

Forest Health Research Program Grantee Webinar:

Community Impacts of Prescribed Fire: Findings from WUI communities from listening sessions and a survey of medically vulnerable adults

Sumi Hoshiko, MPH, CA Dept. of Public Health

Ana Rappold, PhD, Environmental Protection Agency



Friday, May 19, 2023

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

[Register here](#)

Abstract: This presentation shows the community engagement component of the CAL FIRE Forest Health Research Program grant-funded project, “Public Health Impact of Prescribed Fire (PHIRE) Study”. This component consisted of two parts: listening sessions of Nevada and El Dorado County residents and a community survey of medically vulnerable Mariposa County residents. Based on results from both parts, the majority of community members supported the policy of increased prescribed fire, but there were still concerns regarding safety measures, health of humans, animals, and ecosystems, and the ability to control prescribed fire. Most participants experienced health impacts from smoke, including physical and mental health impacts. Many faced obstacles in trying to protect their health. Residents want more timely, practical information and reliable sources of information, including communication modes that are not internet-dependent.



Speaker Bios: Sumi Hoshiko is a Research Scientist with the California Department of Public Health where she leads the recently formed Climate Change and Health Unit within the Environmental Health Investigations Branch. She is the Principal Investigator for a study funded by CAL FIRE examining the public health impact of increasing prescribed fire smoke (“PHIRE” study). This study continues earlier research on the health effects of wildfire smoke. Previous investigations include heat-related mortality and a variety of environmental exposures and health conditions, including tobacco smoke, chromium, perchlorate, radiation, cancer clusters and asthma. She holds a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from UC Berkeley.

Dr. Ana Rappold is a Statistician and a Clinical Research Branch Chief at the US EPA. Ana conducts clinical and epidemiological research on health effects from air pollution and other environmental exposures and has authored several studies specific to wildfire smoke impacts on cardiopulmonary health. Ana received a 2019 Arthur S. Flemming Award for the Smoke Sense Project, a smartphone citizen science app that seeks to answer how people experience wildfire smoke and builds community around health protective behaviors in the face of exposures.

The Forest Health Research Program is part of [California Climate Investments](#), a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment — particularly in disadvantaged communities.

