

### DIAMOND HEAD STATE MONUMENT

~Island of Oahu~



Top to bottom: aerial of Diamond Head showing crater interior with Honolulu and Waikiki in background, visitors travel to the crater rim for the view, the Hawaiian Coot (*alae keokeo*).

*D*iamond Head, known as *Leahi* to the ancient Hawaiians, is an integral part of Hawaii's image and mystique. As many as a million people visit this world renown landmark each year. A large percentage of these visitors hike the .7-mile trail and ascend to the crater's summit for the spectacular view.

Diamond Head State Monument, which includes the crater and its slopes, is also known to have had several *heiau* (religious temples) on its flanks. *Papaenaena Heiau*, erected by Maui's King Kahekili following his conquest of Oahu, was completely demolished by an Oahu chief in 1856. Gun batteries and bunkers remain as evidence of Diamond Head's role in the military's coastal defense system since World War I.

This large tract of underdeveloped land has habitats that include some unique endemic and endangered plants and birds. A seasonal wetland provides habitat for Hawaiian coot (*alae keokeo*) Gallinule (*alae ula*) and two endangered sedges, *Cyperus trachysanthos* and *Toralinium aueiculatum*. An exposed, unaltered, natural crestline provides habitat for the endangered plant *Schiedea adamantis*, which is unique to Diamond Head.

In geological terms, Diamond Head is a "pyroclastic cinder cone generally comprising of a friable tuff-type soil structure which is easily scarified and subject to accelerated erosion."

As the number of people ascending to the summit has increased:

- uncontrolled access along the interior slopes has brought about visible scarring as the soil breaks away;
- the threat of uncontrolled fires and public access in some of the Crater areas has risen and may bring about the demise of endangered birds and plants.

Diamond Head Crater has been kept intact through ordinances and the DLNR's efforts to preserve the natural beauty of this world renown cinder cone.



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Top to bottom: DLNR clearing habitat for rare native species, *Schiedea adamantis*, *pueo* (Hawaiian Short-Eared Owl) frequently visit the crater, the Cannon Club on the exterior slopes of Diamond Head.

#### DLNR's Hotspot Team for Diamond Head State Monument:

**Clyde Hosokawa - State Parks, Oahu, 587-0303;**

Wayne Ching - Forestry and Wildlife;

Diamond Head State Monument Coordinator;

John Dooling - Land Division;

Ed Henry - Land Division;

Don Hibbard - Historic Preservation;

Kevin Kong - Conservation and Resources Enforcement;

Sherrie Samuels - State Parks;

Eric Yuasa - Land Division;

is in charge of preserving the cultural sites and resources of this internationally recognized landmark.

#### DLNR's Vision for the Future and How to Attain It

The future vision of DLNR is the establishment of a world-class "semi-wild interior park and development of an exterior park for family picnic outings" as stated in the approved Diamond Head State Monument Plan developed by the Diamond Head Citizens Advisory Committee and adopted by the Board of Land and Natural Resources in 1979. The plan was subsequently enacted into law by the Hawaii State Legislature in 1992. DLNR's plan is to:

- incorporate 9 acres of land at Makalei Place and 2 acres along Diamond Head Road into the Monument;
- provide interpretation/information, maintenance and enforcement for visitor satisfaction and protection of resources;
- work closely with partners to protect critical habitat of endangered plants and wildlife;
- continue trail improvements to minimize erosion; construct visitor interpretation and orientation facilities to create awareness of unique cultural and natural beauty of Diamond Head and Hawaii;
- secure, restore and incorporate the Federal Aviation Administration site, Cannon Club, and portions of the National Guard installation into the monument in the long-term plan for Diamond Head State Monument.

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Top to bottom: *Cyperus trachysanthos*, graffiti on structure, scarring of crater interior.

The crucial obstacle towards sustaining Diamond Head State Monument is the commitment and resolve of the people of Hawaii and their elected officials to persevere towards a clear uniform program of action. The “Diamond Head Citizens Advisory Committee” provides a stabilizing force toward this goal as segments of government have grappled with setting aside such a large land area within urban Honolulu for “preservation of natural beauty and historical aspects and public use for recreational purposes”.

**To realize DLNR’s future vision for Diamond Head, a budget of \$21.4 million will be required over the next 4 years.** 🌺



DLNR’S Hotspot Team for the Diamond Head State Monument: (top row, l-r) Hosokawa, Ching, Dooling, Kong, (middle row) Henry, Hibbard, Samuelson, Yuasa.