

**Public Expectations  
in 20-30 Years:  
*More of the Same  
or Can We Shape  
Public Opinion?***

# Public Attitudes toward Fire

- Some evidence of improved ecological understanding, BUT:
- FEAR
- Expectation of protection
- Expectation of success
- Intolerance of smoke



# Therefore:

- Fire is still scary and bad.
- Fire is considered preventable.
- The benefits of fire are still not embraced.



Comprehensive fire  
management cannot be  
accomplished without a change  
in public expectations.



# From the QFFR:

- Expanding Community Education should...promote the concept of creating fire adapted communities that complement the fire adapted ecosystems that they adjoin.
- Strategy should support communities organizing to...above all become more comfortable (and knowledgeable) with prescribed and natural fires in their environs.
- The goal is a paradigm shift, where the public would expect that fire would be allowed to play its natural role and question why we would propose to put fires out.



# From the 10-year Comprehensive Strategy (Dec. 2006)

## Goal 3, Task 2:

Further develop and implement a public education campaign such as the National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) Wildland Fire: A Natural Process to complement Smokey Bear's message of fire safety. The campaign will emphasize fire's role in ecosystems and the benefits of fire management to ecosystems and public health and safety.

- **Collaboration Level:** All
- **Lead Collaborator(s):** *Stakeholders, NWCG*
- **Implementation timeframe:** Fall 2008



# Steering Committee

**BLM**, Cynthia Moses-Nedd

**I-Chiefs**, Bob Roper

**NACo**, Abby Friedman

**NASF**, Dan Smith

**National Coalition Prescribed Fire Councils**, Zach Prusak

**NIFC/BLM**, Don Smurthwaite

**National Park Service**, Roberta D'Amico

**TNC**, L.McCarthy, W. Fulks, E. Brunson

**Northern Arizona University**, Tom Sisk

**Oregon Association of Counties**, Eric Schmidt

**USDA Forest Service**, Maureen Brooks, Randy Philips

**WGA**, Jay Jensen

**TWS**, Greg Aplet, Tom Fry

**Wisconsin DNR**, Catherine Regan

**Shaping Future  
Public Expectations:  
*Laying the Foundation  
to Influence Opinion  
and Behavior***



# What is public education?

- Strategic communication
- Not lobbying



# Strategic Communication...

- Builds consensus
- Persuades
- Changes behaviors
- Conditions the environment for policy



# Critical Aspects of Strategic Communications Programs

- Polling
- Messaging
- Targeting audiences
- Delivering the Message
- Measuring impacts



# Message Development

- What message produces change?
- Simple, clear, concise, consistent language
- Rational or emotional
- Create urgency
- Call to action
- 2-3 maximum
- Use poll results



