



Tribal-Federal Partnerships and the Cost to Reduce Fuel



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Problem: Excess Woody Debris

Encroachment of severe wildfires threaten the security of many tribal communities. In this analysis we are looking at the accumulation of excess woody debris as the problem.

What is Woody Debris? The United States Forest Service (USFS) classifies it as:

- (1) Coarse woody debris - fallen or decaying trees and branches
- (2) Fine woody debris - small diameter trees under ten diameter breast height (dbh)

Why is it a Problem?

- Last 50 years growth of woody debris on federal lands has almost tripled
- Growing fuel source for severe wildfires
- Over 3,000 miles of tribal lands share borders with federal lands

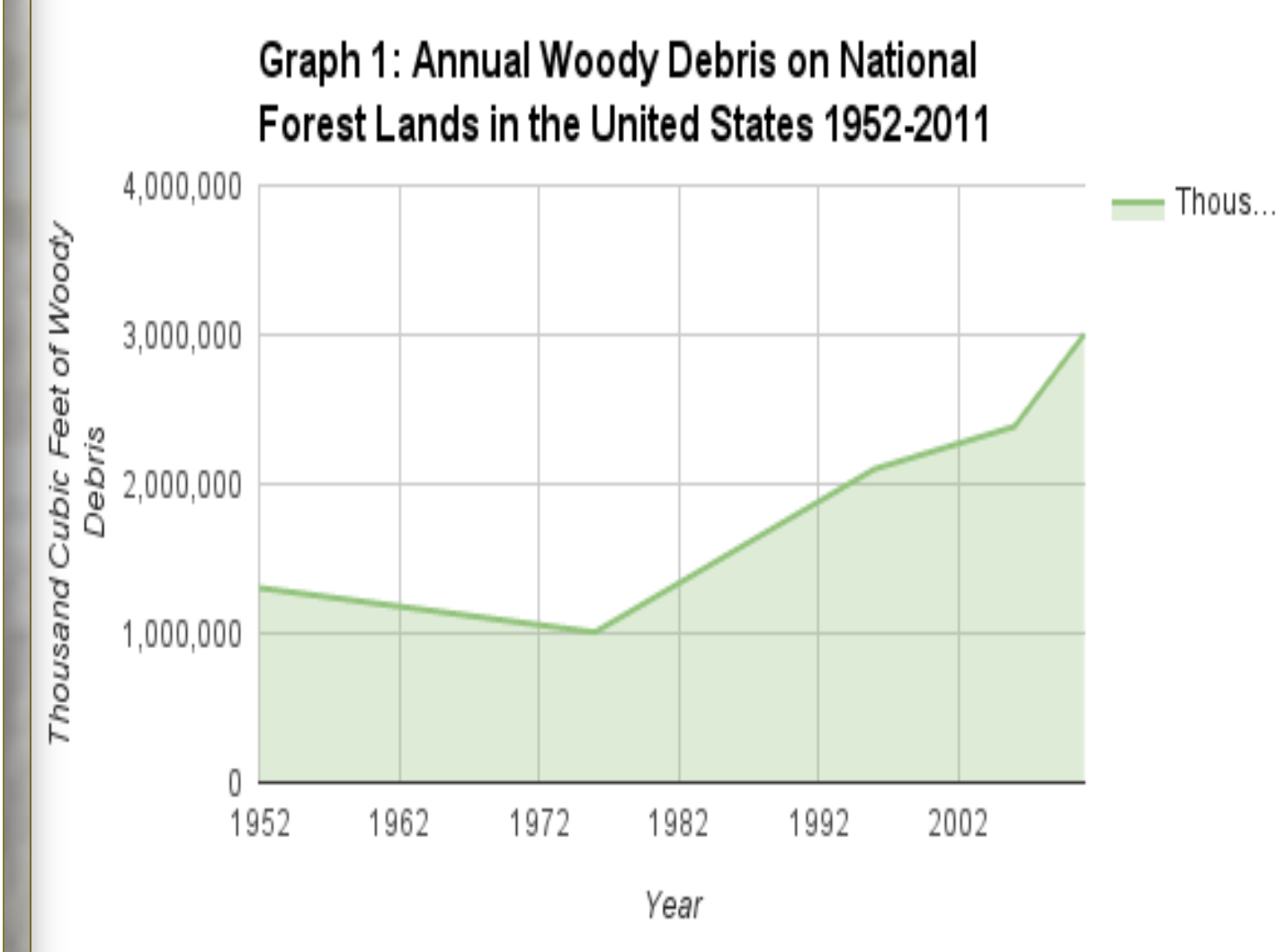
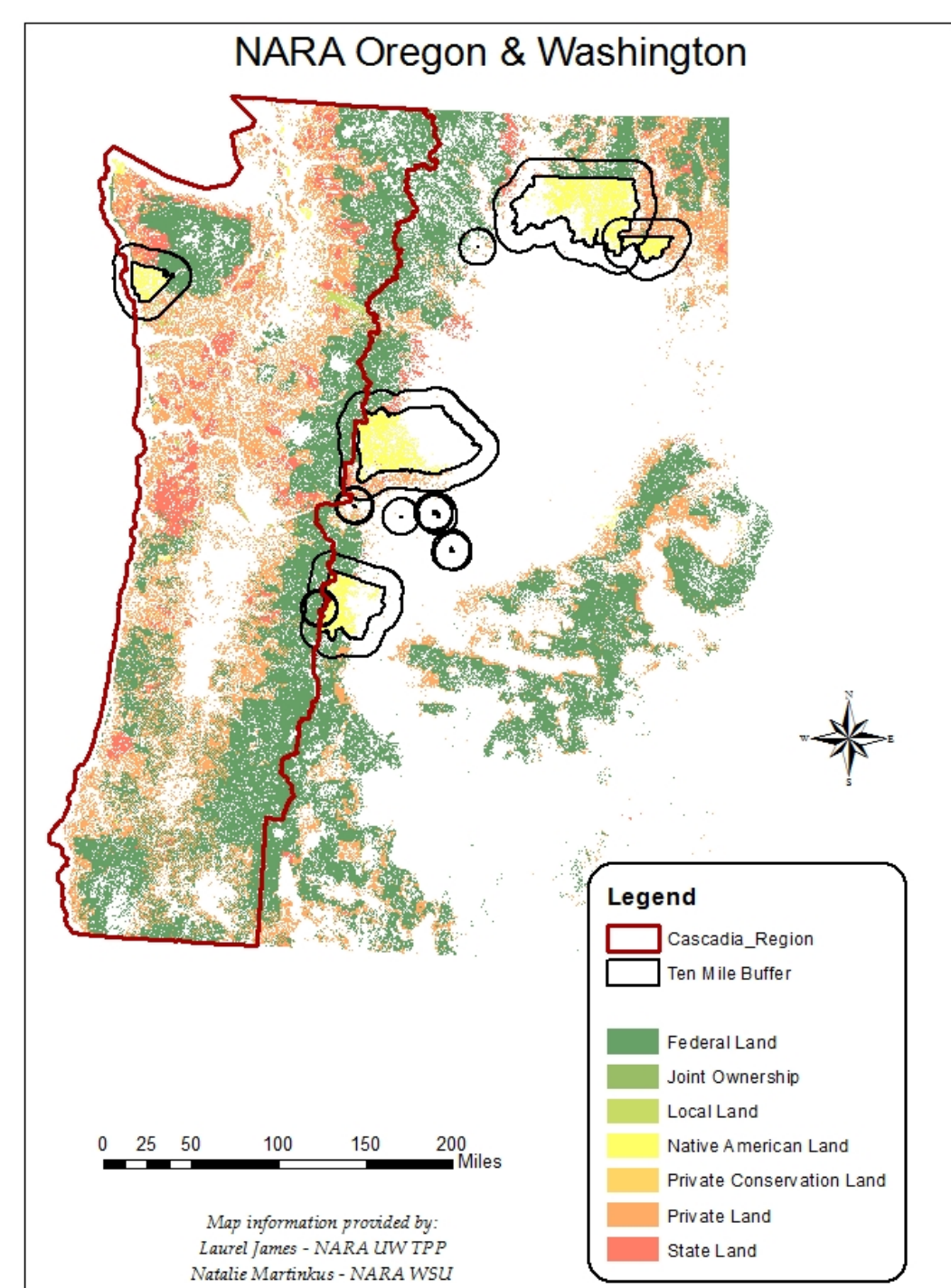


Table 1. The above table represents data collected by the USFS, tracking the growth of excess woody debris in the nation from 1952 to 2011.

