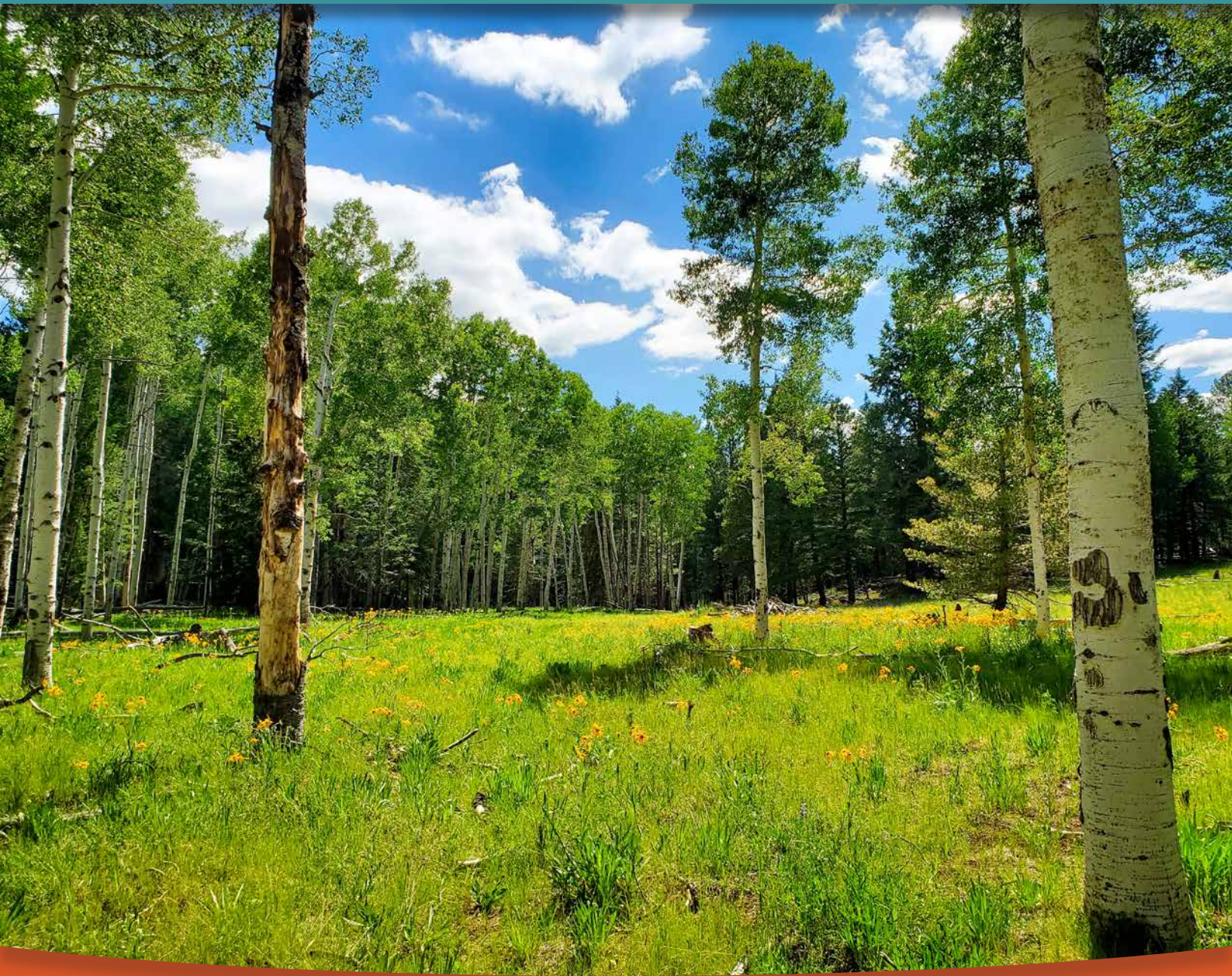




Wildfire Resilience Initiative Grantee Convening

Report on Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities

MAY 4– 6, 2026 | GRANLIBAKKEN TAHOE, TAHOE CITY, CA





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report synthesizes progress, challenges, and opportunities across the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation’s Wildfire Resilience Initiative, drawing on grantee reflections provided for the 2026 convening. It presents a cross-cutting synthesis of the initiative’s six strategic areas: early-fire interventions, pre-fire community interventions, pre-fire ecosystem interventions, deeper understanding, enabling conditions, and measurement and evaluation.

Grantees report substantial advances since initiative inception in ecologically beneficial fire science, community-scale resilience planning, early-fire detection and tracking, cross-sector alignment, and wildfire technology deployment. Across the portfolio, work is moving from field-building and proof-of-concept toward integration, demonstration, and early institutionalization. Early-fire technologies are transitioning into operational pilots and adoption pathways; research grantees are translating scientific understanding into policy-relevant and operationally usable insights; and community and ecosystem pilots are evolving into multi-strategy implementation platforms rather than isolated place-based projects.

