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GMAC REPORT

Issues at Keauhou Small Boat Harbor.

Kailua Kona, Hawaii

Keauhou Small Boat Harbor REPORT

Summary. GMAC's task is "To advise County, State and Federal agencies on matters related to the preservation of subsistence hunting and fishing, and protecting traditional and cultural gathering rights." This report is from the fisher, gather and traditional rights viewpoint.

The Keauhou Small Boat Harbor.

According to DLNR's Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation: Keauhou harbor has 12 moorings, a double-lane 30-foot-wide launch ramp, a pier, loading dock

area, vessel wash down area and trailer parking. Public restrooms are available.

Hawaii Small Boat Harbor Appraisals done by DOBOR state:

“Keauhou Small Boat Harbor is located on the west coast of Hawaii approximately five miles south of Kailua- Kona and approximately 15 miles south of Kona International Airport. The small boat harbor has an inventory of moorings comprised of Tahiti moored in harbor buoys on tenant owned buoys.

Amenities are minimal and include a double lane, 30-foot-wide. The bay is 300 yards wide and lies between two lava flows. The harbor is well protected accommodating offshore moorings on owner buoys. Loading and unloading pier is available.”

There are currently 12 vessels occupying the harbor; the CBRE appraisal writes “however, harbor representatives estimate

the total number of vessels the harbor could accommodate ranges from 20 to 24 vessels.”

“I have fished this ramp for over 50 years. We want the fishers to have a place to launch and fish for food. Don’t forget about the fishers. Keep the aloha. Don’t let the locals get run over.”

Parking Overload. Keauhou is an active harbor. There is limited parking so overcrowding is a problem. Lack of signage is an issue. Tourists sight seeing, ocean adventure clients, fishers and canoe and kayakers intermingle with no clear sense of direction. There are buses. Wednesday Market located there adds to the congestion.

A fisher writes “I came in the other night. Mellow and then 20-40 people at the ramp.”

Loading Dock Crowding. Fishers comment that the loading docks are not being used to secure your boat, back trailer in and haul boat out.

Complaints are that some boats seem to be tied at old pier sideways while the finger pier has the same problem. The finger pier has boats mooring on it. Zodiacs use the ramp to load tourists instead of loading and then launching. There’s canoes and kayaks in the mix.

Some boat operators seem to be deliberately slow in hauling their boats seemingly “working the tourists for tips.” Some fishers set up their fishing tackle on the ramp instead of before or after launching. Pedestrians mingle all around and often not aware or paying attention.

“Doesn’t look safe.”

Navigation and Safety Issues. Manta Ray viewing is a popular attraction and Keauhou Bay has one of the prime viewing sites.

The manta ray business is seen as a \$12 million dollar a year business. Popularity and congestion at the limited viewing sites has led to a potentially dangerous situation.

Boats are taking ocean adventurers to view manta rays. These boats use lights to attract and engage the mantas. The boats put their clients with various levels of ocean experience in the water at night and leave them swimming while the boat drifts off the manta feeding site in a process called live boating.

Coast Guard input on this situation would seem appropriate.

An ika shibi fisher writes “I came in from fishing South Point in the dark. At night hard to see the light at the Keauhou Ramp because there’s boats lit up with people drifting on the mantas. Coming in at dark after fishing and loading the fish box. Tired. And I do not want to run over a tourist. You just ruined your life. I’m trying to protect them. This is trouble.

DOBOR’s Commercial Mission. Part of the problem at Keauhou is that DLNR Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation’s “Modernizing Ocean Recreation Management in Hawai`i Strategic Action Plan - 2019.” DOBOR in this plan wants to privatize boating and focus on ocean recreation. DOBOR wants tourism dollars and says “the boom in ocean recreation, the weather, and Hawai`i’s landscape and culture - the engine that keeps Hawai`i’s economy healthy - does not result in a

