that is consistent with this park's purpose. These road signs will be placed at appropriate locations to direct visitors traveling by motor vehicle. A wayside exhibit plan will be needed to identify the specific locations, interpretive messages, and materials to be used for waysides.

Visitors will be advised that at the present time NPS does not have access rights to any of the Ta'u village lands within the national park. No visitor interpretation of the natural or cultural resources

of the Ta'u village lands is to be carried out by NPS until such time as the village landowners formally lease their lands for national park purposes.

## **CONTINUING THE TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS OF THE SAMOAN CULTURE**

Congress, in authorizing the establishment of the National Park of American Samoa, provided special and unusual direction to NPS because of the presence of communal land ownership in American Samoa and the Samoan culture, both of which are unique and not to be found in any other unit of the national park system.

First, the national park was to be established based on a lease agreement with village landowners; second, within this national park Samoan customs are to be maintained; and third, provisions are to be provided for traditional subsistence uses of national park lands and waters.

In authorizing this national park, Congress also required that it be administered by NPS in accordance with the 1916 Act which established the national park system and the other legal authorities the Service has to protect the natural and cultural resources of national parks.

The 1916 Act, NPS's Organic Act, directs the Service to "promote and regulate the use of...national parks... by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks... which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historical objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Another important legal authority which NPS utilizes in caring for the national parks is the 1978 amendment to what is referred to as National Trust Act of 1970. In this amendment, Congress declared that "the protection, management, and administration of these areas (the national parks) shall be conducted in light of the high public value and integrity of the National Park System and shall not be exercised in derogation of the values and purposes for which these various areas have been established,..."



Subsistence fishing by village residents is to be provided for in the national park. Existing traditional subsistence and gathering activities are also to continue — the long-term management goal of the national park being neither to degrade resources nor to diminish the existing level of subsistence uses.

Additional legal authorities used to care for national park resources include the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and the Endangered Species Act of 1972.

The above laws, which provide the authority for NPS to protect the units of the national park system, have much in common with the traditional Samoan way of caring for their "sacred earth" and preserving their cultural heritage. **Fa'asamoa**, literally the Samoan way and the term most commonly used to describe the traditional Samoan way of life, means respecting and adhering to the traditions and customs of the Samoan culture. These traditions and customs largely have been responsible for the relatively unspoiled condition of the tropical rainforest which now makes up the National Park of American Samoa and which NPS has been directed by Congress to "preserve and protect." The **matai** system of lawful, chiefly authority is one of the most important components of **fa'asamoa**. For centuries, the **matai** system has acted to enforce **fa'asamoa** over the lands and waters now placed within the national park.

NPS is to operate this national park in a manner that is consistent with **fa'asamoa** and its **matai** system. The **matai** of the village councils who have agreed to lease their lands for national park

purposes are recognized by NPS as the lawful authority in dealing with many internal village matters related to the national park. NPS is to consult with the village councils in matters pertaining to operation of the national park on village-owned lands. The park superintendent is to work continuously and cooperatively with these village leaders. As noted, the assessment proceedings leading to the establishment of the national park have already served to reinforce the traditional and customary authority of the matai council over their village lands.



The National Park Service is to operate this national park in a manner that is consistent with fa'asamoa and its matai system. The superintendent is to consult regularly with the village councils in matters related to national park operations.

During the scoping meetings held in the eight villages with leased lands within the national park, each of the councils agreed that in order to facilitate this continuous and ongoing communication and consultation with NPS, a committee will be set up to act as the liaison between each of the village councils and the National Park of American Samoa. The park superintendent, in operating this national park, will make effective use of these committees to ensure that there is continuous communication and consultation with each of the councils in carrying out the direction of Congress.

Concurrent with the preparation of this general management plan, the park superintendent is to work with each of the eight village councils through their designated representatives to accomplish the following specific tasks:

Clarify and reach agreement as to the rules or procedures which are to be imposed regarding the maintaining of the Samoan culture and the permitting of traditional subsistence agricultural, fishing, cultural, and gathering uses within the national park.

Clarify and reach agreement on establishing procedures for the elimination of non-traditional practices which are judged to be harmful to national park resources and in conflict with **fa'asamoa** — for example, the use of dynamite or bleach to kill reef fish and other marine life, sand mining, hunting with firearms, building permanent structures for personal use on village lands, cutting old growth forest trees, using non-traditional tools, etc.

Clarify and reach agreement regarding appropriate actions to take when lands in the national park are cleared "unnecessarily." Also, determine whether "nuisances" related to village lands ought to be handled by NPS or handled by the village councils, or whether these "nuisances" ought to be handled jointly. These concerns were raised by a village council at the scoping meetings and therefore need to be addressed. The "nuisances" referred to by the council included some of the examples listed above.

