



Media Release

U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii
Public Affairs Office
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Prescribed burn planned to prevent brushfires, protect endangered species

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii (April 13, 2021) —The Army is taking action in its ongoing effort to prevent brushfires and their potential threat to more than 30 species of endangered plants and animals by conducting a prescribed burn of the Schofield Barracks training range complex.

The Army's specialized Wildland Fire Division is scheduled to begin the prescribed burn the week of April 19, provided environmental conditions such as wind, temperature and fuel moisture are within the regulatory parameters for such burns.

"Prescribed burns are an essential tool to help reduce the chances of uncontrolled brushfires in this area, which are the biggest threat to these endangered species," said Chief Alex Temporado, Fire Division chief, Directorate of Emergency Service, U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii. "Prescribed burns help prevent brushfire outbreaks on our training ranges, and can reduce the number of brushfires by upwards of 70% annually."

"We anticipate completing the burn in approximately three days," Temporado said. "There's a short time period following the wet winter months when all prescribed burn parameters are right, prior to the dry summer months."

The Army has received burn approval from the Hawaii State Department of Health's Clean Air Branch after extensive preparations which have included coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure all state, federal and Army requirements are met.

Army staff will closely monitor humidity, wind and the level of concentration of natural fuel in the burn areas in an effort to minimize smoke and ash.

"Controls on the smoke duration and amounts are very important and we will be monitoring weather data, smoke production and fire behavior to make informed decisions and adjustments as needed," said Justin Turnbo, fire management officer, Wildland Fire Division, USAG HI. "We will be taking all feasible precautions to lessen potential impacts on our neighbors."

Throughout the burn, Army staff will use smoke modeling software to detect direction and amount of smoke produced and make all necessary adjustments.

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ARMY 2-2-2

The prescribed burn is a critical piece of the Army's management of threatened and endangered species. Highly flammable guinea grass and other vegetation can become large fuel sources for brushfires that threaten natural resources, such as the O'ahu 'Elepaio, the endangered flycatcher bird that resides in habitat above the range.

Multiple personnel and assets from the Army are supporting the prescribed burn. These include: firefighters, aviators, engineers, range and safety officers, natural and cultural resources specialists, explosive ordnance disposal personnel, and law enforcement personnel.

All burn operations will take place during daylight hours, and Army Wildland firefighters will remain on site each night to monitor the area. The Federal Fire Department will also be on standby for the duration of the burn.

For questions, community members can call the Army's Public Affairs office at 656-3158 or 656-3150 or email usarmy.hawaii.pao@mail.mil.

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SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii – Shanon Sison, firefighter, Army Wildland Fire, ignites invasive Guinea grass with a flare gun during the Army's 2016 prescribed burn, here. The Army conducts prescribed burns to prevent large brushfires during the dry summer months.



SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii – Bryson Kamakura, firefighter, Army Wildland Fire, ignites invasive Guinea grass with a drip torch during the Army's 2016 prescribed burn.

ARMY 3-3-3



SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii – Army Wildland firefighters use Type 6 fire engines, which are more compact than traditional fire engines and allow crews to access remote areas



SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii – Army Wildland firefighters discuss preparations for the 2017 prescribed burn, here.



SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii – Shanon Sison, firefighter, Army Wildland Fire, sprays fire-retardant foam to protect utility poles during the 2017 prescribed burn, here.



SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii – The O'ahu 'Elepaio, an endangered flycatcher bird that resides in habitat above the range, is just one of the more than 40 endangered species the Army manages, on Oahu.