

# Hiyaking Hawai'i: Kawainui Pool Party.

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Note: Pictures were taken with my Canon SX110.



With a scream and a splash, a female hiker in pink long sleeves, fell into the gap between two huge boulders ahead of me. I tottered on the tip top of the massive stone behind her. Her head was level with my feet and she was struggling to climb out of a pool of thigh deep water. Stooping down I grabbed her elbow and helped her climb out with considerable effort onto the boulder ahead.

A few hours earlier, I had been waiting at Haleiwa Beach Park for the usual HTMC (Hawaiian Trail and Mountain Club) Sunday meet-up. There I had met Darryl a fellow hiker and we spoke to Steve Brown the hike coordinator.

“Is this a dangerous hike Steve?” asked Darryl.

“Yes!” said Steve firmly.

“Are there any steep sections?” asked Darryl.

“Yes!” said Steve firmly.

“Is it going to be muddy?” asked Darryl.

“Yes!” said Steve firmly.

Even though this was a members’ only hike the parking lot was packed with cars and there must have been about 50 hikers waiting for Steve’s starting spiel.

Once Steve gave us directions to the road leading to the trailhead our caravan departed and within a few minutes we were lined up at the first gate. Steve opened it and we found ourselves on a gravel road. My little Prius took a beating from the many potholes but held up as I weaved around to avoid them. Finally we reached another gate and again waited till Steve opened it. After a

lot more driving on the gravel road we turned onto a nice new highway. I kid you not. It was broad, smooth and recently constructed. Like a snake in a tornado it twisted and turned, surprisingly heading down then eventually weaving upwards around some very tight turns. There were signs of ongoing construction everywhere. Later another hiker lamented the construction saying the land owners were planning on building houses and a shopping center nearby.

At the end of the paved road we struggled to find good parking spots as there were so many cars. Finally when everyone was assembled we heard one last warning speech by Steve. He assigned a long-legged hiker named Peter as the designated point person.

As Darryl and I waited for the crowd to thin I recognized two hikers and sauntered over to them.

I had last met Phil and Myra, brother and sister, over a year ago when they led the HTMC's Tantalus Scramble hike. We caught up on happenings since. Myra indicated a guy with an 1800's style mustache next to her as her husband, and said he was celebrating his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday today.

"Anyone who can try this hike on his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday is doing well," I said.

Once on the trail I fell in behind Darryl and just ahead of Larry and Gay two other hikers I knew from previous hikes. Right away the trail climbed steeply. Though the ground was damp it was not too slick. Larry complained about the steepness of the climb and I agreed. But after several minutes we reached a level trail and soon were making good progress.

Overhead gray clouds and the occasional drizzle tickled us and with the

thick vegetation we were luckily insulated from the midmorning sun.

As we contoured in and out I saw a streambed far below on the right. Sometimes the path became a narrow edge with a steep drop on the right. But the trail clearing crew had done an excellent job of grading the slanted parts and adding the occasional step. So this made the going a lot easier than expected.

At one point on the narrow trail we encountered a wall of strawberry guava trees laden with red ripe fruit. Larry, Gay and I stopped to gorge ourselves.

“Man,” I said between bites. “These are the sweetest strawberry guavas I’ve ever tasted.”

Larry took out a large plastic bag and promptly began filling it to the brim. Finally prompted by hikers approaching from behind we moved on.

Larry had said to expect 10 stream crossings before we reached our destination, the largest freshwater pool on O’ahu. Soon we came to our first crossing which was only a tiny stream and easily forged. And after that the crossings came fairly frequently.

Meanwhile Larry and Gay keep up a constant conversation. Many times I was breathing hard from exertion and was surprised they still managed to keep talking. Since they mostly talked issues common to themselves I never felt obligated to interject.



Many of the stream crossings I managed easily as there were enough rocks. Larry was also good at crossing without getting his boots wet. Gay however adopted the fatalistic approach and plowed into the water and dispensed with the rock hopping.

As we descended a slight slope Larry pointed out a dam below. As we crossed its narrow causeway I could see the tunnel to the left in the side of the mountain that was used to divert the collected water. Most likely to irrigate the sugarcane fields of old I speculated.

At this point Myra and her husband caught up to us and soon passed us. I managed to keep up with them and soon Larry and Gay dropped back behind me. Myra chatted amicably with me asking about my job and family. She even commented I had lost some weight since the last time she had seen me which brought a broad smile to my face.

