



Posted on: Monday, July 2, 2007

## Public denied access to some Oahu beaches

 StoryChat: [Comment on this story](#)

By [Gordon Y.K. Pang](#)  
Advertiser West O'ahu Writer

The clean, white sandy beach along Iroquois Point offers a stunning view of downtown Honolulu, Waikiki and Diamond Head.

But unless you live there, this beach is off limits. Iroquois Point Island Club, the civilian subdivision that has replaced what was once the Pu'uoloa Naval Housing complex, does not allow public access to its beach.

"It's private property, the roads are private, they're not city and county," said Steve Colon, president of Hunt Development's Hawai'i division, which operates the property.

Other private, oceanfront developments on O'ahu — including Ko Olina and Turtle Bay — offer beach access to the public.

State law requires all beaches remain accessible to the public, and counties must make sure the public can reach the beach in areas where private property dominates.

But the Iroquois Point Island Club, which rents homes to the public, can refuse access to its beach because it is on land belonging to the Navy. Military property is exempt from the state and county beach access rules. The Navy leased Iroquois Point to a private developer for 65 years.

That doesn't sit well with some Iroquois Point neighbors.

"Even when it was a military beach, it wasn't as strict as it is now," said Kurt Fevella, former chairman of the 'Ewa Neighborhood Board.

Fevella said that as a youth he and friends would bike or bus to Iroquois Beach.

Leroy Barker, a Waipahu resident, was driving around 'Ewa Beach with his family on a recent weekend scouting for a site to hold an upcoming picnic. Barker was turned away at the Iroquois entrance by the security guard.

"He told us, 'I'm sorry, sir, this is private property — unless you're checking out one of the units for rent or visiting someone in the housing development, you cannot use the beach,'" Barker said. "The state has a shoreline access law. Where was the state when this (transfer) happened?"

### AN UNCOMMON CASE

For the managers of Iroquois Point, restricted access into the subdivision is a security and safety issue for its residents and a selling point for potential renters. About 1,100 of the 1,463 single-family and townhomes have been rented.

'Ewa Neighborhood Board member Jeff Alexander said he understands the position of the Iroquois Point managers.

"I don't blame them for not letting people go into their private development," Alexander said. "They start letting people go in, the crime rate will go through the roof."

Colon, of Hunt Development, said his company's policies are nothing new.



### BEACH ACCESS

State law requires lateral access to the shoreline from the highest point waves reach to the water.

For mauka-makai access, state law requires the counties to provide reasonable public access ways of no less than 6 feet wide in areas where none exist.

The only exception is military property.

*Source: Dolan Eversole, a coastal geologist with the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant program, now working with the state's Office of Conservation and*

"The Navy had a guard and limited access," Colon said. "All we've done is taken over and continued the same basic policy."

*Coastal Lands*

Counties generally have required some access for the public when developers seek land- use approvals.

## RELATED NEWS FROM THE WEB

For instance, 180 parking stalls at Ko Olina Resort in Kapolei are set aside for public access to the resort's man-made lagoons, said Ken Williams, general manager of the Ko Olina Community Association. That's 30 stalls more than is required by the city, he said, noting that the stalls are often filled up on weekends and holidays.

Latest headlines by topic:

- [Geology](#)
- [Science](#)

Once those stalls are filled, the public is told at the gate that they can walk in from outside the property or pay for on-site parking, although that sometimes fills up with guest vehicles as well, Williams said.

Powered by [Topix.net](#)

At Turtle Bay Resort on the North Shore, 48 parking stalls are set aside for public shoreline access, said resort spokesman Nathan Hokama. And, similar to Ko Olina, the public can pay hotel rates to park on resort grounds or walk inside if the 48 stalls are filled, he said.

Hokama noted that 150 more public access stalls would be added if the resort's expansion plans come to fruition. And the number of pedestrian access trails to the beach would increase from three to five, he said.

But officials with the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, which oversees shoreline access in the Islands, said there's nothing the state can do at Iroquois Point. Despite it now being a civilian-owned residential community, it is still on military property.

## FEDERAL LAW APPLIES

"Public access onto beaches that are within military reservations are controlled by national/homeland security laws that override our state laws," said DLNR spokeswoman Deborah Ward. "Unless the military has relinquished that authority by declaring a specific area as being open to the general public, the state does not have any say in the matter."

Ward cited other beaches on military property barred from the public including Marine Corps Base Hawai'i and Hickam Air Force Base on O'ahu and the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kaua'i.

The Navy signed a 65-year lease for the 363-acre Iroquois Point subdivision in June 2003 with Fluor Hawaii LLC, which has since partnered with the Hawai'i division of the Hunt Development Group to form Ford Island Housing. Hunt Development is the managing partner.

Navy spokeswoman Terri Kojima said the contract leaves access issues up to the management company. "Public access at Iroquois Point is controlled by Ford Island Housing," she said. "The Navy no longer controls access into these leased areas."

Ford Island Properties is working with the Army Corps of Engineers and spending an estimated \$10 million for a project to fight significant sand erosion that has been occurring on the Iroquois Point beach, Colon said. Besides replenishing sand and widening the beach, the company is in the process of installing underwater groins — similar to the one in Waikiki at the end of Kapahulu Avenue — to arrest the beach erosion, he said. The project is one that Ford Island Properties is undertaking voluntarily, Colon said.

The company also has cleaned up debris along the shoreline and installed a series of beach cabanas and thatched palapas, or umbrellas, along the sand for sunbathers as well as two sand volleyball courts and parking areas, Colon said. Future plans call for such things as restrooms, a swimming pool and a playground.

Reach Gordon Y.K. Pang at [gpang@honoluluadvertiser.com](mailto:gpang@honoluluadvertiser.com).

[Back](#)

© COPYRIGHT 2007 The Honolulu Advertiser, a division of [Gannett Co.](#) Inc.

All materials contained on this site are protected by United States copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast without the prior written permission of The Honolulu Advertiser. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice from copies of the content.