Based on the above, a set of common "ground rules" will be worked out by NPS and the village councils that would apply to all eight villages. There could also be a separate set of rules worked out by the park superintendent with each village council to deal with the special conditions or circumstances which exist there. The park superintendent will deal with each village as a separate entity.

Section 3.(g) of Public Law 100-571 calls for the establishment of an Advisory Board to provide advice to the park superintendent regarding the management of the park. The Advisory Board will deal with those national park issues that are broad in scope — that is, those which cross village boundaries or are external to national park boundaries. Now that the National Park of American Samoa is formally established, the park superintendent is to take all appropriate actions required of NPS leading to the establishment of this Advisory Board by the Secretary of the Interior. Accordingly, the park superintendent has forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior the names of the five Advisory Board



nominees, including the three submitted by the Governor of American Samoa, as called for by Section 3.(g).

## **MANAGEMENT ZONING**

In the development of general management plans for units of the national park system, NPS uses four zones to indicate management emphasis: natural, historic, park development, and special use. Subzones also may be established when necessary to show areas where there is to be specific types of intended use or development.

There exists on lands within the National Park of American Samoa an intermixing of both natural and cultural resource values. The tropical rainforest is considered part of and woven into the Samoan culture. The Management Zoning on the lands within this national park needs then to reflect both natural and cultural resource values. Consequently, the management zoning for lands within the National Park of American Samoa is to be an overlay of both the Natural and Cultural zones.

The significance of the national park's tropical forest as the United States' only mixed species paleotropical forest is known, as is the importance of the flying foxes in maintaining the integrity of that forest. However, in these early stages of the assessment of the park's resources, the extent and nature of its cultural and archeological attributes remain to be identified and studied by NPS. What is known so far is that significant aspects of the Samoan and pre-Samoan culture, both the tangible and the intangible, are undoubtedly present in the national park and are of major significance. These must be cared for in a manner that is consistent with the traditional Samoan culture in its historic context and as it exists today. The national park's resources must also be cared for in a manner that is acceptable to the respective village councils.

Within the Natural/Cultural Zone, the different kinds of natural resources — the tropical forest, flying foxes and other native wildlife — and processes found within the national park are to be protected and preserved, and non-traditional (non-park) uses that are found to adversely affect them will not be accommodated. Within this zone, traditional gathering of plants for medicinal purposes or other cultural requirements are to be accommodated. These activities are to be carried out in the same manner and by the same methods traditionally used by native Samoans. As

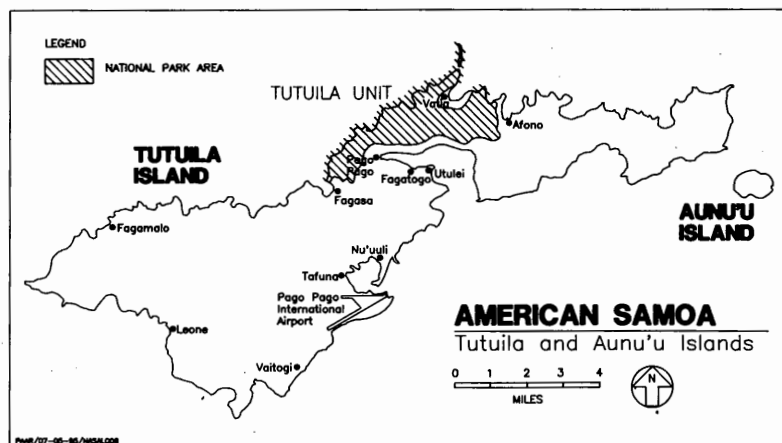
additional knowledge of the national park's natural resources is gained and planning for its management and development progresses, certain areas within this zone may be set aside for strict protection as Protected Natural Areas because of their unusual fragility, scarcity, or ecological significance. These areas will be a subzone within the Natural/Cultural Zone.

The cultural, archeological, and historical resources and their settings within the Natural/Cultural Zone are to be preserved, protected, and, with the concurrence of village councils, interpreted for visitors. In the future, there may also be areas within this zone where particularly fragile and/or sensitive cultural or archeological resources are found. These areas will be zoned as Protected Cultural Areas and set aside for strict protection. The wishes of the village council will be fully considered before NPS provides any type of treatment to these kinds of cultural resources.

The marine areas of the national park's offshore waters are to be zoned Natural. Within the Natural Zone, there are to be provisions for the maintaining of traditional Samoan subsistence reef fishing and gathering by the adjacent villages so long as no net losses occur in marine and benthic resources and, based on sound scientific research, the overall health of the coral reef habitat is not degraded. The ecological carrying capacity of the reef will be the prime determiner used to determine acceptable levels of subsistence uses of the park's offshore waters. There will be consultation with the village councils during the development of these provisions.

