



Punaluu Black Sand Beach Saved? The Park Remains Closed.

By Jeff Tucker and Rob Kvidt / October 14, 2026 / Hawaii Travel News / 2 Comments

One of Hawaii's most recognizable black sand beaches may finally have a permanent future, but visitors head to the beach to find the park as they remember. Hawaii County has a tentative \$1.46 million agreement to buy Punaluu Park on the Big Island, potentially ending the park's closure. The park was closed the longtime public park in August

Ad ends in 10

AdChoices 

The deal announced October 13 would bring the 6.8-acre property into public ownership for the first time after more than 70 years of county leases. It could permanently resolve issues about the parking, pavilions, restrooms, and other facilities that made Punalu'u such an easy stop for generations of Hawaii visitors. But the purchase isn't final yet, and the park remains officially closed, even though access to the beach itself continues.

When we visited last December, we pulled off Highway 11, parked near  the shore, and walked onto the black sand. Ad ends in 10. Turtles often rest. It was the familiar Hawaii experience we had come to take for granted, even as growing crowds of visitors changed the atmosphere.

How a 72-year arrangement evolved into a \$1.46 million purchase.

The county had leased Punalu'u Black Sand Beach Park from successive private owners since at least 1954. The last long-term lease, signed in 1998, cost just \$1, but negotiations for a new arrangement collapsed this summer after the owner sought different terms.

We covered that uncertainty in our August article, [The Hawaii Beach We Thought Always Would Be There Is Changing](#). The story took another turn when owner Black Sand Beach LLC offered a free 10-year conservation easement intended to preserve public access. Now the proposed outright purchase could provide something more lasting than either another lease or a temporary easement.

The breakthrough reportedly followed a change in how negotiations were conducted. After years of discussions largely handled through attorneys, Mayor Kimo Alameda met directly with the landowner at Punalu'u. The two sides agreed to a proposed sale at the property's assessed value of \$1.46 million, using the county's Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation Commission program.

The agreement also addresses a practical issue that could have complicated public ownership. Part of Ninole Loop Road, which connects the park to the county road, remains privately owned. Under the proposed arrangement, the county would maintain about a quarter-mile of that road, while the landowner would guarantee public access. Ad ends in 10



The park could still remain closed for months.

The immediate news for visitors is somewhat less encouraging than the purchase announcement suggests. Punalu'u Black Sand Beach Park closed after the lease expired August 29, and the county says it

will remain closed until it completes the purchase unless it negotiates another temporary lease.

Mayor Alameda told [Honolulu Civil Beat](#) the purchase could take six months. The county is trying to negotiate an interim arrangement to reopen the park sooner, with responsibility for major facility repairs still being worked out. No reopening date has been announced.

It's important to distinguish the closed park from the beach itself. Shoreline access remains available, but visitors shouldn't assume the familiar county parking and park facilities are operating.

Long before the previous lease expired, Punalu'u was already experiencing the effects of its popularity. In our earlier reporting on [Hawaii beaches becoming overrun](#), we documented the crowds at Punalu'u and identified it as a Big Island location under strain. Restoring public management won't automatically ease those pressures, which will remain the county's responsibility if the purchase goes through.

For now, the agreement offers something that wasn't certain when the park closed in August. That is the prospect of permanent public ownership and an end to decades of dependence on private leases. Travelers still need a confirmed reopening date and to know whether they'll be able to experience Punalu'u much as they did before the closure. Ad ends in 10

Have you visited Punalu'u Black Sand Beach, and would you favor the county buying it permanently even if reopening takes several more months?

By Rob and Jeff, Beat of Hawaii.

Some of Hawaii's most meaningful places are the ones visitors walk right past without knowing they are there. We've spent nearly 20 years finding them firsthand for BOH as full-time Hawaii residents reporting on travel, culture, and island life, and telling you what they mean for your trip. [Join us →](#)

Get Breaking Hawaii Travel News

Beat of Hawaii's Special Picks for You

Kauai Wants Visitors Back. So Where Are They?

September 25, 2026 / 30 Comments



Hawaii's Black Sand Beach Just Got Much Harder To Reach

June 4, 2026 / 11 Comments



Big Beach Maui Could Be Next Up For Kauai-Style Visitor Controls

May 27, 2026 / 16 Comments

Kauai Can't Handle More Visitors. They're Coming Anyway.

April 17, 2026 / 22 Comments

Kauai Is Full And Running Out Of Room To Fix It

March 26, 2026 / 20 Comments

Hawaii Beaches Hit A Turning Point: Shuttles, Reservations, And New Rules Coming

November 4, 2025 / 16 Comments

Leave a Comment



Ad ends in 10

Comment policy (1/25):

- * No profanity, rudeness, personal attacks, or bullying.
- * Specific Hawaii-focus "only."
- * No links or UPPER CASE text. English only.
- * Use a real first name.
- * 1,000 character limit.

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Type here...*



Name**

Email**

☐ Notify me of followup comments via e-mail. You can also [subscribe](#) without commenting.

POST COMMENT

This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) apply.

2 thoughts on “Punaluu Black Sand Beach Saved? The Park Remains Closed.”



Ad ends in 10

Mikael

October 15, 2026 at 11:29 am

This is a fantastic opportunity that provides surety that the public will have access and that much needed improvements will be made. I first visited this beach 35 years ago and there was only another couple there. Fast forward to last year and saw the line of cars waiting

to turn into the beach so we did not visit. Definitely need a reservation system for non-residents.



REPLY

Robert T

October 15, 2026 at 7:28 am

The only fair solution is for the County to implement free and unrestricted access for Locals and mandatory 30 day advanced reservations for tourists.

Tourists should be charged per vehicle And per person, or required to pay for a shuttle bus.



REPLY

Get Breaking Hawaii Travel News

Name

Email

Ad ends in 10

Send me updates!