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*Oregon Public Utility Commission  
February 26, 2026*



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# Collaborative Governance

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How wildfire mitigation outcomes are tied to collaborative wildfire management networks.

**Cody Evers, Portland State University**

(w/ Lindsay Campbell, Miranda Mockrin, Mahmood Muttaqee, Olivia Awbrey, Kathy Hixson, Max Nielsen-Pincus, Michelle Johnson, )



Portland State  
UNIVERSITY



Denver

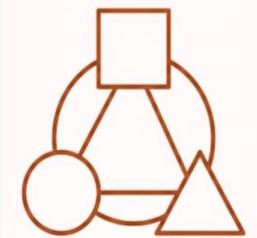
## Wildfire as a wicked problem

### The Problem



Wildfires across the U.S. are becoming larger, more frequent, and more widespread (Iglesias et al., 2022). This creates governance demands that exceed the capacity of any single entity.

### The Response



This drives an urgent need for cross-jurisdictional, landscape-level collaboration to pool resources, knowledge, and legitimacy (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

### The Assumption



Broad, diverse collaboration is expected to strengthen resilience and produce more effective outcomes.

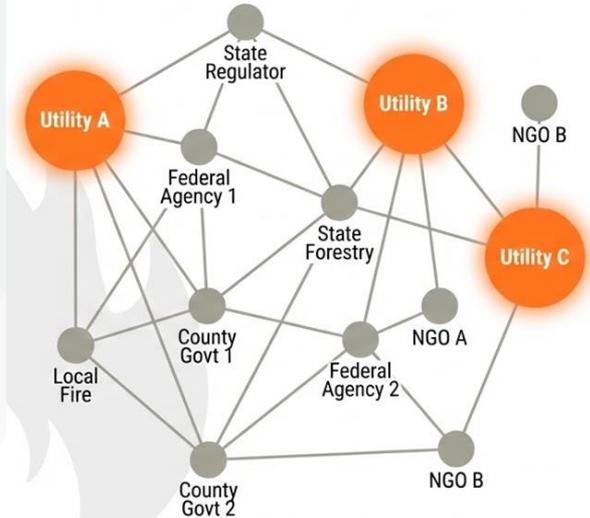
# Wildfire governance & utilities

## Utilities as embedded actors in wildfire governance

- Wildfire mitigation occurs in multi-sector networks
- No single actor controls wildfire outcomes
- Coordination quality shapes mitigation effectiveness

## Why this matters for regulators:

- Utilities & WMP part of broader “ecosystem”
- Network position may influence effectiveness.
- Funding doesn’t automatically mean better collaboration.
- Regulators influence: Incentives for coordination; Stability of funding environments; Alignment across sectors



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# Mapping Collaborative Governance

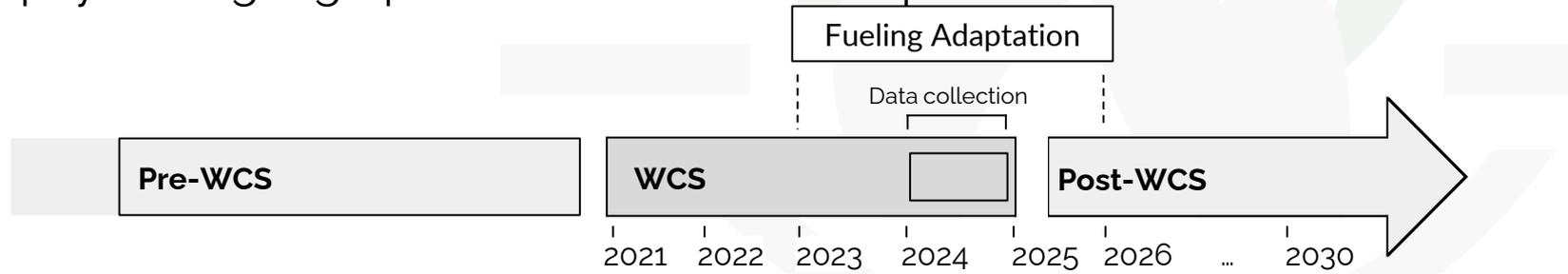
(case studies from ongoing research in  
partnership with USFS, CU-Denver, CWPC)



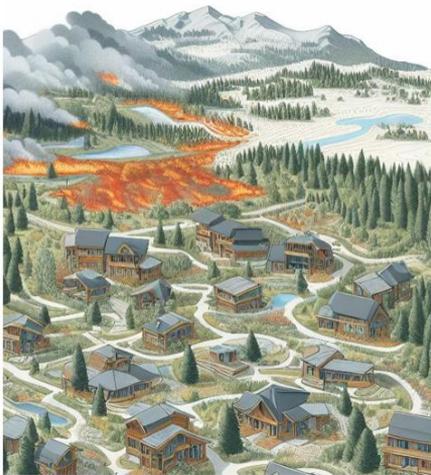
## Background context

**Fueling Adaptation** is an ongoing collaborative research project funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL/IIJA) to examine human dimensions of federal wildfire mitigation efforts through the Wildfire Crisis Strategy (WCS, 2021-2024). It builds on past work developed through past research developed through CoMFRT and STEWMAP.

