

FIRE IN FLORIDA'S ECOSYSTEMS

Curriculum and Educator Training Program

2006-2007 Final Report

May 2006 - June 2007

Contract No. 12003



Prepared for
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Program Background

Since August 2000, the Florida Division of Forestry has supported prescribed fire and wildfire prevention education for teachers throughout the state with the *Fire in Florida's Ecosystems* (FIFE) program. **The goals of the FIFE program are to provide educators with high-quality fire ecology education materials and to give them the background knowledge and skills to use the materials and activities in their classrooms, visitor centers, or demonstration areas. The larger goal of the FIFE program is to engender a Florida populace that will support fire management on public lands and the prescribed burning and fuel reduction campaigns that are needed to reduce wildfire danger in the state.** Funding and support for the December 2004 – February 2006 Fire in Florida's Ecosystems program was provided by the Florida Division of Forestry with National Fire Plan Community Assistance funding from the U.S. Department of Interior's National Park Service Southeast Regional Office.

FIFE is delivered to educators throughout Florida via free workshops that offer in-depth information and a corresponding curriculum package. The trained educators then reach Florida's young citizens with information and activities that transmit messages about fire ecology, prescribed burning, and wildfire prevention. The hope is that the information these young people receive will help shape their attitudes about prescribed fire and wildfire prevention as they grow up. In addition, they will share knowledge about fire with their families and friends – helping to spread the word about fire's benefits.

From August 2000 through June 2007, a series of 113 workshops have reached a total of 2,301 Florida educators. The most recent round of trainings covered in this report reached 244 educators in 11 workshops and 5 conference short trainings from July 2006 to June 2007.

Results of a June 2007 Comprehensive Follow-up Evaluation of all past participants showed that over 60% of trained educators had adopted FIFE into the classroom and had used the curriculum in the past two years. We have estimated that each educator trained through the FIFE program is



reaching an average of 150 students per year. The 217 educators trained in 2006-2007 (although a total of 244 people were trained, 217 were Florida educators) could be reaching about 32,550 students each year with high-quality fire ecology, wildfire prevention, and prescribed fire use information. These students may take the information home to share with their families, for a total potential impact on over 78,000 Floridians each year (2.4 citizens per Florida household).

Table 1. Overall Summary of FIFE Training Activity, 2000 - June 2007

Contract	Period	Activity	Number of Workshops	Target Number of Educators	Number of Educators Trained
1	August 2000 to March 2002	Curriculum Design and Assembly, Trainings, Evaluation, Follow-up Survey	49	1200	1205
2	April to July 2002	Trainings, Evaluation	8	150	154
3	July 2002 to June 2003	Curriculum Update, Trainings, Evaluation	10	200	204
4	June to December 2003	Trainings, Evaluation	14	300	311
5	January to November 2004	Trainings, Evaluation	12	210	218
6	December 2004 to February 2006	Trainings, Evaluation	9	200	204
7	May 2006 to June 2007	Trainings, Evaluation, Materials Update, Comprehensive Program Evaluation	16	230	244
Totals			118	2490	2540

Program Marketing

We have continued marketing the FIFE program to increase awareness of the program among educators and among Florida Division of Forestry representatives, as well as to increase FIFE's presence on a state and national level. With the increased marketing efforts of the past several seasons, awareness of FIFE among educators throughout the state as well as the entire USA is growing.

Marketing to Educators

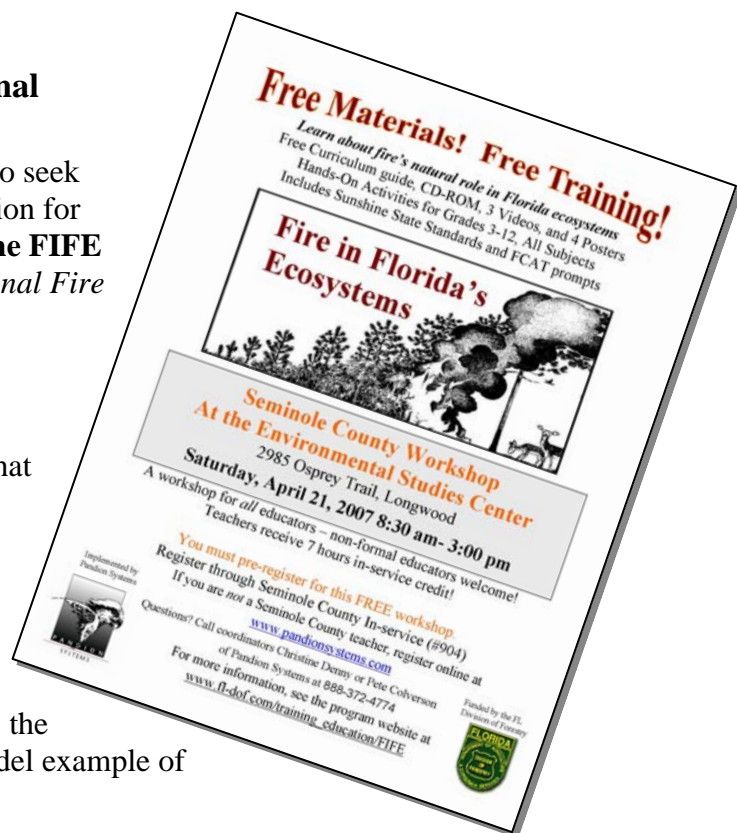
The FIFE workshop was marketed to educators at the October 2006 *Florida Association of Science Supervisors Conference*. We set up a display booth where we told teachers about FIFE and collected contact information from people interested in future programs. In addition, we presented a talk about FIFE at the conference. We also gave a FIFE presentation to all of the state's science supervisors at the *2006 Florida Association of Science Supervisor meeting* in October 2006. FIFE was an invited presentation at the *2006 Florida Master Naturalist Annual Meeting* where we conducted a 2.5 hour workshop to statewide natural resource educators.

Prior to administering the FIFE Comprehensive Follow-up Evaluation (see p. 15), all past FIFE participants were sent an email telling them about the survey invitation they would be receiving (the survey was online and notices were sent via email). This email served the purpose of informing educators about the survey and it re-established contact with our group of trainees. The email generated a lot of interest and feedback from past participants. Many of them wrote back to let us know they were enjoying the program and looked forward to providing feedback for the survey.

