



Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy
National Goals; Collective Solutions

Response to Wildfire
Fire Adapted Communities
Resilient Landscapes
Supported by Science



Southeast Regional Assessment



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Mike Zupko
Southeastern RSC Chair
Representing S. Govs Assoc.

Southeast Snapshot

WHAT WE HAVE:

- High percentage of productive private land
- Hyperactive growing season of green yet highly flammable fuels
- Dense population (heavily distributed) throughout the hyperactive green stuff

Southeast Snapshot

What we DON'T have:

- A collaboration and coordination problem
- A need for broad policies constraining local managers
- A problem with moving woody material, though an uncertain future.



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Southeast RSC

- 1 State Forestry
- 1 SGA
- 2 USFS (Regional Forester and Station Director)
- 1 FWS Regional Fire Director
- 1 NPS Deputy Park Superintendent
- 1 BIA Regional Fire Director
- 1 IAFC Representatives
- 1 Tribal Agency Administrator
- 1 Science Team Liaison
- 1 USGS
- 1 County Commissioner

Southeastern Working Group

- 3 State forestry
- 2 USFS
- 1 BIA
- 1 NPS
- 1 FWS
- 1 USGS
- 1 TNC



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Process Overview

- RSC & WG included representation from a diverse range of county, state, and federal agencies, NGOs, and entities active in the Southeastern fire management community
- RSC chartered WG during spring 2011 meeting
- WG held weekly conference calls and met in July and August
- RSC held bimonthly conference calls
- RSC met to review WG's work in September, providing guidance for revising and expansion of regional report



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Process Overview

- Phase II Southeastern Cohesive Strategy effort based on foundational documents:
 - Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment
 - Southern Forest Futures Project
 - State Forest Action Plans
- Success in the Phase II effort was due in large part to close relationships between members of the Southeastern fire management community at all levels





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Process Overview

- SE Phase II Outreach effort had four primary efforts:
 - Review of foundational documents of fire policy and science in the Southeast as well as Forest Resources Assessments for the 13 Southeastern states and Puerto Rico
 - Two focus groups held in Columbia, South Carolina and Pearl, Mississippi drew 80 participants
 - Online comment form sent to 1,400 Southeastern stakeholders and widely recirculated and posted online
 - Multiple conference calls and webinars to capture input from regional stakeholder groups



Process Overview

- What worked well
 - Already strong collaboration across the South, relatively easy to pick up and run with the charge
 - .
- What didn't
 - Time constraints
 - Limited use of NST knowledgebase / modeling to inform process (2.5)
 - Limited “doers”
 - .

Would echo most of NE and W additional comments



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Overview of South's Situation

- Strong collaboration already – excellent history of cooperation
- Working forests and relatively strong market infrastructure
- Private landowners, many motivated to manage land
- Active prescribed burning throughout the region
- Fairly extensive road system allows for rapid IA from RFDs



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Overview of South's Situation

- Year-round fire season
- Significant wildfire activity
 - Over half ignitions and 40% of large fires
- Large and expanding WUI
 - Over half of all WUI in the country
- Smoke management is a challenge with ↑ WUI
- 89% private land bring 5 million reasons for owning land
- Fragmentation
- Invasive species



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Policies and Regulations

- State and local legislation – put it out
- Federal legislation – review and make determination

- Compacts (SE and SC and bridges to other regions)
- Interagency agreements
- MOUs – closest resource



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Policies and Regulations

Barriers to effective collaboration:

- Conflicts related to land agency policy
(federal v state v local)
- Nearly 90% of acreage in the Southeast is privately held
- Balancing expectation for wildfire protection with safety of firefighters and the public with available resources.
- Landscape fragmentation as a result of rural development
- Land management agency policy v other agency policy
- Reimbursement challenges / differences



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Values, Trends and Risks

- Ecosystem – air, water, and other ecosystem components
- Infrastructure – human infrastructure, habitations, other structures and property
- Societal – human, social, and cultural values
- Economic – direct and indirect costs of wildland fires
- Fire Management – wildfire response capacity and capability



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Values, Trends and Risks

- Population growth and rapid development of WUI
- Land fragmentation
- Smoke management
- Future of RFDs



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Values, Trends and Risks

- *Inherent risks to firefighter and public safety*
- *Impact on ability to manage (both land and fires)*
- *Impact to forest resource*
 - *Natural system (habitat etc)*
 - *Future of top economic contributor in most Southern states*



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Goals and Regional Objectives

Restore and Maintain Landscapes:

Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives



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Goals and Regional Objectives

Restore and Maintain Landscapes (5):

