

Institute for Journalism & Natural Resources
The Future of Wildfire
A Workshop for Journalists – Missoula, April 19-21, 2018

THURSDAY, April 19th, 2018

5:30pm – Participants gather in the lobby of the Holiday Inn, downtown Missoula, for the walk to our opening dinner at the Iron Horse Pub.

Roster of Participating Journalists:

Ashley Ahearn, Freelance Producer (*Science Friday*, *WNYC*, *NPR*) – Winthrop, WA

Frankie Barnhill, Reporter, Boise State Public Radio – Boise, ID

Warren Cornwall, Freelance Journalist (*Science*, *The New York Times Magazine*) – Bellingham, WA

Kelsey Dayton, Freelance Journalist (*Washington Post*, *Outside Online*) – Missoula, MT

Sherry Devlin, Freelance Writer & Editor (*Treesource*, *Missoula Current*) – Missoula, MT

Susan Dunlap, Environment/Natural Resources Reporter, *The Montana Standard* – Butte, MT

Marissa Fessenden, Freelance Journalist and Illustrator (*Nature*, *Scientific American*) – Bozeman, MT

Courtney Flatt, Multimedia Reporter, *EarthFix* – Richland, WA

Nate Hegyi, Montana Reporter, Mountain West News Bureau – Missoula and Bozeman, MT

Lauren Kaljur, Reporter, *Discourse Media* – Vancouver, BC

Sarah Keller, Independent Journalist (*High Country News*, *Smithsonian*) – Bozeman, MT

Anna King, Bureau Chief, Northwest News Network – Richland, WA

Laura Lundquist, Freelance Journalist (*Montana On The Ground*) – Missoula, MT

Liam Moriarty, Feature Reporter/Producer, Jefferson Public Radio – Ashland, OR

Katy Nesbitt, Freelance Journalist (*La Grande Observer*, *Capital Press*) – Enterprise, OR

Tony Schick, Investigative Reporter, Oregon Public Broadcasting – Portland, OR

Elizabeth Stewart-Severy, Environment Reporter, Aspen Public Radio – Basalt, CO

Meera Subramanian, Journalist/Author (*The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*) – West Barnstable, MA

Susan Valot, Freelance Radio Reporter (KQED, KCRW) – Lomita, CA

Eric Whitney, News Director, Montana Public Radio – Missoula, MT

Sophie Yeo, Independent Environmental Journalist (*Washington Post*, *Pacific Standard*) – Chicago, IL

Zachary Ziegler, Reporter/Producer, Arizona Public Media – Tucson, AZ

IJNR:

Dave Spratt, executive director – Ann Arbor, MI

Melissa Mylchreest, director of communications & development – Missoula, MT

Covering Fire: Journalism, Wildfire, and the Changing World of Both

7:00pm – Climate change, drought, development, and forest management have fundamentally shifted the way wildfire behaves. Meanwhile, journalists are often tasked with covering fires at the drop of a hat – whenever and wherever they start. Michael Kodas, author of *Megafire*, will talk about his decades of experience covering fire, what to look out for, and what we might be able to expect in the future.

- **Michael Kodas**, author/journalist; associate director of the Center for Environmental Journalism, University of Colorado-Boulder

Overnight—Holiday Inn, Downtown – 200 S Pattee St, Missoula, MT 59802

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FRIDAY, April 20th, 2018

7:15 am— Journalists gather in the lobby of the Holiday Inn for the short walk to the Swift Building (315 S 4th St E), where breakfast and coffee will be waiting. (*Commuters can meet us there!*)

Please note that the schedule will include a 10-15 minute break between each session

Wildfire in the West: The 30,000-foot-view

8:00am – In order to understand the current realities of wildfire and fire management, it's important to look at the historical, cultural, and ecological forces that have jointly shaped the present. We'll hear from two long-time fire experts about where we came from, and where we seem to be headed.

- **Steve Arno** – research forester, U.S. Forest Service (retired)
- **Ron Wakimoto** – professor of forestry, University of Montana (retired)

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes (and Everywhere Else): Wildfire and Public Health

9:15am – Last summer, smoke from wildfires across the Northwest collected in western Montana, causing an unprecedented decline in air quality across the region. While 300ppm of particulate matter is hazardous, readings routinely reached 800ppm – occasionally even surpassing levels that air monitoring equipment can measure. Was this simply a summer-long nuisance, or will that exposure create long-term health problems?

- **Sarah Coefield** – Air Quality Specialist, Missoula County Health Department
- **Curtis Noonan** – associate professor of epidemiology, Center for Environmental Health Sciences, University of Montana

Burning Money: The Economics of Wildfire

10:30am – From insurance investments on houses built in the wildland urban interface to the billion-dollar-figures spent on suppression annually, there's no question that the costs associated with fire are growing higher each year. We'll hear about what the fiscal world of fire looks like, as well as what new changes in federal budgeting might mean for the future of fire management.

