

natural stopper, preventing dirt or mud from filling the hollow tube.

The trail is intermittently "paved" with 'ohi'a tree logs looking like railroad ties from long ago. Avoid false trails. Remember, you'll never go more than 15 minutes without seeing the 'ohi'a logs. You've gone almost a mile when you see your first old abandoned wooden power pole. Just after this you come to a flat muddy area and a trail to the left. We've walked through the flat part and sunk three feet into a bog. Take the

*A hiker marvels at the richness of Kaula'i, which is ever-present on this trek.*



side trail around unless you want to lose a shoe. You'll cross a couple of smaller streams (a foot wide) and a slightly larger stream.

After 1½ hours or so, when the trail encounters a large stream again, it seems to end. This is where people get lost. It actually veers slightly left, away from the stream and over some rocks. Look for muddy stains on the rocks and they will lead you to the trail in the tall grass ahead. It crosses the stream where the stream makes a right turn. Once you cross, pick up the trail *directly* on the other side, and it's not far before you walk on a skinny plank bridge over a ditch. There are two

trails here, one straight and one to the left. *Take the left trail.* It goes to the gauging station and tunnel. It takes us 1¾–2½ hours to the first tunnel, and about 45 minutes *in* the tunnel. Coming back is a bit faster. You'll gain about 600 feet with all the ups and downs.

Once in the tunnel you notice that there's water standing in it. That's from the small amount of water that drips from the ceiling. It's just the right amount to keep about four inches of water fresh. The tunnel is about 6 feet wide and 7–10 feet high with an occasional need for a head duck on the straight portion. The bottom is flat and lined with small rocks, which makes for fairly straightforward walking. The tunnel reverberates with the ever-constant sound of the splashing of your feet in the ankle-high water. About 900 feet above you is the ridge that the ancient Hawaiians used to walk on to reach the summit of

Wai'ale'ale where the remains of their altar, at the wettest spot on Earth, may still be found. As you approach what appears to be the end, you see an odd sight: railroad tracks in the shallow water, probably used to haul the debris out of the tunnel during construction. At the light at the not-quite-end of the tunnel, you can step outside momentarily to visit a small waterfall waiting for you. Then it's back in the tunnel for the remaining ¼ mile. That latter portion is partially lined with cement and shorings, requiring anyone 6 feet tall or more to duck for a bit. At the real end you need to get up on the dike and take the overgrown trail near the tunnel exit. It goes down for about a minute to the Hanalei River. During good weather the scenery is magnificent. The mountains tower all around you. Wai'ale'ale plateau is above and to your left, its side etched with waterfalls. The river, with some impossibly large boulders, makes a perfect place for lunch.

Most will be more than satisfied with this destination. But if you started early (hiking by 7 or 7:30 a.m.), there is one more challenge for the intrepid. You've been through a mile of tunnel already and are at the river. Directly across from the giant boulder and pool (you'll see it), there's a *very* faint trail on the other side of the river that leads 5–10 minutes upstream to *another* ¼ mile-long tunnel. It's more dicey. Follow the trail until it meets an old diversion dam. From the top of the dam look upstream then turn to your right. You should see a vague trail going directly uphill. It will take you to a cement wall (part of the next ditch). The next tunnel entrance is to the right.

Once inside the tunnel (known to hunters as Ka'apoko Tunnel), there's lots of head ducking, and it has a more rickety feel. When the tunnel ends, there's



*Hikers entering the tunnel.*

an offshoot to the left. Not far from there, you come to an incline with water gurgling down. Scoot up and you'll emerge in a Shangri-La that will make you giddy with joy. A cathedral of 200-foot sheer walls are so steep they actually lean *inward*. Water drips from above, creating an exotic backdrop. To the left is a pounding waterfall. The setting is unbelievable and worth all the effort you went through to get here.

Needless to say, you'll have the opportunity to get muddy, slip on your 'okole, bump your head, twist your ankle, etc., on this adventure. Use your best judgment. This tunnel is not maintained for this purpose, so please don't complain to *anybody* if you have any problems. This is a strenuous, exciting and memorable adventure with absolutely *no* guarantees. *That's* why it's an adventure.