

## IN THE FIELD: INTERVIEWS AND DISCOVERIES SHAPING WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION

Since June, we've interviewed leaders from community, city, and county organizations, meticulously identifying key players and their interactions while tracking information flow and actions for emergency preparedness and wildfire risk reduction. Collaborating with community leaders at county, municipal, and district levels, we reviewed their organizations' experiences in the past five years, specifically in preparing for and coping with severe wildfires in Northern California.

Through these in-depth interviews, we pinpointed communication, interaction, coordination, and planning processes among organizations, revealing strengths, performance gaps, and development opportunities. This information would contribute to building sustainable risk reduction for the region over the next five years. We are coding and analyzing the interview data to identify networks and sub-networks of interaction among the participating organizations.

The collected data guides the creation of a socio-technical digital twin, modeling potential risks and strategies for action at county, city, and district levels. Our work is integral to identifying real-world dilemmas for the serious games under development, aiming to foster collective learning and inspire actionable changes.

Key findings from interviews include increased awareness of risk post-recent wildfires, innovations in technology altering social connectivity, heightened actions by community organizations to reduce risk, and improved collaboration among local organizations. Gaps were identified in connections among community organizations and public agencies that warrant review and redesign. Noteworthy is the organizational response to the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening local networks, funding community outreach, hiring community promoters, aiding Spanish-speaking groups, and assisting those with mobility issues.

Our research also reveals wildfires are perceived as a public health issue in low-income neighborhoods, where the threat extends beyond the fire itself to toxic smoke, power loss, transportation disruptions, and compromised housing safety. The evacuation process, crucial yet risky, depends on road networks, access to communications, and the availability of safe shelters.

For the organizations that gratefully participated in our interviews, please refer to the table below:

Organization
Buena Vista Neighborhood Group
Golden Gate Neighborhood Group

Diablo FireSafe Council
Oakland FireSafe Council
Head- Royce School
Berkeley FireSafe Council
Claremont Canyon Conservancy
Friends of Joaquin Miller Park
Castro Valley Library
Merritt College
Hills Emergency Forum
Kaiser Hospital
Canal Alliance
Oakland City Library
Fremont Unified School District
Piedmont Gardens
Pt. Reyes Disaster Council
Inverness Fire Dept and Inverness Disaster Council
West Marin Community Resource Center
Marin County Parks
Marin County Office of Education
Pacheco Valle FireWise Community
Marin County Cooperation Team
College of Marin
Upper Sequoia FireWise Community
The Bluffs at Hamilton Hill
San Geronimo Valley Community Center
Oakland Unified School District
Fire Safe Marin
Faith-in-Action East Bay
City of Oakland
Oakland Fire Department
Berkeley Fire Department
City of Berkeley, Office of Emergency Services
Port of Oakland
Alameda County Sheriff's Office
City of Union City/Newark
City of Fremont
Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department
East Bay Municipal Utility District
East Bay Regional Park District
Marin Municipal Water District