Homeowner Risk Reduction Behaviors Concerning Wildfire Risk

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Response to Comments from:
Alexandra Riley, Statistics Division, NASS (July 2006)

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COMMENTS:

1. What is the population for the study? What population will the study be applicable to?

RESPONSE: The population for the study is the members of the homeowner associations from the three communities that will be surveyed. This study is <u>not</u> intended to provide generalizable results that will be applicable to all wildfire affected communities throughout the western US. The intent is to use the three case studies to provide internally valid findings that could then be compared to results from other case studies in the extant literature. Future research could then be designed to test the results for external validity using a random sample from a larger population.

    a. How were the three cities that the study will take place in chosen? How will the choice of these three cities affect the Forest Service's ability to generalize the results of the study to other cities in the Western US that did not have a chance to participate in the survey?

RESPONSE: The three locations where chosen based upon several criteria. First, experience with wildfire was considered. Each of the locations has a significant history with wildfire. Second, the three sites vary from a significantly urban setting in Boulder, Colorado to a rural setting at Camp Sherman, Oregon. Third, each of the locations has worked with a variety of organizations, NGOs and government agencies to address wildfire issues in their community. These three factors make the communities an ideal target for research in this area.

    b. If a HOA chooses not to participate in the study, what methodology will be used to adjust for their non-response?

RESPONSE: Each of the HOAs identified for this study have been contacted to assure their willingness to participate in the study. The boards-of-directors for each have provided membership mailing lists to implement the survey.

    c. If a household within an HOA does not respond, what methodology will be used to adjust for their non-response?

RESPONSE: Households within the HOA will be surveyed using the basic methodology prescribed by Dillman (2000, pp. 150-153). We believe that non-response will be minimized through the proper implementation of a mail survey and the support of the HOA Board of Directors. However, households that do not respond will be identified and a final contact made to determine if their characteristics are significantly different from the rest of the HOA surveyed. For example, if the response rate for part-time residents is significantly less than full-time residents then additional efforts will be used to increase the response from this group (i.e. contact the household via telephone to increase response).

    d. Will homeowners that are not part of a community that has an HOA be given the opportunity to take part in the survey? If so, how will they be selected to participate? If not, how will that affect the interpretation of the results?

RESPONSE: Homeowners that are not a member of the targeted HOA will not be surveyed. This will limit the population that the results can be applied to, however, the objective of the research project is to better understand the targeted HOAs and not the entire population living in the selected areas.

2. Who in the surveyed household will complete the survey?

RESPONSE: The cover-letter for the survey will indicate that an adult member of the household that is familiar with wildfire issues and the household response should complete the survey.

3. Management of the two survey instruments?

RESPONSE: There is only one survey instrument.

Reference:

Dillman, Don A. (2000). *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, 2nd ed., New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.