FIRE SAFE COUNCILS IN THE INTERFACE: The Role of Community Participation in Fire Hazard Management
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OUTLINE

1. WHY ARE COMMUNITY FIRE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS IMPORTANT TO LANDSCAPE SCALE FIRE MANAGEMENT?

2. THE WILDLAND COMMUNITY INTERFACE AS A SOCIAL INTERFACE

3. CONTRIBUTIONS: DEFINING THE WUI

4. BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

5. CHALLENGES FOR FSC
   • FUNDING
   • INSTITUTIONAL LEGITIMACY
• Landscape scale approach to fire management is important.
• Landscapes are divided into jurisdictions that fire doesn’t recognize – fires keep on burning.
• Property boundaries and communities are barriers to fire management.
THE WILDLAND COMMUNITY INTERFACE:
WHERE PEOPLE LIVE AND MANAGE LAND
Challenges of Fire Management in the Wildland Community Interface

• Different landowners have different goals for land management – PRIVATE PROPERTY
• Landowners, tribes, and community members do not automatically trust one another or the perceived “authorities”.
• Federal land managers and fire professionals may see “THE PUBLIC” as a problem
• Fire managers on public lands are spread thin...

Sue Daniels put this into perspective ... two staffers
San Diego: six firemen for 49,000 parcels....
The Social INTERFACE
Federal State and Local
Land and Fire Management Agencies

FSC, Tribes & Other Community Organizations

Communities, Neighborhoods, Landowners, Individuals
Community Capitals Framework Flora and Flora, 2008
http://www.soc.iastate.edu/staff/cflora/ncrcrd/capitals.html
Types of Social Capital

Bonding – within groups

Bridging – between groups

Networking -
  • Building Trust
  • Information sharing
  • Joint Fact Finding and
  • Learning Networks
Data Sources:

1) HSU Survey of Fire Safe Councils:
   • 70 FSC contacted and survey mailed between July, 2006 and January, 2007.
   • 28 FSC (40%) responded by March, 2007
   • Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and qualitative content analysis.

2) Follow up interviews with research with Fire Safe Councils around the state by Jenny Mayberry and Michelle Fuller, Environment and Community Graduate Students at HSU

3) Review of Minutes and reference materials from the California Fire Safe Council

4) Discussion with TCFSC representatives on Draft 2010 CWPP (Pat Frost and Kelly Sheen)
Fire Safe Councils in California

There are ~ 200 active FSC in CA
(over 50 in San Diego County alone)

The groups are very diverse
• Large countywide, small neighborhood, urban, rural...

They have in common:
• Located in the WUI or Wildland Community Interface
• Largely Volunteer
• Focus on protecting communities and reducing losses from wildfires
FSC Collaborate with Federal, State and Local Partners

Number of FSC

BLM  USFS  NRCS  USFWS  NOAA  CDF  DFG  TRIBES  COUN.  MUNIC.  OTHE.  VOL FD  LOCA.
WHAT ACTIVITIES DO FSC SPEND TIME ON?

- FUEL REDUCTION (41%)
- PLANNING (23%)
- NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH (10%)
- WORKING WITH OTHER GROUPS (14%)
- PUBLIC EDUCATION (8%)
- PUBLICATIONS (4%)
FSC CAPACITIES  Strategic Planning

Issue:
• CWPP – 64% complete (n=18)
• Data gathering and GIS mapping for local area (topography, roads, hydrology, vegetation types, fire history, structures, hazardous materials storage, community specific data e.g. public facilities; WUI, utility lines, water tanker access points, helicopter landing sites);
• Strategic fuel reduction planning including project identification and prioritization;
• Evacuation route plans, installation of address and road signage;
• 911 emergency system development or enhancement

