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CLIMATE & WILDFIRE INSTITUTE

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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MISSION STATEMENT .....	3
YEAR IN REVIEW .....	4
ABOUT CWI .....	5
LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR .....	6
BUILDING COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RESILIENCE FROM THE GROUND UP ...	7
LESSONS FROM TEAKETTLE: RESILIENCE THROUGH SETBACKS .....	10
LEADING TOGETHER: CONVENINGS AND WEBINARS .....	13
PUBLIC AFFAIRS: TURNING SCIENCE INTO ACTION .....	16
TRANSFORMING DATA, TOOLS, & TECH INTO DECISIONS .....	20
PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS .....	23
FINANCIALS .....	24
STAFF & BOARD .....	25
LOOKING AHEAD .....	27

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# MISSION STATEMENT

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The Climate & Wildfire Institute (CWI) accelerates solutions to climate and wildfire challenges. CWI works to speed new solutions to the frontlines and to decision-makers by building a consortium of collaborative partnerships. As a boundary organization, we operate at the intersections of research, policy, and practice, facilitating collaboration and innovation across sectors to advance climate and wildfire resilience within the Western U.S.

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# YEAR IN REVIEW

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To say 2025 was an eventful fire year would be an understatement. Through profound loss came new momentum, breakthroughs, and unprecedented progress across programs, partnerships, and communities.

CWI is proud to have supported multiple community resilience efforts, launched new partnerships such as the Nevada County Resilience Fund, helped define key wildfire priorities at the federal and state level, contributed to scientific data platforms, and convened one of the most productive gatherings of wildfire experts in the West.

Our work helped protect communities from catastrophic wildfire, engaged dozens of partners in meaningful collaborations, and brought together interdisciplinary networks committed to long-term wildfire resilience.

In 2025, CWI supported:

- Multi-jurisdictional wildfire resilience planning efforts, including the Fire Smart Community Pilot.
- New community-scale wildfire resilience pilot projects in the Tahoe Basin and Nevada County, California.
- Interagency open science and data integration.
- A dynamic systems-mapping database with key partners.
- Expanded policy pathways and key research at the federal and state level.
- A convening of top wildfire scientists, policymakers, philanthropists, and practitioners to identify shared wildfire data challenges, gaps in research, and next steps towards actionable solutions.

Most importantly, this year revealed the growing strength of a movement—one centered around collaboration, creativity, and the shared belief that true wildfire resilience can become the new reality in communities across the Western U.S.

# ABOUT CWI

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## WHO WE ARE

CWI is a science-backed, nonprofit organization that accelerates wildfire resilience by uniting researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and communities. We focus on the systems that shape wildfire outcomes—policies, governance, open science, and best practices—and provide them actionable and scalable pathways.

CWI operates through a consortium-based model, bringing together a large, broad, and diverse network of wildfire experts from across disciplines and sectors. This approach allows us to draw on the strengths of scientists, land managers, cultural practitioners, local leaders, and technical specialists to co-produce solutions that no single institution could develop alone. By connecting these experts and decision-makers, CWI serves as the backbone that organizes knowledge, aligns strategies, and accelerates innovation across the wildfire resilience landscape in a way only a consortium can. Our internal team has roots in the social sciences and specializes in collaborative frameworks, coalition- and consensus-building, and bridging science-to-application communications.

## WHAT WE DO

- Data & Demonstration: Incubating open data products, applying knowledge-based solutions on the ground for ground-truthing and replicability.
- Public Affairs: Developing knowledge-based solutions for decision-makers in local, state, and federal government.
- Convenings: Facilitating pathways and partnerships for knowledge-based solutions to scale.

## OUR APPROACH

We help researchers, practitioners, government, and local communities build replicable frameworks that combine science, trusted leadership, and long-term resilience planning. We do not compete for implementation; we organize the ecosystem that makes implementation of new technology, data, and strategies possible.

# LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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As we approach the one year anniversary of the LA Fires, the pull towards retrospective heartbreak is strong, and the greatest salve for it is shining a light on lessons learned and victories. As an Angeleno, the fires were especially vivid and made the work we do all the more salient. Then came the loss of the Teakettle Experimental Forest in the southern Sierra Nevada, all against the backdrop of widespread reductions in the federal workforce and national spending cuts which unearthed a few reminders for me personally.

- At the end of the day, even with the best tech and most well-resourced fire agencies in the world, true resilience comes down to the preparedness of each community—and most are not prepared.
- Even the most effective collaborations move only at the speed of bureaucracy and trust.
- The world is full of good people taking both seen and unseen heroic action everyday.

It's our mission to shape the systems that ease collective action at every layer of society. This year, CWI helped expand wildfire resilience efforts in the Lake Tahoe Basin, launched the landmark Nevada County Resilience Fund, and brought together an extraordinary network of thinkers, practitioners, and policymakers through our 2025 Signature Convening. We continued advancing The Stewardship Project towards federal policy for Indigenous stewardship and cultural burning practices. Our previously incubated data and innovation products—including the Interagency Treatment Tracker, Million Acres Scenario, and Regional Resource Kits—continued to flourish, and we launched a new tool—FireLines.

As we step into 2026, our work does not simply continue, it deepens. Next year will be marked by exciting new collaborations and partnerships, insights into public attitudes and motivations, and a whole slate of convenings for action. The road ahead will not be easy, but then nothing worthwhile ever is. There will be moments of loss, uncertainty, and frustration. But intertwined with those moments will come breakthroughs: quiet victories, powerful solutions, and flashes of clarity that remind us why this work is so critically important.

