Santa Clara County FireSafe Council
Monthly Board Meeting

Topic: FireSafe Council Monthly Meeting
Time: October 19, 2021 01:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/93452057358?pwd=VUREWS9Mc08wTXNNOXdzUEE3YjhoUT09
Meeting ID: 934 5205 7358
Passcode: 161433

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Section Title</th>
<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Attachment</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>Call to Order</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dede Smullen</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1:31 PM</td>
<td>Board &amp; Advisors Reports</td>
<td>CAL FIRE</td>
<td>Chief Ed Orre</td>
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<td>SCCFD</td>
<td>Mike Mathiesen</td>
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<td>President's Report</td>
<td>Dede Smullen</td>
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<td>Appoint 2021 Board Nominating Committee</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1:48 PM</td>
<td>Consent Items</td>
<td>Approve September 2021 Meeting Minutes</td>
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<td>Accept September 2021 Financials</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1:50 PM</td>
<td>Action Item</td>
<td>Resolution 2021-10 Adopt Updated Bylaws</td>
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<td>Resolution 2021-11 Authorize Forest Health Grant Savings Account and Signatories</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Title: DamageMap: AI system identifies buildings damaged by wildfire</td>
<td>Yi-Lin (Aron) Tsai</td>
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<td>PhD candidate</td>
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<td>Stanford University</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2:30 PM</td>
<td>Activities Reports</td>
<td>CEO Report</td>
<td>Seth Schale</td>
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<td>Financials Update</td>
<td>Chris Sommerfield</td>
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<td>Managing Director Report</td>
<td>Eugenia Rendler</td>
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<td>Hazardous Fuel Reduction Program Report</td>
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<td>Communications, Outreach and Education Report</td>
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<td>Grants</td>
<td>Pai Venegas</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2:55 PM</td>
<td>Round Robin</td>
<td>Raise your virtual hand!</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3:15 PM</td>
<td>Adjourn General Meeting</td>
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Next Meeting Date and Location
November 16, 2021 Zoom Only

Attachments
1 September 2021 Meeting Minutes
2 September 2021 Treasurer's Reports
3 Resolution 2021-10 Adopt Updated Bylaws with draft from attorney
4 Resolution 2021-11 Authorize Forest Health Grant Savings Account and Signatories
5 Manager's Activities Reports
6 Strategic Plan
7 DamageMap Article

2021 Meeting Schedule - Zoom

November 16, 2021
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/93452057358?pwd=VUREWS9Mc08wTXNNOXdzUUE3YjhoUT09
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<td>CAL FIRE</td>
<td>Chief Ed Orre</td>
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<td>Got all resources back from other fires (engines, dozers, crews). Ready for next events. Fire stats: 2020 1 million acres affected. 2021 975,000 acres affected. Grat-received 17 applications and awarded 4. Adds up to $7.9M. SCC FireSafe not awarded. Contra Costa received for mapping. Moraga/Orinda received for fuel break. City of Oakland for dead/dying trees along Skyline. Diablo FireSafe Council for fuel treatments and education. Collecting pinecones for seed bank at Davis from Henry Coe and Redwood Regional Parks. Oak mortality task force discussing Bay Area mortality. Dede asked about a second round of funding. Ed replied next year grant cycle but mentioned other grants coming up at other agencies.</td>
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<td>Mike Mathiesen</td>
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<td>Back to full staffing. Went through highlights on slide including hoping for new staff by Spring. Updating CWPP annexes. Zonehaven rollout community education webinar coming up led by Mike. Discussed some CWPP work done.</td>
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<td>President's Report</td>
<td>Dede Smullen</td>
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<td>Dede thanked everyone for coming and welcomed new attendees. Explained why Ed and Mike go first and grateful they can do the presentations to update us. Board had a pre-meeting to review the Strategic Plan. It was adopted last July with an inperson meeting then the rest on zoom. It was refreshed and adopted today. We will share with everyone on the website and send around when it's cleaned up. Many thanks to Paul Hansen for his work on this. Trying to make the meetings go smoother so some clerical items are being handled in advance of board meetings. Thanks to Seth for monthly speakers. If anyone has ideas on how to make the meetings more meaningful for them, please let us know.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1:48 PM</td>
<td>Consent Items</td>
<td>Approve August 2021 Meeting Minutes</td>
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<td>Accept August 2021 Financials</td>
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<td>Accept Renewal of Insurance policies (various)</td>
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<td>Motin to approve: Paul Hansen   Second: Derek Neumann   AYES: Smullen, Wollbrinck, Neumann, Ameri, Hurlston, Hansen, Lewis, Munoz    NO: 0   ABSENT: Katz, Nelson, Shearer    (3) ABSTAIN: 0 Motion Passes 8/0</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1:55 PM</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Paradise: One Town's Struggle to Survive an American Wildfire</td>
<td>Lizzie Johnson, Author</td>
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<td>Author Conversation</td>
<td>Lizzie brought a unique perspective on how wildfire affects a community with her journalism and subsequent book on the Paradise fire which affected Butte County. More human interest than technical but she came away with some lessons learned. She lived there part time while doing the work on the book and said this event was unlike any other because it wasn't just a house or neighborhood that went, but a whole town and world for the people who lived there. The fire took the town in two hours and it outpaced the alert system, which was fractured between different agencies. Now it is centralized with the Sheriff office. She listened to every 911 call, some of which were grave and she realized that not having accurate and timely information leads people to the inability to make a decision which results in inaction. This led to some people dying. Paradise was a town for people who couldn't afford to live in other areas so they're having a difficult time rebuilding. Many hoped to rebuild but moved out of the area. They created block leaders to help gather information on rebuilding.</td>
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Activities Reports

