



**CENTER FOR URBAN FOREST  
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## News Brief

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### Demo of New Computer Fire Tool is a Big Hit

Our Center's new ecoSmart Design Software FireWise Tool was a big hit at the National Fire Plan meeting in New Orleans in January. **Dr. Greg McPherson demonstrated the tool** – stressing the interactive capability of the computer based tool that allows users to test various firewise techniques. A **fire-danger warning indicator** rewards implementation of good landscape and structural practices.

**ecoSmart is a web-based software program** designed to evaluate trade-offs between different landscape practices on residential parcels. It quickly displays buildings and landscape features on a graphical user interface. Components include FireWise, WaterWise and EnergyWise.

The **FireWise component** allows users to assess the threat of fire posed to a home by different configurations of trees and shrubs. The user places their home on the lot and interactively adds, removes, grows, and prunes trees. A **fire-danger indicator** warns the user of the likelihood of structural ignition by changing from green (low), to yellow, to red (high) in response to changing amounts of radiant heat on the house.

The FireWise tool is in the **beta-test stage**, and could be used to train those conducting residential fire risk evaluations or as a web-based self-evaluation tool in conjunction with work by local FireWise councils. Field testing will begin this spring in various locations in the West.

### Urban Heat Island Presentation Coming Soon

Dr. Greg McPherson has been invited by the U.S. EPA to make a presentation during an **urban heat island conference call** scheduled for March 18, 2003. Greg's presentation will cover several topics regarding the mitigation of urban heat islands,

including **Strategically Planting Trees to Conserve Energy** and **How to do Parking Lots Right**.

The call usually attracts 40-50 people working in environment or energy offices, non-profits, and industry (cool roofing, asphalt and concrete). Typically 3-4 main speakers participate and then some time is set aside for people to voluntarily provide updates on the work they're doing. **To participate in the call contact Eva Wong**, Heat Island Reduction Initiative (HIRI), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 202-564-3528.

## Staff Changes

**Leaving – Dr. Lisa deJong**'s last day at our Center was February 7<sup>th</sup>. She was our fire research scientist who did pioneering work in South Lake Tahoe. She was with us only 18 months, but made significant contributions in furthering the understanding of the human side of fire management in the urban/wildland interface. You can see some of her work on our website at <http://cufr.ucdavis.edu>.

Lisa is putting her career aside for a while. She and her new husband Arend Jan are moving to her hometown, Dallas, Texas, to start a family. She expects to encounter even bigger challenges in her new life than she did at our Center, and is looking forward to it!

**Leaving – Sabrina Mathis**, our ecology intern, is also leaving us. Her last day will be Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. Sabrina was hired under the 1890 Scholarship Program in 1995 and completed her undergraduate work before coming to us in 1998. She recently fulfilled her contractual obligations under the Scholarship Program and has decided she needs a new focus in her life. For the near future she will try her hand at the retail business, using her Center experience to create a website and build a new inventory procedure for a used record store.

Sabrina's long term goals include law school in the fall of 2004, and some foreign travel. Her real dream is to live in several foreign countries to get a more in depth understanding of their cultures. While in these countries, she plans to support herself by teaching English.