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# NEWS RELEASE



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## **New Initiative Promotes Research into Fire and Forests** *UC Berkeley and CAL FIRE Formalize Partnership*

**Sacramento** – The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Fire Research and Outreach have entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize an agreement to partner on research related to critical forest and fire issues. Highlighted by the recent large and damaging wildfires plaguing the state, the program of research will leverage both agencies' unique expertise and perspective to collaborate on defining key research topics, methods, and paths for communicating results.

"Partnering with a strong research university like UC Berkeley will provide land managers critical scientific information about the effects of forest management activities in California," said Chris Keithley, PhD, Chief of the Fire and Resource Assessment Program for CAL FIRE. "This type of research will help shape how and where fuels treatments are applied, and will help us identify the most effective methods for a particular community and forest type," added Keithley.

As forests and wildfire regimes change in response to a warming climate, there is an increasing need to improve dissemination of research to promote science-based policies that address complex and changing forest management decisions. Named the California Initiative for Research on Fire and Forests (CIRFF), a few of the shared research priorities of this partnership include investigating how strategic placement of prescribed fire and other fuels reduction/forest health treatments affects wildfire hazard and suppression effectiveness, improving understanding on the efficacy of prescribed burning and other management actions, developing metrics to assess effectiveness of fuels and forest health treatments at the local and regional scales and creating new opportunities for exchange of scientific information related to wildfire.

"One of the exciting and novel aspects of this partnership is the collaborative nature of the science and outreach that will be conducted," says Scott Stephens, a professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, and co-director at the Berkeley Center for Fire Research and Outreach. "Scientists from both organizations will be contributing data and expertise to address critical wildfire questions."

With the 2020 historic wildfire season not yet officially over, the efficacy of forest management, prescribed fire and other fuels treatment activities is generating a lot of interest from land managers and the public. As a result of this partnership, new research will be better communicated to policy makers and land managers.

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