Taken together, the place-based pilots have become a central mechanism for integration and learning. They anchor implementation while also serving as living laboratories where scientific tools, governance models, beneficial fire strategies, communications approaches, and resilience metrics are being assessed together under real-world constraints. Increasingly, they are beginning not only to deliver local outcomes, but also to generate transferable models that can inform state policy, agency practice, insurance engagement, and future investment.

A defining feature of the initiative at this stage is the importance of connective infrastructure and broader uptake of demonstrated solutions. Grantees consistently emphasize that durable wildfire resilience depends not only on individual tools or projects, but also on the systems that link and sustain them: governance structures, shared data platforms, evaluation frameworks, workforce capacity, policy alignment, and long-term financing mechanisms. Moore funding has frequently played a catalytic role in complex and under-resourced domains such as beneficial fire, watershed protection, insurance engagement, cross-sector convening, and early-fire technology adoption.

Exploring a zombie forest outside of Grass Valley, CA.
(Photo: Connor Nolan)

EVENT OVERVIEW

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's Wildfire Resilience Initiative held its 2026 grantee convening at Granlibakken Resort in Tahoe City, California, for the third year. For the first time, the convening was co-convened with the AI Collaborative: Wildfire. Over 130 participants from seventy organizations participated in the convening, representing a diverse group of sectors including philanthropy, non-profits, fire service, universities, public agencies, investors, utilities, and tech innovators. The 2026 theme was "Better and Stronger Together," and the convening aimed to create opportunities for learning among peers, to strengthen existing relationships, and to foster new connections.

Participants completed a post-event survey to assess participants' experience and the success of the convening in achieving its stated goals. Survey results reflect a positive and impactful convening experience, marked by strong participant satisfaction, meaningful connections, and clear alignment with the event theme. The overall experience rating for the event averaged at 4.7 out of five, with 74% of respondents selecting the highest score. Participants also reported substantial value in relationship-building and advancing their work: 72% of respondents gave the highest rating for making new connections that better enable their work (4.7 out of 5 average score), while many indicated gaining new insights or collaboration opportunities (4.2 out of 5 average score), and identifying actionable ways to deepen alignment or partnerships (4.1 out of 5 average score). In terms of programming, unstructured and peer-driven, open conversations stood out as most beneficial. Attendees described leaving the convening feeling inspired, connected, motivated, energized, and optimistic. Overall, the findings highlight that the convening successfully fostered deep connections, practical collaboration opportunities, and a strong sense of shared purpose, leaving participants encouraged and ready to build on the momentum.

CHANGES IN WILDFIRE RESILIENCE SINCE INITIATIVE LAUNCH

In the April 2026 pre-convening worksheets, grantees reflected on shifts in wildfire resilience since 2022, before the Moore Foundation's Wildfire Resilience Initiative launched. Responses provide a valuable lens into how grantees perceive field-level change since 2022 and the extent to which those changes reflect Moore-supported work. Taken together, these responses suggest that wildfire resilience in Western North America is undergoing a meaningful if uneven transition—characterized by growing sophistication and integration, alongside persistent structural and institutional constraints.

1. Wildfire resilience is shifting from generalized awareness to targeted, implementation-driven action

Grantees describe a clear transition away from broad awareness and high-level planning toward precision, prioritization, and action. Communities are increasingly moving beyond statements



Plot layout training for the WFFRC inaugural 2025 field season in the Sierras (Photo: Western Fire & Forest Resilience Collaborative)

that wildfire risk is rising toward more specific questions: where risk enters communities, which interventions will matter most to mitigate risk, and how limited funds and capacity should be prioritized and sequenced.

This shift is especially evident in place-based community pilots, where advanced modeling tools (e.g., fire pathway analysis, built environment relative vulnerability modeling) are enabling these communities to translate abstract risk into actionable, place-specific decisions and to prioritize limited funding for interventions that will make a measurable difference. In several geographies, this has strengthened local ownership of wildfire resilience as a cross-sector governance issue rather than a fire-agency responsibility alone.

Importantly, grantees also caution that this new level of analytical clarity exposes a parallel challenge: implementation capacity does not necessarily keep pace with analytical sophistication. In some places, communities now know *what* to do but remain constrained by staffing, funding, political authority, or governance complexity. As a result, the field is entering a phase where progress will be defined less by filling knowledge gaps and more by mustering the capacity and harnessing incentives to act on known priorities at pace and scale.

2. Acceptance of beneficial fire is increasing, but remains highly context dependent

Responses suggest a widespread conceptual shift in how fire is understood: across regions, grantees report growing recognition that not all fire is inherently bad, and that increasing ecologically beneficial fire (by which we are including ecologically beneficial managed wildfire, prescribed fire, cultural fire) will be essential and a practical necessity for long-term resilience. This shift is



Ponderosa pine, canyon live oak and interior live oak seedlings establishing in a growth chamber with elevated CO₂ concentrations at UC Santa Barbara. The experiment examines the effects of increasing CO₂ on post-fire seedling establishment, growth and survival for important important Sierra Nevada species. (Photo: Lara Kueppers)

particularly visible among land managers, researchers, and practitioners working in ecosystems where decades of suppression have yielded fire deficits and produced fuel conditions incompatible with climate change.

