

What is a fire resilient landscape?

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CONTEXT

The concept of fire resilience is becoming more and more considered in light of extreme wildfires and the emergence of wildfire risk in countries not traditionally prone to these events. If the term 'resilience' is to be included in the political agenda as an approach to face extreme events, it is necessary to start by understanding the meaning of a **fire resilient landscape**.

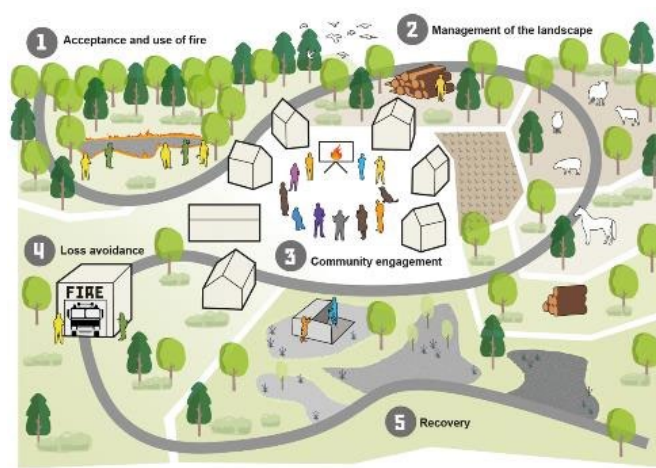
Despite its relevance, there does not exist a consensus on the definition of the term. PyroLife Early Stage Researcher Fiona Newman Thacker proposes a definition that integrates environmental and social perspectives. They also analyse the applicability of their definition in the 2022 Roses wildfire, in Northeastern Spain, and the ASK (Artillerie Schietkamp) Military Site in the Netherlands, an area with fire risk because of the presence of ammunition associated with shooting practices, and that is engaged with proactive fire management.

OUTCOMES

- A **fire resilient landscape** is a socio-ecological system that accepts the presence of fire, whilst preventing significant losses through landscape management, community engagement and effective recovery.
- Fire resilient landscapes are characterised by the following five themes:

1. **Acceptance** of fire as part of ecosystems **and use of fire** in prescribed burns.
2. **Management of the landscape** to generate and maintain patchiness (mosaic landscapes) and reduce fuel load.
3. **Community engagement** through knowledge sharing and exchange, collaboration, education and trust.
4. **Loss avoidance**, as there is no long-lasting damage to values and suppression takes place strategically by a highly trained firefighting force.
5. **Recovery** of the fire resilient landscape, returning to a stable state partly due to having species adapted to fire.

- The definition and the themes are applicable in the sites studied.



The common themes of a fire resilient landscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For policymakers

- Look at resiliency holistically, integrating both social and environmental perspectives.
- Support land uses aiming to enhance resiliency.

For emergency responders

- Build capacity for enhancing fire resilient landscapes through strategic mitigation and suppression.
- Integrate knowledge of local communities and land managers.

IMPACT ON

Wildfire management

- Key to developing fire resilient landscapes are:
 - The involvement of local communities.
 - A proactive approach where the landscape is managed all year round by livestock farming, sustainable exploitation of forest resources, and prescribed burning.

FULL ARTICLE FREELY AVAILABLE: Newman Thacker, Fiona; Castellnou Ribau, Marc; Bartholomeus, Harm; Stoof, Cathelijne R. What is a fire resilient landscape? Towards an integrated definition. *Ambio* (2023). Available at <https://bit.ly/3D2ouSg>

Collaborators:



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