To those of you already here, thank you for your partnership. We welcome the rest of you to join us on this journey.



— Marissa Christiansen, Executive Director

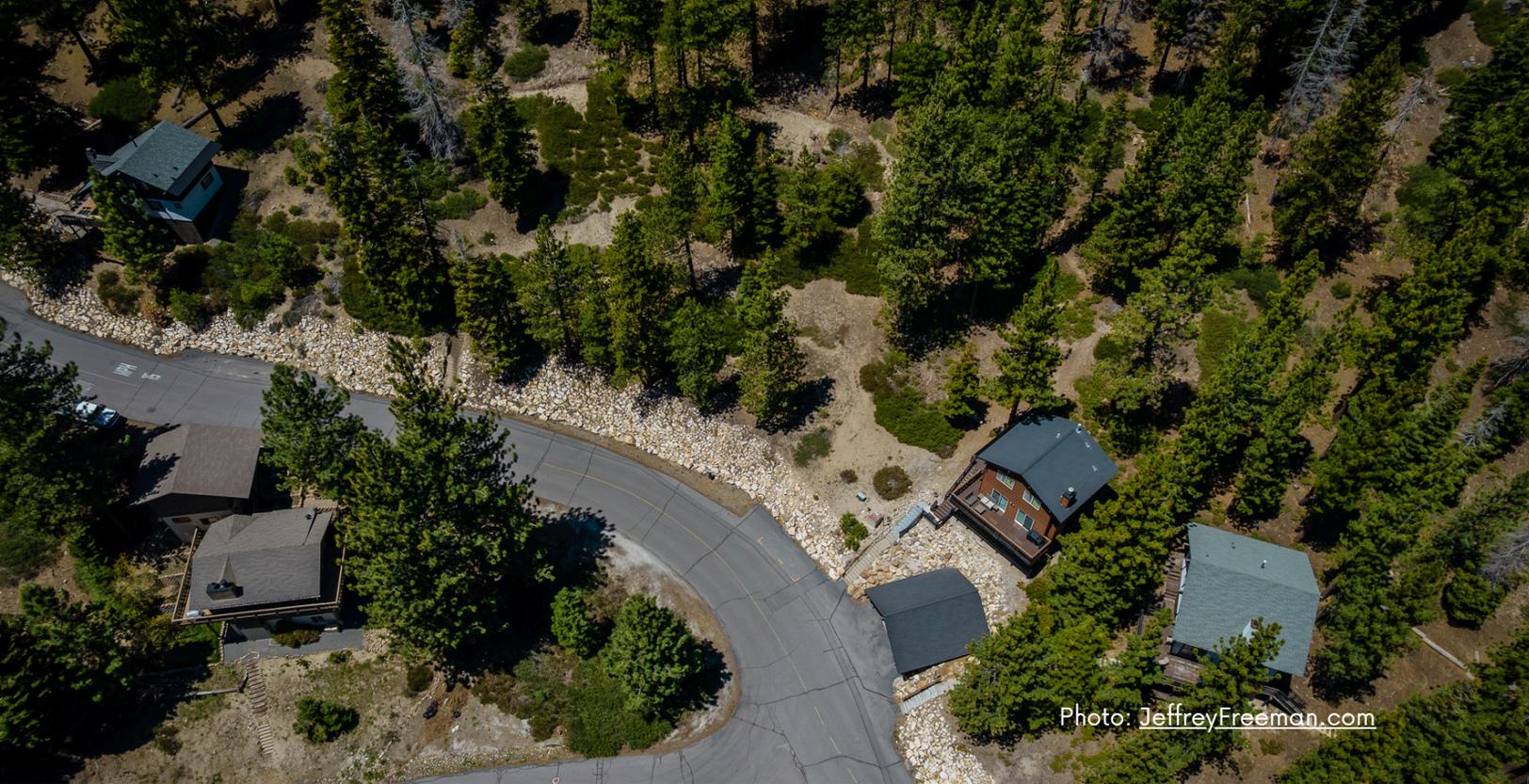


Photo: [JeffreyFreeman.com](http://JeffreyFreeman.com)

# BUILDING COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RESILIENCE FROM THE GROUND UP

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## WHY COMMUNITY MATTERS

Wildfire resilience begins where people live, work, and gather—on familiar roads lined with pines, in neighborhoods where children play, and in landscapes that give communities their identity. Across the Western U.S., communities face the same fundamental barriers: fragmented systems, inconsistent resources, and no clear roadmap for meaningful action. Too often, homeowners don't know which mitigations matter most, local agencies are overstretched, and well-intentioned efforts lack coordination.

CWI helps close these gaps with strategic, science-informed, community-centered models that unite local leadership, trusted institutions, and cutting-edge technology. Our work is grounded in a simple belief: lasting wildfire resilience is built from the community outward, and only succeeds when people are empowered with clarity, partnership, and a path forward.

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## TAHOE BASIN PILOTS: WHERE THE MODEL BEGAN

The Tahoe Basin is where this new resilience strategy first came alive. With support from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and in partnership with the Tahoe Fund, North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, Vibrant Planet, Fire Aside, BurnBot, and others, we helped develop the [Fire Smart Community Pilot](#)—a first-of-its-kind project demonstrating what’s possible when innovation meets collaboration. The pilot’s core goal was bold and clear: create the most fire-ready neighborhood in the Tahoe Basin by identifying and implementing the “mitigations that matter most” using advanced modeling and coordinated action.