**Wildfire Crisis Strategy** described as a 10-year plan with federal funds acting as down payment; geographic focus on 21 landscapes



## Research questions



**Overarching RQ:** How are federal investments leveraging existing capacities, networks, and adaptations within wildfire-prone landscapes?



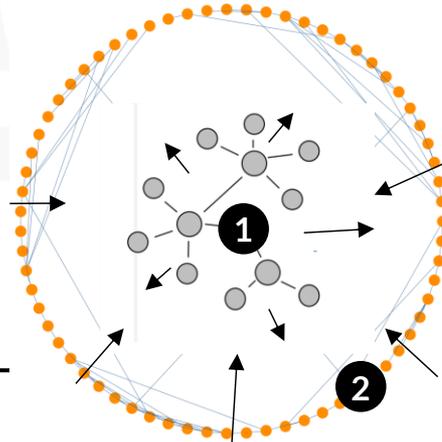
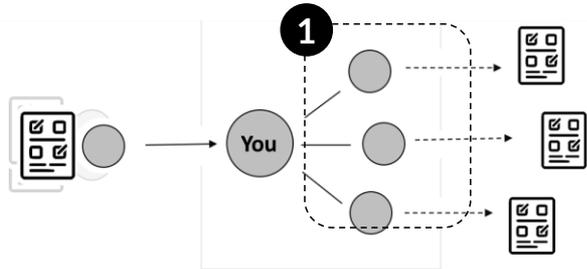
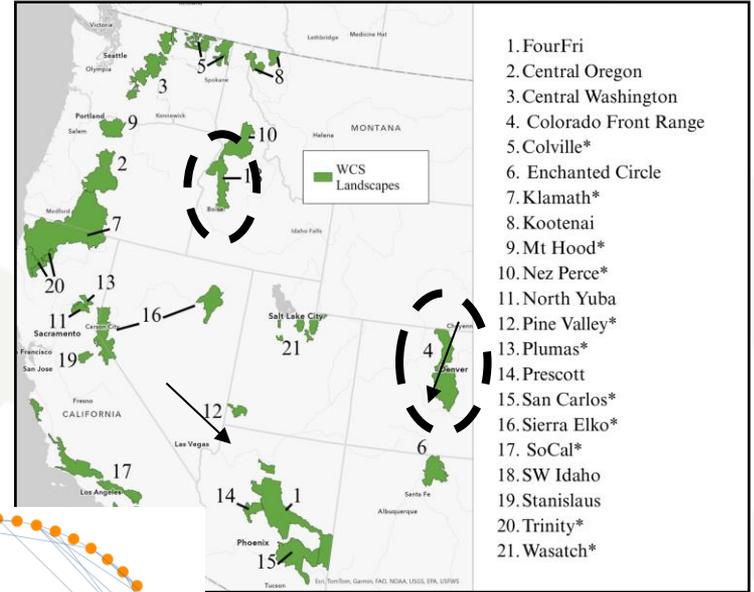
**Governance RQ:** What and where are there capacities and gaps in governance networks to engage in collaborative wildfire management?



### Survey Sampling strategy

Sampling followed two strategies: one-based on survey responses themselves and one-based on a broad list of potential stakeholders.

- 1. Targeted:** Chain referral
  - Starting from kickoff meeting
- 2. Blanket:** Organizational lists
  - FS employees & key partners
  - IRS 990 filers - registered nonprofits
  - Filter Labs list of groups





### CO Front Range

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- Extensive past federal investments through CFLRP, NRCS
- Many notable fires: Cameron Peak, Marshall Fire
- Strong non-profit and university presence: Northern Colorado Fireshed Initiative, Colorado Forest Research Initiative

### SW Idaho

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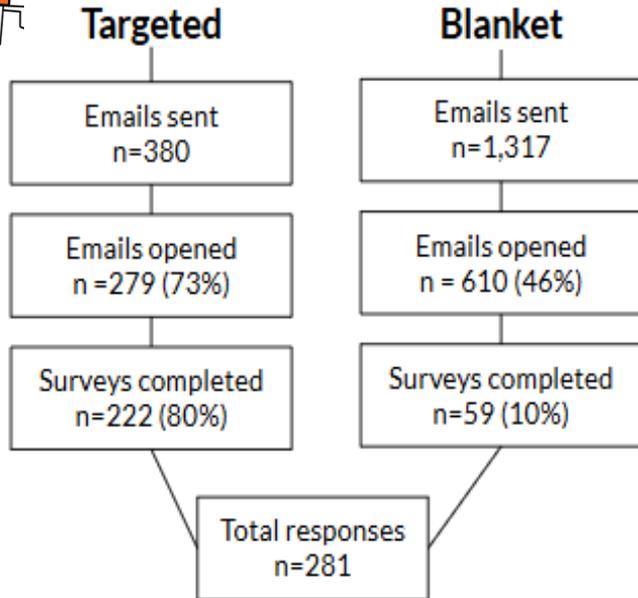
- Forest collaboratives
- Lots of backcountry fire; No recent national-level events
- County-led wildfire planning
- WCS funding operated through new All Lands Partnership (ALP)

