

The Ha'ikū Stairs are comprised of over 4,000 steps that extend from Ha'ikū Valley (400 feet elevation) to the ridge line of the Ko'olau Range (2,820 feet elevation) and connects to a trail in Moanalua Valley. The Ha'ikū Stairs resides on Parcel TMK: 4-6-15:011 owned by the City and County of Honolulu Board of Water Supply, but also straddles the ridgelines of adjoining landowners, namely the City and County of Honolulu, DHHL and DLNR. BWS is conducting a boundary survey to verify the location of the stairs to underlying properties. BWS acquired the vertical portion of the amphitheater shaped Ha'ikū Valley from Bishop Estate as a single lot through condemnation in 1958 for water development purposes. BWS developed the Ha'ikū Well on the Kahuku side of the valley and the H-3 Freeway construction subsequently split it into two parcels, TMK: 4-6-015:001 and 4-6-015:011.

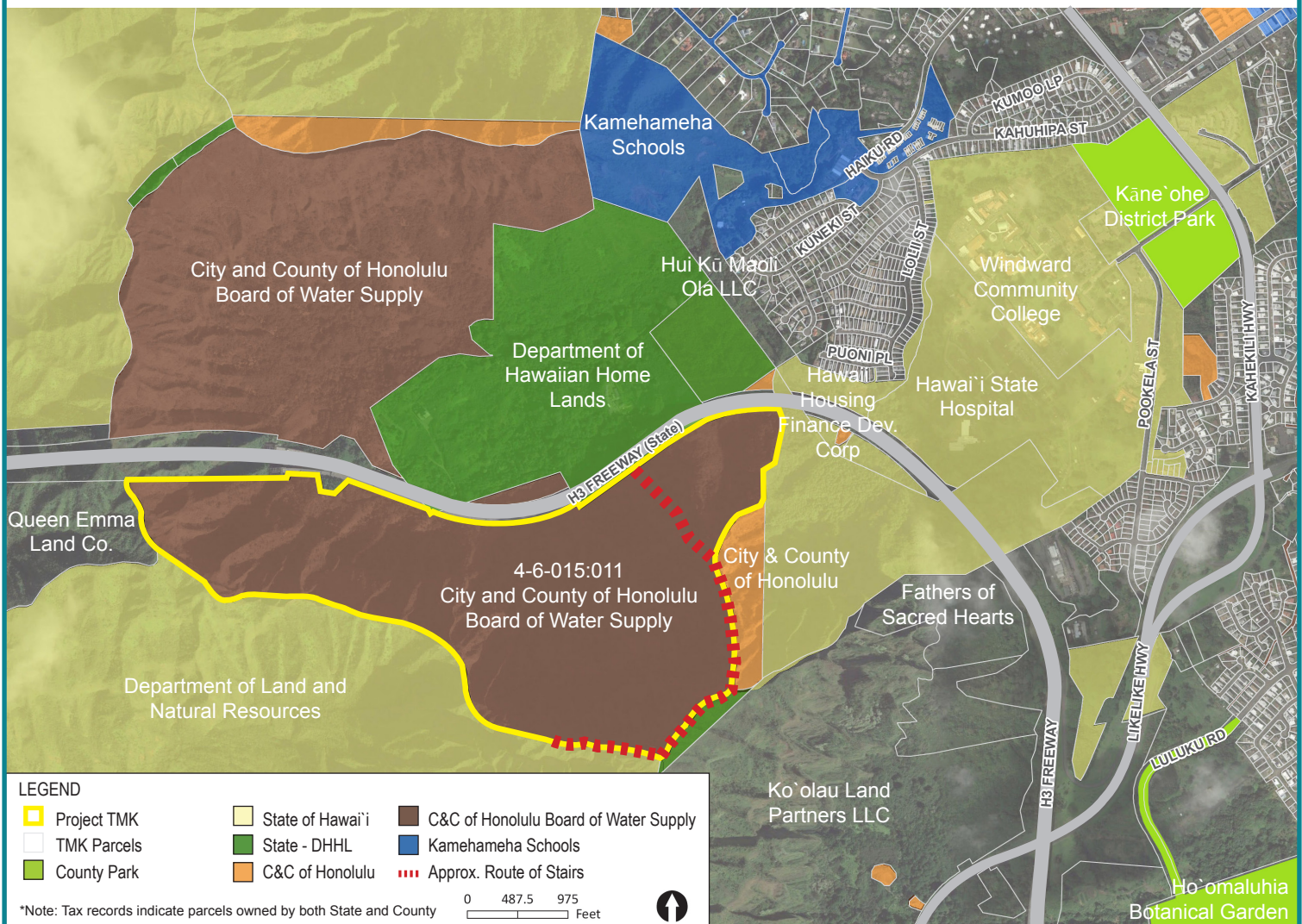
Originally built of wood in the 1940's by the U.S. Navy to access radio communications antennae facilities along the ridgeline, Ha'ikū Stairs was replaced with stainless steel stair modules in the late 1950's. In 1975, the U.S. Coast Guard converted the facility into the Omega navigation station until it terminated operations in 1991. Since 1987, the Ha'ikū Stairs has remained closed to the general public due to vandalism and liability concerns.

