

Linking wildfire burn mosaic and lynx habitat modeling

AFE/IAWF Fire Continuum Conference

Monday, May 20th 8am - noon
University of Montana, Missoula, MT

The incidence of large and severe fire events is increasing in the western United States with long-term implications for future wildfires, landscape successional mosaics, and wildlife habitat abundance and connectivity. Recent research demonstrates that recently burned areas often act as barriers to subsequent fire spread and/or mitigate the severity of subsequent fires. Landscape mosaics of heterogeneous burn areas ranging in time since fire can therefore be more resilient to future wildfire events than large homogeneous patches of similar vegetation.

In this workshop, we will introduce a landscape fire simulation tool that couples state and transition models of vegetation and fuels succession with an operational fire spread model and hourly weather streams. We will use a case study from north-central Washington to explore the consequences of different wildland fire management strategies (no suppression, managed wildfires, and modern fire suppression) on habitat abundance and connectivity for the Canada Lynx. Recent large fires in north-central Washington State have severely impacted some of the best remaining habitat for Canada Lynx in the conterminous United States. Understanding how remaining lynx habitat could be managed to create more fire-resilient successional and habitat mosaics will be critical to the survival of this species.

The workshop will be facilitated by Bill Gaines, a wildlife biologist, Paul Hessburg, a research fire and landscape ecologist, and Susan Prichard, a research forest and wildfire ecologist. The first half of the workshop will be to introduce the topic and simulation tool. The second half of the workshop will be devoted to interactive discussions on habitat suitability, opportunities to integrate management objectives for wildland fire and wildlife habitat, and implications for other species of concern.

Sign up at: <http://firecontinuumconference.org/workshops/>

Workshop Leaders:

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