ADAPTING TO WILDFIRE:
MOVING BEYOND HOMEOWNER RISK PERCEPTIONS
TO
TAKING ACTION

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Homeowners Taking Action

A Last Mile Problem

Solving social problems with a nudge
(TED talk by Sendhil Mullainathan, Harvard Economist)
Beyond risk perceptions to taking action...

Community Context

Developing Fire Adapted Communities: The importance of Interactions Among Elements of Local Context

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ABSTRACT
Resident perceptions and actions related to wildfire management are influenced by a complex set of factors that are often tied to a specific local context. We conducted in-depth case studies in two diverse communities to better illustrate how elements of local social context collectively influence wildfire perspectives and behaviors in a given locality. Our results suggest that the influence of commonly cited predictors for wildfire mitigation actions, including homeowners’ associations, vegetation preferences, and previous experience with wildfire, can vary based on their interaction with other elements of local context such as residents’ desire for privacy, preferences for wildland or ornamental vegetation, identification as “suburbanites,” or “country residents,” and willingness to collectively organize. We compare our results to existing wildfire social science findings and argue for a more holistic view of local social context as a way to design tailored strategies for increasing resident responsibility for wildfire.

KEYWORDS
Wildland urban interface; wildfire; fire adapted community; local context
Taking action...

Specific Information
Taking action...

Multiple Interactions
WiRē (WildfireResearch): an interdisciplinary research collaboration focused on homeowner wildfire risk mitigation and community wildfire adaptedness.
The WiRē Approach

Systematic data collection within communities
“Nudges” – small messages that seek to encourage behavioral change

Dear Cedaredge Resident,

We have recently seen the devastating effects of wildfire in Colorado communities. We do not want to see homes destroyed by a wildfire in Cedaredge. Therefore, the Cedaredge Volunteer Fire Department and the West Region Wildfire Council (WRWC) are working together to help homeowners reduce their risk from wildfire. We all need to work together to reduce our risk from wildfire.

As part of the 2014 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), WRWC conducted a wildfire risk analysis in your area to determine how residents can be better prepared in the event of a wildfire. We thought you might be interested in the following information about your wildfire risk:

Your community’s overall wildfire risk is rated as: [community rating]
Your own property’s wildfire risk rating is: [property rating]
The average wildfire risk rating of your ten closest neighbors: [property rating]

West Region Wildfire Council is providing you with more information about your property’s wildfire risk and what you can do about it. To learn more, you can visit a website built and maintained by WRWC that is specific to your home.

Go to [www.COWLwildfire.org/myhome] and type in this code when asked: [XXXX]

To learn more about programs and funding available to assist you in your efforts to reduce your wildfire risk, please contact Jamie Gomez, Mitigation & Education Coordinator for Delta, Ouray, and San Miguel Counties, at (970) 615-7300.

Sincerely,

Jamie Gomez
Mitigation & Education Coordinator
West Region Wildfire Council

[Signature]

Tom Latrd
Fire Chief
Cedaredge Volunteer Fire Department

Group (n)  Website Meeting  ANY RESPONSE

A (325)  54  7  59  18%
B (326)  39  3  40  12%
C (326)  57  10  62  19%
All (976)  150  20  161  16%

D-space projects

After nudge letter

+ 45 site visits (and counting)...

Preliminary data; subject to revision
How can we use a century’s worth of fire science to help homeowners adapt and live with wildfire?

Unite research and practice
Relationships matter
Don’t think about the last mile last!
Thank You

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