Marketing at Professional Meetings and National Conferences

In addition to regular marketing efforts, we continue to seek outlets for FIFE presentations and ways to gain attention for this fire ecology education program. **We presented the FIFE program at two national conferences:** *3rd International Fire Ecology and Management Congress* in San Diego in November 2006 and *2nd Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference* in Destin, Florida in March 2007.

At each of these conferences we presented: 1) a talk that highlighted how the FIFE program is a successful model for fire ecology education in Florida, and 2) a two hour preconference workshop entitled, "From Start to Finish: Creating a Successful Fire Ecology Program for Educators" (the workshop was taught twice in San Diego). This workshop highlighted the steps needed to create an outreach program that meets the needs of its target audience. FIFE was used as the model example of this process.



FIFE Curriculum Package 2006-2007

The FIFE curriculum package was reproduced in 2006 in order to deliver trainings for the year.

The curriculum package included some changes from past years including:

- Moving all FIFE videos from VHS format to DVD
- Updating all FIFE teaching PowerPoints and placing them onto a CD along with the FIFE Curriculum and an information sheet about the program. This CD is now being distributed to all FIFE trainees as part of the program.
- The creation of a “Fire Adapted Ecosystems of Florida” poster to be distributed to all future FIFE trainees.

Figure 1: Media Included in the 2006-2007 FIFE Curriculum Package (underlined items are new this year)

- *Fire in Florida's Ecosystems* Educator's Guide:
 - Educator background information
 - 11 student activities with complete instructions and enrichment components (*To Light a Fire includes a new data sheet*)
 - FCAT-style background reading and study prompts for each activity
 - Complete Sunshine State Standards correlations for each activity
- Materials necessary to complete activities:
 - Tree ring photographs (7) and descriptions
 - News articles about fire for student review
 - *Fire Feelings* character cards
- Posters:
 - *Fire in the Longleaf/Wiregrass Ecosystem* Poster (DOF)
 - *Using Fire Wisely. . .Prevents Wildfire* Poster (DOF)
 - *Fire's Role in Nature: Southeastern U.S. Pinelands* Poster (USFS)
 - *Longleaf Pine Ecosystem* Poster (FWS)
 - *Florida's Fire Adapted Ecosystems* (created during this contract and will be available next year)
- Videos (in DVD format as of 2006):
 - *Fire in the Southland* (Tall Timbers Research Station)
 - *Where There's Fire* (WFSU/Florida Department of Education)
 - *The Missing Fires* (Utah State University Extension)
- CD
 - 4 Teaching PowerPoints for the classroom (Updated from the web versions)
 - The FIFE curriculum in PDF format
 - 1 page description of the FIFE program
- Supplemental materials:
 - *Burning Issues* Interactive CD (BLM)
 - *The Natural Role of Fire* Booklet (DOF)
 - *Prescribed Fire: A Prescription for a Healthy Florida* Brochure (SJRWMD)
 - *Common Florida Natural Areas* Brochure (DEP/DOF/Pandion)
 - *Wildland Fire in the United States* Brochure (NWCG)
 - *The Natural Enquirer* Booklet (USFS)

Training Workshop Summary 2006-2007

Online Registration

A big improvement in the FIFE workshop is the launch of online registration in fall 2006.

Online registration greatly improves our ability to keep track of program registrants and to provide participants with program information prior to their workshop. It also allows easy access to the program via the web. The online registration form is linked to the FIFE website and can be found at www.pandionsystems.com/registration_fife.asp.

Recruiting

Recruiting for this season of FIFE workshops was successful, however we are seeing a definite change in attendance patterns. Whereas in the past we were able to quickly fill workshops with active marketing and outreach, this past training season was more challenging. We had two workshops cancelled due to lack of registration which is unusual. We also had several workshops that had full registration, however the day of the workshop ½ of the teachers did not show up. Marketing, pre workshop information, and outreach efforts were all similar to previous years. In order to discover some of the reasons why this was happening **we conducted informal phone interviews with some educators**. They told us that many teachers felt overwhelmed with requirements for the FCAT and would only attend trainings that were entirely FCAT focused. They also told us that some counties are restricting trainings teachers can attend and no longer allow teachers to go to “sit and get” workshops where teachers automatically receive workshop materials after sitting in a multi-hour training. These counties require teachers to do additional work following the workshop such as creating a lesson plan or reporting on using the curriculum in their classroom. Some of these issues guided the questions we asked in our comprehensive follow-up survey of past FIFE attendees. Information from this survey and feedback from teachers was combined to create the recommendations for program improvements included in this report (p. 26).



We were able to train 244 attendees at 11 workshops, and 5 conference short trainings over the thirteen month period of trainings (Table 2). In addition, we gave a presentation to state science coordinators, three conference presentations, and one conference poster. The majority of the educators trained during this round of workshops were formal classroom teachers and education students, although several non-formal educators also attended training sessions. The workshops were held year round, with some of the workshops

occurring during county summer institutes for teachers.

Workshops

The popularity of the FIFE program continues – many workshops fill very quickly and some have waiting lists. Many workshop hosts have scheduled repeat trainings. Several locations now have FIFE on their annual training schedule and advertise FIFE as one of their regular opportunities for educators. The May 2006 - June 2007 FIFE workshops are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. FIFE Educator Training Workshops, May 2006 – June 2007