The Incline Village (Tyrolian Village HOA) pilot combined parcel-level defensible space inspections, vegetation modeling, home-hardening assessments, fuels treatments, and a powerful social science layer to understand homeowner behavior. New technologies, such as remotely operated mastication equipment and risk modeling tools, allowed the team to prioritize treatments with precision, accelerating decision-making and reducing risk far more quickly than traditional approaches. We authored the resulting case study and, from that, co-authored the [Fire Smart Community Pilot Playbook](#), which describes the top-line approach and strategy.

Key learnings from the pilot, featured below, helped shape CWI’s community resilience model, which we are already replicating across other geographies:

- HOAs can be powerful starting points, offering common-space control and unified communications.
- Modeling transforms intuition into clarity—identifying superspreader homes, high-risk vegetation corridors, and the most effective interventions.
- Empathy matters, especially when helping homeowners navigate defensible space and home hardening recommendations.
- Action spreads socially—when people see their neighbors act, they are more likely to also take action.

By the end of 2025, the pilot had expanded to four additional Tahoe communities: Glenbrook, Incline Pines, South Lake Tahoe, and Carnelian Woods. This demonstrates the model’s adaptability across different neighborhood types and governance structures. The Tahoe Basin pilots proved something vital: with the right team, tools, and trust, communities can meaningfully reduce wildfire risk quickly, collaboratively, and measurably.

## NEVADA COUNTY RESILIENCE FUND

In 2025, CWI helped launch one of its most ambitious initiatives to date: [The Nevada County Resilience](#)

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Fund (Fund). Developed in partnership with Pacific Gas & Electric, the Nevada County Office of Emergency Services, the National Forest Foundation, and the cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City, it reflects a new governance and investment model for building wildfire resilience across an entire region.

Nevada County faces some of the most severe wildfire risk in California, with vulnerable infrastructure, historic communities, and steep terrain. The Fund's purpose is to strengthen wildfire resilience through local, science-informed investments that align with the county's Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This project prioritizes:

- Home hardening and defensible space;
- Protection of lifeline infrastructure (schools, care facilities, utilities, roadways);
- Strategic fuels reduction and vegetation management; and
- Multi-benefit projects that deliver landscape and community benefits.

The Fund operates through a collaborative governance model, ensuring project selection is consensus-driven, transparent, and aligned with community priorities. Long-term sustainability is built into the Fund's design and it integrates monitoring and evaluation to measure real-world risk reduction.

The model extends beyond risk mitigation. The Fund will strengthen local economies by encouraging local contracting, workforce participation, and procurement, ensuring that resilience investments circulate within the community and build long-term capacity. It also emphasizes community engagement, working to build trust, transparency, and equitable access to benefits. The Fund is more than a financial mechanism—it is a blueprint for what county-scale wildfire resilience can look like.

## REPLICATING SUCCESS

CWI's community resilience approach—refined in Tahoe, expanded in Nevada County—is designed from the outset to be replicable. The Fire Smart Community Pilot explicitly aimed to create a model that a variety of communities could adapt to their local landscapes, governance structures, and needs.

In 2026, CWI will deepen this work by seeking to partner with additional communities to implement this framework: identifying high-risk neighborhoods, assembling cross-sector teams, using advanced modeling to prioritize interventions, and supporting governance structures that sustain resilience long after initial projects are complete. Each community is unique, but the recipe for resilience is not:

- Bring together the right partners;
- Use the best available science;
- Identify the mitigations that matter most; and
- Empower communities to lead.



# LESSONS FROM THE TEAKETTLE: RESILIENCE THROUGH SETBACKS

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## WHAT TEAKETTLE REPRESENTED

For more than eight decades, the Teakettle Experimental Forest (Teakettle) in the southern Sierra Nevada stood as one of the world's most important living laboratories. Teakettle is a place where scientists unraveled the complexities of mixed-conifer ecosystems, fire behavior, soil processes, hydrology, and long-term ecological change. Generations of researchers walked beneath its towering sugar pines and ancient firs, studying how forests evolve when left to grow, compete, and burn in patterns shaped over millennia. But Teakettle was much more than a research site—it was a repository of ecological memory, a rare place where long-term studies could unfold slowly and patiently, revealing insights that only time and continuity can offer.

CWI's involvement at Teakettle grew from this legacy. Our team, together with partners from the United

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States Forest Service, Sierra Sequoia Burn Cooperative, Dinkey Collaborative, Fire Restoration Group, and Tribal cultural practitioners, had been designing a [landmark prescribed fire project](#) aimed at restoring resilience to a forest that had gone far too long without beneficial fire. The project sought to integrate cultural burning practices, cutting-edge fire science, community stewardship, and century-scale restoration objectives. The work would have demonstrated how intentional fire—applied carefully and respectfully—could return balance to a landscape increasingly vulnerable to climate-intensified wildfire. Teakettle represented what we strive for: science, culture, community, and stewardship working hand-in-hand to heal fire-adapted forests.

## GRIEVING AND COMMENCEMENT

When the 60,000-acre [Garnet Fire](#) swept across the Teakettle Experimental Forest in late summer 2025, it transformed more than a landscape—it reshaped our sense of responsibility. The fire moved swiftly, and the loss was profound. It altered long-term research plots, destroyed centuries-old canopy structures, and reshaped the ecological conditions that made Teakettle a globally significant scientific site.

