

Most Critical Issues

Imagery, Landfire is not applicable, value at risk, cultural value differences, technology, native corps and land management, population differences w other states, politics, bio mass, commodities, restoration, calimgrassis, education, infrastructure (lack of), access, resource inventories...

We need to remember to consider how are future investments going to be applied?

How to move governments to enact laws to require reduction of wildfire hazards and ignitability of structures; both during construction and retrofit?

Allotments: Protection levels, Risk Management, Agency Priorities

Fuels Mgt: Priority:

CWPP, Village Protection,

Agency Specific Strategic Planning, Scale

Program reliability (FPA & Land fire)

Scale – Tongass has 16 million acres – mapping difficult

Expense of fuels treatments

Moving resources over large landscapes expensive

Logistical challenges

How will climate change affect Alaskan Fire?

UAV application on large scale (topography) vs. “lower 48”

Scale – Alaska vs. Lower 48

Minimum funding levels

Value of native villages vs. La subdivision?

Climate change

Historical data lacking – further affected by lack of weather stations

WUI definition for Alaska

Smoke issues

Land management priorities – sometimes at odds

Funding minimums – is there a valid analysis for determining minimum workforce?

Carbon sequestration- How does one balance monetary tradeoffs with natural processes tradeoffs- Is fire exclusion the right thing to do?

DATA- lack of accurate, timely state wide data – (land fire doesn’t work) Delay due to weather to get good satellite images- lack of weather stations, large changes in vegetation yearly

No defined WUI- varies across the state. Burroughs have OK WUI data but lacking statewide for protection

Our fuels program target small acres to allow for natural process in the larger landscape.

We do treatments in and around villages- very little landscape scale Rx treatments.

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Climate change – issues of tundra burning and CO2 it releases
Forest health- beetle kill, FRCC large wildfire size
Summer smoke issues
Different values at risk

Funding – small villages vs. lower 48 subdivision
Climate Change
Alternative energy
Creation of jobs

ID Values at risk vs. cost of effort of suppression tactics -
At what point (trigger) does smoke management (air quality) dictate increased suppression effort? Is this a fire climax ecosystem and fire smoke should be expanded?
Need to bring in the latest technology to fire suppression efforts, include fire history and fuels management activities surrounding communities, and integrate with CWpp locally.

Environment
Values at risk in WUI
Smoke
Fuels Management to scale based on state size
Funding level minimums- federal, state, and local
Multiple agency & cultural views

Enable the fire community to make cultural shift from suppression to managing for multiple objectives (safety, cost, terminology, risk assessment, management, etc)
Elevate fire information to fire communications – tell the story year round rather than just the fire facts/statistics
Understand relationship between climate change and fire
Cultural Values – ANILCA – native allotments – point protection
Alaska Factor – size of Alaska – scale of logistics (climating factors, air & water transportation)
Protection levels – How do they fit (Critical, full, modified, limited)
1 million acres burned annually requires annual re-evaluation, protection assessments
Commodities – Biomass, Carbon sequestration?
Community and Public Education
Smoke issues – natural Ok, fire use not- smoke levels affect DEC allowable levels
Invasive species- 4-5 year delay on fire ecosystem regrowth
Fire wise & CWPPs- not taking

Priority Values & Attributes

Cultural value differences

Wildlife values/habitat

Resources

Numerous entities are working in various ways on wildfire mitigation. Some receive funds some do not (or very little). Seems an accounting of entities would be in order (Interagency plans?).

Cultural Values – ANILKA, Native Corporations, Native Villages, Native Land management

Increase in Bio mass production, Subsistence

Subsistence values- how to measure

Does the CWPP process work in Alaska>

Consensus is that very few CWPPs have successfully identified priorities for the public.

How does subsistence hunting get affected by fire?

How much training and money will be needed to standardize training & qualifications?

If you use population levels to rank funding needs, least populated state program will fade away.