## Response rate

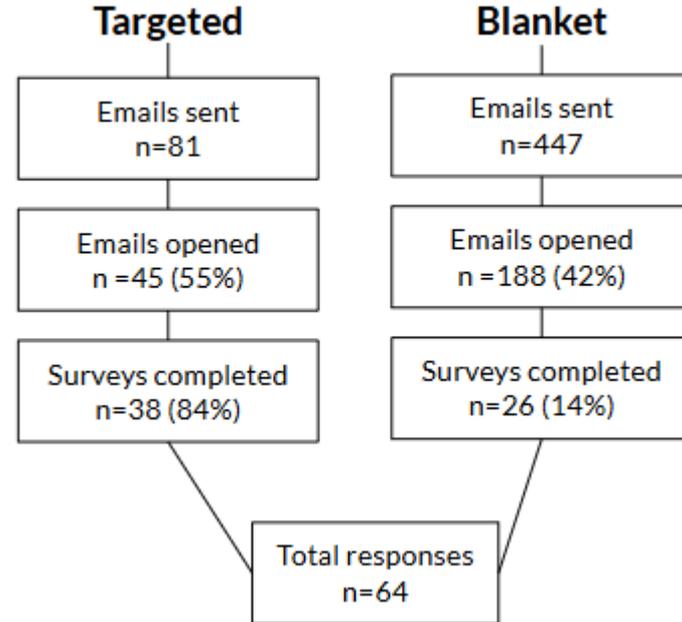
Targeted sampling had a higher response rate while blanket sampling broadened representation.



### CFRL



### SWID



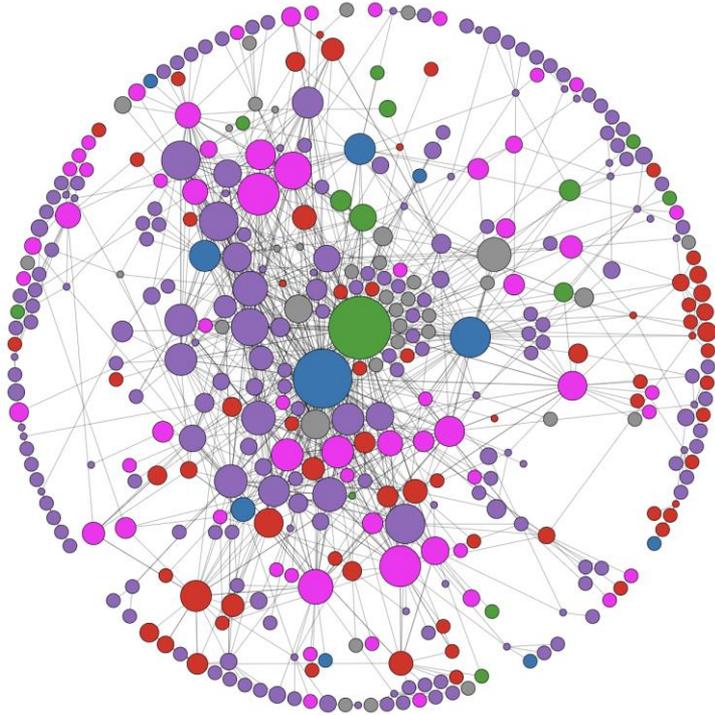
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# Collaborative Governance Results

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# CFRL wildfire network

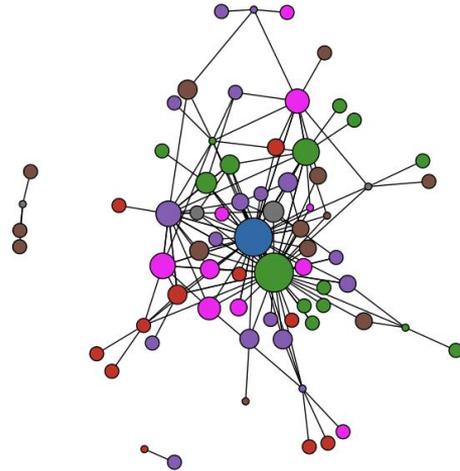
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1500 partnerships  
40% of partnerships informal

# SWID wildfire network

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250 partnerships  
75% of partnerships informal



### CO Front Range

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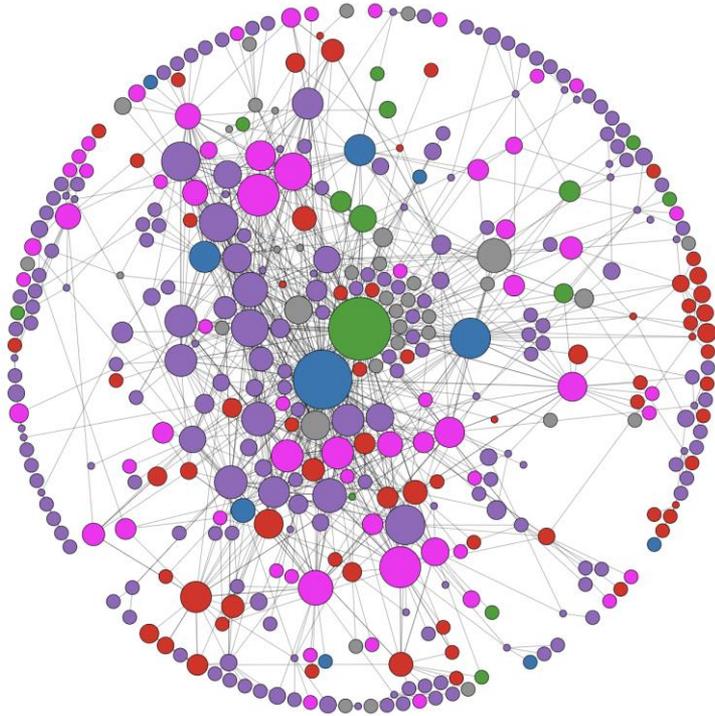
- A **complex, multi-faceted**, and **cross-sectoral** network of **400+ organizations**
- **Federal investment through the WCS was a key factor building collaboration** towards improved landscape outcomes.
- Capacity constraints remain. **Organizations vary widely** in financial resources, staffing, and the geographic areas they have the capacity to serve.
- Few acres treated relative to other landscapes

