

Rapid climate changes are altering ecosystems in the southwestern U.S. Climate change is already resulting in dramatic shifts in many ecosystems including mismatches in the timing of plant and wildlife lifecycle events, changes in species distributions and interactions between different species in a community, and alteration of fire and other disturbance regimes. These shifts are projected to continue at an increasingly rapid pace, resulting in significant challenges for natural resource managers and planners. To reduce the risk of further degradation and loss of southwestern ecosystems, deliberate implementation of adaptation actions will continue to be critical for effective natural resource management in the face of ongoing climate change.

Ecological processes and disturbances occur at the landscape scale, extending across multiple land ownerships. To facilitate climate adaptation planning and implementation for ecosystems and the human communities they support, we need new and existing collaborative partnerships that extend across jurisdictions. It is now more important than ever to build and maintain partnerships, engage, identify shared goals, and learn how to effectively collaborate with state and federal agencies, tribes, and the public. By working together, sharing Indigenous and western knowledge perspectives, being inclusive, and building trust, we can co-develop and implement consistent, effective fire-adapted climate adaptation practices for our southwestern landscapes.

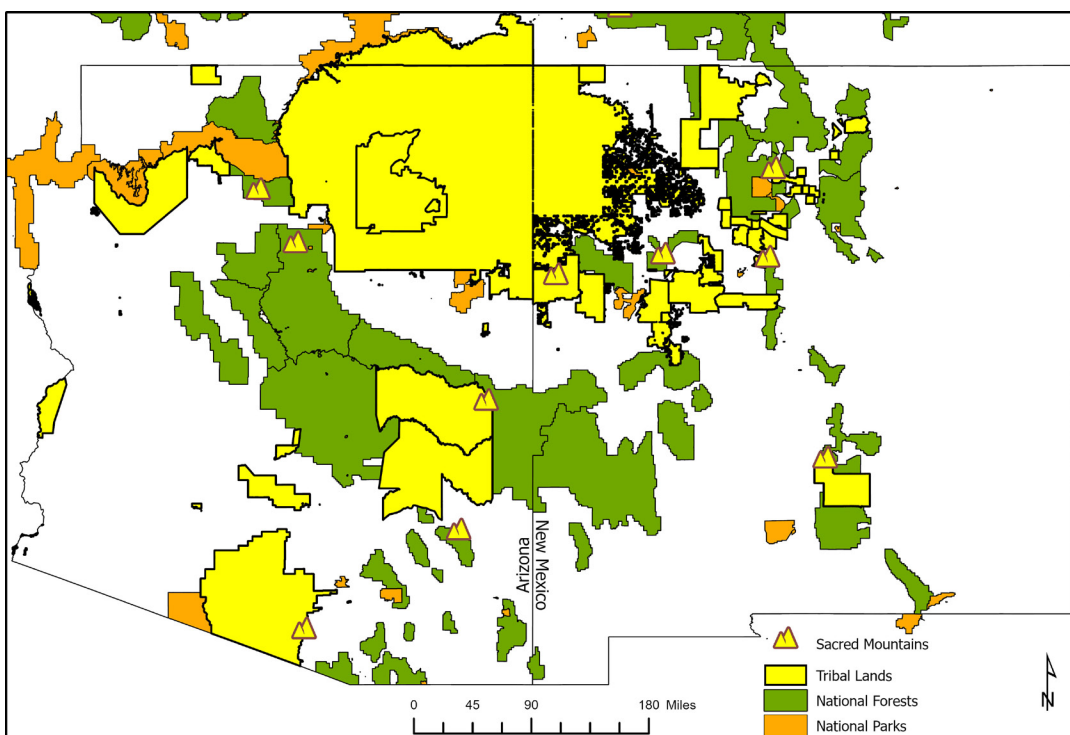


Figure 1 (left): Current federally designated boundaries in the interior Southwest (Arizona and New Mexico). Many people lived and interacted with southwestern landscapes over millennia, even during profound droughts. Today's ecosystems management should consider the long history and legacies of land stewardship and incorporate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and cultural use of fire for best practices on fire and climate adaptation strategies.

The Southwest Fire and Climate Adaptation Partnership (SWFireCAP) is an open and inclusive group of partners with a shared vision for working together to advance fire and climate adaptation in the southwestern U.S. We believe that the monumental task of effective climate adaptation requires cross-organization collaboration and leveraging of people, time, resources, and funding. Initiated by the Southwest Climate Adaptation Science Center and the Southwest Fire Science Consortium, the SWFireCAP now has several partner organizations and is open to anyone interested in the intersection of climate change and fire in the Southwest.



Figure 2: The SWFireCAP includes all of the users, factors, and perspectives that influence or are influenced by an issue, and it is not limited to just the members of the partnership.

The partnership operates with self-governing roundtable teams—action-focused groups with the capacity to tackle one or multiple objectives, working together as long as there is energy, interest, and relevance. The SWFireCAP roundtable teams are: (1) working towards expanding knowledge and the practice of cultural burning in the interior Southwest, (2) identifying and testing on-the-ground adaptation options to facilitate the use and understanding of these practices, and (3) assembling freely available climate adaptation training modules with special focus on the fire-climate nexus and Indigenous practices of ecosystem restoration to better support authentic partnerships with Indigenous communities throughout the Southwest.

If you would like to learn more about the SWFireCAP or you would like to become a partner, please visit our website www.swfirecap.org or contact our coordinator, Sarah LeRoy (sary21@arizona.edu).



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