

Leaving Our Mark on State Parks: Improving Our Public Parks for the Better

Parks in Hawai'i provide a wonderful place for families to spend time together. However, the condition of parks makes the public question whether or not they are usable. Damaged slides, graffiti, and structural issues in the playground are reasons as to why people avoid them. By creating an app or website where people can report damaged equipment the state can give the public a role in solving this problem. Doing this will allow not only necessary repairs and improvements to be completed, but will also give future generations the parks they deserve.

I had personal experience with this issue in my own neighborhood park. During my time in elementary school, my favorite place to visit was the Kamiloiki Park in Hawai'i Kai. The playground consisted of two slides, two climbing contraptions, monkey bars, and a bridge. We would spend hours at the playground just enjoying time together. Four years ago, that ended because of cracks on both of the slides. My parents deemed it too dangerous to use; consequently, we stopped using the Kamiloiki playground.

Parks serve many purposes besides being outdoor spaces. They provide many health benefits that are invaluable through promoting physical activity. Because of this, these public spaces can reduce obesity, blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and much more. These recreational areas also reduce global warming, a growing issue in our world. Trees' planted within parks aid in this dilemma, and are able to lower surrounding temperatures from a range of five to ten degrees.

With many benefits, it is hard to see why they are avoided. The terrible state of the parks, such as cracked slides, graffiti, and other broken equipment, is part of the issue. Mayor Kirk

Caldwell recognizes this and has attempted to take action: “In 2015, Mayor Kirk Caldwell announced an initiative to fixing the bathrooms, playground equipment and grounds of many of Oahu's 300 parks,” (Honolulu Family). With the disastrous status of parks, their quality can only decline if no preventative measures are taken. In fifty years no one will use them, and as a result, generations to come will no longer be playing in parks.

One solution to these issues is a technological approach, in which an app or website is created that gives the people the ability to report anything that needs to be repaired in a park. After writing a description of the damage, a time estimate will be given for when someone will respond. The addresses of nearby parks will be given to use for the time being. The funding for repairs is already provided by the government, but if the community is willing, they'll have the ability to donate money to their parks in order to quicken the repair process. In the website, there would be a section dedicated to online donations through credit card transactions. Community members will also be able to volunteer in order to aid in the restoration of their parks.

Acting now is necessary, for if no changes are made, then the situation of parks will continue dwindling. Clarence T.C. Ching ultimately wanted to help others and fixing public parks certainly pertains to his mission. In fact the Clarence T.C. Ching foundation donated five million dollars to build the Clarence T.C. Ching Athletics Complex which serves as a recreational area for students. Giving the public a place to enjoy and receive health benefits is irreplaceable, especially since it's one of the few things in Hawai'i that doesn't come with a cost. It's disheartening that parks are avoided simply because of the poor matter they are left in. Producing an app or a website is the solution to this problem. This way communities can improve and contribute to their parks together.

Works Cited

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