

OCC Adventure Hikers

Go To Waimanalo Flume and Palehua Ridge

By Don Eovino

An intrepid group of 21 stalwart souls met on Sunday October 30 at the end of the Maunawili Trail in Waimanalo for our gourmet adventure hike to the Waimanalo Flume! The three to four mile hike included a pep talk by Don Eovino who along with Katy Bourne, Candes Gentry and Brad Coates are frequent visitors here. Each New Year' Day they run the entire 11 mile distance at 7 a.m. sharp, rain or shine, sleep or no sleep, and drunk or sober, usually all of the former!

Warned by Don, and as befitting a pre-Halloween hike, the tunnel was treacherously mined with goblins and ghouls and things that go squish in the dark by Katy Bourne and her daughter Skye, who the night before salted the shaft with gummy-bear like creepy crawlers, snakes, scorpions, gecko's, and a hanging skeleton at the entrance to the flume.

Those that could bend easily (only about 10 creaky bodies) braved the 600 meter tunnel. Duck walking in moving water a couple feet deep, in a four foot tall cave, pitch black except for those that came prepared with an occasional headlamp proved to be a worthwhile experience to get over claustrophobia.

Among those going in were Candes and her friend Steve, Brad Coates, Katy, long time OCC swimming organizer (double rough water) Jim Anderson, and a couple of rambunctious dogs!

Going back the way they came and forgoing the experience because of not so supple joints or fear of the dark were Nora Meijide, Don and Hiroko Eovino, Bill Wright, and their dogs who found their way back without going through the flume.

Regrouping 1.5 miles later at the bottom of the hill, muddy, sweaty, and wet but happier for the experience, we all trucked to Waimanalo Beach Park for our splendid BBQ.

Our next hike was to Palehua Ridge in the enchanting Honouliuli rain forest above Makakilo heights.

A mystical experience was in store for the biggest

group to join up so far. Word of mouth is catchy as over 35 people all showed up on time many with great pot-luck dishes. Guarded by two manual gates, the area is a rare find but home to Alison O'Neil, Don Eovino's assistant who has lived up there for the last 50 years.

The road is maintained by the DLNR for satellite dishes and other structures, and is one of the highest spots on the island at 2,500 feet. However, driving a car is an adventure as the road literally spans the ridge in some places with steep drop offs on either side of the road. All parties gathered in a long fun caravan as the ride past the gate was two miles to the residence, then another three miles to the top and end of the road.

Katy Bourne, Terri Needles, Brad Coates, Andrea Lehman, Rich and Rae Turbin, Jim Anderson, Kim Heyer and Gerry DeBenedetti braved the heights, along with yours truly and others.

Alison escorted all of us up the wind swept ridges across spines that you could see what looked to be Pearl Harbor, but at that height all you could see were the finger-like harbors and no homes or roads. There were also views of Nanakuli, Maili and Pokai Bay at the same spot. An exciting traverse found us hugging the walls as the trail narrowed to 16 inches, and except for a well-placed dug-in strap would have been dangerous and impassible.

Trudging through pristine ironwood forests and up steep boulder inclines was a breath taking adventure for all of us. The ride back down to Alison's cool deck was a resplendent relief and a way to bond with all the hikers over a hot gourmet brunch that is getting to be the signature draw for the end of our hikes. Alison was the gracious host to open up her enchanting domicile to our rugged group. The memories and feeling of that location will last a long time for us as we all want to come back again!

Check the OCC website or enews for a schedule of our upcoming hikes and join us