Landscape Level Fire Planning Efforts on the Six Rivers National Forest

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Six Rivers National Forest

Fire Ecology Symposium
General Overview of Six Rivers National Forest

USFS Fire Policy

Landscape Level Planning
Six Rivers National Forest

Supervisors Office: Eureka, CA

• Four Districts:
  • Smith River NRA
  • Orleans/Ukonom Ranger Districts
  • Lower Trinity Ranger District
  • Mad River Ranger District

The Forest lies within the following Counties:
• Del Norte
• Siskiyou
• Humboldt
• Trinity.

There are many miles of anadromous fish bearing streams, including the following rivers:
• Smith
• Klamath
• Salmon
• Trinity
• Van Duzen
• Eel
• Mad River.
Two major forest types exist on the Six Rivers

- Douglas-fir/Tanoak/Madrone
- Douglas-fir/Pine/Madrone
Fire Policy

“Fire as a critical natural process will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale, and across agency boundaries. Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of fire. The circumstances under which a fire occurs and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and values to be protected dictate the appropriate management response to fire.”

Management Intent:
The LRMP will define and identify fire’s role in the ecosystem. The response to an ignition is guided by the strategies and objectives outlined in the LRMP or the FMP.

Values to be protected from and or enhanced by wildland fire are defined in the LRMP or FMP.

Planning is coordinated across jurisdictional boundaries.

Revised Policy Guidance


Revised Policy Guidance

Major Changes:

• Terminology: Wildland fire - any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland.
  - Wildfires – Unplanned ignitions and planned ignitions that are declared wildfires.
  - Prescribed fires – Planned ignitions.

• A wildland fire may be managed for multiple objectives
A National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

- All Lands Approach
- Vision for the next Century:
  - “Safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a Nation, live with wildland fire.”
- Greatest Challenges:
  - Restoring & Maintaining Resilient Landscapes
  - Creating fire-adapted communities
  - Responding to Wildfires
- Seeks to build stronger collaborative relationships
Cohesive Strategy – Goals & Performance Measures

- Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.
  - Decreased Ecosystem Risk as measured by LANDFIRE, Fire Regime Condition Class, FRID, etc.
- Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.
  - Communities have mitigation plans with planned and/or completed treatments
- All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.
  - Annual agreements, operating plans, shared training
Cohesive Strategy – Scalable

- Local
  - MCKWC, Orleans – Somes Bar FSC, Orleans VFD, Individual Homeowners

- Regional
  - Tribes, State Forestry Organizations, Prescribed Fire Councils, Environmental Organizations, Individual State and/or National Forests and Parks.

- National
  - National Incident Management Organization (NIMO), Federal Agencies (NWCG), DHS, FEMA
• Regions will identify “a portfolio of activities that address social and environmental values risks and investments and will document progress and accomplishments.”

• Regional strategies “will be used to inform a national tradeoff analysis and identify the most effective allocation of funds.”

• “Information is *shared in an upward way* to inform higher level analyses and decision-making. Local values and risks influence regional and national values and risks,” and vice versa.

• Within the regions, “tribal, state, regional and *local interests will be heard and considered* before regional strategies are rolled up into a national strategy.”
Values at Risk: Forest Wide

- Life and Property
- Communities/Homes
- Infrastructure
- Recreation Sites
- Tribal Lands/Cultural Resources
- Municipal Watershed
- Special Habitat
- Fisheries
- Timber
Recent Large Fire History 1970-2009

2000-2009 Fires
• Somes
• Ukonom Complex (2008 Fire Siege)

1990-1999 Fires
• Specimen
• Megram

1980-1989 Fires
• King Titus
• Yellow
• Glasgow

1970-1979 Fires
• Hog

Legend
- 2000-2009
- 1990-1999
- 1980-1989
- 1970-1979
Fire Return Interval Departure

Measure of the extent to which contemporary fires are burning at frequencies similar to frequencies before Euroamerican settlement.
A Change In Vision

Ag. Secretary Tom Vilsack, Seattle, WA - August 14, 2009

“... a vision that conserves our forests and the vital resources important to our survival while wisely respecting the need for a forest economy that creates jobs and vibrant rural communities.”

