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## News Release

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### Cal Poly Pomona Fire Ecology Expert Hopes for More Education on Nature of Wildfires, Fire Prevention

POMONA, Calif. — November 19, 2008 — “Chaparral always burns,” says Cal Poly Pomona professor Ronald Quinn, referring to the dry brush native to Southern California. “The more people understand the nature of these wildfires and what we can do to prevent them and be safer, the better off we’ll all be.”

As the world watched the recent wildfires in awe, Quinn saw the blazes through a more critical lens as a fire ecology expert. When the flames die and the smoke clears, Quinn hopes more people take preventative measures to protect themselves against wildfires.

“Fires start all the time, but they seldom turn into the kind of holocaust we have seen,” he says. “It’s a result of two things: dry vegetation and strong, dry winds. You can’t stop chaparral fires from happening, but you can reduce the risk of your home catching fire.”

Wildfires are a natural part of this region’s ecosystem, says Quinn. It’s essential for people who choose to live close to nature to be fully informed about the inherent fire risk to a home when it is near highly flammable chaparral.

Homeowners should carefully consider items they put near their home, he warns. Things like wooden decks, fire wood, wood sheds and fuel tanks could easily be ignited by flying embers. Landscape

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Fire Prevention Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand that wildfires are a natural part of the ecosystem and a risk of fire will always exist.</li> <li>• Consider fire prevention when landscaping your home.</li> <li>• Think carefully about items you put near your home that may be flammable, like wooden decks and fuel tanks.</li> <li>• Be prepared with an evacuation plan.</li> </ul>

choices also should serve as a barrier to fires rather than as fuel. A popular example is the use of succulent plants (like cacti, aloes, and yuccas), which are low maintenance as well as fire and drought resistant.

One of the easiest tips is also free: Be prepared with an evacuation plan.

“You don’t have time to waste when the police bullhorn is blaring and you have 10 minutes to get out,” Quinn says. “Think in advance what you would do and what you would need.”

Quinn is available for interviews with media. More information also is available in the 2006 book, “Introduction to California Chaparral,” by Ronald D. Quinn and Sterling C. Keeley, University of California Press.

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