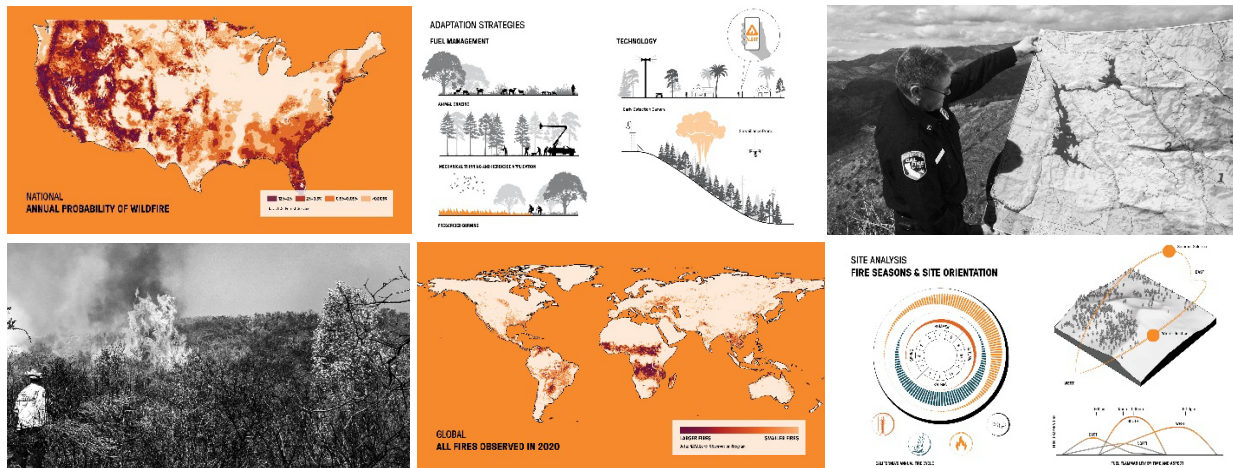


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# SWA Publishes “Playbook for the Pyrocene,” Rethinking the Role of Design in a Fire-Prone World

Drawing on years of research and partnerships in Paradise, Sonoma County, and across the state of California, the book aims to enhance wildfire literacy across the AEC industry and beyond, serving as a broadly accessible guide for landscape architects, developers, and planners.



October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 – Today, SWA announces the publication of [“Playbook for the Pyrocene.”](#) a comprehensive guide integrating years of wildfire research and industry knowledge for designing fire-resilient communities.

Over the past 50 years, the U.S. has experienced a drastic increase in catastrophic wildfires. Today, nearly 80 million U.S. properties stand a significant chance of exposure to fire, with nearly 16% of the country’s population living in designated fire hazard areas—both numbers that are anticipated to increase substantially by 2050. In California, the average wildfire season has nearly doubled in duration over the past half-century. For professionals across the AEC industry as well as agencies, homeowners, and developers, this is a critical moment to boost fire literacy and understand how we can take action.

Building on years of wildfire-related research in Paradise and Sonoma County, California, as well as helping shape the state’s overall wildfire planning guide, “Playbook for the Pyrocene” is a practical manual for design professionals, agencies, and landowners to rethink how we design and build communities in a fire-prone world. In particular, the project focuses on filling knowledge gaps—synthesizing information from fire science, forestry, land use planning, and emergency management to provide guidance across a range of project types, scales, and contexts.

Among the book’s findings are six broad guidelines and 20 applied strategies to reduce wildfire risk at a community scale—presented in an illustrated guide intended for a broad audience without specialized expertise. An additional appendix serves as a more comprehensive repository of topical resources, guidelines, best practices, and empirical research related to each strategy.

“Playbook for the Pyrocene” is authored by SWA Senior Research Associate Jonah Susskind alongside a research team including Alison Ecker, Sydnie Zhang, Harrison Raine, Shannon Clancy, Dallas Ford, Peter Rustad, Rajpankaja Talukdar, and Ted Vuchinich.

[Download the publication.](#)

[Download press images.](#)

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#### **About SWA**

SWA is a long-standing, employee-owned collective of eight independent design studios across the U.S. and China. We design spaces that connect people with nature and each other. We’ve built a legacy of exceptional design over generations. Our methods, materials, and mindsets are valuable—but we’re driven by the immense possibilities offered by new technologies and ideas.

[www.swagroup.com](http://www.swagroup.com)

#### **About XL Lab**

XL Lab is SWA’s firmwide platform for research and innovation, providing insights into far-reaching topics like the role of design in climate adaptation and mitigation, the future of mid-sized American cities, and large-scale infrastructure reuse projects for ports, rivers, and transportation systems.

[www.swagroup.com/ideas](http://www.swagroup.com/ideas)

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