



# DHHL & HWMO WILDFIRE SYMPOSIUM

August 23, 2024 | Daniel K. Inouye International Airport Conference Center

*Preparing for the next wildfire*



ANAHOLA, 2023  
IMAGE: KAUA'I FIRE DEPARTMENT



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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Aloha kākou

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization welcomes you to our organizations' inaugural wildfire symposium.

Our homelands are facing very scary times. The increasing frequency and severity of destructive wildfires have become a harsh reality.

The fact that most, if not all, wildfires are ignited by humans continues to astound me. Our recklessness, negligence and even maliciousness cause wildfires.

A lit cigarette carelessly tossed aside; a spark from a hunting rifle's ricochet bullet; the spinning firecrackers we ignited in open fields or the trash we burned in a 55-gallon drum; throwing caution, and embers, to the wind.

Our human behaviors are wildfire ignition points; rethinking our actions can mitigate these risks.

The department recognizes your commitment to creating safer communities and I ask that you lead your homesteads in safeguarding itself from future wildfires.

HWMO is dedicated to offering mentorship within your communities to help them achieve Firewise certification; DHHL supports this effort 100-percent.

Our Firewise homestead communities will serve at the core of the department's wildfire response plan. Our goal is to have all our homesteads certified as Firewise communities.

I pledge to assist each of you in making your homesteads Firewise; caring for our 'āina is a kuleana we all share.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kali Watson".

**Kali Watson**

*Director, Department of Hawaiian Home Lands*

# AGENDA

## Registration

**9:30 a.m. - 9:35 a.m.**

Walter Kaneakua  
O'ahu Commissioner  
Pule

**9:35 a.m. - 10 a.m.**

Director Kali Watson  
Opening Remarks

**10 a.m. - 10:20 a.m.**

Archie Kalepa  
Maui Commissioner  
*Lahaina, Yesterday, Today and  
Tomorrow*

**10:20 a.m. - 10:50 a.m.**

Randy Awo  
Former Maui Commissioner  
*Kāko'o Leiali'i: DHHL's Response  
to a Community in Crisis*

**10:50 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.**

James Barros  
Hawai'i Emergency  
Management Agency  
*Navigating the Flames:  
Emergency Preparedness  
and Safety*

**11 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.**

Captain Keith Ito  
Honolulu Fire Department  
*Ready, Set, Go!: Your Personal Fire  
Action Guide*

**11:15 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Michael Walker  
Division of Forestry and Wildlife  
*How Did We Get Here?:  
A Fire History of Hawai'i*

## Lunch

**1 p.m. - 2 p.m.**

DHHL Staff Panel Q&A

**2 p.m. - 3:55 p.m.**

Elizabeth Pickett and Nani Barretto  
Hawai'i Wildfire Management  
Organization  
Firewise Community Program

**3:55 p.m. - 4 p.m.**

Closing Remarks



# ABOUT HWMO

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Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Waimea on Hawai'i Island. It serves as a hub for wildfire prevention, mitigation and planning activities in the Hawai'i-Pacific region through pro-active, collaborative, and forward thinking projects.

HWMO's vision is for the people and places of Hawai'i, and the greater Pacific, to be wildfire-ready and wildfire-resilient.

Through its extensive partnerships and grassroots efforts, HWMO works towards reducing wildfire risks for communities across the state and throughout the pae 'āina.

HWMO is the Firewise agent for Firewise USA and has mentored homestead communities on Maui and Hawai'i Island through the Firewise USA certification process.



KAILAPA, 2024 | IMAGE: HWMO

# WHAT IS **FIREWISE**

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Firewise USA, a national program created by the National Fire Protection Association, educates individuals on how to adapt to living in wildfire-prone communities. This initiative encourages neighbors to work together and take action now to prevent losses. The program emphasizes homeowner responsibility and provides the framework for education dissemination, community partnerships, and local actions that support community wildfire safety efforts.



WAI'EHU KOU MAUKA, 2024

Firewise USA encourages local community-based solutions for wildfire safety, with the goal of reducing home ignitions due to wildfires. The Firewise USA program is co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the U.S. Department of Interior, and the National Association of State Foresters.



# FEATURED SPEAKERS



## **Archie Kalepa**

*Maui Commissioner, Hawaiian Homes Commission*

Archie Kalepa is a retired lifeguard who served the County of Maui for nearly 30 years. Kalepa supports DHHL's mission and plans to leverage his skills and experiences in support of the development of healthy, thriving communities for Native Hawaiians.



## **Randy Awo**

*Former Maui Commissioner, Hawaiian Homes Commission*

Randy Awo spent seven years as Maui Commissioner and is recognized for his efforts in Lahaina following the historic wildfires. Awo played a key role in developing and executing Kāko'o Leiali'i; a resource trailer dedicated to offering comprehensive support services to those affected by the wildfires.