### SW Idaho

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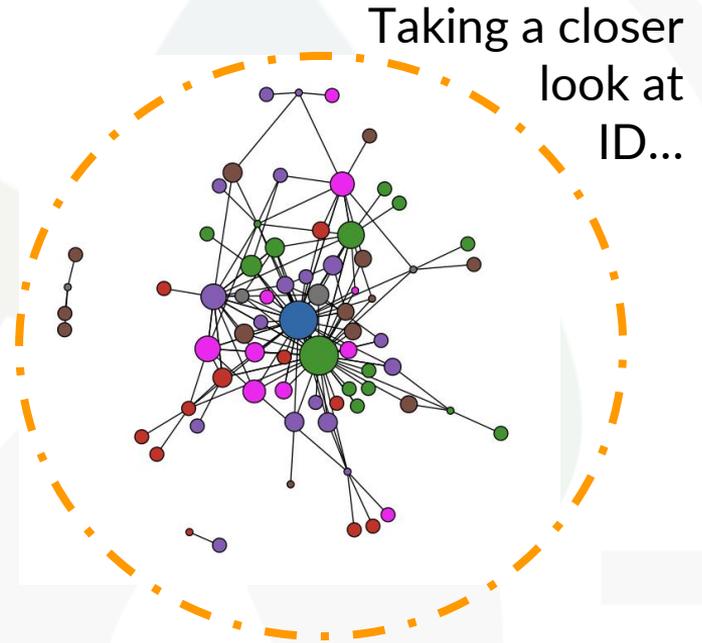
- A **cross-sectoral** network of **100+ organizations**. IDL and USFS make up the core.
- **Organizations vary widely** in financial resources, staffing, and the geographic areas they have the capacity to serve.
- More influenced by the WCS **but** perceived poorer collaborative/landscape outcomes (vs CO)
- The **creation of the All Lands Partnership** is a key investment in building collaborative capacity - which takes time.
- Many acres treated relative to other landscapes

# CFRL wildfire network



1500 partnerships  
40% of partnerships informal

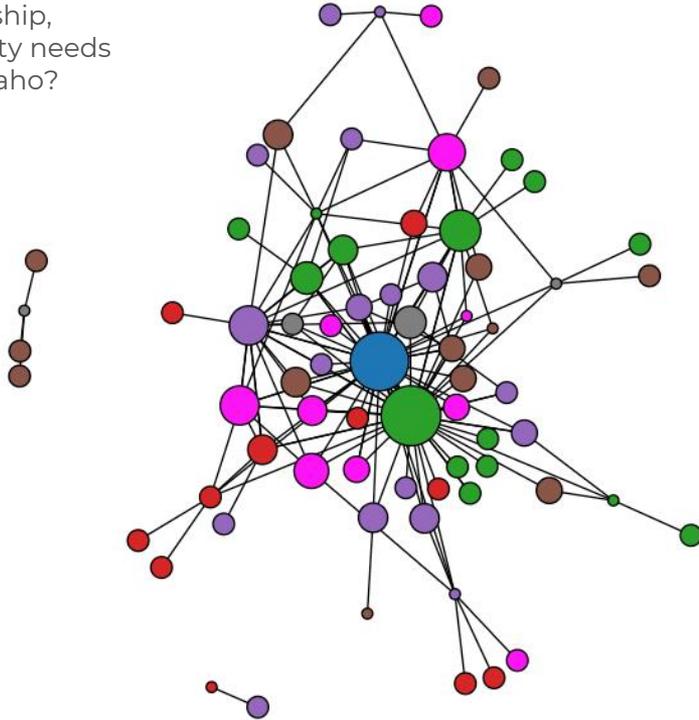
# SWID wildfire network



250 partnerships  
75% of partnerships informal

During the past year, which organizations have you or your group collaborated with most frequently to address wildfire, stewardship, and/or community needs within the SW Idaho?

