

Managing Hazardous Vegetation on O'AHU

Reduce Wildfire Spread and Damage ❖ Increase Firefighter Safety

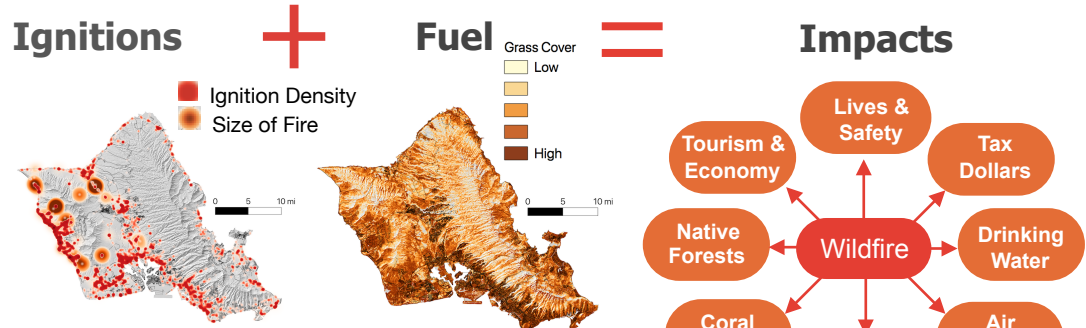
Why manage vegetation?

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. O'ahu has all of these ingredients year-round and wildfire impacts are devastating and far-reaching.



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

Map 2: Grass cover on O'ahu. 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

Land Managers Are Currently Reducing Wildfire Risk Through Vegetation Management

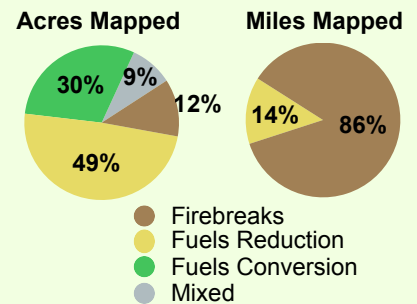
In 2018-19, Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) conducted a statewide rapid assessment to identify where vegetation is managed in a way that reduces wildfire hazard.

Vegetation management efforts were categorized as strategies that:

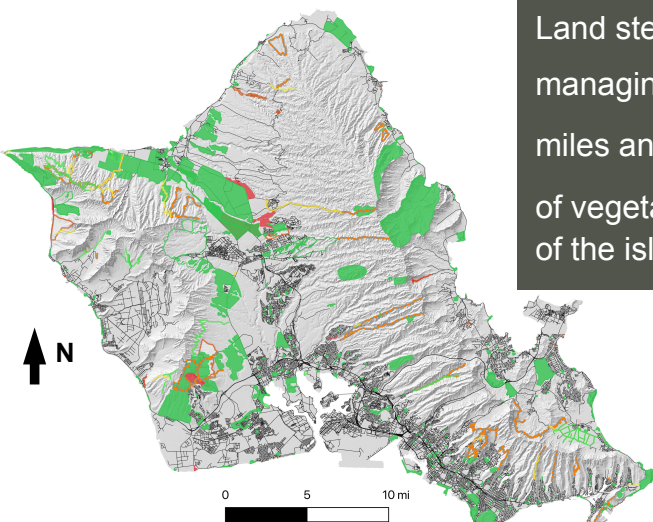
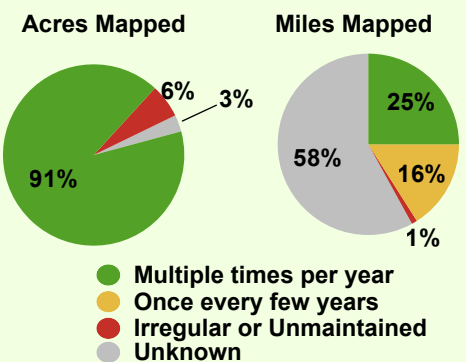
- ❖ Reduce fuel load (**fuels reduction**)
- ❖ Transition vegetation from higher to lower fire risk (**fuels conversion**)
- ❖ Provide safer first response access and breakup fuel continuity across landscapes (**firebreaks or access roads**)

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

Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Strategy



Maintenance Schedule



Land stewards on O'ahu are managing roughly **200 miles** and **43,000 acres** of vegetation (nearly **11%** of the island).

- Maintenance Schedule
- Multiple times per year
 - Once every few years
 - Irregularly or Unmaintained
 - Unknown Maintenance
 - Roads

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.

