



Science Buzz Cafe

Science Buzz Cafe # 560

Monday 6 PM • January 12th, 2026

The HopMonk 'Abbey' Since 2007

230 Petaluma Ave. Sebastopol, CA

Host, Daniel Osmer (daniel@economicbuzzcafe.com)

6 PM • Come Early for Food & Drink • RSVP \$7 • DOOR \$10

Fire Cameras, AI and Satellites Unblinking Eye: Early Wildfire Detection

**Sonoma County's Experiment:
Artificial Intelligence & Fire Response**

Samuel Wallis, Deputy Director

Sonoma County Emergency Management

Wildfire safety relies heavily on detecting fires early to both extinguish them before they grow unmanageable, as well as to alert and evacuate communities as early as possible if immediate suppression becomes impossible. Following 2017, Sonoma built up a network of fire detection cameras. Starting in 2021, Sonoma became the first County in the country to experiment with artificial intelligence to detect wildfires early on. This two-year pilot program revealed a lot about the capability and limitations of the technology. **Sam will talk about what has been done historically in wildfire detection and describe the developing camera network, how the AI system was implemented and its effectiveness. He will also mention other systems and technologies used for early fire detection and confirmation.**

Samuel "Sam" Wallis is the Deputy Director for the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management since March 2023. He has also served the County as Community Alert & Warning Manager for four years and Emergency Coordinator for five years. This included responding to floods, wildfires and other emergencies and disasters. He also served for 27 years in the US Army in a variety of capacities and holds a BA in English from SSU and a master's in emergency management from Walden University. **Sam currently resides in Sebastopol, California with his wife and 16-year-old son.**

The Purpose of Capital is to Fund the Development and Application of the Talents and Skills of Youth of All Ages!

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