



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH BEGINS
ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING
OF WAIOPILI DITCH AT MAHA'ULEPU;
AREA WILL BE CLOSED TO PUBLIC SEPT. 26 - NOV. 30**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) will be conducting environmental sampling in the Maha'ulepu area to further study the bacteria in recreational waters at Waiopili Ditch and in the Poipu-Koloa Watershed area. To facilitate the collection of scientific samples, Maha'ulepu Farm LLC has agreed to close the area around Waiopili Ditch and temporarily restrict public access from Sept. 26 – Nov. 30, 2016. The public is advised to stay out of the area while the department completes its study. The closure will not affect lease holders and tenants in the area.

"The department appreciates Maha'ulepu Farm's cooperation during our water quality study to determine the cause of high bacteria levels found in previous studies," said Keith Kawaoka, deputy director of Environmental Health. "Restricting access to the area will help to ensure the accuracy of our sampling."

In a study earlier this year, the department found high levels of enterococci bacteria at Waiopili Ditch and the adjacent Waikomo Watershed, better known as the Poipu-Koloa Watershed. The department is currently working with the University of California, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (UC Berkeley Lab) to determine the sources of bacteria found in the area using UC Berkeley Lab PhyloChip technology. PhyloChip is a proven diagnostic tool used effectively in California. DOH in collaboration

with UC Berkeley Lab will use the tool for the first time in a semi-tropical environment. Water, sediment, soil, decaying leaves, injection well and cesspool effluent, and fecal matter from various animals and birds will be tested to identify specific sources of contamination. Identifying these sources will help guide plans to mitigate and prevent bacteria in recreational waters that can cause illness and health concerns.

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