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Annual World Water Monitoring Day Events to Highlight Water Quality in Makiki, Ala Wai Watersheds

(FORT SHAFTER, HI NR 20-2010) The City and County of Honolulu Storm Water Quality Branch and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, will be collaborating with Washington Middle School, the Hawaii Water Environment Association (HWEA) and Punahou School for Oahu's annual World Water Monitoring Day activities on Sept. 21 and Sept. 23, 2010 in the Makiki and Ala Wai watersheds.

World Water Monitoring Day is an initiative organized by the Water Environment Federation and the International Water Association, designed to promote education and personal stewardship regarding water ecosystems and resources. The City and County of Honolulu and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are spearheading this effort, along with thousands of volunteers worldwide, by sampling water quality and reporting findings.

Monitoring activities are easy and engaging. Volunteers will perform tests for dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity (clarity), temperature, phosphates and nitrates. More than 250 Washington Middle School students will participate along the Makiki Stream.

On Sept. 21 and Sept. 23, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., students and volunteers will rotate through four stations at the upper section of the Makiki Stream near the Makiki Pumping Station on Makiki Heights Drive. Students and volunteers will then transfer to the lower end of the Makiki Stream, at Magic Island, to continue water monitoring until 12:30 p.m.

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Technical experts from the City and County of Honolulu and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be on-hand to collect and measure water samples, answer questions about water quality and the City's storm drain system, and conduct a stream survey and trail walk. They will be joined by staff from the Hawaii Water Environment Association (HWEA) and Punahou School Mamiya Science Center.

Students will then upload their data to a special section of the World Water Monitoring website to be added to data collected worldwide. They can view the results of their work online and compare their findings with other students.

While regulatory stream monitoring is conducted throughout the year by the City's Storm Water Quality Branch, World Water Monitoring Day is a vital way for volunteers and community members to understand the importance of water quality. Last year, more than 120,000 people in 81 countries monitored their local waterways as part of the initiative.

Adjacent land uses and human activities that can potentially have a negative impact on the quality of the stream and riparian (lands along stream) zone include runoff and debris from single-family homes and lawns in residential areas, paved roads, parking lots, gas stations, fast-food restaurants, and bridges, as well as accelerated erosion on forest lands and from roads, and illegal trash dumping in the upper watershed.

These events are free and open to the public. To participate, contact Iwalani Sato, Storm Water Community Relations Specialist, at 768-3248 or Joseph Bonfiglio, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Honolulu District Public Affairs, at 438-9862.

More details are available online at <http://www.cleanwaterhonolulu.com> and www.worldwatermonitoringday.org.