CEO Report

Seth Schalet
 Went through highlights on his report. Completed FHG with CalFire and started working with collaborators. First draft of service agreement and one more meeting with attorney coming up. In process of onboarding Insperity our new Payroll/HR firm. A lot of work and thanks to the team. Phase I is payroll. Phase II is migrating HR info and getting online self service for employees going. Will bring HR manual up to date. Looking at bylaws and AOI. Meeting with attorney to rewrite and initial review with board will be in next 2-3 weeks. Hope to adopt at October meeting. Received $20K grant and created go-bags in cooperation with SJ Mayor's office and Sharks and SAP. First 200 people who attended the event got them.

Financials Update

Chris Sommerfield
 Seth spoke for Chris who was absent. Monthly finance committee meeting. Have been able to move forward on revising the budget now with a better picture on timing issues, etc. This will improve the budget.

Managing Director Report

Eugenia Rendler
 Hazardous Fuel Reduction Program Report
 Communications, Outreach and Education Report

Eugenia gave updates on HFR and COE. Everything is going now with permits in hand. Mt. Madonna is in Phase II cutting down dead trees. Taking longer than planned but going well. Mid Page Mill starts next month and Moody Road starts in November. Hired Stephen Harrington who will be working at the contract level for FHG. Interviews going for COE Manager and its posted on our website. Our in-person requests for activities and education are going up which is great.

Grants

Pai Venegas
 Seth went over this since Pai was absent. Working on grants for unrestricted funds. Creating outreach packet for family foundations, which typically have interest in environmental and health based issues. We will know by October 31 if we are awarded PG & E.

Round Robin

Raise your virtual hand!

All
 Denise G - introduced Dave Barnett and Lisa Schmidt. Shout out to Irene and Lynn S. Events/festivals are coming up plus emergency wildfire events.

Jeff B - Firewise community update $24K worth of work/chipping done in Redwood Estates.

Erika A - Gave example of real estate with AB38. Seller needs to provide or buyer needs to complete within one year, but there is some issues with CalFire being backed up to conduct the investigations. Just be aware.

Dave B - Discussed home hardening for fuel breaks with Mid Pen, Palo Alto, etc. Hoping to participate in regional planning with CWPP.

Jared L - mentioned recently installed wildfire camera. S/B operational next week.

Rob R - $7M from State for West Valley cities. Also, $70M from Feds through Eshoo.

Derek N - have crews out doing heat and fire watches

Michael G - helpful working with Denise, Dave and J Logan for work on Rancho San Antonio.