Our dialogue continued for a while but then after too much picture

taking at a large green pool they left me and Larry and Gay caught up to me again.

Larry had been counting stream crossings and when we came to number eleven we both realized something was wrong.

“Maybe we shouldn’t have counted that first one,” said Larry.

I agreed.



By now I had slipped off a rock on an earlier crossing and my right boot was soaked. Still I managed to keep the left one dry and eventually after another crossing I could hear voices in the valley ahead. I looked up to see hikers sitting at the meeting of two tall green cliffs. After one final crossing I emerged onto a pile of rocks fronting a large greenish-blue pool. Scattered like haphazard colorful pebbles, people were lounging everywhere laughing and talking. A few were in the water and I saw the far end of the pool converged into a narrow rocky passageway like a fallen giant funnel.

A person emerged from inside the funnel's spout and swam back to where we were sitting. As he dripped water I asked him about what was back there and he said a small waterfall which he had used for a back massage.

I started the enjoyable task of digitally recording the scene. Once I had taken several dozen shots I sat beside Darryl to have my lunch. Almond butter and blackberry jam in 12-grain bread. Gourmet luxury on a squalid rock.

Phil, Peter and I were the last left at the pool. As we gathered up our belongings I took some quick last minute shots with no one else around.

"Would be great to backpack into here and camp out," I said wistfully.

Phil smiled.

"I remember a camping story about someone putting a rock in another guy's pack to slow him down," said Phil.

"Oh yeah," said Peter nodding knowingly. "It was about this big and weighed about 5 pounds."

Phil laughed. "No way. Was it you?"

"I was nice about it," said Peter. "I found out at the end of hike who it was. But I was nice."

We all laughed and I motioned to Peter's backpack.

"Better check your pack Peter," I joked. "I saw Phil hanging around there earlier."

Phil took off and Peter and I brought up the rear. Peter is a strong hiker and stayed close on my heels which intimidated me and I was forced to hike at a quick pace. We soon caught up to Larry and Gay. This forced Peter and me to

slow as Gay struggled considerably during the stream crossings. Often Peter would bound ahead and wait on the other side for us.

The scream and splash followed on one of the many crossings. During a crossing of especially huge boulders I was right behind Gay when she fell into a deep chasm between two massive boulders. This was where I grabbed her elbow and helped her out. Once on the other side she said she was fine.

“Want to see Anus Rock?” asked Larry as we finished crossing another streambed.

“Um,” I hesitated. “Are you going to bend over or something?”

“No, no. When we are at the dam remind me to point it out to you.”

“Okay,” I said again hesitantly.

Once at the dam I didn't need to remind Larry about his promise as he recalled it by himself. He stopped about halfway across then pointed downstream. I looked to see two potential candidates unexpectedly. One was shaped like the lower back of a naked person bending over and the other like the actual anurous opening.



Larry wanted a picture of the rock and so gave me his camera and scooted down the dam's wall till he stood on the rock with the rectal notch. He bent over I obligingly positioned him and took several shots like a porn movie director. Thankfully he never thought to remove his pants to further enhance the moment. Still we laughed nonstop at his antics.

On the upstream side of the dam Peter brought our attention to a large red prawn that daringly walked underwater to only a few yards from us.

"That thing is the size of a lobster," I said taking more pictures with Larry's camera. After checking us out, he turned slowly and returned to deeper water.

Following suite we also returned to our trek homeward and quickly resumed our Peter-forced march back. Under his pressure we soon quickly returned to the first pseudo-steam crossing.

"We're almost back," I said happily.

Relativity had played its mind trick and the trek in had seemed twice as long and hard as the hike back out. Soon we were descending the steep slope to the road below and emerged onto new black asphalt. Half the cars were gone and I was told Steve had led out an advance group and would return for the rest of us.

Though initially concerned about the many warnings from Steve, this hike had turned out to be not overly dangerous. True, some parts were steep and close to sheer drops, but the HTMC's trail clearing crew had done a magnificent job removing the low lying hau branches, cutting back the vegetation and grading the many slanted sections.

And our reward for their hard work was an exceptional time spent at a gem of a rarely seen freshwater pool. The largest on the island for a hiker pool party.



The End.