Date	Event	Location	Audience	#
June 2006	Training	University of North Florida, Duval County	Preservice Teachers	27
July 15, 2007	Training	Orlando Science Center, Orange County.	Orange County Teachers	17
October 21, 2006	Training	Oscar Scherer State Park, Sarasota County.	Sarasota County Educators	20
October 2006	Presentation	2006 Florida Association of Science Supervisor Meeting, Alachua County	Statewide Science Supervisors	80*
October 2006	Short Training	2006 Florida Association of Science Teachers Conference, Alachua County	Statewide Teachers	6
November 4, 2006	Short Training	FL Master Naturalist Annual Meeting	Statewide Educators	9
November 2006	Pre- conference Short Training (2), Talk	3 rd International Fire Ecology and Management Congress, San Diego, CA	Practitioners and Educators from all over the world	20 at trainings
December 7, 2006	Presentation	SE State Parks Program Seminar	Nonformal Parks Educators from the Southeast US	15*
January 27, 2007	Training	Tallahassee Museum, Leon County	Leon County Educators	10
February 24, 2007	Training	Florida Master Naturalist Instructors, Alachua County	Alachua County Educators	5
February 26, 2007	Training	Florida Gulf Coast University, Lee County	Pre Service Teachers	32
March 3, 2007	Training	Calusa Nature Center, Lee County	Lee County Teachers	8
March 2007	Pre- conference Short Training, Talk, Poster	2 nd Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference, Destin, FL	Practitioners and Educators Nationwide	7 at training
April 6, 2007	Training	University of North Florida, Duval County	Preservice Teachers	19
April 21, 2007	Training	Environmental Studies Center, Seminole County	Seminole County Educators	24
June 12, 2007	Training	Pasco County Summer Institute	Pasco County Teachers	22
June 13, 2007	Training	Nature's Classroom, Hillsborough County	Hillsborough County Educators	18
Total Educators Trained				244

*Trainees not counted in the final number.

Workshops are held at a “host” school, forest, nature center, or private facility, with Pandion Systems arranging workshop logistics. The training agenda has been updated over the years of the program to best meet teachers’ needs and to provide as interesting and interactive a program as possible. A typical workshop agenda is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Typical FIFE Training Workshop Agenda

Time	Item
9:00 – 9:15am	Opening, Pre-Workshop Survey, Program Introduction, Curriculum Package Preview
9:15 – 9:35am	* <i>Fire Feelings</i> , Fire in Human History
9:35 – 10:00am	<i>Fire Adaptations</i> , “Fire in the Southland” video
10:00 – 10:30am	Florida’s Fire-Adapted Ecosystems, <i>Habitats Classified</i> , Wildfire and Prescribed Fire
10:30 – 10:45am	Break
10:45 – 11:45am	Prescribed Fire Tools and Techniques (DOF), <i>To Light A Fire</i>
11:45am – 12:30pm	Lunch (on your own)
12:30 – 1:15pm	<i>If Trees Could Talk</i> , Public Perceptions of Fire
1:15 – 2:30pm	Field Trip to a Fire-Maintained Landscape, <i>Burned Area Scavenger Hunt</i>
2:30 – 3:00pm	Burning Issues CD Demonstration, Post-Workshop Survey, Evaluations, Closing

**ITALICS* indicate that participants perform a FIFE curriculum activity. Up to six activities are performed during the workshop, time and conditions allowing.

Typical trainings include a presentation by a DOF representative. The DOF portion of the workshop includes a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation followed by a visit to a brush truck or some other equipment brought by DOF if possible. During this presentation teachers get a better idea of the role DOF plays in land management in Florida. DOF also leads a discussion on the basics of prescribed burning – why it is done, how it is done, where it is done, and regulations about burns. The equipment demonstration gives educators a close-up look at the gear used by DOF for prescribed burns and wildfire fighting. The DOF representatives that assisted by giving presentations at workshops in this round of trainings are listed in the box to the right.

Florida Division of Forestry Speakers at 2006 - 2007 FIFE Workshops

- Bill Delph, Lakeland District
- Sean Gallagher, Orlando District
- AnnaLeasa Winter, Jacksonville District
- Travis Pollard, Tallahassee Forestry Center
- Gerry LaCavera, Caloosahatchee District
- Brian Olsen, Myakka River District
- Ludie Ehlers, Waccasassa Forestry Center
- Dana Sussmann, Orlando District

Program Evaluation Results 2006-2007

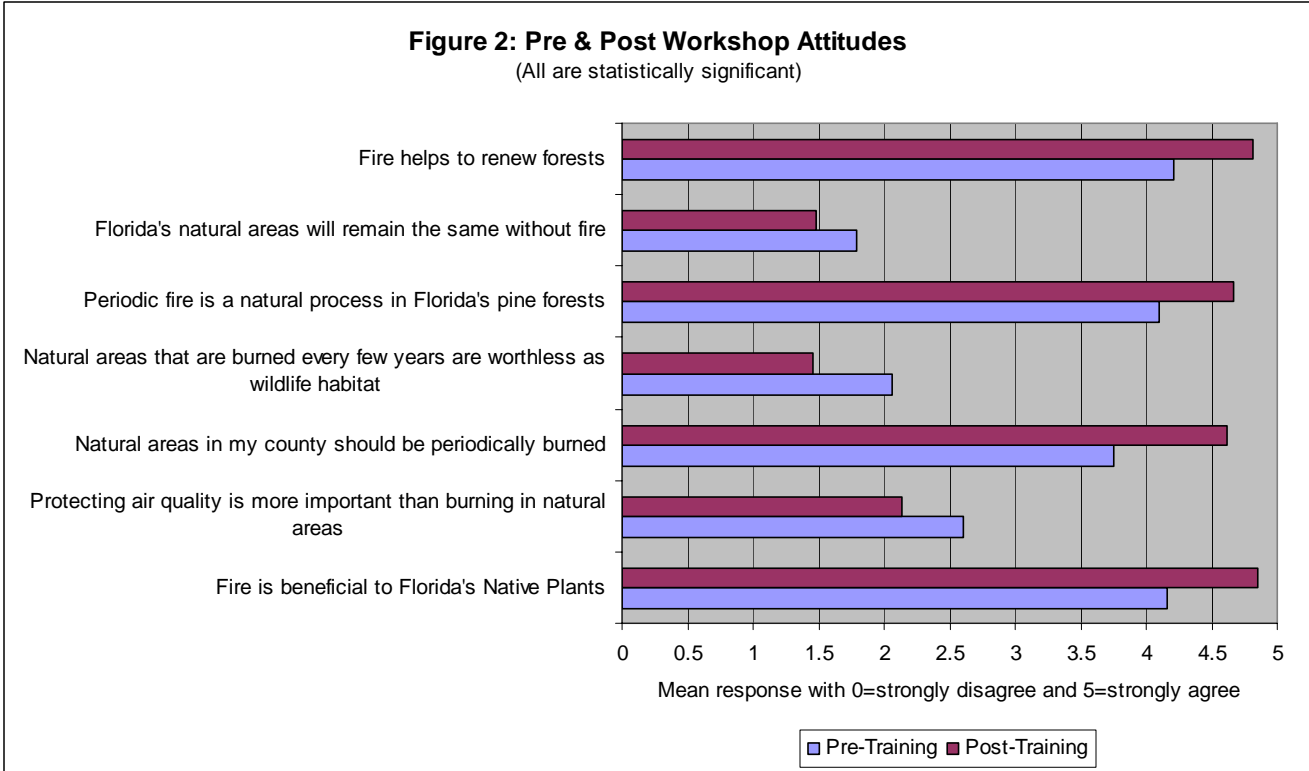
Research indicates that evaluation creates more successful educational programs. Evaluation has been infused throughout the FIFE program to ensure its effectiveness. At its inception, the FIFE program underwent a detailed assessment and design process from March through July 2000. The program design process included a number of assessment tools, including a telephone needs assessment survey of school districts and audiences, pilot testing of the educator training model with a group of experienced science teacher-trainees, and development of a targeted marketing and training plan.