At the same time, grantees emphasize that acceptance of beneficial fire remains uneven, and politically contested. Liability concerns, limited burn windows, workforce shortages, smoke impacts, and pockets of public resistance constrain wider implementation. In some ecosystems—particularly shrublands, cultural landscapes, boreal systems, and wildland urban interfaces—there is still active debate about when, where, and how prescribed or managed fire should be used.

Grantees underscore that one of the most important advances of the last four years is not increased acreage burned, but greater conceptual clarity: clearer distinctions among beneficial, neutral, and detrimental fire; increased attention to ecosystem-specific fire regimes; and more nuanced conversations about tradeoffs. Moore-supported research and place-based work via the SPARK pilots are frequently cited as contributing to this conceptual maturation, even where implementation remains limited.

3. Technology and science have advanced quickly, and institutions are challenged to keep pace

Grantees see a growing gap between what is technically possible and what has already been adopted and operationalized. The last four years have brought major advances in wildfire detection, modeling, analytics, decision support, and monitoring. These capabilities are increasingly able to fill critical data gaps, and support fine-scale prioritization, real-time intelligence, and modeling needs.

Yet, many respondents emphasize that institutions, norms, and practices will also need to evolve. Procurement rules, risk tolerance, permitting systems, and legal frameworks can present barriers to more rapid and broad uptake of scientific insights and/or adoption of promising solutions at pace with the speed of technology change. In Western North America, FireWERX, SPARKs and other place-based pilots, and XPRISE Wildfire are working to bridge this gap and provide protected spaces for agencies, researchers, technologists, and communities to work together and test tools under real operational conditions. Comparing across technical testbeds and place-based pilot locations can also shine a light on institutional barriers for broader-scale adoption—revealing where governance, policy, and capacity reforms may be required.

4. Philanthropy's niche is becoming clearer—and more widely recognized

Philanthropy has been playing a distinct role, particularly in areas where government and markets face structural constraints. In addition to supporting work to de-risk, accelerate, and demonstrate novel solutions, philanthropy's risk-tolerant, long-horizon capital is supporting high-impact work that can be harder for other actors to support with less risk-tolerant, patient capital. Philanthropy is helping to build alignment and the connective tissue for the field, through shared data platforms, learning exchanges, and convenings that no other single agency or organization can easily fund. Philanthropic funding has also supported integration, particularly where multiple strategies can be tested together and compared through communities of practice across geographies, rather than in isolation. At the same time, the emphasis that philanthropy and the Moore Foundation specifically have placed on co-development, uptake, adoption, and hand-off of innovative solutions is also critical, for both scale and durability.

5. Durability now depends on institutionalization and sustainable project finance

Wildfire resilience work has necessarily focused on research and development, awareness, and experimentation. An additional, essential step is institutionalizing gains. Across responses, grantees repeatedly linked durability to a common set of conditions:

- Stable governance structures.
- Predictable financing mechanisms that extend beyond shortterm grants.
- Shared data, monitoring, and evaluation systems that make progress visible and accountable.
- Policy and permitting frameworks aligned with active resilience rather than reactive response.

Place-based work can offer a glimpse of how a mature wildfire resilience system looks. However, grantees are clear that pilot projects are early proofs, not finished solutions. Dedicated workforce capacity, embedded in local and regional institutions, will also be needed for implementation. Moving from pilots to normalized practice will require blended capital and sustainable project finance.

PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The six sections that follow summarize grantee-reported progress, challenges, and opportunities across the Wildfire Resilience Initiative's core strategy areas: early-fire interventions, pre-fire community interventions, pre-fire ecosystem interventions, deeper understanding, enabling conditions, and measurement and evaluation. Together, they show where the field is gaining traction, where barriers continue to limit uptake and implementation, and where grantees see the strongest opportunities for future progress. These sections offer a cross-cutting view of how the initiative is advancing wildfire resilience through research, practice, policy, and place-based work.

Early-Fire Interventions

Progress

Early-fire interventions supported by the initiative have progressed from exploratory concepts to early research and development, toward operational readiness. The deployment of satellite technologies represents the most significant technological advancement in early-fire detection. [Earth Fire Alliance](#)'s FireSat protoflight satellite, launched in early 2025, released first fire images to the public in July 2025 and was named one of TIME Magazine's Best Inventions of 2025. Initial data from the protoflight is being released to early adopter agencies and research organizations across four continents, with three more operational satellites scheduled to launch and go live later this year.