Adjourn General Meeting

Next Meeting Date and Location

October 19, 2021 Zoom Only

Attachments

1 August 2021 Meeting Minutes
2 August 2021 Treasurer’s Reports
3 link to documents
4 Manager's Activities Reports
5 2020 Annual Report
6 Correspondence Climate Roadmap Update
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<th>First</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>SCFSC Position</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<td>Dede</td>
<td>Smullen</td>
<td>Director/President</td>
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<td>Derek</td>
<td>Neumann</td>
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<td>Erika</td>
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<td>Jim</td>
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<td>Director/First VP</td>
<td>San Jose Water Co.</td>
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<td>Joelle</td>
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<td>Kirk</td>
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<td>Mathieson</td>
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RESOLUTION NO. 2021-10
OF THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY FIRESAFE COUNCIL
AMENDING THE BYLAWS OF THE CORPORATION
October 19, 2021

WHEREAS From time to time the Board of Directors will make necessary amendments to the Bylaws of the Santa Clara County Firesafe Council, and

WHEREAS The Firesafe Council has grown and changed significantly since the bylaws were first adopted, and

WHEREAS The Board, in consultation with an attorney, determined that several Articles of the Bylaws were out of date and no longer serving the purposes of the Firesafe Council, and

The Board has also authorized the attorney to make a Statement of Information Filing, updating the Secretary of State's records to reflect FireSafe Council's new business address and appointing the attorney to serve as its Agent for Service.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors hereby amends the Bylaws of the Corporation as follows in the attached XX Pages.

Approved and adopted on the 19th Day of October, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Signed and Certified as Accurate:

________________________________________
Shana Nelson
Secretary, Santa Clara County FireSafe Council

Date
Santa Clara County FireSafe Council

Mobilizing the people of Santa Clara County to protect their homes, communities, and environment from wildfires

14380 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070 • Phone (408) 975-9591 • www.SCCFireSafe.org

Resolution No: 2021-11

RESOLUTION OF THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY FIRESAFE COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TO OPEN A SAVINGS ACCOUNT for FOREST HEALTH GRANT FUNDS with
THE CALIFORNIA BANK OF COMMERCE
and AUTHORIZING SIGNATORIES.

October 19, 2021

WHEREAS, the SCCFSC has an established checking account with the California Bank of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, there is a business need to receive grant funds, transfer and make payments and distributions to Santa Clara County FireSafe Council's checking account; and

WHEREAS, The SCCFSC savings account is for the sole purpose of Forest Health Grant related activities; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors will receive copies of monthly account statements at the Finance Committee meeting and such statements will be included in the monthly board meeting packet.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors hereby:

1. Authorizes the opening of a new savings account for exclusive and dedicated use of Forest Health Grant funds; and

2. Appoints CEO, Seth Schalet; CFO, Chris Sommerfield, and Treasurer, Derek Neumann, as signers to savings account.

Approved and Adopted on the 19th day of October, 2021.

AYES:  
NOS:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTAIN:

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Santa Clara Fire Safe Council Board of Directors.

Shana Nelson, Secretary SCCFSC

Date
Seth Schalet SCCFSC CEO Report  
October 19, 2021, Board Meeting Packet

Budget & Finance & Opps:

- Collaboration Service Agreements for Forest Health Grant finalized with attorney. Each collaboration partner-SJW, MidPen and SCC Parks was sent their copy for review and input on October 6th. As of this writing, no feedback has been received. Ideally like to complete each by end of next week.
- Attended Saratoga City Council meeting on 10/6. New SCCFSC contract extension was brought up for discussion. Crystal Bothelio, Assistant City Manager explained to the Council members the terms and services of the contact. I spoke briefly to indicate I was glad to answer any specific questions—of which there were none from the Council or from the public. Contracted was ratified and approved.
- Insperity (HR Firm) onboarding. Continuing to move forward with weekly project team meetings. We have delayed switching over to the Insperity payroll module until January to allow for more time for the team to build out the scope. This will also enable SCCFSC to support our year-end grant reporting needs using our current QuickBooks system and not having data change in mid-stream.
- Next project with Insperity is to update SCCFSC’s Employee Handbook, bring policies and procedures current. Goal is Jan-Feb 2022 to complete.
- Team has started initial discussions on SCCFSC 2022 annual budget. Will present for review/discussion and adoption in early January 2022. Team needs more time to finish year end project grants reporting, FHG start-up activities.
- I have been working with Dede on engaging the attorney to update/refresh our Bylaws and review the Articles of Incorporation. As of this report creation, having a meeting on during the 10/14 finance committee, attorney, Sam Kiamanesh with Casas Riley Simonian LLP will review and discuss the proposed Bylaw changes. Board was given current and proposed Bylaws and change recommendation documents last week upon receipt from attorney.
- I am recommending we establish a new savings account with our current bank specifically and exclusively for the receipt and transfer of all Forest Health Grant monies, so we segregate it from our general pool of funds and have a better audit trail for transactions and internal control process. I had asked our auditor to weigh in, they did and agree on the approach, recommending a new dedicated savings account exclusively for FHG funds.

