

Reef Guardians Hawaii Champions Efforts in Protecting One Of Hawaii's Most Valuable Lagoons

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Reef Guardians Hawaii, a 501c3 nonprofit group focused on conserving coral reefs, is increasing its efforts to safeguard the 'Anini Lagoon, which is home to Hawaii's longest continuous coral reef. This lagoon serves as a breeding ground and nursery for various marine species, many of which are under severe threat due to environmental shifts.

The organization has noticed a significant decline in the health of the 'Anini Lagoon in recent years. As a response, they have produced an 'Anini Water Quality Characterization Report that assesses the current state of the lagoon and proposes a plan for its revival. This in-depth report can be accessed at https://www.reefguardians.org/anini-lagoon.

"The 'Anini Lagoon provides a habitat for a diverse range of marine species, making its preservation critically important," said Robin Mazor, a Reef Guardians Hawaii executive director. "This report is a valuable source of information that helps us appreciate the specific challenges facing this ecosystem, stimulating prompt and

targeted action."

From January 2024, the organization will launch a comprehensive Water Quality Testing Program at the lagoon. Community volunteers and necessary funding will support this objective-oriented initiative. Its primary aim is to gauge and manage pollution impacts to counter destructive occurrences in the lagoon, such as outbreaks of coral disease, excess algal growth, and diminished fish populations.

Besides its focus on the 'Anini Lagoon, Reef Guardians Hawaii is actively addressing the widespread decline of indigenous coral species around Kauai. Research findings on several diseases, including Coral Bleaching, Black Band Disease, and Cyanobacteria, can be accessed at https://www.reefguardians.org/coral-disease.

"Although we're dealing with a serious situation, we have confidence in our collective capacity to curb the negative effects on our coral reefs," said Mazor. "By cultivating a deeper understanding of these diseases and how land-based influences affect reef health, we intend to develop effective solutions."

In Mazor's view, education is a significant factor in facilitating coral reef recovery. To this end, Reef Guardians Hawaii offers several educational programs, including a detailed study of the 'Anini watershed and lagoon with the Hawaii Technology Academy and public forums conducted by their Chief Water Quality Scientist, Robin Knox. Data on one such discussion can be found at https://www.reefguardians.org/single-post/public-forum-with-chief-water-quality-scientist-combatting-pollution-in-the-anini-wanini-watershed.

These initiatives highlight the group's faith in collective responsibility, pushing them to involve as many stakeholders as possible in their preservation endeavors. The public can support this cause by completing a stakeholder survey, reaching out to the Reef Guardians Hawaii's leadership, or by making contributions towards the 'Anini Lagoon Water Testing Program.

As part of their commitment to restoring local ecosystems, Reef Guardians Hawaii aims to establish community-based management plans for the 'Anini watershed and drive the creation of 'Anini/Wanini Watershed Hui, a collaborative endeavor involving the Wastewater Alternatives and Innovations organization and community volunteers.

In the face of environmental challenges, Reef Guardians Hawaii is committed to improving the resilience of Hawaii's sensitive marine ecosystems. They are dedicated to restoring these valuable habitats and vow to continue their research, restoration, and education efforts to ensure the future well-being of Hawaii's marine life. To learn more and to help with financial support visit www.reefguardians.org

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REEF GUARDIANS HAWAII

Reef Guardians Hawaii -Corral Reef, 501(c)(3) Non-Profit

Our mantras are "Reef Preservation through Research, Restoration and Education? and ?Saving our Oceans, One Reef at a time."

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