- 1.1 Build and maintain resiliency in Southeastern landscapes through strategic use of prescribed fire, mechanical treatments, grazing, etc., and manage wildfire where and when appropriate based on ownership and landscape context
- 1.2 Promote strategic interagency policy development and planning across agencies, organizations and the public to more effectively integrate wildland fire planning into land-use planning and economic development



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Goals and Regional Objectives

Restore and Maintain Landscapes:

- 1.3 Develop and sustain capability and capacity required to plan and carry out landscape treatments, including prescribed fire
- 1.4 Encourage increased public awareness to ensure public acceptance and active participation in achieving landscape objectives
- 1.5 Mitigate environmental threats other than wildfire (i.e. storm damage, insects, ice storms, hurricanes, insects and disease) that reduce ecosystem vitality and increase susceptibility to wildfire



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Goals and Regional Objectives

Fire Adapted Communities:

Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property



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Goals and Regional Objectives

Fire Adapted Communities (3):

- 2.1 Support development of, and maintain engagement with communities by developing and leveraging partnerships through community wildfire planning for improved preparedness
- 2.2 Eliminate loss of life and minimize loss of structures
- 2.3 Coordinate public policy and shared responsibility across jurisdictions



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Goals and Regional Objectives

Response to Fire:

All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions



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Goals and Regional Objectives

Response to Fire (2):

- 3.1 Increase firefighter safety by using risk management
- 3.2 Increase and leverage resource capability and capacity. Streamline and support training across all areas to maximize effectiveness



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“Strategic Opportunities”



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“Strategic Opportunities”

- Expand outreach and education to landowners and residents, particularly those new to the region and/or non-traditional
- Enhance collaboration, training and capacity building across agencies
- Continue/Enhance proactive fuels mitigation through all management techniques, including prescribed burning

Four potential Management Scenarios were considered



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Alternatives to Achieve the Goals and Objectives

Four potential Management Scenarios were considered

- Alternative A: Present Management Situation
- Alternative B: Increased Personal Responsibility and Action Through Outreach and Education
- Alternative C: Increased Firefighter Safety and Wildfire Response Through Enhanced Collaboration, Training, and Capacity
- Alternative D: Increase Proactive Fuels Mitigation Through All Management Techniques, Including Prescribed Burning



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Alternatives to Achieve the Goals and Objectives

- “Phase 2.5”



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Southeast Regional Strategy Committee

- Mike Zupko – Chair, Southern Governors Association Representative (Executive Director, Southern Group of State Foresters)
- Kevin Fitzgerald – Vice Chair, Great Smoky Mountains National Park Deputy Superintendant, NPS (alternate: Liz Struhar – Fire Planner, NPS)
- Liz Agpaoa – Regional Forester, Southern Region, USFS (alternate: Dan Olsen – Director of Fire & Aviation Management, Southern Region, USFS)
- Tom Boggus – Texas State Forester, NASF
- Ed Brunson – BIA (alternate: Larry Mahler - Forester, BIA)
- Rob Doudrick – Station Director, USFS (alternate: Kier Klepzig – Assistant Director, SRS)
- Bob Eaton – Chief, Division of Fire Management, FWS
- Jim Ham – County Comm, GA
- Tom Lowry – Choctaw Nation
- Alexa McKerrow – Biologist, USGS
- Bruce Woods – Department Head, Mitigation and Prevention, Texas Forest Service, IAFC



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Working Group Members

- David Frederick – Chair, Fire Director, Southern Group of State Foresters
- Darryl Jones – Vice Chair, State Fire Chief, South Carolina Forestry Commission
- Tom Spencer – Vice Chair, Predictive Services Department Head, Texas Forest Service
- Forrest Blackbear – BIA
- Vince Carver – Regional Fire Ecologist, FWS Fire
- Margit Bucher – North Carolina Fire Manager, The Nature Conservancy
- Alexa McKerrow – Biologist, USGS
- Shardul Raval – Assistant Director, Fire & Aviation Management, Southern Region, USFS
- Rachel Smith – Natural Resource Specialist, Presidential Management Fellow, USFS
- Liz Struhar – Fire Planner, NPS



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Coordination and Logistical Support Team

- Sandy Cantler – SE Coordination Lead, USFS
- Carol Deering – (on NEMAC SE site as member) USGS
- Jim Fox – Director, NEMAC, RENCI, UNC Asheville
- Jeff Hicks – Geospatial Software Engineer, NEMAC, UNC Asheville
- Matthew Hutchins – UNC Asheville
- Jim Karels – WFECL Liaison (FL State), Florida Forest Service
- Danny Lee – Director, Eastern Forest Environmental Threat Assessment Center, Southern Research Station, USFS
- Karin Lichtenstein – Project Manager/Research Scientist, NEMAC, UNC Asheville
- Tom Quigley, Contractor, National Science Team



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QUESTIONS?

