

Global Cooperation Fire Management : current status, guideposts for future direction

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ABSTRACT – An overarching goal of the *International Wildland Fire Conference* series is promoting international fire management cooperation. The global fire community has long-recognized the factors contributing to steadily increasing wildland fire management problems including climate change-induced increases in fire frequency and severity, increasing fuel loads and landscape flammability, rising populations and expanding distribution of people (the major cause of wildland fire) into flammable environments, increasing fire threat to communities, livelihoods and food security, and escalating fire suppression costs. The global fire community recognizes the critical importance of enhanced international cooperation as a key strategy to mitigate the growing risk (weather and fuels) and threat (human and environmental values at risk) of wildfire globally. Greater international collaboration provides enhanced fire risk reduction capability (prevention) and sharing critical fuel, weather and fire intelligence for readiness (pre-suppression) planning. Suppression capacity increased through sharing of expertise and where suitable and appropriate resource-exchange, and suppression effectiveness improved by sharing advances in training, science and technology transfer. Many actors and agencies actively, or potentially can, contribute to greater international collaboration. This study reviewed the current status of global fire cooperation, and compiled ideas to enhance future global exchange of fire management initiatives, through examining documentation of cooperation activities or programs in fire management, by survey and discussions with key individuals and agencies actively involved in international fire management cooperation. International collaboration depends on the commitment of sovereign countries, each with context, opportunities and challenges. Many networks were initiated in the past, but few are active, effective and sustained. Success of efforts in collaboration has been limited and tends to consist of reports, proceedings, guidelines, manuals and other documentation with little evidence of impact and uptake by countries. It would seem that the requirements for a sustained network include articulated need, shared leadership and persistent funding.

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