

Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge

Trail Stabilization Project Update – January 23, 2016



Slope erosion and settlement have occurred along the walking trail to the lighthouse.

This is the first in a series of updates about a trail stabilization project at Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge. The purpose of the project is to stabilize the walking trail between the visitor parking area and the Daniel K. Inouye Kīlauea Point Lighthouse.

The entrance gates at Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge clicked closed at 4:00 PM on January 16, just like any other Saturday. This time, however, it set into motion a temporary public closure so work on an extensive trail stabilization project could get underway. The project will address public safety concerns along sections of a popular pedestrian walking trail that have experienced slope erosion, undermining, and settlement. The work is expected to

last through the end of April.

Lauren Jalbert, Project Engineer for McMillan Jacobs Associates, kicked off the project Tuesday morning, meeting with all Refuge and Kīlauea Point Natural History Association staffs and leading a planning overview. The gathering provided an opportunity for the working groups to meet one another, discuss the project schedule, and ask questions or raise concerns. During the meeting, the team discussed safety considerations and access to the work area.

Also this past week, Jalbert met with Acting Refuge Manager Mike Mitchell and his biology staff to thoroughly address all environmental compliance related to sensitive plant and animal species found on-site.



Shotcrete has cracked and pulled away from the concrete retaining wall, one of the conditions that will be addressed during the project.



Refuge Biologist Kim Uyehara and Acting Refuge Manager Mike Mitchell discuss wildlife and habitat considerations with Project Supervisor Rob Sonner.

In some cases, the required actions are general and address overall protection of wildlife and habitat, such as restricting activities to daylight hours when birds can easily be seen and avoided, and asking construction crews and delivery trucks to reduce driving speeds while within the Refuge boundary. Other efforts are more specific, like using only pre-cleared, designated routes to enter or exit work areas and installing a

temporary perimeter fence to keep threatened and endangered species from entering the construction site.

The construction work will take place during a time of year when visitation is heaviest. However, the dates were selected because they represent the least busy time of year for wildlife nesting. Nēnē (Hawaiian Goose, *Branta sandvicensis*) are typically done incubating their eggs by January;

‘Ua‘u kani (Wedge-tailed Shearwater, *Puffinus Pacificus*) are expected to arrive in March and lay their eggs in early June.

Closing the property inside the public entrance gate to visitors was necessary because of limited space and parking. The designated visitor parking spaces near the entrance to the pedestrian pathway are being used to stage both heavy equipment and materials. Additionally, the access route to the lighthouse is narrow and would be unsafe for the heavy visitor foot traffic the Refuge would normally see this time of year.

During the stabilization project, visitors can still enjoy the sweeping panoramic views for which the area is so well known. The Visitor Services staff has relocated to an overlook where they can point out the lighthouse and trail work as well as answer questions for guests.

More information on the trail stabilization project, including the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact documents, can be found at <http://1.usa.gov/1ZBZuEi>.



With the lighthouse and trail stabilization work within view, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Park Rangers Angela Iwai and Brian Deuel talk with guests at an overlook near the entrance to the Refuge.