



## **Policy change and governance at the wildland-urban interface: the case of post-wildfire impacts in Boise, Idaho**

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In the summer of 2012 over 1.7 million acres (approximately 6900 sq kilometers) were burned from wildfires in the state of Idaho in the Western United States. While most of these fires were in rural and wilderness areas, several significant fires occurred at the wildland-urban interface (WUI), threatening houses, communities and the built environment as never before. As the population of the Mountain West in the United States grows, the WUI (the area where homes are being built adjacent to traditionally wild or rural areas and the built environment encroaches on wildlands) is rapidly becoming an at risk area for human habitation. Efforts to make these areas more resilient and sustainable in the face of increasing fire risk, due to increasing drought and climate change, are resulting in efforts to change or adapt disaster response and planning policy. An increase in stakeholders, however, with diverse objectives and resources presents an opportunity to assess the current governance situation for policy change in response to wildland fires in the dynamic and complex context of the WUI. The research presented here will focus on the case of Treasure Valley region of southwest Idaho and Boise, the capitol city of Idaho. This region is illustrative of the growing urban western United States and the pressures from a growing population pushing into the WUI. This research frames fire policy and decision making at the wildland-urban interface within public policy process theory using the example of the summer of 2012 forest fires in Idaho (USA) and focuses on subsequent impact these fires are having on fire planning and policy in the Boise metropolitan region. The focus is on the diverse stakeholders (federal, state and regional agencies, tourism, agriculture and private sector interests, homeowner organizations, and fire response and recovery agencies) and their roles and responsibilities, their interactions, decision and policy processes, the use of science in decision making, post and pre disaster assessments, and subsequent policy changes. The conclusions will reflect on the outlook for the future of the WUI in regard to wildfire risk and response and on the contribution of policy process theory to this policy domain. This paper/poster addresses significant theoretical and empirical issues raised in the Call for Papers for NH7.1 "Spatial and temporal patterns of wildfires: models, theory and reality," including: pre-fire planning and risk management; post-fire evaluation; relation between wildfires and social changes; and the influence of weather and climate change on wildfire activity.