

Success Stories



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Fire Network



NC STATE
EXTENSION

Cooperative Extension Service (CES) Wildland Fire Peer-Learning Exchange



Background:

Cooperative Extension is well-positioned to help communities manage wildfire risk and enhance resilience, yet many Extension professionals lack the tools and support to provide this information. A survey of UC ANR personnel (Koundinya et al. 2020) found that many wanted support to better assist communities with understanding risks (61%), mitigating risks (58%), and having the resources to educate members of their communities about risks (52%).

In 2023, a similar event was held in North Carolina, where strong participant demand for more fire-related training highlighted the need for a second Exchange. Inspired by that model, we partnered with the original organizers to bring this event to California.



Project:

In April of 2025, 43 extension and extension-related professionals from across the nation convened for the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) Wildland Fire Peer-Learning Exchange hosted in Wawona, California. The Exchange featured train-the-trainer style presentations, demonstrations, field tours, and discussion panels. Sessions included cultural burning and partnership with tribes, a mini fire festival, home hardening 101, and a fire ecology hike in the nearby Mariposa grove of giant sequoias!



Attendees participated in a fire ecology hike in the Mariposa Grove.



Following a box fan filter workshop, attendees showed off their DIY air filters.

Results

The CES Wildland Fire Peer Learning Exchange provided a valuable forum for participants to share resources, information, implementation strategies, barriers, and success stories across regions and disciplines. Presentations offered practical tools and insights to support Extension professionals in their fire-related work. Additionally, several new cross-state collaborations and resource-sharing efforts emerged from the exchange, including the exploration of nationwide Master Burner Program.

“I walked away feeling inspired to make changes to my own local and statewide programming.”

- Workshop Participant

Survey responses indicate the exchange successfully increased Extension professionals' knowledge of fire science information, resources, and partnerships. Participants reported gaining knowledge in resources available for Extension programming, cultural burning and partnership with Tribes, and education and outreach programs related to fire. Additionally, most participants plan to take action within the next year based on what they learned in the workshop, with many intending to engage in digital media communications, attend fire-related trainings or workshops, and promote DIY box fan filters. Overall, the results suggest strong momentum toward expanding fire-related outreach, education, and collaboration.

Actions

To build on the momentum of the CES Wildland Fire Peer Learning Exchange, hosting similar exchanges in other regions can be a powerful way to strengthen fire outreach and education nationwide. Organizers can tailor sessions to regional needs while incorporating successful elements such as peer-led presentations, resource showcases, and facilitated discussions on cultural burning, prescribed fire, and community preparedness.

Additional Resources

UCANR's Fire Network



National Extension Wildland Fire Initiative



NC State Extension- Prescribed Fire



References

Koundinya, V., Chiarella, C., Kocher, S., & Kearns, F. (2020). Disasters Happen: Identifying Disaster Management Needs of Cooperative Extension System Personnel. *The Journal of Extension*, 58(5), Article 12. doi.org/10.34068/joe.58.05.12

Contact

If you're interested in hosting a similar workshop, please reach out to the California Fire Science Consortium.

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