# Identify the Audience

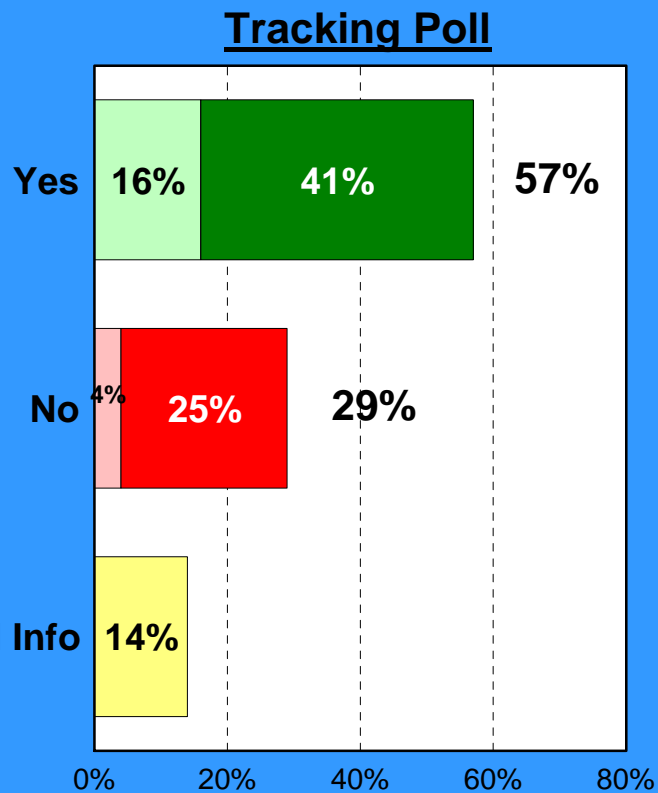
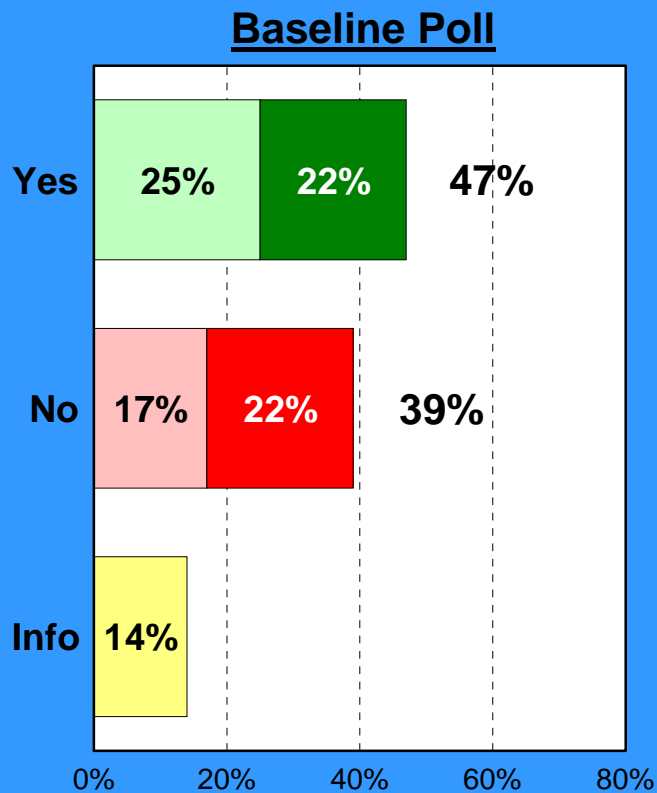
- Who are they and why are they important?
- Demographics matter
- Who responds to rational or emotional messages?
- Smart use of resources
- Use poll results





# Voters who saw ads were significantly more likely to vote Yes on Proposition 12.

Baseline Q. 3/  
Tracking Poll Q. A1



Lighter Shades = Probably; Darker Shades = Definitely

# Phase I: RESEARCH

- **Goal:** Identify national and regional public attitudinal barriers (fears, mistrusts, opposition) and opportunities (favorable language, spokespeople) related to fire and fire use as a basis for developing campaign key messages and delivery vehicles.
- **Strategy:** Establish strategic, diverse group of “steering committee” stakeholders to design research (polling), help obtain research funding, and plan and execute campaign development workshop.
- **Actions:**
  - Obtain funding necessary to conduct research (~\$200,000).
  - Hire polling and media consultant.
  - Conduct and analyze research activities (focus groups, polling).
  - Plan Feb. 2008 workshop to develop campaign structure and elements.
- **Timeframe:** May to January 2008

# Phase IIA: IDENTIFY CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

- **Goal:** Define final campaign framework (key messages and delivery mechanisms) based on research insights.
- **Strategy:** Host multiple-day, face-to-face workshop with consultant, steering committee(+) group of stakeholders.
- **Actions:**
  - Disseminate research results to key experts (e.g. public information officers), compile comments and incorporate into campaign elements.
  - Conduct workshop to (1) Review research results, provide workshop attendees with strategic message training, and (2) Develop campaign key messages and delivery mechanisms (local, state, federal).
- **Timeframe:** February 2008



# Phase IIB: DEVELOP CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

- **Goal:** Finalize final proofs of campaign materials and/or develop guidelines for local development and use of campaign materials.
- **Strategy:** Reconvene steering group to translate campaign framework developed in workshop into sample campaign materials.
- **Actions:**
  - Continue to work with consultant(s) in developing/determining:
    - Guidelines for local production of campaign materials.
    - Develop budget based on delivery vehicles and campaign materials and seek public and private funding.
- **Timeframe:** February thru May 2008



# Phase III: DELIVERY

- Deliver campaign plan to implementing partners
- ***Timeframe:*** Summer 2008



# Campaign Development Timeline

- **Summer 2007:** Raise funds (\$200 K) for Research/Campaign Development
- **Fall 2007:** Research/Polling/Focus group work
- **Winter 2008:** Workshop to define campaign elements
- **Spring 2008:** Development of campaign materials
- **Summer 2008:** Delivery



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