09/04/20-ADDITIONAL HAWAIʻI ISLAND AREA CLOSES AFTER TODAY TO DISCOURAGE LARGE GATHERINGS

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DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
News Release

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For Immediate News Release: September 4, 2020

ADDITIONAL HAWAIʻI ISLAND AREA CLOSES AFTER TODAY TO DISCOURAGE LARGE GATHERINGS

Puna Trail and Hāʻena Beach (Shipman's Beach)

(HILO) – The Puna Trail and Hā‘ena Beach (Shipman’s Beach) in the Puna District on Hawai‘i island will be closed at midnight today. The 2.5-mile-long trail leads to Hā‘ena Beach, known locally as Shipman’s Beach, and has seen large group gatherings dating back to original COVID-19 related orders and closures back in April.

This closure, like yesterday’s announcement that all State Beach Parks and J-7 Ranch (“Narnia”) on Hawai‘i island are also closing after today, is consistent with Hawai‘i County’s closure of all county beach parks. All State and County closures are in effect at least through Sept. 18, 2020.

Surveys conducted in April by staff from the State’s Nā Ala Hele Trails and Access Program, showed an eight-fold increase of usage of the Puna Trail, compared to data from 2019. At that time an average of 16 people a day used the trail, while the COVID-19 survey period showed an average of 140 users each day.

The Department of Land and Natural Resources supports all county and state rules in an effort to reduce the chances of coronavirus infection on Hawai‘i island, which recently, like O‘ahu, has experienced a surge in cases. Closed signs were put up at the trailhead this afternoon and the WH Shipman Estate which co-manages the trailhead parking lot with the State supports closures, as enforcement is difficult at the remote Hā‘ena beach. County and State law enforcement officers will be patrolling all closed areas this weekend to ensure compliance with all emergency rules.

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