The Teakettle had been a living archive, filled with ancient stories held in core samples and root systems, in fire scars and shade patterns, in the quiet exchange between soil and snowpack. The loss of this ancient forest highlights the importance of proactive stewardship. Our planned prescribed burn represented a vision for resilience, where beneficial fire would help forests better withstand heat, drought, and the intensified severity of wildfires like Garnet. While that specific opportunity has passed, the insights from the Teakettle do not vanish—they compel us to apply what we've learned with greater urgency.

The loss experienced at the Teakettle exposed the fragility of what we love most about California's forests and reminded us that even the best-studied places require active care and science-backed actions in an age of compounding climate impacts. While we do mourn what was lost—the history, the research, the living structure of a unique forest—the Teakettle's transformation is not an ending, but a catalyst. It calls us to sharpen our resolve, take risks, strengthen partnerships, advance resilience work, scale proven solutions, and protect the forests that remain.

## WORKING WITH THE SIERRA SEQUOIA BURN COOPERATIVE

In the months following the fire, CWI deepened its collaboration with the Sierra Sequoia Burn Cooperative, whose community-led approach to beneficial fire aligns with our belief that resilience must be grounded in local leadership, cultural practice, and shared stewardship. This partnership has reaffirmed something we witnessed repeatedly at Teakettle: that restoring good fire is as much about rebuilding community capacity and trust as it is about fuels, stand density, or fire behavior models. We will continue to work with the Sierra Sequoia Burn Cooperative going forward as we analyze how to respond

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to the Garnet Fire and how to build resilience in the southern Sierra Nevada region.

## PIVOTING AND MOVING FORWARD

While the original prescribed burn project is no longer possible, our commitment to the forest, to the science and to the partners who poured years of work into this landscape remains unwavering. With the support of CAL FIRE, CWI is now pivoting toward post-fire resilience work in the Teakettle burn footprint and continuously exploring how to learn from and support other cooperative burns across the state. Our efforts will focus on understanding fire severity patterns, incorporating re-entry prescribed burn opportunities, coordinating monitoring of ecological recovery, and advancing collaborative stewardship approaches that can guide adaptive implementation across forest landscapes.

The lessons of Teakettle inform how we implement prescribed fire projects, evaluate ecological risk, support long-term monitoring, and engage cooperatives. Teakettle's story is not only about what was lost; it is about how we carry forward what it taught us. Through heartbreak, we find new purpose. Through loss, we find new resolve. And through Teakettle, we continue to imagine a future where fire can once again shape forests in ways that sustain the living systems we depend on.

## WHAT TEAKETTLE TAUGHT US: 5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1** Resilience work demands urgency: Teakettle reminded us that the time required to navigate bureaucratic, administrative, and cultural barriers and get beneficial fire on the ground can cost us the landscape itself. Conditions are changing, and management practices need to change as well.
- 2** Good fire requires community as much as science: Effective burning succeeds through trust, place-based knowledge, and local leadership working in concert.
- 3** Forests hold long memories: Decades of research can disappear in an instant, which reinforces the importance of investing in long-term monitoring and treating ecological knowledge as a living asset, not a static archive.
- 4** Collaboration is a form of strength: Partnerships with researchers, Tribal practitioners, cooperatives, government agencies, and local stewards are essential for building the kind of collective capacity that complex landscapes require.
- 5** Loss can clarify purpose: The Garnet Fire was a setback and a teacher. It sharpened our focus, strengthened our commitment to active stewardship, and encouraged us to design projects that are forward-looking, adaptable, and grounded in real-world conditions.



# LEADING TOGETHER: CONVENINGS AND WEBINARS

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## 2025 SIGNATURE CONVENING: WILDFIRE DATA WORKSHOP

In March 2025, CWI's annual Signature Convening brought together nearly 70 fire professionals, community leaders, data scientists, policymakers, funders, and technologists in San Rafael, California. The focus: how can we convert data into decisions, and decisions into resilience. From the outset, the tone was mission-driven and there was a shared recognition that no agency, academic, or community can solve the wildfire crisis alone.

Across panel discussions, structured breakout sessions, and facilitated networking, participants co-designed pathways around three emergent themes: insurance and risk modeling, public health and smoke, and urban planning and governance. These are interconnected pieces of the puzzle we often treat separately. Yet at the convening, they sat side-by-side, sparking fresh insights and new collaborations.

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What emerged from the convening was not merely a list of next steps, but a shared narrative: communities need scalable, replicable models; data platforms must sit inside governance structures; policy must align with implementation; and cross-sector collaboration remains essential. These takeaways were not just bullet points; they became touchstones for how CWI will shape its work moving forward. Beyond the discussions, the convening seeded long-term relationships, new partnerships, and different ways of thinking about complex challenges. Our [2025 Convening Report](#) reviews and codifies the insights, conversations, and ideas that emerged from this gathering.

“ CWI knows how to create a space where people feel heard, respected, and ready to collaborate. Hosted locally in Marin County, CWI's 2025 Signature Convening translated complex wildfire data challenges into shared, actionable solutions. We're grateful for the partnership.