[XPRIZE Wildfire](#) transitioned from solution development beginning in 2022 to finals testing in 2026. For the Space-based Detection and Intelligence Track, finals testing concluded in New South Wales, Australia, in April. For the Autonomous Wildfire Response Track, finalist teams will deploy autonomous systems over two weeks in June, in Nenana, Alaska, just outside of Fairbanks, in partnership with the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Challenges

The very pace of technological change presents a challenge for institutions to adopt emergent tools. Grantees repeatedly note that procurement rules, staffing limits, and legal frameworks are often slower to evolve than the early detection and tracking technologies themselves, and resource

FireSat Initial Operational Capability launch, 2026.
(Photo: Earth Fire Alliance)



FireSat

AN EARTH FIRE ALLIANCE PROGRAM





GBMF MS-IR and FLIR LW-IR cameras looking at fire from 10,000 ft. (Photo: Tim Ball)

constraints can compound these barriers. This work highlights that adoption depends not only on technical readiness, but also on the organizational support needed to integrate tools into operational decision-making.

Opportunities

Place-based pilots and testbeds, including those identified by [FireWERX](#), as well as those where SPARK grantees are focusing community or ecosystem resilience efforts, offer high-value environments for early-fire integration, and enabling uptake and adoption. By coupling early detection, intelligence, and response technologies with fire-prone community risk mitigation and ecosystem stewardship, early-fire tools can be evaluated not just for technical performance, but for their contribution to end-to-end resilience outcomes. Integration with on-the-ground efforts can also enable increases in ecologically beneficial wildfire and decreases of detrimental fire.

Pre-Fire Community Interventions

Progress

Community-focused work has become more targeted, measurable, and implementation-oriented. Across SPARK pilots, pathways have been established to move from modeling to action. In Gunnison County, for example, [Dr. Hussam Mahmoud](#)'s AGNI-NAR modeling for the Town of Marble identified priority mitigation zones and helped build local consensus around specific interventions. In Klickitat County, vegetation treatment, cross-boundary collaboration, communications infrastructure all advanced in parallel, while local work groups and wildfire resource hubs strengthened implementation capacity. In Alaska, new wildfire exposure maps, community wildfire protection planning support, and tabletop exercises are improving community preparedness in places that previously had limited wildfire infrastructure. The Tahoe Sierra SPARK pilot also demonstrates this shift, combining model outputs, parcel-level mitigation data, home hardening, fuels treatment, and resident engagement into community-scale action planning, which the Tahoe Fund has been disseminating and scaling through their [FireSmart Community Pilot Playbook](#). In the Flagstaff SPARK, wildfire communication techniques and social science within the wildfire space led to increased support from key leadership and significant increases in public requests for wildfire risk-based home assessments. This has directly enabled the collection of measurable risk-reduction data within the City of Flagstaff and surrounding fire districts.

Outside the SPARKs, the [WUI Mitigation Alignment Project](#) led by the Western Fire Chiefs Association has advanced a science-based mitigation framework across multiple states: Oregon's adoption of IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home standards, associated state funding, and formal continuation partnership with IBHS; the Colorado Fire Commission unanimously voted to support adoption of IBHS Wildfire Prepared Homes for new construction and communicated that fire districts may independently adopt local WUI codes incorporating IBHS standards without waiting for statewide action.

