Exercise 1.3
Prioritizing Interface Issues

There are many interface issues that challenge natural resource professionals, policy makers, planners, and residents. But each region has slightly different concerns. Natural resource professionals must be aware of the issues that are most important "close to home." This exercise helps them think about which issues are of primary concern for their local regions.

Objectives: Participants will be able to do the following:

1. Identify interface issues of importance for their region or state.

2. Prioritize the most important issues that will affect their work.

Materials:

Flip charts
Paper
Markers
Sticky dots
Presentation 1.2

Time: 30 to 45 minutes

1. Explain the main purpose of the exercise to the participants:

Interface issues of most concern will vary across regions. This exercise helps us identify critical interface issues in our state, including those that may be consistent across the region and those that are very site specific. We will also identify those that are deemed most critical according to each of us individually and by the group as a whole.

2. *Presentation 1.2* has slides that will help you to present this exercise to your participants. Ask each participant to individually list the issues that need to be addressed in the wildland-urban interface area of their region or state on a piece of paper. After a few minutes, ask everyone to help you make a list of all the different interface issues that individuals have come up with. As they read off their lists, keep track of the issues by writing them on a flip chart, ensuring that issues are not included more than once.

3. Once everyone has had a chance to list all of the issues that they can imagine, review the list and see if similar items can be combined, or if nuances keep them apart. Then tape the charts on the wall around the room.

4. Next, give participants four sticky paper dots and ask them to indicate the relative priority of the issues on their lists by allocating sticky dots among the issues any way they wish. They can either identify four different items of importance, or assign all their dots to one or two items.

5. When they have finished allocating dots, total the dots and identify the top 3 to 5 issues on a new sheet of paper.

6. Facilitate the discussion by asking if the most important issue for each participant's region is in the top list. Consider expanding the list to include issues that may be important for certain areas (different regions of even the same state can be distinct). Discuss differences/similarities between regions that arise. Following are some questions that might help prompt this discussion:

- How would the priority issues change across the region/state?
- Which issues are the consequences of other issues?
- If one issue were resolved, which others would disappear?
- What are some of the solutions to these interface issues?

Optional: This exercise can be done in combination with *Exercise 1.2: Describing the Interface.*

Summary

This exercise helps participants to think about the interface issues of most concern for their regions, including those that are common and those that are unique within the state and across the South.