



GREATER OVERBERG
FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION



8TH INTERNATIONAL WILDLAND FIRE CONFERENCE
PORTO | MAY 23

A benchmark exercise

with some new perspectives and take-home messages

Ms Louise Wessels, Manager: Greater Overberg Fire Protection Association (goFPA) & WC UFPA Chairperson

8th IWFC 2023 @ Porto, Portugal

- With the 1st International Wildland Fire Conference (IWFC) held in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A., in 1989, a series of conferences was initiated aimed at promoting exchange of expertise and international cooperation in wildland fire management.
- Landscape fire management is an international issue, and this conference looked for new opportunities to share experiences.
- The conference highlighted that across the world there are diverse points of view and diverse needs when it comes to wildfires, and that finding workable solutions will require a lot of inputs.

“The Framework” provides a structure to work from.



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Tiago M Oliveira: Chair of 8th IWFC Organising Committee and Chairman of AGIF Board of Directors

Porto Statement - “Towards the Development of an International Landscape Fire Governance Framework”





The Framework: Highlights

The Summary:

vi. The proposed governance model calls for fire risk assessment and determining how communities and cultures perceive risk and accept fire impacts. That perception drives risk management and helps communicating clearly. Stakeholder engagement is crucial for governance, and having stakeholders involved in decision-making helps with monitoring and aiming at continuous improvement, measuring progress and planning for shorter periods under a context of uncertainty.

The Expected Outcomes – to achieve:

19. A significant reduction of losses driven by added expertise on each component of the value chain, enhanced risk governance incorporating the latest research and scientific knowledge, and a defined set of responsibilities and accountability with each stakeholder having a clear view of their scope of action, where the risk is adequately accessed and evaluated, institutional cooperation is agreed upon, communities are involved and have active voices in the process, and communication is clearer, objective, and transparent.

Guiding Principles:

23.c.

Bottom-up policies design

The definition of public policies considers the expectations and knowledge of local communities, involving them in the decision-making processes. Policy development and strategic planning shall be holistic, addressing the fire problem at landscape level by including all relevant institutional mandates and the potential and capacity of contribution of the civil society.

Priorities for Action:

26.

Action is needed to valuing rural areas so that people are encouraged to actively manage them.

28.

Adapting behaviours can help limit or reduce levels of exposures and vulnerabilities.

31.

Governance: Critical differences in power, authority, and capacity within and between relevant institutions and actors can be an impediment for informed communication and cooperation, since addressing wildfire risk involves trade-offs between competing values and interests of actors. **Wildfire risk should be viewed as negotiated with stakeholders rather than simply determined by quantitative models that might not consider stakeholder needs.**

Integrated Fire Management (IFM) – The Value Chain

38.f.

Post-fire is the stage for concluding the investigation of the causes of a wildfire event, to repair damages from fire suppression, for the restoration of the land and for the recovery of communities returning to their baseline and identifying lessons learned. Post-fire actions are the opportunity not to be missed in creating resilient landscapes and communities, and reducing future disaster to support this framework's goals.

Adaptive management: Planning decisions should not be immutable, over a relatively long interval like 5 or 10 years, rather revised in shorter periods, annually or bi-annually, and be adaptable.

Stakeholder engagement

45.

Local communities, indigenous groups, non-government organizations and local governments with less financial or political power are not adequately given the necessary inclusion and authority in decision-making processes. Therefore, planning for risk reduction measures should be identified in participatory procedures, such as round tables with all stakeholders, which allow discussion and negotiation at the correspondent jurisdictional levels.

Systemic and Public Communication:

48.

The strategies towards better adapted attitudes to risk should consider the different causes of wildfires, the population targets, and their risk perceptions, with the identification of the most effective communication and engaging tools in each regional level. The perception of the likelihood of low probability / high impact events poses an additional challenge to adequate fire risk perception and should therefore be addressed as highly important in the communication strategy.

“Benchmarking” is the continuous activity of identifying, understanding and adapting best practice and processes that will lead to superior performance.



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World-class presenters:
A few favourites



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INTEGRATED FIRE MANAGEMENT **BY GARY MORGAN**

Relationships come first before formal agreements!

What are the main factors causing our wildland wildfires?

POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Political policies
- Urban planning
- Changing land management practice
- Legalities
- Resource competencies
- Community disengagement

It's complicated but can be overcome with collaboration and cooperation!

THE PYROCENE BY STEPHAN PAYNE



“A provocative rethinking of how humans and fire have evolved together over time—and our responsibility to reorient this relationship before it's too late.”

Quote from the University of California Press

“Fire” cannot be dealt with as an emergency intervention - there can be no more “living with fire”. It’s becoming a global constant problem. It’s more than IFM now, because fire has integrated itself into its surroundings and so LANDSCAPE management is needed. Integration! - Problems are similar but solutions need to be adapted for specific landscape needs and situations.



Fire Protection Associations are a key component!

Why?

**BECAUSE THEY ENCAPSULATE LANDSCAPE
MANAGEMENT!!!**

- The proposed governance model calls for fire-risk assessment and determining how communities and cultures perceive risk and accept fire impacts.
- That perception drives risk management and promotes clear communication.
- Stakeholder engagement is crucial for governance, and having stakeholders involved in decision-making helps with monitoring and aiming at continuous improvement, measuring progress and planning for shorter periods under context of uncertainty.



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Closing & Take-home messages

- Landscape Fire Governance Framework 2023 - **Annexure: Integrated Fire Management Value Chain Prerequisites**
- Build relationships
- Focus on local communities – risk identification, their competencies, communication and ownership of their risks
- Perceived risk and education
- Pre-fire knowledge
- POST FIRE interventions have to be identified and planned for
- Informed budgeting
- Investing in Fire Protection Associations



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#Thankyou

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