Preworkshop and postworkshop surveys are used at every FIFE workshop to assess educators' fire-related experience, knowledge, and attitudes, as well as their intentions for using the FIFE package in their classroom. In addition, anonymous workshop evaluation forms are collected at all FIFE workshops to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program and delivery and to gather feedback for training program and curriculum improvement. Evaluation is a critical element for educational program success, and is infused into all aspects of the FIFE program. During training workshops, educators were asked a series of questions related to fire's role in nature both before and after the workshop. The Presurvey and Postsurvey Summary Statistics (Table 4) reflect the responses of 2006-2007 trained educators to the knowledge and attitude surveys presented before and after each workshop. **The results continue to be very positive, with statistically significant changes in knowledge and attitudes resulting from the workshops in most categories and questions.** Educators continue to leave FIFE workshops with increased knowledge about fire ecology and more favorable attitudes toward prescribed burning for wildfire prevention and other environmental benefits.

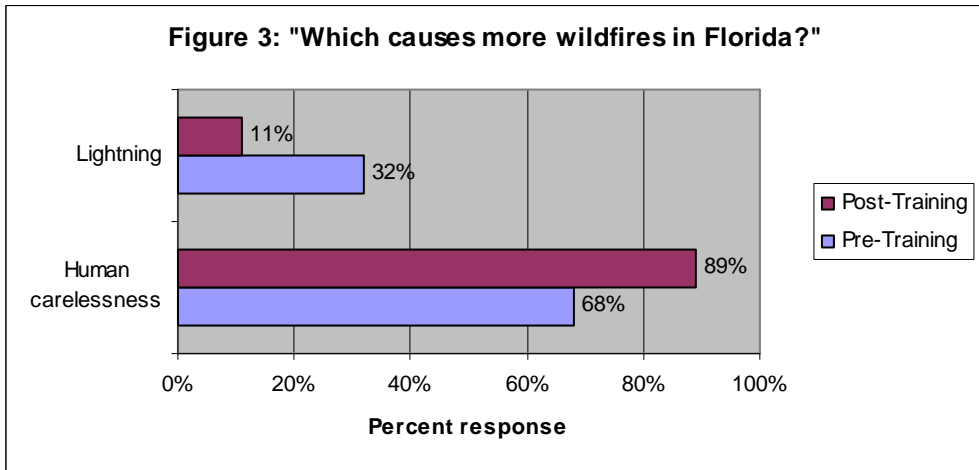
Below are several graphic interpretations of the results listed in the summary statistics. All of these questions showed statistically significant changes between pre- and post-workshop testing. For example, before the workshop, only 21% of respondents *strongly agreed* that "Natural areas in my county should be periodically burned." Following the workshop, 68% of respondents *strongly agreed* with the statement.

In another example, before the workshop, only 38% of respondents *strongly disagreed* that "Florida's natural areas will remain the same without fire." Following the workshop, 72% of respondents *strongly disagreed* with the statement. Figure 2 presents the means for each of the seven attitude questions, in order to compare changes in attitude before and after the training workshops. Percent frequencies for each question are represented in Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6.





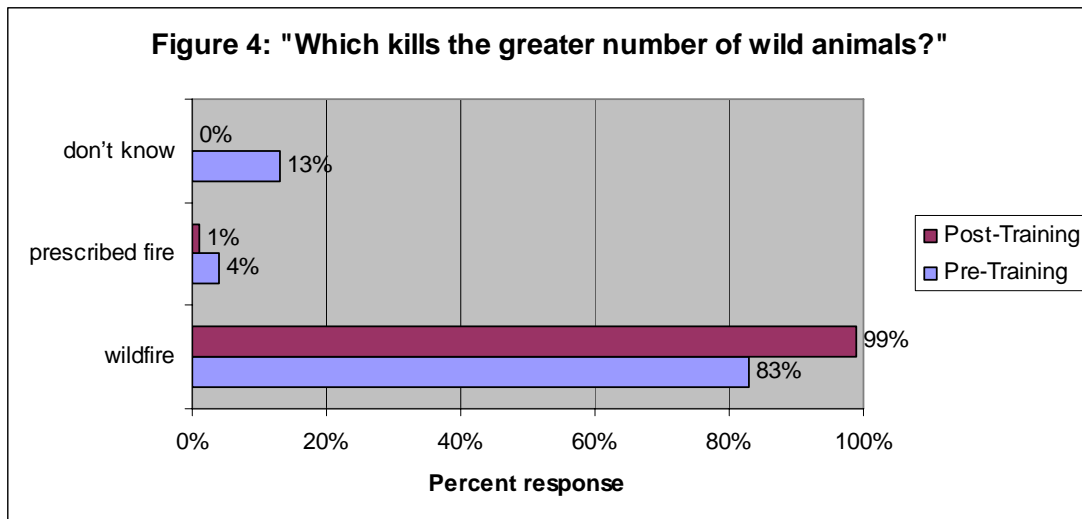
Before the workshop training began, 68% of participants knew that most wildfires in Florida are created by human carelessness or intention rather than natural causes such as lightning. After the workshop training, 89% responded correctly to the question (Figure 3).



