

# NORTH KONA

## COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

### OVERVIEW OF WILDFIRE-RELATED CONCERNS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

#### NORTH KONA PLANNING AREA

The North Kona planning area generally covers the district of North Kona on the Island of Hawai'i. The planning area lies between the districts of South Kohala and South Kona, and occupies the portion of the west side of Hawai'i Island that had never before been covered with a CWPP. Steep slopes, rough terrain, strong winds, and a large percentage of highly ignitable invasive grasses characterize the North Kona landscape. This, coupled with warm weather, recurring drought conditions, and a history of human-caused fires put the area at increased risk of wildfire. The proximity of development to fire-prone wildlands present hazardous conditions that now threaten North Kona communities and natural resources. Overgrown vegetation close to homes, pockets of open space within subdivisions, and an increase of non-native high fire-intensity plants around developed areas pose increasing threats to commercial, community, environmental, and residential resources.

#### WHAT IS A COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP)?

A CWPP is a plan developed by local communities, resource managers, large landowners, city planners, County/State/Federal agencies including emergency responders, state foresters, and other interested parties to clarify and refine priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in wildland-urban interface areas. It is intended to create a foundation of collaboration and communication among diverse parties toward achieving wildfire risk reduction goals. Through the CWPP process, communities have a tremendous opportunity to learn more about wildfire issues and impacts, influence where and how vegetation reduction projects and federal hazard reduction funds are applied and to initiate or get involved at the local level.

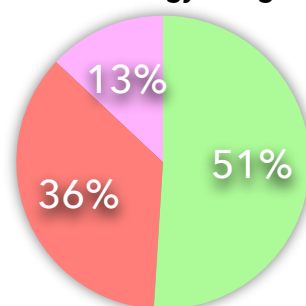
#### COMMUNITY INPUT COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

To collect input for the North Kona CWPP, a foundational component of the CWPP process, Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) supported and facilitated individual meetings with decision makers and private landowners and coordinated 4 public meetings that involved agency representatives, organizations, and community members. Participants identified and ranked wildfire concerns and recommended actions, and pinpointed high value resources at risk on a map of the planning area.

The North Kona CWPP public and agency input has been organized according to a national framework called The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (dubbed the Cohesive Strategy). The Cohesive Strategy encourages communities to develop a dynamic approach to planning for, responding to, and recovering from wildland fires. The overarching national strategy is further divided into three regions for tighter collaboration and coordination in each area. Hawai'i falls into the Western Region, which delineates its goals into the following categories:

- Resilient Landscapes
- Safe & Effective Wildfire Response
- Fire Adapted Communities

North Kona  
Community Concerns Organized by  
Cohesive Strategy Categories



North Kona Planning Area

#### CWPP Area Overview

ISLAND

**Hawai'i**

DISTRICTS INCLUDED

**North Kona**

ACRES COVERED

**320,731**

YEAR COMPLETED

**2016**

NUMBER OF  
WILDFIRES BETWEEN  
2002-2011\*

**195**

LARGEST FIRE ON  
RECORD BETWEEN  
1999-2011\*

**Pu'u Anahulu GMA,  
1999, 10,000 acres**

NATIONALLY-  
RECOGNIZED  
FIREWISE  
COMMUNITIES WITHIN  
PLANNING AREA

**None**

\*Based on available records; update in process

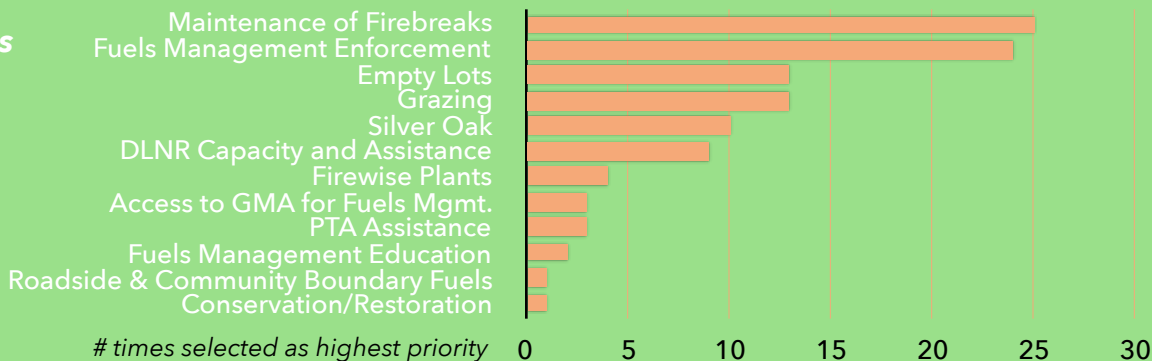
More CWPP input graphs  
on the back!

