



## DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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GOVERNOR

SUZANNE D. CASE  
CHAIRPERSON

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 23, 2015

### **BLEACHPALOOZA EVENT BRINGS STATEWIDE ATTENTION TO DAMAGING EFFECTS OF CORAL BLEACHING**

***Volunteer Opportunities on All Islands Set for Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>***

(HONOLULU) – Coral 'bleaching', a stress response caused by high ocean temperatures that makes corals appear white and can ultimately lead to their death, is reaching unprecedented levels across Hawaii. Serious concern has already prompted a response from state and federal agencies charged with protecting and monitoring the health of coral reefs and volunteer organizations are also now responding. DLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is supporting the first-ever *Bleachapalooza*; a grassroots effort that will bring volunteers together statewide to receive training on how to identify coral bleaching in their areas and how to report their findings to the Eyes of the Reef Network ([www.eorhawaii.org](http://www.eorhawaii.org)).

The Eyes of the Reef Network plays an integral role in the state's coral bleaching response plan by reaching out to ocean users and providing additional assessment and reporting capacity of coral damage. The *Bleachapalooza* event is the brainchild of community organizer Liz Foote and DAR Maui special projects coordinator and Eyes of the Reef Maui coordinator Darla White. They are intent on spreading the messages of how to kokua our coral reefs during this stressful time and how to get more people involved in reporting bleaching in the waters they most frequently use to the EOR network. White explained, "We initially conceptualized *Bleachapalooza* as an event for Maui that would provide a way for people to take positive action for our reefs by reporting coral bleaching. Once we started talking to our colleagues, it immediately became clear that this call for action should extend statewide."

DLNR Chair Suzanne Case said, "The ocean is the lifeblood of Hawaii and our coral reefs are the building blocks for the entirety of a healthy aquatic ecosystem. Virtually everyone in Hawaii enjoys the ocean in some way and anything we can all do to help protect coral reefs will help protect our most vital natural resource for generations to come."

On Oct. 3, 2015, when ocean temperatures are predicted to peak, trained volunteers will simultaneously get into the ocean on Maui, Oahu, Kauai, and Hawaii Island to look for bleaching on coral reefs. The information they gather will give a better understanding of the extent of the coral bleaching and future conservation options for reefs statewide.

MORE

In advance of *Bleachapalooza*, the Eyes of the Reef Network is offering free coral bleaching identification training. Training is not mandatory to participate in the event but you should be a confident snorkeler, free diver, or SCUBA diver, have a basic understanding of what coral is, be able to recognize white, bleached corals. For updates on the *Bleachapalooza* event, check the Eyes of the Reef Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/eyesofthereef>). Island-specific information for *Bleachapalooza* is as follows:

### **Bleachapalooza Coral Bleaching Identification Training**

Oahu-

Sept. 30, 2015 6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.

Dive Oahu at Discovery Bay, 1778 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 3

For more information or to RSVP: [peytdiver@gmail.com](mailto:peytdiver@gmail.com)

Hawaii-

Sept. 26, 2015 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

West Hawaii Civic Center, (Building G) 74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Highway

For more information or to RSVP: [KramerKL@hawaii.edu](mailto:KramerKL@hawaii.edu)

Maui-

Oct. 3, 2015 9:00am

Kahekili Beach Park, 65 Kai Ala Dr.

For more information or to RSVP: [kaanapalimakaiwatch@gmail.com](mailto:kaanapalimakaiwatch@gmail.com)

Kauai-

October 1, 2015, time and location TBD

For more information or to RSVP: [Katie.T.Nalesere@hawaii.gov](mailto:Katie.T.Nalesere@hawaii.gov)

### **Bleachapalooza Events-October 3, 2015**

Oahu-

Please contact [peytdiver@gmail.com](mailto:peytdiver@gmail.com)

Hawaii-

Kahalū'u Beach Park, 9:30 a.m.

Maui-

Kahekili Beach Park, 9:00 a.m.

Kauai-

Please contact [Katie.T.Nalesere@hawaii.gov](mailto:Katie.T.Nalesere@hawaii.gov)

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