# Wildfire governance network



## Sectors

	Mentions	
	Organizations	
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Federal gov	15	79
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> State gov	1	47
<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> Local gov	8	46
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Fire districts	11	21
<span style="color: purple;">■</span> NGO	18	62
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Other (private, utilities, univ, etc.)	11	18

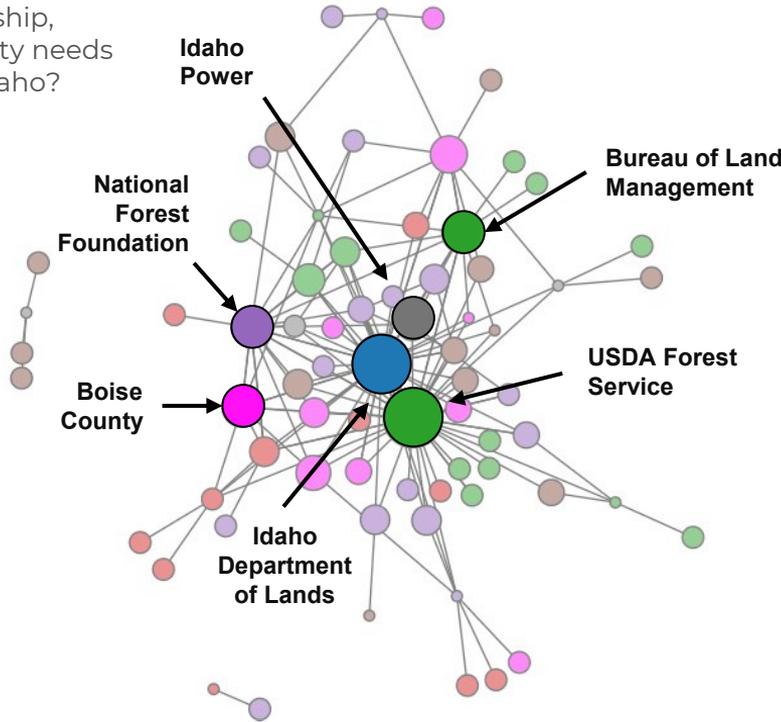
- Organization (n=101)
- Partnership (n=240)

## LEGEND

■ Federal   
 ■ State   
 ■ Local   
 ■ Fire district   
 ■ NGO   
 ■ Other   
 ○ Organization (n=101)   
 — Partnership (n=240)

During the past year, which organizations have you or your group collaborated with most frequently to address wildfire, stewardship, and/or community needs within the SW Idaho?

# Wildfire governance network



## Central actors

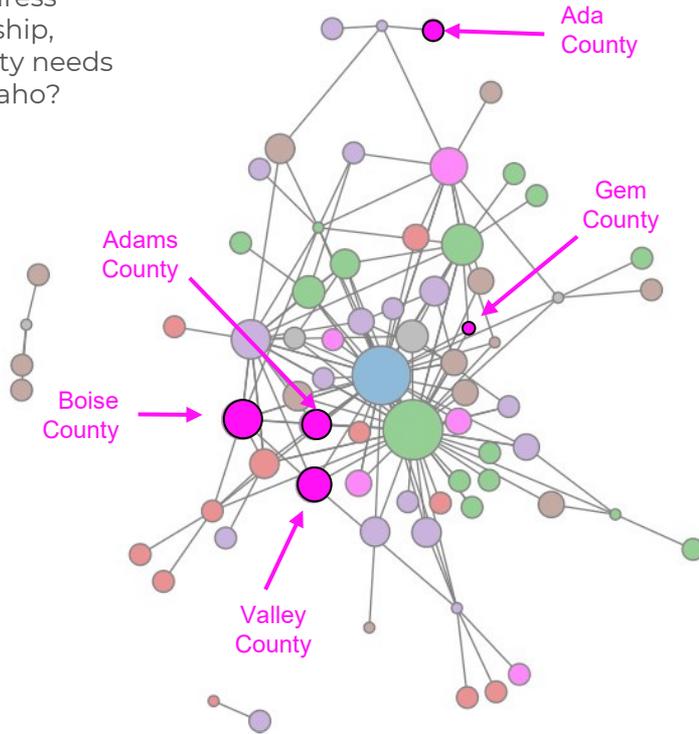
Frequently mentioned organizations	Mentions
Idaho Department of Lands	40
USDA Forest Service	40
National Forest Foundation	15
Boise County	15
Bureau of Land Management	13
Idaho Power	9
City of Boise	6
Valley County	6
Natural Resources Conservation Service	5
Southern Idaho Timber Protective Assoc	5

### LEGEND



During the past year, which organizations have you or your group collaborated with most frequently to address wildfire, stewardship, and/or community needs within the SW Idaho?

# Wildfire governance network



## Local government

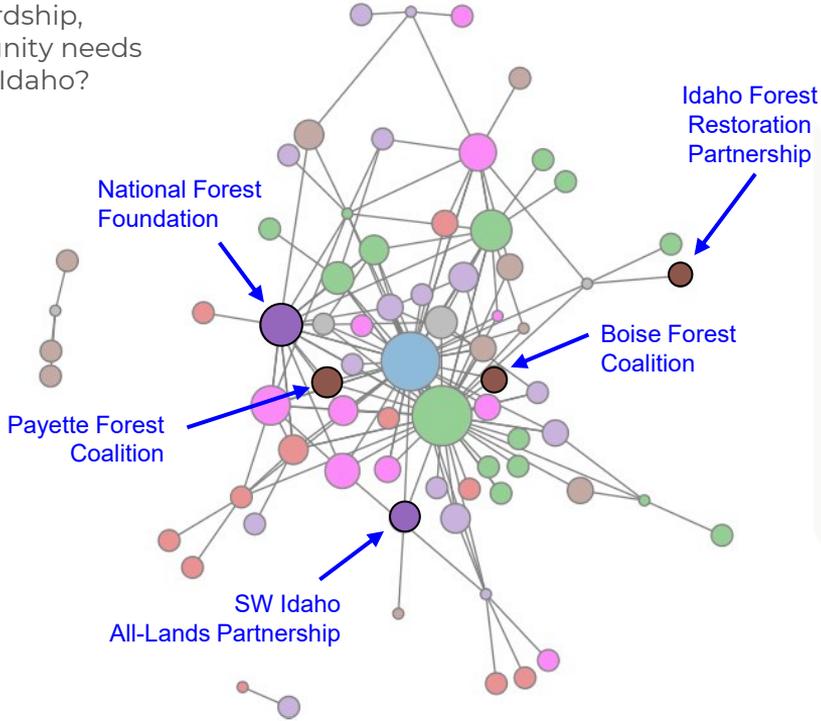
County government	Mentions
Boise County	16
Valley County	8
Adams County	5
Ada County	4
Gem County	2

