
**IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK
FOR GOAL 3 TASK 2
10-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY**

**PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON THE ECOLOGICAL
ROLE OF FIRE AND THE BENEFITS OF FIRE MANAGEMENT**

PREPARED BY

PARTNERS IN FIRE EDUCATION



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Introduction

Wildland fire management in the United States is becoming increasingly complex and costly due to unchecked growth of the wildland-urban interface, climate change and altered fire regimes across the nation. Compounding these factors is limited public understanding about the ecological impacts and monetary costs of fire exclusion and suppression, and of the critical role of fire in sustaining ecosystems and human values.

Fire managers and scientists are aware of the ecological and social benefits of integrating the role of fire into land management planning. For example, the National Fire Plan is organized around four goals: 1) improve fire prevention and suppression; 2) reduce hazardous fuels; 3) restore fire-adapted ecosystems; and 4) promote community assistance. The National Fire Plan and other fire policies include a full range of ecologically and socially appropriate fire management options, yet public acceptance of alternatives to suppression has not kept pace. Public misperceptions about the risks of wildfire management continue to drive ecologically-inappropriate fire management.

Today much is riding on how Americans perceive fire and the strategic options for dealing with fire. In keeping with the *10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan Update* (November 2006), that is one of the guiding elements of the National Fire Plan, the Partners in Fire Education (PIFE) steering committee¹ was created, bringing over 30 stakeholders together from various governmental and non-governmental fire communities to

Further develop and implement a public education campaign, such as the National Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (NWCG) *Wildland Fire: A Natural Process*, to complement Smokey Bear's message of fire safety. The campaign will emphasize fire's natural role in ecosystems and the benefits of fire management to ecosystems and public health and safety. (Goal 3a, Task 2)

Framework to Implement Goal 3 Task 2

This implementation Framework was developed with the goal of increasing public support for US fire policies and the National Fire Plan, including goal three, restoring fire-adapted ecosystems. The Framework uses findings from recent public opinion research to develop a structure for future communications about fire, and proposes communications modules and organizational options for an effective campaign. A key premise of the Framework is that by using research results of what the public currently knows, a campaign can be developed to tell the "fire story" with language the public understands. The campaign does not require "contrast" messages, because the public has relatively unformed opinions about fire and, according the research, will be able to easily understand management approaches when they are explained to them.

¹ A full list of PIFE steering committee members, extended stakeholders who participated in the workshop and the pollsters and consulting team is provided in the appendices.

The Framework provides general descriptions of the next steps, including a set of modules that can be combined to make up the public education campaign and three options for organizing the campaign. Further work will be needed to fully develop an implementation blueprint for the campaign.

The Framework is organized in six parts:

- I. Research-based Communications
- II. Messaging
- III. Agency Internalization
- IV. Campaign Modules
- V. Organizing Options
- VI. Research Summary and Appendices

I. Research-based Communications

The PIFE steering committee commissioned a two-phased research effort.² The first phase was a comprehensive review of existing survey data regarding public attitudes toward fire. These data included public opinion surveys, results from focused interviews and other qualitative research, and secondary source material describing public attitudes toward fire. Education materials from NWCG, such as *Wildland Fire: A Natural Process* and the 2007 Communicators Guide, were included in the review and key concepts were identified to further test in the second phase.

The second phase was a national quantitative and qualitative survey on attitudes and knowledge about fire's beneficial ecological role. This research included six focus groups and a national survey with regional oversamples. The goals of the second phase research were to establish a baseline of public attitudes toward fire from which to measure future changes in attitudes, and to craft language and messages that increase acceptance of an ecological role for fire. Specific words and phrases were tested with the public in order to learn what language will effectively communicate about fire use.

Five Key Public Opinion Research Findings

- 1) Americans understand that some fires can be beneficial, and that a history of fire suppression has led to more large and destructive fires.
- 2) At the same time, Americans have a strong negative emotional reaction toward fire: they fear for their safety.
- 3) The public's understanding of fire's ecological role has increased over the past years.
- 4) Public concerns about wildfire rank very low compared to other conservation issues.
- 5) Whatever their level of concern about fire, Americans voice more concern about fire's effects on people, including firefighters, than on fire's effects on ecosystems or nature.

² Research was conducted by the Democratic polling firm of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (FMM&A) and the Republican polling firm of Public Opinion Strategies (POS). See the appendices for a full summary of the research and methodology.

The Context for Communication about Fire

The research shows that within the context of all the other concerns and problems people have, the wildfire issue is relatively insignificant. People don't think about fire very much, and usually only when confronted with a wildfire in their area. Relatively few people, including those living in natural areas at risk for wildfires, have had personal exposure to fire, and relatively few personally fear their homes are at risk from a wildfire. However, the notion of uncontrolled fire is scary to them.

The research confirmed that among ecological and environmental concerns, global warming, loss of wildlife habitat, poorly planned growth, and development and loss of forest land are much larger concerns than uncontrollable wildfires, fire management and smoke from fires. Other public opinion research has found that these conservation issues, including global warming and habitat loss, are far down the list of concerns that people have, compared to current issues such as the war in Iraq, the economy, health care, immigration and education.

The research also suggests that the public does not know or care enough about wildfire to form an opinion about fire management. As is discussed in the research summary, a striking number of Americans (45% nationally and 49% in forest wildland-urban interface or WUI) are unsure whether the management approaches described in the quantitative survey (see research summary page 5) would be a step in the right or wrong direction.

The knowledge gap identified in the survey indicates there is opportunity and need for a public education campaign to simply increase awareness before advocating a set of actions as a logical approach. The research indicated that once people get more information on the issue, they move to more support for appropriate fire management actions. For example, after respondents were afforded a longer discussion of the issue and presented with options for fire management, overall support increased from 51% to 65% nationally and from 48% to 61% in forest WUI. More importantly, the "don't knows" dropped by 14 points and changed most dramatically among women in all regions, but especially in the Northeast and Mid Atlantic states. These findings indicate that persuasion and communication can work to close the gap.

Implications for Communications Strategy

The bottom line is that the context for fire messaging is challenging, but there is a fairly strong opportunity to reverse it. However, doing so will require careful word and message choices that respect two key values that cannot be changed by any amount of persuasion: 1) people are more interested in protecting their families and property than they are protecting the health of ecosystems; and 2) people fear fire, and while they recognize it has some beneficial aspects, above all they want potentially damaging fire to be under control.

II. Messaging

The PIFE steering committee and a group of extended stakeholders gathered at a workshop in April 2008 to discuss a messaging tool for use in communicating with the public about fire. The messaging tool is based on the research findings about how the public understands and learns about fire. Following is a brief review of the data used as the underpinnings for the messaging.

Core Message Concepts: Safety and Human Benefits

The research indicates two core messaging concepts for greater success in influencing how the public thinks about fire — safety and human benefits.

The first core messaging concept of the PIFE project is safety, as is standard in today's fire communications. The research shows that the public wants firefighters to do everything possible to keep people safe and try to save all properties. While people recognize that, pragmatically, there will be instances in which not every home can be saved, they want to know that the effort was made. Because they care about safety, people are open to using controlled burns in natural areas to help give every home a greater chance of being saved. They are also willing for fire teams to try to use fire under controlled conditions in order to receive beneficial gains (such as cleaning out undergrowth and fuel, regenerating forests and saving tax money).

The safety message also resonates in the preference for the term “controlled burn” over the official term “prescribed burn,” which only 8% of survey respondents said gave them a favorable impression. The term “proactive burn” was favored by 10% and “managed burn” by 23%, showing increasing comfort with terms that clearly indicate a human role in controlling or managing the fire. Focus group participants indicated that “prescribed fire” did not convey a sense of safety, but that “controlled burn” indicated that someone was in charge and working to minimize damage.

To firefighters the term “controlled” means a control line around a fire (see definition below³). The public understands the word very differently. According to the pollsters:

“Controlled burn” is a crucial emotional gateway to change public perceptions. It links the main value of “control” with the term “burn” that is seen as less destructive and more hopeful than the term “fire.” “Fire” is seen as devastating but “burns” are intuitively seen as events from which there can be recovery and healing. In addition, people understand that some burns can be regenerative in natural areas.

³ CONTROLLED: The completion of control line around a fire, any spot fires there from, and any interior islands to be saved; burned out any unburned area adjacent to the fire side of the control lines; and cool down all hot spots that are immediate threats to the control line, until the lines can reasonably be expected to hold under the foreseeable conditions. From: *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology*.

The second core messaging concept of the PIFE project is that fire should always be talked about within the perceptual frame of the positive benefits it brings to people and communities. Fire messages can harness the beneficial uses of fire for the health of natural areas, as long as the primary goal is the health of human-populated communities. Ecological health of natural areas is a secondary benefit.

The public is also open to using controlled burns and closely monitored naturally occurring fires as a means to protect the health of wild areas that influence the overall health, well-being and quality of life of people (for example, regenerating natural areas that help provide clean air and water). While implementing fire management strategies is a desired outcome of the National Fire Plan and the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, to the public, fire management is simply a means to an end that is judged by its human benefit.