Those specific areas within the national park that are either now being used for traditional subsistence farming activities or were used for these activities in the recent past are to be zoned Special Use. NPS will work with the village councils to clarify and reach agreement as to the areal extent of these areas and the rules which are to be imposed therein with regard to maintaining these uses.

On Tutuila, the existing paved road leading to the village of Vatia and the top of Mt. Alava encompassing the upper aerial tramway tower and the visitor use facilities proposed here are to be zoned Park Development. The proposed visitor parking/trailhead facilities at Fagasa and Afono passes are also to be zoned Park Development.



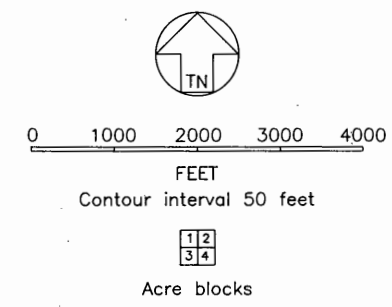
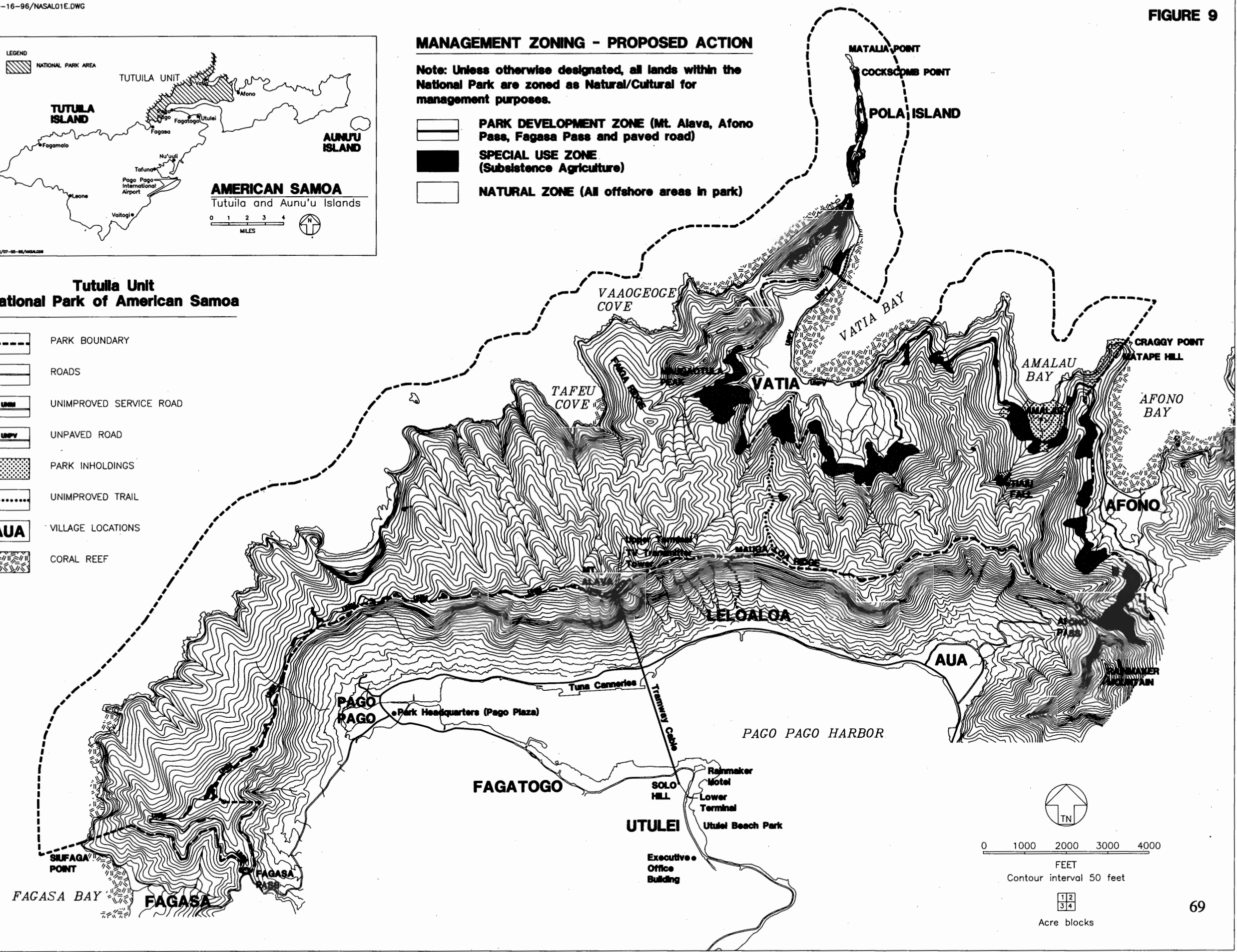
**MANAGEMENT ZONING - PROPOSED ACTION**

