

# Lake States Fire Science Consortium

A JFSP KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CONSORTIUM



## 2016-2017 Webinar Series October 20, 2016

**Good fences, good neighbors? Coordination across  
property boundaries among private landowners.**

**Paige Fischer  
School of Natural Resources and Environment  
University of Michigan**

Audio will start at top of the hour.

This webinar is listen only – to ask questions please use the chat box in lower right of screen.



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Photo credit: The Stewardship Network



Photo credit: The Stewardship Network

# Good fences, good neighbors?

## Coordination across property boundaries among private land owners

Paige Fischer, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan

Lake States Fire Science October 20, 2016 Webinar

# Acknowledgements

Research Team:

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Funding sources:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture, McIntire-Stennis  
project 1003473

Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station

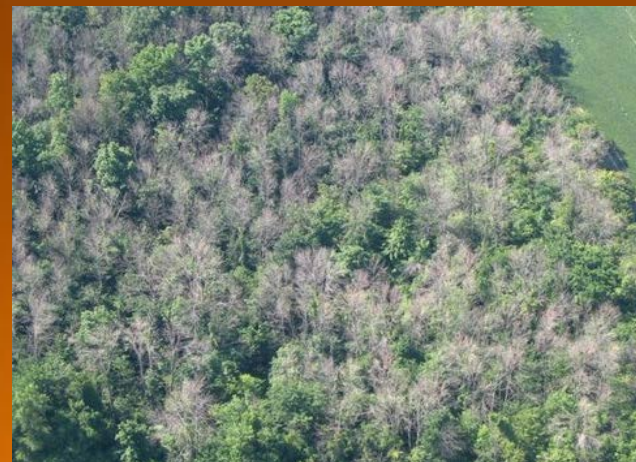
National Fire Plan

# Landscape management

- Wildfire and other pressing threats to forest ecosystems operate on larger scales than typical parcel
- Landscape scale management of wildfire risk is a policy priority
  - DOI Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC)
  - USDA FS-NRCS Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership
  - Wyden Amendment



Meridian Boundary Fire, Michigan 2010. Photo Credit: USFWS



Emerald Ash Borer mortality Photo Credit: Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health

# Private forestland owners

- Own large proportion of forest land, mostly in small parcels
- Manage for a wide variety of objectives not just financial investment or home site
- Coordinated management could arguably increase scale and impact and reduce costs



Photo credit: The Stewardship Network

# Coordinated management

- Cooperation is based on the benefits of reciprocity to participating parties when combined efforts can achieve more than individual efforts
- Social exchanges generate mutual benefits and obligations
- Risks when actors in interpersonal relationships engage in transactions of an economic nature
- Without assurances provided by formal agreements, potential for failure to meet expectations of reciprocity



Photo credit: Bob Akerly

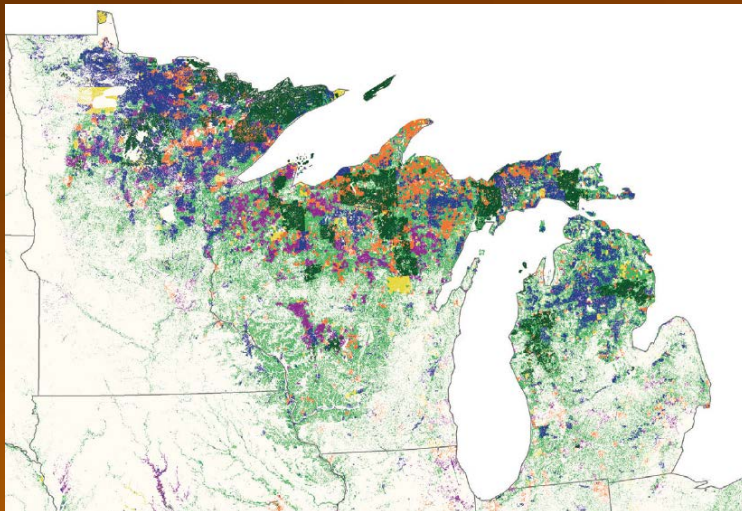
# Research questions

1. How do forest owners coordinate management?
2. What factors contribute to the emergence and success of coordinated management?
3. What is the functional role of coordinated management?
4. What institutional interventions may be needed to help private owners coordinate to attain ecological and economic benefits?

