



The Fire Story: Episode 3 Resource Guide

Episode three introduces key concepts of mitigation work as a risk reduction strategy within the historical contexts of fire management by peoples who were indigenous to the United States as well as the Federal Government pre-1940's. A good way to think about the relationship between mitigation and risk reduction is that mitigation is the input and risk reduction is the output. In essence, mitigation work reduces overall wildfire risk. There are many ways to engage in mitigation work, including prescribed fire, thinning, and removal of debris. Mitigation work was happening as part of the many cultural practices of tribes indigenous to the Americas since their arrival and settlement, and still happens by tribes in the many areas they live in today. On federal land, mitigation work largely stopped in 1935 when the Forest Service implemented the 10:00 a.m. Rule, which stated that by 10:00 a.m. the day after a fire started it should be completely put out. This suppression legacy fundamentally changed the natural condition of the forests and has led to a buildup of fuels in our forests. The buildup of fuels is part of the reason we are seeing increased intensity in fire seasons today.

Terms Outlined in this Episode:

[Prescribed Fire](#), also known as a controlled burn, is a planned fire used by agencies as a fire mitigation technique. Prescribed fires only take place during certain weather conditions and require the [management](#) of experienced fire professionals. [Some of the primary benefits](#) of prescribed fire are its cost-effectiveness, ability to reduce fuel loads in the forest, and how its use promotes growth of native species.

[Mechanical Thinning](#) is a mitigation technique that essentially is thinning the forest, removing some trees and the amount of vegetation that has accrued. Mechanical thinning is a technique that can be used on its own, but is often used in combination with prescribed fire.

[Cross boundary work](#) in the context of mitigation, refers to multiple agencies, companies, and private landowners working together. It also involves cooperation and work at a political level, managing resources and creative policies that span industries, values, and priorities.

[Fire Return Interval](#) is a term used to describe what we think would be the average period between fires on a specific landscape in a historical fire regime (before suppression). You can think about many mitigation intervals like cleaning a home. You need to clean it initially, but then you also need to maintain it or else it will go back to its original state.

Additional Information and Programs Discussed:

- [The Timber Wars](#) were mentioned in this episode as crucial context for understanding forest management in the Pacific Northwest today. Oregon Public Broadcasting produced a 7-episode podcast series that details The Timber Wars in Oregon. The series provides an in-depth look at how politics, communication, and history have shaped land management practices and perspectives in the PNW today.
- [Indigenous People's cultural fire management practices](#) were briefly discussed as part of this episode. This topic will be explored in depth during a future special episode, but you can learn more about ways western states can learn from Indigenous burning practices through [WBUR On Point](#) and [OPB's Think Out Loud](#). There are current organizations, such as the [Cultural Fire Management Council](#), who are working toward further fire use and cultural resource management.
- For more basic information about fire behavior, fire-adapted communities, and landscape-scale land management, you can turn to [OSU's Extension Fire Program](#) and [Fire Facts from Northwest Fire Science Consortium](#).

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The [Northwest Fire Science Consortium](#) is a regional fire science delivery system for disseminating knowledge and tools; a framework for coordinating fire science delivery; and a venue for increasing researcher understanding of the needs of managers & practitioners.

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