Grants/Fundraising:

- Attended the 9/28 Forest Health Grant webinar (so did Anneliese), to learn about the process of reporting, requesting grant advances and managing the program.
- Approached Stephanie at GCRCD about a grant opportunity I came across that could be a possible joint initiative. The Whale Tail grant for wildfire fire education around 1) youth education programs, 2) programs for educating the general public. The Whale Tail grants program focuses on education about coastal and marine environments. If a project will take place in an inland area or on a bay, the proposal should address how the project includes coastal and marine educational content, including how the connection to the coast and ocean will be
emphasized. Max is $50,000, average award $25,000. Discuss possible collaboration—if we partner, application due 11/5.

- Identified a few potential opportunities to explore general operating-non programmatic support with local foundations. Working with Pai to develop outreach to these foundations that would be new for SCCFSC.
- Reworked the 21 SFA California FireSafe Foundation grant award we received to account for the loss of matching funds due to the loss of the CAL FIRE grant and Mt. Madonna match. Pai led the work and Eugenia was actively engaged in revising both the budget and proposal and resubmitted on 10/8. Thank you both.

Partner Engagement/Outreach:

- Successful event on 9/24 at Alum Rock Park with San Jose Sharks Foundation, SAP and the San Jose Mayor’s office. Got to spend time speaking with San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo (who recognized SCCFSC from his podium speech). Spent time speaking with Dorsey Moore, CEO of the San Jose Conservation Corps, met Captain Mark Thomas, Bureau of Field Operations, Wildland Officer, San José Fire Department who I invited to attend today (meet during today’s round robin). Also, spend time with Craig Clements and Amanda Stasiewicz of San Jose State University’s wildfire program. Met a few other City of San Jose contacts. I want to thank board member Joelle Hurlston for attending and being an ambassador for SCCFSC meeting and engaging event attendees.
- On 10/7, attended the Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (GCRCD) board meeting. Thanked Stephanie (ED) for the collaboration on the possible joint Whale Tail grant I came across. At this meeting, Pelayo Alvarez, PhD, California Director, Conservation Ranching Initiative for the Audubon Society gave a presentation on a grazing program they have initiated to promote local beef for ranchers. He sent me a copy of the presentation and distributed it to staff and partners who engage with the rancher community.
- The next day, 10/8, I followed up with, Pelayo Alvarez and make a connection and he indicated one thing that he didn’t cover during the GCRCD presentation is he and the Audubon team are working with several partners to develop a framework for the use of grazing as tool for fuel reductions as part of a strategy to increase access to grazing land for ranchers in places where it is ecologically advisable. Indicated I would like to engage on joint collaboration on that effort for our ranching community and he will reach back out in the future as they scale this program to discuss what that could look like.
- Reached out after reading an article and invited today’s board speaker—Yi-Lin Tsai and Marios Galanis, part of the DamageMap development team to make today’s presentation.
- Reached out to Helen Wolter, District Representative, for Senator Josh Becker-District 13 as a follow-up to prior conversations about bringing her on a project site tour to show prior SCCFSC work and review possible new areas/projects for state/county funding support. Jim Young and I are meeting her on Tuesday October 26 and will take her on a 90-minute tour and answer questions. She will bring the information back to Senator Becker.
- On 10/7 met with the co-founders of Firemap. I approached them as they have a unique and attractive, vertically integrated solution to do drone based home, structural and property analysis, that then extends to home hardening recommendations, defensible space recommendations, scheduling and bundling the home hardening install and after-market follow-
on services opportunities. We discussed SCCFSC becoming an exclusive Santa Clara County VAR and or lead referral partner as a first opportunity for SCCFSC to develop a portfolio of related products and services to bundle and extend revenue and mission impact. Possibly an opportunity to help support Firemap with defensible space inspections as well. Firemap is very interested in partnering with us and we have had a series of follow-ups since.