Messages about Fire Management Outcomes

The research indicates greater success in communications if outcomes from fire management strategies are described using the wording shown here:

1. Protecting people, property and communities;
2. Safeguarding the health and regeneration of natural areas;
3. Safely managing controlled burns to clear fuels;
4. Saving taxpayer money through controlled burns;
5. Protecting our air and water by protecting the health of forests and natural areas, and giving plants and wildlife the exposure to fire they need to survive.

Those engaged in implementing the National Fire Plan may be quick to perceive support for maintaining the health of natural areas; however, the fullest picture of how the public sees the issue shows a strong trend in which the health of natural areas is immediately tied to beneficial human outcomes. In short, the messaging needs to be careful to see the forest for the people.

Integrating the two core messaging concepts —safety and human benefits— is the finding that Americans want well-rounded teams of experts to be in charge of fires. Rather than trusting a single individual to manage a fire, they want a team approach that includes many experts, from local fire fighters to meteorologists, so that all aspects of fire will be considered.

The Right Messengers

The research participants provided a very clear picture of who they trust for information about wildfire (see research summary, page 10); how the message is communicated and by whom is critical to success. In the focus groups, the participants described the yellow Nomex® shirt with the green pants; they emphasized that these people are tired and might even still have soot smudges on their cheeks. The significance of this description is that the public wants information from someone on the front lines with local experience. For this reason, effective communications will feature park rangers, firefighters, local firefighters and US Forest Service field personnel talking about the value of fire management actions and demonstrating how and why they are done.

Fire management professionals have a language for communicating with one another about fire that is codified in the NWCG glossary.⁴ One goal of the quantitative research was to learn how to translate technical words into everyday language that resonates with the public. The language below was tested in the research and shown to be effective to communicate fire concepts.

Words to Communication about Fire with the Public

Use:

Instead of:

Natural areas	...Wildland, ecosystem, landscape
Homes near natural areas	...Wildland Urban Interface
Fire teams	...Fire managers, management teams
Controlled burns	...Prescribed fire
Cut/remove overgrown trees/brush	...Mechanical thinning
Managing natural fires where safe	...Wildland Fire Use

⁴ NWCG maintains a glossary of fire terminology to ensure interagency consistency. Public information officers and other communicators are directed to use terms in the glossary. NWCG has a process for submitting and approving changes to the glossary, which anyone can propose. The terms in the box could be submitted to the glossary as appropriate terms to use when communicating with the public.

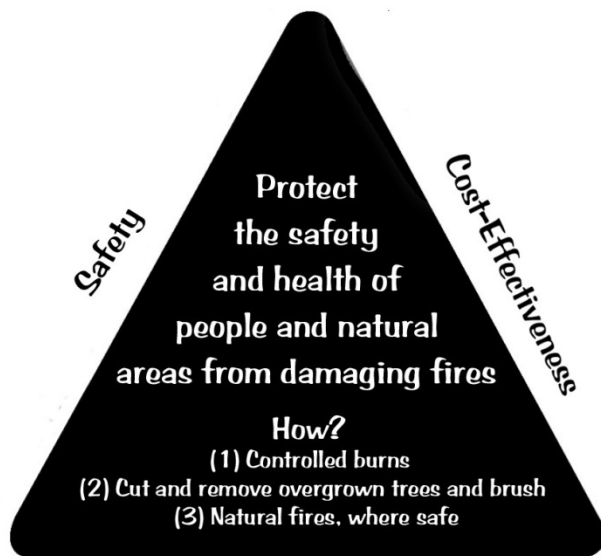
Message Triangle Tool

Building on the research, a “message triangle” was developed that covers the two core messages (safety and human benefits) and the three key arguments that support them (see figure below). This tool is the key message — the first, middle and last thing that should be communicated about the beneficial uses of fire to the general public. The message tool is a visual aid for fire communicators and is not intended as a graphic to share with the public.

The message in the triangle is not “new.” Yet the terms and phrases used and the selected messengers are subtly different and were purposefully selected after analyzing the research results. As highlighted in the core message concepts discussion above, the idea in the center of the triangle is:

Protect the health and safety of people and natural areas from damaging fires.

The main point encompasses elements of the most effective messages from the research, and provides jumping off points for the key three sub-themes: safety, healthy natural areas equal healthy people and cost-effectiveness. The sub-themes, while derived from the research findings, do have a strong correspondence to the NWCG vision and guiding principles. For example, the first two guiding principles in the NWCG Strategic Plan are 1) Safety and 2) Cost-efficiency. The third leg of the message triangle, Healthy Natural Areas = Healthy People, is closely aligned with the NWCG vision statement: “The nation’s resources and communities are protected and enhanced through safe, comprehensive, and cohesive interagency wildland fire management.”



Healthy Natural Areas = Healthy People

The research was used to structure the triangle with broad themes so that communications professionals can more easily use and adhere to the language in the triangle. The parts of the triangle follow a logical progression—the core message statement in the center, and then a directed progression of the top-tested messages and their proof points. The triangle does not include every single statement that every single messenger is ever going to say. It does provide an exclusive list of the key message themes that every messenger needs to be using, and the key support points⁵ s/he needs to make on the themes' behalf.

Each of the sub-themes in the triangle was derived from the polling data. For example, safety is the top priority for everyone and should be addressed before any other concept is mentioned. The poll showed that 86% of the public found the following argument convincing (and 43% found it very convincing):

Safety is always the number one priority when it comes to fire. But, by putting out every single fire, we are actually creating more dangerous conditions. Using controlled burns to thin out overgrowth and carefully managing natural fires helps ensure the safety of neighborhoods in outlying areas.

Human health and community benefit is the best way to talk about the ecological impacts of fire management. For example, the regenerative effects of the Yellowstone fires to our most treasured national park is well recognized among the public and effective when used as a proof point to demonstrate the benefits of fire to people and natural areas. The following message was convincing to 80% of the public (40% very convincing):

Forests and natural areas are important to our health - they act as natural filters to give us clean air, and are the source of our clean drinking water. We must ensure the health of our forests and natural areas by allowing some fires to take their natural course.

Cost effectiveness is also a common concern. Eighty percent of those polled found the following message to be convincing (41% very convincing):

Taxpayer money is being wasted putting out fires that are far from people and their property. A far more cost-effective approach is to use controlled burns to prevent large, severe fires from spreading into areas where people live, and to allow some fires to take their natural course, which costs five times less than trying to put out fires.

Visual aids are also very effective for public communications and several images were tested in the focus groups. Images of regeneration after a fire were widely favored, especially images of re-growth emerging from the understory (see examples

⁵ The full description of “how” fire teams will protect the safety and health of people and natural areas from natural fires, tested in the research, is as follows:

1. Allow fire teams to use controlled burns when and where doing so will safely reduce the amount of fuel for fires.
2. Cut and remove overgrown brush and trees in natural areas that acts as fuel for fires.
3. Allow naturally started fires that do not threaten homes, people or the health of that natural area to take their natural course, rather than putting the fire out.

below). Pictures with animals did not work well, as people were worried about the safety of animals during the fire. Participants also gravitated towards images of fire fighters but did not want to see them out setting fires or working on the fire lines. They wanted to see firefighters after work, smudged, sweaty and in their gear but not in danger. The most effective images show that safety comes first and that fire is a means to an end.

The message tool will only be effective if used by every messenger in every setting—whether it's on television, to a newspaper or to friends at the grocery store. Because fire is not a top rated issue for the public, and communicators may only get one or two chances to deliver a fire message when the public will actually listen, repeating the same message consistently will be more effective. At the PIFE workshop the consultants described their “whack-a-mole” theory of communications: the way to win the prize in the arcade game of whack-a-mole is to keep hitting the same mole hole with the mallet over and over again. This principle also holds true in communications: keep repeating the same message to gain public understanding.

The general themes, words used and message points should always stay the same, even though the reinforcing points of the message may change from audience to audience and may be different across the various fire-adapted regions of America. Not every ecosystem, situation or question requires equal use of all three parts of the triangle, or the tested messages and proof points. But in order for the public to hear these messages clearly, all of the messengers need to be saying the same thing with enough clarity and frequency for the public to hear and understand.

III. Using the Research Findings and Message Tool: Agency Internalization

At the April workshop, the PIFE steering committee and guests discussed several communications modules that could be effective in implementing a public education campaign on fire use. The workshop participants agreed that agency acceptance or “brand internalization” is crucial to success and a top priority before moving forward with other components of an educational campaign.

“Brand Internalization” refers to activities which reinforce the use and usefulness of messages within organizations. Through the NWCG, the wildland fire community already has an established organization to facilitate brand internalization. For example, NWCG provides coordinated policy and program implementation through federal, state, and tribal agencies and organizations. One goal in NWCG’s strategic plan is that “all Wildland Fire organizations share a joint communications plan that is clearly articulated” to promote efficient policy, decision making and management. The first strategy under the NWCG communication goal is to “develop and implement a communications plan for inreach and outreach.” The wildland fire community relies on NWCG to provide consistency, and therefore the success of future public education campaigns needs the acceptance and support of NWCG.

