



PHOTOS COURTESY DLNR

The new, rubble-reinforced Royal Hawaiian Groin in Waikiki covers part of the original groin, above. Warnings signs in Japanese and English were installed on Aug. 13 at the restored groin, below.

New Royal Hawaiian Groin is first of several planned for Waikiki

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By Mindy Pennybacker
mpennybacker@staradvertiser.com

The construction of a Royal Hawaiian Groin, billed as new but encapsulating the still-intact spine of its 93-year-old predecessor on Waikiki Beach fronting the eponymous pink hotel, is pau, the state Department of Land and Natural Resources announced in a press release last week.

As a final touch, signs warning "Danger," "Keep Off" and "No Diving" in English and Japanese were installed Aug. 13 on the 180-foot-long, 30-40-foot-wide rock rubble wall, which stands 9 feet above mean sea level at its landward end and 4 feet above mean sea level offshore.

The purpose of the new groin, like that of the slenderer, 370-foot-long old jetty, is to stop erosion of sand from Royal Hawaiian Beach, DLNR said.

"It is new, but a remnant of the old Royal Hawaiian Groin remains entombed in it," Sam Lemmo, administrator of the DLNR Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL), said in an email, adding

that the fortified groin is "the first construction of a permanent structure on Waikiki Beach in 50 years" and the first in a series of planned projects on the beach, including the addition of more sand and more groins in various designs; the new groin has an L-head, unlike that of its spindly but stalwart progenitor, which stretched out to sea before terminating a gentle, open fishhook curve towards Diamond Head.

"We are involved in a long-term planning process to make some improvements at Waikiki," Lemmo said. "It would propose a combination of sand restoration, sand back passing, new structures, and upgrading of existing structures."

In a beach replenishment project scheduled for this winter, he said, sand will "be retrieved from off shore and delivered and placed on Royal Hawaiian Beach."

It will follow in the footsteps of a 2012 project in which about 24,000 cubic yards of sand was added to widen Royal Hawaiian Beach, said Dolan Eversole, Waikiki Beach management coordinator with the University of Ha-



wai Sea Grant College Program, in an email, adding, "the (2012) permit allows a follow-up restoration within 10 years using the same methods,"

The sand for the 2012 beach renourishment was taken from approximately 2,000 feet offshore, according to DLNR's 2013 report on Royal Hawaiian Beach.

Sea Grant provided outreach and coordination for the \$1.5 million groin project, supported through a public-private partnership between the state and the Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District Association, which provided half the funds through a special tax assessment from Waikiki commercial properties.

With regard to longer-term plans, a draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Notice will be released within one to two months, detailing "conceptual plans for new and re-engineered

shoreline structures such as groins and breakwaters in three priority areas, including the Fort Derussy beach cell, Halekulani beach cell, Royal Hawaiian Beach cell and the Kuhio beach Ewa Basin," DLNR's announcement said.

Work on the new groin began in May to take advantage of a quiet, empty Waikiki Beach after most hotels were shuttered and beaches temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On Aug. 24, Honolulu parks and beaches were closed again through Sept. 16 by Mayor Kirk Caldwell's emergency order.

For now, resembling a submerging petroglyph from the past, the tracery of the old jetty's calligraphic swoosh remains visible through Waikiki's waters.

For more information, visit the website wbsida.org/projects-royalhawaiiangroin.