



People, Fire, and Forests: A Synthesis of Wildfire Social Science

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Years of drought and decades of aggressive fire exclusion have left North American forests at high risk for future catastrophic fires. Forest settings are a magnet for recreational opportunities and for rapidly growing residential development—putting an increasing number of citizens and their property into the path of wildfires. Recordsetting wildfires initiated the twentyfirst century and motivated the rise to prominence of wildfire on the political agenda, prompting important and farreaching new public policy initiatives. To be effective, these policies must be informed by science—but that requires more than just improved knowledge about the physical and biological dynamics of fire and forest ecosystems. Social values, socioeconomic factors, demographic trends, institutional arrangements, and human behavior must also be taken into consideration by the agencies and individuals responsible for wildland fire decision making. The first book to integrate the social science literature on the human dimensions of wildfire, *People, Fire, and Forests* reviews current studies from this broad, interdisciplinary field and synthesizes them into a rich body of knowledge with practical management implications. Chapters in the book highlight principal findings and common threads in the existing research and identify strengths and gaps. They cover such topics as public perception of wildfire risk, acceptability of fire management policies, and community impacts of wildfire. Designed to make relevant social science information more available and useful to wildfire risk managers and policy makers, *People, Fire, and Forests* is also intended to encourage and guide further research into wildfire. By exploring the theoretical and methodological issues surrounding human interactions with wildfire and describing the practical implications of this research, this volume provides an essential resource for students, scholars, and professionals.

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