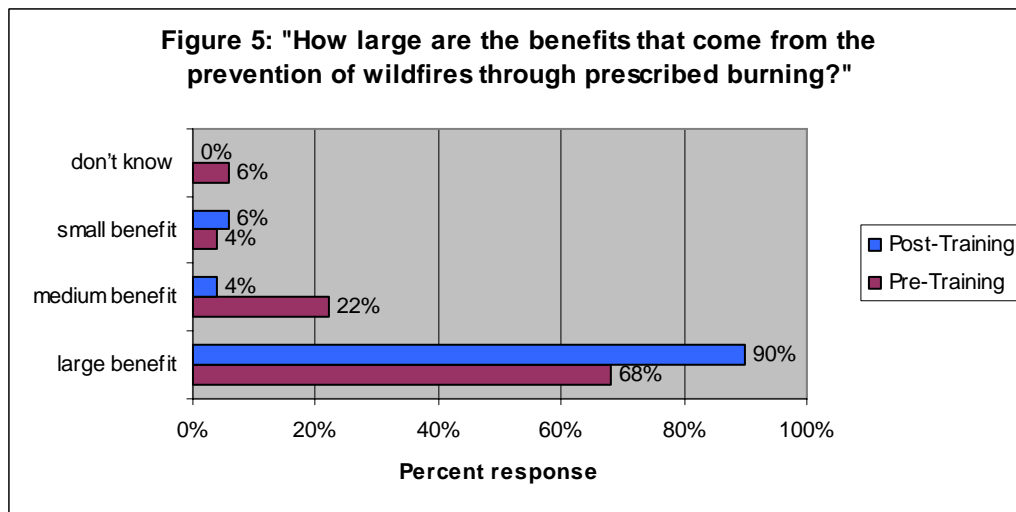
The “risks and benefits of prescribed fire” questions are an important evaluation measurement in these workshop surveys. As identified in a 1999 survey, one of the greatest concerns of Florida residents regarding prescribed fire is its perceived potential for harm to wildlife. Forty percent of respondents indicated that they learned that wildfire kills more animals than prescribed fire.



Prior to the workshop, 13% of participants said they did not know the answer to this question (Figure 4). Prior to the workshop, 52% of participants felt that prescribed fire presented a *large* to *medium* risk to wildlife. Following the workshop, only 10% of respondents felt this way. Sixty-four percent of the respondents said that this was a smaller risk than they first thought.



Prior to the workshop, 68% of respondents felt that “prevention of wildfires resulting from prescribed fire” was a *large benefit*. After the workshop, 90% of participants felt this way (Figure 5). Fifty-one percent reported that this was a larger benefit than they first thought.



At the beginning of the workshop, only 16% of the educators said that they had taught fire ecology topics in their classroom and only 8% had used fire ecology activities in the classroom (Figure 6). After the workshop, 98% of participants planned to teach students about fire ecology topics and 96% planned to use fire ecology topics in the classroom.

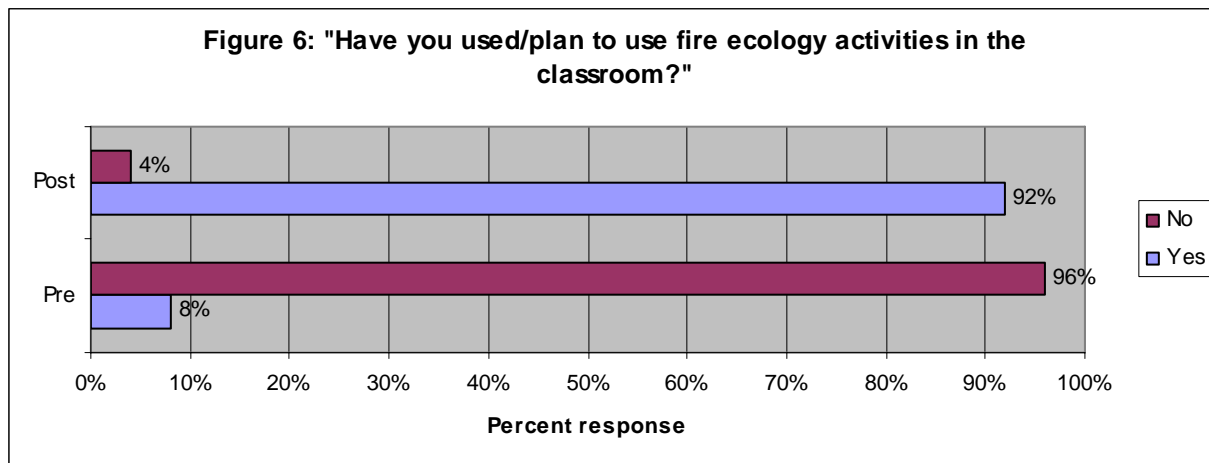


Table 4: Fire in Florida's Ecosystems Training Workshops Presurvey and Postsurvey Summary Statistics for 2006 (N=191 Trained)

1. What Do You Think? Please circle your response.

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean ¹ (1 to 5)		Sig
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
Fire is beneficial to Florida's native plants (agree*)	4%	0%	5%	0%	6%	1%	46%	17%	39%	82%	4.1	4.85	⊛
Protecting air quality is more important than burning in natural areas (neutral*)	8%	28%	41%	39%	38%	26%	10%	3%	3%	4%	2.6	2.14	⊛
Natural areas in my county should be periodically burned (agree*)	3%	1%	6%	0%	23%	3%	47%	28%	21%	68%	3.8	4.6	⊛
Natural areas that are burned every few years are useless as wildlife habitat (disagree)	32%	67%	43%	24%	14%	3%	8%	3%	3%	3%	2.1	1.5	
Periodic fire is a natural process in Florida's pine forests (agree*)	1%	1%	4%	1%	11%	3%	51%	23%	32%	72%	4.1	4.7	⊛
Florida's natural areas will remain the same without fire (disagree*)	38%	72%	48%	21%	10%	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1.79	1.45	⊛
Fire helps to renew forests (agree*)	2%	1%	3%	0%	9%	1%	43%	14%	43%	84%	4.2	4.8	⊛

*Preferred response. ¹Means are on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

