



SPEAKING TRUTH *WITH* POWER: FUSEE GOES TO D.C.

On Monday, October 29th, we got a phone call requesting a FUSEE representative to provide oral testimony in a Congressional hearing *three days later* in Washington, D.C.! FUSEE was formally invited to testify in a November 1st hearing on "[Wildfires and the Climate Crisis](#)" before the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

FUSEE member, Dr. Michael Medler of Western Washington University, volunteered to fly to Washington and deliver our testimony, meanwhile, a team of FUSEE members—some of whom were toiling away on the firelines in southern California—pulled together to write our testimony. Sitting alongside Michael were Forest Service Chief, Gail Kimbell; Nobel-laureate climate scientist, Steven Running; and the Wilderness Society's Forest Program Director, Mike Francis. Michael did a great job presenting our testimony and answering follow-up questions from Committee members. Afterwards, Michael delivered copies of the "San Diego Declaration on Climate Change and Fire Management" to key members of House and Senate committees.

The following is an excerpt from FUSEE'S testimony:

"In our view, global warming is fundamentally a *fire* issue, for it is the *burning* of fossil fuels that is the primary anthropogenic cause of climate change.

Consequently, we must bridge the gap between the Nation's energy and climate policies, and our wildland fire management policies. The best available science and the professional experience of wildland firefighters justifies taking action now to reduce fossil fuel burning while at the same time addressing land management practices, rural development patterns, and fire management policies in order to confront both the causes and consequences of the climate crisis.

Wildland firefighters serve on the frontlines of climate change, and have high hopes that Congress will craft sound energy, land management, and urban development policies that effectively deal with the *'burning issue of our time.'*"



FUSEE member, Dr. Michael Medler, chats with Congressman Jay Inslee (D-WA) at the hearing on "Wildfires and the Climate Crisis" in the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

Check out our website for the full version of our [testimony](#) as well as those of the rest of the panel of speakers.

FUSEE members also traveled to Washington D.C. twice this past summer to meet with members of Congress and urge passage of the "[Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2007](#)" (S.1152), co-sponsored by Senators Cantwell (D-WA) and Salazar (D-CO). FUSEE helped draft parts of the bill, getting safety training for prescribed burning and wildland fire use activities, as well as wildfire suppression included in the bill language.

FUSEE also helped gain endorsements for S.1152 from the International Association of Wildland Fire, and the Federal Wildland Fire Services Association. Check out our website for the complete text of S.1152.

FUSEE FIREFIGHTERS ON THE FRONT LINES OF FIRE

FUSEE members reported from the frontlines of wildfire suppression incidents, prescribed fire projects, and wildland fire use fires in California, Georgia, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Australia during 2007. Send us stories and photos from your experiences to info@fusee.org.



HOT OFF THE PRESSES: FUSEE IN THE NEWS

One of our major program areas is public education via the newsmedia, and FUSEE had another breakout season in the press.

FUSEE members were quoted in 28 major articles published in local, regional, and national newspapers. We made the press nearly every week during wildfire season in the West, and these news stories covered a broad range of fire ecology and management issues beyond the traditional “war reporting” of wildfire suppression incidents. Journalists used our quotes to reveal the social and ecological context underlying specific wildfires and to make connections with wider forest/fire policy debates.

Some of the press highlights from 2007 include:

- 🔥 [“Heating Up: Climate Change is Beginning to Catch the Eye of Fire Planners,”](#) (Jan.) *Wildland Firefighter Magazine*
- 🔥 [“Tahoe Fire Yields Lessons,”](#) (June 29) *Christian Science Monitor*
- 🔥 [“Angora Fire: Averting Another Disaster,”](#) (July 25) *Sacramento Bee*
- 🔥 [“Wildfires Bring Up Climate-Change Issues,”](#) (July 28) *McClatchy Newspapers*
- 🔥 [“Officials Seek to Contain Wildfire Costs,”](#) (July 29) *Los Angeles Times*
- 🔥 [“Forest Service Picks ‘Let It Burn’ Labs,”](#) (July 30) *Associated Press*
- 🔥 [“Kempthorne defends wildfire decisions,”](#) (Aug. 2) *Idaho Statesman*
- 🔥 [“Slash and Burn: Climate Change + Commercial Logging = Big Fire,”](#) (Aug. 16) *Missoula Independent*
- 🔥 [“Governor Declares Emergency: Large Idaho Fires Expected to Merge,”](#) (Aug. 21) *Associated Press*
- 🔥 [“Body Count: The Human Cost of the War on Wildfire,”](#) (Aug.) *Forest Magazine*
- 🔥 [“The Fire This Time,”](#) (Nov. 5) *Time Magazine*