NWCG could help promote interagency acceptance of this public education campaign through several activities, including training for communications professionals, (especially fire information officers/specialists and public relations/communications specialists) on the message framework and its application, and by approving glossary terms specifically for communications with the public (see box on page 6)

Personnel working to apply Appropriate Management Response may benefit from a portion of the internal training portion of this educational program, particularly in regard to firefighter safety and communications about steps taken by fire teams to carefully manage natural fires. Thus, a second effort of brand internalization should focus on firefighting personnel beyond those who work in communications.

Typical brand internalization activities would include development of standard PowerPoint and video presentations that incorporate the messages, training workshops (including “WebEx” seminars), general purpose brochures and one-page documents that can be used in a variety of regions or audiences, and the development of specialized messages reflecting region-specific issues. These activities are necessary for the implementation of future campaign activities, and can be carried out under the NWCG strategic plan goal of communications.

IV. Campaign Modules

The research suggests that consistent and targeted use of the message tool can build support for fire's natural role in ecosystems and the benefits of fire management to ecosystems and public health and safety. Building public support for fire's natural role in ecosystems is included in the strategic plan of NWCG's Wildland Fire Education Working Team (WFEWT) which developed out of NWCG understanding

that successful fire management programs depend on institutional as well as public support, cooperation and collaboration. To foster this support, NWCG formed the WFEWT to provide an effective, interagency education program to communicate wildland fire management issues and messages to various federal, state, and local interest groups and to the general public.⁶

Communications on fire's ecological role is difficult because of the breadth and diversity of the audiences across the nation and the relatively low priority the public places on fire management as an issue of concern. The research suggests, and fire communications experts know from experience, that communication efforts will have to be well coordinated and sustained over years to achieve that support. The research survey identified the public's preferences for various information sources, as shown in the box below. These preferences were used to rank and structure several different campaign modules, including grassroots communications, electronic media, "new media," and "earned media." These modules were reviewed through a facilitated working group process at the PIFE workshop in April, and all were recognized as having value towards reaching the public successfully.

Top-Rated Sources for Fire Information

The quantitative survey asked people where they are most likely to pay attention to information about fire. The results nationally:

- 32% newspaper article
- 16% radio ad
- 13% web site
- 12% newsletter mailed to your home
- 8% brochure or pamphlet
- 8% booth at an event like a fair or farmers' market
- 5% newspaper advertisement

TV was not offered as a choice because the pollsters already knew TV ranks at 80% or higher as an information source.

⁶ WFEWT Strategic Plan. Note that with the planned restructuring of NWCG, the WFEWT is slated to become the Subcommittee on Education, Prevention and Outreach. The Subcommittee is expected to absorb the function and strategies of the WFEWT.

Many activities can be used to apply the research findings and message tools as described in the following section. As funds become available and the communications efforts achieve success in targeted regions, the activities can be expanded in scope and extent.

1). Grassroots Communication

The goal of the grassroots module is to directly reach those most affected by fire use—individuals in at-risk communities—to increase their understanding of fire’s natural role in ecosystems and the benefits of fire management. The emphasis here is on person-to-person contact through door-to-door education, community events, service groups, exhibit trailers, etc. Key partners in this effort will include extension agents and state forestry conservation groups, landowner groups and the ranching community, homeowners associations, watershed councils and local fire districts.

Materials developed for the grassroots communications module are not necessarily expensive, but they will need to be locally specific, reflecting particular issues in the targeted community. Therefore, direct mail newsletters (preferred by 12% of people) brochures and pamphlets (preferred by 8% of people), door hangers, and booths at events etc. (preferred by 8%) will need to be created for each audience. If successful, the grassroots module will result in increased acceptance of wildland fire use in nearby wildlands and increased inclusion of the use of controlled burns in Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

2). Electronic media

Electronic media such as television, cable and radio is the dominant source of information for most of the public. This public education campaign may, at some point, engage electronic media to a greater or lesser degree. The costs are very high, thus television and radio advertising will need to be used sparingly and limited to strategic audiences that cannot be reached through other modules (e.g. recreationists going into public lands, downwind urban areas). The Ad Council, which has supported Smokey Bear for more than 40 years and carried a FIREWISE campaign for two years, could be approached for this public education campaign provided that sufficient funding is available for the upfront production costs.

3). New Media

The internet can be used to communicate with people who are more difficult to reach through traditional means. Thirteen percent of respondents to the survey indicated they like to get information through the web, and that percentage is expected to grow as people seek their news through websites and blogs. Additionally, new media provides enormous capacity to target messages to key demographics and younger Americans. "Viral video"—that is, video clips that people e-mail to their friends—and social networks such as MySpace and Facebook can propagate messages without intervention. In addition to a public website with content tailored to regions or specific audiences, a

private, password-protected website should be maintained to serve as the hub of the communications effort, providing the ability for communicators to customize materials according to local needs and contacts, share best practices and experiences and order customized print on demand.

4). Earned Media

Nearly one third of the public surveyed in the poll said they pay attention to fire information provided in newspapers. This “earned media” includes editorials, op-eds and news stories achieved through traditional public relations efforts and is a logical communications activity that can contribute to closing the information gap. Activities would include editorial board visits, the creation of press packets, VIP events, media tours and placement of op-eds at strategic times prior to and during a region’s fire season.

Table 1. Summary of the Campaign Modules

Description of Campaign Modules				
	Grassroots	Electronic Media	New Media	Earned Media
Objective	Local emphasis to reinforce all other modules	Carry the messaging through TV and radio advertising	Harness power of the internet to spread the message	Earned media as a conduit to get the message to target audiences
Audience	WUI residents, and rural areas and communities with an emphasis on women	TV watchers in poll sub-groups most likely to move, especially women, and WUI residents and forest users	Local communities at risk, educators, NGOs and regionally specific audiences	Newspaper readers including local public officials and policy makers, homeowners and interest groups
Activities	Develop materials for outreach in wide range of community venues, with appropriate timing	Buy television, cable and radio advertising	Develop materials for internet outreach including videos, blogs, quizzes and maps	Consistent press packets, place Op Eds and strategic use of fire season coverage
Partners	Extension services, NACo, local government, federal/state agencies and local organizations	If seeking donated media and no paid media involved- Ad Council	Agencies and NGOs	NGOs, Federal and State agencies
Estimated Unit Costs	\$20-50K to produce a set of multi-purpose message products (video, brochures, etc); \$20K per message training workshop	Alternative 1) If choosing to use only donated media via Ad Council campaign, yearly costs >=\$1M; could receive donated media estimated from \$2 to 30M per year.	\$20-50K to produce message products which can be coordinated with other modules; \$20-30K annual maintenance costs	Module replicates existing approach so earned media does not generate new costs; \$20K per message training workshop
		Alternative 2) the purchase cost for TV/cable/radio range from \$250K/month in Denver to \$40K/ month in Bend. Development of ads can cost \$800K/year		
Expected Outcome Given the Investment	Effective in rural communities; more fire use incorporated in CWPPs	Highly effective at influencing public attitudes but requires very large investment	Reaches new segments of the public that are not reached with current outreach	Existing earned media will be more effective at building public understanding

Organizing Options

The PIFE steering committee felt it was important to suggest some options for how to organize the follow-up public campaign efforts, given that the research indicated the public can be moved by a public education campaign. Some of the PIFE steering committee felt that no further action should be taken unless sanctioned by the NWCG. Others felt a full-blown, independent public relations campaign should be considered. Still others felt the existing PIFE structure of stakeholders working in collaboration could be a workable organizational model for the future. The PIFE steering committee provides three distinct options for consideration, below, and suggests that a hybridization or combination of these options is also viable.

Table 2. **Summary of the Organizing Options**

	(A) Government-run Program Under NWCG	(B) Independent Paid Campaign	(C) PIFE Extension
Overview	NWCG develops a charter and models the marketing effort after the FIREWISE program	Create an independent paid campaign	Continue current model of an <i>ad hoc</i> coordinating group
Structure	Possible subcommittee of task team under the new NWCG Prevention, Education and Outreach Committee	Hire Campaign Director and staff with a board of agencies and stakeholders	Committee of stakeholders and agencies can report to any of the following: WFLC, WGA or NWCG
Staff	Existing agency staff and new contracts	New staff of paid campaign	Existing staff of NGOs and agencies
Strengths	Structure has a successful track record	Highly focused and effective structure	No start up time because structure exists
Concerns	NWCG's oversight may reduce stakeholder participation from current level in PIFE	Connection to NWCG would be harder to establish and maintain	Heavy work load for people and orgs with collateral duties
Cost	Medium (\$250,000/yr in additional staff cost)	High (\$400,000- \$800,000/yr for staff and office)	Low (\$100,000/yr + donated staff time)

APPENDICES

- A. Research Summary
- B. Consulting Team
- C. PIFE Steering Committee
- D. PIFE Workshop Attendees
- E. Marketing Modules
- F. Organizing Options

APPENDIX A. KEY PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE ECOLOGICAL ROLE OF FIRE



*Fairbank,
Maslin,
Maullin &
Associates*

*Opinion Research &
Public Policy Analysis*

TO: Partners in Fire Education

FROM: David Metz
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates

Lori Weigel
Public Opinion Strategies

RE: Written Analysis and Key Graphs Illustrating the Opinion Research Findings Regarding the Ecological Role of Fire