2. Which causes more wildfires in Florida? ⊛

Human carelessness	68% pre	→	89% post
Lightning	32% pre	→	11% post



3. Which of the following best defines prescribed fire? ❄

When lightning naturally ignites a fire	3% pre	→	2% post
When someone's yard trash fire escapes into the forest	1% pre	→	0% post
When land managers purposefully set a fire	89% pre	→	97% post
Don't know	7% pre	→	1% post

4. We'd like to know more about how you view the risks and benefits of *prescribed fire*, and whether your opinion changed as a result of this program. Please answer the following:**Car accidents due to smoke from prescribed fire**

How large is the risk? ❄				Did the program affect your opinion?
large risk	7% pre	→	5% post	7% this is a bigger risk than I first thought
medium risk	24% pre	→	16% post	43% this is a smaller risk than I first thought
small risk	64% pre	→	77% post	49% no change in my opinion
don't know	5% pre	→	2% post	

Spread of prescribed fire to neighboring property

How large is the risk? ❄				Did the program affect your opinion?
large risk	20% pre	→	8% post	8% this is a bigger risk than I first thought
medium risk	30% pre	→	14% post	44% this is a smaller risk than I first thought
small risk	44% pre	→	77% post	48% no change in my opinion
don't know	6% pre	→	1% post	

Harm to wildlife from prescribed fire

How large is the risk? ❄				Did the program affect your opinion?
large risk	22% pre	→	2% post	6% this is a bigger risk than I first thought
medium risk	30% pre	→	8% post	64% this is a smaller risk than I first thought
small risk	44% pre	→	90% post	30% no change in my opinion
don't know	4% pre	→	0% post	

Unattractive landscape right after the prescribed fire

How large is the risk? ❄				Did the program affect your opinion?
large risk	22% pre	→	3% post	6% this is a bigger risk than I first thought
medium risk	19% pre	→	12% post	51% this is a smaller risk than I first thought
small risk	53% pre	→	83% post	43% no change in my opinion
don't know	6% pre	→	2% post	

Better wildlife habitat resulting from prescribed fire

How good are the benefits? ❄				Did the program affect your opinion?
large benefit	55% pre	→	94% post	61% this is a bigger benefit than I first thought
medium benefit	34% pre	→	4% post	3% this is a smaller benefit than I first thought
small benefit	5% pre	→	2% post	36% no change in my opinion
don't know	6% pre	→	0% post	

Improved forest lands resulting from prescribed fire

How good are the benefits? ❄				Did the program affect your opinion?
large benefit	64% pre	→	96% post	61% this is a bigger benefit than I first thought
medium benefit	26% pre	→	3% post	3% this is a smaller benefit than I first thought
small benefit	4% pre	→	1% post	36% no change in my opinion
don't know	6% pre	→	0% post	

Prevention of wildfires resulting from prescribed fire

How good are the benefits? ❄				Did the program affect your opinion?
large benefit	68% pre	→	90% post	51% this is a bigger benefit than I first thought
medium benefit	22% pre	→	4% post	7% this is a smaller benefit than I first thought
small benefit	4% pre	→	6% post	42% no change in my opinion

don't know	6% pre	→	0% post	
Maintenance of the natural landscape resulting from prescribed fire				
How good are the benefits? * ⚙				
large benefit	57% pre	→	92% post	Did the program affect your opinion?
medium benefit	30% pre	→	7% post	57% this is a bigger benefit than I first thought
small benefit	8% pre	→	1% post	3% this is a smaller benefit than I first thought
don't know	5% pre	→	0% post	40% no change in my opinion
Comparing Wildfire to Prescribed Fire...				
Which kills the greater number of wild animals? * ⚙				
wildfire	83% pre	→	99% post	Did the program affect your opinion?
prescribed fire	4% pre	→	1% post	40% yes
don't know	13% pre	→	0% post	60% no
Which generates the greatest amounts of smoke? * ⚙				
wildfire	79% pre	→	99% post	Did the program affect your opinion?
prescribed fire	5% pre	→	1% post	45% yes
don't know	16% pre	→	0% post	55% no

5. Fire Teaching Experience and Future Teaching Plans					
	Yes		No		Sig
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
Have you been or do you plan to teach students about fire ecology topics?	16%	98%	84%	2%	* ⚙
Have you used or do you plan to use fire ecology activities in the classroom?	8%	96%	92%	4%	* ⚙
Have you taken or do you plan to take students on a field trip to visit a fire-maintained landscape?	11%	65%	89%	35%	* ⚙

*=Statistical significance at p<0.05. Due to missing data points, effective n=156 to 190 for analysis.

Program Planning 2007-2008

We have had several inquiries about FIFE workshops for the next school year. We will be requesting the BLM-produced *Burning Issues* CD for the next training session and hope to have access to it. Access to this CD has, at times, been challenging, but we are hopeful that we will be able to supply it to educators again for the coming training year.

We will be distributing the new *Florida's Fire Adapted Ecosystems* poster to all future trainees. This poster will be printed and ready for distribution in 2007-2008.



FIFE Comprehensive Follow-up Evaluation

Methods

In 2007, a comprehensive evaluation of the FIFE program was conducted to gauge the use of the curriculum, to find out how the materials and workshop could be improved, and to assess retention of the workshop material. **Pandion conducted an evaluation of educators that had participated in the FIFE program over the past seven years.** We know that FIFE participants enjoy the workshop and materials however, the information educators receive is most useful when it is integrated into their lessons and shared with their students. In order to best meet educators' needs, we wanted to find out the following:

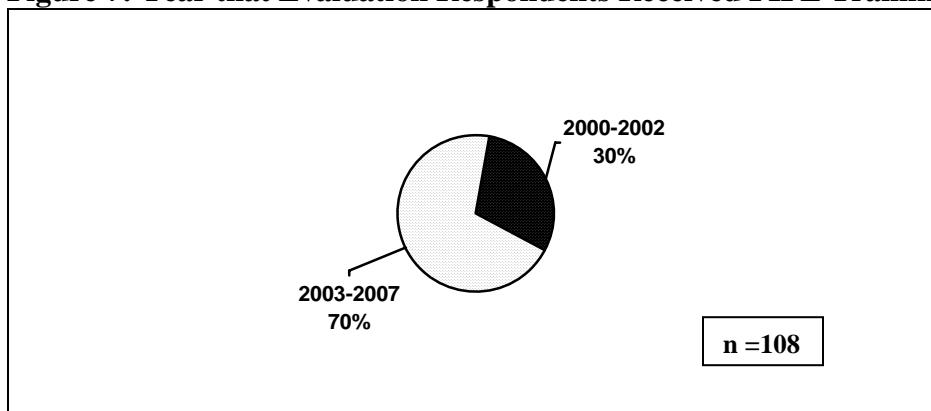
- Is the FIFE package being used by educators?
- How is the FIFE package being used?
- Is the curriculum being adapted for educator use?
- What are the barriers to curriculum use?
- How could the FIFE program be improved and what additional resources would help teachers integrate FIFE into their curriculum?
- Have educators retained the information they received in the training?

