

PRESS RELEASE

McCullough Research

May 4, 2026

On Friday May 8th Robert McCullough will be giving a lecture on Urban wildfire risks in Portland and the lessons that can be learned from the Eaton wildfire.

Fifteen months ago, McCullough Research assisted the New York Times in the identification of the Easton Wildfire ignition point and supported additional research on possible faults that may have caused the disaster.

The distance from Portland's second largest high risk fire zone, Oaks Bottom, to Eastmoreland is less than a mile. Not surprisingly, this raises the question whether Southeast Portland may face wildfire risks in the future. The Eaton wildfire reached Altadena in less than thirty minutes. The fire crossed the one-mile distance from ignition to homes far more rapidly than sophisticated risk modelling had predicted.

Portland's most critical high risk fire zone is Forest Park and the adjacent seven miles of petrochemical tank farms. A wildfire here would be catastrophic, but the population in the area is small. A fire in Oaks Bottom is adjacent to the Sellwood/Brooklyn neighborhoods and over twelve thousand homes. Another two thousand homes are in Eastmoreland.

Siloing of utilities, governments, and regional officials was a central concern with the LA wildfire. Even with advanced warning from the U.S. Weather Service, they were unprepared.

Portland has fewer resources and even less preparation. Our emergency plans are a decade out of date. Oaks Bottom has no sophisticated risk studies or Pano Ai ignition cameras to spot wildfires. PGE has two Pano Ai cameras scanning Forest Park twenty-four hours a day. The rest of Portland has none.

Mr. McCullough will be available for interviews before and after the lecture.

The lecture is at 11am to 12:30pm. on Friday at the Parsons Gallery, in the Portland State University Urban Center, 2nd floor. The event is free and open to the public, and Robert will be available for further discussion afterward. Follow up interviews can be scheduled through McCullough Research at 503-777-4616 or william@mresearch.com.

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The Political Economy of **Wildfires**

Join us for a conversation with energy and economics consultant Robert McCullough, focusing on why our current policies and institutions are not up to the task of dealing with the myriad effects of global warming and the increasing risk of natural disasters like wildfires.



This event is free and is open to the public.

Friday, May 8
11 am - 12:30 pm

Urban Center, 2nd Floor
Parsons Gallery
560 SW Mill St.
Portland, OR 97201



Portland State
Economics