DATE: April 30, 2008

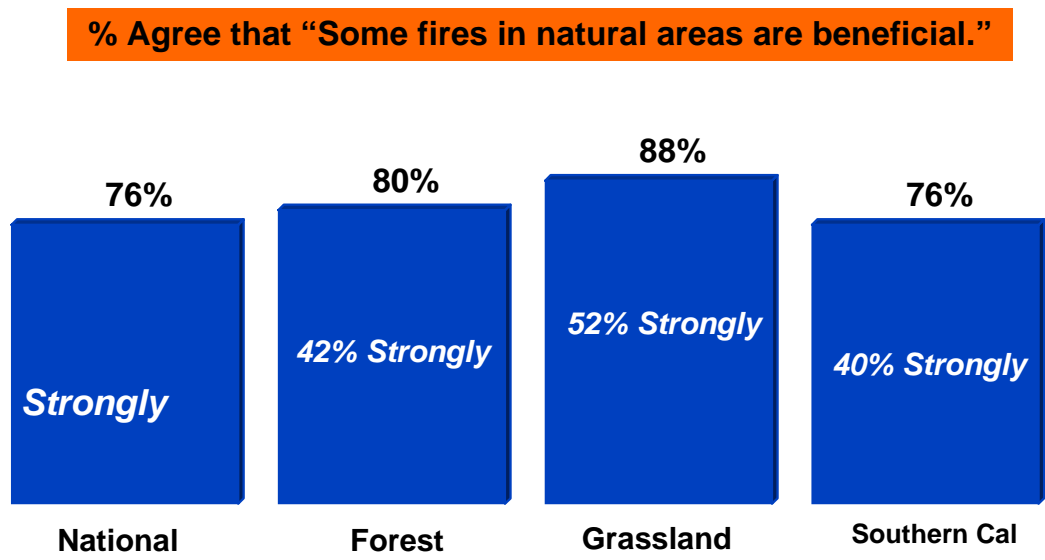
The Democratic polling firm of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates (FMM&A) and the Republican polling firm of Public Opinion Strategies (POS) recently partnered to complete extensive opinion research among Americans regarding the ecological role of fire and various approaches to fire, including a series of six focus group in fire-prone communities around the country, and a national survey of 2,000 individuals. The survey results are drawn from four key samples: a representative national sample of all Americans; and additional samples of residents of fire prone counties near and in forested areas in the Southeast and West; residents of fire prone counties in shrub and grasslands in the Rocky Mountain and Plains states; and residents of Southern California.

The survey had two key goals: 1) to establish a baseline of public attitudes toward fire from which to measure future changes in attitudes; and 2) to craft language and messages that increase acceptance of an ecological role for fire.

Among the key specific findings of the survey are the following:

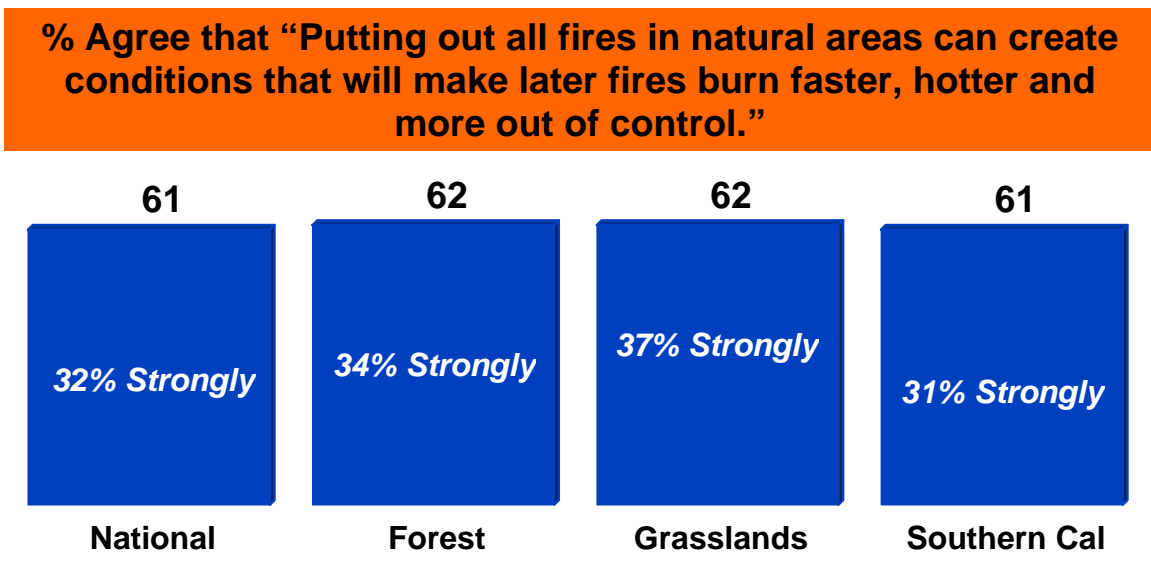
- The public is more sophisticated in its understanding of the ecological role of fire than might have been anticipated at the outset of this project. The following two graphs (Figure 1 and 2) speak to the level of sophistication we found among respondents nationally and in every sub-region. However, it is worth noting that there is a distinct difference in attitudes based on two key factors: 1) the educational attainment of the respondent, with those with higher levels of education more likely to express agreement with these core views of fire; and 2) by gender as women tend to be more risk averse and less accepting of the “story of fire” than are men. So for example, 81% of men agree with the statement regarding fire being beneficial and 71% of women agree with that statement.

Figure 1



- Notably, the focus groups made it clear that people *do* think there are “good fires” and “bad fires.” They tend to view naturally started fires that do not threaten people’s lives or property as “good,” while fires that are started by man or that threaten property, lives or the health of a natural area are almost always seen as “bad.”

Figure 2



- At the same time, fire is still viewed with at least caution if not downright fear. Respondents in the focus groups used words like “panicky” and “devastated” to describe their emotions when thinking about fires in natural areas. When forced to choose, a majority of the American public continues to

side with a viewpoint that emphasizes this “dangerous” perception of fire. This view is relatively unchanged in the last four years.

44% nationally, +4% from 2004

Forest fires are a part of nature. We need to protect communities from fires, but in remote areas we should let fires burn and let nature take its course.

53% nationally, -3% from 2004

Forest fires are unpredictable and dangerous. We need to contain and extinguish fires as soon as they are discovered.

The view that fire is “dangerous” leads to a clear desire to ensure someone is actively attempting to “control” fire. This is reinforced when we test communications that underscore the necessity of reassuring voters regarding safety before other messages are accepted.

- There is growing concern about fire nationally. Today, 56% of Americans say that forest fires are getting “worse,” compared to 48% in 2004.
- Again because we conducted additional interviews in various sub-regions (as noted in the introduction), we were able to examine any distinctions in attitudes based on these geographic regions. More often than not, there were NOT significant distinctions between those living in fire-prone forest areas, fire-prone grasslands areas and the national sample. However, we can note some core distinctions:
 - 1) Southern California shows far greater concern about fire than any other region of the country. They are four times as likely to say their neighborhood has been evacuated (16%, compare to 4% nationally). They are nearly twice as likely to say they worry more about fire today than do adults nationally (46% worry more in Southern California, compared to 27% nationally). In addition, of the various conservation-related issues we tested, only in Southern California does fire top the list of concerns as one can see here.
 - 2) Conversely, the “forest” sample is the least distinct attitudinally, despite including only residents of areas near forested areas and often in counties that might typify the “wildland urban interface” (WUI). While recognizing that this explanation of WUI may be a widely accepted technical definition, it is worth noting that we found “WUI” more to be a state of mind of how people living in a range of places view where they live, rather than a geographically-determined point of view that is unique to people living in similar types of neighborhoods and communities.
 - 3) The “shrub-grassland” respondents are the least concerned of any geographic sub-group about being personally affected by a wildfire. Only 11% say they are worried that their property faces “serious risks from wild fires,” the lowest level of concern of any geographic sub-group. The grassland respondents were also more likely to agree that “some fires in natural areas are beneficial” (88% agree), and are the most supportive of implementing a range of approaches to fire like “controlled burns” in their own state.

Table 1. Summary of Issues Ranked By % Extremely/Very Serious in So. California

Issues	Southern California	National
Uncontrollable wildfires that destroy property and forests	51%	21%
Global warming	48%	40%
Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife	37%	28%
Smoke from fires in natural areas	36%	16%
Loss of forest land	36%	26%
Poorly planned growth and development	33%	27%
Fire management in forests and public lands	32%	20%
Insects and diseases that kill trees	30%	22%
Too much logging of forests	21%	18%

- Despite concerns that fire is generally unpredictable, solid majorities accept approaches to fire that recognize the beneficial attributes of fire for the health of natural areas as long as precautions are taken. Support is significantly higher for the two approaches perceived as being the most pro-active:

90% support, 52% strongly support

Allow fire teams to use controlled burns when and where doing so will safely reduce the amount of fuel for fires.

79% support, 51% strongly support

Cut and remove overgrown brush and trees in natural areas that acts as fuel for fires.

Support is still strong, but less intense for the third and fourth approaches to fire tested:

62% support, 31% strongly support

Allow naturally started fires that do not threaten homes, people or the health of that natural area to take their natural course, rather than putting the fire out.