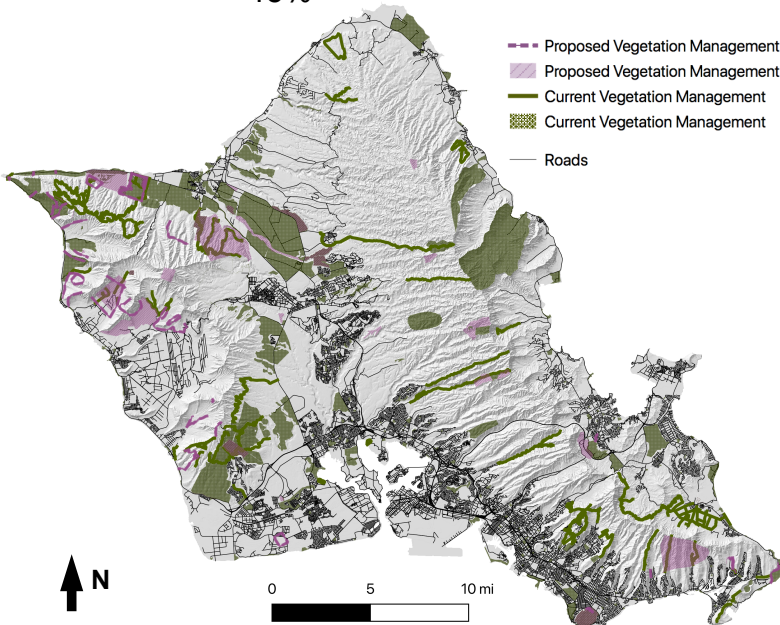
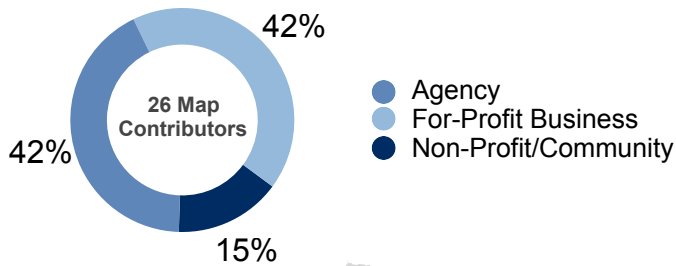
For more results visit:



hawaiiwildfire.org

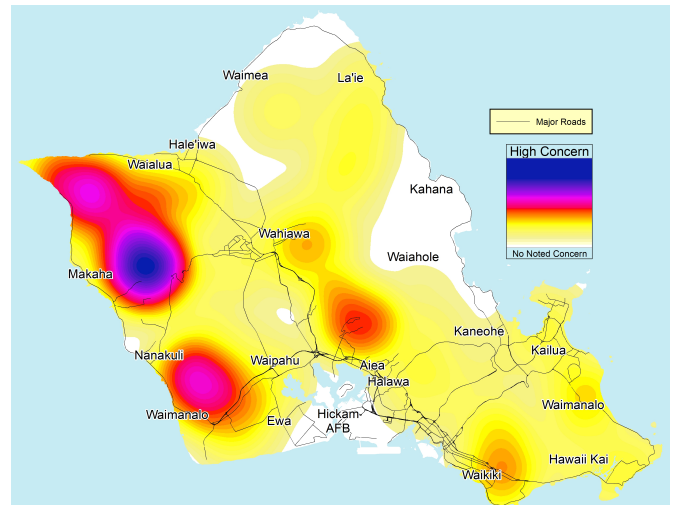
There is a great need for investment in and collaboration on vegetation management as expressed by the 26 map contributors and 33 action planning workshop participants on O'ahu.

Mapping contributors identified roughly 12,000 acres and 50 miles of needed vegetation management. 9,500 acres of these are in addition to areas already managed.



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

Where to Start First?

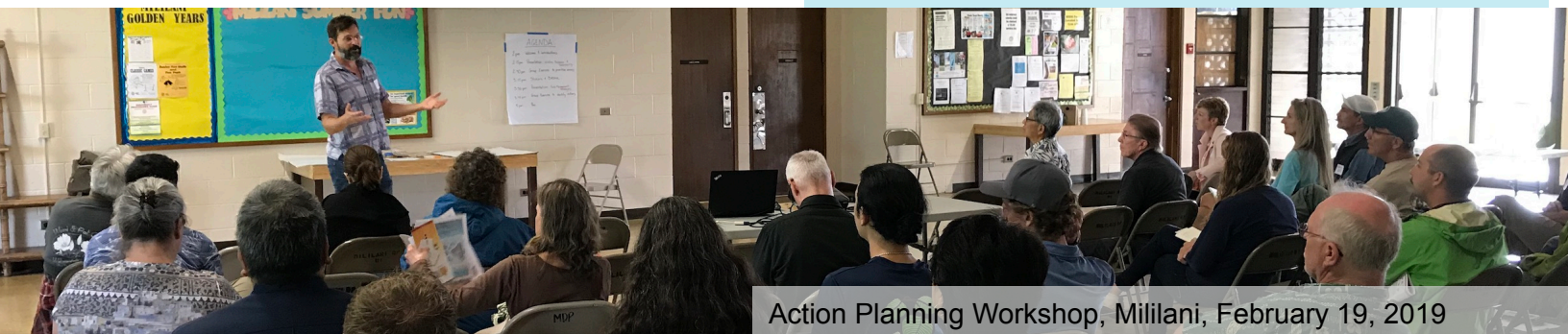


Map 5: Collaborative priority areas. Participants at the action planning workshop identified areas of highest concern where fire hazard (hazardous vegetation, fire weather, and frequent ignitions) and values at risk of fire damage intersect.

Recommended Actions

(input from 33 action planning workshop participants)

- Address the 'Policy Gap' for vegetation management:**
 - Encourage legislative funding support
 - Develop and align agency policies for vegetation management to enable agencies to take action and establish process for resolving conflicting policies
 - Tie insurance rates to risk abatement or fire prevention education and awareness
 - Encourage policy to mitigate electric utility hazard
- Empower communities to take action to reduce fire risk by:**
 - Exploring models for local response, particularly in 'hot spot areas' with recurring fire problems
 - Provide specific training to landowners and communities on fuel conversion best practices particularly dry forest areas invaded by Guinea grass



Action Planning Workshop, Mililani, February 19, 2019

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