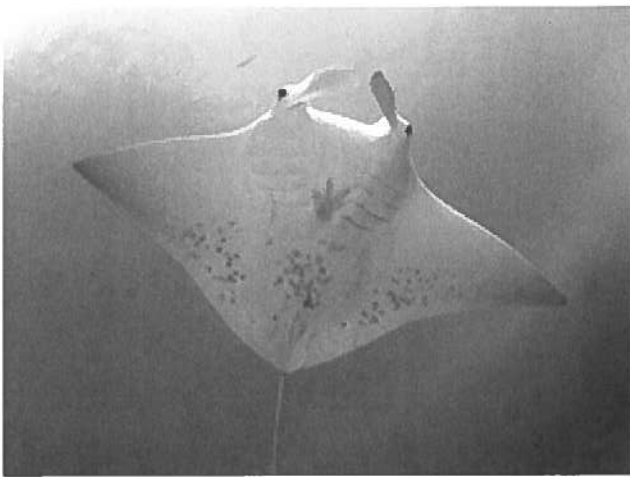
windfall in funding for DLNR or DOBOR.” DOBOR had a statutory mandate to promote fishing they removed this in their rules package passed in 2019. DOBOR gets a monthly fee and a percentage of income from tour operators. This chasing the “windfall in funding” led DOBOR to over commit to commercial boating. DOBOR is now in the process of attempting to limit manta tours a difficult task after they allowed businesses to invest in Keauhou harbor tourism.

“We fish for food. It can take \$800 to pay for a trip. Unlike the tourist trade we don’t make our money before we go.”

Description: Hahalua the Manta Ray.

Hahalua is the Hawaiian word for manta ray. This hahalua manta ray description is from Papahanamokuakea Monument
<https://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/>

monument features/ . “Manta rays (*Manta birostris*, hāhālua in Hawaiian) weighing up to 3,000 lbs. Their wingspan can exceed 20 feet, and the largest manta recorded was 23 ft. They have cartilaginous skeletons



and are related to sharks. One of the defining features of these fish are their pair of "cephalic flaps" which act to funnel water into the mouth. When curled up, these

flaps resemble horns projecting from the head. Mantas are harmless to humans, but can be quite intimidating when seen up close due to their immense size. They prey upon tiny plankton and swoop in great looping circles with their gaping mouths open wide. Similar to humpback whale fluke patterns, mantas can be identified by

the pattern of blotches and dark spots on their undersides. At one time there were thought to be several species of manta but recent DNA research by Tim Clark at the University of Hawai'i has shown they are all the same species.

DOBOR held a public meeting on mantas at the West Hawaii County Building February 2023. At this meeting there were Hawaiian kupuna who took issue with the hahalua being used as a tourist attraction.

Manta ray at Mokumanamana. Photo Credit: James Watt”

Kam Schools Keauhou Bay Project.

Kamehameha Schools the beneficiary of lands surrounding Keauhou Bay is proposing development and improvements and has written and released a Bay Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

According to KS, "Since the proposed KBMP is located within the shoreline area,

as defined in Hawai'i Revised Statutes section 205A-41, a County Special Management Area (SMA) Use Permit is required. To obtain the permit, Kamehameha Schools must complete the State Environmental Review Process, starting with the preparation and review of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)."

The statutory 45-day public review and comment period on the Draft EIS ended on August 7, 2024, however, community groups who oppose the development are still providing outreach and collecting signatures. More information on their efforts can be found here: <https://bigislandsupport.com/savekbay>.

KS Management Plan Overview

(including video): <https://www.ksbe.edu/keauhou-bay>

Link to Management Plan document:

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/Doc_Library/2024-06-23-HA-DEIS-KS-Keauhou-Bay-Management-Plan-Vol-I.pdf

EIS Document Volume 1: https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/Doc_Library/2024-06-23-HA-DEIS-KS-Keauhou-Bay-Management-Plan-Vol-I.pdf

EIS Document Volume 2: https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/Doc_Library/2024-06-23-HA-DEIS-KS-Keauhou-Bay-Management-Plan-Vol-II.pdf

Link to submit comments: <https://g70.commentinput.com/?id=4fpJYcNjx2>

Planning for Future Growth. Kona growing. Managing growth. Needs to managed closer. I mean I'm not against folks hustling and making money. Good for

them. But locals do we all get kicked out? Where is the entity running this. Somebody is going to get killed.

GAME MANAGEMENT ADVISORY

COMMISSION Purpose: To advise County, State and Federal agencies on matters related to the preservation of subsistence hunting and fishing, and protecting traditional and cultural gathering rights.

Authority: Hawai'i County Charter, Section 6-9.3

Appointment: By the mayor and confirmed by the council in the manner prescribed in Section 13-4, Hawai'i County Charter. **Full Membership:** Nine members.

Specific Representation: One resident member from each council district established by the previous redistricting commission.