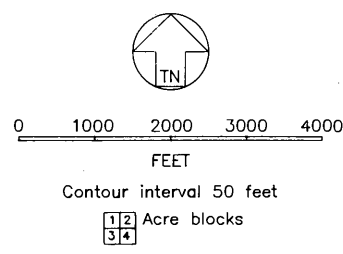
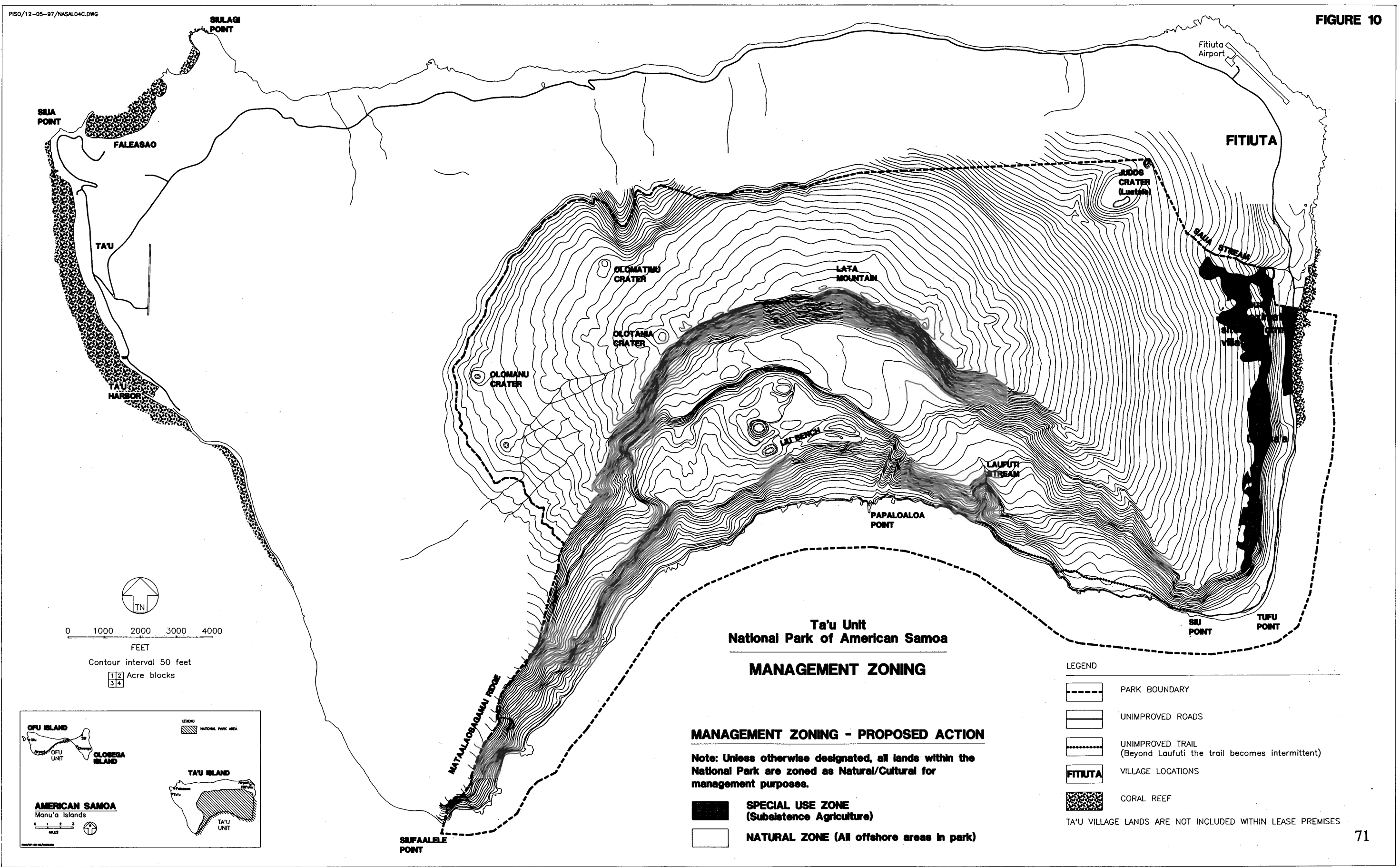
Note: Unless otherwise designated, all lands within the National Park are zoned as Natural/Cultural for management purposes.

