Reno – Great Basin Forum Q-Set

Most Critical Issues

Public – taking responsibility for fire-proofing lands under their control.
Cross boundary agreements to allow promoting "let burn" opportunities

Recognize that Great Basin ecosystem is a high value resource and that protection from fire is critical to numerous resources (Sagebrush dependant species)

Focus on natural resources instead of focusing on WUI – People need to take care of themselves and we should focus on wild land protection and enhancement.

Land surface processes, mostly post-fire including things like landslides, flood, water quality

Scale dependence between WUI – in places like urban California vs. broad landscapes of something like the Great Basin.

National focus on defensible space- building codes, clearance, access, water protection
Flexibility in spending fuels money- WUI vs. Resources Protection
Fire managed for resource benefits- has to expand, should expand
Liability for fire, all fire, wildfire, prescribed fires is with the homeowner
Suppression agencies need some continuity/with history- not drastic

Protect ecological integrity of great Basin habitats
Invasive species
Too little fire (pinyon juniper) vs. too much fire (sage brush)
In the face of climate change, how will fire change the dynamics in the Great Basin?

Consideration of resource values and infrastructure (energy, transmission etc outside the WUI (acres burned)

Pre-fire treatment in Pinyon Juniper systems and encroachment of P-J in sage brush/grasslands. Why wait until there is a fire Allocate more funding to land treatments

Post fire revegetation When fires burn into very dense P=J, what strategies can be devised to help avoid non-native annual understory return and also to help vegetation to move toward native perennial plants

Making prescribed fire and fire surrogates (thinning etc) more available as a tool for BLM and USFS

Public safety – WUI projects are very valuable for human protection/property protection

Get monitoring into the funding equation.

Must consider states role in fire management. Some states have no option other than full suppression.

Recognition of differences between various ecosystems with respect to fire management strategies
Need for additional public education/community outreach regarding the nuances of too much fire/too little fire
Impact of climate change

Balancing the need for fire (for the ecological and economic good it performs) with the need to suppress or control fire

Causing fire presuppression, fuels management, fire control & management and Rx Fire to, in combination, increase the resilience of the many ecological sites in a landscape. Adjust the natural fire regimes into the future sustainable fire regimes given our history and current presence of flammable Invasives and the mix of land uses.

Imbalance in wildfire resource expenditures – more spent of fire suppression Relatively less spent on treatments and improving land health.

Priority Values & Attributes

Do we have good science that will allow Rx burning?
If we don't, how can we get it?
The big question is- do we have the political will that will allow for treatment instead of just postponing big (huge) killing fires

What effect does wild land fire have on the enhancement of the ecosystem? To destroying the ecosystem?
Can it be funded and be effective?

Can we stop the spread of cheat grass?
Riparian, wetland, spring systems are extremely important in GB ecosystems
Priorities must come from the local area

Sage grouse issues – with the elevated federal status under the ESA will be playing a major role in future GB land mgmt

Priority should come locally – not nationally
You need a portfolio of investments across the landscape in all fire adapted ecosystems

How will this strategy address and incorporate risks and priorities of other values affected by fire?

How will the strategy address the current value bias of different vegetation communities?
Resources (healthy landscapes) –is assessing values and change agents through eco-regional assessments how will this be considered?
How will strategy address trade-off in cost from protection through suppression vs. restoration?

What are the values, in terms of bio-diversity, of a particular place on the landscape?
How should various fire management schemes address positive and negative impacts of biodiversity?
How do individual thinning projects or Rx Fire done locally fit into a landscape scale land management process?
How to fund real rigorous monitoring that will allow for better future project design?
How will Cs provide sufficient flexibility to identify small parts of large landscapes where large amounts of biodiversity are concentrated (riparian areas in NV?)

In the Great Basin – water is the most valued resource. So Protection of watershed is critical

Biodiversity conservation should be a priority value in particular riparian areas (4% of the landscapes/80% of the bio diversity in Nevada)
Even though growth/development is currently depressed that is likely to change (resumption of high growth) over next 10-15 years

How can we incentivize the use of livestock to strategically treat fuels in a sustainable manner

How does the increasing competition of unburned woody plants add to the damage from increasing heat for eventual combustion? These combine to accelerate risk to the perennial understory herbaceous plants which are needed to occupy ecological niches so they (to avoid being filled up with non-natives filling a vacuum)

Need to consider: Values or ecological services foregone – requires non-market valuation techniques. Urban interface plays a more important role in terms of values since damages are market valued

Rating and Incorporating Risk

Develop fire science with reasonable standards across boundaries. Can we find consensus to do this? Hint- requires finding middle ground

Known risk and predictable benefits associated with prescriptions: burns & fire surrogates vs. unknown risk and likely only negative impacts associated with uncontrolled wild fire.

