



Webinar: Wildland Fire Smoke Messaging and Perception 28 June, 2011



The NWCG Smoke Committee (Smoc) hosted this webinar on June 28, 2011 in collaboration with the NWCG Communication, Education, and Prevention Committee, USFS Smoke FARM Team, and NIFC External Affairs. Four presentations and a discussion period examined public perception and messaging about smoke and fire. The webinar was a key initial step in developing needed messaging about wildland fire smoke, and it also served as the Smoke Committee's beginning effort at developing a broad-scale interagency communication plan on the topic. Presenters and topics included:

Sarah McCaffrey Research Social Scientist, USDA Forest Service	Summary of Recent Research Findings Emphasizing Smoke and Other Variables for Developing Smoke Messaging
Only a few of the numerous studies conducted in recent years examining various aspects of public acceptance of fire management have focused primarily on smoke. However, smoke issues have been addressed in incidental ways in many studies. This presentation provided a summary of recent research findings with an emphasis on smoke and other variables that may be useful to consider in developing smoke messaging.	
Laura McCarthy The Nature Conservancy	Public Opinion Surveys: Lessons for Communications about Smoke
A national public opinion survey conducted in 2008 documented public attitudes toward planned and unplanned wildfire and the resulting smoke, and suggested ways to influence public opinion with messages about planned fire. More recent surveys of public opinion in communities like Santa Fe, NM and Applegate, OR provide additional insights that can inform communications about smoke.	
Troy Hall, PhD University of Idaho	Public Perceptions of Smoke: Contrasting Tolerance among WUI and Non-WUI Communities in the Northern Rockies and Southern Regions
Land managers need information about factors that underlie public perceptions and tolerance of smoke. Our research aims to address this need by describing and explaining regional variations in tolerance for smoke. Regional mail/internet surveys and deliberative workshops will evaluate how stakeholders understand and process impacts related to smoke, and how competing values are traded off. Other project highlights include a literature synthesis about public perceptions and tolerance of smoke, the development of smoke photo series guide, and enhancement of the existing Rx410 training module based on survey and deliberative workshop findings.	
Christine Olsen, PhD Oregon State University	The Influence of Communication Strategies and Partnerships on Public Perception of Smoke Management: Preliminary Findings from Four U.S. Communities
This project examines how communication programs and fire and fuels-related community partnerships influence public perceptions of smoke management across multiple regions. This presentation provided preliminary findings from year one of the project, which included site visits and interviews in communities within and adjacent to four national forests: the Fremont-Winema N.F. (south-central Oregon), the Kootenai N.F. (northwestern Montana), the Shasta-Trinity N.F.(north-central California), and the Francis Marion N.F. (central coast South Carolina). An overview of project years two and three was also presented.	