- On 10/4 attended the regional meeting for the California FireSafe Council coordinate by Brooke McAllister, Central CA Regional Coordinator. Discussed various grant opportunities, she updated us on their strategic focus, projects and staffing.
- On 9/28, held a meeting with CAL FIRE Chief Orre & Chief Hess, along with Dede & Eugenia to discuss various projects and priorities. Follow-up actions in process.
- Attended San Mateo Firesafe board meeting 10/13. Matteo Garbelotto, Director U.C. Berkeley Forest Pathology and Mycology Laboratory was a guest speaker, and I shared his “Investigating The Potential Fungal Involvement in the Widespread Decline (dieback) of Trees in the SF Bay Area” PowerPoint presentation afterwards. They have a new staff hire and their Executive Director, Sheena Sidhu, reached out to me to see if I would be willing to met with her and update her on SCCFSC activities—meeting being scheduled in San Mateo soon.
- LACFO—attended the LACFO meeting on 10/13 where they were slated to give an updated to their county-wide fire service review they have been conducting. I had my hand raised (in Zoom) to ask a question but they did not acknowledge or call on me. The question was they received 450 survey responses, but I believe everyone—in the WUI and non-WUI-were given the survey. My question would have been of the 450 surveys returned, how many of those are WUI residents? Also, what percentage of WUI residents were sent a survey and by what methods? Email/postal, text? What percentage of total WUI residents have returned a survey? The meeting did not have any substantive discussion on the fire service review progress, though information on the 3 county wide meetings, was provided in their agenda packet.
  - Community Meeting #1 (communities in south Santa Clara County)
  - Community Meeting #2 (communities in central and east Santa Clara County)
  - Community Meeting #3 (communities in north and west Santa Clara County)

*from agenda packet notes: All three meetings were well attended, with forty-five (45) individuals attending Meeting #1, twenty-two (22) individuals attending Meeting #2, and one hundred and thirty-one (131) individuals attending Meeting #3. This tally does not include LAFCO staff, CPSM staff, TAC members, and partner agencies’ staff who were also present at the meetings.

- Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District-Attended the LPRCD board meeting on 10/13. Discussed with them Pelayo Alvarez’s Cattle Grazing presentation and sent them the slides. Then, reminded them of our Large Animal Evacuation program and Stephanie (ED) and Peter (board member) are willing to help promote this—Stephanie is an experienced equine evacuator. Would share our program with their contact list. As far as joint grant funding/projects, this is a bit outside their charter in the RCD, but can help us promote it.
- Youth engagement with Wildfire Awareness Initiative (WAI) group of 20 Cupertino middle and high school youth focused on wildfire awareness. Sent them several emails they used as content for their communications. Here is their Instagram page: https://www.instagram.com/waiforchange/  Here is their presentation:
• Have attended all board meetings in the last month for core partners- South Skyline FireSafe Council, Saratoga Fire District, San Mateo FireSafe Council, Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District, Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (GCRCD).
• Next month’s (November) board guest speaker is Alexander Maranghides, Senior Engineer NIST who will present on the WUI Community Hazard Framework being proposed as an update in the new CA fire code—he was the lead developer of this. Also, he will touch on a future presentation he will give in 2022 on the data in NIST’s Structure Separation Experiments (SSE) research project including overview and experiments to date.

Board Engagement:

• Held our follow-up session with the board to calibrate our prior meeting on updating the strategic plan—thank you all for your engagement. Followed up with Dede and Paul. Plan to be approved as an updated framework for execution.
• Held conversations with several board members this past month to get input, feedback and updates. Thanks for making the time.
SCCFSC Grant Manager’s Report
Oct 2021 Board Meeting
10/19/2021

Grant Pipeline/Submitted
- Whale Tail
  - Potential grant collaboration with Stephanie Moreno, Executive Director of Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (GCRCD) – COE deliverables, post fire winter hardening, boarding & prepare the ground before the fire or fire evacuation.
  - Grant request up to $50,000
- Network for Good
  - Submitted for general operations support
  - Amount ask $5,000
- Prospecting few foundations with Seth for general operating/capacity building funding
- Exploring other grant opportunity to collaborate with Stephanie Moreno

Grant Received
- 21 SFA
  - Funder: California Fire Safe Council
  - 2 projects: Black Road, Charcoal Road
  - COE deliverables
  - Amount: $193,628

Grant Reports
- Q3 19SFA (May 1 – July 31)
- Q3 20 SFA (May 1 – July 31)
- #7 18CCI (July 1 – September 30)
- 20CFF (September 2020 – August 2021) End of Grant Project Report
2021-22 Strategic Planning Committee Update

SCCFSC Board Meeting
September 21, 2021
2020-2025 Strategic Goals

• **Build Organizational Structure to Drive Mission**
  
  • Ensure long-term success of the organization driven by a passionate leadership team aligned to Goals, fueled by a capable workforce and strategic partners, with sufficient baseline funding to deliver our ongoing Mission.

