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Sports fields sprout in Lydgate breeze

by Dennis Fujimoto - the garden island

WAILUA — Dennis Wong, Roger Soares and Michael Lopez of Earthworks paused only so dignitaries could get the formalities out of the way Tuesday.

After the groundbreaking ceremonies ended, the trio — armed with a trench cutter — lost little time installing the silt screen for three sports fields above the south end of Lydgate Park.

The day marked the realization of a seven-year vision sparked by Tim Bynum and other members of the Friends of Kamalani, said Mayor Bryan Baptiste, who led the formal ceremonies.

Jeff Fisher of Earthworks said his crews were already poised to begin work, which should be done in about three weeks.

“The hard work comes after that,” Fisher said. “Ali’i Landscaping and Talbert Tacbian’s crew will have the task of installing the irrigation and planting.”

Tacbian said they have about a year to complete the work and the fields should be ready for use some time in 2007.

“I have been privileged to have been able to work on this project under both mayors Maryanne Kusaka and Baptiste,” said Doug Haigh of the county’s Public Works Department. “This is one of the fun parts of my job. We do the work and get to see the children enjoy our efforts.”

Haigh said the project involved the collaboration between the various segments of the Public Works Department, including engineering and consultation with Ed Okamoto of the Wailua Golf Course.

Although no formal statement was made, there was hope that Okamoto would help in maintaining the facility once the project was complete.

Thomas Noyes of the Friends of Kamalani said the community can get involved in the development of the three sports fields, which will enable soccer games to be played at Lydgate Park.

Noyes said they are planning two works days where the community can help plant trees and other landscaping projects. The first of these is Oct. 28, which coincides with National Make A Difference Day, and the second will be on Nov. 4, a day after the Arbor Day Hawai’i celebration.

“If everything goes right, we’ll be working to get something positive on the park put into the ground,” Noyes said. “The more support and buy-ins we can get from the community, community groups and agencies, the more we’ll accomplish.”

Bynum, another of the Friends of Kamalani leaders, said trees and shrubs for the Kamalani Park project are now over 13 years old because they were planted before the park was built.

Defying naysayers who said the group will fall apart shortly after the building of the Kamalani Park, Bynum said they’ve already advanced to building the Kamalani Bridge, the first phase of the pedestrian and bicycle path, and the sports fields are the latest contribution to the popular park.

In his remarks, Baptiste said Lydgate is one of the best, if not the best, park in the state.

“We have kept our commitment to the community,” Bynum said.

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