

AH Committee

From: Gordon Firestein <gfirestein@seapact.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2019 4:25 PM
To: AH Committee
Subject: July 3rd Committee Meeting
Attachments: 2019 Maui Vegetative Fuels Management Fact Sheet_HWMO.pdf

Aloha, Committee Members,

Attached is an infographic published today by Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) that is relevant to the decision about the proposed Makila projects.

It maps the risks of vegetative fuels, and shows Launiupoko and Maalaea as the two areas on Maui of “highest concern.” These are the areas on Maui that ought to receive mitigation first.

It also lists the actions that ought to be taken to manage the fuels. So far, few if any have of these actions have been taken in the Makila area.

It lists four recommended actions with implications for county policy. A detailed report will be published by HWMO in July.

This document is a red flag. Dr. Trauernicht’s testimony sent to you today is a red flag. The tearful voices of those affected by last year’s fire are red flags.

If you knew me well, you would know I am not one to be hyperbolic or melodramatic. I have a PhD in engineering, and strive to be guided by fact and objective observation.

Given all of this, there can be no other conclusion: you must reject these projects. Put affordable housing (indeed any new housing) in places where wildfire is not such a high risk.

Respectfully,

Gordon Firestein
Launiupoko Firewise Chair

Managing Hazardous Vegetation on MAUI

Reduce Wildfire Spread and Damage ❖ **Increase Firefighter Safety**

Why manage vegetation?

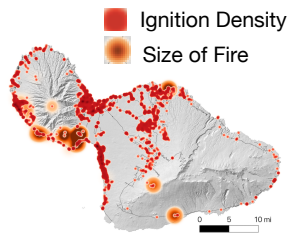
Dry plant matter ignites easily and provides **fuel** for a fire to follow.

In Hawai'i, the **amount of flammable hazardous vegetation**, or **fuel load**, can develop quickly due to rapid growth of vegetation, multiple growing seasons, and regular dry and drought cycles.

Frequent, active **vegetation management** is critical to reduce fire hazard across the landscape and to **protect our communities and valuable ecosystems from destructive fire impacts mauka to makai**.

Wildfires need **oxygen**, **ignitions (heat)**, and **fuel** to start and spread. Maui has all of these ingredients year-round and wildfire impacts are devastating and far-reaching.

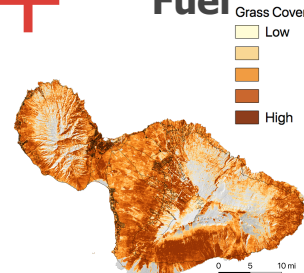
Ignitions



Map 1: Wildfire ignition history 2002-2012. In Hawai'i 99% of fire starts are human caused (often along roadsides).
Source: HWMO 2013



Fuel



Map 2: Grass cover on Maui. Invasive, fire-promoting grasses ignite easily when dry. They spread along roadways and disturbed areas and are first to regrow after a burn, choking out native plant communities and increasing fire risk.
Source: UH Manoa 2018



Impacts



Land Managers are Currently Reducing Wildfire Risk Through Vegetation Management

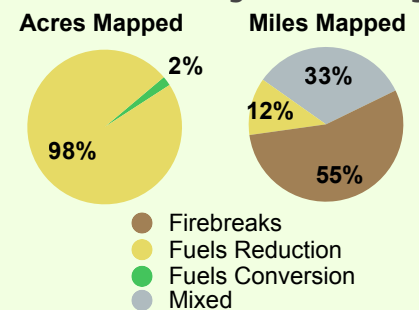
In 2018-19, Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) conducted a statewide rapid assessment to identify where vegetation is managed in a way that reduces wildfire hazard.