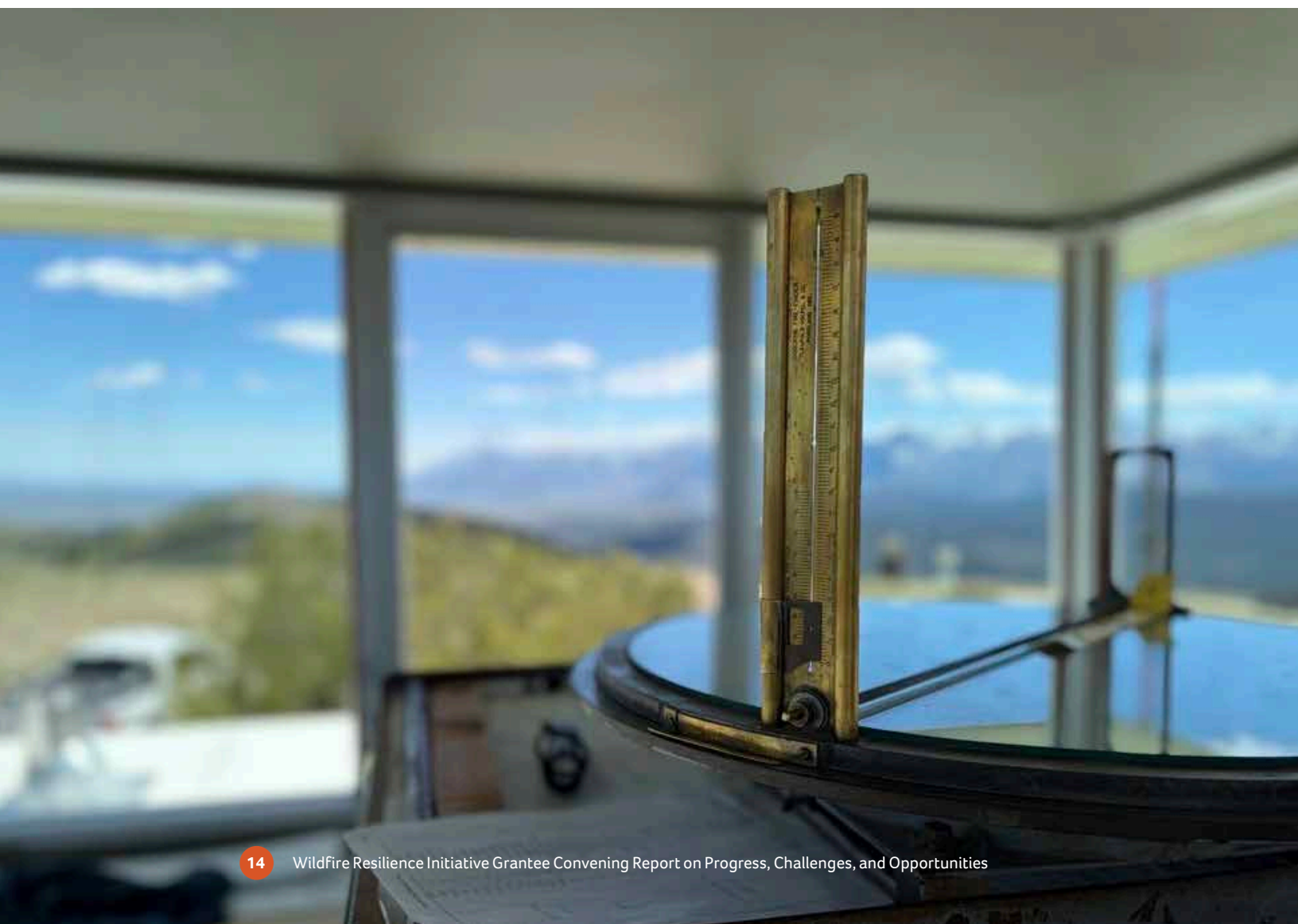
Challenges

In SPARK geographies, local governments, fire districts, and community organizations can lack the needed staff time, stable funding, and technical support to sustain implementation. However, the SPARK framework has distilled key elements and demonstrated effectiveness for building shared data systems, governance structures, and cross-sector partnerships that make implementation possible at scale. In communities, conflagration is seen as a low-probability, if high-consequence event, so gaps persist regarding perceived lack of urgency, community motivation, and workforce capacity. The insurance market offers a key to shifting this, with higher-probability, broader-reach impacts for property owners. Currently, however, the risk transfer industry is not fully aligned with or able to capture and reflect mitigation measures in accurate pricing of risk. There are promising grantee efforts underway that can provide the data and modeling for insurers to incorporate mitigation measures into underwriting and pricing, offering a promising incentive for broad, scaled adoption of meaningful action to mitigate risk at the community scale.

Opportunities

New community-facing communications tools, before-and-after examples, and standardized mitigation documentation could help communities move from awareness to action. Shared data systems such as the [Urban Fire Mitigation Exchange \(formerly WUI Data Commons\)](#) could make mitigation work visible, verifiable, and more usable to communities, agencies, insurers, and researchers. In British Columbia, opportunities to strengthen the linkage between wildfire and water resource provisioning provides ways to demonstrate the overlap between the drinking water and governance frameworks and how to leverage into better wildfire resilience that emphasizes a multi-barrier decision-making approach from a source water and community perspective. This can help to provide unmistakable evidence of wildfire impacts on watersheds, water quality, water quantity, infrastructure, post-fire debris flow. Similar opportunities at the water-fire nexus are present in other place-based pilots as well.

Bald Mountain Lookout, Inyo National Forest, Osborne Fire Finder (Photo: Genny Biggs)



Pre-Fire Ecosystem Interventions

Progress

Pre-fire ecosystem work is increasingly combining scientific insight, treatment implementation, and place-based coordination. Grantees report stronger integration of fuels reduction, prescribed and cultural fire, watershed stewardship, and ecosystem monitoring than was visible four years ago. UC San Diego completed measurements and demonstration burns at multiple sites and is building interoperable fuels and fire environment products that can support practitioner workflows with the [BurnPro3D](#) platform. Conservation X Labs completed the [Western North America round of the Fire Grand Challenge](#), leveraging a broad partner network and helping validate and prepare innovations for economically driven, locally appropriate land and fire stewardship throughout the fire cycle, while protecting biodiversity and promoting healthy ecosystems.