## COMMUNITY CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The Cohesive Strategy categories (detailed on front page) were further broken down to reveal the specific concerns put forward by meeting participants.

### North Kona's Concerns Related to Resilient Landscapes

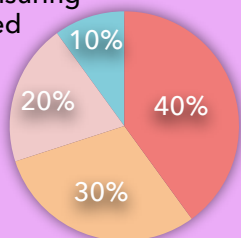
The Resilient Landscapes category focuses on all input related to restoring, protecting, or maintaining landscapes.



### North Kona's Concerns Related to Fire-Adapted Communities

North Kona meeting participants strongly demonstrated an understanding of the Fire Adapted Communities framework, which emphasizes that wildfire preparedness and readiness efforts in a community need to become an ongoing and broadly supported part of living in, working in, and civically managing an area. Discussions related to ensuring that this is taking place in North Kona resulted in the following priorities:

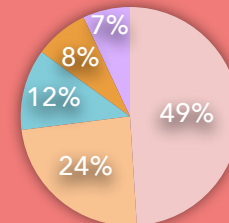
- Evacuation Routes & Practice
- Protect Archeological Sites
- Roadside Signage
- Greenwaste



### North Kona's Concerns Related to Safe & Effective Firefighting

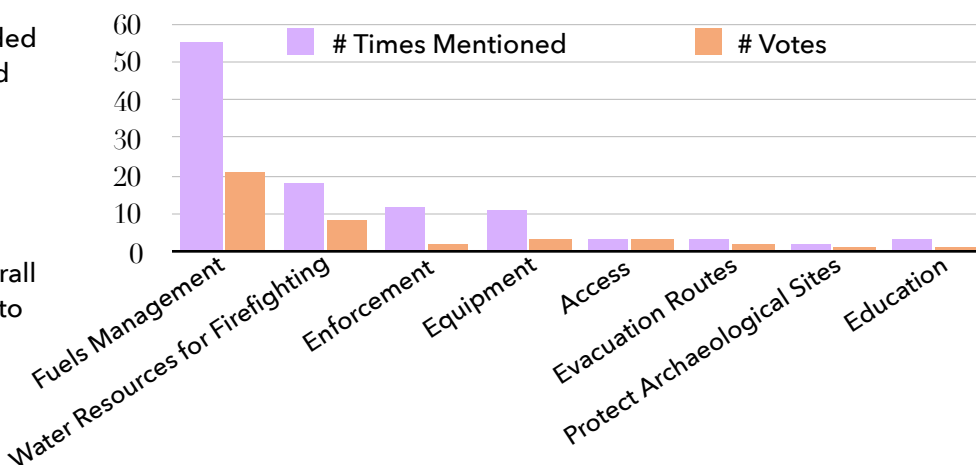
Comprehensive and effective wildfire preparedness and protection includes preventing ignitions, minimizing the ability of fire to travel across structures and landscapes, and maximizing the likelihood for fires to be suppressed quickly to keep them as small and minimally impacting as possible. In North Kona, the specific concerns were prioritized as follows:

- Increase/Improve Water Resources
- Equipment
- Funding
- Access
- Training



### Most Frequently Raised Concerns

While North Kona CWPP participant input yielded diverse and broad concerns and recommended actions, certain topics came up with greater frequency. All input was aggregated and analyzed to capture an overview of the most frequently raised concerns. Concerns were recorded two ways: 1) number of times it was mentioned as a concern, and 2) number of overall votes it received once participants were asked to vote on priorities from the full list of concerns generated by all groups at the meeting. The figure on the right displays them both.



This info sheet was created by Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that has been providing the Hawaiian Islands with nationally-recognized wildfire protection services since 2000. HWMO worked collaboratively with numerous partners on the North Kona CWPP with the goal of bringing residents and forestry and fire/emergency professionals together to identify next steps for wildfire protection in the planning area. The plan is compliant with the national framework for CWPPs and is signed by Hawai'i Fire Department and State of Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife (the plan is awaiting signature by Hawai'i County Civil Defense).

The complete North Kona CWPP is available on the HWMO website (link on the right).

This product was made possible through support provided by the U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, under the terms of Grant No. 16-DG-11052012-146. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



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