

Preparing for jurisdictionally complex wildfires: Are the right actors having the right conversations?

Fall 2019 Third Annual National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Workshop – Plymouth, MA

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Meet the Fire Chasers

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Co-PIs:

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Collaborator:

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Current Graduate Students:

- Shannon McGovern
- Elliot Nauert
- Ryan Scott



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2017

What have we been up to?

- ❖ Phase 1: case studies of the 10 most jurisdictionally complex fires of 2017
 - ❖ Federal, state, local and private interests
 - ❖ Type 1 project fires
 - ❖ Federal led fires, state led fires
 - ❖ 5 states– 5 GACCs
 - ❖ Surveys and interviews with 88 AAs, ARs, private reps, and ICs
- ❖ Phase 2: Field observations on three jurisdictionally complex fires in 2018
 - ❖ 2 in OR; 1 in CA
- ❖ Phase 3: Surveys and interviews with 49 AAs, ARs, private reps, and ICs
 - ❖ Interviews across 5 fires

The challenge...

- ❖ New, complex socio-ecological context
- ❖ Need to understand how changes in fire are leading to changes in fire management
- ❖ Are our current tools up to the task of effectively co-managing today's fires?

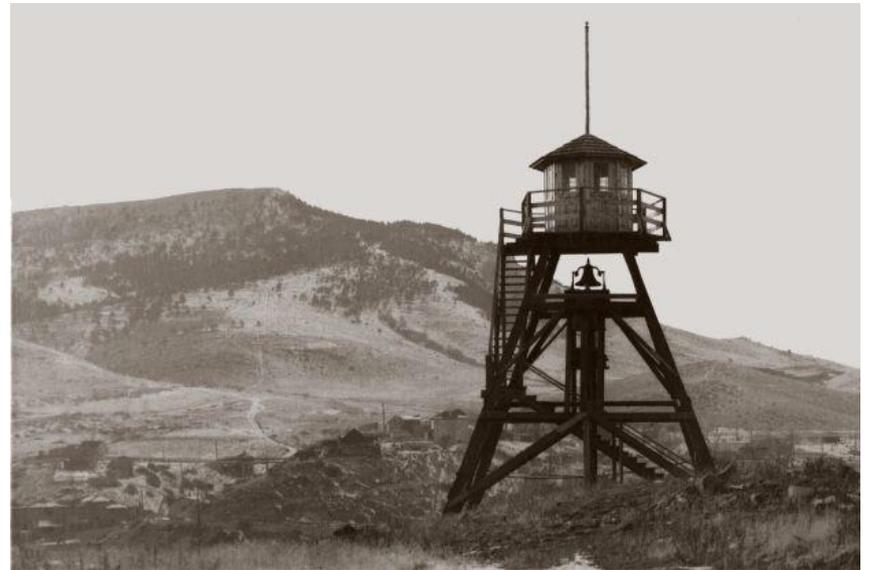


Photo credit: AL KNAUBER
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Historically



10,000 acres

Today



150,000 acres

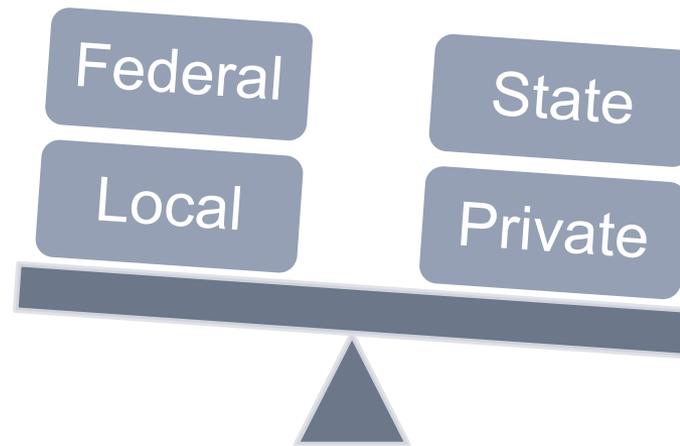


The Conflict Cocktail: Jurisdictional Interdependency Meets Jurisdictional Autonomy



How are we doing co-managing wildfire?

