SANTA CLARA COUNTY FIRESAFE COUNCIL AND CAL POLY WUI FIRE INSTITUTE COLLABORATE ON ADVANCING WILDFIRE RESEARCH

Research Collaboration will feature early wildfire technology adoption, promoting research from faculty and Postdocs, and data collection within Santa Clara County to advance mutual initiatives.

Saratoga, CA, October 12, 2026 — Today, Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCCFSC) announces a new research collaboration with the California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly) Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Institute with the goal of advancing collaboration on wildfire research. The collaboration provides SCCFSC with early access to wildfire research, a pool of guest presenters, the ability to help pilot test and ground-truth technological innovations from Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Institute.

Working closely with G. Andrew Fricker, PhD., Associate Professor of Geography at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, specializing in spatial ecology, remote sensing, GIS, and environmental modeling, the collaboration will share resources to advance mutual interests, collaborate on grants and research initiatives, and provide Andrew's faculty and students the opportunity to share early stage and published research critical to advancement of wildfire risk mitigation.

Cal Poly's G. Andrew Fricker commented, "This collaborative allows our organizations to work more closely together on innovative solutions to solve collective problems facing communities in the wildland urban interface. Working with UNR and SCCFSC, we will find interdisciplinary solutions to problems facing homeowners, insurance companies, community managers and fire professionals. Our joint efforts will speed up research, build capacity, resources and provide interpretable research outcomes which will benefit communities across the west. It will also provide a valuable platform to train and educate the next generation of professionals working in fire-related professions."

According to Seth Schalet, CEO of the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, “Innovation, lab to field optimization of research and the ability to share and promote the initiatives of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Institute will advance wildfire preparedness for the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council constituents. I have known Andrew for several years, followed his work and that of Frank Frievalt, the Director of the Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Institute at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and we have often communicated around various aspects related to wildfire science. Our research collaboration formalizes our relationship in a unique way that enables Santa Clara County FireSafe Council to avail of their work, faculty research, support joint grant applications and develop the ability to gain access to early technology programs to help ground-truth and scale those initiatives in ways beneficial to our constituents.”

About Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) FIRE Institute

The Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Institute is a mission driven organization that seeks solutions to the Wildland Urban Interface fire problem through innovative research, training, and education to create safer and more fire resilient communities in California and the West.

Mission and Vision

Develop and evaluate methods of designing and managing forests and communities in ways that reduce wildfire severity and threats to human welfare and property while maintaining environmental and community health.

Core Research Areas

FIRE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Applying engineering and science-based solutions to fire management problems, including:

- Design and protection of the built environment
- Responder health and safety
- Social and economic factors
- Prescribed fire use in WUI environments
- Last mile issues like defensible space and structure density

About Santa Clara County FireSafe Council
As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a 20-year history, SCCFSC's core mission is to mobilize the people of Santa Clara County to protect their homes, communities, and environment from wildfires. A trusted partner across the government, fire service, corporate and WUI residential communities, SCCFSC has led some of the most complex hazardous fuel reduction projects in the region. With a board of directors and advisory board that has deep expertise across the wildfire ecosystem — including wildfire and environmental research, academia, emergency management, regional planning, technology solutions and wildland firefighting leadership — SCCFSC is uniquely positioned to lead cross-sector collaborations and partnerships in Silicon Valley, Santa Clara County and beyond. For more information, visit https://sccfiresafe.org/.

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