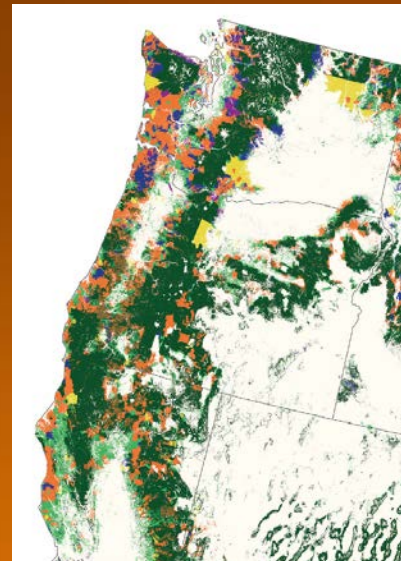
# Methods

- Comparative analysis of cases of coordinated management
- Qualitative interviews with private forest owners in cases
- Qualitative content analysis of interviews

## Great Lakes Region



## Pacific Northwest



Public	Private	
<span style="color: darkgreen;">■</span> Federal	<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> Family*	<span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Non-forest
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> State	<span style="color: orange;">■</span> Corporate	
<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Local	<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Other Private**	

\*Family includes individuals, families, trusts, estates, and family partnerships.

\*\*Other private includes conservation and natural resource organizations, unincorporated partnerships and associations, and Native American tribal lands.

Map credit: USFS NRS



# Cases

Case (pseudonym)	Location	Owners	Parcel size	Management Focus
Woody Hills Properties (WHP)	SE MI	10	10-300 acres	Restoration and invasive plants
Blue River Properties (BRP)	N MI	26	10 acres	Wildfire risk
Network of Active Environmental Stewards (NAES)	SE WI	70-80	5-100 acres	Restoration and invasive plants
Perry Lake (PL)	N MI	12	1-2 acres	Wildfire risk
	C WA			Forest Health/Wildfire Risk
	E WA			Forest Health/Wildfire Risk
	C WA			Forest Health/Wildfire Risk
	E WA	5	20-100	Forest Health/Wildfire Risk
	E WA	13	~20	Forest Health/Wildfire Risk
	E WA	9	5-200	Forest Health/Wildfire Risk
	E WA	6	5-200	Forest Health/Wildfire Risk
	N CA	7		Forest Health/Wildfire Risk
	OR			
	OR			

# Results

## Social arrangements for coordination

Joint Effort	Type of Joint Effort	Lake States Cases			
		WHP	BRP	NAES	PL
Joint Planning	Informal Communication (social events, etc.)	X	X	X	X
	Formal Communication (meetings, etc)		X	X	X
	Coordinated fundraising (grants, etc.)	X	X		X
Joint Implementation	Sharing Equipment/Tools		X	X	
	Sharing labor (hiring common crew)	X		X	X
	Pooling labor (working on each other's properties)	X		X	



Photo Credit: wisowls.org



Photo credit: TSN



Photo credit: wisowls.org

# Results

## Factors contributing to emergence and success

	Lake States Cases			
Factor	WHP	BRP	NAES	PL
Shared interest/risk	X	X	X	X
Strong leader	X	X	E	X
Access to expertise outside the group	X	X	E	X
Social cohesion (trust and familiarity)	X	X	P	E
Access to expertise inside the group			X	
Access to funding	E			X
Formal institutions (home owner's association, etc..)	P	X		X
Full time residency		X		P

*Notes: X means factor in emergence and persistence; E means factor in only emergence; P means factor only in persistence*

# Results

## Factors contributing to emergence and success

	Lake States Cases			
Factor	WHP	BRP	NAES	PL
Shared interest/risk	X	X	X	X

*"Given our overall environment and being locked in with only really one good ingress, egress in the event of a forest fire– it was going to take us all trying to work together."*

*-BRP Landowner*

# Results

## Factors contributing to emergence and success

	Lake States Cases			
Factor	WHP	BRP	NAES	PL
Shared interest/risk	X	X	X	X
Strong leader	X	X	E	X

*"You have got to have someone who keeps it going, keeps it organized, and keeps people interested. If it wasn't for "Don" it would eventually just [dissolved]."*

*-BRP landowner*

# Results

## Factors contributing to emergence and success

	Lake States Cases			
Factor	WHP	BRP	NAES	PL
Shared interest/risk	X	X	X	X
Strong leader	X	X	E	X
Access to expertise outside the group	X	X	E	X

*"It was "Mark" at DNR who first brought us together. They came out and helped us assess the situation. And the direction they provided for the initial work is what got us started."*

*-PL Landowner*

# Results

## Factors contributing to emergence and success

	Lake States Cases			
Factor	WHP	BRP	NAES	PL
Shared interest/risk	X	X	X	X
Strong leader	X	X	E	X
Access to expertise outside the group	X	X	E	X
Social cohesion (trust and familiarity)	X	X	P	E

*"We had a loose-knit organization to begin with [to address] common causes: roads, plowing, gates and things like that...We were historically used to doing some things in common...So when someone said fire is an important issue [we were able to organize around it]."*