— Mark Brown, Executive Officer, Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority

## WEBINARS: SCALING THE CONVERSATION

Our second pillar of connection in 2025 was our series of hosted [webinars](#) which enabled CWI to extend the conversation to a broader audience. Through four high-impact sessions, we engaged hundreds of participants—tackling complex topics, breaking down silos, and driving toward actionable insights. The webinars included:

- [Algorithms in Action: Transforming Wildfire Management with AI & ML](#) (January 2025): CWI hosted technologists and field practitioners to share insights on how artificial intelligence and machine learning are reshaping wildfire detection, prediction, and response.
- [Practitioner Pathways for Fast-Tracking Forest Management Projects in California](#) (June 2025): We partnered with renowned experts to explore policy pathways, including California Governor Gavin Newsom's state of emergency and California Environmental Quality Act suspension options, and how they can enable forest management solutions at greater pace and scale.
- [Insuring Resilience: Pathways Through California's Wildfire Insurance Crisis](#) (October 2025): Catastrophic wildfires in California have upended the state's insurance market. We engaged insurers, community groups, and policy leaders in a frank discussion of the risk finance ecosystem, how the insurance industry is evolving in relation to wildfire, and new ideas emerging to address the challenges of insuring a region impacted by climate change.
- [Prescribed Fire in Winegrowing Country: How Much Smoke Is Too Much?](#) (November 2025): Smoke from prescribed burns near vineyards can impact grapes and the wine those grapes produce. In partnership with CAL FIRE, we discussed how prescribed fire practitioners and vintners are working together to improve communications, navigate the impacts of smoke, and protect both fire-prone landscapes and one of California's most renowned industries.

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## WHY THIS MATTERS

Together, the convening and webinar series exemplify how CWI is building a connected ecosystem of resilience. The on-the-ground strength in one room, the digital reach in hundreds more—both were leveraged to accelerate the pace of change. By intentionally layering high-touch gatherings with broad-scale virtual engagement, CWI ensures that ideas don't stay locked in conference rooms, but rather spread into communities, agencies, boards, and policy conversations.

Looking ahead, we will build from these moments. The networks we convened in 2025 will feed coalitions, collaborations, and applied projects in 2026. We will further harness data-driven insights, leverage policy levers informed by practitioners, and amplify a diversity of voices in the wildfire resilience community. In short, 2025 was a year of building bridges between data and action, science and community, policy and practice.

“ CWI's convenings create a valuable space for science, policy, and practice to meaningfully intersect. Last year's convening fostered connections that continue to shape our work, and we're excited to build on that momentum as we collaborate on the next gathering and deepen our policy work together to advance wildfire and forest resilience across the West.

— Crystal Raymond, Deputy Director of Policy and Management,  
Western Fire and Forest Resilience Collaborative

“ CWI has been a valuable partner to CAL FIRE in planning and delivering a recent webinar that brought together winegrowers, scientists, practitioners, air quality experts, and other key stakeholders to address prescribed fire and smoke concerns. Their inclusive, solutions-oriented approach has laid the groundwork for continued collaboration on a workshop to address vintner and practitioner concerns in wine country, convening in spring 2026 in Napa Valley. CAL FIRE appreciates this partnership and the role CWI plays in advancing constructive, cross-sector dialogue.

— Len Nielson, Staff Chief of Prescribed Fire,  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)





# PUBLIC AFFAIRS: TURNING SCIENCE INTO ACTION

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In 2025, we significantly expanded our Public Affairs program, advancing our mission to bridge science, policy, and practice so decision-makers have the tools and insight needed to effectively address this era's wildfire and climate challenges. Through new leadership, strategic initiatives, and trusted partnerships, CWI's Public Affairs program is shaping how California and the Western U.S. think about wildfire resilience at every level, from legislatures to community collaboratives.

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## MEET JAMES PUERINI, CWI'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In early 2025, CWI welcomed [James Puerini](#) as our new Deputy Director of Public Affairs, bringing to the organization a rare combination of lived wildfire experience, policy expertise, and deep commitment to equity and community well-being.

James began his career as a wildland firefighter for a Tribal government in Oregon. Witnessing firsthand how catastrophic wildfire reshaped landscapes and devastated communities inspired him to move from the fireline to the policy arena, motivated by a belief that meaningful change requires both scientific understanding and political will.



In Washington, D.C., James worked for U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley and U.S. Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici, supporting federal policy development related to natural resources, rural communities, and climate resilience. He then spent five years at The Nature Conservancy, where he partnered with community-based organizations and led global initiatives focused on human rights, environmental equity, and community-driven conservation solutions.

James holds a Master's degree in Forestry from Yale University, where he founded a labor-rights initiative for wildland firefighters and conducted several fire-focused research projects. His combination of field experience and policy fluency has already strengthened CWI's voice at the intersection of science and governance. With James's leadership, CWI's Public Affairs program has become a forceful connector, ensuring science is embedded in the decision-making processes that shape wildfire resilience.

## ADVANCING POLICY PRIORITIES THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

CWI operates as a critical boundary organization, strategically leveraging coordinated partnerships to bridge the gap between science, policy, and implementation, thereby amplifying our impact. This year, CWI significantly expanded its policy coalition, forging strategic partnerships with a diverse set of key allies to drive effective action, for example:

- State Agencies & Initiatives: California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) and the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force.
- Academic Institutions & Scientific Think Tanks: U.C. Berkeley Center for Law, Energy & the Environment (CLEE), the Environmental Policy Innovation Center (EPIC), Federation of American Scientists (FAS), and the California Council on Science and Technology (CCST).
- Ground-Level Practitioners & Policy Innovators: Grassroots Wildland Firefighters, the Megafire Institute, and Spatial Informatics Group – Natural Assets Laboratory (SIG-NAL).

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With these partners, we're pushing forward ambitious projects for 2026 related to wildfire data and technology, reimagining the wildfire workforce, leveraging science to inform policy, creating forums to hear from candidates for office, informing funding priorities for wildfire resilience, and promoting woody biomass utilization, among others.

