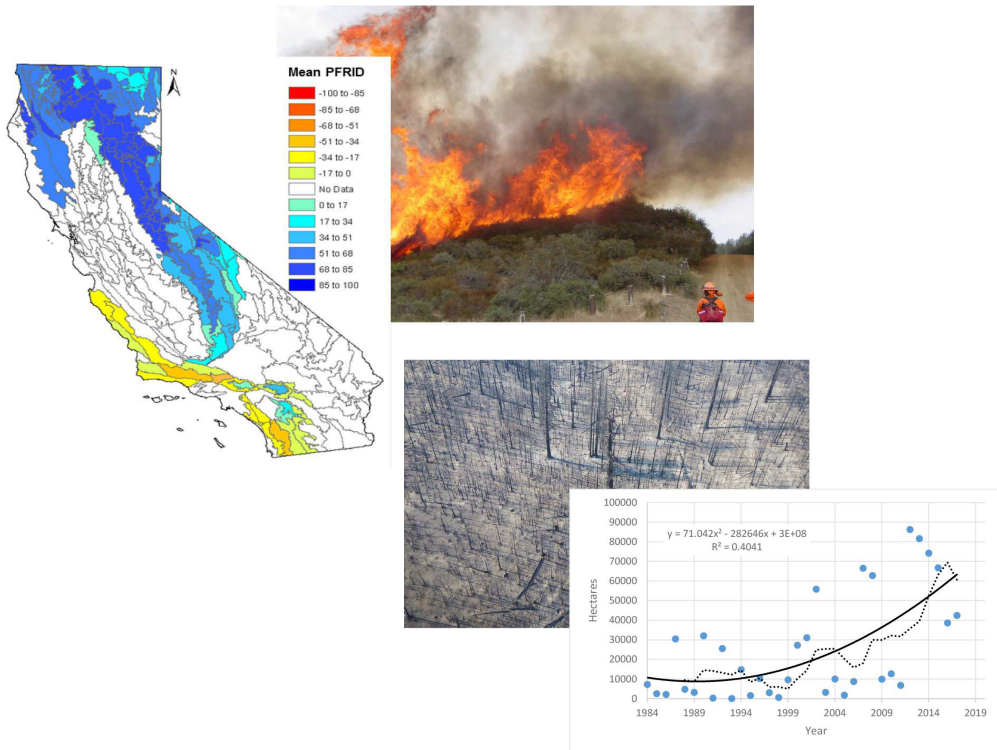


## Ruminations on fire and vegetation trends in California



### PRESENTED BY:

**Hugh Safford,  
PhD**



Dr. Hugh Safford is Regional Ecologist for the USDA-Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region (California, Hawaii, Pacific Territories), and a member of the research faculty in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy, University of California-Davis. Safford manages a staff of Forest Service ecologists that provides expertise in vegetation, fire, and restoration ecology; climate change; and inventory and monitoring to the National Forests in the Pacific Southwest Region. The Safford Lab at UC-Davis is focused on applied ecological support to resource and fire management in California, neighboring states, and other Mediterranean climate regions.

Dr. Hugh Safford will summarize historical, current, and projected future patterns and trends in fire and vegetation in California. Burned area is increasing rapidly in California (and principally in northern California), but in most years it is still notably below pre-Euroamerican settlement averages.

The real issue is the way that fires are burning, not their area. Huge increases in the amount of forest fire area burning at high severity (aka "stand-replacing") are leading to issues with forest regeneration, vegetation type conversion, ecosystem services, and loss of key habitat for important wildlife species of conservation concern. (Note: this is an expanded version of a talk he gave at the Wildlife Society Western Section conference on Feb. 5, 2021.)