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### **Future Conservationists Experience Unique Summer Internship Amid COVID Challenges**

**HONOLULU, HI (August 26, 2020)** – Valuable research wasn't the only success stemming from a conservation-focused summer internship program hosted by local nonprofit Malama Maunalua. Aand participate in a unique internship program unlike years past.

Malama Maunalua moved forward with its internship program despite the pandemic and took several precautions to ensure the safety of students and staff. For example, interns that returned or traveled to Hawaii underwent the mandatory two weeks of quarantine and participated in virtual introductions and project brainstorming through Zoom. Additionally, while visiting environmental sites or participating in close contact work, all interns were required to wear face masks, exercise social distancing, and use hand sanitizer. Despite the challenges arising from COVID the six talented interns conducted challenging research projects focused within the watersheds of Maunalua Bay.

“Our internship program has always been hyper focused on creating projects that give interns exciting, real-world experiences in the world of conservation, “ says Doug Harper, Malama Maunalua Executive Director. “While our organization gains valuable data from their research and insight from driven, young minds, our main goal is to engage students who want an opportunity to conduct research in the field while also developing methods to communicate their work to the community.”

At the end of their internship this month, the students presented a final ‘end product’ that furthers Malama Maunalua’s research or outreach goals and will be used to further the mission of protecting the watersheds of the Bay.

Some notable research done by the interns of this cohort is2:

- Identifying suitable locations for climate resilient coral reef restoration in Maunalua Bay

- Investigating different restoration techniques for the native seagrass species *H. hawaiiiana*
- Organizing data for water quality assessments of Maunalua Bay
- Oyster bioremediation to clean the water in Maunalua Bay and Koko Marina and community awareness about the benefits of oyster filtration
- Installing rain gauges around and above Maunalua Bay in order to more accurately capture the local regional rainfall variation

### **About Mālama Maunalua**

Mālama Maunalua is a community-based, non-profit stewardship organization committed to conserving and restoring a healthy and productive Maunalua Bay through habitat restoration, science and planning, and education and outreach. The Maunalua Bay region stretches from Black Point (Kupikipikio) in the west to Portlock Point (Kawaihoa Point) in the east and to the summit of the Koʻolau Mountains. The region is approximately 28 miles in size and has eight miles of shoreline fronting the Bay. Maunalua Bay comprises about 6.5 miles of submerged waters. Ten watersheds feed into the Bay.

Learn more at [www.malamamaunalua.org](http://www.malamamaunalua.org).

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