

SMOKE EXPOSURE Spotlight

JANUARY 2026

PICKETT FIRE
PHOTO: CALFIRE

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Learning from the Pickett Fire: Collaboration and Resilience in Napa Valley

By Napa Valley Grapegrowers staff

When the Pickett Fire broke out north of Calistoga in summer 2025, the Napa Valley Grapegrowers (NVG) mobilized immediately to support growers on the ground. While the fire's footprint was limited, its timing during the growing season offered an important opportunity to learn more about smoke exposure, community preparedness and the systems that help safeguard vineyard health.

Within hours, NVG distributed emergency resources and connected growers to trusted smoke-exposure testing labs, sampling guidelines and communications from the ag commissioner and Office of Emergency Services. Working closely with UC Davis researchers and the West Coast Smoke Exposure Task Force, we facilitated coordinated sampling across affected vineyards to help refine scientific understanding of how smoke compounds move through the landscape. These real-time collaborations turned crisis response into valuable data collection that will inform best practices for years to come.

Equally important was the sense of community. Growers shared equipment, staff and information across property lines, an echo of the cooperative spirit that defines Napa agriculture. NVG hosted a post-fire debrief with local partners to capture lessons learned – from irrigation timing to canopy management – ensuring growers have the practical tools needed to recover quickly and plan ahead.

The Pickett Fire reinforced what NVG has long championed: that preparedness, partnership and stewardship are our greatest defenses against the evolving realities of farming in California. As we look ahead, NVG will continue advancing smoke research, updating grower resources and investing in resilience training through the Napa Valley Farmworker Foundation. Together, we're strengthening the systems that protect our vineyards, our people and the place we all call home.

About Napa Valley Grapegrowers

NVG represents over 600 Napa County grape growers, vineyard management companies and associated businesses. napagrowers.org



L to R: Erick Hernandez, Napa County Fire Department deputy fire marshal; Anne Cottrell, Napa County District 3 supervisor; Caleb Mosley, Napa Valley Grapegrowers executive director; Michelle Novi, Napa Valley Vintners counsel and senior director of industry relations.

**WEST COAST
SMOKE EXPOSURE
TASK FORCE**

WCSETF.ORG

INSURANCE

Important Deadline, Policy Endorsements for 2026 Growing Season

PROTECT YOUR VINEYARDS AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

As a reminder, the grape Multiperil Crop Insurance (MPCI) is a federally subsidized insurance policy providing insurance for yield losses caused by natural perils.

The 2026 crop season will see some additional benefits due to The One Big Beautiful Bill. These include additional premium subsidies of 3%-5%, depending on the coverage option. The endorsements to the grape policy saw an additional 15% premium subsidy applied for the upcoming season. If you have not reviewed your options, now is the time. There is no other way to protect your future crop against the uncertainty of Mother Nature.

MPCI DEADLINE FOR CALIFORNIA

Jan. 31, 2026

LOSS EXAMPLE

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Average Yield | 4 tons per acre |
| Coverage Level | 75% |
| Insured Tons | 3 tons per acre (4 x 75%) |
| Tons Harvested* | 2.5 tons per acre |
| Payable loss | 0.5 tons per acre |

*The tons harvested are assumed to be light due to a naturally occurring peril. The price per ton paid for losses is determined by the county/crush district, the variety, and if you have opted to use the contract price.

GRAPE ENDORSEMENTS

All endorsements are meant to enhance the underlying coverage, but they will add additional premium. These must be selected by the MPCI deadline date.

FIP-SI (Fire Insurance Protection – Smoke Index)

Provides additional smoke coverage to the underlying MPCI policy without requiring lab testing, claims adjustment or a notice of loss. FIP-SI coverage is specific to the number of heavy smoke days the insured county experiences and does not consider the policyholders smoke loss. Once the minimum number of heavy smoke days is met, the FIP-SI endorsement will be triggered and start paying out. As the heavy smoke days increase, the payout factor for FIP-SI increases.

SCO (Supplemental Coverage Option) and ECO (Enhanced Coverage Option)

Extends insurance coverage beyond traditional limits, offering protection for up to 95% of your expected crop value. These options offer a premium subsidy of 80%, making them highly affordable. SCO and ECO losses are based off the county's overall yield performance and not the policyholders' yield. For ECO, when the expected county yield drops below 95%, the ECO endorsement is triggered. The SCO endorsement is triggered when the expected county yield drops below 86%.

Thank you to Kristine Fox of Relation Insurance for providing this update.

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WCSETF WEBSITE RESOURCES



- Research
- Best practices
- FAQs on smoke impacts
- Smoke analysis labs
- Contracts
- Crop insurance
- Wildfire preparedness
- Fire apps
- University resources
- Informational videos
- Newsletter and bulletins
- News and events

Fall 2025 Articles

[Tainted or just influenced? \(11/6/25\)](#)

[Scientists just found a clever 'fix' for smoky, wildfire-tainted wine \(10/1/25\)](#)

[How Napa Valley vineyards helped stop the Pickett Fire \(9/26/25\)](#)

[Smoke in wine research pt 1 \(9/26/25\)](#)

[Smoke in wine research pt 2 \(9/29/25\)](#)

Smoke Exposure Sessions in 2026

Unified Wine & Grape Symposium

Jan. 27-29, 2026 | Sacramento, Calif.
Clarity In the Smoke: Integrating Wine Sensory to Chemical Analysis and Predictive Modeling for Wildfire Smoke Events

Oregon Wine Symposium

Feb. 3-4, 2026 | Portland, Ore.
Evolving Our Understanding of Smoke Exposure Impacts

WAVE / Ravenholt Seminar

April 22, 2026 | Richland, Wash.
Smoke Research: Putting Findings into Practice

EVENTS



Upcoming events and past recordings:
wcsef.org/events

The WCSETF originated from discussions in early 2019 between winegrape growers, winemakers, wine/winegrape industry leaders as well as related industry entities from California, Oregon and Washington. The task force held its first in-person meeting in July 2019. Since that time, the task force has convened educational webinars and produced reference materials to assist growers and winemakers with certain challenges associated with smoke-exposed winegrapes.