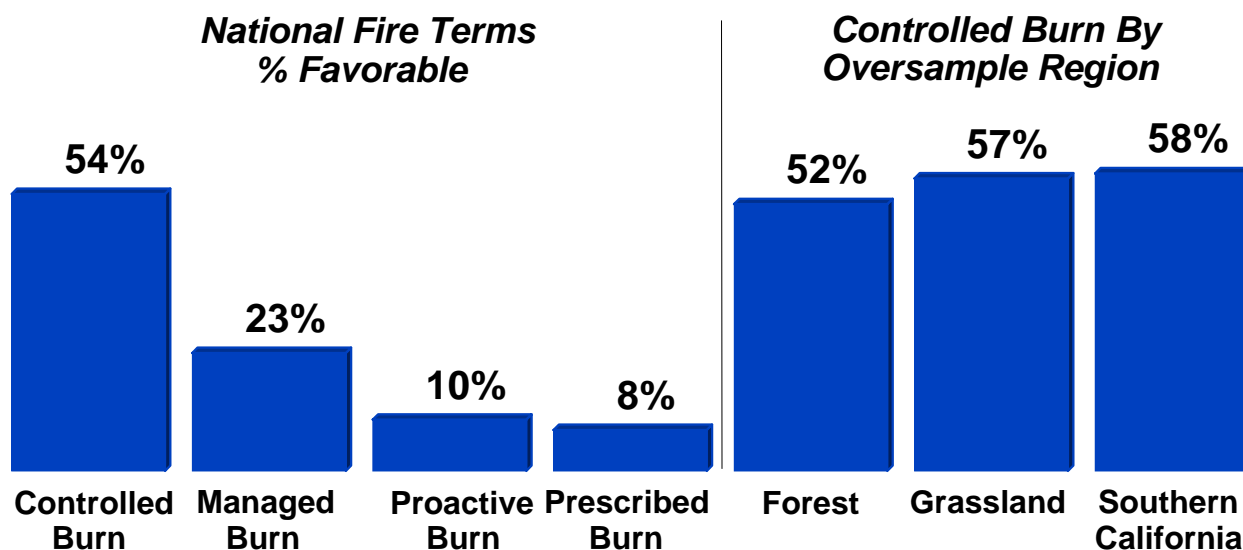
81% support, 44% strongly support

Shifting some existing government funds from putting out practically all fires to pro-actively cutting and removing overgrown brush and trees and using controlled burns to reduce the amount of fuel for fires.

Support for these approaches to fire cuts across most demographic and geographic groups. However, these approaches do tend to generate stronger support levels among men and among those with a college degree.

- In addition, the use of the term “controlled” was tested among the top rated competing phrases from the focus groups, and “controlled” resonates far more strongly than other potential descriptors, as seen in Figure 3. While the public intellectually understands that no one can “control” fire, this does not stop them from wanting to know that someone is *trying* to control it.

Figure 3



- Support for the approach referred to here as a “controlled burn” can vary depending on exactly how it is described and implemented. The following explanation demonstrates the research-based rationale that demonstrates why various terms were used to describe this practice:

Figure 4

The language for “controlled burns” was carefully tested in the focus groups.

Allow fire teams to use controlled burns when and where doing so will safely reduce the amount of fuel for fires.

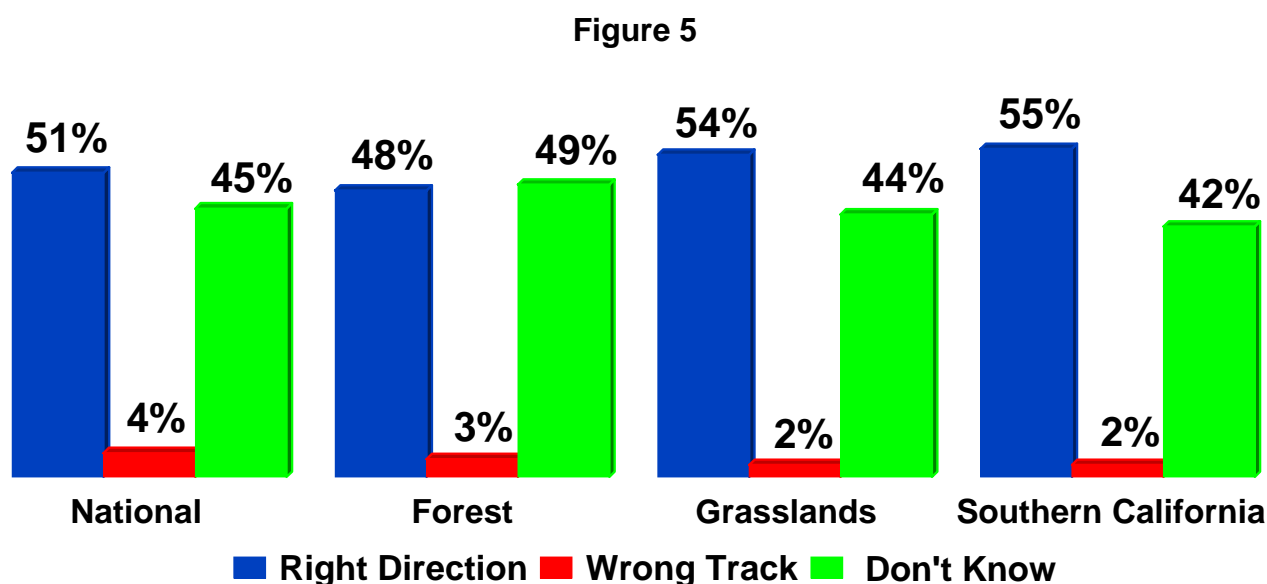
Fire teams – A team of people – forest experts, fire fighters, and even perhaps weather experts – are considered optimal to decide when and where fires can be conducted safely. They do NOT want an individual to make this decision alone.

Safely – Always reassuring that safety is first and foremost in mind is critical.

Burn – Seen as smaller, less “wild” and more able to be controlled than a “fire.”

When and where – Focus group respondents saw many variables as potentially leading to out-of-control fires and want many factors considered.

- It is worth noting that after hearing about these four approaches to fire, a bare majority are willing to go so far as to say that these approaches to fire represent a “step in the right direction” (51%). Only 4% believe it is off on the wrong track, but the remainder – a significant 45% – say they simply do not know enough to say one way or the other. This same dynamic is evident in all of the sub-samples as well as demonstrated in the following graph:



- We learned a great deal about how to more effectively communicate the rationale for supporting these approaches to fire. Survey respondents were offered a series of statements that might be arguments for this four-point approach to fire, and were asked to rate each as either “very,” “somewhat” or “not” convincing. Of a wide array of statements tested, a number rose to the top and provide clear direction on the language and themes which resonate most strongly:

#1 Reassuring people that safety is the top priority is of penultimate importance. One message that captures this concept is that:

“Safety is always the number one priority when it comes to fire. But, by putting out every single fire, we are actually creating more dangerous conditions. Using controlled burns to thin out overgrowth and carefully managing natural fires helps ensure the safety of neighborhoods in outlying areas” (43% say this is a very convincing reason to support this package of approaches to fire).

#2 Including people in the messaging is also important, as the public seeks to understand how this discourse on fire affects them personally. Several of the top-tier statements tested incorporate this “human element” successfully:

“Taxpayer money is being wasted putting out fires that are far from people and their property. A far more cost-effective approach is to use controlled burns to prevent large, severe fires from spreading into areas where people live, and to allow some fires to take their natural course, which costs five times less than trying to put out fires.” (41% very convincing)

“Forests and natural areas are important to our health - they act as natural filters to give us clean air, and are the source of our clean drinking water. We must ensure the health of our forests and natural areas by allowing some fires to take their natural course.” (40% very convincing)

#3 Highlighting the benefit of fire to natural areas is also appropriate. People do value the health of natural areas and we finally found specific language that elicits an overwhelmingly positive response:

