

# Between fires: rethinking our relationship with fire



LEVERHULME

Centre for Wildfires,  
Environment and Society

Wednesday, 31 August, 2022, 16:50-18:30 BST (Online only)

Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) Annual International Conference 2022

In the dominant framing of fire, visible during ‘mega wildfire’ events such as those witnessed in recent years in the Amazon, Australia, and California, it is typically cast as detrimental to ecosystems, economies, and human health. This narrative is not new. Over recent centuries, the perspective that fire use was incompatible with ‘rational’ land use was used as justification for policies aiming to eradicate anthropogenic fire in many countries, especially in European colonies. Ecologists understood fire as an exogenous disturbance from which ecosystems must recover. Yet, policies of fire suppression have often exacerbated wildfire risk and ignored the critical role of fire in many ecosystems and in agricultural and livestock-based land use systems.

In recognition of this, a new narrative is emerging that seeks to recover anthropogenic fire. People around the world – from peasants and Indigenous peoples to state agencies, non-governmental organisations and commercial foresters and farmers—use and control fire for diverse purposes, including agriculture, pastoralism, hunting, gathering, and ecosystem management.

In this ‘world cafe’ session we discuss the move from fire suppression towards fire management, and ‘reviving/recovering’ fire’.

*Who should have the rights and responsibilities for the work of fire use/recovery? Why?*

*What does living with fire look like in the present and future?*

## Speakers

- Paul Laris (California State University)
- Kayla De Freitas (Royal Holloway University of London)
- Christine Eriksen (ETH Zürich)
- Rachel Carmenta (University of East Anglia)
- Iokiñe Rodríguez Fernandez (University of East Anglia)

## Session Organisers

- Cathy Smith (Royal Holloway University of London)
- Kapil Yadav (King’s College London)

Agenda	
Time	Item
16:50 to 17:00	Introduction to session, speakers and agenda for the day
17:00 to 17:30	Myth-busting sessions by key speakers
17:30 to 18:30	Interactive discussion and wrap up



Please scan the QR code to know about the conference and how to join the session. If you have any questions, please contact

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