How TO reconcile tourism values (bucolic vistas, wildlife) with eh reality of fire existing in the boreal forest ecosystem?

How will fire frequency, severity, and duration affect species (flora/fauna) migration (decrease) extinction? Include fire size also? What will the effect be on diversity?

Cultural values

Maybe one size does not fit all- should it be regional?

People's perception of fire issues. People not wanting to have gov agencies telling them what to do on their property

How does Cohesive strategy address the protection of critical watersheds in Alaska

Funding for crews off of fire assignments comes from projects – i.e. fuels treatments, fire wise & hazardous fuel reduction as well as grants/ Without funding crews cannot stay afloat to address any of these issues. Will funding to support crews increase or decrease and will funding allow for building of infrastructure, education, and training?

Gather an array of local values to the jurisdictional agencies and publics and allow for variety of local priorities.

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Not sure Anchorage fire dept is considered young- and we are growing rapidly because of need not want. Need to provide WUI protection but need the state to assist in wildfire costs.

Why do firefighters continue to lose lives defending homes & fires? No home or fire is worth a human life.

Why does the fire community continue to talk about putting the fire out versus managing the fire?

How does the fire community move from tactics to strategic/big picture thinking?

Rating and Incorporating Risk

Public safety

May be up to land manager or administrator

Fire agreement

Strategies must conform to organizational

Cultural means

Congressional mandates

Implementation Limitations

Workforce Decline/Availability

Alaska has struggled with this issue for decades. It seems as though land managers have been very reluctant to quantify resource values so that relative rankings or priorities can be established.

Ensure minimum finding needs

Will the strategy incorporate high reliability organization principles? Acceptable risk?

Human life/safety is the priority- everything thereafter is relative

Objectives for fire management in Alaska cannot be compared to other areas- our acres and cost protection vs. acre treated.

Beware buzzwords like investments/alternatives/tradeoffs- sounds a lot like FPA [and that does not work!]

Native Interests

Species composition

Public perceptions

After public and firefighter safety- Then protecting structures that have met defensible space requirements- fire structures outside established fire protection zones.

Then allow local land management plan for individual agencies to identify priority resource values

How do we evaluate return on our fire investments?

Fire suppression resources stop 95-97% of fire starts at less than 300 acres. Do we have a way to measure how many fires would grow to megafire size if we only invested in n – X millions?

How do we measure return of fuels mitigation investments? Value of resources protected from fires that burn through the area 5 years or 100 years?

How do we measure return on investment to State Forestry/ Yes, they fund people/equipment but extra protection is achieved beyond state legislative funding?/

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Scale is different – needs to include cultural, biomass, protection, ecological values and smoke. AFD is concerned with pre-suppression, suppression, and aftermath. Collectively we are growing into providing protection for the municipality because the states coverage may not be able to provide needed action.

Does fire community understand HRO (high reliability organization) principles?
Is it acceptable when firefighters plan a tactic to ask- Can we do this safely? If no- can we take a different direction?

Climate change – carbon release on North slope
Fire intensity levels – slow vs. fast moving fires
Standards for agencies – how to match up the work together
Planning and zoning not addressing much of developers into WUI
Evacuation plans – 15 years old
Scale issues with cultural, bio-mass, residential protection, ecology, carbon, smoke

Time Frame

5-10 for Investment & Technology

20-40 larger ecological view

But 2-3 review – to assess detailed strategies --how you change your program

5 years

4 years – needs to be revisited – issues change all the time

5 years – more is probably unrealistic

4 years

Every 5 years – to stay current – changes

The strategy needs to be dynamic and flexible – Shorter time span reviews allow for validation. Suggest following the QFR cycle.

5-10 years (impacts of technology, growth, climate change)

1 year- this is a new process – I tend to think a smaller time frame is more beneficial

Annually- reviewed every year due to environmental factors, climate change, and fire behavior?