## EXAMINING A NATIONAL WILDFIRE INTELLIGENCE CENTER

In partnership with the Environmental Policy Innovation Center, CWI is developing a white paper to examine the creation of a federal Wildfire Intelligence Center, envisioned as a National Weather Service-style hub for wildfire data. This work examines governance models, artificial intelligence and machine-learning applications, data interoperability, and user needs. Establishment of a National Wildfire Intelligence Center has been suggested by the federal government, and the goal of this research is to offer pathways to successful implementation.

## THE STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

The Stewardship Project (TSP) continued to grow in national prominence in 2025. Launched in 2022, TSP brings together leading academics, Tribal cultural practitioners, legal scholars, and land stewardship experts to re-envision the role of active management and Indigenous knowledge in federal land policy. Under the leadership of Dr. Scott Stephens (UC Berkeley), Dr. Don Hankins (CSU Chico), and Sara Clark, Esq. (Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP), TSP works to:

- Promote the integration of Traditional Indigenous Knowledge with Western scientific frameworks;
- Identify modern barriers to prescribed fire, cultural burning, and ecological stewardship; and
- Support co-management and co-stewardship approaches that center Indigenous voices.

In 2025, TSP was invited to provide testimony before the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee, reflecting its rising influence on national policy. Its research has been published in academic journals, cited in the Los Angeles Times, and requested by federal agencies seeking guidance on Tribal co-stewardship. As the backbone organization for TSP, CWI provides the coordination, grant management, convening support, and communication infrastructure that empowers more than 15 core experts, and a much wider network of partners, to collaborate effectively.

## ADDITIONAL POLICY ENGAGEMENT

CWI contributed significantly to state and federal conversations related to:

- Funding efforts to address the wildfire crisis through California's Prop 4 bond and strategic federal

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appropriations;

- Wildfire data and technology needs and priorities;
- Forest operations and permitting reform to unlock wildfire resilience activities at scale;
- The federal Fix Our Forests Act (FOFA) and other policy pathways for scaling restoration;
- Supporting and sustaining the wildfire workforce;
- Advancing the biomass economy for wildfire resilience;
- Home hardening, insurance, and community-level mitigation;
- Informing candidates for office about pressing wildfire issues; and
- Cross-jurisdictional governance frameworks.





# TRANSFORMING DATA, TOOLS, & SCIENCE INTO DECISIONS

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## WHY DATA AND TECHNOLOGY MATTER

The gap between “knowing” and “doing” remains one of the greatest barriers to wildfire resilience. Data exists, sometimes in abundance, but it is scattered across agencies, universities, nonprofits, consultancies, and private tools. Without integration, the best research cannot guide field operations, and the most promising solutions remain isolated rather than scaled.

CWI’s Data and Technology portfolio works to close this gap. We build connective tissue between data producers and data users, ensuring that insights travel rapidly from models to managers, from research to policy, and from community needs to actionable pathways. In 2025, our work in this space accelerated meaningfully—driven by expanding partnerships, new innovations, and a commitment to making complex wildfire data intuitive, accessible, and useful.

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## FIRELINES: MAPPING THE WILDFIRE SOLUTIONS ECOSYSTEM

The centerpiece of CWI's technical innovation is [FireLines](#), a first-of-its-kind network intelligence platform designed to visually map the wildfire resilience ecosystem. In 2025, CWI advanced FireLines through scoping, ontology development, data integration, and user-interface planning, laying the foundation for a transformational public-facing tool.

Across the Western U.S., billions of dollars flow into wildfire solutions, yet our collective view of "who is doing what, where, and with what impact" remains fragmented. The consequences of this fragmentation are significant: duplicated efforts, under-resourced high-risk geographies, disconnected investments, and critical gaps in treatment footprint and land-use history.

FireLines addresses these challenges through a graph-based, web-enabled platform capable of:

- Semantic searching and multi-hop queries to surface relationships that static maps cannot.
- Visualizing connections between projects, funders, agencies, data hubs, researchers, and high-risk landscapes.
- Generating inventories of resilience projects and community mitigation models.
- Conducting gap analyses to identify redundancies and underserved regions.
- Interpreting data through LLM-driven queries, allowing users to ask natural-language questions.

FireLines is designed to support agencies, funders, nonprofits, and academic partners with real-time, relational insights. It will enable more strategic resource allocation and reduce inefficiencies that slow progress against an accelerating crisis. Ultimately, this network intelligence platform will serve as a powerful connective layer across the wildfire solutions field, helping leaders understand the system they operate in, make smarter decisions, and collaborate with precision.

At this early stage of development, we are beginning to [gather organizational data](#) from across the wildfire space: what projects you're working on, where you're working, who you're working with, and how you measure impact. This information will form the foundation of the FireLines network and the platform's functionality will grow as more data is added over time.

## CALIFORNIA'S YEAR IN FIRE: A FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

In 2023, CWI published the first-of-its-kind [Year In Fire report](#). This year we supported the 2025 update of California's Year in Fire—a statewide monitoring and communication framework designed to help the public and policymakers understand trends in fire behavior, impacts, and resilience across the state. The Year in Fire model is grounded in transforming complex data into clear, accessible insights that illustrate

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the cumulative story of a fire season. The framework's scorecards document acres burned, ignition patterns, smoke impacts, severity metrics, suppression conditions, and community consequences, painting a comprehensive picture of the impacts of wildfire in California over the past year.

