

# Santa Barbara TRES— A Southern California First

Dangermond Preserve and Sedgwick Preserve  
November 12-19, 2022

By Moses Katkowski

In November 2022, The Nature Conservancy's Dangermond Preserve and the University of California Sedgwick Reserve hosted the first Santa Barbara Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES), which was also the first TRES in southern California. More than 45 participants spent eight days training, burning, and building community around good fire practices to reduce fuel loads, build ecological resilience and study the impacts of fire in the Santa Barbara area. Despite weather challenges—and delays due to rocket launches—multiple days were available for burning, and research objectives were met. When the group couldn't burn, they turned to other projects and learning. This included touring a local ranch property to hear from members of the county's Range Improvement Association, whose members have been burning in the area for generations. Hearing their experience firsthand put the TRES event into the context of a larger prescribed burning effort in Santa Barbara, where the lessons learned could be shared amongst all.



A fire history tour set the context of fire in Santa Barbara County. © Jared Childress

Broadcast burning at Sedgwick Preserve (top) and pile burning with a diesel torch at Dangermond Preserve (bottom). © Jared Childress

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At the Sedgwick Reserve, two burn units totaling 20 acres were completed in two days. These burns were key for multiple long-term research projects that will help inform fire management moving forward.

At the Dangermond Preserve, early season rains and the week's weather limited burn potential; however, participants were able to build and burn 80 piles of woody debris to reduce wildfire risk. On the last day at Dangermond, the team was able to nimbly execute a three-acre burn when a tight weather window opened up midday. This allowed participants and the preserve to see some broadcast burning, and to study its effects afterwards.

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In an incident-within-an-incident training exercise, participants practice a medical evacuation.

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Yucca, immediately after burning.

"Looking at the burned units later, after significant rain events over the winter, there is an abundance of new native plant growth including hummingbird sage, California sagebrush, elderberry and bush sunflower," said TNC preserve stewardship manager Moses Katkowski.

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## Participant Organizations

Amah Mutsun Land Trust  
Avalon Fire Services LLC  
Big Sur Land Trust  
Biswell Forestry  
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo  
California State Parks  
Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association  
East Bay Regional Parks  
First Nations Emergency Services Society  
Hamey Woods  
National Park Service, Yosemite National Park  
Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  
Padre Associates  
Pala Band of Mission Indians  
Prometheus Fire  
Santa Barbara County Fire Department  
Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council  
Santa Clara County Fire Department  
Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department  
Santa Lucia Preserve  
Santa Ynez Chumash, Environmental Office  
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District  
Sonoma County Regional Parks  
Spring Valley Fire Department  
The Nature Conservancy  
U.S. Air Force, Vandenberg AFB  
University of California Cooperative Extension  
University of California San Diego  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
USDA Forest Service  
Ventura County Prescribed Burn Association  
West Plainfield Fire Department

For more about Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges, visit:  
<http://nature.ly/trainingexchanges>

For more about the Santa Barbara TREX, contact:  
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Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges are part of the *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together* (PERFACT) cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more about PERFACT, contact Marek Smith at [marek\\_smith@tnc.org](mailto:marek_smith@tnc.org).

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