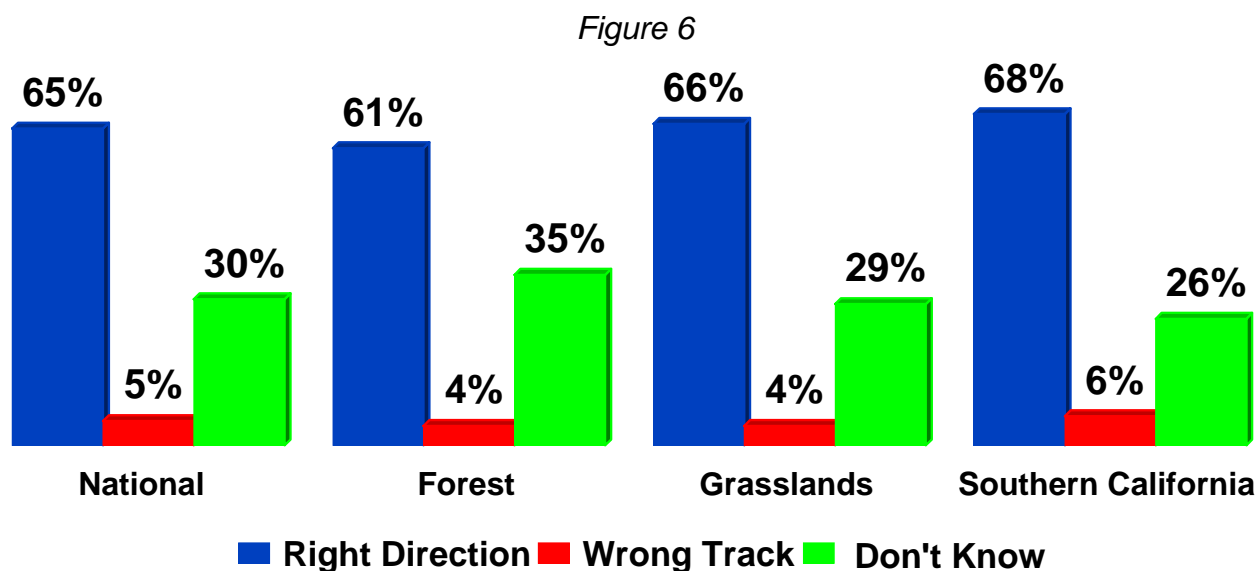
“We know that allowing fire to take its natural course can help the health of our forests and natural areas. For example, the fires in Yellowstone in 1988 showed how natural areas can quickly bounce back rejuvenated with even more wildlife and types of plants than ever before.” (45% very convincing)

“Many types of plants and wildlife need fire to survive. Periodic fire stimulates growth and reproduction of plants, provides wildlife habitat and ensures healthier natural areas near us.” (40% very convincing)

Interestingly, the Yellowstone example was one cited frequently by focus group respondents and was therefore incorporated into the messaging tested.

- These messages do move the needle and increase the perception that these approaches are a step in the right direction. Initially, 51% believe these approaches are a step in the right direction when considered as an overall package. After hearing this additional information, 65% say the same as seen in Figure 6.
- Female sub-groups and people in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states are most likely to increase their feeling that that these approaches are a step in the right direction.
- This information is most effectively conveyed by those that the public perceives as being on the “front lines” – namely, fire fighters and other “experts” who are out in the field and dealing with fire. Interestingly, “local” firefighters tend to be the preferred messenger for respondents who have been evacuated due to fires before.

- One messenger regarding fire issues that routinely came up in the focus groups was Smokey Bear. Smokey's focus on preventing wildfire is not seen as compatible with the message about fire's ecological role. Respondents perceive Smokey to be a messenger targeted to children, and still believe in the overarching, safety-oriented goal of trying to prevent man-caused fires in natural areas.



Groups Most Influenced by Hearing Messages

Category	% Increase in Support after Hearing Messages
Northeast Region Women	32%
Mid-Atlantic Region	30%
Northeast Region	28%
Independent Women	27%
Small City/Rural Women	26%
Women Age 18–54	25%
Women Without Degree	24%
White Democrats	24%
Women	23%
Less Than a Mile from WUI	23%
Motorized Recreation	23%

Summary of Sources of Information by % Very Believable - NATIONAL

Sources of Information	% Very Believable	% Total Believable
Park rangers	76%	97%
Fire fighters	76%	99%
Local fire fighters	61%	93%
State foresters	59%	88%
U.S. Forest Service	57%	91%
University forest science professors	41%	73%
Scientists	37%	81%
Conservation organizations	29%	75%
Hunters and fishermen	25%	66%
Federal land managers	24%	63%

Overall, the research clearly demonstrates that the public is increasingly savvy in its understanding of the core principles supporting the ecological role of fire. At the same time, there is still an emotional response to fire and a sense that fire is unpredictable and dangerous that has held steady over the last four years. Americans solidly back a number of approaches to fire that they perceive as being pro-active and keeping the safety of people and property in mind. They are slightly less comfortable with allowing some fires away from people and property to take their natural course, although more than three in five voters still back the idea. In communicating about these approaches, it is fundamentally important to reassure that safety is a priority; to not lose sight of conveying how this issue affects people, and to demonstrate “success stories” like the Yellowstone example.

Methodology Statement:

FMM&A and POS completed telephone interviews with adults age 18 and older among four distinct audiences: 800 adults nationally, proportionally throughout the United States; 400 adults in fire-prone counties in forested areas in the West and Southeast; 400 adults in fire-prone counties in shrubs/grasslands in the Rocky Mountain and Plains states; and 400 adults in Southern California. Interviews nationally and in the forest sample were conducted February 23-26, 2008, while interviews in the shrubs/grasslands and Southern California were conducted March 11-13, 2008. The margin of sampling error for the national sample is +/- 3.5%, and for the three targeted samples is +/-4.9%. The margin of error for subgroups within each sample will be larger.

Each sub-sample was composed of counties which were selected by the Research Sub-Committee. The explanation for selection is as follows:

FOREST:

To select high fire risk counties in the West, we used data from the Headwater Economic study "Home Development on Fire-Prone Lands West-Wide Summary." The study identified counties with high current-development and future-development potential on lands adjacent to fire-prone public lands. For our sample, we selected counties with at least 20 acres of large areas of developed forested private lands adjacent to the fire-prone public lands.

To select high fire risk counties in the Southeast, we used data for the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SWRA). We selected counties using their Level of Concern (LOC) rating. LOC is calculated as the Wildland Fire Susceptibility Index (WFSI) times the Fire Effects Index (FEI). SWRA uses districts instead of county boundaries so we identified districts with at least 50,000 acres with LOC 0.64-1.36 and at least 100 acres with LOC 14.9-100 and then selected the counties within those districts. In both the west and the southeast, we removed counties with large cities (pop. >150,000).

SHRUB-GRASSLANDS:

To select high fire-risk counties in shrub and grassland areas, we started by examining the LANDFIRE National data. While this data did help to narrow down focal areas within states, the data was either too coarse or did not completely cover grassland areas to be reliable for selection of the final counties. With the focal areas identified, we turned to on the ground fire and conservation professionals. We asked this group to name 5 or fewer counties in the focal areas that they are familiar with that meet the follow three criteria: all or predominantly grass lands or arid lands; rural with no cities or towns over 50,000; high natural fire ignition.

In addition, the survey was preceded by three sets of focus groups among homeowners in the suburbs of major metropolitan areas and in smaller outlying communities. The goals of the groups were to refine language and messages and to inform the content of the survey. The groups were held in Denver, Colorado; Bend, Oregon; and Jacksonville Florida. One group in each location consisted of homeowners who reside in relatively "close-in" suburbs, and/or farther from large, undeveloped natural areas, so that they are not as likely to be personally affected by fire but might see smoke, for example. The other group consisted of homeowners who reside in outer suburban/exurban or even rural areas (depending on the site). These home owners are residing in areas that would likely be considered as WUI.

APPENDIX B. CONSULTING TEAM

Martin Hamburger	The Hamburger Company
Steve Alexander	The Steve Alexander Group
Dave Metz	Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin and Associates
Rich Neimand	Neimand Collaborative
Lori Weigel	Public Opinion Strategies

APPENDIX C. PIFE STEERING COMMITTEE

Greg Aplet	The Wilderness Society
Thomas Atzet	Atzet Ecological Consulting
Maureen Brooks	US Forest Service
Ed Brunson	The Nature Conservancy
Chuck Burley	American Forest Resource Council
Helene Cleveland	US Forest Service
Janean Creighton	Washington State University
Roberta D'Amico	National Park Service
Abby Friedman	National Association of Counties
Tom Fry	The Wilderness Society
Wendy Fulks	The Nature Conservancy
Robin Hanford	The Nature Conservancy
Jay Jensen	Western Forest Leadership Coalition
Chris Lancette	The Wilderness Society
Laura McCarthy	The Nature Conservancy
Karen Miranda-Gleason	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Eleanor Morris	The Nature Conservancy
Cynthia Moses-Nedd	Bureau of Land Management
Zach Prusak	The Nature Conservancy
Tim Radtke	DOI Office of Health and Safety

Catherine Regan	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bob Roper	International Association of Fire Chiefs
Eric Schmidt	Oregon Association of Counties
Sam Scranton	Bureau of Indian Affairs
Sandy Shaffer	Applegate Partnership
Tom Sisk	Northern Arizona University
Don Smurthwaite	NIFC, Bureau of Land Management
Catherine Sparks	Rhode Island DEM Division of Forest Environment
Germaine White	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Hazel Wong	The Nature Conservancy

APPENDIX D. PIFE WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Steve	Alexander	The Steve Alexander Group
Greg	Aplet	The Wilderness Society
Thomas	Atzet	Atzet Ecological Consulting
Dick	Bahr	National Park Service
Carol	Baudler	The Nature Conservancy
Mark	Beighley	US DOI - Office of Wildland Fire Coordination
Sandy	Benson	Nebraska Game and Parks
Ed	Brunson	The Nature Conservancy
Serena	Carlson	Intermountain Forest Association
Helene	Cleveland	US Forest Service
Wally	Covington	Ecological Restoration Institute, Northern Arizona University
Janean	Creighton	Washington State University
Roberta	D'Amico	National Park Service
Joe	Daniels	Oneida County Commissioner, Idaho
Tom	Fry	The Wilderness Society

