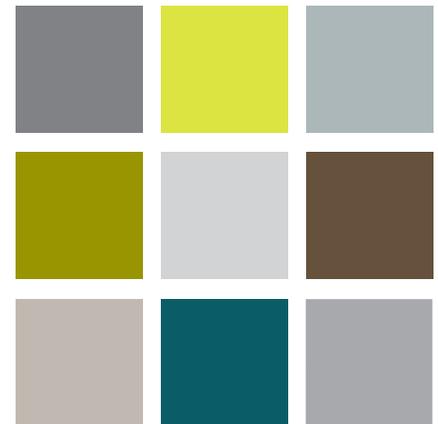


Enhancing Fire Science Delivery in the Lake States Improves Forest Management and Restoration Impact Statement



SUMMARY

Ensuring that the best available fire-science information is available for managers and policymakers is critical for improving forest management and restoration.

SITUATION

Fire-dependent forests were once common features across the Lake States Region, including along the south shore of Lake Erie in Ohio. Many of these forests have been altered considerably over the past 150 years, significantly increasing hazardous forest fuels in some while changing the mix of dominant forest tree species in others. These changes have led to an increased risk of catastrophic wildfire and a decline in resilience and sustainability. Current efforts to reduce hazardous fuels and restore these forests to more natural conditions are often complicated by the need to focus on multiple objectives, including wildlife habitat, forest products, recreational opportunities, and other important ecosystem services. Unfortunately, many resource managers approach these issues with incomplete knowledge of ‘state-of-the-art’ fire-science information, often resulting in management and restoration failures. There are also significant barriers and issues that affect how fire-dependent ecosystems are managed, including how information is shared among managers and policy makers, as well as how on-the-ground prescribed burning programs are implemented.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Enhancing Fire Science Delivery in the Lake States Improves Forest Management and Restoration

RESPONSE

As one of 14 national knowledge-exchange consortia funded by the Joint Fire Science Program, OARDC scientists founded and continue to lead the *Lake States Fire Science Consortium*, an international and multi-institutional effort composed of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, state and provincial Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, and others. OARDC scientists are delivering the best available fire-science information to fire and resource managers across the Lake States Region, including portions of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, as well as the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Ontario. Efforts are continuing to identify significant gaps in the knowledge and research associated with fire science in the region, and to deliver science-based technical information through a variety of manager-preferred outlets, including newsletters, fact sheets, technical reports, field-based workshops, conferences, webinars, and field consultations. A searchable, web-based database of fire-science information has been developed, as well as a network of demonstration field sites across the region that highlight the natural fire regimes, and issues related to fire and forest fuels management practices.

IMPACT

The delivery of 'state-of-the-art' fire-science information to fire and resource managers is critical to successfully managing and restoring fire-dependent forests. We currently serve over 430 fire and resource management professionals across the region as active members of the Lake States Fire Science Consortium, ultimately improving the effectiveness of forest management and restoration programs by federal, state, and private resource management organizations. These efforts led by OARDC researchers will ultimately improve environmental quality and ecosystem health across the Lake States Region and reduce the potential risks from catastrophic wildfire.

Contact Information

P. Charles Goebel

Professor

135 Williams Hall
1680 Madison Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691

330.263.3789

goebel.11@osu.edu

senr.osu.edu