A 32 question survey (Appendix 1) was developed to answer these questions. The survey was delivered via Survey Monkey, a popular online service that allows participants to click on a web link and access the survey. Participants were contacted using a database of past FIFE attendees. At every FIFE workshop, participant names and contact information are collected and added to this database. Initially the 2,540 FIFE participants in the database were sent an email announcing the upcoming survey. This initial email also served to collect returned emails and update the database. A link to the survey instrument was sent via email to the 1,435 FIFE participants with active emails. Of those initially contacted, 21 emails were returned or the educator asked to be removed from the contact list due to their retirement since taking the training.

Response Rate

Of the 1414 total sample, 108 individuals completed the survey placing the response rate at 7.64%. A 5% response rate was considered sufficient for data collection, so our target number of responses was exceeded by 37 participants. Seventy-percent of respondents attended the FIFE workshop after it was updated (2003-2007) (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Year that Evaluation Respondents Received FIFE Training



Results: Demographics of FIFE Trainees

The trainee's responses were varied when asked what they were responsible for teaching and the ages/grade levels they currently teach. Although a majority of trainees taught science (33%) for grades 6-8 (21%, Figures 8 and 9), a high percentage of responses revealed that the trainees were accountable for other specific types of courses including health, conservation, environmental education, and computer literacy among others (19%, Figure 9). Almost 22% of trainees were not formal educators and listed their audience as being a mix from alternative high school programs to organizational programs through 4-H and the Boys and Girls Club to environmental fields such as park guide or forester. The survey revealed that 60% of the respondents had used FIFE materials within the past two years and had used them more often than other available environmental educational materials, making the FIFE curriculum part of their scheduled lessons or activities at least one to five times since attending the workshop (Figure 10). This information indicates that FIFE is attracting a different educator than some of the other very popular environmental education curriculums like Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, and Project WET. These curriculums are often used by educators that teach environmental subjects as part of their curriculum. FIFE seems to be getting some of these teachers, but it is also attracting teachers that do not traditionally teach environmental subjects or use other environmental curriculums. This different audience creates the opportunity for FIFE to provide ecosystem and ecological information to a group that may not have been using this type of teaching in their programs previously.

