

Introduction

2nd Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference: The Fire Environment—Innovations, Management, and Policy

**Wayne Cook and Bret W. Butler, Conference Co-Chairs and
Proceedings Compilers**

The 2nd Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference: Fire Environment – Innovations, Management and Policy was held in Destin, FL, March 26-30, 2007. Following on the success of the 1st Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference, this conference was initiated in response to the needs of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group – Fire Environment Working Team.

Fire management programs are designed to reduce risks to communities and to improve and maintain ecosystem health. The conference addressed recent innovations in technology, management and policy. The scope included not only the how to, but also the what and why of the fire environment. The more than 450 conference participants represented a wide range of organizations, disciplines, and countries. The conference program included workshops, invited speakers, oral and poster presentations, panels, and vendor displays. Each day began with invited speakers who presented a range of viewpoints. Topics included the psychology of wildland fire management, smoke and public policy, fire as an ecological process in wilderness areas, and fuels management policy and direction of U.S. Federal agencies. Panels addressed two key topics: “Extreme Fire Behavior – What is it?” and “The Human Element in Forest Fire Operations: Thinking Deciding, Acting, Learning.” About 100 people took advantage of the optional preconference workshops that described and demonstrated computer systems, models, and methods that can be used in support of fire and fuels management. In addition to the six invited speakers, there were 159 oral and 73 poster presentations. Presenters described their experiences, findings, and ideas on topics including:

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

Forty-eight of the presenters elected to submit a paper for the published proceedings. Titles and authors of presentations without papers are listed in the appendix to give an indication of the scope of the conference.

The published proceedings is a partial record of the conference content. An important element was the interaction and sharing of information that occurred outside of the formal presentations. Many of those who responded to the after-conference survey listed “networking” as one of the most valuable aspects of the conference. They noted the mix of managers, researchers,

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academia, practitioners, and policymakers. The field of fuels management will undoubtedly benefit from the many personal contacts made at the conference. Special thanks are owed to the organizing committee, who formulated the structure of the conference, and planned and implemented details of the conference. The conference was a success due to the contributions of many dedicated individuals.

Conference Co-Chairs:

- Wayne Cook, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS), Fire Sciences Lab, Fire Behavior Research, Missoula, MT
- Bret Butler, USDA, Forest Service, RMRS, Fire Sciences Lab, Fire Behavior Research, Missoula, MT

Invited Speakers:

- Susan Conard, National Program Leader for Fire Ecology Research, USDA Forest Service
- Joe Ferguson, National Incident Management Organization, Fire and Aviation, USDA Forest Service
- Michael Long, State Forester, Florida Division of Forestry
- William Paleck, Superintendent-Retired, Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, North Cascades National Park, U.S. Department of the Interior (USDI) Park Service
- Sally Shaver, Director Air Quality Standards Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Karl Weick, Professor of Organizational Behavior and Psychology, University of Michigan

Conference Organizing Committee:

- Detlef Decker, Washington State University
- Bill Gabbert, International Association of Wildland Fire Executive Director
- Marc Titus Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Dan Jimenez, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Robert Ziel, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Paul Sopko, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Matt Jolly, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Tim Swedberg, Joint Fire Science Program
- Louise Kingsbury, USDA Forest Service Research (retired)
- Kyle Shannon, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Jason Forthofer, Fire Behavior Research, RMRS Missoula Fire Sciences Lab
- Jim Brenner, Florida Division of Forestry
- Colleen Finneman, USDA Forest Service, Region 1 Fire and Aviation Management
- James Furman, Eglin Air Force Base
- Dave Thomas, USDA Forest Service (retired), Renoveling consultant
- Mike Spaits, Eglin Air Force Base
- Paul Schlobohm, USDI Bureau of Land Management
- Zachary Prusak, The Nature Conservancy
- Pete Lahm, USDA Forest Service