*- BRP Landowner*

# Results

## Factors contributing to emergence and success

	Lake States Cases			
Factor	WHP	BRP	NAES	PL
Shared interest/risk	X	X	X	X
Strong leader	X	X	E	X
Access to expertise outside the group	X	X	E	X
Social cohesion (trust and familiarity)	X	X	P	E

*"There were the social relationships that were already in place. We had trust in "Bill" and trust each other...Nobody is trying to skim money out of any of this – only putting money in."*

*-WHP Landowner*



# Results

## Functional role of coordination

	Lake States Cases			
Functional Role	WHP	BRP	NAES	PL
Increases management skill	X	X	X	X
Reduces financial cost of management	X	X	X	X
Increases access to information about management	X	X	X	X
Inspires self-confidence in management	X	X	X	X
Reduces physical burden of management	X		X	X
Increases access to funding	X	X		X
Encourages conformance to management standards	X	X	X	X
Increases area under management	X	X		X
Improves ecological conditions	X	X	X	

# Results

## Functional role of coordination

Functional Role	
Increases management skill	<i>"We are able to accomplish a lot. It gives you a real boost when you go out with a group and get a whole section cleared or a whole area burned. That's a real boost psychologically. And the learning component—I was complaining about having to return my saw because it gets so dull and [someone] said, 'No, you don't.' He showed me how to sharpen my saw, and where to buy a saw set and a file. Now I have a set-up for sharpening my saw."</i>
Reduces financial cost of management	
Increases access to information about management	
Inspires self-confidence in management	
Reduces physical burden of management	
Increases access to funding	
Encourages conformance to management standards	
Increases area under management	
Improves ecological conditions	

-NAES Landowner

# Discussion of Lake States Cases

Coordinated management constrained by risks of non reciprocity?

- **Social risks offset by**
  - high levels of trust
  - mutually understood expectations
  - low expectations and demands
  - respect for individual autonomy

*"We still go out and help other people even though we don't ask other people to come help us anymore. I don't ever get the feeling that anybody is concerned about [non-reciprocation]. I have never heard anybody say, "Oh, they are always asking for help with a burn but you never see them coming out to help." At our age we kind of don't get bent out of shape over that."*

*- NAES landowner*

*"It's expectations. It's common courtesy. If I borrow a tractor, I am not going to run a tank full of diesel through it and return it to them. I am going to fill it back up. Plus, I have kind of become a maintenance guy for some of them...I can weld and have an electrical license and mechanical contractors license."*

*- BRP Landowner*

# Discussion of Lake States Cases

## Institutional interventions needed?

- **Limitations of not having formal institutions**
  - Inability to engage new/seasonal residents
  - Aging labor pools
  - Funding difficulties
  - Maintaining motivation and engagement

*"There is something wonderful about an organization that has decided not to get really formal ...But of course then you put yourself at risk of the ebb and flow of human energies and we're aging so, you know..."*

-NAES landowner

*"We are a loose social group. When we originally started almost everyone would show for our meetings. But houses turnover, new people come in, and the ten of us or so that are involved with everything, you know, we're the 'bad guys' so to speak..."*

-BRP landowner

# Discussion of Lake States Cases

## Institutional interventions needed?

- **Recognized benefits of more formalized process for funding, coordination and leadership**
- **Concerns about demanding too much out of people**

*Opportunities for grants would increase, you would have more participation and the more property owners ...But expecting [someone] to do that on their own time continually – it is not going to work...I put my heart into this stuff for years and I finally just had to step back because I was just doing too much.*

-WHP landowner

*Yeah, nobody keeps track of what you do. In fact that is probably one reason we like it. It is very loose, it is very unstructured and if you don't go to one of the meetings in the year half of the time they don't know you hadn't been there because nobody is keeping count.*

-NAES landowner

# Policy Implications

- Coordinated management among private forest owners can happen
- Social risks not a deal breaker for coordinated management
- Institutional innovations could help foster social conditions that enable coordinated management
  - Shared risk perception
  - Leadership
  - Access to outside expertise
  - Social networks
- Institutional innovations would need to accommodate
  - Preference for low expectations and demands
  - Need for individual autonomy

# Next Steps

- Finish case studies in Oregon and Northern California
- Distill findings into framework to inform policy and planning
- Report, journal articles and presentations

# Lake States Fire Science Consortium

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## 2016-2017 Webinar Series November 17, 2016

**Restoration of fire-dependent pine barren  
ecosystems in northern Wisconsin – Bridging the  
gap between research and management practices.**

**Brian Sturtevant and Christel Kern  
USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station**



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