

Speaker Bios



Sharon Hood

Sharon Hood is a Research Ecologist at the USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Lab in Missoula, MT. She studies tree mortality from fire, fire and bark beetle interactions, pine defenses, and treatment effectiveness to improve forest resilience to disturbances and stress. She received a BS in Forestry from Mississippi State University, a MS in Forestry from Virginia Tech, and a PhD in Organismal Biology and Ecology from the University of Montana.



Scott Stephens

Scott Stephens is interested in the interactions of wildland fire and ecosystems. This includes how prehistoric fires once interacted with ecosystems, how current wildland fires are affecting ecosystems, and how future fires and management will influence people and ecosystems. He is also interested in wildland fire and forest policy and how it can be improved to meet the challenges of the coming decades, both nationally and internationally. Working with Indigenous partners to learn how to steward ecosystems into the future with climate change is a key area of research. Stephens has given

testimony on fire and forest policy at the US House of Representatives, the White House, California Assembly and Senate, California Governor's office, and served on the 2024 US Wildfire Commission. He is on the Board of Directors of the Climate Wildfire Institute and is one of the leaders of The Stewardship Project which is a partnership of Indigenous people and western science to improve federal fire policy. He was selected in the Top 1% of Researchers Worldwide in 2024 and 2025 (<https://clarivate.com/highly-cited-researchers/>)



Molly Hunter

Molly Hunter is the Science Advisor for the Joint Fire Science Program, responsible for providing strategic guidance on program initiatives and evaluation of program investments. She brings to the program her prior experience in teaching and research in fuel treatments, invasive species, fire ecology, and science application. She received her BS in Plant Biology from the University of California at Davis and PhD in Forest Science from Colorado State University.



Bryce Adams

Bryce Adams is a Research Forester within the USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station. He has a BS in Environment and Natural Resources from The Ohio State University, a MS in Biology from Bowling Green State University, and a PhD in Environment and Natural Resources from The Ohio State University. Bryce's work includes examining silvicultural strategies designed to enable forests to respond to

changing environmental and climatic conditions. Some of his recent work includes the development of tools informing the selection of seed sources for future adaptation potential.



Beth Newingham

Dr. Beth Newingham is a Research Ecologist with the USDA-Agricultural Research Service in Reno, NV. Her research focuses on linking plant, soil, and insect processes in the context of community and ecosystem ecology, fire, invasions, and restoration. She works closely with state and federal land agencies, as well as ranchers, on post-fire rehabilitation, fuel treatments, and national monitoring programs. She attained her BS degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln and PhD in Organismal Biology and Ecology from the University of Montana.



Donald Hagan

Dr. Donald Hagan is an Associate Professor of Forest Ecology at Clemson University whose research focuses on the role of fire in the restoration and management of forest ecosystems. His work integrates plant ecology, fire ecology, and soil science to better understand how prescribed fire and wildfire influence forest structure, biodiversity, and ecosystem function. His research spans the Appalachian region and other fire-prone landscapes across North America and is supported by agencies including the U.S. Forest Service, the Joint Fire Science Program, the Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Department of Energy. Since 2015, he has conducted research at the southern Appalachian Fire and Fire Surrogate Study site, contributing to long-term efforts to

evaluate the ecological effects of fire and fuel reduction treatments. At Clemson, he teaches courses in Dendrology, Forest Ecology, Forest Communities, and Forest Biology – and undergraduate students are integral to his field research program. He also serves on the board of the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists.



Lisa Ellsworth

Lisa Ellsworth is an Associate Professor at Oregon State University. She co-leads the Sagebrush Steppe Treatment Evaluation Project and is the Director of the Great Basin Fire Science Exchange. Her research team links field observations of plants, fuels, and wildfire with experimental combustion experiments and fire behavior modeling to better understand how management tools can impact wildfire spread, severity, and post-fire recovery. Lisa is a science communication with the Wilburforce Foundation and has worked in advisory roles in a wide variety of science communication media and products. She received a BS in Biology and a MS in Wildlife Science from Oregon State University and a PhD in Natural Resources and Environmental Management from the University of Hawaii.