Relative risks depend on location & values at those locations. Allow local areas to determine risk and values

WUI
Resource Values
Species- with a focus on habitat

Ranking and priorities need to be nested (local rolled up to state/regional)

What is the desired future condition of a particular place on the landscape in terms of vegetation composition?
What ecosystem services are desirable? Bird diversity? Human recreation? Water availability?

In the interface, rating a risk should consider the threat to firefighters protecting whatever.

Where & under what conditions do we risk transitions across ecological thresholds
When to burn (time is not an if? It's when!) and the time for optimum fire effects or fire damage differs among plant communities

Time Frame

5 years- because things change during that time frame.

5-10 years It takes that long to adjust to new strategies and changing policies and regulations to meet strategies

5 year time frame within context of 50-100 years

10 years with 5 year updated. Conditions (biological, climatic, human) change over time.

10 years – it's farther than we can see
5 year updates – it's a good rotation for self reflection on effectiveness, relevance

25-30 years

50 years – update every 5 years
50 years based on climate predictions
5 year update to deal with political and social issues to incorporate new information

Multiple time horizons

1) Ecological succession (50 years-ish)
2) Event (preceding conditions- weather plus post fire restoration and recovery- (decadal)
3) Planning cycle (1 to 5 years)

100 years – write the Strategy as a PEIS (programmatic EIS) so that smaller time scales and small spatial scale projects can tier off of the master document

From days to centuries, depending upon the question.

Go back to historic fires and give local input highest priority
Keep politics out of it

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

Who stands to benefit
Short term vs. long term

All plus science

Need focus community protection, local ordinances, building codes, and regulations by individuals, developers, and local government?

Coming from a science organization, none of the examples here seem to be explicitly science-oriented? However, a science basis for how questions are asked and how they are answered is important.

Land use Plans, Forest Management Plans, State wide county assessments, Agency FMPs- (most significant)

All of these can feed the strategy – but their significance in decision making should be relevant to their significance on the landscape relative to risk. A CWPP community may not be in need of funding if it is in a low risk area but a non CWPP community in chaparral may need help to survive

Eco-regional Assessments
RMPs through fire plans – may reflect past conditions (use if current 0-10 years)

How will local jurisdictions be given flexibility to address local (or state and regional) issues concerning fire management?

How can existing docs/plans be used in future plans? In an effort not to reinvent any existing wheels?

All these interests (behind plans etc) need to talking all the time to keep informed of changes.

The existing plans should be used as a foundation to build on if they meet important criteria – are they broadly based?

All things considered – most significant issue

How to remove politics and home rule from the planning and implementation?

Ecosystem protection and enhancement
Funding of projects and funding of people to implement protection and enhancement.

Maintenance & restoration of the ecological integrity and evolutionary capacity of GB ecosystems to (sagebrush, PJ, riparian etc) adapt to climate change

How do we get the public to accept even more smoke?
How much wild land fire for resource benefit can we stand?
How much prescribed fire (and mechanical) will we fund?
How many suppression resources do we need/want? When to replace the aircraft fleet?
What are we going to do about housing codes & defensible space codes on a national scale**?**
What are we going to do about P-J expansion in the next five years?

Integration of strategies/plans across jurisdictions/disciplines to leverage resources

How new strategies will address the need to employ treatment son the land (hand cutting, prescribed burns etc to affect the ecosystem restoration rather than continue with the existing model where large amounts of money are spent on putting out a fire than some minor reveg effort.

How will strategy address 2 part question- (1) what is desired future condition within an ecosystem (sagebrush, comfier forest, or riparian corridor) (2) what is the desired future condition in the WUI. – and then how to arrive at both.

Protection of watersheds

The need for integration across & within organizations & disciplines
Firefighter safety

Resilience – In fires where fire use is used as a tool to treat vegetation for net benefit, there may be (often are) areas of need for ESR because of we do not , we create some areas of highly flammable vegetation.
Perennial grasses & root turnover add to soil carbon (carbon sequestration) woody fuel that will burn is temporary

Economics