Designing fire adaptation pathways: One size does not fit all

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Broad team goals

• How does local context enable or constrain fire adaptation at multiple scales?
• Creation of considerations, processes that facilitate co-creation of adaptation “pathways”
• How does social diversity/social fragmentation operate on the landscape?
The Interactional Approach

- Community: emergent and context-specific
- A systematic means for understanding, action
- Developed through 20+ ongoing years of research, existing literature
- Provides a corpus of influences, builds a “narrative” to articulate different “pathways”
A corpus of characteristics

1. Community Identity/collective action
2. Communication networks
3. Presence of local champions
4. Risk reduction initiatives among agencies and locals
5. Local firefighting capacity supported by volunteerism

6. Community organizations (e.g., homeowners’ association)
7. Community fire organizations (e.g., Firewise)
8. Locals understanding of local fire suppression responsibilities and limitations
9. Diversity of people/skills in locality
10. Land use, building or fuels reduction standards

11. Perception and action related to forest health/aesthetics
12. Local peoples’ experience with wildfire
13. Local awareness of wildfire risk
14. Local ability to reduce fire risk
15. Place and community attachment
16. Local independence or distrust of government

17. Local wood products industry
18. Proximity and mill capacity
19. Development patterns/landscape fragmentation
20. Willingness/ability to pay for fire mitigation actions
21. Number of second/seasonal homeowners and turnover rate
22. Amenity migration
Building an understanding

• Could the WUI be understood as a *range of community types*...

• “Community Archetypes”
  ▫ Diverse influences on wildfire, forest management
  ▫ The means to tailor programs, incentives
Rural lifestyle WUI communities

Formal community units
(e.g. subdivisions, gated communities)

Formalized Suburban WUI Communities

High amenity, high resource WUI communities

Working landscape/Resource dependent WUI Communities

Informal community units
(e.g. drainages, resident relationships)

Dayton, WA
Linden, AZ
Entiat, WA
Three Creek RFPA, ID
Black Canyon RFPA, ID
Kacee, WY

Rancho Santa Fe, CA
Auburn Lake Trails, CA
Caughlin Ranch, NV
Heatherlands, ID
Starweather, ID

Bend and Sisters, OR
Leavenworth, WA
Applegate, OR
Schweitzer, ID
McCall, ID
Timber Lakes, UT
Lost Driveway, WA

The North Fork, MT
Grizzly Flats, CA
Pinetop, AZ
Show low, AZ
Woodland Park, CO
Pateros, WA
Story, WY
Mink Creek, ID

Dayton, WA
Linden, AZ
Entiat, WA
Three Creek RFPA, ID
Black Canyon RFPA, ID
Kacee, WY

Alta Lake, WA
Whitefish, MT
‘Old Town’
La Grande, OR

Diamond Lake, WA
Wilderness Ranch, ID
Chilliwist, WA

Methow Valley, WA
Cave Junction, OR
Hayfork and Weaverville, CA
Roundup, MT
From theory to practice

• Pathway considerations as process:
  1. Catalog combo of local context
  2. Articulate consistent narrative
  3. Compare with similar communities
  4. Enact tailored pathways components

• Broad categories, sub-considerations
Select case studies

- “Road show” interviews
- Selection of unique, place-based challenges
- Initial case studies to understand
- Tailored, co-managed research to explore process

1. Lost Driveway
2. Virginia Ridge
3. Mission Restoration
4. Ponderosa community
5. Kittitas Fire Adapted Communities Coalition
6. Stemilt “no man’s land”
Ex. 1 Methow Valley fuel treatments

Lost Driveway Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project

Virginia Ridge Forest Improvement Timber Sale

Mission Restoration Project
Matching treatments and contexts

- “Community” variation and values
- Support, opposition stems from alignment with local culture

  - **Lost Driveway:** Light prescriptions preserved aesthetics, recreational opportunities
  - **Virginia Ridge:** Concern over forest aesthetics, commercial harvest
Overarching lessons and considerations

- Aligning community and professional values
  - Lost Driveway categorical exclusions
  - But are the treatments enough?

- Transparent decision-making processes
  - Experts and disputes over science
  - Narratives and conflict

- Co-management circumstances
  - Less necessary when high support
  - Dialogue needed for complimentary actions
Phase II: Aiding ongoing process

• Partner with DNR, NRCS, local coordinators

• Empower local, applied research
  ▫ Phase 1: Case studies of local context
  ▫ Phase 2: Focus group planning for strategic fire adaptation processes

• Engage broader assessments
Example 2: KFACC co-management

- Formed May 2017 discussions about coordination, planning
- Jolly Mountain Wildfire
- 15 regular attendees, ~50 supporting
- Meet once a month
Approach and engagement

Three phases:

- 27 semi-structured interviews
- Two workshops
  - 1st: 18 KFACC attendees
  - 2nd: 16 KFACC attendees
- Upcoming surveys, community focus groups
KFACC roles

- A translator between agencies, state, the public
- Building shared narratives
- Utilizing unique advantages
  - Local watchdog
  - Superordinate leverage
- Building FAC support in diverse, challenging conditions
Workshop 1: strategic plan review

- Pre-workshop survey

- Three foci of the 2017 plan
  1. Fire Adapted Communities
  2. Landscape resiliency
  3. Wildfire response and responder safety
Prioritizing common purpose

- Two priority actions for each category:
  - Fire adapted communities
    - Better catalogue, engage diverse populations
    - Create capacity, pipeline for diverse projects
  - Fire Resiliency
    - Comprehensive data, criteria on fuel treatments
    - Investigate, experiment with barriers to fuel treatment
Workshop 2: Diving deep into context

• Identify unique populations
• Co-develop tailored next steps for adaptation
Workshop 2: Example outcomes

- **Upper Kittitas County**: Home hardening or building code rigidity; resident outreach info on incentives or private mitigation

- **Cle Elum Ridge (North)**: Evacuation planning due to limited ingress/egress; expanded prescribed burning; defensible space

- **South Cle Elum Ridge**: Evacuation preparation; coordination for large fuel break incorporating efforts on private properties and roadsides

- **Less adaptation**: Vantage/Auvil Ready, Set, Go! and evacuation planning; addressing transient populations and language barriers; secondary focus on fuels reduction
Additional partnerships

- Landowner surveys near landscape fuel treatments
  - Geographic sample of diverse populations
  - Adaptation attitudes, mitigation actions, support for ongoing management options

- Analysis of past treatment proximity
Challenges, Opportunities & Growth

• Coalitions are not static; People change, landscapes change

• Collaboration is not mutually exclusive with agreement

• Transparency
Deepening the practice

• Research that reflects the question(s)
  ▫ Frameworks that allow for generalizable lessons
  ▫ Efforts that help people chart their own path

• Fire adaptation: A negotiation, not an answer

• Developing considerations, exploring processes allows for community development
Questions?

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