

## **Florida Abstract**

What's it look like? Public preference for fuels treatments after seeing on the ground Fire and Fire Surrogate Study treatments.

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Successful fire management in the wildland urban interface needs to take into account public concerns about different fuels treatment methods. Although several recent public opinion surveys indicate that there is a reasonably high level of acceptance of prescribed burning and thinning as fire hazard reduction practices, they also raise questions as to what people are thinking of when they indicate their acceptance. Results suggest that individuals with lower levels of acceptance may tend to think the practices will only result in clearcut or charred landscapes. Objections to practices may thus be based not on direct knowledge but rather on an inferred or partial understanding of the visual and ecological effects of a treatment. The Fire and Fire Surrogate study, developed through the Joint Fire Science Program, aims to better understand the tradeoffs and ecological effects of alternative fuel treatment methods. It also provides a unique opportunity to better understand public reaction to actual on the ground fuel treatments. A surrogate study site in California has completed four treatments: prescribed fire, mechanical harvesting, mechanical harvest followed by prescribed fire, and untreated. Visitors who see all four treatments are being given a short survey exploring their reactions to and preference for each treatment. This presentation will provide a preliminary examination of responses with particular emphasis on how the ability to physically see the effects of different treatments influences preferences and whether preferences change depending on whether or not the treatment is to take place in the wildland urban interface.