

Keehi Lagoon Canoe Facility Under Construction

Keehi Lagoon Canoe Complex

By Marilyn Kali

What started as a dream of OCC member Bob Fischer many years ago, is finally becoming reality down at Keehi Lagoon--a world class canoe racing facility.

State and Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association officials were on hand when ground was broken in January for the \$2.4 million Competition Center which is being constructed in Phase 1.

"Sure we're excited," said HCRA President Michael Tongg. "The planning has been going on for so many years, we didn't think it would ever really happen.

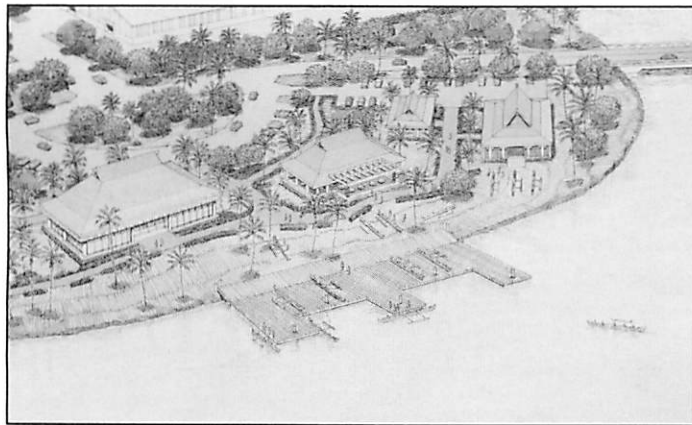
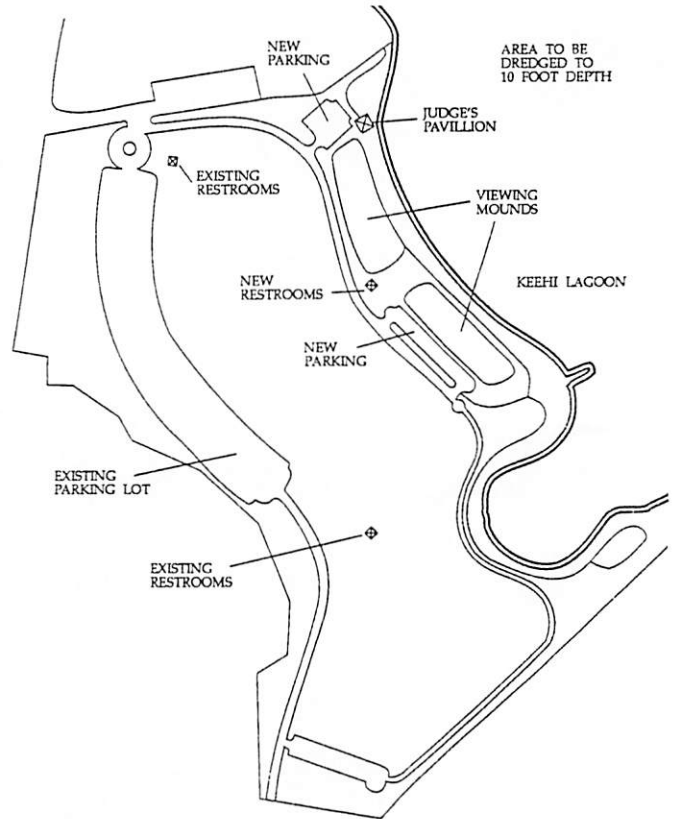
"We'll finally have first class facilities for our sport. We won't have to sit in the dirt any more or cut our feet on the glass in the water."

In Phase 1 of the Keehi Lagoon project, the State Department of Transportation is building a judges' pavilion where they can view the finishes from a second-story loft. The loft will house

video equipment so finishes can be electronically recorded.

There will also be new restrooms, outdoor showers, jogging and bicycle paths, access roads, two new parking areas with space for 200 cars and lots of landscaping and shade trees.

Also under construction are two long earth mounds which will be grassed so that spectators can sit and



This is a architect's drawing of the proposed Hawaiian Canoe Center.



HCRA officials participated in the groundbreaking ceremony.

watch the races. The mounds will be 10-12 feet above the beach level and will make it easier to watch the races.

Completion of Phase 1 is expected in September.

Phase 1A, which will involve dredging Keehi Lagoon to a depth of 10 feet, will get underway in September. The state has already removed all the derelict vessels from the race course.

When the dredging is finished, there will be a total of 12 lanes, each 80-foot wide and a half-mile long. A sandy beach will also be built at the park to replace the coral and broken glass that is there now. A groin will be built to hold the new beach in place.

Completion of Phase 1A is scheduled for January, 1992.

Future phases are still in the planning stages.

Located on the peninsula between Kalihi and Moanalua Streams, mauka of the race course, the Hawaiian Canoe Center will provide essential supporting facilities for the Keehi Lagoon Canoe Competition Center, including administrative areas, canoe and kayak storage and launching, training and education facilities, canoe related cultural and historical displays, meeting places, canoe and related craft and repair facilities and food and beverage services.

Because of the construction at Keehi, there won't be any races scheduled there this year. The Oahu Championships will be held at Kaneohe Bay. Healani has yet to decide on a location for their regatta, usually held at Keehi, which opens the racing season on June 2.