EARLY CAREER AWARD IN FIRE SCIENCE

Award History

The Early Career Award in Fire Science is to recognize a promising early-career professional who has demonstrated outstanding ability in any field of wildland fire science. Early career is nominally taken to include professionals who are under 40 years of age when nominated.

Award Recipients

2016	Dr. Guillermo Rein
	Senior Lecturer, Imperial College London, UK. Dr. Rein is a prominent fire behavior scientist, studying ignition, combustion emission, smoldering and interactions of fires and ecosystems. At this early stage of his career, his greatest contributions have been in the area of smoldering wildfires, where he has revolutionized the experimental and numerical description of these fires, translating science from engineering to applications such as fire history, emissions and climate change. This work has been published in over 67 journal papers, receiving more than 1700 citations throughout his short career. Among these, 17 journal papers and 6 keynote lectures have focused specifically on wildland fires.

2017

Travis Paveglio

Assistant Professor, Department of Natural Resources and Society, University of Idaho.

Dr. Paveglio's remarkable research trajectory and innovative ideas are reshaping how we think about resilient and adaptive communities in the wildland urban interface. His work is truly path breaking both theoretically and practically for how we can create more fire adapted communities. Dr. Paveglio is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Natural Resources and Society at the University of Idaho. He has been a remarkably productive scholar for one so junior in his career. He has currently published as first author or co-author 33 peer reviewed publications. In his short career, he has proven to be a world class collaborator working across disciplinary boundaries beyond his home field in social science. He routinely works with and understands linkages among agencies, academia, local administrative units, and landowners affected by wildfire. He has secured $7,301,508 in grants as Co-Principle Investigator, with $232,416 as Principle Investigator.

2018

Dr. Nicholas Skowronski

Northern Research Station, US Forest Service.

Nick's current research focuses on the quantification and analysis of the structural characteristics of forest canopies and how this relates to carbon and water cycles. He has recently been using a newly emerging remote sensing technology called LiDAR which actively characterizes the canopy with a laser beam. His work is split between developing methods for using LiDAR and other remotes sensing techniques for wildfire mitigation and studying how forest functionality changes after disturbance.

2019

Dr. Sara McAllister

US Forest Service

Sara has been a Research Scientist for the US Forest Service at the Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory since 2009. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering where she focused on spacecraft flammability for NASA. Her background in combustion and engineering has enabled her to bring unique insight into the physical processes controlling ignition, fire spread, and burning.

2020

Dr. Alexander Filkov

Dr. Alexander Filkov's research program and expertise in fire behavior is recognized at a national and international level. His work covers a broad range of fire behaviour topics, including research on the ignition and combustion of fuels, the spread of wildfire and transition mechanisms to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), and the performance of structural materials under different fire conditions. Dr. Filkov's publications have made a significant contribution to the following areas of fire behaviour: deterministic-probabilistic modelling, thermal behaviour of fuel, firebrand generation and spotting mechanisms, dynamic fire behaviours, and fire performance of materials. His international reputation and broad network of peers have allowed Dr Filkov to organise and participate in several large field experiments on forest and grass fires in Russia, the USA, and Australia.

2021

Dr. Cathelijne Stoof

Dr. Cathelijne Stoof is an esteemed interdisciplinary researcher in wildland fire science, recognized for her significant contributions to understanding the effects of fire on soils, greenhouse gas emissions, and ecology. Her extensive publication record includes 117 papers with over 1,400 citations, demonstrating her impact on the scientific community. Dr. Stoof founded the Wageningen Fire Centre and led the PyroLife consortium, which received a €4 million grant to train future fire scientists, addressing wildfire challenges in Temperate and Mediterranean regions. She is also a strong advocate for diversity in science, actively engaging the public and supporting underrepresented groups.

2021

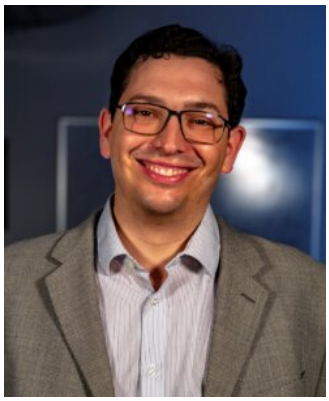
Dr. Sayaka Suzuki

Dr. Sayaka Suzuki is a prominent researcher in wildfire dynamics, particularly concerning the spread of fire into communities. Her groundbreaking work quantifies firebrand production from burning structures, addressing a significant gap in the field. She has developed unique continuous-feed firebrand generators to simulate firebrand showers, contributing over 30 journal articles to the study of outdoor fire spread. As a leader in bridging the gap between traditional building and wildland fire science, she was a key editor for a comprehensive encyclopedia on wildland fires and has played a vital role in fostering international collaboration among fire researchers. Suzuki is committed to increasing the representation of women in fire science, actively recruiting young female researchers in Japan.

2022

Dr. Adrian Cardil Forradellas

Dr. Adrián Cardil is a leading wildfire scientist specializing in fire behavior modeling, weather patterns, and disaster management. He earned his Ph.D. in Forest Engineering with honors and has worked as a researcher, professor, and consultant. His contributions include cutting-edge wildfire modeling tools aiding emergency response, particularly in Europe and the U.S. He has co-authored over 48 peer-reviewed publications, won prestigious awards, and developed innovative fire simulation applications. His global research and teaching continue to advance fire management strategies.

2023	Dr. Michael Gollner
	Prof. Michael Gollner is a leading fire scientist specializing in wildland fire, combustion, and fire protection engineering. His research has advanced understanding of fire ignition, spread, heat transfer, ember generation, and fuel moisture effects. He has served on key committees, testified before the U.S. Congress on fire policy, and delivered major keynote lectures. Recognized with prestigious awards, he excels at bridging applied fire research and fundamental combustion science. As an educator, he has mentored many fire safety engineers and scientists

2024	Dr. José Manuel Fernández Guisuraga
	Dr. José Manuel Fernández Guisuraga is a postdoctoral researcher at CITAB, University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Portugal. He specializes in remote sensing and fire severity assessment, contributing breakthrough research published in top journals. His work includes pioneering methodologies to improve fire severity estimation and analyzing wildfire impacts on ecosystems. He has led international research projects, collaborated with the USDA, and secured a prestigious six-year research contract. His contributions in teaching and mentoring further establish his impact in fire science

2024	Dr. Erin Belval
	Dr. Erin Belval is a Research Forester at the Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station, specializing in wildland fire management and firefighter safety. Since joining in 2021, she has led studies on fire dispatch efficiency, firefighter retention, and the economic impacts of wildfire suppression. She played a key role in the Interagency Hotshot Crew Programmatic Review, influencing federal firefighter pay policy. Her research also extends to forecasting fire suppression costs, COVID-19 impacts on fire operations, and fuel break effectiveness. She collaborates with universities and contributes to strategic fire management initiatives.