### LEGEND



During the past year, which organizations have you or your group collaborated with most frequently to address wildfire, stewardship, and/or community needs within the SW Idaho?

# Wildfire governance network



## Collaborative forums

Collaborative forums	Mentions
SW Idaho All-Lands Partnership	20
Boise Forest Coalition	13
Payette Forest Coalition	10
Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership	7
National Forest Foundation	5

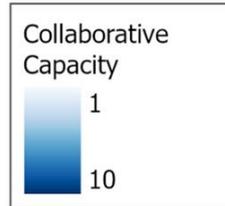
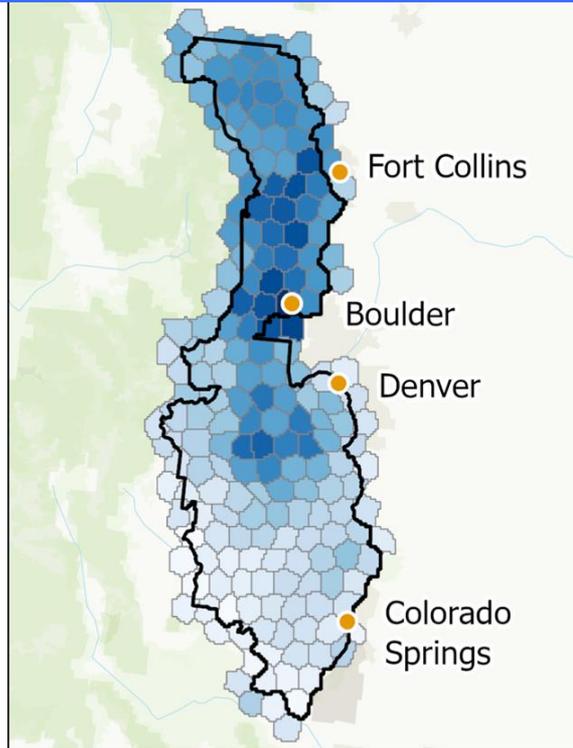
### LEGEND

■ Federal   
 ■ State   
 ■ Local   
 ■ Fire district   
 ■ NGO   
 ■ Other   
 ○ Organization (n=101)   
 — Partnership (n=240)

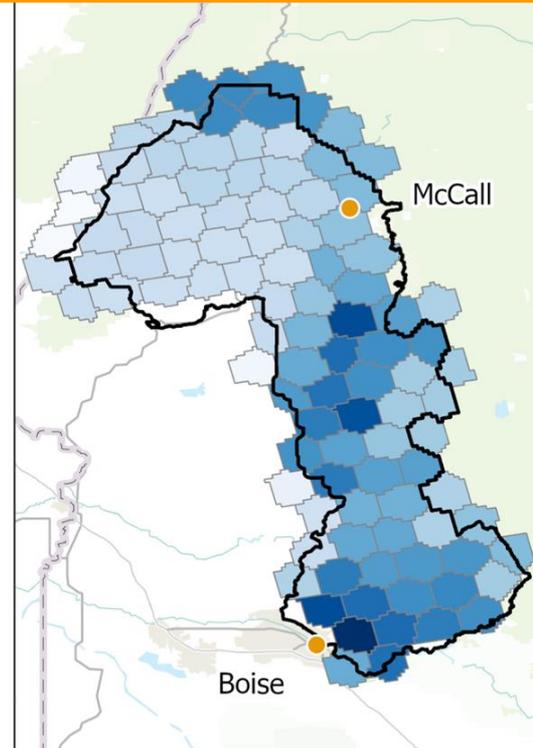
# Mapping Collaborative Capacity

Index includes:  
# groups  
# staff  
# network ties in the  
subfireshed

## CO Front Range



## SW Idaho



# FireCollab Map: Public Dashboard

## Southwest Idaho FireCollabMap

[Download the Data](#)

[Homepage](#)

[Working together](#)

[Find groups](#)

[Collaborative capacity](#)



Wildfire risk mitigation and adaptation requires collaboration.

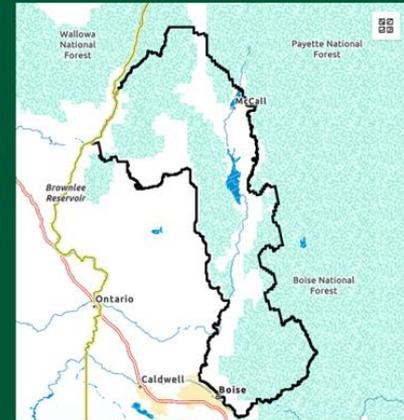
No one organization alone can effectively reduce wildfire risk, a challenging threat that spans public and private lands and impacts a wide array of actors and communities.

