On-ground Live Fuel Moisture Content Sampling Along California's Central Coast Santa Lucia Preserve - Carmel Valley, CA

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The ratio of water to dry mass within live plants is an important factor when determining the severity and intensity of potential wildfires. Currently, live fuel moisture content (LFMC) samples support wildland fire management, but are limited in number and spatial extent. In Monterey County, the only LFMC data to analyze spatial and temporal trends is collected by CalFire and the Los Padres National Forest Unit of the United States Forest Service across five long-term sampling sites. Our project aims to enhance the spatial coverage of current LFMC data being collected across Monterey County. Here, we share results from the ongoing work to monitor LFMC across Carmel Valley, CA. We evaluate LFMC data by environmental factors such as slope, aspect, topography, and species composition. We also place our LFMC samples in relation to nearby long-term sampling locations. We conclude by interpreting spatial and temporal trends in the preliminary data and discuss logistical challenges of establishing more long-term LFMC sampling sites to better represent the complex topography and vegetation composition of Central California.