Wendy	Fulks	The Nature Conservancy
Karen	Gleason	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Martin	Hamburger	The Hamburger Group
Robin	Hanford	The Nature Conservancy
Catherine	Hibbard	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Timothy	Ingalsbee	FUSEE: Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology
Sue	Kupillas	Allied Solutions Kupillas, LLC, former county commissioner
Chris	Lancette	The Wilderness Society
Charley	Martin	US DOI, Bureau of Land Management
Will Gray	May	Alachua County Fire Rescue, Florida
Linda	Mazzu	NIFC- Bureau of Land Management
Laura	McCarthy	The Nature Conservancy
Dave	Metz	Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin and Associates
Sonja	Mitchell	The Nature Conservancy
Eleanor	Morris	The Nature Conservancy
David N.	Mueller	Bureau of Land Management
Rich	Neimand	Neimand Collaborative
Jonathan	Oppenheimer	Idaho Conservation League
John	Owens	NIFC - Bureau of Land Management
Jeannie	Patton	The Nature Conservancy
Bob	Roper	International Association of Fire Chiefs
John	Saddler	Florida Division of Forestry
Max	Schwartz	National Park Service
Sam	Scranton	NIFC- Bureau of Indian Affairs
Leslie	Sekavec	NIFC-USDA Forest Service
Sandy	Shaffer	Applegate Partnership, Oregon

Carl	Skinner	USDA Forest Service, PSW Research Station
Don	Smurthwaite	NIFC - Bureau of Land Management
Catherine	Sparks	DEM Division of Forest Environment
Harry	Steele	Idaho Department of Lands
Victoria	Sturtevant	Southern Oregon University
Diane	Vosick	The Nature Conservancy
Lori	Weigel	Public Opinion Strategies
Hazel	Wong	The Nature Conservancy

APPENDIX E. COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

Following are more details and thoughts about the communications activities developed at the PIFE workshop in April 2008.

1) **Brand Internalization**

The goal of “brand internalization” is to provide initial and ongoing training to federal, state, tribal and local agencies as well as other fire community stakeholders and potential partners—in short, all fire communicators—on the message framework and its application. At a minimum, we want to make sure the new message framework gets out through existing agency communications and education efforts. Creating early buy-in from these key audiences, both internal and external, will be critical.

There was some discussion during the PIFE workshop that many within the fire management community would also benefit by a portion of this educational program and how it relates to appropriate management response, particularly in regard to firefighter safety. Thus, a second effort of brand internalization needs to focus on firefighting personnel beyond those who work in communications, to reach, for example, the interagency Hotshot crews, whose mission has historically been large fire “control.”

Audiences

- Federal Agency Directors
- Elected officials and policy makers at all levels
- All federal land management employees
- Fire Prevention and Education staffs
- State wildfire agencies
- Leaders in local jurisdictions
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- Interagency Hotshot crews and rural fire protection organizations
- Other NGOs

Objectives

- Identify who owns PIFE—who is responsible for funding it, managing it, who has authority (see Section IV. Organizing)
- Agency director buy-in within a period of 90 days
- Legislative action supporting a reallocation of existing dollars to fund PIFE campaign
- Integrate messaging and language conceptually with existing fire management objectives
- Capitalize on administrative changes in NWCG to promote this program
- Build acceptance and support for message within leadership

Partners

- Federal, State, and local agencies, NGOs
- Agency Leadership

- WFLC presentation (June 2008)
- Fire Directors
- Agency Directors
- NWCG

Activities

- Develop a standard PowerPoint presentation
- Develop a standard video presentation on controlling fire
- Provide turn-key collaterals: brochure, one pager, etc. and make available for regional use
- Share general messages, and provide customized messages
- Customize for local or regional use
- Create a Glossary of terms
- Hold training workshops for partners and players
- Frequent seminars to share information and build support among regional officials and agencies
- Share research products in an appropriate manner
- WebEx seminars to reach additional groups and stakeholders
- Create a “turnkey” (i.e. adaptable for immediate use anywhere) marketing package to show how regional efforts can be funded and implemented
- A separate project for materials design will be required

Measures

- Rapidity of Agency Directors’ approval
- Increased support for federal land management activities

Timing and/or Prioritization

This module is first priority. Once support is gained for funding to implement the campaign and federal agencies are on board, this will help formulate the implementation of the other four modules.

2) Grassroots

The goal of the grassroots module is to reach those most affected by fire use—at-risk communities—to increase their understanding of fire’s role in our natural areas. This will reinforce the effectiveness of the other levels of communications covered by other modules, with a local, on the ground, in the field, educational effort or road show featuring key messengers: firefighters, park rangers and forest service personnel. These are the most credible spokespersons and we’ll use them to build understanding and trust. Research shows messaging takes hold when audience members see the communications happen at different levels, and through a variety of pathways.

Audience

- Local leaders of communities and the local fire community

- Developers and realtors
- At-risk landowners
- Public land users
- Target special demographics who are persuadable—women’s groups, high school groups

Objectives

- Build support and understanding for local fire teams
- People understand fighting and managing fire is an organized team effort
- Define problems and issues in each area/region where fire use is applied, then educate the public on the whys and hows
- Affect community wildfire protection plans to include the use of controlled burns.
- Develop additional community fire plans and update existing ones
- Increase the at-risk homeowner’s understanding of fire’s role in our natural areas

Activities

- Develop regionalized educational materials for grassroots dissemination (brochures, doorknob hangers, etc.)
- Community events, fairs, open houses with fire teams
- Direct outreach to community audiences, Rotary, Garden Club
- Provide media training on the triangle message framework
- Target special demographics who are persuadable—women’s groups, high school groups

Partners

- Extension Services can help with training
- Landowner groups and the ranching community
- Homeowners associations
- Watershed councils
- Local fire districts and state forestry conservation groups
- Industry groups
- Local governments & local federal agencies provide support

Measures

- Commitment levels from partners
- Reduced levels of complaints from controlled burns
- Increased number of acres burned/treated
- Additional follow-on surveys to measure progress
- Number of communities visited
- Increase in number of Community Wildfire Protection Plans
- Number of fuels treatments approved

Cost

- Material costs once turnkey collaterals are designed.

- Reallocate National Fire Plan grant funds for Community Assistance in support of this grassroots module
- Training of staff (e.g., extension service) has a cost for their staff time

Timing and/or Prioritization

- High priority: to begin explaining the “hows” and “whys” of fire use to at-risk communities.
- Timing of regional campaigns needs to be done several months prior to fire season, so as to not incite the emotional fear factor.

3) Electronic Media

The goal of electronic media is to carry our messaging to audience members through the pathways of paid television, cable and radio advertising. The workshop discussed numerous social marketing campaigns, and all employ this technique to a greater or lesser degree.

Audience

- People living near natural areas, targeting a select number of regions
- Recreationists going into public lands, or those who are affected by fire—downwind, urban areas, etc.
- Strategically important demographic audiences—those who are most persuadable according to polling

Objectives

- Address problems and issues in each area/region where fire use is applied, then educate the public on why and how by adapting message to the tools being used regionally.
- Increase acceptance of controlled burns to prevent damaging wildfire.
- Build support among target audiences for policy goals of PIFE

Activities

- Determine which key messages to use based on triangle
- Collect footage, develop script ideas
- Develop one or more Public Service Announcements (PSA)
- Develop spots that are adaptable with minor modifications to various situations.
- Focus on the regions—different vegetation will affect messages
- Share drafts internally among stakeholders for review
- Seek support from Ad Council
- Create a Dissemination plan—develop local guidance for how and when (e.g. seasonality) of use for PSA
- Supplement with direct dissemination of printed materials
- Develop a radio commercial/PSA that can be customized for each area with web and contact information.

- Provide basic media buy guidelines (how much and when) for each of the initial key target media markets.
- Develop standard PSA marketing packet.

Partners

- Revenue sources
- Federal, state, local and tribal
- Air & water regulatory agencies
- NGOs, watershed councils
- Media

Measures

- Whether we start doing more controlled burns
- Reduced number of complaints
- Number of website hits
- Number of times spot is shown

Costs

Costs are likely to be high, and require seeking reprogramming or allocation of new funds. For example, estimates of donated media time for Smokey Bear advertising through the Ad Council are \$90 million per two-year campaign period.

Timing and/or Prioritization

- Timing needs to be localized to happen several months before fire seasons occur.
- PSAs and other messages need to reflect the stage of learning that the area should be receiving, not just thrown in anywhere.
- Requires significant levels of funding and therefore is unlikely to be implemented until after other modules have begun.

4) New Media

New media is a dynamic and growing component to any communications effort. By harnessing the power of the internet to spread our message, we can reach people who are more difficult to communicate with through other means. Additionally, using new media, we have the ability to target our message to key demographics. We can reach women, rural audiences or other segments of the audience market with targeted messages.

“Viral” communications relies on individuals to forward web-based material they find particularly interesting (or funny or shocking) to others. With viral video, a communications wave can be started that will power itself. These “Web 2.0” tactics allow social networks to pass the fire messages along without any purposeful intervention. We can engage new audiences through the use of blogging and other networking techniques.