FUSEE quotes of the year:

“(T)HE LAST THING FIREFIGHTERS NEED is a lot of hot air coming out of Washington, D.C., and Boise.” (*Idaho Statesman*, Aug. 2)

“WHAT’S HAPPENING IS THAT CLIMATE CHANGE is colliding with past land management abuses.” (*Missoula Independent*, Aug. 16)

“YOU’RE PUTTING PEOPLE BETWEEN the unstoppable force of a wildfire and the immovable object of a home. That’s as unsafe a position as you can be in as a firefighter.” (*Time Magazine*, Nov. 5)

RADIO DISPATCH: FUSEE HITS THE AIRWAVES

FUSEE also had two major radio interviews this year:

- 🔥 [“Shelter in Place,”](#) (Sept. 5) National Public Radio Morning Edition broadcast featuring FUSEE member Rick Halsey, director of the California Chaparral Field Institute
- 🔥 [“San Diego Declaration on Climate Change and Fire Management,”](#) (Nov. 5) half-hour live interview on KPFK-Los Angeles featuring FUSEE executive director Timothy Ingalsbee

MAKES A GREAT GIFT!

FUSEE buttons are free for each new membership. Additional buttons cost \$2 each. Outfit the whole crew!





SCOUT THE LINE: FUSEE WEBLOG BREAKS NEWS GROUND

FUSEE launched our own weblog (www.fusee.blogspot.com) this year which provided an avenue for releasing special reports that broke the news for stories later published in the mainstream newsmedia.

Our report, "[Angora Fire: Burning Homes, Not Crownfire, Fueled an Urban Conflagration](#)" (July 18) used groundbreaking data provided by FUSEE members working on the Angora Fire to "scoop the press" on key findings later released by the California State Fire Marshall. Our blog report led to several major news stories, including the story in the *Sacramento Bee*, "Angora Fire: Averting Another Disaster" (July 25), that had a major influence the way journalists covered WUI wildfire disasters the rest of the summer. Instead of blaming vegetation for causing wildfires, journalists started to raise critical questions about rural sprawl and the need for homeowners to take more responsibility for reducing wildfire risks in the home ignition zone.

Our follow-up report posted on our weblog, "[Firebombs in the Forest: Untreated Slash Piles Fueled Angora Fire Destruction](#)" (Aug. 14) used field data collected on-site from a team of FUSEE investigators to "blow the whistle" on the lack of proper thinning slash treatments in the Lake Tahoe Basin. FUSEE even chartered a helicopter to get aerial photos of the untreated slash piles that were burned by the Angora Fire, and spread embers to adjacent destroyed homes. This report led to several news stories including "Do Slash Piles Pose a Fire Danger?" (Sept. 5) by the *Bonanza News Service*. We suspect that the problem of the Forest Service implementing mechanical thinning projects but neglecting to burn the resulting slash or conduct understory broadcast prescribed burning occurs across the West.

Using information from FUSEE members on the firelines in Idaho, our reports, "[Where the Heck is Yellowpine, parts I and II](#)" (Aug. 16 and 31) and "[New Strategy for Suppression Siege in Idaho's Fire Country](#)" (Aug. 19), broke the news about a major shift in wildfire suppression strategy that occurred in the northern Rockies this past summer. The strategic shift from

"perimeter control" to "point protection" was a historic step towards putting into practice the full spectrum of Appropriate Management Response policy. Our blog reports led to an Associated Press article (Aug. 21) that was published in newspapers across the country.

FUSEE was also the first group to post a short video clip of the burnover of the Cascade Complex's Incident Command Post on [YouTube](#) (Aug. 21). This clip won a top-rating from viewers (and was a "copycat" posting by several others), and sparked lots of discussion about FUSEE on several weblogs, including the blogs of the *New West*, *High Country News*, *Idaho Statesman*, *Spokane Spokesman Review*, and several other independent bloggers.