In fire year 2017, **state** and **private** jurisdictions were least satisfied with co-management strategies



Barriers to Co-Management

1. Difficult to predict multi-jurisdictional nature until the fire makes a run for another jurisdiction
2. More actors in decision space = more difficult to communicate clear objectives
3. Tools for multi-jurisdictional command (joint delegations of authority, unified command, area command) do not provide a clear role for not-yet-affected jurisdictions

Points of Leverage to Resolve Tensions in Co-Management

Interdependence

*

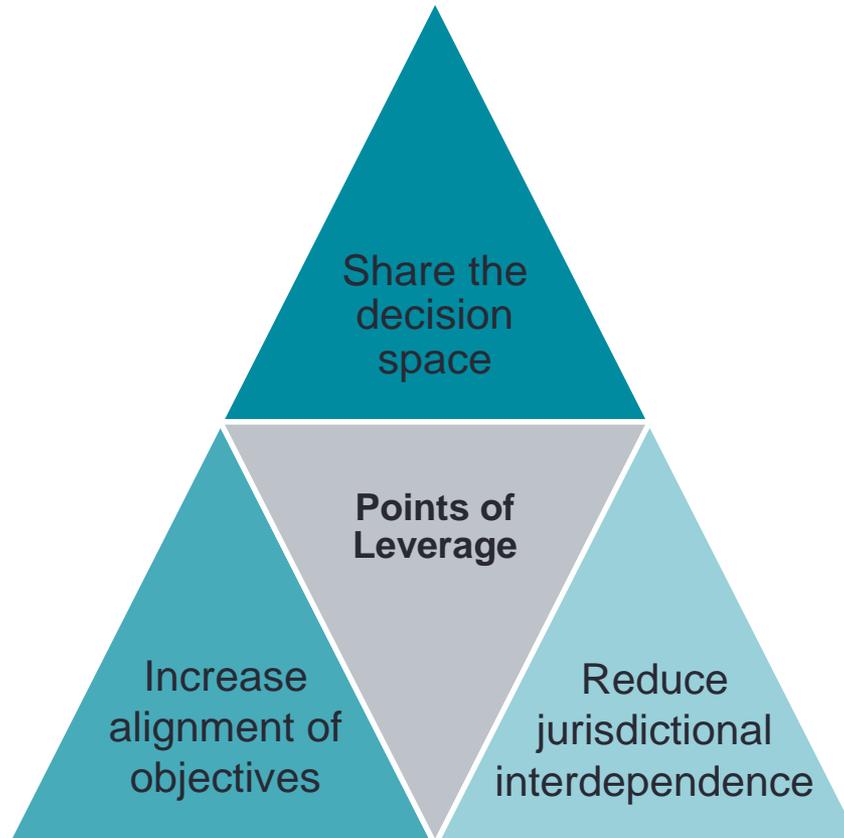
Competing
Objectives

*

Unilateral
Decision-Making

=

Conflict



Small Group Discussion Activity

1. What conversations are you having with jurisdictional partners ahead of fire season?
 - a) Are these conversations different from the ones you were having in the past?
2. Who is and is not part of these conversations?
3. **What conversations do you wish you were having?**

All groups will report out on question #3

Large Group Discussion Activity: Debrief

- 1) **What conversations do you wish you were having?**
- 2) What is getting in the way of having these conversations?
- 3) What would need to change in order to better support these conversations?

For additional discussion, see the article found here:

<https://fireadaptednetwork.org/co-managing-wildfire-conversations-you-need-to-have-right-now/>



WHAT CONVERSATIONS
SHOULD YOU BE HAVING
NOW?



Thank you!

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Additional Information, if needed

The Conversations You Should Be Having Now

1. **“Hi, my name is...”**

- ❖ Interpersonal relationships matter in negotiations and tough conversations.

2. **“How and when are we going to communicate with each other about potential threats?”**

- ❖ Low-cost/high-return strategy promoting a climate of mutual respect.

3. **“How do we communicate concerns and offer assistance when we perceive a significant threat from a fire that is on your jurisdiction?”**

- ❖ One of the most well-reviewed co-management tools was a regularly scheduled agency administrator meeting.