In the [Colorado River Sustainability Campaign](#) SPARKs, ecosystem work now includes prescribed fire in the Upper Green watershed, erosion-control design, and treatment projects that connect fuels reduction to watershed and habitat outcomes, as well as a new Subalpine Forest Resistance, Resilience, and Transition group with USFS and NGO partners, and a climate-adaptation synthesis for the Upper Gunnison Basin. In Klickitat, partners completed 493 acres of treatments on Mt. Adams Community Forest lands, additional mechanical and prescribed fire treatments across dozens of landowners, and formed the Mt. Adams Fire Working Group to prioritize cross-boundary action over a 497,830-acre project area. Santa Barbara is advancing research, prescribed fire, and public engagement in shrublands and hardwood rangelands—important but understudied ecosystems where beneficial fire remains both ecologically significant and socially contested. In B.C., the [POLIS Wildfire Resilience Project](#) and the [Bulkley Valley Research Centre](#) are advancing concepts including Potential Operational Delineations (PODs), spatially delineated strategic planning units that can be used by fire and landscape managers to more effectively prepare for and respond to wildfires, and that provide a crucial decision-support framework to help bridge wildfire management, forestry, and land use planning. The [Alaska Venture Fund](#) is broadening the frame of values at risk to include permafrost, carbon, subsistence habitat, and cultural significance, while helping build the scientific and policy basis for new management protocols in boreal systems.

Challenges

Important scientific and operational gaps persist, especially in shrublands, grasslands, boreal systems, and other ecosystems that have historically received less research attention than forests. And, for increasing the pace and scale of beneficial fire, grantees identify the following challenges: liability concerns, burn windows, permitting delays, workforce shortages, and pockets of public resistance. Federal permitting slowdowns and staffing disruptions in 2025 were especially consequential for treatments tied to federal lands, including prescribed fire and wetland restoration projects in geographies such as the Colorado River Sustainability Campaign pilots in Colorado and Wyoming. In Klickitat, state procurement barriers, short implementation windows, and local capacity constraints made it difficult to translate strong plans into sustained ecosystem action. In the Bulkley

Valley Research Centre's work in British Columbia, knowledge gaps around fire regimes, treatment efficacy, and fuel typing have limited operational uptake, while land managers face the challenge of planning under imperfect information. In Alaska, agency silos, limited contractor capacity, and the challenge of integrating Indigenous and community perspectives into official planning have presented barriers. Prescribed burning in chaparral and coastal sage scrub in Santa Barbara remains limited by disagreement about risk-reduction value and will require more accurate understanding of ecological trade-offs. Across the portfolio, grantees emphasize that ecosystem resilience is often discussed readily, but implementation is hampered by institutional barriers can make it difficult to align ecological objectives, community protection, and operational realities.

Opportunities

Grantees see major opportunities in better defining, measuring, and communicating beneficial fire across ecosystems; linking fuels and fire data through shared platforms; and building stronger bridges between research products and operational planning. There is particular interest in more interoperable data infrastructure, and clearer ways to show how upstream ecological interventions reduce downstream community and watershed risk. SPARKs add several concrete pathways for doing so. In the Colorado Basin pilots, cross-SPARK learning around modeling, hydrology, and landscape-scale stewardship is helping communities connect ecosystem treatments to measurable downstream benefits. The BC SPARK work has shown that fire-pathway analysis, Potential Operational Delineations, and scenario planning can provide practical decision-support tools to shift land-use and forest-management planning toward resilience. Long-term demonstration sites in the Santa Barbara SPARK at UCSB's Sedgwick Reserve that combine prescribed fire, research, training, and outreach offer a promising model for adaptive management and public learning. By defining climate-detrimental fire, launching Fire Adapted Alaska, and developing Indigenous-led stewardship and cross-border boreal partnerships, work in Alaska could open new pathways for ecosystem resilience in under-resourced regions. In Klickitat, an opportunity has emerged to integrate wildfire planning across county plans and connect watershed and fireshed stewardship more explicitly. All of these efforts are surfacing the commonalities across geographies that will help scale and accelerate both adoption and public understanding.

Deeper Understanding

Progress

In the initiative's deeper understanding strategy, grantees continue to produce analyses, tools, and published results that fill and bridge knowledge gaps across ecology, data science, earth observation, monitoring, engineering, community development planning, and decision support. The [Western Fire and Forest Resilience Collaborative \(WFFRC\)](#), the [POLIS Wildfire Resilience Project](#), and [Bulkley Valley Research Centre](#) have significantly advanced efforts to define ecologically beneficial fire across multiple scales, with WFFRC highlighting that 60 percent of western U.S. wildfires between 2010 and 2020 were ecologically beneficial and developing west-wide products including

satellite-based quantification of “good wildfire” and a “readiness” application for beneficial fire. Stanford University’s Climate and Energy Policy Program published a substantial set of [academic publications](#), [white papers](#) and [policy briefs](#) on wildfire workforce, utility risk, prescribed fire, liability, disaster insurance, smoke forecasting, and risk mitigation, and launched an annual [“Year in Fire” report](#) for California. [Stanford’s Field Lab](#) also advanced work on vegetation-climate mismatch, zombie forests, biomass-age trajectories, and vegetation transitions, building new remote-sensing and ecosystem-modeling tools for tracking fire effects and recovery.

