

# Canoe Regatta participants praise Waikiki sand replenishment project

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For 71 years, Waikiki Beach has played host to the Walter J. Macfarlane Memorial Canoe Paddling Regatta on the Fourth of July, and this year one of the main attractions was the beach.

Several thousand people gathered on beautiful Waikiki Beach for the annual Walter J. Macfarlane Regatta, the key word here is beach.

“It’s so beautiful Ron. We’re able to walk, we’re able to maneuver around the canoes and everybody has space. It’s the way Waikiki should be,” Kathy Erwin with the Kailua Canoe Club said.

For several years, that wasn’t the case because of erosion. There was literally no beach for tents, canoes or even foot-traffic.

“It was real crowded but a lot of times when the boat was lined up the water would hit the boats so never have room for walk but at least this year get room for walk with the kids especially the tourists yeah, it’s a lot better for them,” Pete Soriano with the Waimanalo Canoe Club said.

Two years ago, 24,000 cubic yards of sand were pumped in from offshore to replenish and widen Waikiki Beach by about 37 feet. The \$2.5M project received rave reviews.

“They did a great job. Make it more inviting, come back. Good for the economy good for the tourist,” Soriano said.

“This is good sand this is good sand, this is original. Real sand from the original coming back to the beach, so it’s nice beautiful,” Chris Sallas with the Waimanalo Canoe Club said.

“I think it’s a good investment and there was a lot of positive things that came about where the people are being happy and satisfied,” Scott Reis-Moniz with the Waimanalo Canoe Club said.

Plenty of smiles and plenty of space.

“I think its something that actually positive and good for our community and the state of Hawaii,” Reis-Moniz said.

“This beach is like the doorway to our islands. This is what people think of when they think of Hawaii, this is one of the first places that they come. So how wonderful we can keep it looking beautiful for our residents and the people who come to visit,” Erwin said.