



Cooperative Extension's Next Great Role in Fire Outreach

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MAIN QUESTIONS OR ISSUES THAT YOU ADDRESSED

How can the Cooperative Extension Service expand its role in public and landowner education about wildland fire?

LOCATION AND ECOSYSTEM INVESTIGATED

Nationwide, in all states where wildfires are an issue and/or prescribed fire is an opportunity to mitigate wildfire effects.

KEY FINDINGS OF YOUR RESEARCH

1. While CES has examples of very effective accomplishments in wildland fire education over the last three decades, it has not kept pace with the growing threats to lives, property and the environment associated with wildfire.
2. As a mitigating factor, prescribed fire has become more widely accepted during that same time, but CES has been even less involved in promoting/training than with wildfire awareness and mitigation.
3. Protection from wildfire and the use of prescribed fire need to be equal elements of future CES programming.

HOW DID YOU ANSWER THE MAIN QUESTIONS OR INFORM THE ISSUES?

1. Expand fire information resources and public/fire manager educational activities through ongoing programs that might be more effective on a broader scale, such as eXtension, Living with Fire and regional Cohesive Strategies.
2. Use training & education curricula about defensible space, Home Ignition Zones, and fire adapted communities to train volunteers for public education activities.
3. Incentivize Extension personnel and other outreach organizations to develop collaborative programs by earmarking competitive funding at state levels to address wildland fire education.
4. Train local CES offices in the Incident Command System so they can be integrated more effectively with other agencies during local incidents and wildfires.
5. Incorporate CES agents in a broader role in all types of training courses related to wildfire, prescribed fire, and fire preparedness.
6. Most importantly, fire must become a priority on relevant CES agendas.

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HOW MIGHT/WILL IT INFLUENCE FIRE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS OR PRACTICES?

1. Local, state and federal agencies should increasingly look to CES as a resource to assist in appropriate ways with both educational programs as well as local incidents, especially in states or regions where CES has not been a key player in fire issues.

WHO IS THE MAIN END-USER OF YOUR RESEARCH?

1. Cooperative Extension Service offices, local and state fire agencies.
2. Homeowners and landowners will be the ultimate end users and beneficiaries.

CONGRESS SESSION

Exploring Past & Future Roles of the Cooperative Extension Service in U.S. Fire Education.