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Red Rocks Community College, Trefny Honors

Motivation and background

This research facilitated through the Geo-Launchpad internship program at UNVACO, a non-profit organization funded by the National Science Foundation, and completed in partnership with Western Resources Advocates (WRA), a non-profit working across seven states in the Interior West to protect our climate, land, air, and water. This research was completed with the Lands teams at WRA and began to assess the disproportion impacts wildfires have on various communities. The research evolved and narrowed to explore these main focal areas;

- **disproportion impacts wildfires have on qualified vulnerable and traditionally marginalized communities**
- **the inequities experienced in wildfire mitigation and education**
- **recovery and rebuilding efforts.**

This research found that many of the identified negative impacts, built upon the already existing social inequalities faced by these communities.

Methods



1. Personal Application
2. Background Knowledge
3. Primary and Secondary Literary Research
4. Consultation with Field Related Experts
5. Topic related Webinars & Education

Findings

- Social Vulnerability Factors
- Environmental Risk Factors
- Current Initiatives
 - Community prevention planning & education mapping
 - Land use planning
 - Philanthropic organizational support reliance for restoration efforts
 - Controlled burns



Discussion

What do these communities need right now?

- On-the-ground evaluation
- Recognize community diversity/needs
- Defensible space – fire wise landscaping
- Planned resources for restoration & rebuilding
- Access to programs for smoke protection, support, education
- Acknowledgement of present day & historical barriers that contribute to vulnerability or at-risk status
- Community investment as a primary focus of wildfire planning

Recommendations

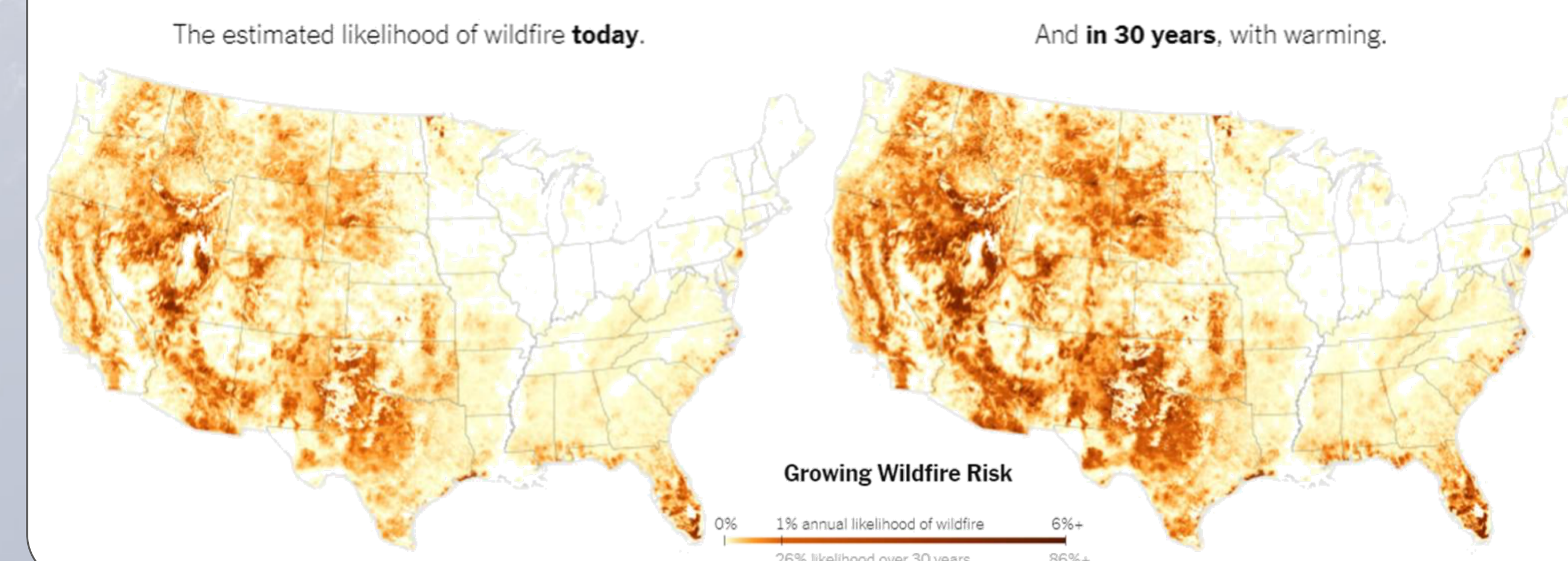
1. Community Focus- connection, trust, liaisons, advocacy, accessibility
2. Direct implementation of community planning & resources
3. Financial Budgeting with clear, specific funding allocation for natural disasters, including wildfire, prioritizing climate justice issues
4. Guidelines & Requirements for Insurance Companies
5. Funding, Subsidies, and Programing
6. Luxury taxes to offset specific costs & increased inequalities

In counties with the highest wildfire risk there are more than:



Data sources: USDA Forest Service, Wildfire Risk to Communities; US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. "Highest" wildfire risk includes "high" and "very high" categories (>90th percentile)

HEADWATERS ECONOMICS



Acknowledgments

Western Resource Advocates & UNVACO acknowledge that, with respect, the lands that our campuses occupy are the unceded ancestral and traditional homelands of the **Arapaho** (uh-RAH-pah-HO), **Cheyenne** (shy-AN), **Ute**(oo-tee), and **Ojéhéthi Šakówinj** (oh-chey-tee shah-koh-ween) or **Sioux** (soo) nations. We further recognize that this workshop is held on the unceded land of **Dakhóta** (DAH-koh-TAH) nation. We honor the land, the water, all peoples both living and past, and we are grateful to be here - recognizing that the original stewards of this land were those ancestors who have lived here for thousands of years, prior to written histories, as well as the many diverse and vibrant Native communities who are still connected to this land on which we gather today. I ask you to join me in acknowledging their community, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations. This acknowledgement is one small part of our commitment to dismantling the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant Nos. 1724794 and 2117397. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.