Mechanism/Type of Activity (more interactive)
• Meetings;
• Trainings;
• Workshops e.g. collaborative review of mapped data; joint prioritization of projects to be implemented;
• Field trips;
• Hire consultants and expert advice;
• Fundraising for VFDs, radio equipment etc.;
## FSC CAPACITIES: Public Education and Outreach Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Mechanism / Type of Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wildfire - fire ecology, fire behavior; fire danger;</td>
<td>Brochures, Newsletters, Press Releases, Newspaper inserts, Mailings, Information binders, Refrigerator magnets, Websites, Videos;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire services - how much can your government do for you? red rock, green rock</td>
<td>Advertising slides, clips at local movie theaters</td>
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<td>Defensible space - legal requirements, different approaches to maximize safety and privacy –</td>
<td>Presentations to homeowner associations, civic clubs, schools;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment - how to use a chainsaw;</td>
<td>FSC meetings and Town Hall meetings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to do fuel reduction - how to thin; how to pile and burn;</td>
<td>Booths at fairs, community events; Picnics and BBQs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire safe home building materials - roofing, decks, eaves;</td>
<td>Door to door canvassing and advising for individual homeowners;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping - fire safe landscaping,</td>
<td>Workshops and trainings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness - how to protect your home, family and pets;</td>
<td>Field tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance options;</td>
<td>Microchipping pets and livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evacuation - how to prepare, family contacts; what to bring if you need to leave in a hurry, what to expect, what to do;</td>
<td>Emergency response booklets with maps and locally relevant data for ICS teams</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Active role in evacuations</td>
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Fuel Reduction & Fire Management

25,647 ACRES TREATED

- 25,647 TOTAL ACRES
- 21870 7 FSC Treat 1000 acres or more
- 3496 9 FSC Treat 100-999 acres
- 281 7 FSC Treat <100 acres
### FSC Capacities Fuel Reduction and Fire Preparedness Activities on Private and Public Land

#### Issues
- Homeowner assistance with regulatory compliance, (e.g. CA Forest Practice Rules);
- Agency assistance with NEPA;
- Thinning and brushing;
- Masticating, lop and scatter on site;
- Chipping and slash removal e.g. to biofuels plant;
- Trash removal
- Use of prescribed fire;
- Water source development and access points;
- Community Fire Patrols, fire danger flag warning systems

#### Mechanism/Type of Activity
- Community/neighborhood work days;
- Community competition for the best defensible space...
- Volunteer, CCC or hired crews;
- Shared equipment (chippers)
- NEPA analysis teams
What can community collaboration achieve?

• Planning – CWPP

• Preparedness: public education, home hardening, fuel reduction for defensible space

• Forest restoration and fuel reduction activities

• Use of local knowledge and skills, creativity, sustained commitment are keys to community preparedness
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH LANDSCAPE SCALE FIRE MANAGEMENT????

TC FSC CWPP COMMUNITY MEETINGS 2010

Photo Credit: Trinity County Fire Safe Council
Trinity County FSC Draft CWPP
WUI Definition

1. Clear Purpose and goals for definition
   • For identification of forest health and fuel reduction activities – NOT for other planning applications, zoning, subdivision; not for insurance purposes
   • Landscape changes, values change – WUI to be reviewed at least every 5 years

2. Transparent definition and process of identification
   • FSC Team combined CALFIRE (FRAP), USFS, BLM definitions of WUI
   • Many community meetings to fine-tune this boundary with local weather, water supply etc.
   • Meetings with fire managers and feedback from industrial landowners incorporated
   • Final meeting with everyone interested
   • Public comment period on CWPP to April 21
Trinity County
2,048,000 million acres
(3,200 square miles)

Federal Land: 1,495,040 acres (73%)

DRAFT CWPP Proposed WUI:
838,650 acres
Federal Land: 554,072 acres
Private Land: 284,578 acres

Even in remote, sparsely populated Trinity County the WUI is huge!

SOURCE:
Trinity County Fire Safe Council
DRAFT 2010 CWPP
http://www.tcrccd.net/fsc/index.html
Projects
Examples from Butte County FSC
(Spring 2011 Newsletter)

Chipper program continues to help

Chipper? 877-0984 Get Fire Safe!