[The Vanderbilt Center for Sustainability, Energy, and Climate](#) expanded and validated the AGNI-NAR wildfire model to include fire propagation in the wildland, improved fuel mapping and wind modeling, and built active collaborations with SPARK communities, insurers, and NGOs. [The Gollner Fire Research Group](#) at the University of California, Berkeley advanced open-source WUI fire modeling by improving structure-to-structure spread and ember transport physics, adding documentation and validation, and using the model to better quantify how mitigation affects community risk and policy decisions. Jody Heymann and Nick Perry of the [WORLD Policy Analysis Center](#), within the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, documented promising practices across 10 case studies on wildfire smoke and public health, synthesizing lessons on monitoring, filtration, communications, clean air spaces, and public license for prescribed burning. Stewart Wilson and the California Polytechnic State University–WUI Fire Institute conducted the only known multi-year, multi-site replicated field trial on environmental effects of ground-applied preventative fire retardants, generating new evidence on groundwater, soil chemistry, vegetation impacts, and efficacy.

Challenges

A lack of persistent data, both spatially and temporally, poses challenges for research, for precision in linking fire effects to consequences across scales and across ecological, built-environment, and public health systems. Strengthening these links can help build trust and salience for new metrics with land managers, and help scale stewardship for resilience across geographies. Grantees emphasize that the cyclical nature of wildfire, and the time it can take for science to be used in policy, land management, and practice can hinder progress at the needed pace. Translating science into action would benefit from consistent public funding, aligned communications, accelerated shifts from long-held mental models about fire as a threat to a pragmatic solution, and continued integration of insights across disciplines and sectors.

Opportunities

Grantees respond that strengthening links among local, regional, national, and global scales—through place-based pilots, shared data infrastructure, and networked communities of practice—could accelerate progress toward increasing ecologically beneficial fire and improving community resilience. By integrating research innovation, case studies, and proof points, targeted partnerships with action-oriented managers in these place-based pilots can scale “what works” across Western North America.

Grantees will also be focusing on extending wildfire modeling from communities into ecological systems, recovery, and multi-objective decision support, especially through partnerships with SPARK communities, insurers, and NGOs. And, to increase ecologically beneficial fire at scale, they see high-leverage opportunities to develop policy recommendations for protecting sensitive populations from wildfire smoke during and after fire events. Linking foundational research to operational tools, policy design, public health practice, and decision-making will enable increased wildfire resilience across broad landscapes.

Enabling Conditions

Progress

In the last year, grantees launched coalitions, built policy and communications infrastructure, published widely used reports, and strengthened links among philanthropy, policy, science, and practice. A maturing field is placing more emphasis on identifying and building on shared values, broad coalition building, aligned framing, and translation from analysis to action. The World Economic Forum's Global Wildfire Leadership Network is documenting the [investment case for action](#) and convening the private sector, finance, and practitioners to accelerate this action and investment in wildfire resilience. In the early months since its inception, [FireWERX](#) has developed and established Fire Innovation Units (FIUs, across local, state, federal, and international agencies) and built structured partnerships and pilot-to-scale pathways to accelerate the adoption of wildfire technologies. This presents unique engagement opportunities with local, state, and federal agencies to bring proven innovation approaches to wildfire—for both early-fire and pre-fire interventions. Efforts like the [Wildfire Solutions Coalition](#) are working to secure sustained funding and financing for durability. Wonder Labs' [State of FireTech](#) reports have also helped establish a recognized FireTech sector and created a shared intelligence base for funders, innovators, and practitioners. These efforts signal that wildfire resilience has shifted from a fragmented set of issue areas to a connected field.

Challenges

The core challenge in a fast-growing and politically complex field will be sustained alignment. Grantees describe the potential for dispersed energy, repetitive efforts, variable member engagement, polarization, and dichotomous framing of the built-environment and ecosystem work as competing rather than complementary and synergistic. Underscoring the importance of continued attention to enabling conditions, grantees note that in the absence of focus and support for alignment, these dynamics could make it harder to rally around collective priorities, when interest in wildfire spikes after disasters and when it recedes during quieter periods. Networks and convenings can successfully build shared language and connections, but translating that alignment into measurable, on-the-ground outcomes will require sustained coordination, better measurement, and stronger links to public systems and durable finance.

Opportunities

Opportunities center on strengthening the translation layer between ideas and action, and across public and private sectors. Grantees see promise in more frequent peer exchange, clear distillation and synthesis of what is working, strong coalition infrastructure around fire funding and policy implementation, and tools for moving insights from reports, pilots, and networks into practical, scaled, durable decision-making. Connective infrastructure itself is a strategic asset, not a side function.

