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## **NON-COMPETITIVE DIVISION**

### On-Site and Virtual Meteorological Support of Maui Wildfire Incident and Recovery Operations

NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS) in Pacific Region covers everything from tropical cyclones to fire weather. In the middle of the action is the NWS' Pacific Region Operations Center (PR-ROC), whose mission is to provide support to our federal and local partners, NWS HQ, our field offices, and NOAA line office partners.

Ongoing drought, combined with forecasted low relative humidity and gusty winds, prompted the NWS Honolulu Forecast Office (HFO) to issue a Fire Weather Watch August 6th and a Red Flag Warning August 7th across Hawaii. These conditions supported the rapid spread of wildfires that began on August 8th on Maui. The Lahaina wildfire that began on August 8th killed 101 people, injured 67 people, and destroyed over 2,200 structures. PR-ROC coordinated with HFO, FEMA Region IX, and the Maui Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to ensure weather support needs were met as first responders arrived on scene.

The Lahaina fire created unique challenges such as concerns over toxic water runoff and airborne toxins. Due to these challenges and the foreseen

length of the recovery phase, PR-ROC and HFO began embedded support at MEMA on August 25. The onsite meteorologist provided real time decision support services to emergency managers, FEMA, EPA, US Coast Guard, and first responders. Being eye-to-eye with these critical decision makers was paramount in conveying changing weather conditions and adapting the forecast to the challenging operations being carried out in Lahaina.

**Presentation Theme:** The theme of this poster is the providing of meteorological decision support services, both on site and virtually, to a fully activated Emergency Operations Center during the incident and recovery phases of a dynamic and high impact event. The National Weather Service Pacific Region Regional Operations Center and the Honolulu Forecast Office provided meteorological support to local, state, and national officials (Emergency Management, FEMA, firefighters, etc.) during a rapidly spreading wildfire that killed over 100 people, injured 67, and burned over 2,200 structures in the town of Lahaina on the island of Maui, HI. After providing support virtually when the event first began, NWS meteorologists were then embedded for 30 days at Maui County Emergency Management Agency to provide support for the long-term recovery operation.

**Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research:** All research was done independently.