“... conserving forests isn’t a luxury – it’s a necessity.”

“Restoration is truly the focus of forest management activities in this new era of the Forest Service. Ecological restoration is also on of R5 Strategic Priorities. With that goal in mind, the Six Rivers NF is aligning its strategic planning to encompass this new vision”, Tyrone Kelley, Forest Supervisor
All Lands Vision

“Our shared vision begins with restoration… . Our shared vision adopts an “all-lands approach,” requiring close collaboration …”
At the Forest level, Strategic and Landscape level planning are aligning with the national direction in terms of Ecological Restoration and Ecosystem Resiliency.

The SRNF is currently initiating discussions with potential collaborators across the forest:

- NRA – Gordon Hill
- LT – Waterman West
- MR – Beaver Slide
- OR/UK - OCFR*

District projects have some elements or objectives to protect communities, reduce the risk of fire, and to help improve the resiliency of the landscapes:

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- LT – Waterman West
- MR – Beaver Slide
- OR/UK - OCFR*

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There are many opportunities and applications of the CFLRP across the SRNF.

On the Six Rivers we have been fostering this idea of “Rivers to Ridges Ecological Restoration”.

“Only an environmental restoration program of an unprecedented scale can change the current trend. It will only happen if collaboration is a meaningful process where people with diverse interests share their knowledge to improve outcomes that enhance future decisions for the good of the forest.”
Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program

One of the primary purposes of the CFLR Program is to encourage collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration as a priority for forest landscapes.
CFLR Objectives

- Encourage ecological, economic, and social sustainability
- Leverage local, private, and national resources
- Reduce wildfire costs, reestablishing natural fire regimes \(\rightarrow\) reducing risk of uncharacteristic wildfire
- Demonstrate effectiveness of ecological restoration techniques
- Utilize restoration by-products to offset treatment costs
How do we restore ecosystem resiliency?

How do you reintroduce fire back into the ecosystem?

How are you going collaboratively work with the community?

How do you protect tribal rights and interests?

What are ways to de-couple fuels reduction goals and timber targets so each can be planned and judged on its own merits?
Conifer Plantation Restoration

- Restore stands after aggressive forest management followed by a lack of appropriate investment.
- Many plantations are vulnerable to wildfires
- Treating the overstocking and densities to reduce the risk of stand replacing fires.
- Include areas formerly burned by wildfire
Oak woodlands is one of California’s fastest declining habitats

- Restoring habitat values and improving resiliency to wildfire

- Recondition oak stand resilience to wildfire

- Allow firefighters to manage wildfires in the area with greater success, while providing firefighters with safer areas to tactically engage these fires, all the while improving habitat conditions for a large number of wildlife species
Potential Opportunities

- Restoration treatments would be holistic including restoring understory native plant communities
- A start to restoring fire back into the ecosystem
- Mechanical biomass harvest
- Fire For Resource Benefit and Rx Burning
- Chance for Service First Approach
- Opportunities to work across boundaries
- Treatments by partners in focus area would qualify as 50% match
Here locally, we are still considering a CFLR proposal which focuses on the Lower Mid-Klamath Basin.

**Restoration Efforts Include:**

- Plantations
- Hardwoods
- Watershed Restoration
- WUI area is included

**Reasoning:**

- Very high priority River system
- Potential to coordinate with Restoration efforts associated with the Dam Removal
- Many Potential Cooperators
- Preventative measures are needed if we are to restore ecosystem resiliency
Potential Collaborators

- Communities
- NRCS
- RMEF
- NWTF
- CDA
- MDF
- CDFG
- BLM
- Tribes
- Counties
In summary:

“Safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a Nation, live with wildland fire.

Thank you.