Vegetation management efforts were categorized as strategies that:

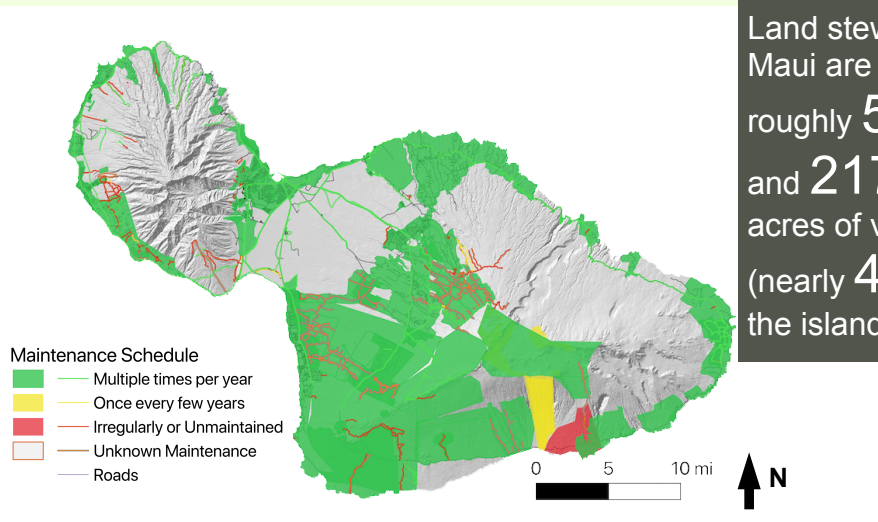
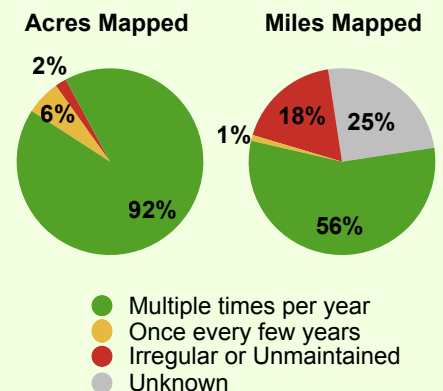
- ❖ Reduce fuel load (**fuels reduction**)
- ❖ Transition vegetation from higher to lower fire risk (**fuels conversion**)
- ❖ Provide safer first response access and breakup fuel continuity across landscapes (**firebreaks or access roads**)

Mapping contributors included agency representatives, community groups, and other large landowners stewarding land across Maui.

Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Strategy



Maintenance Schedule



Map 3: Maintenance frequency of areas with vegetation management activities reported by mapping participants. Regular, ongoing maintenance of vegetation is critical to effectively reduce wildfire hazard.

Land stewards on Maui are managing roughly **560 miles** and **217,000 acres** of vegetation (nearly **47%** of the island).

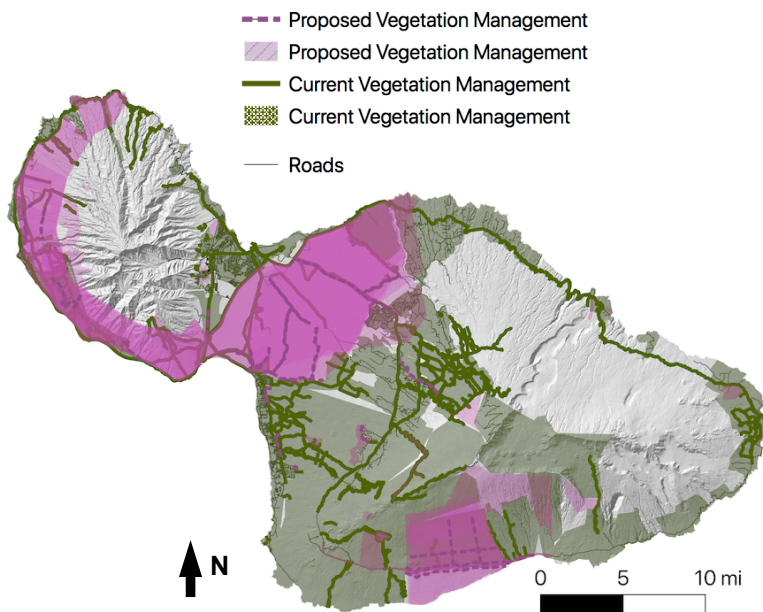
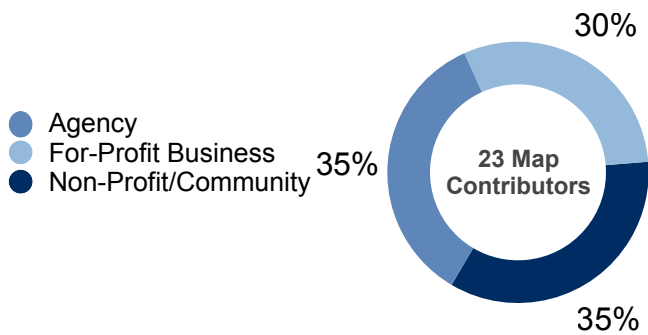
For more results visit:



