



On-the-ground learning with Palau and Guam: Strengthening Pacific Relationships



Key fire science topics:

Social science and human dimensions, Invasive Plant Species, Vegetation, Fuels Management, Watershed Processes, Postfire recovery and management

Impact Categories:

Connectivity, Capacity Building, Social

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The Pacific Fire Exchange (PFX) is a program funded by the Joint Fire Science Program and jointly managed by Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. PFX aims to improve fire outcomes in Hawai'i and the Western Pacific by pursuing, translating, and sharing fire science and research with those who are dealing with wildfire.

Story Summary:

In September 2025, the Pacific Fire Exchange (PFX) traveled to Palau and Guam to strengthen relationships with long-time wildfire partners and to connect with new organizations advancing fire resilience across the US Affiliated Pacific Islands. The visit provided an invaluable opportunity to learn directly from island partners, celebrate local progress, and explore future collaborations to improve wildfire preparedness and response throughout the Pacific region.

In Palau, where fires are concentrated on Babeldaob Island and nearly all are human-caused, PFX met with members of the Network for Wildfire Prevention, led by the Ebiil Society, and partners from the Protected Areas Network, Palau Fire Department, Department of Forestry, Land, and Water Resources, and several conservation organizations.

On Guam, PFX met with long-time collaborator Christine Fejeran, Chief of the Department of Agriculture's Forestry and Soil Resources Division, along with local partners from the Red Cross, National Weather Service, and University of Guam. The trip deepened shared understanding, inspired new projects, and reinforced connections among Pacific wildfire professionals.



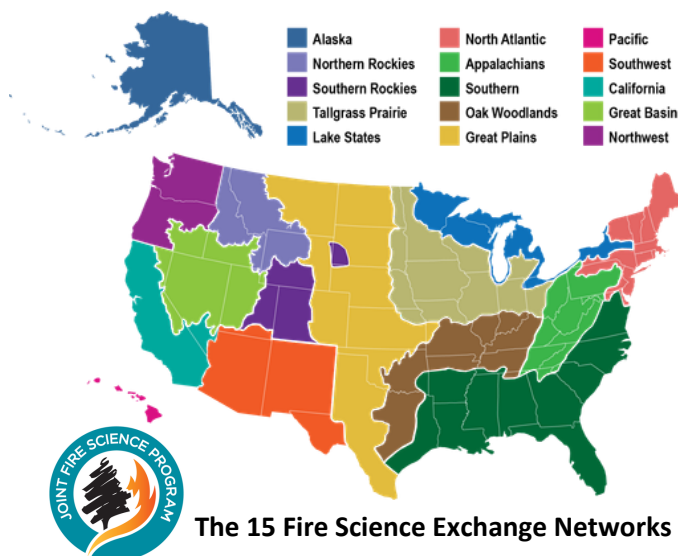
Impacts

- **Strengthened Pacific partnerships:** Reaffirmed collaboration with long-time partners in Palau and Guam while forming new relationships with agencies and conservation groups active in wildfire prevention and recovery.
- **Shared learning and mutual growth:** Exchanged knowledge on human-caused ignition patterns, fuel management, and fire-adapted restoration techniques unique to island environments.
- **Support for regional wildfire strategy implementation:** Discussed progress and challenges in advancing Palau’s National Wildfire Strategy and identified opportunities for continued PFX technical support and training.
- **New project ideas and next steps:** Partners proposed collaborative efforts, including developing wildfire basics training for Palau’s natural resource rangers and emergency responders, creating island-specific outreach materials for both Guam and Palau, and compiling Pacific-region wildfire education and training opportunities.
- **Revitalizing regional coordination:** Partners expressed strong interest in re-establishing the Pacific Island Area Network to facilitate ongoing wildfire knowledge exchange across islands. PFX in partnership with Hawai’i Wildfire Management Organization will host this.
- **Deepened sense of connection:** The trip strengthened trust, communication, and shared purpose among Pacific partners—laying the foundation for coordinated, culturally grounded approaches to wildfire resilience across island communities.



Pacific Fire Exchange meeting with professors at University of Guam to build collaborations and hear about current wildfire research projects.

“Connecting through online platforms and video conferencing is critical to PFX’s wide collaborations across the Pacific, but there is no replacement for gathering in person, sharing food and culture, talking story, and seeing the impact of wildfire on these landscapes firsthand.”



More information about PFX Regions:

Check out the PFX website Regions page for information on wildfires in both Palau and Guam. You can see the areas burned, frequency of wildfire and learn about wildfire history. Search “curriculum” on the PFX website to see wildfire educational materials developed with and for Guam and Palau for grades 6–12.