- PARK DEVELOPMENT ZONE (Mt. Alava, Afono Pass, Fagasa Pass and paved road)
- SPECIAL USE ZONE (Subsistence Agriculture)
- NATURAL ZONE (All offshore areas in park)

**Tutuila Unit National Park of American Samoa**

- PARK BOUNDARY
- ROADS
- UNIMPROVED SERVICE ROAD
- UNPAVED ROAD
- PARK INHOLDINGS
- UNIMPROVED TRAIL
- VILLAGE LOCATIONS
- CORAL REEF





**Ta'u Unit  
National Park of American Samoa**

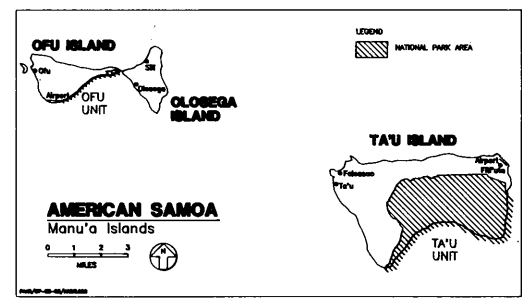
**MANAGEMENT ZONING**

**MANAGEMENT ZONING - PROPOSED ACTION**

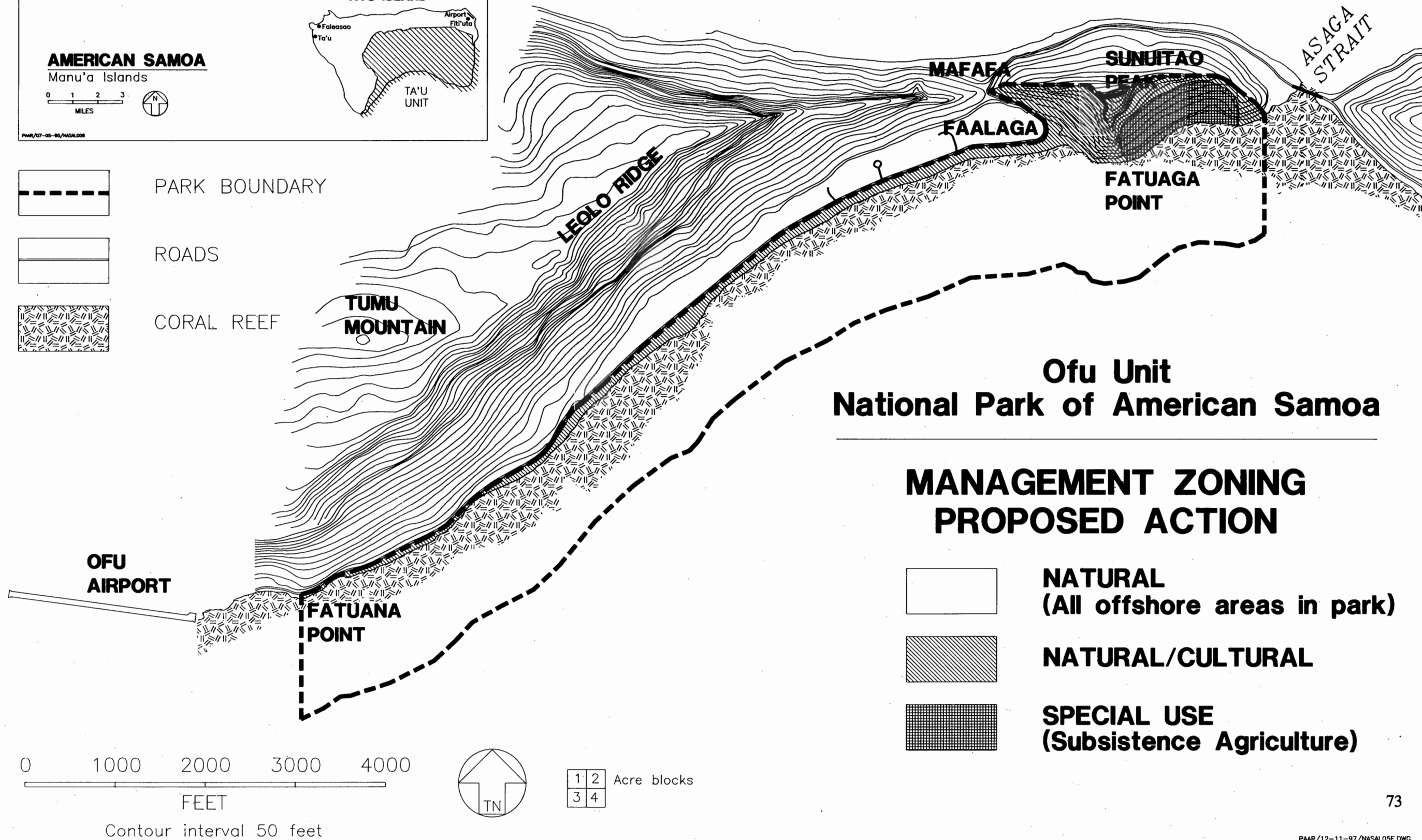
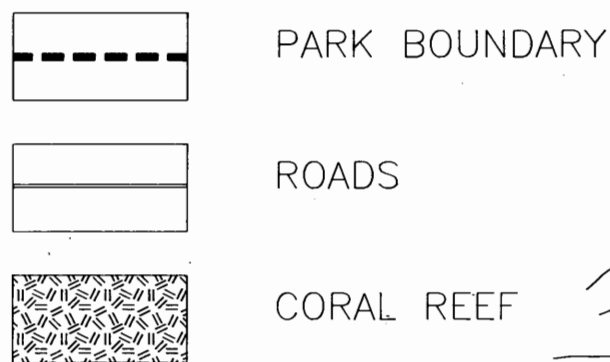
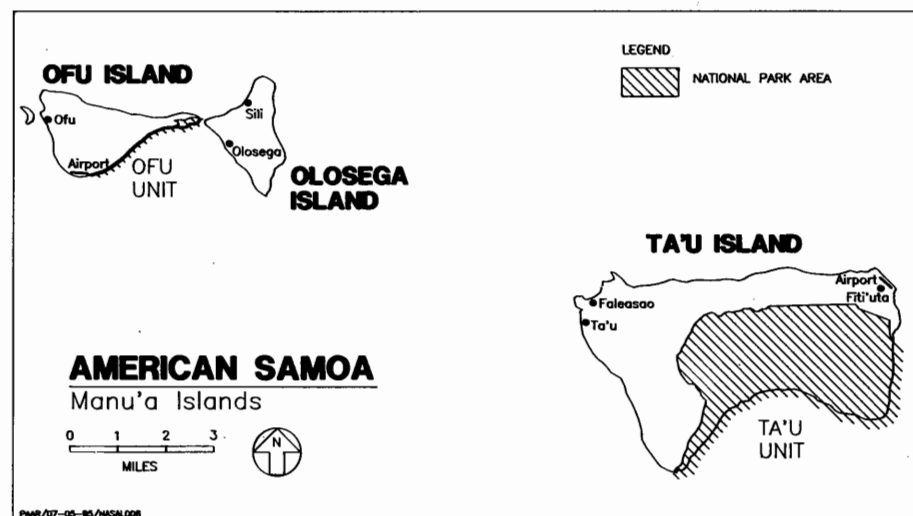
Note: Unless otherwise designated, all lands within the National Park are zoned as Natural/Cultural for management purposes.