4-5 years (1-2 year to refine/clarify- ½ years to implement)

4 years- should support interagency support timeframes

Successful strategies span 5 years – The world changes so quickly that planning more than 5 years is difficult and potentially ineffective.

20 years

3-5 years is somewhat predictable based on previous 3 years effects

Landscape and ecological change needs a broader range and longer horizon to work with

Land Unit Plans, State Risk Assessments, CWPPs, Land management regulations

Land management plans Or Fire management plans
Inter agency fire management plans are pretty cohesive
Borough comprehensive plans
Borough community comprehensive plans

Jurisdiction Agency vs. Protection agency
Issues regarding agency specific priority?

FMPs- every year
Local AOPs and Agreements (Every year- 5 years)
LRMP 5 years

There are numerous local level plans that each land manager is tasked with updating or participating in a going effort to provide updates. The State of Alaska developed Area Plans, administered by the DNR Division of Lands, Water, and Mining that should also be considered (not mentioned)

Are the plans being truly updates on the prescribed timeframes All of the plans would be better understood if there was standardization of them

Every plan should have a minimum funding level in terms of sustainability

How will diverse land management objectives be incorporated into a single comprehensive strategy?
What will the evaluation process look like to determine the strategy's effectiveness?

Key is land management plans

Local government risk assessments where fire is natural and reoccurring. Should not be infringed by human development with expectations of 100% fire protection.

CWPP when needed
Annual Operating Plan – between AFD & State DOF (updated annually)
Working on a cohesive fire management plan which would encompass city evacuation needs – suppression - WFDSS

Are the above – core elements of an effective fire management plan?
When evaluating a program, are the above plans etc considered?

Forest restoration form fast fire regrowth (Calamagrastis?)
Bio-mass – Alaska native corporation lands incorporating 44 million acres may plan for bio-mass use or carbon sequestration.

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Conservation easements whereby conservation groups pay native corporations to leave their lands in a natural state

Contradictory land management values for fire protection/fire use and how to value these planning applications and reporting of values as effective values

All things considered – most significant issue

That we stay open to new technologies and try to implement the best practices in the most economical way to ensure citizens are educated and protected.

Cultural Impacts/Issue Alaska Specific

Land Status change- native Corporation interpretation of fire management plan response levels, Government mandated fire protection

Scale – logistical movement

Funding codes between agencies need to be able to cross without reimbursable agreement that aren't effective -- Subsistence weighted values

Alaska has a very unique interagency fire management planning process which Holy Grail to fire managers and land managers in Alaska. The update process (AK IAFMP) is paramount to the development of a cohesive strategy for Alaska.

Climate Change & Alaska has a very unique program

Future work force – where is the next generation of FMO's, land managers, Foresters?

A cultural shift will need to take place so that acceptable risk is considered when evaluating the range of response options. The 2009 policy guideline implementation offers multiple management objectives, but human nature is to take the easiest course of action- suppression. However the easiest course of action is not always the right one, and today's managers need to prepare for that.

Eco-system health

Declining funds- hazardous fuel accumulations

How can someone plan fuels treatments without knowing availability of funding?

Scale of Alaska is tremendous. Resources needed to accomplish tasks such as fire prevention, fire protection, education and training far exceeds funding provided. Many jobs can be created in an ever demanding economy. The opportunity to use our states resources for biomass is also an opportunity to combat climate change, and reduce available fuel for wild land fire.

Integrating FMPs within geographical areas to encompass many resource protection objectives

How to enable the fire community to make the cultural shift from suppression to managing for multiple objectives? (safety, cost, terminology, risk assessment, management?)

Tying effectiveness to funding made available

Other Issues

FS crews working together with FWS or NPS on fuels projects together and being able to use the sponsoring agency fund code. Or cross staffing engines and crews when severity or a fire code isn't available

With so many players- with vastly different resource objectives, funding availability, etc a cohesive strategy that is efficient seems unlikely?