Public and private websites could be developed in conjunction with the websites of what has been known as the NWCG Wildland Fire Education Working Team and that soon will be the NWCG Prevention, Education, Outreach Committee. A public website could be developed and broken down by region with educational with links to other resources. Video and other collateral could be available on the site, and other media sources as well. A private, password-protected section of a website could be created for all users of the message triangle. The website could provide standardized materials that can be customized according to local needs and contacts, some form of Wiki or blog for sharing best practices and experiences, and the ability to order customized print on demand.

Audiences

- Local communities at risk
- People with greatest concern about wildfire, primarily women
- Educators, NGOs, Government
- Regionally specific audiences could have separate pages for PIFE SE, PIFE SW, containing different messages.

Activities

- High profile Google ad words: reach out for broad audiences
- Create a web video: fire teams doing burns, area in recovery.
- Series of videos to launch across the country
- Two tiers of websites—public and private
 - Provide up-to-date information for publi —the go-to site
 - Continual upkeep. Keep messages as up to date as possible
- Use social networking sites for making connections: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Wikipedia
- Recruit and train a community of bloggers around the country
- Link bloggers to old media coverage
- Form partnerships with universities to create media—Montana state film school, American Univ. film school
- Create curriculum materials
- Multimedia, web video, flash video, maps
- Create media around “Success Stories,” e.g., Yellowstone, others.
- Quizzes, other web gimmicks

Partners

- Agencies, NGOs, other message campaigns

Measures

- Hits, feedback
- Monitoring user-based content
- Focus grouping websites
- Exit Web Surveys

Timing and/or Prioritization

- This information could help incorporate the phases of information to be given at the regional level. “Why” and “how” first, “what” later on.
- Second to third priority.

5) Earned Media

Earned media is a logical component but should not be considered a sole source of marketing. It will not be effective alone in closing the information gap.

Each effort should be supported by a local or regional public relations firm on a seasonal basis. Deliverables should be op-eds, editorial board meetings, events scheduling and story pitches. Message framework and turnkey materials should be available to PR firms on demand via password website.

Audiences

- Public officials
- Homeowners
- Large landowners
- Timber industry
- Recreationists
- Women in each area — strategic targets who are most easily moved

Objectives

- Use the media as a conduit to get our messages to the target audiences

Partners

- Conservation groups, members of fire community
- Federal, state and local fire agencies
- Timber industry, livestock landowners and users

Activities

- Placement of op-eds
- VIP events
- Develop a toolkit similar to The Wilderness Society toolkit—put out several months prior to a region’s fire season
- Media tours
- Highlight “Success Stories”—defensible space, areas that have come back, etc.
- Communicate in trade publications—targeted articles on other news outlets
- Use prevention community (fire prevention coops, firefighters) messengers.
- Prior to prescribed burning season, get out press packets, make contacts
- Continue press interaction during fire season and address risk issue directly in communications to women

Measures

- Media audit, content analysis
- Number of complaints during controlled burns or when a naturally ignited fire is allowed to burn

Costs

- No or few new costs because earned media is already used by federal, state, local and tribal agencies as well as non-governmental organizations.

Timing and/or Prioritization

- May work best later into the campaign, once the whys and hows have been accepted and the whats are starting to be shown
- Third or fourth priority
- Timing eventually could be any time of year

APPENDIX F. ORGANIZING OPTIONS

Achieving consistent messaging over time will require some organization to serve as a centralized “minder” of materials and the message. Ideally, the organization will include a coordinating entity that understands the research and updates it in response to new events and challenges. The coordinating entity would have many responsibilities, including message management and upkeep, brand identification, transmitting information up and down, initiating new polling surveys in three-to-four years to measure the effectiveness of delivery, liaison to agencies, creating a logo and developing an internal feedback loop from practitioners in field. A rapid response team that interprets existing messaging and researching new situations where new research is not practicable but could be added further down the line.

Three options for the organizational structure of the coordinating entity and rapid response team are presented in this section, both in a summary and in detail. Each has its own merits and pitfalls, but they all represent effective methods for turning the PIFE campaign into reality.

A). Government-housed—Firewise model

Overview: This national interagency structure would model the Firewise program and be housed under the umbrella of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). This group would have oversight responsibilities for turning the framework into a full-fledged campaign and then implementing the campaign through the use of the five modules.

Reporting Structure: NWCG is the premier national interagency organization reaching throughout natural areas and wildfire management. Its various committees and teams have specific responsibilities and assignments, many of them requiring collaboration with others within NWCG and outside agencies and organizations. The PIFE campaign could be organized by adding to existing NWCG committees or creating a new task team, provided that a charter is created that defines PIFE and that the anticipated scope of PIFE falls within the NWCG strategic plan. Any organizations represented in PIFE would also need to develop an MOU to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Personnel: The campaign committee should be representative of the federal, state and local fire services and non-government natural areas management entities. The number of representatives should be no less than five and no greater than eight. The group should elect its own chair, vice-chair and secretary, each serving two two-year terms.

Additional Details:

Meeting frequency after initial organization—once or twice annually
 Meeting location—fixed or changing; government facility or other
 Reporting to/support from the parent NWCG Committee

Funding: Appointees' travel and related costs funded by the organizations they represent; Federal Grant funding in four-year increments

Costs:

Administrative: salary plus benefits of staff, office space and infrastructure (phones, computers, etc.), travel

External: TBD—full array of campaign costs for items mentioned in campaign framework. When resources become available to implement elements from the campaign framework, this task team could oversee that work in much the same way that the Firewise task team oversees a grant to the National Fire Prevention Agency and its contract with Fleishman-Hillard for Firewise communications.

Strengths: Structure has a successful track record. NWCG is in process of reorganizing, providing an opportunity to make a niche for the framework effort.

Concerns: As federal committees change focus, the commitment to implement the PIFE campaign, particularly to the public at the grassroots level, could be dropped. Also small- and medium-sized NGOs and grassroots cannot participate without funding.

B) Paid independent campaign organization

Overview: A staff ranging in size from three to eight people would manage the campaign, seeking to obtain a win for our issues much the same as a campaign is organized to elect a person to public office (could also be set up as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or housed under the WGA). Duties would include but not be limited to the process of converting the framework into a full-fledged campaign strategy, working with partners in both the government agency and nonprofit sectors, media outreach, etc.

Reporting Structure: This would be an independent operation responsible for making and enacting decisions with oversight by an officially designated body resembling a board of directors or advisors, comprised of members of the existing PIFE steering committee. The Board would appoint an executive committee to work with the campaign staff on key issues, and a singular point person to be available to assist and direct the campaign on daily affairs as needed.

Physical Location: Ideal situation would be for office space to be provided as a contribution from sources, including nonprofit, agency, developer, office building owner, etc.

Costs:

Administrative: salary plus benefits of staff, office space and infrastructure (phones, computers, etc.), travel

External: TBD—full array of campaign costs for items mentioned in campaign framework

Personnel: The staff would comprise positions such as the following:

Campaign director—direct and manage the campaign, work with agencies and nonprofits to facilitate on-going acceptance and use of campaign

Communications director—oversee and lead all external communications efforts, placing emphasis on old and new media outreach, paid and free advertising, materials creation, etc.

Communications manager—assist with above

E-communications manager—maintain campaign website, deliver e-mail newsletters/alerts/calls to action

New media manager—oversee production and marketing of campaign-related videos, pitch stories to blogging community, use social networking tools as relevant to promote campaign, recruit and train grassroots bloggers/blog responders and other e-communicators across the country

Communications intern—assist communications team

Fundraising director—seek financial support for campaign through grants, corporate donations, etc.

Accounting/HR consultant—oversee income and expenses, payroll, etc.

Strengths: Effective, highly focused structure

Concerns: Need to maintain strong coordination and communication with federal and fire agencies. May be less responsive to all stakeholders other than grassroots structure. This type of organization would require consistent funding feeding and may be difficult to feed as money gets tighter.

C) PIFE Extension Grassroots

Overview: A grassroots campaign would be headed by a task force/committee comprised of a wide variety of members, as the PIFE Steering Committee is now.

Reporting Structure: The grassroots campaign committee could report to WFLC, NWCG, or the WGA but would not be a formal function of any organization. The campaign would be organized much like the PIFE effort is now except that additional committees/working groups would be added to accommodate the additional workload required by the tasks of fleshing out the framework and implementing the campaign. Funding sources would need to be identified.

Physical Location: None

Costs:

Internal: Travel for committee meetings and planning.

External: TBD — full array of campaign costs for items mentioned in campaign framework

Personnel: Committee members would conduct the campaign, forming subcommittees to focus on tasks such as those outlined in the independent structure. They include

working with agencies and nonprofits to get them to adopt/utilize campaign tools; directing external communications efforts, placing emphasis on old and new media outreach, paid and free advertising, materials creation, etc., and raising money to conduct/expand campaign

Strengths: Structure could be established quickly, as it essentially would be a continuation and expansion of PIFE.

Concerns: This option doesn't provide a method to ensure implementation of the campaign in a consistent manner over time, and continues to put heavy work load on existing PIFE members over a multi-year campaign. For the current partners, PIFE has been challenging because all the partners have other work duties.