

# SADDLE ROAD PROJECT BULLETIN

Issue V  
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## Ground Broken

United States Senator Daniel K. Inouye delivered the keynote address at ground breaking ceremonies held February 17, 2004 as the first phase of Saddle Road improvements got underway.



*Left to right: Dave Gedeon, Walter Kunitake, Rod Haraga, Larry Smith, Senator Dan Inouye, Representative Neil Abercrombie, COL David Anderson and Mayor Harry Kim*

The blessing was given by Ulu Garmon. Other dignitaries in attendance were Alexis Lum, LTC Clarke, Peter Cline, Abe Wong, Glenn Yasui and Donald Okahara. Several hundred citizens joined the dignitaries noted above to mark this momentous occasion.

## Construction Underway



Through a competitive bid process administered by the Federal Highway Administration, Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA), Kiewit Pacific was awarded an \$11 million contract to begin the first phase of earthwork and drainage improvements between mileposts 28 and 35

slated for completion this spring.

This section of the project is an entirely new roadway, diverging from the existing Saddle Road for a length of over six miles.

Motorists may notice construction activity in the distance to the west of Mauna Kea Access Road. Motorists may face occasional traffic slowdowns as construction vehicles traverse the intersection near the Mauna Kea State Park entrance. However, major traffic delays are not anticipated during the construction of this segment.

## Saddle Road Mitigation

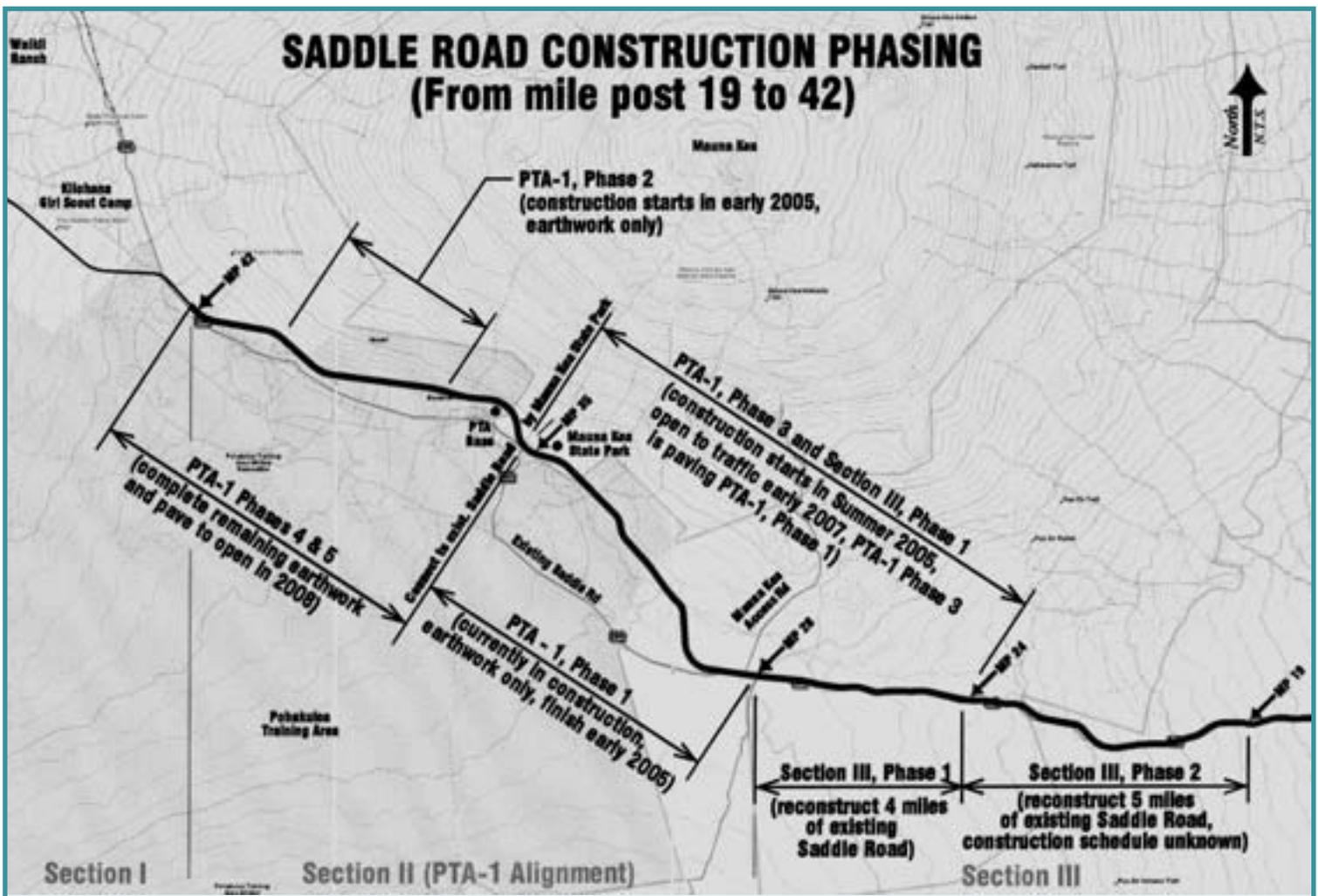
The Saddle Road project passes through land designated as Critical Habitat for an endangered bird known as the Palila. To mitigate for roadway impacts, a multiagency mitigation plan has been implemented. The plan's main objectives are to re-establish a population of Palila on the north slope of Mauna Kea, to protect and expand the Palila population on the west slope of Mauna Kea, and to restore habitat at Kipuka Alala. Over the last two years, several groups of Palila have been released above the Puu Mali mitigation site and government biologists report encouraging results of these early steps.