## **James Barros**

*Administrator, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency*

Retired Colonel James D.S. Barros took on the role of Administrator for the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency in February 2023. Barros' 32-year career includes experience in the COVID-19 Joint Task Force and lead roles in emergency response operations to flooding, lava eruptions, and hurricanes across the state.



## **Keith Ito**

*Captain, Honolulu Fire Department*

Fire Captain Keith Ito acts as the engineer at the Wai'anae and Nānākuli fire station, managing the department's wildfire program. With a 26-year career at the Honolulu Fire Department, Ito has also contributed to the HazMat Team.



## **Michael Walker**

*Fire Protection Forester, Division of Forestry and Wildlife*

Michael Walker serves as the Fire Protection Forester in the Division of Forestry and Wildlife at the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources. In addition to his responsibilities within DOFAW, Walker offers emergency response assistance to various state agencies during wildfires and hurricanes.



## **Elizabeth Pickett**

*Co-Executive Director, Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization*

Elizabeth Pickett has been a driving force in wildfire mitigation and education since 2008. Her extensive experience includes collaborating with partners across Hawai'i and the Western Pacific to lead and implement comprehensive wildfire projects, including the development of the state's Community Wildfire Protection Plans.



## **Nani Barretto**

*Co-Executive Director, Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization*

Since joining HWMO in 2019, Nani Barretto has played a pivotal role in expanding and strengthening the Firewise program. Under her leadership, the program has grown to encompass 21 vibrant Firewise communities, fostering a collaborative network where members share resources, insights, and solutions to wildfire challenges.



# OUR MISSION

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The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands' mission is to manage the Hawaiian Homelands trust effectively and to develop and deliver lands to native Hawaiians.

Integral to our mission is the quest to defend our homesteads from the ravages of wildfire. Partnering with HWMO to certify our homesteads is a priority goal for the department and an actionable first step.

Through our collaborative efforts with HWMO, we aim to ensure that our communities are resilient and well-prepared against the threat of wildfires. This partnership involves not only certifying our homesteads but educating our residents about fire prevention strategies and emergency preparedness.

Our commitment to wildfire preparedness is part of a broader effort to safeguard the Hawaiian Homelands for future generations. By strengthening a culture of safety and resilience, we can preserve the rich heritage of our 'āina, ensuring it remains a thriving and vibrant part of Prince Kūhiō, and all of Hawai'i's, legacy.



LAHAINA, 2023












# HOMESTEAD COMMUNITIES

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands fulfills Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole's vision of rehabilitating native Hawaiians by returning them to the land.

Established through the passage of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act by U.S. Congress in 1921, the Hawaiian homesteading program, administered by DHHL, includes management of more than 200,000 acres of land statewide with the specific purpose of developing and delivering homesteading.

Only four of the department's homesteads are Firewise certified.

 <b>KAUAʻI</b>	 <b>OʻAHU</b>	 <b>MAUI</b>	 <b>MOLOKAʻI</b>	 <b>HAWAII ISLAND</b>
Anahola Piʻilani Mai Ke Kai Hanapēpē Kekaha Puʻu ʻŌpae	Kapolei Nānākuli Princess Kahanu Estates Papakōlea Kewalo Kalāwahine Waimānalo Waiāhole Kumuhau/Kaʻkaina Waiʻanae Kaupuni Village Lualualei Lands	Hikina Kahikinui  Kēōkea Leialiʻi Paukūkalo Waiʻehu Kou Waiohuli 	Hoʻolehua Kalamaʻula Kapaʻakea Moʻomomi One Aliʻi	Honokāia Humuʻula Kamoku  Kaniohale Kawaihae Laʻi ʻŌpua Lālāmilo Nienie Puʻukapu/Waimea  Puʻupūlehu Discovery Harbour Kamāʻoa Kaūmana Keaukaha Kurtistown Makuʻu Panaʻewa Piʻihonua Puʻuʻeo University Heights Waiākea



# DHHL STAFF

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**Linda Chinn**

Acting Administrator  
Land Management Division

**Brian Furuto**

Former Administrative Services  
Officer

**Gigi Cairel**

Grants Specialist

**Andrew Choy**

Planning Program Manager

**Kuali'i Camara**

Property Development Agent

**Kalani Fronda**

Acting Administrator  
Land Development Division

**Paula Ailā**

Acting Administrator  
Contact and Awards Division



KAHIKINUI, 2020 | IMAGE: MAUI FIRE DEPARTMENT

# WORKING TOGETHER

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A Firewise homestead community is neighbors helping neighbors to take action to prepare themselves, their homes and their hale against wildfires.

A community that looks out for each other and provides households in need of assistance with help in emergency preparation.

That is what is needed to defeat the next wildfire.



ANAHOLA, 2024



# MAHALO