Methodology

In this study we look at three forms of tribal-federal partnerships to reduce excess woody debris on federal lands: partnerships through the Tribal Forest Protection Act, partnerships through long-term stewardship contracts, and partnerships through the Collaborative Landscape Restoration Program.

1. Partnerships through the Tribal Forest Protection Act

The Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) was developed in response to severe wildfires originating on federal lands that devastated neighboring tribal communities. The TFPA gives tribes the authority to enter into agreements or contracts with the USFS to carry out land management activities on federal lands that are adjacent to tribal lands. The key tool that has been most utilized in TFPA are stewardship contracts, allowing an exchange of USFS products for land management services.

Photo 1. TFPA Los Burros Stewardship with the White Mountain Apache Tribe & Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest



Photo 2. Example of a untreated piece of forest landscape near the White Mountain Apache Tribe's Sunrise Ski Resort



Photos credited to our visit to the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT) and Jonathan Brooks, WMAT Forest Manager.

Application. To evaluate the impact a TFPA stewardship contract would have on the CSKT we refer to their prior TFPA project with the Lolo National Forest known as the McGinnis Cabin Project.

2. Partnerships through the Long-term Stewardship Contracts

Long-term stewardship contracts were added as a new provision under the 2003 Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-7) that allowed the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to enter into stewardship contracts to up to 10 years. The benefit of this form of partnership is that it incentivizes prospective contractors to invest in infrastructure (equipment and/or processing facilities) due to the longer-term of supply offered by the federal agency.

Application. To assess the impact of a partnership through a long-term stewardship contract we adapted the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest's White Mountain stewardship contract model to a CSKT one.

3. Partnerships through the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program

The final partnership we looked at is a tribe entering into a Collaborative through the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) initiated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This form of tribal-federal partnership would not be strictly between a tribe and a federal agency, but instead a multi-partnership between diverse landholders throughout a community that could unite on land management practices to best restore landscapes in a local area. The CFLRP would last a total of ten years and allocate up to 4 million dollars annually to a Collaborative project.

Application. To evaluate the impact a Collaborative would have on the CSKT we applied the Weiser-Little Salmon Headwaters Collaborative, since it is in close proximity to CSKT and they have had previous involvement with the CFLRP.

Analysis

We are currently undergoing our analysis, but as we evaluate we are assessing each partnership based on four key criteria: environmental, economic, cultural, and tribal self-determination.

Overview of Impact Measures		
Environmental	Yield of Woody Debris reduced (burned or removed) in tons	How much woody debris (small diameter trees and fine woody debris) is reduced per ton/acre (Average will be based off either a weighted average of prior similar projects/or singular model)
	Impact on forest resiliency	Determined by the diversity of land management practices that best protect the ecosystem
Economic	Number of jobs locally sourced from the Tribe	Take initial estimate of how many jobs each partnership will generate and determine percentage of those who would be tribal members. (Estimated again by similar models/projects)
	Total revenue received from partnership project	Price for the type of forest product the Tribe could sell from the project multiplied by the tons of that forest product removed from the project
	Costs to Tribe	Cost per acre of treatment multiplied by the number of acres of treatment
	Costs to USFS	NEPA Costs, Administrative costs, and depending on project pre/post treatment costs
Cultural	Ability to protect ancestral lands of cultural significance	Analyze the flexibility of land selection within the partnerships, estimate if the Tribe is able to determine which lands get treated or if they are subject to the discretion of partner agencies
	Autonomy of applying TEK to land management practices	Estimate how much say the Tribe has in deciding land management methods through partnership negotiations
Tribal Self-Determination	Political feasibility	Evaluate the political support the Tribe would have from tribal community and partner agencies
	Administrative Feasibility of implementation and maintenance	Evaluate based on number of partners involved, complexity of project, and the flexibility for change in each partnership should unforeseen circumstances arise
	Time until project through partnership is completed	Measure in months and/or years (based on similar models/projects)

Current Predictions

Based on our initial findings, it does not appear that these partnerships are cost-effective in woody debris reduction. We will explore alternative sources of funding such as Renewable Identification Numbers (RINS) to enhance the utilization of these tools.

Objective

The purpose of this research is to evaluate how tribal communities can best reduce the accumulation of excess woody debris on federal lands in the most cost-effective approach.

In this analysis we use the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes in Montana as our case study.