In addition, special contract requirements will reduce the risk of fire along the roadway and the introduction of alien species to land adjacent to the roadway.

## Project Timeline

Once this initial earthwork and drainage project (mileposts 28 to 35) is completed in early 2005, construction shifts in two directions—west and east. On the west side of the Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) Base, earthwork and drainage improvements will commence this spring on a three-mile section between mileposts 37 and 40. Once again, motorists will rarely be inconvenienced as construction activity will be to the north of the existing roadway. Construction of this segment is expected to be completed within one year.

Approximately six months later, reconstruction of four miles on the east side of Saddle Road (mileposts 24 to 28) begins. Here, the roadway will be predominately reconstructed along



its existing alignment and traffic delays will occur. Keeping the new alignment within the existing roadway corridor and lava flow notably reduces construction impacts to adjacent lands and biological and archaeological resources. Reconstruction will thoroughly upgrade road conditions to meet modern roadway design standards. This project will also include the third phase of PTA-1 construction, which will pave the 6.5-mile segment currently underway. Construction is expected to commence in mid-2005 and take approximately 18 months to complete. By early 2007, the completed 10.5-mile stretch of newly paved highway (MP 24 to Mauna Kea State Park near MP 35) is scheduled to open to traffic.

### Upcoming Milestones

Funding is being made available from several sources: U.S. Department of the Army, Defense Access Road Program and Ecosystem Management Program, U.S. Congress, FHWA and Hawaii Department of Transportation. Construction of the remainder of the roadway from milepost 6 to Mamalahoa Highway will be phased and scheduled as funds become available. At this time, additional sections will be constructed in this order (refer to centerfold map for section detail):

1. Completion of Section II (PTA Base to milepost 42)
2. Western portion of Section III (mileposts 19 to 24)

The construction timeline for Section I (Mamalahoa Highway to milepost 42), the lower portion of Section III (mileposts 9 to 19) and Section IV (mileposts 6 to 9) has not yet been finalized.

### Ala Mauna Advisory Committee

A group of citizens have come together under the guidance of the Saddle Road Task Force and Hawaii Island Economic Development Board (HIEDB) to collaborate on an interpretive corridor along Saddle Road. The Ala Mauna Advisory Committee will identify the area's natural history, cultural traditions, amazing geography and natural resources that may be accessible in selected areas along the roadway. Potential areas of interest for possible interpretation and signage are presently under discussion. More detailed information can be obtained by calling HIEDB at (808) 966-5616 or via email at [sky.hiedb@verizon.net](mailto:sky.hiedb@verizon.net).

[www.saddleroad.com](http://www.saddleroad.com)

Citizens having questions or concerns about construction improvements to Saddle Road can contact either Mr. Dave Gedeon, FHWA Project Manager at (720) 963-3723 or Mr. Bruce Meyers, Okahara & Associates, Project Engineer at (808) 961-5527 or via email at [hilo@okahara.com](mailto:hilo@okahara.com).