

# LIVING WITH FIRE

The background of the entire page is a scenic landscape. In the foreground, there are several wooden cabins with gabled roofs and porches, situated on a grassy hillside. The middle ground is filled with a dense forest of evergreen trees. In the background, there are mountains under a sky with soft, orange and yellow clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

## DAILY PROGRAM

March 7, March 14, March 21, 2026

# Session 1, March 7: Fire Risk

How did we get here?  
Where are we now?



**9:00 Welcome:** Maria Benech, League of Women Voters of the Mother Lode  
Karen Caldwell, Tuolumne Fire Safe Council

## **9:10 🗣️ Cultural Burning | Tending the Wild (17min)**

For thousands of years, California Indians used fire as a tool for managing natural resources. Throughout the state, Native peoples conducted cultural burns on a wide range of plants and it was their fire regimes that created diverse habitat mosaics that sustained meadows, coastal prairies, and grasslands.

## **9:30 🗣️ The West is Burning (55min)**

Learn about the conditions of forests in the western U.S. This feature documentary examines the history of forest management and litigation that led to the current conditions which are causing catastrophic fires nearly year-round. The film explores the urgent need to act now, and the potential to generate positive change in our forests, watersheds, and communities, both rural and urban.

## **10:30 Break**

## **10:45 Panel Discussion**

Local leaders in fire, land management, private lands, forest resource utilization, collaboration and partnerships, education, and government will explore the themes of Resilient Landscapes, Fire Adapted Communities, Collaborative Forest Management, Communities and the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Roger Peterson - Division Chief/Unit Forester, CALFIRE Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit

Mike Albrecht - Director, Associated California Loggers

Ryan Campbell - Tuolumne County Supervisor, District 2

Ann Segerstrom - City of Sonora, Mayor

Brittan Gregory - City of Sonora, Fire Chief

John Buckley - Executive Director, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center

Brian McCrory - Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor, Stanislaus National Forest

Tom Hofstra - Professor of Forestry and Natural Resources, Columbia College

## 11:47 Fuel Reduction Campus Tour

Dr. Thomas Hofstra will guide us on a walk through Columbia College Campus to view active fuel reduction work being done by Forestry and Natural Resources students.

Difficulty: Moderate.

Dr. Thomas Hofstra is Professor of Forestry and Natural Resources at Columbia College.

Bio/Introduction: "I grew up in Minnesota, and have an education in Ecology (PhD/UCSC) and Botany (MS/ASU). I have been an instructor at Columbia College since 2004, and have coordinated the Forestry and Natural Resources program since 2007. During that time, I initiated and carried out vegetation management for fire-safety and forest health, through hands-on student instruction on the 285-acre Columbia College campus".

## 1:00pm Adjourn

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## Session 2, March 14: Reducing Risk and Building Resilience

**9:00 Welcome:** Maria Benech, League of Women Voters of the Mother Lode  
Karen Caldwell, Tuolumne Fire Safe Council

**9:10 🗣️ Fireforest: When Forest Fire met Forest Restoration (16 min)**

The Cameron Peak Fire was racing uncontrollably towards communities in northern Colorado. As it reached the footprint of a past U.S. Forest Service prescribed burn and the Drala Mountain Center (formerly Shambhala Mountain Center), the fire behavior rapidly changed. The prescribed burn, combined with forest restoration treatments at Drala, gave firefighters a foothold to halt a portion of the fire and avert disaster for the communities downslope.

**9:30 Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs)**

Karen J Caldwell: President, Tuolumne Fire Safe Council, retired District Ranger, US Forest Service.

**9:45 YSS and the SERAL Project & current Chair of YSS:**

**Patrick Koepele: Executive Director, Yosemite Rivers Alliance and current Chair of Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions.**

Patrick will highlight the formation of the Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS) collaborative group and the Social and Ecological Resilience Across the Landscape (SERAL) Project on the Stanislaus National Forest.

