

Public views of fuels management in the United States: Research findings on social understanding, beliefs, and practices

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The active involvement of the public is central to efforts to reduce the wildfire hazard. As such, understanding their relevant beliefs and expectations-of the landscape and of land management agencies-is crucial information for managers in developing effective fire management plans. With the advent of the National Fire Plan in 2000, significant research attention has begun to be paid to understanding the social dynamics of fire management in the United States. This presentation will present key findings from over a dozen studies conducted as part of an NFP funded project that examined public understanding and preferences in relation to wildfire and fuels management. Topics explored include what influences homeowner willingness to mitigate wildfire hazard on their property, what elements make prescribed fire and mechanical thinning more or less acceptable fuels management practices, how different demographic characteristics shape beliefs, and how the public responds to post-fire restoration efforts. Findings from the studies, which are ongoing, will provide fire managers, planners, and educators at the national, state, and local level with useful guidelines about the most effective means of fostering public support for and participation in pro-active fire management activities.

Translating science into practice - ecological bushland management