• **Develop Resilient Neighborhoods**

  • Engage, educate and facilitate communities efforts to improve neighborhood wildfire resiliency through fuel reduction initiatives, home-hardening and evacuation preparations. Support FireWise certifications.

• **Collaborate on County and Regional Wildfire Prevention Programs**

  • Drive large-scale fuel reduction and forest health initiatives with the support of partners and sponsors, often funded by local, State and Federal grants. Champion wildfire prevention initiatives across County.

• **Prepare for the Future**

  • Plan for the future by researching and identifying innovative, effective and practical solutions to mitigate negative impacts associated with wildfire threats, including the use of advanced technologies and state-of-art protection capabilities. Form strategic alliances across industry and government to facilitate a long-term strategic impact to significantly reduce our losses to wildfire.
Goal 1 – Build Organizational Structure to Drive Mission

Ensure long-term success of the organization driven by a passionate leadership team aligned to Goals, fueled by a capable workforce and strategic partners, with sufficient baseline funding to deliver our ongoing Mission.

1. Build Board Leadership to Drive Core Initiatives
   • Recruit new members to expand leadership depth and capabilities
   • Drive core Goals with strong Board participation

2. Ensure Organizational Capacity to Deliver Mission
   • Enhance workplace programs and benefits to attract and retain competent staff
   • Manage to a long range financial model to optimize resources with predictable results

3. Establish Sustainable Funding
   • Create programs to generate new sources of consistent funds
   • Establish alliances within County and State for non-grant based funding
Goal 2 – Develop Resilient Neighborhoods

Engage, educate and facilitate communities efforts to improve neighborhood wildfire resiliency through fuel reduction initiatives, home-hardening and evacuation preparations. Support FireWise certifications.

1. Amplify our Message and Brand Reputation within Communities
   • Speak in a unified voice about our compelling Mission and purpose
   • Innovate, promote and deliver unique services and expertise
   • Broaden our message through industry alliances and community organizations

2. Expand Community Outreach
   • Grow volunteer support base to expand direct touch within neighborhoods
   • Tune outreach efforts to enhance engagement across our diverse communities
   • Sponsor key events to highlight impact and attract supporters

3. Deliver Neighborhood Wildfire Reduction Programs
   • Accelerate wildfire prevention program rollouts
   • Align with youth and university education programs to foster new approaches
   • Expand and facilitate FirewiseUSA communities
Goal 3 – Collaborate on County and Regional Wildfire Prevention Programs

Drive large-scale fuel reduction and forest health initiatives with the support of partners and sponsors, often funded by local, State and Federal grants. Champion wildfire prevention initiatives across County.

1. Embrace County Wildfire Prevention Programs and Initiatives
   • Promote widespread adoption of wildfire initiatives within County and State
   • Align with stakeholder organizations to optimize efforts and results

2. Build Capable Partner Ecosystem to Provide Expert Services
   • Provide overall leadership to deliver unified and coordinated solutions
   • Expand delivery of services over time by growing partnerships and collaborations

3. Win and Implement Landscape Scale Fuel Reduction Projects
   • Work collaboratively with multiple organizations to propose and win large projects
   • Provide program leadership in planning, implementation and execution
Goal 4 - Prepare for the Future

Plan for the future by researching and identifying innovative, effective and practical solutions to mitigate negative impacts associated with wildfire threats, including the use of advanced technologies and state-of-art protection capabilities. Form strategic alliances across industry and government to facilitate a long-term strategic impact to significantly reduce our losses to wildfire.