**10:15 BREAK**

**10:30 Breakout Sessions**

**The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Emily Rogan, Senior Program Officer, United Policy Holders: California Home Insurance Update:**

This presentation will cover:

- The current CA home insurance marketplace
- What you can do to keep your insurance affordable
- Home improvements and wildfire mitigation that may qualify you for insurance discounts

Emily Rogan is the Senior Program Officer of the nonprofit organization United Policyholders (UP). UP has been helping homeowners and renters with insurance issues before and after disasters since 1991. United Policyholders does not take money from or sell insurance, the information you will hear will help you make sure the insurance you are paying for will be there if disaster strikes.

**Protecting Your Home from Wildfire: Eric Knapp, PhD Research Ecologist, US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station.**

Dr. Knapp has been studying forests and fire in the Sierra Nevada for over 25 years. After experiencing the Carr Fire and the Camp Fire, he set out to learn what caused some homes to survive while surrounding ones were destroyed. He will share findings from his research and thoughts about how communities at the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) better live with fire.

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### Fire Preparedness Exercise:

- MV Eitzel: Professional Researcher, UC Davis: MV works with communities on testing and using a variety of tools to answer questions of key concern.
- Tom Maiorana, Associate Professor of Design, UC Davis
- Ryan Meyer, Executive Director of the Center for Community and Citizen Science at UC Davis

NOTE: The UC Davis team is joining us to share a tabletop exercise/board game on preparing for evacuation, and as part of their four-year research grant in Tuolumne County they're curious to hear what you think about it! Watch for a survey following the session to capture your thoughts, and feel free to ask them questions about the larger project.

### 12:45 Questions and Closeout

1:00 pm Adjourn

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## Session 3, March 21: Community Resilience & Individual Responsibility



**9:00 Welcome:** Maria Benech, League of Women Voters of the Mother Lode  
Karen Caldwell, Tuolumne Fire Safe Council

### 9:10 🗣️ Weathered: Inside the LA Firestorm (55min)

The 2025 LA Wildfires set a record as one of the most expensive and destructive in US history. As environmental shifts accelerate extreme fire conditions and communities expand into fire-prone landscapes, these devastating wildfires are becoming more common. But are they inevitable?

10:05 BREAK

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**10:20 FAC & Firewise Communities:**  
Karen Caldwell, Tuolumne Firewise Program Coordinator

Learn what makes up a Fire Adapted Community (FAC) and how to become a “recognized” Firewise Community

**11:05 Good Fire - Fire in the Ecosystem & Burning Safely on Private Land.**  
Lara McNicol, Forester & Co-Coordinator for Tuolumne Prescribed Burn Association.

Lara is a Conservation forester in the central Sierra Nevada mountains and foothills. Specializing in forest management, fire ecology and preparedness, conservation planning, prescribed fire planning, and multi-generational family forest management.

**11:40 📺 Your Home Can Survive a Wildfire (14 min)**  
Karen Caldwell - Defensible Space & Home Hardening (16 min)

**12:15 Group Discussions: What can each of us do to help create a Fire Adapted Community (FAC)**

**12:45 Report out/share**

**1:00 Adjourn**

*Thank you for attending our series and learning more about how together we can become part of a more Fire-Adapted Community.*





*The Tuolumne Fire Safe Council and the League of Women Voters of the Mother Lode have partnered together to sponsor this event focused on educating residents on the increasing risk of wildfire to our homes, businesses, infrastructure, and natural resources.*

*The goal is to improve knowledge and understanding of the many factors that influence wildfire behavior and how we can learn to live with wildfire through adaptation and participation of all.*

*Through the generous support of Columbia College Foundation and Black Oak Casino Resort the Living with Fire Series has become a reality.*

*Thank you to all of our Speakers, Volunteers and Sponsors.*



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## What does a fire adapted community look like?



**FIREWISE USA®**  
Residents reducing wildfire risks



## READY TO GET STARTED?

For more detailed information, help in getting started, or questions, contact us at

**Tuolumne Fire Safe Council**

Email: [tcfirewise@gmail.com](mailto:tcfirewise@gmail.com)

Phone: 209-559-9527

Or visit our website

[www.tuolumnefiresafe.org/firewise](http://www.tuolumnefiresafe.org/firewise)

**Facebook:** [Tuolumne Fire Safe Council](#)