

The Garden Island

## Kalalau rockfall contractors may finish work early

Paul C. Curtis - The Garden Island | Posted: Friday, October 1, 2010 11:45 pm

Editor's note: This is the second in a series of stories about Kalalau.

KALALAU — Wilderness camping, ha.

Rockfall-mitigation workers with AIS Construction out of California, staying on Kalalau Beach, have hot and cold running water, generators, a cook, and most of the other comforts of home.

But, as they are engaged in the dangerous, labor-intensive work of removing potentially hazardous rocks from valley and makai walls while dangling from ropes, and working seven days a week, they need all the creature comforts they can get.

Craig Loop, AIS Construction supervisor, said work happens from sunrise to sunset, is so physically demanding that an hour or two of rock removal also demands about a half-hour break, and that the work is ahead of schedule and could be done within three weeks.

That is well before the Oct. 31 deadline state Department of Land and Natural Resources officials have given the contractors to complete the work that began earlier this month, in time for the reopening of the popular wilderness area Nov. 1.

The portion of Na Pali Trail from Hanakapi'ai Beach (around the two-mile mark) to Kalalau Beach (the 11-mile mark ending the trail) has been closed since the first full week of September, to keep unauthorized people out of harm's way.

The DLNR has used that closure to clear out illegal campers, remove illegal campsites, and allow local hunters to hunt to reduce pig and goat populations.

To give some of his crew members breaks, Loop said some are allowed to leave the valley and spend a few days at a condominium in Princeville, where they can rest and relax before returning to the grueling work that is sometimes complicated by high winds and rain.

Jim Hobbs, owner and pilot of Airborne Aviation, has multiple contracts to deliver workers and supplies onto the beach, and has also been flying DLNR Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement officers in and out of the valley, making sure no campers or dwellers are in the valley, on the beach, or anywhere near where workers use five-foot long prybars and other devices to remove rocks which could easily kill a human if struck.

On Tuesday, when he flew The Garden Island reporter into the valley to have a first-hand look at the ongoing work, he took the opportunity to haul a few loads of gathered rock (around 1,000 pounds a sled) from the beach landing zone to a dump area near Ho'ole'a Falls.

"We're just doing it for safety, not yardage," said Danni Jonsson, project foreman for AIS Construction.

While on the job, the AIS crew is utilizing the lanai of the DLNR cabin near the beach, with the workers' personal tents scattered along the beach.

See [thegardenisland.com](http://thegardenisland.com) for video of some of the work.

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