

Fire Ecology and Wildfire Preparedness



Historically, the ecosystems in Nevada and Placer Counties experienced frequent low-to-moderate intensity fires, which resulted in fire-resilient ecosystems. Now, past management practices and an increase in climate change impacts have made human communities and ecosystems more vulnerable to high-intensity wildfires. To address California's growing wildfire-related challenges and build fire resilience across the state, the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) created the Fire Network to build capacity among UC ANR scientists, practitioners, agencies, policymakers, and communities. In Nevada and Placer Counties, we are able to allocate statewide Fire Network resources to develop and deliver regionally-specific fire-related research and extension programs to meet the concerns of local residents and resource professionals.

Our local research efforts aim to inform the strategic implementation and maintenance of various fuel reduction treatments across the Sierra Nevada. This year, we completed a multi-year study quantifying the long-term impacts of wildfire on shaded fuel break longevity. Through collaborations with University of California researchers and advisors and the US Forest Service, we provided fire and forest managers with important

information on treatment efficacy and how it connects to forest persistence through multiple wildfires. We are collaborating with the forestry and livestock programs on a project assessing the efficacy and commercial viability of targeted grazing for fuel reduction in wildland-urban interface communities. We are also researching how to create equitable fire and forestry career pathways for justice-impacted communities to help address statewide natural resource workforce development issues.

Our growing regional fire program will continue to have a strong emphasis on collaboration with other regional UCCE Advisors and other local programs and organizations. We continue to provide strategic advice on the Advisory Committee of the Placer Prescribed Burn Association (PBA) and frequently collaborate with Placer PBA and Yuba Bear Burn Cooperative on prescribed fire workshops and outreach events. We have also partnered with Fire Safe Councils and Firewise Communities in Nevada and Placer Counties to host events centered on wildfire preparedness. Moving forward, we aim to leverage the diverse expertise of Network members and programs developed to accelerate the delivery of fire-related programs in Nevada and Placer Counties.

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Program Highlights 2022-23:

- More than 65 people participated in four Pile Burn Workshops in Nevada, Placer, and Yuba Counties. The workshops were jointly hosted with Forestry Advisor Ricky Satomi and in partnership with CalFire, local fire departments, regional Air Quality Management Districts, local Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), and local Fire Safe Councils.
- Over 150 people attended four Wildfire Preparedness Workshops in Nevada and Placer Counties. Events focused on educating residents about defensible space and structure hardening and were in partnership with local Fire Safe Councils, CalFire and City of Auburn Fire, and other regional organizations.
- More than 40 people gained hands-on skills in preparing their lands for and using prescribed fire at a workshop jointly hosted with Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor Dan Macon and in partnership with the Placer RCD.
- A total of 181 residents and forestry and natural resource professionals in Nevada and Placer Counties completed our Wildfire Preparedness and Impacts Survey.



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