

RICHARD MURPHY ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE

UNDERSTANDING THE RAPID RECENT INCREASE IN WESTERN US WILDFIRE ACTIVITY

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 19
3:00 - 4:00 PM MST
IN PERSON | VIRTUAL

SMLC Room 102

Register | <https://goto.unm.edu/urphy21+>

By evaluating records of wildfire occurrence and size in the western US from 1984 through 2020 (during which time annual burned area increased 300%) patterns point to a tenfold increase in forest fire area, that fire size increase rather than frequency affects burn area, and that fires ignited by lightning represent the highest growth in forest fire size.

Continued work is needed to better understand the interacting effects of fuels and climate on western US wildfire in order to inform our expectations of future wildfire trends and decisions about how to better manage fire, fuels, and other related natural resources such as water.



Park Williams

Associate Professor
Department of Geography UCLA

Park is a hydroclimatologist whose research aims to understand the causes and consequences of hydrological extremes such as drought. Much of his research focuses on hydroclimatology in its own right, and much also aims to improve understanding of how hydrological extremes affect life on earth (bioclimatology). Questions that he finds especially interesting involve the effects of human-caused climate change on the hydrological cycle, ecological systems, and humanity through extreme events such as heat waves, wildfires, and flooding.



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Grand Challenges

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