California's Year in Fire is more than a report. At its core, it is a public engagement tool, helping communities understand their fire-adapted landscapes; a monitoring framework, connecting on-the-ground activity to statewide policy gaps; a scientific resource, enabling researchers and lawmakers to identify long-term trends; and a resilience catalyst, encouraging residents, leaders, and land managers to think proactively. This year, as part of the [California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force's latest meeting](#), CWI contributed datasets, scientific review, and narrative framing that strengthen the project's ability to serve as a "critical connection between activities on the ground and gaps at the policy level." The 2025 edition will help Californians understand not only what happened, but what must happen next.

## CECS DATASETS: MODERNIZING THE WAY WE MEASURE FIRE POTENTIAL

CWI supported the [Center for Ecosystem Climate Solutions \(CECS\)](#) dataset. This open-science platform integrates climate models, ecosystem conditions, carbon data, and fire severity modeling into a unified system. The CECS dataset supports forest treatment planning, carbon-benefit analysis, wildfire risk modeling, and cross-jurisdictional landscape planning. Our role in 2025 involved supporting new dataset integrations and helping translate CECS insights into planning guidance. This work directly informs state and regional strategies for fuels reduction and ecological restoration.

## WILDFIRE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COMMONS: A NATIONAL VISION FOR DATA INTEROPERABILITY

We engaged with the team at [UC San Diego's Wildfire Science & Technology Commons](#) (Wildfire Commons), a collaborative initiative advancing wildfire research coordination, knowledge sharing, and interoperable wildfire data systems. The Wildfire Commons aims to create a shared framework, rooted in open science principles, that enables data producers and data consumers to work from the same playbook. The long-term vision of the Wildfire Commons is a fully interoperable national wildfire data architecture capable of supporting prediction, planning, resilience modeling, suppression, and post-fire recovery. Sarah Caldwell, CWI's Deputy Director of Collaborative Programs, worked with the Scale and Sustain Working Group to assess pathways for the Wildfire Commons expansion, impact, and community engagement. For a comprehensive view of the efforts she and others contributed to this year, [read the recently published Wildfire Commons 2025 Working Group Reports](#).

# PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

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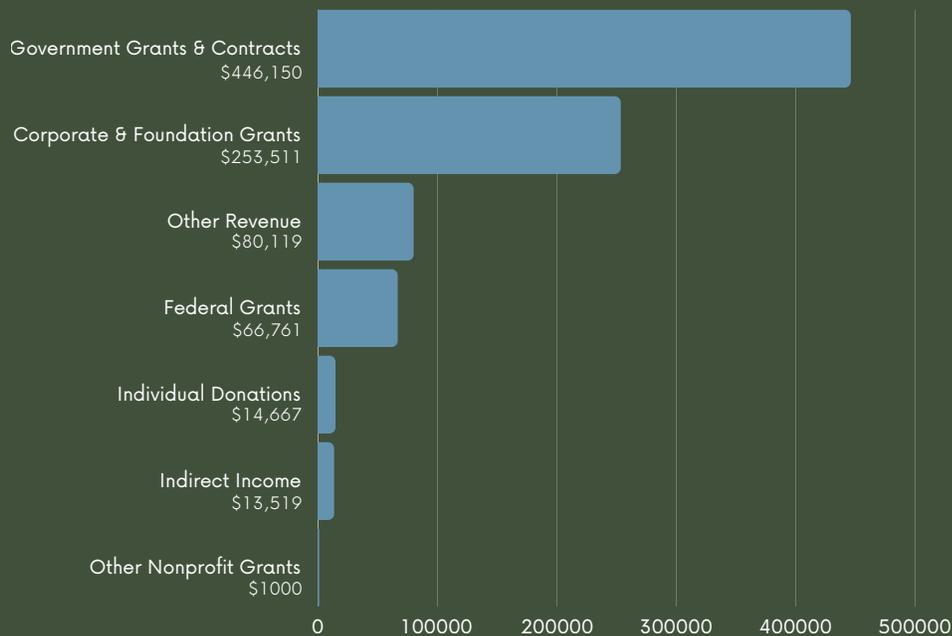
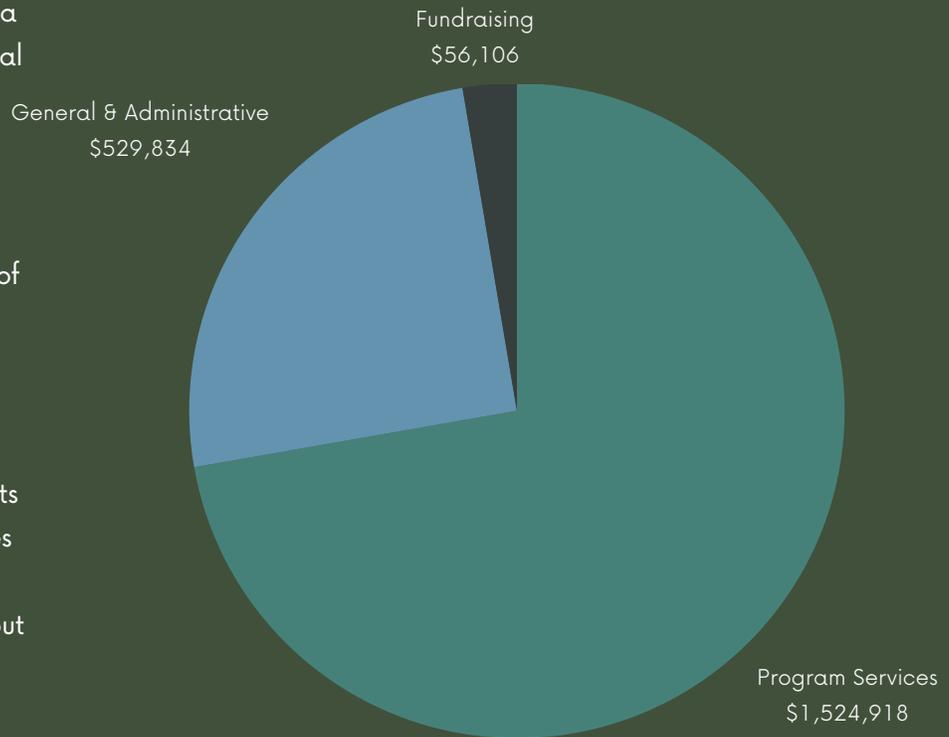
CWI collaborates with dozens of partners whose leadership and investment make our consortium model possible. We are especially grateful to the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and Coalitions and Collaborations: Action, Implementation & Mitigation for supporting the capacity and coordination behind this work. Explore the list of our partners below:

