

Note: This is a portion of a sign posted at Hakalau Bench Park

An Oceanfront Park is a Sweet Reuse for a Former Sugar Mill

Property History

The Hakalau Sugar Mill was built in 1890 by the Hakalau Plantation Company on the shores of Hakalau Bay on the big island of Hawaii, which became a busy shipping port during the days of inter-island sailing ships. The mill was severely damaged by a tsunami in 1946 but rebuilt and resumed operation that same year. Sustained by the mill, Hakalau remained a thriving, multiethnic sugar plantation town up until the early 1960s, when operations began to decline. In 1974, with expenses outweighing demand, the mill shut down operations and the site became idle. Major mill structures were demolished and removed in 1979, though concrete slabs, partial walls, and remnants of the mill's cart rail and water flume were left behind to rust amidst the heavy vegetation. The dormant site was purchased by Continental Pacific, LLC in 2003, and donated to the County of Hawaii Department of Parks and Recreation in May 2006.

Property Size: 3.2 acres/
Former Uses: Sugar Mill
Current Use: Public park
Current Owner: County of Hawaii Department of Parks and Recreation

- 1974 The Hakalau Sugar Mill ceases operations
- 1979 Major structures demolished and removed
- 2003 Site is purchased by Continental Pacific, LLC
- 2006 County of Hawaii conducts EPA-funded environmental assessments indicating no major contaminants of concern
- 2006 Site is donated to the County of Hawaii Department of Parks and Recreation
- 2007 Basic Image, Inc. and Local volunteers clean remaining debris and prepare the site for reuse
- 2009 The property begins reuse as a public park

Note! →

Project Results

With assessments of the property giving a green light to cleanup and reuse, the oceanfront site was cleared of all debris by Basic Image, Inc. and local volunteers cleared all remaining debris from the site and provided the necessary landscaping improvements and opened to the public as a recreational park in 2009, and is enjoyed by hundreds of visitors a year.

Spectacular Bridge

Some of the most spectacular bridge construction in island history took place on the Hamakua coast during the late 1940s and early 1950s, as Territorial engineers realigned Mamalahou Highway along the former route of the defunct Hawaii Consolidated Railway. This route averaged better than one bridge per mile over its 40-mile length. Two were converted railway trestles: Hakalau, at 722 feet, thought at that time to be Hawaii's longest highway span.