- **Ray Rasker** – Executive Director, Headwaters Economics

Lunch Discussion: Realities of On-the-Ground Wildfire Management

11:45am – From rangeland to mountain forests to neighborhoods in the interface, each requires different fire management approaches. Combine this with the alphabet soup of agencies tasked with managing fire – USFS, BLM, NIFC, USFWS, state DNRCs – and the results can be bureaucratically mind-boggling. But no matter what, the reality is that wildfires demand attention, and it's up to those on the ground to figure out the how, when, and where of management.

- **Bill Hahnenberg** – Deputy Director of Fire and Aviation Management, USFS
- **Joliet Pollet** – Fire Planning and Fuels Management Division Chief, BLM
- **Mike O'Herron** – Area Manager, Southwest Area Land Office, Montana DNRC
- **Erin Phelps** – District Ranger, Lolo National Forest, USFS

Disturbance in the Forest: Climate, Ecology, and Fire

1:30pm – As the climate shifts and forest management changes, fire regimes follow suit. What impact is climate change having, how can we restore a more 'natural' balance to our forests – and what is natural, anyway?

- **Phil Higuera** – professor of fire ecology, University of Montana
- **Andrew Larson** – professor of forest ecology, University of Montana
- **Bob Yokelson** – research professor of chemistry, University of Montana

3:00pm – Journalists hop on the bus for a short ride.

Science on Fire

3:15pm - In order to be better equipped to live alongside fire, we need to better understand why fire does what it does and how it's changing. We'll hear from a handful of researchers at the USFS Fire, Fuel and Smoke Science Program about what they're learning – and how they hope journalists might help get the word out.

- **Colin Hardy, Matt Jolly, Mark Finney, et al** – researchers, Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory

5:30 pm – Workshop adjourns for the day, and the group boards the bus to head to dinner at Brooks & Browns.

Overnight—Holiday Inn, Downtown – 200 S Pattee St, Missoula, MT 59802

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SATURDAY, April 21st, 2018

7:30am — Journalists gather in the lobby of the Holiday Inn for breakfast, and then a quick bus ride up to the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area.

Please note that we will be out in the field for ~3 hours, so please bring weather-appropriate clothing, a day pack, water, etc. We will be walking 1-2 miles on relatively even terrain, so please wear footwear appropriate for walking.

Fire on the Mountain: Working Together to Restore a Forest

8:15am – The Marshall Woods Restoration Project is a 13,000 acre example of how collaborative management and a long-sighted plan can not only significantly improve the ecosystem health of a forest, it can also protect private lands, provide recreation opportunities, increase fire resilience, and benefit watershed quality. A joint project of the U.S. Forest Service Interdisciplinary Team and the Lolo Forest Restoration Committee, the plan also works with DNRC to bring adjacent private landowners to the table in an effort to form a cohesive wildfire management strategy. We'll hear from the folks in charge of putting this plan into practice, and visit a number of public and private sites along the trail.

- **Jen Hensiek** – Missoula District Ranger, Lolo National Forest, USFS
- **Angela Wells** – Stewardship Program Manager, Montana DNRC
- **Dave Williams** – District Fuels Specialist, Lolo National Forest, USFS
- **David Atkins** – Forest Ecologist and Forester; President, *Treesource*
- **Jill Belsky** – Landowner; professor of rural and environmental sociology, University of Montana (invited)

11:00am - The group boards the bus for a ride across town to the USFS offices at Fort Missoula, and lunch.

After the Smoke Clears: BAER and Post-Fire Management

11:30am – Wildfires get the most media coverage while they're actually happening, but the story doesn't end

when the rain falls or the snow flies and the fires are finally out. For many forest managers, that's when the work really starts. We'll hear about how BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response) plans are formed with an eye toward protecting life, property, water quality, and compromised ecosystems – and also how some burned areas are deemed suitable for salvage logging, and what that process entails.

- **Ann Hadlow** – BAER Specialist and Soil Scientist, Lolo National Forest, USFS
- **Sheryl Gunn** - Silviculturist, Lolo National Forest, USFS

Coming Full Circle: Indigenous Approaches to Wildfire

12:30pm – Throughout North America, indigenous communities not only thrived alongside wildfire for thousands of years, they used it as a tool to manage the ecological systems within which they hunted, fished, gathered, and lived. Today, tribes like the Confederated Salish and Kootenai are at the cutting edge of forest management, combining traditional knowledge with modern fire research to restore their lands.

- **Tony Harwood** – Division Manager, Forestry Department, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

Burning Down the House: Wildland-Urban Disasters and How to Avoid Them

1:30 pm — It's no surprise that as development moves deeper into the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), more homes are lost to wildfires. But does it have to be that way? We'll hear about how and why homes ignite, smarter approaches to building, better landscape management practices, and the critical role private landowners play in the bigger picture.

- **Jack Cohen** – research physical scientist, Missoula Fire Sciences Lab, USFS (retired)

2:45pm — Workshop adjourns, and bus returns journalists to the Holiday Inn.