1. Create a Long Range Vision for Wildfire Prevention Solutions
   • Establish a vision and direction integrated with industry thought leaders
   • Develop a future architecture of integrated solutions, services and functions

2. Develop Industry Collaborations to Drive Vision
   • Identify potential sponsors and partners from industry
   • Build a collaborative resources roadmap around long term objectives
   • Collaborate with potential alliances for funding, technologies and other resources

3. Establish County – State – Federal Advocacy Programs
   • Create influential and unified voice as advocate for policy implementation
   • Establish external champions to create points of influence
Top Strategic Initiatives for 2021-22

• Expand Board Capability
  • Recruit new members to expand leadership depth and capabilities, then establish an results-oriented approach to drive our strategic agenda

• Enhance Workplace Compensation and Benefits
  • Make hiring a top priority and implement new programs to attract and retain employees

• Establish Sustainable Funding
  • Produce non-grant based funding sources to ensure stable operations and an attractive workplace environment

• Build Strategic Collaborations
  • Integrate with industry leaders to create long term services and solutions to reduce wildfire losses
AI system identifies buildings damaged by wildfire
16 September 2021

The DamageMap application identifies buildings as damaged in red or not damaged in green. Researchers developed the platform to provide immediate information about structural damage following wildfires. Credit: Galanis et al.

People around the globe have suffered the nerve-wracking anxiety of waiting weeks or months to find out if their homes have been damaged by wildfires that scorch with increased intensity. Now, once the smoke has cleared for aerial photography, researchers have found a way to identify building damage within minutes.

Through a system they call DamageMap, a team at Stanford University and the California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) has brought an artificial intelligence approach to building assessment: Instead of comparing before-and-after photos, they’ve trained a program using machine learning to rely solely on post-fire images. The findings appear in the International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction.

"We wanted to automate the process and make it much faster for first responders or even for citizens that might want to know what happened to their house after a wildfire," said lead study author Marios Galanis, a graduate student in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at Stanford's School of Engineering. "Our model results are on par with human accuracy."

The current method of assessing damage involves people going door-to-door to check every building. While DamageMap is not intended to replace in-person damage classification, it could be used as a scalable supplementary tool by offering immediate results and providing the exact locations of the buildings identified. The researchers tested it using a variety of satellite, aerial and drone photography with at least 92 percent accuracy.

"With this application, you could probably scan the whole town of Paradise in a few hours," said senior author G. Andrew Fricker, an assistant professor at Cal Poly, referencing the Northern California town destroyed by the 2018 Camp Fire. "I hope this can bring more information to the decision-making process for firefighters and emergency responders, and also assist fire victims by getting information to help them file insurance claims and get their lives back on track."

A different approach

Most computational systems cannot efficiently classify building damage because the AI compares post-disaster photos with pre-disaster images that must use the same satellite, camera angle and lighting conditions, which can be expensive to obtain or unavailable. Current hardware is not advanced enough to record high-resolution surveillance daily, so the systems can't rely on consistent photos, according to the researchers.

Rather than looking for differences between before-and-after images, DamageMap first uses pre-fire photos of any type to map the area and pinpoint building locations. Then, the program analyzes post-wildfire images to identify damage through features like blackened surfaces, crumbled roofs or the absence of structures.
"People can tell if a building is damaged or not—we don't need the before picture—so we tested that hypothesis with machine learning," said co-author Krishna Rao, a graduate student in Earth system science at Stanford's School of Earth, Energy & Environmental Sciences (Stanford Earth). "This can be a powerful tool for rapidly assessing damage and planning disaster recovery efforts."

Structural damage from wildfires in California is typically divided into four categories: almost no damage, minor damage, major damage or destroyed. Because DamageMap is based on aerial images, the researchers quickly realized the system could not make assessments to that degree of detail and trained the machine to simply determine if fire damage was present or absent.

Opportunities for growth

Because the team used a deep learning technique called supervised learning, their model can continue to be improved by feeding it more data. They tested the application using damage assessments from Paradise, California, after the Camp Fire and the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area after the Carr Fire of 2018. The researchers said the open-source platform can be applied to any area prone to wildfires and hope it could also be trained to classify damages from other disasters, such as floods or hurricanes.

"So far our results suggest that this can be generalized, and if people are interested in using it in real cases, then we can keep improving it," Galanis said.

Galanis and Rao developed the project during Stanford's 2020 Big Earth Hackathon: Wildland Fire Challenge. They later collaborated with Cal Poly researchers to refine the platform, a connection that resulted from Rao and Frickers' participation in Google's 2019 "Geo For Good" conference, where the two built an initial prototype as part of the conference Build-A-Thon.

The co-authors tested their model results against damage data collected on-site by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) agents—information that made the research possible.

"Damage inspectors went through painstaking efforts going door to door, looking at the damage, geotagging locations and finally making it publicly accessible," Rao said. "Researching or innovating future technologies directly hinges on access to such data."


Provided by Stanford University