- American Wildfire Experience
- Blue Forest
- Brumidi Group
- BurnBot
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
- California Council on Science and Technology
- California Fire Science Consortium
- California State University, Chico
- California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force
- Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies
- City of Grass Valley
- City of Nevada City
- Coalitions and Collaborations: Action, Implementation & Mitigation
- Conservation X Labs
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Environmental Policy Innovation Center
- Federation of American Scientists
- Fire Aside
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Grassroots Wildland Firefighters
- Megafire Institute
- Napa Firewise
- National Forest Foundation
- Nevada County, California
- North Lake Tahoe Fire District
- NV Energy Foundation
- Oregon State University
- Pacific Gas & Electric
- Resources Legacy Fund
- RockRose Risk
- Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP
- Sierra National Forest
- Sierra Sequoia Burn Cooperative
- Spatial Informatics Group
- Stanford University
- Tahoe Fund
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
- Tahoe Resource Conservation District
- The Fire Restoration Group
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, San Diego
- University of Colorado
- Vanderbilt University
- Vibrant Planet
- World Economic Forum
- XPRIZE
- XyloPlan

# FINANCIALS

The following charts provide a high-level view of our financial activity for the year, illustrating how resources support and sustain our mission. The financial picture here tells the story of a year of building and refining our programs, offerings, and consortium of partners.

The chart on the right presents a snapshot of CWI's expenses for the year, reflecting the resources required to carry out and sustain our work.



The chart on the left provides an overview of CWI's total revenue and support for the year, illustrating the resources that make our work possible.

# MEET THE TEAM

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## CWI STAFF

Our staff brings together deep expertise and a shared commitment to advancing our mission. Every day, our team translates vision into action—ensuring that ideas move from concept to real-world impact.



**Marissa Christiansen**  
Executive Director



**Sarah Caldwell**  
Deputy Director,  
Collaborative Programs



**David Lawlor**  
Deputy Director,  
Development



**James Puerini**  
Deputy Director,  
Public Affairs



**Sabrina Goodman**  
Manager,  
Communications



**Helen Lahoda**  
Manager,  
Operations & Finance



**Scott Scherbinski**  
Manager,  
Programs

## CWI ADVISORS & CONSULTANTS

Our work is strengthened by a network of trusted advisors and external consultants who contribute specialized knowledge, strategic guidance, and on-the-ground expertise which helps inform our direction and ensure we remain responsive to evolving challenges and opportunities. Thank you to the following advisors and consultants for supporting our mission: Chris Anthony, Charles Camp, Brian Fennessy, Bethany Hannah, David Marvin, Lisa Rosenthal, Tarwin Stroh-Spijer, and Katy Tant.

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## CWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors provides essential leadership, governance, and long-term vision for the organization. Drawing on diverse professional backgrounds and lived experience, board members steward our mission, uphold our values, and support the organization's growth and resilience.



**Ken Alex**  
President



**John Battles**  
Vice President



**Jeff Meston**  
Treasurer



**Alex Hall**  
Secretary



**İlkay Altıntaş**  
Board Member



**David Saah**  
Board Member



**Lara Kueppers**  
Board Member



**Scott Stephens**  
Board Member



**Marybel Batjer**  
Board Member



**Rick Martinez**  
Board Member



**Andrew Engler**  
Board Member



# LOOKING AHEAD

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Although wildfire is a natural and often beneficial ecological process, shifting conditions and climate impacts have increased the frequency and severity of catastrophic events that threaten both communities and ecosystems. Addressing this challenge requires strong, sustained investments in science, technology, and data systems that can inform timely, accurate, and practical decisions. But research alone is not enough.

To translate knowledge into action, we build collaborative partnerships, deliver expert capacity, and accelerate solutions that empower communities and decision-makers across the Western U.S. While the work ahead remains demanding, we are confident that our efforts will continue to move us toward a future where communities are better protected and landscapes are more resilient. We invite you to join us as we continue our vitally important work in 2026.

You can support CWI by making a [donation online](#), by calling CWI's Deputy Director of Development David Lawlor at 541-207-4784, or by sending your donation check to:

Climate & Wildfire Institute  
2443 Fillmore St., #380-2477  
San Francisco, CA 94115

You can also [sign up online](#) to receive our quarterly newsletter or stay in touch with us via social media:

- ✕ : ClimateWildfire
- @ : climateandwildfireinstitute
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# CONTACT



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