- SPECIAL USE ZONE (Subsistence Agriculture)**
- NATURAL ZONE (All offshore areas in park)**

- LEGEND**
- PARK BOUNDARY
  - UNIMPROVED ROADS
  - UNIMPROVED TRAIL (Beyond Laufuti the trail becomes intermittent)
  - FITIUTA** VILLAGE LOCATIONS
  - CORAL REEF
- TA'U VILLAGE LANDS ARE NOT INCLUDED WITHIN LEASE PREMISES



**FIGURE 11**



The ranger station and visitor use facilities proposed near Saua for the Ta'u unit and those for the Ofu unit are to be low-key, dispersed, and will have little effect on natural processes and cultural resources. These facilities would all be within the Natural/Cultural Zone.

### **MANAGEMENT ZONING**

	<b>Natural/ Cultural Zone</b>	<b>Natural Zone</b>	<b>Park Development Zone</b>	<b>Special Use Zone</b>
Tutuila unit	2,403 acres	1,200 acres	6 acres	144 acres
Ta'u unit	5,184 acres	1,000 acres	0 acres	213 acres
Ofu unit	73 acres	350 acres	0 acres	13 acres
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>7,660 acres</b>	<b>2,550 acres</b>	<b>6 acres</b>	<b>370 acres</b>

### **CARRYING CAPACITY**

A widely accepted definition of carrying capacity "is the character of use that can be supported over a specific time by an area developed at a certain level without causing excessive damage to either the physical environment or the experience for the visitor."

Thus, there are two principle components related to determining the carrying capacity for the national park: (1) the ecological or physical capability of its natural and cultural resources to sustain certain levels of visitor use without damage and (2) the sociological carrying capacity related to the ability of visitors to enjoy and appreciate these resources without interference by other visitors.

A third component is the objectives of park management. Broadly, the carrying capacity can be addressed through the establishment of management zones within the national park. Management further structures and regulates the physical and sociological carrying capacity of a national park through the development of facilities such as trails, roads, restrooms, parking, and overlooks in specific locations, as well as through the provision of visitor services. Providing interpretive services is an

effective way to instill in the visitor an understanding and an appreciation for the resources of the national park and thus aid in implementing a carrying capacity for a particular area.