In 2005, the City refurbished the Ha'ikū Stairs with the intent of formally re-opening it for public use while the City worked

to secure legal access. BWS began the process of transferring the Parcel and stairs to the City because water sources were already developed on the Kahuku side of the valley and the City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) was poised to take over operation and maintenance responsibilities. Unfortunately, the City Council did not approve the property transfer from BWS to DPR. BWS continues to pay for security to keep trespassers off the stairs and HPD and HFD continue to absorb the costs of trespassing enforcement and rescue operations.

The mission of BWS is to provide safe, dependable and affordable water now and into the future. Maintenance and operations of the Ha'ikū Stairs does not support the BWS mission.

The Ha'ikū Stairs provides scenic vistas of the Ko'olau and Kāne'ohe Bay, however, in its current condition, it is a liability for BWS and adjoining ridgeline landowners because of hikers who ignore posted no trespassing signs and continue to illegally climb Ha'ikū Stairs. Risk of injury, harm, or death is a concern. In 2015, BWS began to assess options to either remove the structure or potentially convey the land to another responsible entity to assume ownership of the parcel. This environmental review will formally assess these options and their range of environmental impacts to then inform BWS and the community as to what the future of Ha'ikū Stairs should be.



PROJECT LOCATION:

Ha'ikū, He'eia,
Ko'olaupoko
O'ahu, Hawai'i

TAX MAP KEY (TMK):

(1) 4-6-015:011

LAND AREA:

224.756 acres

STATE LAND USE DISTRICT:

Conservation District,
Protective Subzone

**CITY AND COUNTY
OF HONOLULU:**

Zoning (Land Use Ordinance)
P-1 Preservation



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Q: *Why is BWS undertaking this project and what is the proposed action?*

A: The proposed action is to remove Ha'ikū Stairs as its continued management is not consistent with the BWS mission. Currently, the BWS annually spends approximately \$160,000 of water rate funds for security at Ha'ikū Stairs that should otherwise be used to deliver water to its customers. The removal of Ha'ikū Stairs eliminates liability risk for BWS and adjoining ridgeline landowners. As an example, in late April 2016, a swing was illegally installed along Ha'ikū Stairs, which presented potential life endangering consequences. In this case, BWS contracted the removal of the swing at a cost of \$23,000 to ratepayers.

Q: *Will BWS consider other viable alternatives besides the proposed action?*

A: As a part of the state environmental review process, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared. The EIS will consider the proposed action along with three alternative scenarios:

- 1) **Legal Access Alternative.** This scenario would require an access easement with agency landowners to define and condition an acceptable hiking trail route, as well as address parking and support facilities. Further, the oversight and implementation of any improvements to or operations and maintenance of the hiking trail and structure would require a separate agreement with a qualified entity that would assume these responsibilities.

In 2014, Councilmember Anderson convened a Ha'ikū Stairs Working Group consisting of key stakeholders including agencies, adjacent landowners, and community representatives. After considering various access alternatives, the Working Group recommended an access path that would start at the City's Kāne'ohe District Park, continue through the Kahuku side of Windward Community College and the DOH Hawai'i State Hospital, and end along the DOT H-3 Service Road to the base of the stairs. The EIS will further examine the feasibility of this option.

- 2) **Conveyance Alternative.** This scenario would result in the transfer of the underlying parcel from BWS to a more qualified government entity. Prior to any conveyance, the provision of legal access would still have to be approved before the transfer of authority and ownership could occur.
- 3) **No action.** Ha'ikū Stairs would remain "as-is" with the land and structure remaining under BWS ownership. No improvements would be made, access would remain closed, and concerns of security costs, liability, and risk would remain.

Q: *How much will the project cost?*

A: Estimated costs are not known at this time but will be evaluated during the EIS. Cost estimates will evaluate the removal of Ha'ikū Stairs as well as a range of necessary structural improvements if left in place.

Q: *What is the estimated schedule and what are the immediate steps for this process?*

A: The schedule to complete the environmental review process is estimated to be 1 year from the issuance of the EIS Preparation Notice (EISPN), which notifies interested parties that a Draft EIS is being prepared. The EISPN will detail the alternatives to be further considered and the studies to be completed. The EISPN is projected to be released in December 2016. A key component throughout the process will be a series of community interactions and meetings to gather input as to viable alternatives.

For more information, please see the official BWS Ha'ikū Stairs website at:

<http://www.boardofwatersupply.com/haikustairs>

If you have questions, please contact



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