The Chipper Program has been operating since 2001 and has provided service to more than 4,000 requests. Call today to request chipper services!

Upper Ridge Shaded Fuel Break II
Project areas: Skyway, Humbug Road and Fir Haven Development Area

Project Quick Facts
- Goal: Safe evacuation and firefighting defense line.
- Began: November 2010
- Completion: June 2011
- Participants: 20+ landowners
- Partners: PG&E, Butte County Public Works, Butte County Air Quality Management District, CalFire, Bureau of Land Management.
- Techniques: Mastication, chipping and pile burning.
- Funding: US Forest Service

Legend
- Project Roads
- roads_buds
- parcel

ABOVE: Chairman Darrel Wilson helping coordinate fuel break work.

BELOW RIGHT: Skyway as it looked before and after the project.
Challenges from the FSC Interface

1. FUNDING --- Role of California Fire Safe Council

2. Legitimacy, Recognition of Local Potential
The Fire Safe Council Inc.

- Purpose and Goals of CFSC:
  - Mobilizing Californians to protect their homes, communities and environments from wildfire
  - Grants Clearinghouse for Federal (BLM, USFS) funds for Fire Management

(http://www.firesafecouncil.org/find/index.cfm)
How well does the CFSC serve FSCs?

Grants Clearing House:

- Created as an easy one stop shop for FSC – intent to make federal funding more accessible

- 2009 Audit of CFSC Clearing House 2001-2009 Business practices was all clear

- It is working
Lingering concerns about transparency

- According to a review by Robin Yonash (Greater Colfax Area FSC) of documents requested under FOIA

- CA FSC Analysis of Clearing House Grant Recipients 2001-2009
CFSC Inc. Clearing House Distribution of Funds 2001-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County/Area</th>
<th>Total $</th>
<th>%</th>
<th># Councils</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SoCal</td>
<td>22,905,026</td>
<td>30.90%</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra</td>
<td>22,660,247</td>
<td>30.57%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>22,226,075</td>
<td>29.98%</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahoe</td>
<td>1,979,939</td>
<td>2.67%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transparency?
Efficiency, Effectiveness, Equity?

How much money is being awarded?
• $3.8 M were awarded in 2001
• $63.1 M were awarded by CFSCI 2003-2009
• $20.3 M were awarded in 2009 by July

There are 58 counties in California
• 50% of funding has gone to 10 counties
• 11% has gone to San Diego Siskiyou 6%;
• 38 counties have received 1% or less

Which organizations are being funded?
• 262 different organizations received funds between 2001-2009.
• “Over time the number of organizations receiving funding is not expanding in proportion with the amount of funding.
• For example from 2008-2009 the amount of funds increased by 54% but the number of organizations went up by only 23%” (CFSC Analysis 2010)
• 21 organizations (4.1%) received 39.5% of the funding
CFSC Inc. BOARD
The Board of Directors is self selected

CFSC Inc. STAFF
Executive Director;
grants and business managers;
data entry staff
How might the a California-wide organization best serve FSCs?

A new organization is forming: The Fire Safe Communities Association

http://firesafecommunitiesassociation.weebly.com/

Seeks to bring fire safe councils and fire safe organizations together as a mutual support system.
What is happening on the ground?

• Role of local community in fire response???
• Equipment operators?
• Liability Insurance?
• Incident Command System
• Local Training?
Why not use collaborative processes for landscape scale fire management?

• Many different skills, capacities can be combined...

• Why not try it, pilot it somewhere?

• Precedents?

• Sustained Yield Unit (SYU) Act of March 29, 1944 (58 Stat. 132; 16 U. S. C. 583-5831),

  “to stabilize communities, forest industries, employment, and taxable forest wealth; to assure a continuous and ample supply of forest products; and to secure the benefits of the forests in the regulation of water supply and stream flow, prevention of soil erosion, amelioration of climate and preservation of wildlife.”