UC Center Sacramento

California's Changing Wildfire and Climate Risks: Research in Support of Resilience

Climate change is also projected to affect California's energy sector in myriad ways, including changes in electricity demand for air conditioning, reduced spring snowpack that diminishes hydroelectric supplies, sea level rise that threatens energy assets, and increased wildfire-related risks to energy sector infrastructure and operations. This talk will provide a brief overview Energy Commission research regarding climate vulnerabilities to California's energy system and the development of an interactive website providing data and tools to facilitate planning for a resilient, decarbonized energy sector. This presentation will also survey recent changes in the timing, size and severity of wildfires, as well as drivers of these changes. Our work supporting past state climate assessments has helped to characterize possible futures for wildfire across the state. We will show examples of past assessment products, and describe work underway to develop new knowledge and the next generation of models and simulations of extreme events to assess risks to California's energy sector. Better descriptions of potential future extreme fire seasons, their impacts, and their likelihood will enable planning and investment for a robust decarbonized energy sector serving the people of California. Planning for other sectors—such as water, ecosystems, public health, carbon management—will be able to leverage lessons learned in the pursuit of a robust energy sector.

Wednesday
October 23rd

12:00—1:00pm

UC Center Sacramento
1130 K Street
Room LL 22
Sac, CA 95814

Register by:
October 16th at:
uccs.ucdavis.edu

Lunch will be served

Dr. LeRoy Westerling is Professor of Management of Complex Systems and co-Director of the Center for Climate Communication. His research interests include applied climatology and seasonal forecasting for wildfire management, climate change impacts on wildfire and related aspects of mountain hydrology, paleo reconstructions of climate-wildfire interactions, simulation of extreme events, and risk communication. Dr. Westerling holds a B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles; and a Ph.D. from the University of California, San Diego. He has published extensively on wildfire and climate in the western United States, and has led the long term fire modeling efforts supporting the California State Climate Assessments

Dr. Susan Fischer Wilhelm is team lead for energy-related environmental research at the California Energy Commission (CEC). Her team plans and manages a large portfolio of energy-related environmental research, including development of high-resolution climate projections, investigation of climate-related vulnerabilities to the energy system, research related to methane emissions from the natural gas system, long-term energy scenarios that fulfill California's energy and environmental goals while abiding by economic and resource constraints, and risks posed by the energy system to ecosystems and public health as well as terrestrial and water resources. The team also leads the energy contribution to California's climate change assessments and contributes to policy-related dialogue related to climate change and adaptation. Susan has worked for the State of California since September 2006, when she joined the California Air Resources Board (ARB) as the Science, Technology, and Health Policy Advisor to the Chairman. Susan earned her Ph.D. in Environmental Health Sciences at UC, Berkeley, and her M.S.E. in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Princeton. She holds a B.S. degree in Physics from Davidson College.

For questions contact Brooke Miller-Jacobs at (916) 445-5161 or bmmillerjacobs@ucdavis.edu

The views and opinions expressed during this lecture are those of the speaker and do not necessarily represent the views of UCCS.