

LEEWARD HALEAKALĀ, MAUI COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN SUMMARY

OVERVIEW OF WILDFIRE HISTORY, CONCERNS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

LEEWARD HALEAKALĀ PLANNING AREA

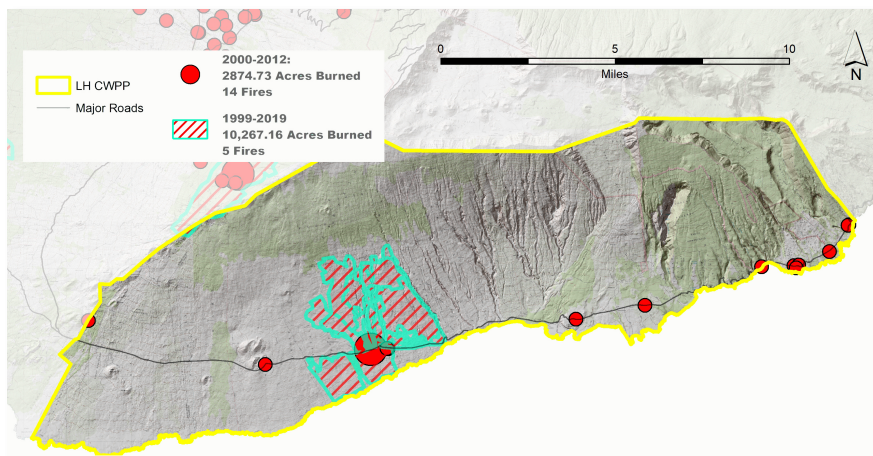
The Leeward Haleakalā planning area is comprised of remote coastal rural and inland communities, ranches and natural areas which are less developed and less accessible than many other parts of Maui. The planning area encompasses Haleakalā National Park, state and private lands, and four residential communities (< 1000 residents each) including Kanaio, Kahikinui, Kaupo, and Kipahulu. The region is considered high risk to wildfire due to its arid landscape, steep slopes, frequent human-caused ignitions, long distances and emergency response times. In addition, lack of water for firefighting, copious amounts of overgrown and unmanaged fire-prone vegetation, and difficult ingress/egress are challenges.

WILDFIRE HISTORY & IMPACTS

The majority of the planning area is located in the most arid region of Maui on the southern flank of Haleakalā, a 10,023-foot shield volcano. Sprawling dry nonnative grasslands and shrublands which surround many Leeward Haleakalā communities can easily ignite

especially near homes, power line right of ways and along roadsides. These contiguous fuels which are exposed to high winds and drought conditions can potentially burn upslope, presenting difficult containment challenges. Wildfire can also spread

rapidly through and around residential, agriculture, and ranching infrastructure. Fires ranging in size from less than 100 acres to a 5,300 acre Kahikinui fire in 2013 have resulted in evacuations, burned structures and closed roads. Even a small fire can have devastating impacts in sensitive areas since natural and cultural resources are clustered within protected areas. Once burned, many native plants and animals do not recover. Forest loss and increased downstream sediment delivery to the marine environment can impair reefs and nearshore fisheries which are critical subsistence resources to many Maui families. Complicating matters is the difficulty of fighting fires in steep terrain with limited resources and few evacuation routes for residents. Finally, agricultural, ranching, and energy production (Auwahi Wind Farm) all face disruptions in operations during wildfire events.



Wildfires in Leeward Haleakalā, 1999 - 2019



Leeward Haleakalā Planning Area
CWPP Area Overview

ISLAND

Maui

DISTRICTS

**Honuaula (Kanaio),
Kahikinui, Kaupo,
Kipahulu**

ACRES COVERED

74,036

YEAR COMPLETED

2021

VALUES AT RISK

**ranches, homes,
wind farms, native
ecosystems, marine
environment**

LARGEST FIRE ON
RECORD BETWEEN
2002 - 2019*

**Kahikinui in 2013:
5,300 acres**

NATIONALLY-
RECOGNIZED
FIREWISE USA®
COMMUNITIES
WITHIN PLANNING
AREA

Kahikinui

*Based on available
records

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP)?

A CWPP is a plan developed by communities, public and private agencies, landowners and decision makers. The purpose is to prioritize wildfire risk reduction projects, establish a pathway for potential funding, foster learning and create a foundation of collaboration and communication among diverse parties to reduce the threat of wildfires.

COMMUNITY INPUT COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The Leeward Haleakalā CWPP was developed by the Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) with agency, landowner and public input from those concerned about the North Shore's wildfire issues. The State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife is the primary partner to HWMO in carrying out the process.

The CWPP identifies priority actions within the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy according to the following goals:

1. **Resilient Landscapes:** wildfire hazards and risks are diminished, while sensitive resources (e.g., endangered species, cultural resources) are protected and lands are rehabilitated post-fire.
2. **Fire Adapted Communities:** all have a role to play and execute in wildfire prevention and preparation.
3. **Safe and Effective Wildfire Response:** injuries and loss of life are diminished while ensuring adequate resources, infrastructure, and cross collaboration among fire suppression agencies.

SPECIFIC COMMUNITY CONCERNS & RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Resilient Landscapes

Since participants were concerned with abundant dry, very flammable vegetation and a critical lack of water combined with long wildfire response times, they suggested the following:

- Install fuel breaks, implement strategic grazing and conduct sustained, multi-method fuels reduction (mechanical, chemical, by-hand, etc.) especially along roadsides.
- Clear corridors for fire fighting access and improve water availability.
- Collaboratively plan and map firefighting resources, infrastructure, sensitive areas.
- Educate the community about fuels management and establish long-term agreements.

Fire Adapted Communities

Since lack of access, abandoned vehicles, rubbish build-up and inconsistency of fire knowledge among Leeward Haleakalā residents are preventing optimal wildfire safety, participants recommended the following:

- Community outreach and assistance in the form of grants for equipment and tools, technical assistance (chipper days), Firewise programming and safety campaigns.
- Improve signage and provide residents information on the structural ignitability of homes and buildings.
- Enhance enforcement to reduce deliberate ignitions and abandoned vehicles.
- Explore establishing community/volunteer firefighting team(s).
- Improve ingress and egress for firefighting and evacuation.

Safe and Effective Wildfire Response

Due to the remoteness and the limited infrastructure throughout, many residential areas are poorly set up for wildfire response. Participants identified the following goals aimed at improving:

- Firefighting capacity, specifically increasing DLNR staffing and budgets for brush abatement.
- Landowner coordination and communication (establish points of contact, access, radios).
- Additional water resources and improved access to existing water.
- Better infrastructure design (roads, turnarounds, staging areas) and signage.
- Collaboration, mapping and the development of a cross-boundary fire management plan.

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. The complete Leeward Haleakalā CWPP which is available on the HWMO website (link on the right) is compliant with the national framework for CWPPs and is signed by Maui Department, Maui Emergency Management, and State of Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife.

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