PASSING THE TORCH: FUSEE GOES TO FIRE CONFERENCES

FUSEE representatives traveled coast-to-coast in 2007 to present speeches and informational posters at the following fire management conferences:

- 🔥 2nd Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference in Destin, Florida, hosted by the International Association of Wildland Fire (March)
- 🔥 12th International Conference of Fire Service Women in Oakland, California, hosted by Women in the Fire Services (April)
- 🔥 14th Annual Sierra Nevada Alliance Convention in Kings Beach, California, hosted by the Sierra Nevada Alliance (August)
- 🔥 Annual Convention of the Society for Environmental Journalists, in Palo Alto, California (September)
- 🔥 The Human Dimensions of Wildland Fire Conference in Fort Collins, Colorado, hosted by the International Association of Wildland Fire (October)

Check out our conference [poster](#) and some of our published papers in the [Communications](#) section on our website.



FUSEE BLOGGERS CAUGHT WRITING LATE AT NIGHT IN NOMEX PAJAMAS

No, that's not true! But truth that is stranger than fiction has been posted in several hard-hitting essays and investigative reports on FUSEE's weblog. Here's an excerpt from one of our more provocative posts:

The first "Yellowpine" post asked why were we fighting backcountry fires that were clearly beyond human control. That post leads directly to this one: if it were not for the presence of a few cabins (one owned by a Senator), or private ranches in this area, it would likely be "Fire Use" ground – where lightning fires are allowed to burn naturally as they have done so since the dawn of time. Hundreds of firefighters and support personnel were placed out in front of wildfires that were running as much as seven miles a day in order to do some politically-motivated structure protection, and to try to hold onto the heel of huge fires that were heading for the wilderness. Idaho's Salmon River Watershed is Fire Country. The land needs fire, and any fires that we suppress there only delay the next big one – and everyone knows this.

I applaud the decision to quit trying to contain and attempt perimeter control of these fires, and to concentrate instead on 'point-protection' of a few historic cabins, old guard stations, or pack-bridges. My biggest hope is that we can learn to make these sorts of calls earlier in the game – not after the fires have kicked our asses around the woods for five weeks. Why did it take so long for the order to come to disengage from 'confine and control' tactics?

The firefighters on the Cascade Complex have had excellent leadership in their camps, but have been let down by those at higher levels. Jerking hundreds of people around (including Overhead, camp crews, cooks, and garbage haulers) in front of running crownfires is unacceptable. Wildland firefighters deserve a clearer mission.

– Fire Hobo ("Where the Heck is Yellowpine? Part II," posted Aug. 31)

Check out the blog for news and views you can use to promote safe, ethical, ecological fire management. Just go to our website – www.fusee.org – and click on [Scout the Line!](#)

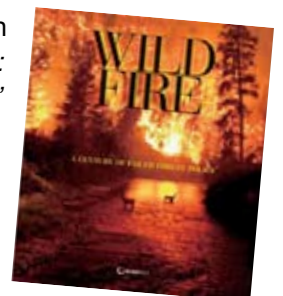
THE FUSEE MISSION: A NEW FIRE MANAGEMENT PARADIGM

FUSEE's mission is to promote safe, ethical, and ecological wildland fire management, and we seek to enable fire management workers to perform their duties with the highest professional, ethical, and environmental standards. We provide policy analysis and public education in support of a new, emerging paradigm that seeks to holistically manage wildland fire for social and ecological benefits instead of simply "fighting" it across the landscape. We want to end modern industrial society's socially-conditioned fear of forest fires, and instead, wisely use fire on the landscape to benefit a multitude of ecosystem functions and processes, vegetative communities, and wildlife habitats, as well as our own human communities and economies.

Our long-term goal is the creation of fire-adapted communities able to work safely and live sustainably within fire-permeable landscapes and fire-dependent ecosystems. We invite members of the wildland fire management and forest conservation communities to visit our website and become members of and contributors to FUSEE.

SPECIAL OFFERS FROM FUSEE

New and renewing members can receive a **FREE** copy of "Wildfire: A Century of Failed Forest Policy." This ground-breaking book contains stunning photographs and thought-provoking essays. Offer good while supplies last. Go to the [membership](#) page of our website for more details.



Also available for \$5 are copies of the pocket guide to *Light-Hand Tactics* written by Francis Mohr, member of FUSEE's Advisory Council. This classic book provides practical guidance on minimizing the adverse impacts of fire suppression actions. Every crew should have one!