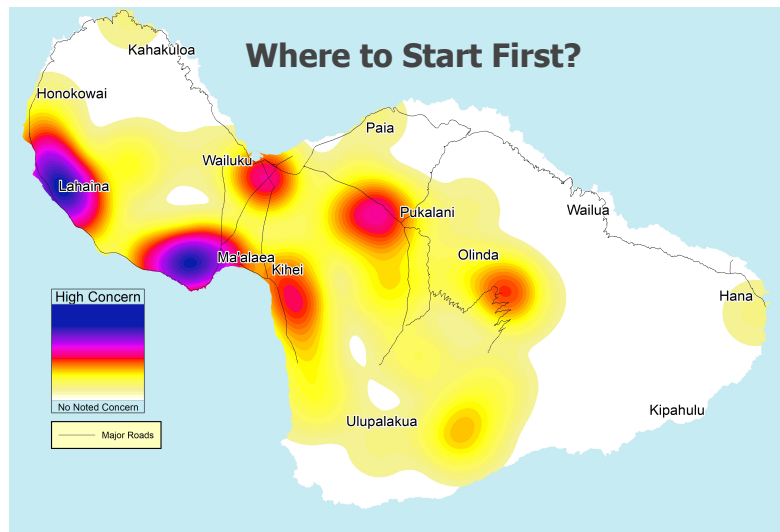
hawaiiwildfire.org

There is a great need for investment in and collaboration on vegetation management as expressed by the **23** map contributors and **41** action planning workshop participants on Maui.

Mapping contributors identified roughly **132,000 acres** and **90 miles** of needed vegetation management. 86,000 acres of these are in addition to areas already manage.



Map 4: Rapid assessment results. Land stewards identified current and proposed areas in need of ongoing vegetation management.



Map 5: Collaborative priority areas. Participants at the action planning workshop identified areas of highest concern where fire hazard (hazardous vegetation, fire weather, and frequent ignitions) and values at risk of fire damage intersect.

Recommended Actions

(input from 41 action planning workshop participants)



Develop planning and policies supportive of landscape-level vegetation management

- Island-wide vegetation management plan
- Develop funding sources for establishment and maintenance of fire infrastructure



Reduce hazardous fuel loads around communities

- Make green waste removal easy for communities
- Use strategic grazing and fuel reduction buffers around community boundaries



Encourage active management of agricultural lands including overgrown forestry operations



Prioritize 'hotspot' areas with recurring fires:

- Reduce hazards through strategic grazing and fuel reduction buffers
- Prevent ignitions by addressing the source of ignitions (e.g., power lines, encampments)



Action Planning Workshop, Wailuku, September 27, 2018

The 2018-2019 statewide rapid assessment of vegetation management was conducted by HWMO to better understand existing vegetation management and prioritize needed vegetation management to **reduce future losses from wildfire**. This project was made possible by the numerous land steward and agency partners who participated in the project and funding support provided by the Hawai'i State Grant-in-Aid Program 2016 and the U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, under the terms of Grant No. 16-11052012-146 and No. 17-DG-11052012-143. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

More project details at: hawaiiwildfire.org