The **Fueling Adaptation research team** conducted an **online survey of groups** involved in wildfire risk management, land stewardship, or community development in Southwest Idaho in fall 2024. This platform displays data collected in the survey from groups that opted to share their information publicly and represents a snapshot of that time.

Click on the tabs above to access resources:

- **Working together** → Explore connections between groups in an interactive network diagram
- **Find Groups** → Find partners on an interactive map & see who is doing what & where
- **Collaborative Capacity** → Examine social capacity & wildfire risk

Have questions or feedback? Email us at: [TO BE ADDED LATER](#)



The Southwest Idaho landscape boundary stretches from Boise to north of McCall and includes portions of Boise and Payette National Forests.



Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



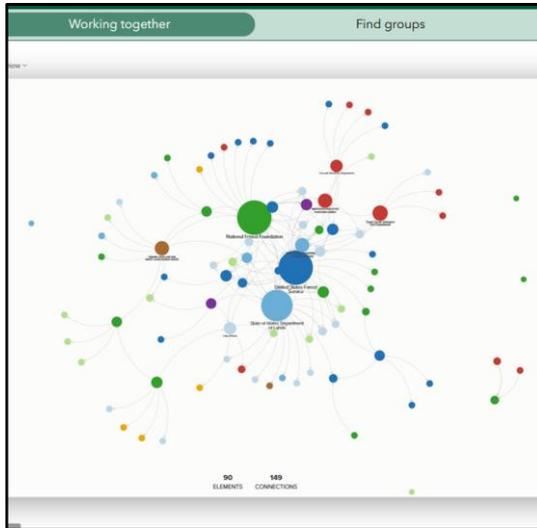
Portland State  
UNIVERSITY



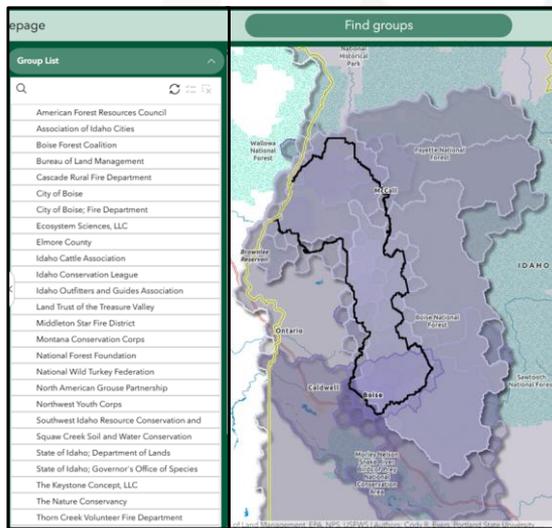
Fueling  
Adaptation

# FireCollab Map: Public Dashboard

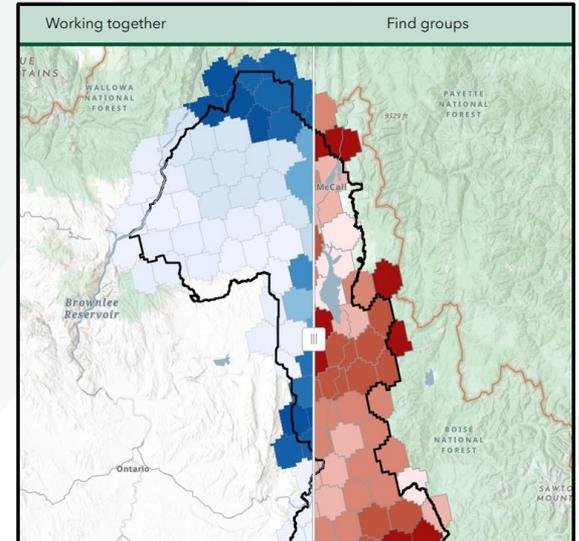
## Org Networks



## Spatial Directory



## Capacity & Risk



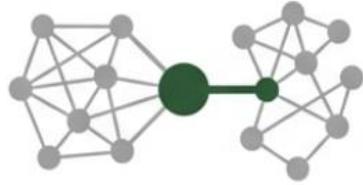
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# Collaborative Governance Key Takeaways