To ensure that the physical and sociological carrying capacity of this national park is not exceeded, the general management plan proposes the implementation of certain actions. Essentially, these actions call for the implementation of resource management strategies to ensure the protection of national park resources, the limited development of facilities, and the provision of interpretive services to provide for a quality visitor experience.

At this time, the carrying capacity of the National Park of American Samoa must be considered low. With the very limited staff (no interpretive staff and inadequate orientation and information services presently available), the resources of the national park are subject to unintentional damage from visitors. Also, due to limited access, the variety of park experiences available to the visitor remains fairly limited. However, since the number of tourists presently visiting American Samoa is still low at about 5,000 annually, the setting of carrying capacities, either physical or sociological, for the national park is not of immediate concern.

At the present time, it is anticipated that only one area of the national park, the Ofu reef, could be receiving levels of use, from both visitors and local subsistence users, which could lead to the degrading of the marine resources there. The ecological carrying capacity of this area needs to be determined — to protect the fragile and unique resources and to ensure the long-term continuation of local subsistence fishing and gathering activities.

It is anticipated that visitation levels to the national park will grow at a slow but steady rate. In the foreseeable future, given the actions proposed under the general management plan, park management will be able to keep pace with the anticipated growth in visitation. Nonetheless, those actions proposed for structuring and regulating visitor use will be periodically reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness. In the coming years, it is proposed that visitor satisfaction surveys be carried out to ensure that the quality of the visitor experience is maintained at NPS standards.



## **OPERATIONAL COSTS**

In order to fully implement the proposed action, 23 additional full-time equivalents or FTEs (each FTE equates to one person/year of 2087 hours) will be needed and approximately \$780,000/year added to the national park's base current operating funds to cover the salaries of these employees. These employees will carry out needed functions in the fields of resource management, interpretation, maintenance, and administration.

## **ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT COSTS**

Listed on the following pages are the estimated costs to construct the access and facility developments called for under the proposed action. Included also are the estimated costs to lease facilities needed to operate this national park under the proposed action.

### **Construction Costs**

The costs of constructing the proposed developments are conceptual estimates only. Called Class "C", these cost estimates are based on square foot construction costs of similar types of facilities and past experience derived from previous NPS contract data. The estimates also include indirect costs added to cover such things as design services, contract supervision, and other necessities. The cost estimates shown below are intended to be valid for American Samoa as they have been adjusted to take into account factors such as the remoteness of job location, material suppliers, labor availability and wage rates, season of construction, and difficulty of terrain. Since government estimates usually require cost projections in advance of available funding, the costs listed below also include an adjustment for future years of cost increases. The cost figures shown below are valid through fiscal year 1998.

It cannot be predicted when funds required for the implementation of the proposed action will be available. The National Park of American Samoa will have to compete for funding with the more than 370 other units of the national park system.



	<u>Gross Construction Costs</u>	<u>Construction Planning Costs</u>	<u>Total Project Costs</u>
<u>Tutuila Unit</u>			
Visitor Center/Administrative Headquarters, 8,000 sf)*	\$4,000,000	\$780,000	\$4,780,000
Visitor Center Entrance Road, Parking for 20 Cars/4 Buses, and Landscaping	\$1,650,000	\$315,000	\$1,965,000
Produce & Install Museum Exhibits at Visitor Center (1800 sf of museum space)	\$525,000	\$100,000	\$625,000
Maintenance/Resource Management Facilities (office/work area/storage/garage)	\$40,000	\$8,000	\$48,000
Aerial Tramway, Removal of Existing Tramway & Installation of New Tramway (includes costs of equipment, equipment commissioning & load testing)**	\$3,000,000	\$500,000	\$3,500,000
Restrooms (self-contained) on Mt. Alava	\$100,000	\$20,000	\$120,000
Interpretive Pavilion at Solo Hill	\$150,000	\$30,000	\$180,000
Restrooms, Site Work, Landscaping at Solo Hill	\$250,000	\$50,000	\$300,000
Visitor Parking/Trailhead at Fagasa Pass	\$15,000	\$3,000	\$18,000
Visitor Parking/Trailhead at Afono Pass	\$15,000	\$3,000	\$18,000
Trailhead at Vatia Village	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$6,000
Information Kiosk at Pago Pago International Airport	\$45,000	\$9,000	\$54,000

\* Visitor center to be designed, constructed, and funded by NPS on lands leased from ASG. Under this option, total annual lease costs for the proposed action would be reduced by about \$156,000 (\$180,000 minus the \$24,000 already being expended by NPS to lease commercial property for use as a park headquarters). See **Lease Costs**.

\*\* design and net construction cost estimates for the aerial tramway were calculated by G. Linebaugh, Regional Tramway Engineer, U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region. Under the proposed action, the construction of the new aerial tramway would be funded by ASG. NPS will contribute to the funding for the design engineering for a new aerial tramway.