A. Ownership and administrative

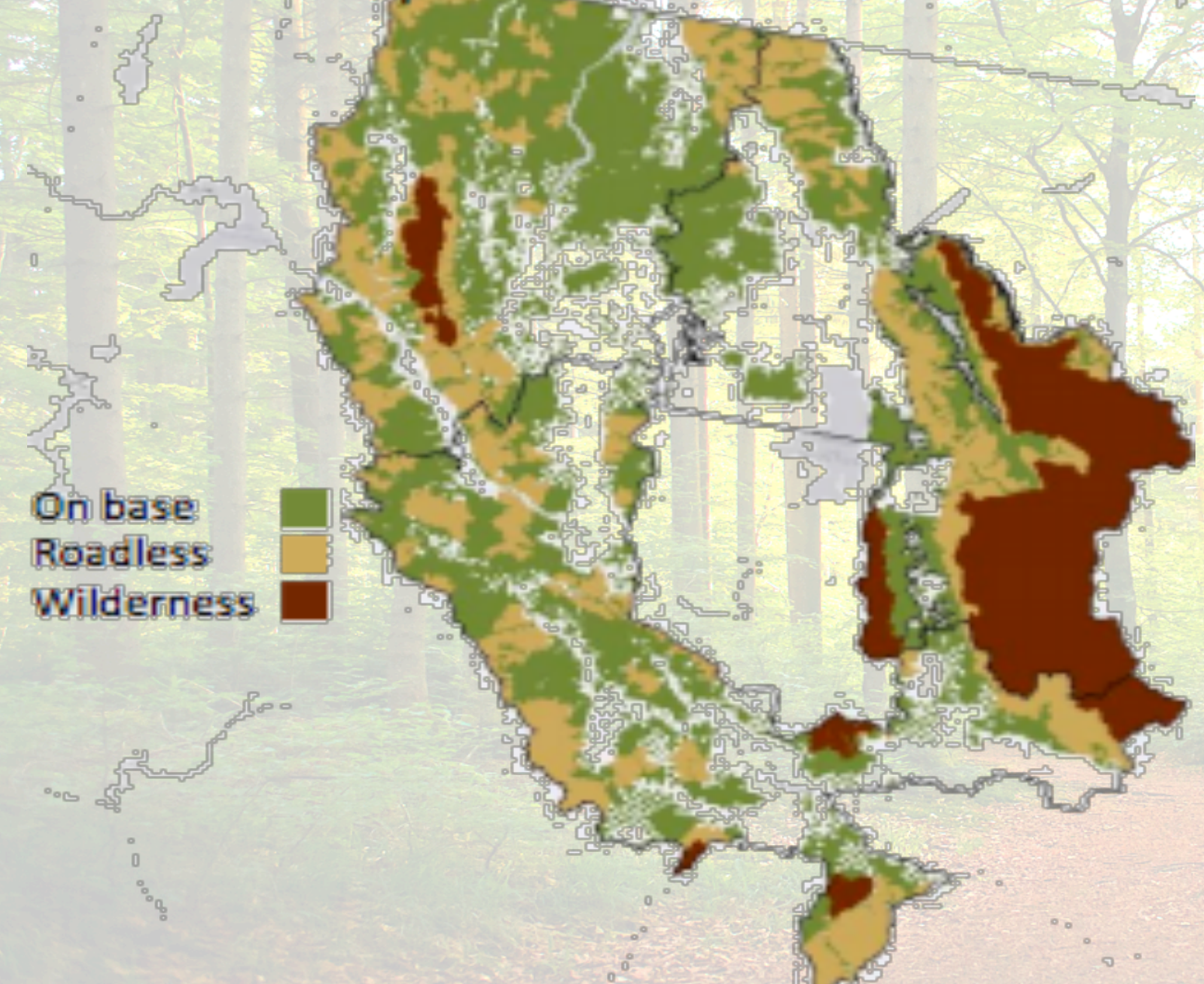


Table 2.4: Acres by administrative zone.

Class	FNF	KNF	LNK	Total
Forest On Base	730,157	1,227,858	1,095,388	3,053,402
Roadless Area	475,974	637,781	755,465	1,869,220
Wilderness Area	1,067,918	92,622	147,286	1,307,826
Special Area	15,851	239,603	6,750	262,205
Recent Fire	80,228	6,925	84,633	171,786
Recent Harvest	10,044	0	0	10,044
Non Forest	1,623	10,345	0	11,968
Water	15,349	4,988	1,224	21,561
Total	2,397,142	2,220,123	2,090,747	6,708,012

Completed by Jeff Connick