

GIVING INSIGHTS

Forest Health and Wildfire Resilience



The interests of our funding community inform the choice of issues we cover in each Giving Insights publication.

Overview

The Western United States, including the Bay Area, is experiencing progressively more destructive wildfire events that exacerbate socioeconomic and health disparities in our communities. Climate change has intensified the weather patterns that lead to devastating wildfires, as warmer temperatures and dry vegetation further increase the risk of extreme fire weather conditions in California.

While fire-prone places are more likely to be populated by higher-income groups in California, many individuals in rural areas, low-income neighborhoods, and immigrant communities do not have the resources to prepare or recover from a fire.¹

The good news is that communities can employ several strategies to be wildfire resilient. Philanthropic efforts are expanding beyond emergency services into investments in preventative community measures and wildfire resilience practices to protect public health and safety.

Jews are encouraged to become the Earth's stewards, "to till and to tend", *I'vadah ul'shamarah*. Tending to our forests and developing wildfire resilience is one important step we can take for the health and longevity of our communities.

Using Your Donor-Advised Fund

The organizations featured in this guide engage in three general approaches to forest health and wildfire resilience:

- **Forest and Wildfire Management**

Forest management efforts include fuel reduction techniques such as controlled burns that reduce highly flammable fuels, prescribed fires under controlled conditions, and efficient planting of trees. This category also includes tribal and indigenous fire management practices.

- **Community Preparedness and Resilience**

Community preparedness and resilience efforts include building community plans and policy solutions in fire-prone areas. Community resilience plans include and are being developed by indigenous and other impacted communities of color.

- **Land-Use and Policy**

Land-use planning tools for local governments include creating building and development code and zoning rules that require fire-resistant construction for new buildings and retrofits. Other tools include nature-based policy solutions which help safeguard ecosystems that are vital for food and water supplies and protecting against natural disasters.

¹ Davies, I. P., Haugo, R. D., Robertson, J. C., & Levin, P. S. (2018, November 2). *The unequal vulnerability of communities of color to wildfire*. *PLOS Climate*.

Our donors are giving to many of the local organizations listed below. We encourage you to consider these when implementing your giving strategy.



<p><u>Amah Mutsun Land Trust</u></p>	<p>The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band are the living descendants of Mutsun and Awaswas-speaking peoples who have continually occupied the watersheds between Año Nuevo to the north and much of the greater Monterey Bay region for millennia. The Trust relearns, applies, and shares the traditional ecological knowledge – gained over 10,000 years – to issues of ecological conservation, resource management, and sustainability in the contemporary world. Incorporating traditional resource and environmental management techniques with sound science and best practices, the Trust promotes vigorous, productive, and resilient landscapes. The Trust shares their knowledge about how Native people have used fuel reduction techniques to steward the environment for centuries throughout California with fire researchers, scientists, the community, and conservation organizations.</p>	 
<p><u>Greenbelt Alliance</u></p>	<p>Greenbelt Alliance focuses on data-driven, innovative policy solutions cultivating regional collaboration to plan and invest in resilient communities. The organization works to educate, advocate, and collaborate to ensure the Bay Area’s lands and communities are resilient in the face of climate change. Greenbelt Alliance has protected nearly 70,000 acres of open space lands from development. These protected lands serve as natural buffers during wildfires and provide groundwater during drought. This organization helped bring over 16,000 Climate SMART homes to the Bay Area. The Greenbelt Alliance advocates for legislation that puts equity and anti-racism at the center of climate resilience.</p>	  
<p><u>Peninsula Open Space Trust</u></p>	<p>POST has preserved over 80,000 acres of open spaces in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz counties. One of POST’s five program areas focuses on protecting redwood trees and restoring redwood forests on the Peninsula and Santa Cruz County. Redwood trees sequester more carbon than any other plant, helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. Redwood forests are a resilient and rich habitat for multiple species of plants and animals. POST also works with timber companies to ensure sustainable logging practices. The organization has a goal of acquiring 20,000 acres of redwoods for protection.</p>	   
<p><u>J Tree</u></p>	<p>JTree is a collaboration of various Jewish organizations that share a commitment to addressing climate change. This international Jewish movement, led by rabbis and activists around the world, encourages Jewish involvement in efforts to restore and protect forests. Working with Hazon and in partnership with the National Forest Foundation, JTree focuses on sustainable reforestation and rewilding through planting trees for the benefit of local communities. The National Forest Foundation has a goal of planting 50 million trees in 5 years resulting in healthier forests, healthier watersheds, and improved wildlife habitats.</p>	  

<p><u>The John Muir Project</u></p>	<p>The John Muir Project monitors commercial logging projects proposed by the US Forest Service on National Forest lands in the Western US, with a focus on National Forests in the Sierra Nevada Mountain range of California. Over the past fourteen years, the project has protected over 300,000 acres of mature and old growth forest and post-fire habitat in the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. JMP also educates local communities in California, Napa, and Sonoma counties to prepare them to be more resilient to wildfires.</p>	
<p><u>Latino Community Foundation</u></p>	<p>LCF supports Latino-led organizations advancing education, health and safety, civic engagement, and youth leadership in communities across California. LCF’s Wildfire Relief Fund has a three-phase strategy – relief, recovery, and resilience – to support families displaced by wildfires across California. The relief phase includes financial aid to families for food, re-housing, transportation, childcare, and language translation; the recovery phase strengthens the capacity of Latino-led grassroots organizations that can serve as anchors in rebuilding a community impacted by a wildfire; and the resilience phase focuses on changing the poor systemic conditions experienced by communities of color by working with policy makers, media, and foundations.</p>	
<p><u>Wild Heritage</u></p>	<p>Wild Heritage provides science to decision makers, conservation groups, and land managers on ways to restore and renew ecosystems in the most natural and cost-effective way possible. This organization works to preserve the primary “old growth” forests that protect over two thirds of Earth’s land and freshwater, prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19, fight climate change by drawing down and storing vast amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, and ensure reliable, high-quality freshwater supplies.</p>	

Have Questions or Suggestions?

If you have additional suggestions or questions on this topic, or would like information on other causes and ways to give, contact your philanthropy advisor or email us at philanthropy@sfjcf.org.

The Federation connects impact and meaning by helping others view the world through the lens of Jewish values. Our 100-year history at the center of Bay Area generosity—supporting both those who give and those who benefit—grants us a unique ability to amplify results and create moments of transformation in the world, our community, and ourselves.