	<u>Gross Construction Costs</u>	<u>Construction Planning Costs</u>	<u>Total Project Costs</u>
Hiking Trail, Mt. Alava to Afono Pass (approximately 3 miles)	\$100,000	\$20,000	\$120,000
Observation Platform, Scenic Overlook and Parking, Vatia Road	\$25,000	\$5,000	\$30,000
<u>Ta'u Unit</u>			
Ranger Station, Restrooms (self- contained), & Maintenance/Resource Management Facilities	\$240,000	\$46,000	\$286,000
New Hiking Trails in Uplands (approximately 8 miles)	\$265,000	\$53,000	\$318,000
Elevated Walkway (100 yards)	\$100,000	\$20,000	\$120,000
Information Display at Fitiuta Airport	\$45,000	\$9,000	\$54,000
Primitive Campsites/Pit Toilets	\$10,000	\$3,000	\$13,000
<u>Ofu Unit</u>			
Visitor Contact Station, Restrooms (self- contained), and Maintenance/Resource Management Facilities	\$120,000	\$23,000	\$143,000
Information Display at Ofu Airport	\$45,000	\$9,000	\$54,000
<u>All Units</u>			
National Park Entrance Signs & Boundary Posts (mark approximately 6 miles of national park boundary)	\$48,000	\$9,000	\$57,000
Wayside Exhibits (approximately 20)	<u>\$135,000</u>	<u>\$27,000</u>	<u>\$162,000</u>
<b>Total Estimated Construction Costs</b>	<b>\$11,018,000</b>	<b>\$2,064,000</b>	<b>\$13,082,000</b>

	<u>Gross Construction Costs</u>	<u>Construction Planning Costs</u>	<u>Total Project Costs</u>
<b>Rehabilitation Costs</b>			
<u>Tutuila Unit</u>			
Modify/Renovate Existing Historic U.S. Navy Building for use as a Visitor Center/ Administrative Headquarters***	\$510,000	\$100,000	\$610,000
Light Grading, Erosion Control, Approximately 4 Miles of Unpaved Road (Fagasa Pass to Mt. Alava)	\$150,000	\$30,000	\$180,000
Built-up Area Atop Mt. Alava (remove unneeded structures and debris; landscape with native plants)	\$35,000	\$7,000	\$42,000
Mt. Alava Pavilion (modify for visitor interpretation)	\$100,000	\$20,000	\$120,000
Approximately 2 miles of Hiking Trail, Maugaaloa Ridge to Vatia Village	\$65,000	\$13,000	\$78,000
<u>Ta'u Unit</u>			
Light Grading/ Revegetation of Approximately 4 Miles of Dirt Road and Walking Trail (to Papaloaloa Pt.)	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$6,000
<b>Total Estimated Rehabilitation Costs</b>	<b>\$865,000</b>	<b>\$171,000</b>	<b>\$1,036,000</b>

\*\*\* NPS to lease historic building from ASG instead of constructing a new visitor center/administrative headquarters. Under this option, the total estimated gross construction costs would be reduced by \$4,780,000.

The above proposed developments would be constructed in the following phased sequence (unless otherwise noted, developments are proposed for the Tutuila unit):

- entrance signs and boundary sign posts (parkwide)
- hiking trail, Fagasa Pass to Mt. Alava
- parking/trailhead at Fagasa and Afono passes
- information kiosk at Pago Pago Airport
- information kiosk at Fitiuta Airport, Ta'u unit

- information kiosk at Ofu Airport, Ofu unit
- ranger station and restrooms, Ta'u unit
- visitor contact station and restrooms, Ofu unit
- elevated canopy walkway, Ta'u unit
- visitor center entrance road and parking
- visitor center/park headquarters
- aerial tramway
- site work, restrooms, interpretive facilities at Solo Hill
- restrooms on Mt. Alava
- interpretive facilities, Mt. Alava
- site work, debris removal, and landscaping at Mt. Alava
- hiking trail, Mt. Alava to Afono Pass
- hiking trail to Papaloloa Pt., Ta'u unit
- hiking trail, Maugaloa Ridge to Vatia village
- trailhead at Vatia village
- museum exhibits at visitor center
- wayside exhibits (parkwide)
- hiking trails in uplands, Ta'u unit
- primitive campsites, Ta'u unit

**Lease Costs**

Tutuila Unit

Visitor Center/Administrative

Headquarters (building approximately 8,000 sf,  
plus entrance road, parking area for  
20 cars/4 buses)\*\*\*\*

\$15,000/month

**Total Estimated Lease Costs**

\$15,000/month

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\*\*\*\* visitor center/headquarters complex to be funded and constructed by ASG and then leased to NPS (building to be designed by NPS). Under this option, the total estimated gross construction costs would be reduced by \$4,780,000.