Measurement and Evaluation

Progress

A recurring theme is the growing demand for measurement systems that can link interventions to outcomes—not just process or activities—across community, ecosystem, and enabling-condition domains. Grantees want to be able to point to not just whether work occurred, but how much ecosystem vulnerability or community risk was reduced, for whom, and under what conditions. This need is shaping both formal evaluation tools and place-based modeling and monitoring efforts. Across the portfolio, grantees are also improving the practical measurement of risk reduction through tools such as modeling platforms designed to make decisions more actionable, parcel-level documentation, and dashboards.

Challenges

Key challenges that grantees have been working to overcome include fragmented data, and uneven ecosystem data and monitoring coverage. Shrublands and grasslands also remain notably underrepresented in the research, relative to forests. More broadly, grantees note that the field would benefit from a shared, rigorous accounting of the co-benefits and ecosystem services from resilience investments.

Opportunities

Opportunities include expanding data layers geographically, incorporating new science such as beneficial fire metrics into measurement and accounting frameworks, and using place-based pilots as testbeds for distilling lessons and enabling adaptive management, especially around monitoring ecologically beneficial fire metrics. Across multiple strategy areas, grantees see strong value in shared standards and more interoperable monitoring systems that can make resilience outcomes visible and comparable.

CONCLUSION

At this third gathering of Moore Foundation wildfire grantees, grantees demonstrated meaningful progress advancing their strategies. Through collaborative sessions and informal networking, participants deepened alignment within and across the initiative's six strategies, identifying progress highlights, as well as shared challenges and opportunities. Many reported discovering actionable ways to partner with other attendees, both within their strategy area and with AI: Wildfire Collaborative members, fostering a sense of accelerating momentum and broader cohesion.

Grantees have reflected that the most important change is not simply that more tools or pilots exist, but that wildfire resilience work is becoming more targeted, integrated, and measurable. Decision-makers and practitioners increasingly have better tools to identify where interventions matter most; researchers are producing more policy-relevant and operationally usable outputs; and cross-sector partnerships are more deliberate than they were just a few short years ago. At the same time, grantees are clear that the field is entering a new phase. Work must now include institutionalization: building the governance, workforce, financing, data systems, and policy frameworks to make progress durable and self-sustaining.

Across the initiative, multiple lines of work are linked and coalescing together in practice: community protection with ecosystem stewardship, modeling with implementation, communications with public action, and technology development with adoption pathways. Place-based pilots show how integration looks under real-world conditions and provide a basis for replication, adaptation, and policy learning. The convening underscored that grantees are not only making progress within their own strategies but increasingly contributing to a more connected field. The strong turnout, high engagement, and emphasis on partnership reflect a shared recognition that achieving wildfire resilience will depend on carrying early momentum into scaled, durable systems.

CXL participating in a cultural burn with the North Fork Mono Tribe, Mariposa, CA, Feb 2024.
(Photo: Marion Adeney)



WILDFIRE RESILIENCE INITIATIVE GRANTEE CONVENING

ANNEX A: ATTENDEES

Alaska Venture Fund

Allen Institute for AI

Alliance for Wildfire Resilience

America the Beautiful Foundation

American Forests

Bezos Earth Fund

Bulkley Valley Centre for Natural Resources Research and Management

California Academy of Sciences

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

California Polytechnic State University

California Wildfire and Forest Resilient Task Force

Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre

Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies

Climate Resilience Fund

Climate & Wildfire Institute

Colorado Department of Fire Prevention & Control

Colorado Department of Natural Resources

Colorado River Sustainability Campaign

Colorado State Forest Service

Conservation Innovations Group

Conservation X Labs

Convective Capital

DBL Partners

Earth Fire Alliance

Edward Charles Foundation (FireWERX)

EMBERPOINT



Flagstaff, AZ TREX at Observation Mesa prescribed burn. (Photo: Neil Chapman, Eric O’Conner)

Environmental Defense Fund

Flagstaff Fire Department

Food and Agriculture Organization

Google.org

IDinsight

IEC Ventures

Los Alamos Fire Department

MegaFire Institute

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Pacific Forest Trust

Pacific Gas & Electric

Planet

Planscape

Rain Industries, Inc.

RAND

Resilient Cities Catalyst

Resources Legacy Fund
San Bernadino County Fire Protection District
Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council
SIG-NAL
Spatial Informatics Group
Stanford University
Tahoe Fund
The Nature Conservancy
The Stewardship Network
United States Forest Service
United States National Science Foundation
United States Wildland Fire Service
University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Montana
University of Victoria
Vanderbilt University
Walton Family Foundation
Watch Duty
Western Fire Chiefs Association
Wonder Labs
Woodwell Climate Research Center
World Economic Forum
XPRIZE
XyloPlan

Santa Barbara County Fire Department burns ~110 acres of coastal sage scrub and oak woodland in the southwest corner of the Sedgwick Reserve next to Woodstock Ranch as part of the Sedgwick 10-year Vegetation Management Program. (Photo: Frank Davis)



GORDON AND BETTY
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