

FORUM: RESILIENCE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE April 8, 2015 - Sonoma State University

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 27, 2015

CONTACT: Oren Wool - (707) 879-8324
info@sonomacountyadaptation.org

Sonoma County to Host the Nation's First-Ever Regional Climate Adaptation Forum

Santa Rosa, CA - The North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative announces the Sonoma County Adaptation Forum to be held April 8, 2015 at the Sonoma State University Student Center in Rohnert Park, CA. (Details below)

This public forum will bring together individuals from across a wide spectrum of sectors and disciplines who are working to ensure that Sonoma County remains vibrant and resilient in a changing climate. More than 200 attendees will explore new and innovative approaches for adapting to climate change.

"We know that the future is likely to bring more droughts, floods and fires," said Susan Gorin, Chair of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. "The forum will bring together policymakers across the county to discuss how we can make our community resilient and safer in light of these challenges."

This event will be the first-ever county-level climate adaptation forum, and comes on the heels of the recent White House Climate Action Champion award given to Sonoma County's Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA), lauded as the nation's "first local government agency created specifically to address climate change." As one of only 16 communities nationwide to receive this award, Sonoma County is now eligible for additional federal dollars and other resources to bolster local programs and policies. More about this award available here:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/03/fact-sheet-16-us-communities-recognized-climate-action-champions-leaders>

"Sonoma County is on the cutting edge of communities nationwide looking at climate change," said Rohnert Park City Councilman Jake Mackenzie. Mr. Mackenzie is also Chair of the Local Government Commission, and Past Chair and currently a Director of RCPA. "This forum is an opportunity to take another proactive step in determining how we can prepare for the change that we know is coming."

Speakers and presenters will include nationally acclaimed research scientists such as Dr. Marty Ralph, Director of the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes at Scripps Institution of

Oceanography, and Dr. Julie Kalansky, Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes (CW3E) and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

The forum will also feature local leaders who are actively researching effects of climate change in the aspects of Sonoma County which are anticipated to be most highly impacted in the coming years, including Dr. Lisa Micheli, Executive Director of Pepperwood, co-founder of NBCAI and co-founder of Terrestrial Biodiversity and Climate Change Collaboration (TBC3), and Jay Jasperse, Chief Engineer and Director of Groundwater Management, of the Sonoma County Water Agency.

Sonoma County's local business community and city and county leaders will be interested in a session discussing how to plan and coordinate a response to climate change impacts on our built environment, public health and safety, and critical infrastructure.

"Businesses need to proactively consider how climate change could affect their bottom line," said Justin Witt, with Brelje & Race Engineers, and a panel moderator. "Successful adaptation means preparing for both threats and opportunities. Planning is a long road and we need to get started now."

Additional conference activities include networking opportunities, provocative 5-minute "Ignite!" presentations, and a closing key-note presentation by Dr. Glenda Humiston, appointed by President Obama to serve as the California State Director at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development.

More information about the event agenda can be found here:

<http://sonomacountyadaptation.org/agenda/>

The Sonoma County Adaptation Forum is presented by an alliance of non-profits, agencies, and businesses working together to increase awareness of climate impacts to Sonoma County and strategies for climate resilience.

Taking the lead on this event is the North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative (NBCAI), a coalition of natural resource managers, policy makers and scientists who are committed to working together to create positive solutions to the problem of climate adaptation for the ecosystems and watersheds of Sonoma County. NBCAI members are experts and conservation leaders drawn from natural resource science and management organizations throughout the region.

The goal of NBCAI is to foster an open conversation between technical experts, land managers and policymakers in support of effective local scale climate adaptation strategies that preserve natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystem services. Since climate adaptation is ultimately a regional issue, NBCAI aims to pilot an approach in Sonoma County that can be extended throughout the North Bay as a whole. Community Foundation Sonoma County has been a true visionary to support the ground-breaking work of NBCAI. We appreciate their support and applaud their role in investing in the promise of Sonoma County.

Other co-organizers and sponsors include: RCPA, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sustainable SSU at Sonoma State University, County of Sonoma Energy & Sustainability Division, County of

Sonoma Public Health Division, Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers, Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy, Local Government Commission, and Sustainable North Bay.

The Sonoma County Adaptation Forum is being held at the Sonoma State University Student Center in Rohnert Park, CA. Sonoma State University (SSU) is the perfect partner for this event given their well-established focus on sustainability, which they recognize as among the most critical global and ethical challenges of our time. At SSU, students, faculty, staff and administrators learn and work in an environment that focuses on the environmental, economic and cultural implications of sustainability to help realize a sustainable, equitable and prosperous planet.

Registration for the Adaptation Forum opens at 8:00 am, and includes morning coffee, lunch, and a closing reception. This event is expected to sell out, and we encourage advance registration. You can register online at: <http://sonomacountyadaptation.org/registration>

For more information or to request a Press Pass, contact:

Oren Wool at (707) 879-8324 | info@sonomacountyadaptation.org

What is Adaptation?

Every day, more people wake up to the realization of how severely the changing climate is affecting, and will affect, our lives, our economy, our health, and our environment. The prospect of unprecedented droughts, floods, crop failures, wildfires, and public health emergencies caused by a rapidly changing climate is frightening. The solution must include urgent steps to burn much less fossil fuel. But we must also prepare our communities for the coming crises. That preparation is called climate adaptation. It turns out that getting prepared for climate change brings a host of other benefits that help our community, the natural world, and our society thrive.

The leading American assessment of climate impacts emphasizes the need to act. “Early action provides the largest health benefits. As threats increase, our ability to adapt to future changes maybe limited... It is prudent to invest in creating the strongest climate health preparedness programs possible.” – National Climate Assessment, 2014