**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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**Race the Flame - A Wildfire Preparedness Run/Walk**

**Santa Cruz, CA –** In an effort to increase public awareness and preparedness for wildfire season, the City of Santa Cruz has partnered with the University of California at Santa Cruz **to host** the first **Race the Flame** taking place on **Oct. 17, 2026.**

**Join the award-winning emergency preparedness run/walk in Santa Cruz!** Last year's Race the Wave earned a CAPIO Award for Excellence—and this year we're putting a new emergency scenario to the test. If you had to escape a wildfire in Santa Cruz how long would it take you to run or walk to reach safety? Would you know which way to go? Here's your chance to test yourself and gain knowledge about wildfires and their impact on our community.

This 2.2-mile race will begin at the UCSC campus at the East Field and follows a route down Coolidge Drive with an ending at the Bay Tree Campus Bookstore and High Street.

At the finish line, an emergency preparedness fair will celebrate community resilience. Community-based organizations will share emergency preparedness information with the community. The fair will highlight the importance of having enough supplies and a plan to care for yourself and your household during the first 72 hours after a disaster.

"Preparedness starts long before a disaster occurs. Race the Flame is an opportunity for our community to learn, prepare, and build resilience that can make all the difference when every second counts," said Fire Chief Rob Oatey.

**Race Details:**

- **Date: Oct. 17, 2026**
- **Start Time:** 8 a.m.
- **Location:** East Upper Field, UCSC
- **Entry Fee:** Adults are only $20 and kids 12 and under are $15

Participants will receive a commemorative t-shirt while supplies last, safety materials, and post-run refreshments at the finish line where a preparedness fair will be hosted.

Whether you're an experienced runner or wanting to learn more about emergency preparedness, your involvement makes a difference. Let's run together to raise awareness, reduce risk, and create a wildfire-resilient community.

Net proceeds from Race the Flame will go to Friends of Parks & Rec Santa Cruz, supporting Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation through fundraising, community involvement and hands-on support. FOPAR's goal is to enhance programs and facilities that support people of all ages and abilities - creating a more active, connected, and vibrant Santa Cruz. Friends of Parks and Recreation (FOPAR) is a 501c3 non-profit organization.

**Register today!**

For more information or to sign up, please visit: **www.santacruzca.gov/RaceTheFlame**