



# Fact Sheet



## Loko Pa`aiiau Fishpond McGrew Point Housing, Oahu, Hawaii

January 2021

The Loko Pa`aiiau Fishpond is located at McGrew Point Navy housing, Oahu, Hawaii. It is one of only three fishponds out of an original 22 in the Pearl Harbor area which are still relatively intact. The Loko Pa`aiiau Fishpond is the most accessible.

Fishponds were used by the ancient Hawaiians to farm fish using areas around the shoreline to enclose a feeding area for fish.

On Sept. 29, 2014, the Navy invited members of local Hawaiian civic clubs and Aiea community members to join them for a ceremony to begin work on restoring the historic Loko Pa`aiiau Fishpond.

Shad Kane, Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner, officiated the blessing and provided dozens of attendees with a lesson in the history of the Native Hawaiians from the area of Aiea and McGrew Point. Several members of Hawaiian civic clubs presented traditional Hawaiian offerings called ho`okupu as part of the ceremony.



Phase 1 of the restoration project was executed by Pono Pacific, a local Hawaii contractor hired by the Navy, who spent six months clearing the dense mangrove trees that were obstructing the pond. Due to the archaeological sensitivity of the site, workers cleared most of it by hand. In addition, during the clearing process, archeologists and cultural monitors were present to ensure that the pond walls were not impacted.

On May 13, 2015, the Navy met with representatives from Native Hawaiian civic clubs and the Aiea community to observe and discuss the progress of the ancient fishpond restoration at McGrew Point. The next phase will be to formulate a preservation and restoration plan, which will include long and short-term goals for the use and restoration of the fishpond.

## History/Background

Historical and archaeological studies reveal that more than 20 ancient Hawaiian fishponds once lined the shores of Pearl Harbor. Core samples indicate that many of Pearl Harbor's fishponds were in use sometime after the 1400s. Others were constructed between the 16th and late 19th centuries.

Unknown elsewhere in Polynesia, shoreline fishponds made of rock or coral walls are considered to be a highly-effective food production invention of the native Hawaiian people. At one time, an estimated 360 fishponds across the chain of the Hawaiian Islands produced a projected million kilograms of fish each year, mostly for the use of the chiefs and their various entourages.

The fish species cultivated were likely mullet (ama`ama) and milkfish (awa). Immature fish were collected and put into the pond. The walls intentionally let the water flow in and out. As the fish grew, they were held in place behind a sluice gate known as a makaha, made of closely spaced stakes. The makaha allowed the water to rise and fall with the tides while it kept out the larger predators. Once grown, the fish were harvested.

Two of Pearl Harbor's fishponds remain visible today. The rest generally were filled by agricultural development in the area in the early 1900s, predominantly for sugar cane cultivation. Loko Oki`oki`olepe, near the entrance to West Loch on the west side of the entrance channel, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The pond wall, approximately 1,000 feet long, 4 feet high and 6.5 feet wide, is made of coral chunks and remains relatively intact. It encloses approximately six acres.

A remnant from Loko Pa`aiau, given a date of between 1327 and 1473 AD based on plant pollen found in sediment core samples, can be seen on the west side of McGrew Point. Two ponds, Loko Kunana and Loko Muliwai, were filled, creating Kuahua Peninsula to the south of where Halawa Stream enters Pearl Harbor.

The largest pond, Loko Hanaloa, on Waipio Peninsula, emptied into West Loch and covered more than 200 acres. Other smaller ponds were in front of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam's Boutiki store, at the head of Merry Loch under today's Ward Field, and at the head of Quarry Loch under today's Millican Field.



A drone view of the Loko Pa`aiau Fishpond. The ancient wall of the fishpond is visible.

*Note: Most of the historical information above comes from Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program, Project No. 1729, "Ancient Hawaiian Fishponds of Pearl Harbor: Archaeological Studies on U.S. Navy Lands, Hawaii" by the International Archaeological Research Institute, Inc., July 2000, edited by J. Stephen Athens with contributions by Athens, Blinn, Buck, Christen, Cowie, Dye, Murakami and Ward.*

## Goal of Restoration

The main focus on restoring the fishpond is to educate local keiki and military families on how ancient Hawaiians built these ponds and to improve relations between the Navy and the community. The Navy is complying with procedures outline in its 2008 Oahu Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan which fulfills federal and state law to preserve and protect cultural resources.

## The Hale

Construction of a Hawaiian healing center hale (open shelter) began in November 2020. The hale is part of the Preservation and Burial Treatment Plan of Loko Pa`aiiau that was agreed to in 2017. Stone paver material for the structure's foundation was funded from a National Public Land's Day grant received earlier in 2020. The hale is intended to serve as a healing and educational center for school groups and visitors, as well as military members who may be adjusting to life in the service or those facing challenges of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Navy continues working with the Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club and Aiea Community Association to restore the fishpond and preserve and protect this cultural and historic site.

## General Timeline

Sept. 26, 2013	Contract awarded to Pono Pacific to remove mangroves at five locations around Pearl Harbor.
Sept. 29, 2014	Ceremony held to begin work on restoring the historic Loko Pa`aiiau Fishpond.
October 2014 - May 2015	Mangrove removal actions at various locations around Pearl Harbor, including McGrew Point.
May 13, 2015	Visit to Loko Pa`aiiau Fishpond to observe mangrove removal results.
May 27, 2015	Congresswoman Gabbard visits Loko Pa`aiiau fishpond.
Oct. 3, 2015	National Public Lands Day event at Loko Pa`aiiau.
March 1, 2016	Draft preservation plan, which includes long and short term goals for the use and restoration of the fishpond, submitted to OHA and Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club for review.
March 2017	Preservation Plan concurred by the State Historic Preservation Division and NHOs.
October 2017 / October 2018 September 2019 / October 2020	National Public Lands Day events at Loko Pa`aiiau.
November 2020	Fishpond wall stabilization.
November 2020 - January 2021	Construct a Hawaiian healing center <i>hale</i> (open shelter) along western shore of Loko Pa`aiiau for meetings and classroom activities.

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