# The Drivers of Collaborative Success in Wildfire Governance

Key findings from OLS regression analysis

## Drivers



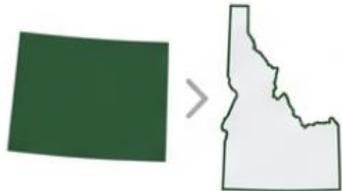
### Network Position

Connecting disconnected groups  
(Betweenness Centrality)  
 $\beta = 0.36^*$



### Effective Forums

Transparent rules, leadership,  
& clear procedures  
 $\beta = 0.23^{***}$



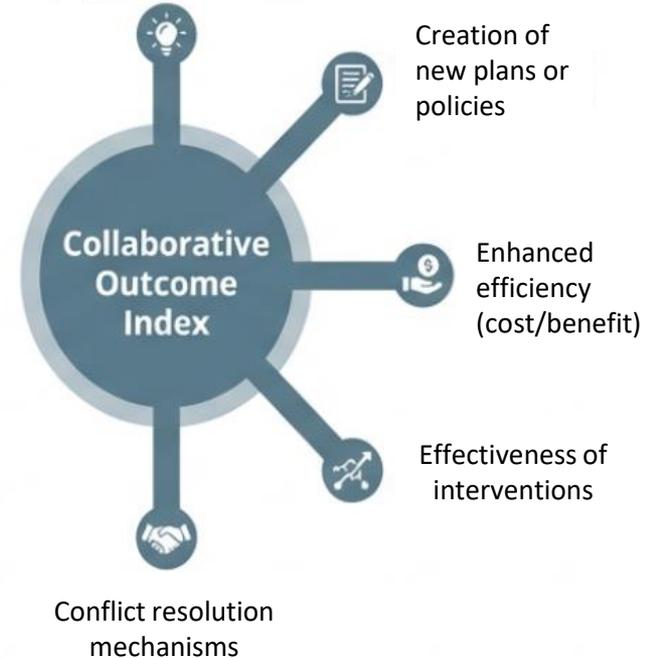
### Regional Context

State-level policy and culture  
(Colorado > Idaho)  
 $\beta = 0.95^{***}$



## Outcomes

Innovation in  
programs/practices



(Muttaqee et al. in prep)

# Practical Implications for Wildfire Governance

## 1. Focus on strategic bridging, not just network growth

Instead of simply adding more partners, organizations should identify gaps in the network and build relationships that connect groups. Prioritize becoming a broker.

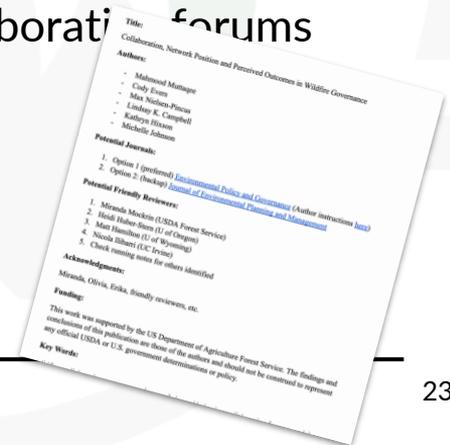
## 1. Invest in the “how” - support high quality forums

Funders/conveners can prioritize the design/facilitation of collaborative forums. Success requires more than just getting people in the room.

## 1. Acknowledge and adapt to regional context

“One size fits all” collaborative models are insufficient.

Strategies can be tailored to the unique institutional history and context of the landscape.



## Project Outputs and Next Steps

- Project Website: <https://research.fs.usda.gov/pnw/projects/bil-fueling-adaptation-socioecological-assessment>
- FS General Technical Report  
<https://research.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/69133>
- White papers for each landscape on survey results
  - Colorado Front Range: [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/esm\\_fac/423/](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/esm_fac/423/)
  - SW Idaho: [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/esm\\_fac/422/](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/esm_fac/422/)
- CWPC practitioner report on adaptation - *forthcoming*
- FireCollabMap - *forthcoming*
- Peer reviewed articles on collaborative networks & community adaptations - *in prep*
- Continuing to use lessons learned to refine and improve STEW-MAP tools for visualizing and strengthening collaboration in wildfire adaptation and forest management



Questions?

Thank you to our research team!

<b>Miranda Mockrin</b>	USFS R&D NRS	PI & Co-lead Obj 3
<b>Lindsay Campbell</b>	USFS R&D NRS	PI & Co-lead Obj 2
<b>Cody Evers</b>	Portland State University	Co-PI & lead Obj 2
<b>Kathy Hixson</b>	Portland State University	Project manager
<b>Max Nielsen-Pincus</b>	Portland State University	Co-PI; Researcher
<b>Sonya Sachdeva</b>	Formerly USFS R&D NRS	Researcher, Co-lead Obj 1
<b>Michelle Johnson</b>	Formerly USFS R&D NRS	Researcher, Co-lead Obj 1
<b>Erika Svendsen</b>	Formerly USFS R&D NRS	Researcher
<b>Dan Williams</b>	Formerly USFS R&D RMRS	Researcher (Emeritus)
<b>Jeff Morissette</b>	Formerly USFS R&D RMRS	Researcher
<b>Molly Mowery</b>	Community Wildfire Planning Center	Independent consultant, Obj 3
<b>Kelly Johnston</b>	Community Wildfire Planning Center	Independent consultant, Obj 3
<b>Austin Troy</b>	University of Colorado-Denver	Researcher, Obj 2 & 3
<b>Robert Anderson</b>	Formerly USFS R&D NRS	Former postdoc, Obj 3
<b>Jeff Sachs</b>	Formerly USFS R&D NRS	Former postdoc, Obj 1
<b>Mahmood Muttaqee</b>	Portland State University	Postdoc, Obj 2
<b>Clayton Vitek</b>	University of Colorado-Denver	Research Assistant
<b>Olivia Awbrey</b>	Portland State University	Research Assistant

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A large, stylized flame logo in shades of orange and yellow, centered on the page. The flame is composed of several overlapping, teardrop-shaped elements. It is enclosed within a circular frame that is partially visible at the top and bottom. The background is a solid orange color.

# Thank you

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