



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

**Public Affairs Office
Honolulu Engineer District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858-5440**

**Contact: Joseph Bonfiglio or
Dino Buchanan
(808) 438-9862 / 8317**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2007

Corps Joins Honolulu and Legislative Officials in 25th Anniversary Celebration of Ho‘omaluhia Botanical Garden and Kaneohe-Kailua Dam

By Joseph Bonfiglio, Honolulu District Public Affairs

(HONOLULU – NR- 08-07) Officials from the City and County of Honolulu, the Hawaii State Legislature and the Corps of Engineers’ Honolulu District gathered to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Ho‘omaluhia Botanical Garden and Kaneohe-Kailua Dam in a city-sponsored ceremony at the garden March 1, 2007.

Highlights of the ceremony included historical presentations, proclamations from the City and County of Honolulu and the Hawaii House of Representatives and testimonials from the engineers and city officials who helped conceive, design and build the Windward Oahu project at the foot of the Koolau Mountains.

According to John Pelowski, Honolulu District’s former Chief of Planning and Technical Supervisor during construction, the project was conceived by former Honolulu Mayor Frank Fasi and his administration as a way to protect the Kaneohe / Kailua area after massive floods in the 1960s caused significant damage to homes and loss of life in the area.

- MORE -

2-2-2 HO‘OMALUHIA

“The city reached out to the Corps to develop a joint federal / city cost sharing flood control project,” Pelowski said.

The project was authorized under the Flood Control Act of 1970.

According to Director Lester Chang, of the Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation, the Corps pulled it all together and created a unique project that creatively combined flood control and recreational features.

After extensive research and coordination with the City and County of Honolulu and numerous state and federal agencies, the Corps began construction of an earthen dam and recreation area in April 1976, according to Honolulu District Commander, Lt. Col. Charles H. Klinge.

“The contractors during construction were a joint venture of local contractor E. E. Black and S. J. Groves of Minneapolis,” Klinge said.

After years of challenging construction in a rain forest environment which averages 80 - 100 inches of rain a year, the Corps finished the K-K Dam and Ho’omaluhia Recreation Area in 1981 at a cost of a little over \$29 million.

Flood control features cost approximately \$17 million and the rest was spent to create the park and recreation facilities.

The result was Ho’omaluhia (“place of peace”) Botanical Gardens, which covers over 400 acres, includes a 32-acre lake and is home to endangered birds (including the Hawaiian coot) and a botanical garden featuring rare plants from Hawaii, Polynesia, Africa, South Asia, Melanesia and tropical America.

- MORE -

3-3-3 HO'OMALUHIA

Over 100,000 people visit Ho'omaluhia every year to hold meetings, hike, camp, picnic, fish, bird-watch and much more. There is a visitors' center and a small art gallery where local artists display their work.

The garden opened to the public in March 1982.

“Ho'omaluhia is one of the nicest and most beautiful recreation areas I've ever seen,” Klinge said. “This project is a clear demonstration of the Corps' commitment to our Environmental Operating Principles, it protects lives and promotes the economic well-being of the windward side of Oahu and it provides a tremendous place for visitors to take in the splendor of the Koolau Range.”

According to Jim Pennaz, Honolulu District Civil Works Technical Branch Chief, who served as the project's Hydraulic Engineer, the K-K Dam has prevented an estimated total of almost \$18 million of flood damage in the last quarter century.

In particular, it prevented one and a half million dollars worth of damage in March 1980 and eight point seven million dollars during storms from 1987 to 1996. In 2005, the K-K Dam prevented almost \$1.5 million worth of damage, according to Pennaz.

Director Chang read and presented a City and County of Honolulu Proclamation on behalf of Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann to Ho'omaluhia Program Coordinator, Olive Vanselow and Ho'omaluhia staff and volunteers.

Deputy Director Dana Takahara-Diaz, of the Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation, read a similar Proclamation on behalf of Hawaii State Rep. Colleen R. Meyer (47th District).

- MORE -

4-4-4 HO‘OMALUHIA

Hawaii State Rep. Ken Ito (48th District) was represented by George Okuda, and Hawaii State Sen. Jill Tokuda (24th District) was represented by Vaughn Tokashi.

Director Winnie Singeo, of the Honolulu Botanical Gardens, served as the master of ceremonies.

Former Honolulu Botanical Gardens Director Paul Weissich and former Director of the Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation, Rom Duran shared anecdotes about construction coordination challenges and how they worked them out with Corps officials.

The unsung heroes of the garden were represented by Director Laverne Higa of the Honolulu Department of Facility Maintenance. Her department cuts the grass, tends the plants and maintains the huge park.

-HED-