A network of prescribed fire demonstration sites for Europe, Africa and Argentina

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Abstract

Changes in wildland fire regimes and an increasing occurrence of large wildland fires are taking place or expected for the near future. They constitute major changes to the current natural and anthropogenic disturbance regimes and to biodiversity threats in several world ecosystems, thus reinforcing the potential mitigating role of prescribed burning. Within the European Integrated Project FIRE PARADOX we are undertaking the ambitious task of setting a network of prescribed fire demonstration sites covering ecosystems from subtropical Canary Islands to Northern boreal Europe. We have also added to this, network, some areas in Argentina and South Africa. Included are pilot projects, experimental and demonstration sites for the application of prescribed fire in the abatement of wildland fire hazard, forest succession management and ecosystem restoration We have agreed on the methodology to choose, implement and run useful prescribed burning demonstration sites, both in forest stands, non-forest vegetation and industrial plantations. Burn plots larger than 10 ha are a major priority, but smaller burn sites would be considered due to limitations set by authorities in sensitive testing phases. Experiences from the European Fire in Nature Conservation Network (EFNCN) and results from previous EU projects like Fire Torch helped to gather a common minimum protocol for data collection and standardisation. When available, images from the site before, during and after burning are used. In this paper, we show some sites as case studies relating prescribed burns, changes in disturbance regimes and how prescribed burnt stands have enhanced the efficiency of fire suppression operations.

• KEYWORDS: prescribed fire, simulation, Farsite, FlamMap, pre-suppression

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