Changing the Wildfire Narrative

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Communication

How can ideas and knowledge in the Cohesive Strategy Addendum change understanding and action?

- Information sharing alone does not change thinking
- Must affect values, emotions, ideas
- Meaning is shaped by Framing and Narratives
- Narratives - Stories around Wildland Fire
Trust Factors in LOW stress situations

All other factors
15-20%

Competence & Expertise
65-80%
Trust Factors in HIGH stress situations

SOURCE: Vincent Covello
Framing

The words we use shape the way people understand and respond.

Previous frames have limited effectiveness.

Frames set up which story we can tell.
War on Fire Frame

Hazard: Fire

Goal: Stopping Fire

What Can/Should We Do (Efficacy)?

- Battle the flames
- People can evacuate
- Never let the enemy take hold
Cohesive Strategy Frame

Hazard: Landscape (condition)
Goal: Improving Landscape & Communities

What Can/Should We Do (Efficacy)?
- Utilize all tools at right time (culture change)
- Partner to engage in wildland strategy (similar)
- People can prepare their lands (home & community)

What will wildland fire find when it arrives?

What did we leave for the next wildland fire?
New Frame Allows New Narratives

- Full range of tools
- Makes “war on fire” one tool
- Emphasis on Right Place; Right Conditions
- New possibilities for tactics
- Expands knowing, action and meaning as a community
Tabletop 1

Reframing – Pivoting, Shifting the narrative

Narratives provide a way to think about and communicate issues

War on Fire - Cohesive Frame –
Tabletop 1

Reframing – Pivoting, Shifting

War on Fire - We are fighting the fire and it is 10% contained after initial attack

Cohesive Frame – We have prepared for wildfires and are working collaboratively to reinforce established fire breaks to contain fire spread that reduces risks to communities and promotes landscape health.
Message Building

1. Who is your audience? (Be specific)

2. What is the issue/opportunity that they are concerned about? (What do they care about)

3. What are you going to do to meet their need? (What actions will you take on their behalf)

4. What are you hoping that they will do? (Actions they can take themselves – range of options)

Considering the answers, I will say: ______________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Thank you

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Let’s Shift Our Engagement Frame

Emily Jane (EJ) Davis
Oregon State University
“We need to educate the public.”
Give Engagement its Due

- Plan it from the start
- Bring in partners from Extension and social science
- Assess needs and assets
- Budget accordingly

Photos: EJ Davis, Katie Wollstein
Draw on Community Partners and Local Context

- Identify partners
- Listen to understand them
- Co-host or share space
- Combine agendas where appropriate
- Put engagement into local context

Take a Learner-Centered Approach

- Orient around their needs and motives
- Activate existing knowledge
- Employ peer learning
- Provide a clear benefit


Photo: EJ Davis
Call to Action
Message Building

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Considering the answers, I will say: _____________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
Action

How do you bring this back to your communities?

How do you help others (internal/external) make these shifts?