

Beach Restoration Project in Waikīkī Wins National Award

A restoration project at a popular Hawai'i beach has garnered national accolades.

The Waikīkī Beach Maintenance Project won an award for best restored beach from the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association. The project was one of four beach restoration projects recently honored by the association. Projects were judged on their economic and ecological benefits, short- and long-term success and the challenges a community overcame during the project.

The Waikīkī project, completed in May 2021, was focused along the shoreline of Mamala Bay on O'ahu's south shore in a spot known as Royal Hawaiian Beach. It involved the placement of 21,700 cubic yards of sand, roughly doubling the beach's width.

The project was part of planned maintenance of Waikīkī Beach every 5-10 years. It employs a "sand recycling" concept, using offshore sand eroded from the beach placed back on the same beach.

"It's critical that Hawai'i develops climate change adaptation strategies statewide," Michael Cain, administrator for the state Department of Land and Natural Resources Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands, said in a press release. "This type of regular beach restoration and maintenance is appropriate for an urban coastal environment like Waikīkī and is an integral part of longer-term resilience strategies for Waikīkī. The options for protection and adaptation, however, will need to be fine-tuned to fit the specific needs of other coastal communities across the state."

The restoration project is another example of a successful public-private partnership between the DLNR Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands, which managed the project, and the Waikīkī Beach Special Improvement District Association, which put \$1 million toward the project's \$3.5 million total cost.

Contractors Kiewit Infrastructure Group and **American Marine Corporation were also instrumental in the restoration project's success, completing the work ahead of schedule despite poor weather and high surf conditions.**

Dolan Eversole of the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant and Waikīkī Beach Special Improvement District Association described the project in terms of the long-term adaption strategy for the area.

"In the longer-term, planning for resilience for Waikīkī includes considering a lot of different variables, including projections for sea-level rise, beach erosion, flooding and anticipated beach and coastal land use priorities," Eversole said in the press release. "It is important we view the marine ecosystem, the coral reefs and beaches as a natural buffer to coastal hazards that require protection and regular maintenance just like other man-made protections."

According to the DLNR in its press release about the project's award, restored beaches increase shoreline resiliency and a beach's ability to mitigate storm damage and flooding from severe storms. Naturally allowing beaches to adjust to short-term sea level rise while remaining an important part of nearshore ecosystems is another benefit of restoration.

The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association created the annual national best restored beach award to highlight these benefits.

"After one year, we are delighted with the project's results," Rick Egged, president of the Waikīkī Beach Special Improvement District Association, said in the press release. "The beach has not only remained stable but increased in width in some critical areas. This is the second time in a decade we've had a sand replenishment project and we're thrilled to receive this national recognition."

source: dredgewire.com/beach-restoration-project-in-waikiki-wins-national-award/