

# Fuels Planning: Science Synthesis and Integration

## Fact Sheet # 1

### The Fuels Synthesis Project Overview

*Synthesizing  
Scientific Information  
for Fire and Fuels  
Project Managers*

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Fuels treatment planners often find the challenge of integrating diverse scientific findings into the design of their projects a barrier to timely decision making. With an increased emphasis on treating fuels to reduce wildfire impacts in the U.S., the need for well-documented, accessible scientific information is becoming ever more crucial. In April of 2003, the USDA Forest Service initiated a project to accelerate the delivery of research information to fuels specialists and others involved in project planning.

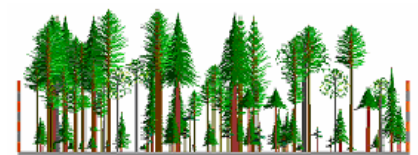


**The Environmental Consequences team** is synthesizing information about the effects of fuels treatments on wildlife and other forest resources. (Photo credit E. Bull)

The geographic focus of the “Fuels Planning: Science Synthesis and Integration” project (known as the Fuels Synthesis Project) is on the dry forests of the Western U.S. Project goals include developing accessible analyses, protocols, and tools; writing peer-reviewed documents that synthesize and integrate the ecological and social science relevant to fuels treatments; and delivering these products in a user-friendly format. Target audiences include fuels management specialists, resource specialists, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning team leaders, line officers in the USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior; community leaders; and educators.



*Historical*



*Present*

**The Forest Structure and Fire Hazard team** is working on new visualization techniques to help fuel planners in decision making.

The Fuels Synthesis Project is organized around four key science topics:

- Forest structure and fire hazard;
- Environmental consequences of fuels treatments;
- Economic uses of material and costs of fuels treatments; and
- Public understanding, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors related to fuels management.

### Planned Delivery of Information

In July of 2003, the project added a fifth team focused on technology transfer in order to ensure effective delivery of science to managers and planners. High on the list of tasks for the Technology Transfer team is getting the word out about science synthesis efforts and products. Products will be made available in hard copy publications, in web pages and electronic documents, through an interactive treatment cost calculator; and potentially through other training tools such as workshops. Other plans include publicizing progress and products in newsletters and magazines such as *Fire Management Today*, publications that are read by managers and planners, and involving scientists in upcoming fire conferences and regional meetings.

### Progress to Date

Teams of scientific experts from public agencies, their management counterparts, and university researchers across the country have been engaged over the last few months in compiling and synthesizing scientific information available on the four key topic areas. A variety of products for delivering this information to the target audiences is currently in the works. A series of fact sheets highlighting key information and findings has been completed and more are on the way. Other products under development include peer-reviewed publications, inter-

active visual demonstrations of forest structure, and decision tools for environmental consequences. All of the information from the Fuels Synthesis Project is backed by up-to-date scientific findings and has undergone peer review. For more information, please visit our website: [www.fs.fed.us/fire/tech\\_transfer/synthesis/synthesis\\_index](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/tech_transfer/synthesis/synthesis_index)



**The Economics team** is working on tools to help evaluate treatment costs and the potential for utilization of hazardous fuels.



**The Social Science team** is synthesizing information on the social considerations important in fire and fuels management. (Photo credit: V Sturtevant)

*Although all of the Fuels Planning fact sheets have been reviewed by scientists, they are not official Forest Service publications and much of the work is based on preliminary findings. Information from fact sheets will be synthesized in an upcoming publication.*