

LANDFIRE Product Application Summary

Title: An Evaluation of the Forest Service Hazardous Fuels Treatment Program—Are We Treating Enough to Promote Resiliency or Reduce Hazard?

Citation: Nicole Vaillant, Elizabeth Reinhardt. In press. An Evaluation of the Forest Service Hazardous Fuels Treatment Program—Are We Treating Enough to Promote Resiliency or Reduce Hazard? *Journal of Forestry*. In press

Authors: Nicole Vaillant, Elizabeth Reinhardt

Application Location: contiguous United States

Objectives

Seeking improved strategies for reducing fuels, the USDA Forest Service fire management leadership initiated this effort to evaluate whether fuel management is impacting enough area to reduce wildfire hazard or create/maintain fire-adapted resilient landscapes. [Link to article.](#)

Project description

The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy recognizes that wildfire is a necessary natural process in many ecosystems and strives to reduce conflicts between fire prone landscapes and people. In an effort to mimic natural fire disturbance and mitigate potential negative wildfire impacts proactively, the Forest Service fuels program reduces wildland fuels through prescribed burning and mechanical treatments. With the development of nationally available, spatially explicit data, it was possible to evaluate the Forest Service fuel treatment program using the actual treatment footprints. we evaluated the extent of mechanical treatments, prescribed fire, and wildfire occurrence within Forest Service administered lands from 2008 to 2012 with respect to historic fire return intervals and current wildfire hazard.

LANDFIRE products used

- Disturbance data
- Public events database
- Mean Fire Return Interval
- Fire Regime Group

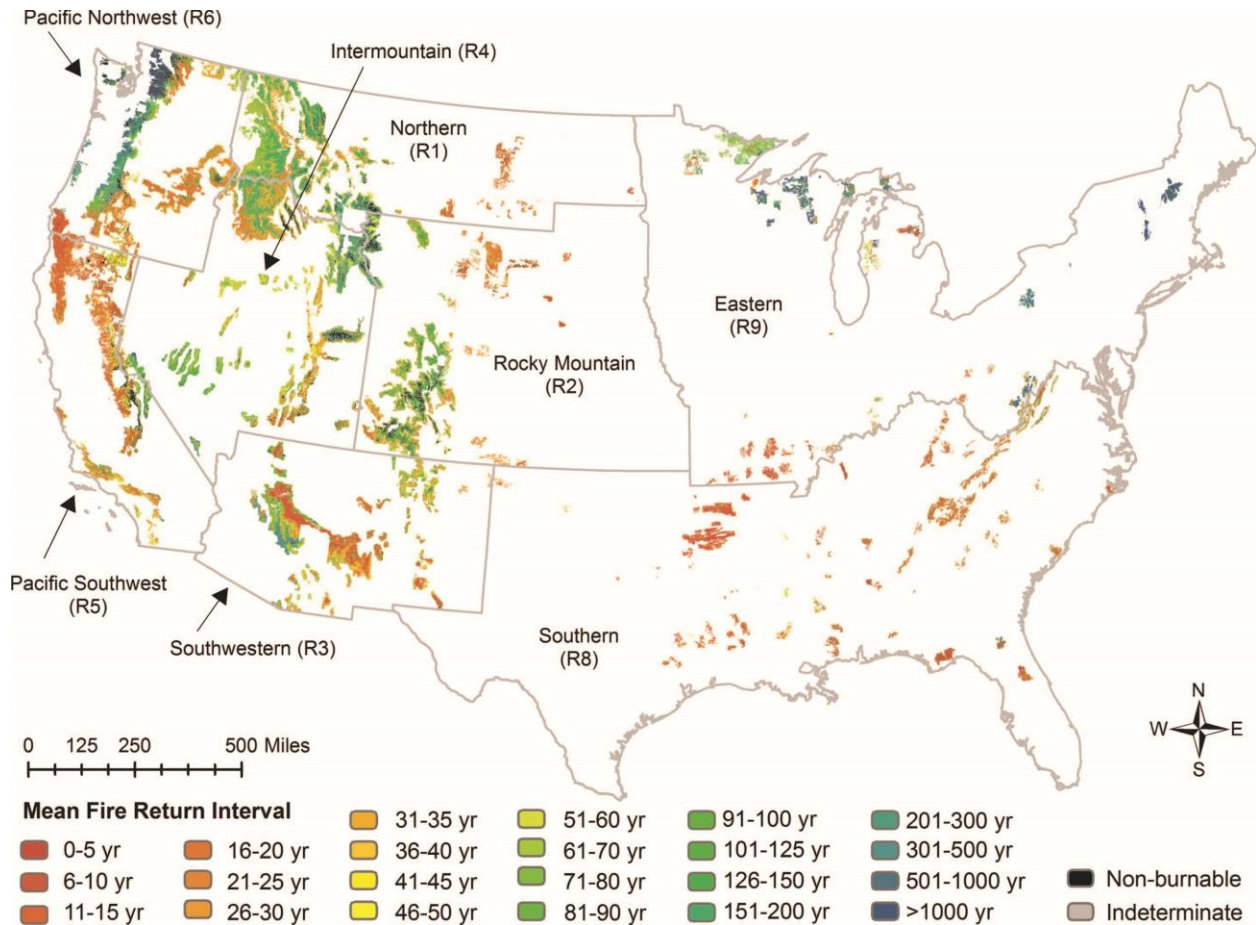
Value of the work to the natural resource management/conservation community

Understanding where past fuel treatments and wildfires have occurred is important for prioritizing future fuel treatments. We found that current treatment implementation is not

focused on the areas that would most reduce fire hazard nor is it at a scale that approximates historic disturbance rates across NFS lands. Strategies to reduce fire hazard and achieve the ecological benefits of fire include: 1) increasing the extent of fuel treatments if resources permit; 2) designing treatments to create conditions conducive to naturally ignited fires burning under desired conditions while fulfilling an ecological role; and 2) placing treatments to reduce hazard while providing options for firefighting when highly valued resources and assets are present.

Links, photos, additional materials

[Vaillant, Nicole and Elizabeth Reinhardt. In press. An Evaluation of the Forest Service Hazardous Fuels Treatment Program—Are We Treating Enough to Promote Resiliency or Reduce Hazard? Journal of Forestry.](#)



Map of MFRI for Forest Service-administered lands in the continuous United States. the most frequent MFRI (5 years), and **Data were obtained from LANDFIRE (LANDFIRE 2014d).** More maps and figures in the article.