

Foreword

1st Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference: Fuels Management—How to Measure Success

Patricia L. Andrews, Conference Chair

The 1st Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference: *Fuels Management—How to Measure Success* was held in Portland, Oregon, March 28-30, 2006. The International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF) initiated a conference on this timely topic primarily in response to the needs of the U.S. National Interagency Fuels Coordinating Group (www.nifc.gov/fuels).

Fuels management programs are designed to reduce risks to communities and to improve and maintain ecosystem health. The conference addressed development, implementation, and evaluation of these programs, with a focus on *how to measure success*. The scope included not only the *how to*, but also the *what* and *why* of fuels management.

The 500 conference participants represented a wide range of organizations, disciplines, and countries. The conference program included workshops, invited speakers, oral and poster presentations, panels, and vendor displays.

Rather than having a single keynote speaker set the tone for the entire conference, each day began with invited speakers who presented a range of viewpoints. Topics included a broad view of fire as it relates to other “disasters,” fire as an ecological process, and fuels management policy and direction of U.S. federal agencies, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and Europe.

Panels addressed two key topics: “Wildland fire use: it’s not just for wilderness anymore” and “How do we define success in fuels management?”

About 250 people took advantage of the optional pre-conference workshops. They attended several of the 10 workshops that described and demonstrated computer systems, models, and methods that can be used in support of fuels management. The short workshops showed how to get additional information, publications, and computer programs.

In addition to the seven invited speakers, there were 151 presentations (97 oral and 54 poster). Presenters described their research and experience on topics including

- modeling, risk assessment, and decision support systems,
- fuel characterization and mapping,
- fuel treatment and prescribed fire,
- fire ecology and fire effects,
- economics and biomass utilization,
- communication and collaboration, and
- case studies.

Sixty-five of the presenters elected to submit a paper for the published proceedings. Some of the papers will also be in a special issue of the International Journal of Wildland Fire. Titles and authors of presentations without papers are listed in the appendix to give an indication of the scope of the conference.

The published proceedings is a partial record of the conference content. An important element was the interactions and sharing of information that occurred outside of the formal presentations. Many of those who responded to the after-conference survey listed “networking” as one of the most valuable aspects of the conference. They noted the mix of managers, researchers, academia, practitioners, and policy makers. The field of fuels management will undoubtedly benefit from the many personal contacts made at the conference.

Special thanks are owed to the steering committee, who formulated the structure of the conference, and to the conference organizing committee, who planned and implemented details of the conference. The conference was a success due to the contributions of dedicated individuals.

Conference Chair:

- Patricia L. Andrews, USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Lab, Fire Behavior Research, Missoula, Montana

Conference Co-chair:

- Elizabeth Reinhardt, USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Lab, Fire Ecology and Fuels Research, Missoula, Montana

Steering Committee:

- Dick Bahr, National Interagency Fuels Coordination Group, National Park Service
- Jack Cohen, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Lynn Decker, The Nature Conservancy, Global Fire Initiative
- Nathalie Lavoie, British Columbia Ministry of Forests and Range
- Carol Miller, Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, RMRS, Missoula
- Steve Taylor, Canadian Forest Service

Conference Organizing Committee:

- Bret Butler, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Michelle Ekstrom, State of Montana
- Bill Gabbert, IAWF Executive Director
- Dan Jimenez, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Matt Jolly, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Ed Mathews, Fire Ecology and Fuels Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Mikel Robinson, University of Montana, Continuing Education
- Jen Schimmenti, The Nature Conservancy
- Diane Trethewey, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Paul Woodard, IAWF officer, University of Alberta