

Success Stories

Supporting Wildfire Professionals and Keeping Communities Safe



**SOUTHWEST
FIRE SCIENCE
CONSORTIUM**



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Research Supporting Sound Decisions

“I can't emphasize enough how helpful having the Report on Fire in the Sonoran Desert is in hand. It's a tangible document that I can use to bolster our conservation efforts and advocate for preserving these delicate landscapes.”

-Juanita Armstrong, Maricopa County Natural Resource Manager

Protecting the Sonoran Desert from Wildfire: Providing critical fire science to address a growing threat

Wildfire is reshaping the Sonoran Desert, threatening its landscapes, wildlife, and communities. Invasive grasses are fueling a dangerous fire cycle, increasing risks to private property, infrastructure, and natural resources. Landowners and fire managers need practical, science-based solutions to address these challenges.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- **Empowering Landowners & Managers:** Published Fire in the Sonoran Desert: An Overview of a Changing Landscape, a widely used resource providing science-based summaries of the issue and insights into how to address the problem.
- **Gaining Recognition:** Featured in major media outlets, we are raising awareness about wildfire risks and solutions for the desert.
- **Driving Actionable Solutions:** Organized field visits, 2024 Arizona Wildland Urban Fire Summit, and organized conference sessions with fire professionals to explore effective fire mitigation and research.
- **Strengthening Future Efforts:** Co-hosting working groups to develop cost-effective strategies for protecting desert communities.

The Southwest Fire Science Consortium (SWFSC) gets emerging science on the ground by connecting scientists, land managers, and the public. By facilitating these connections, the SWFSC helps to assure that scientists are addressing the most pressing questions and managers are applying cutting-edge science and diverse knowledge in their efforts to protect communities and critical natural resources.

Additional funding for this project
provided by:



Read the story...

Historically, wildfires in the Sonoran Desert were rare and patchy. However, invasive grasses like buffelgrass and red brome have created a dangerous fire cycle, threatening rangelands, homes, and vital infrastructure. Without intervention, this shift could result in costly damage to private property, increased firefighting expenses, and a permanent transformation of the landscape.

The Fire in the Sonoran Desert report is already proving invaluable for those on the front lines of land management. With detailed maps, repeat photography, and scientific analysis, it provides a clear picture of the problem and outlines practical solutions. The report also includes research plots that agencies can use to track changes over time and refine fire mitigation strategies.

Looking ahead, the Southwest Fire Science Consortium remains committed to common-sense, science-based solutions that protect the land, reduce fire risks, and support responsible land management. By fostering collaboration among landowners, fire professionals, and policymakers, this effort is ensuring that the Sonoran Desert remains a productive and resilient landscape for future generations. 🌵



Images that illustrate the difference between native Sonoran Desert vegetation (left) and a highly invaded area thick with fuels of invasive grasses (right).

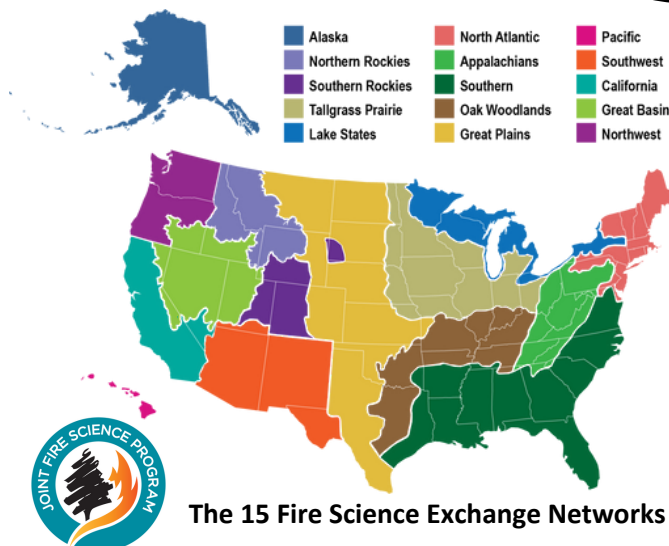
VIDEO // Fire Prevention Case Study on Accidental Ignitions

THE FULL REPORT //
Fire in the Sonoran Desert

GROWING EDGE // Designing Fuel Breaks for Desert Ecosystems



Appendices contain lists of repeat photo stations and long-term desert fire plots



The 15 Fire Science Exchange Networks

"Thank you so much for what you do, your website and materials are incredible resources. I am using maps and figures from your Fire in the Sonoran Desert report to use in collaborative meetings with BLM and USFS leadership."

-Joshua Hurst, Arizona Game and Fish Department Regional Supervisor