

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

Pacific Southwest Research Station

800 Buchanan St., Albany, CA 94710



Contacts:

Jason Kirchner (510) 508-0075

Pamela Padgett (951) 680-1584

Living with Fire in Chaparral Ecosystems Conference

ALBANY, CA, January 3, 2005-

January 10-12, 2006, land managers, fire-fighting agencies, and policy makers from throughout southern California will meet at the Riverside Convention Center to discuss the dangers and impacts of southern California's wildfires, and also to share tools and solutions for dealing with the problems created by these wildfires. Led by the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station, the *Living With Fire in Chaparral Ecosystems: Providing Tools for Decision Makers* project has spent the past year gathering information from a wide variety of wildfire-affected stakeholders, including homeowners, land management agencies, local governments, insurance companies, and building contractors. Next week's conference will be the final event for the project and is a unique opportunity for a wide variety of specialists to interact and develop comprehensive approaches to planning and preparing for wildfires.

The *Living With Fire in Chaparral Ecosystems* conference will take place over three days with each day focusing upon the different phases of a wildfire ranging from before the fire, to fighting the fire, to dealing with the aftermath of the fire. On each day specialists from across the United States will present information about such topics as wildfire protection plans, inter-agency fire coordination, and fire's effects upon the environment, property insurance, and community planning. Additionally, there will be interactive displays and software demonstrations highlighting infrared fire mapping, homeowner fire preparedness, and Burned

-more-

Area Emergency Relief (BAER).

This multi-disciplinary approach to wildfire planning and preparedness has been led by the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station, in partnership with the University of California, Berkeley, the San Diego Natural History Museum, and the Edward J. Blakely Center for Sustainable Suburban Development. The goal of the *Living With Fire in Chaparral Ecosystems: Providing Tools For Decision Makers* project has been to improve our understanding of the needs of a wide variety of stakeholders affected by wildfire in order to develop a comprehensive and consistent set of information that decision makers (such as local governments, land managers, home owners, and private industries) can use to base their planning and fire preparedness strategies upon. It is our hope that through the development of a comprehensive source for wildfire information that we can help southern California to be well-prepared for the next wildfire.

For more information about the *Living With Fire in Chaparral Ecosystems: Providing Tools for Decision Makers* project and the upcoming conference, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/chaparral/>

MEDIA ADVISORY: Media attendance at any or all of this event is highly encouraged.

Attached to this release is a copy of the preliminary program. For additional information, or to request an interview with any of the scheduled speakers, please contact: Jason Kirchner, Pacific Southwest Research Station Public Affairs Officer, (510) 508-0075, or Pamela Padgett, Project Coordinator, Pacific Southwest Research Station, (951) 680-1584.