Figure 8: Grade or Age Level Currently Teaching

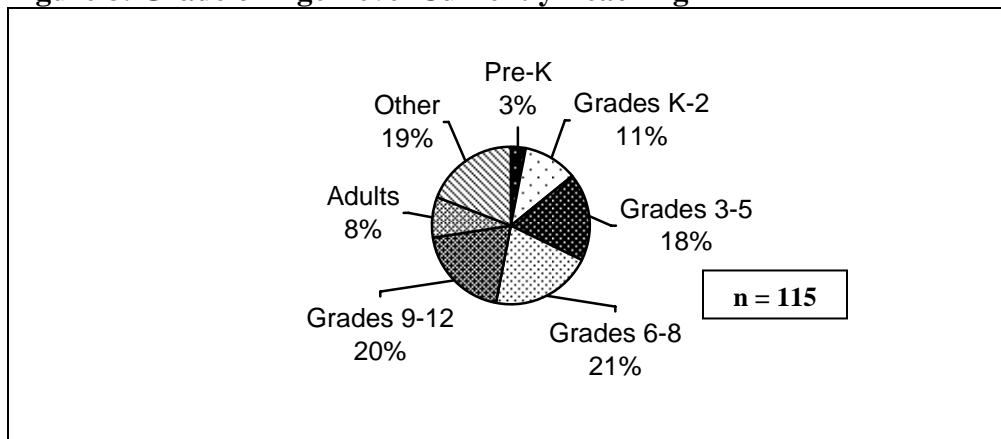


Figure 9: Subjects Currently Taught by FIFE Trainees

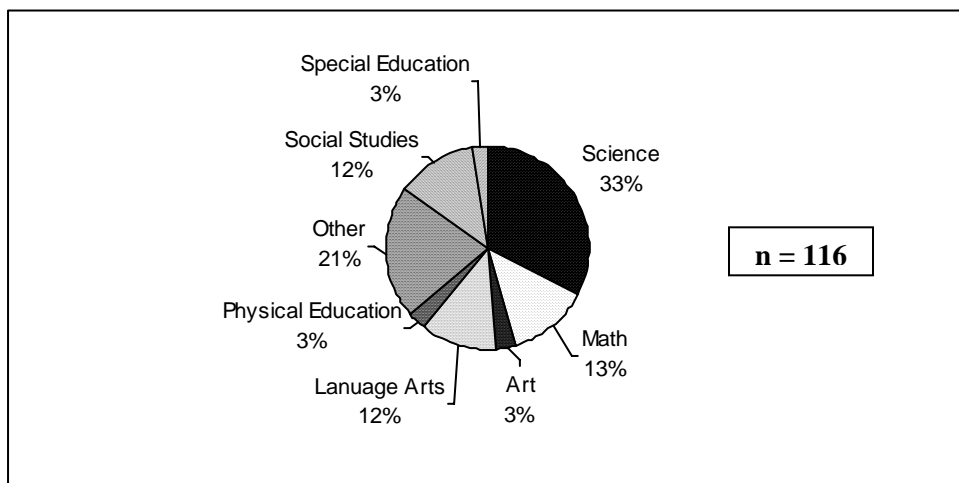
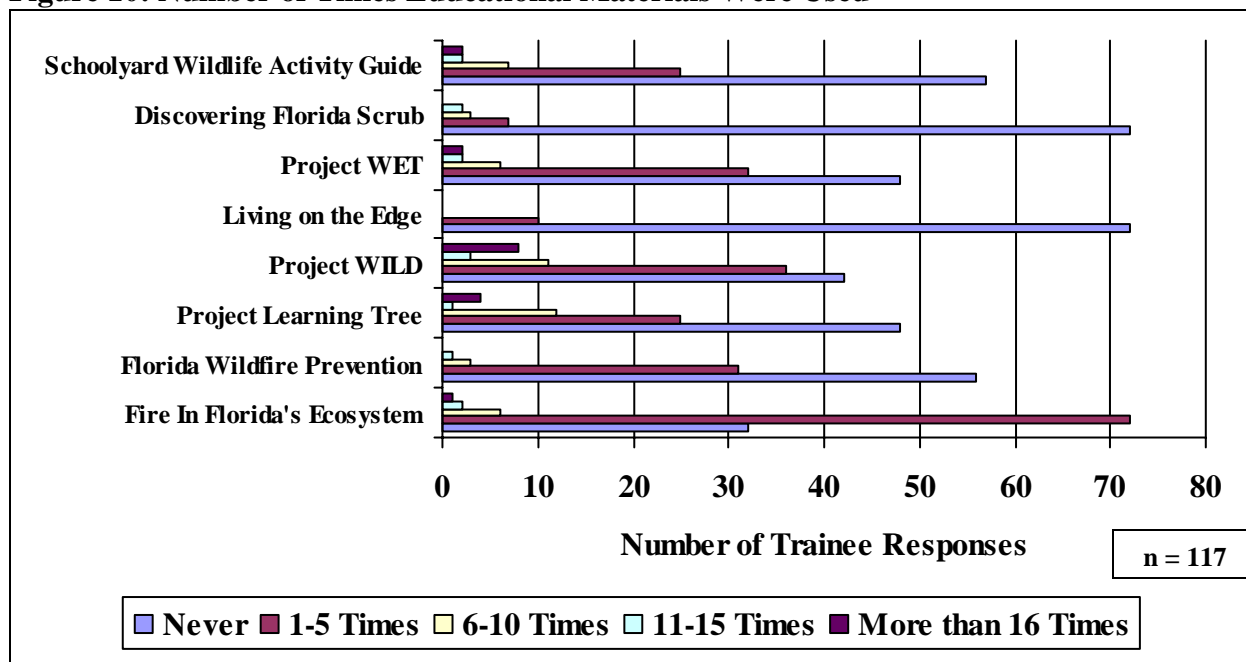


Figure 10: Number of Times Educational Materials Were Used



Results: The Use of FIFE

The majority of FIFE trainees have used the activities (25%), posters (15%), and educator background information (15%) provided during training workshops (Figure 11). Among activities offered through FIFE, the most widely used was “Fire Adaptations” and “If Trees Could Talk” (Figure 12). Although more than half of the respondents surveyed have used the FIFE materials (60%), some barriers or limitations to use of the activities included:

- The chance to use the materials has not presented itself yet (36%)
- Time issues with incorporating the materials into current lessons (20%)
- The materials seemed too advanced for certain settings (11%)

Educators responded positively towards their use of FIFE materials. Of the 65 educators that responded, 37 stated that they had used the FIFE curriculum activities to aid with teaching, and 69% of 77 educators found the FIFE curriculum to be helpful in meeting FCAT objectives or Sunshine State Standards. Of the 31% of educators who did not find the material helpful for test preparation, most commented it was due to the fact that they were not formal educators and they did not have to “worry” about teaching towards these specific goals.

Ninety four percent of respondents said that the FIFE curriculum provided enough information for them to feel comfortable to teach students about fire ecology, and 99% of 79 respondents felt the FIFE curriculum provides enough instruction to prepare for activities.

Figure 11: FIFE Curriculum Components Used Within the Past Two Years

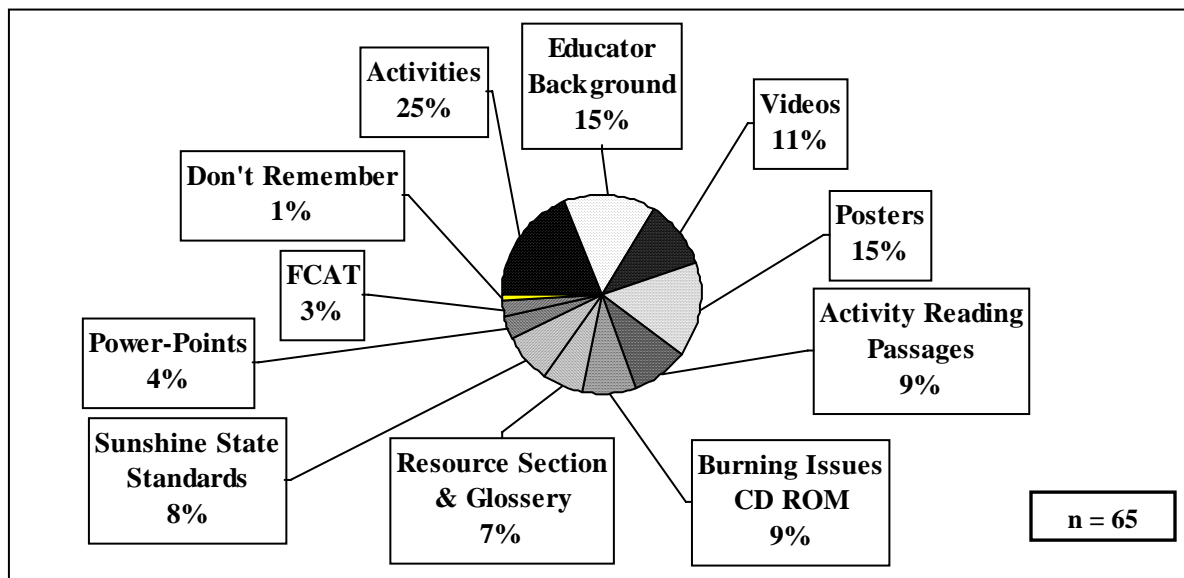
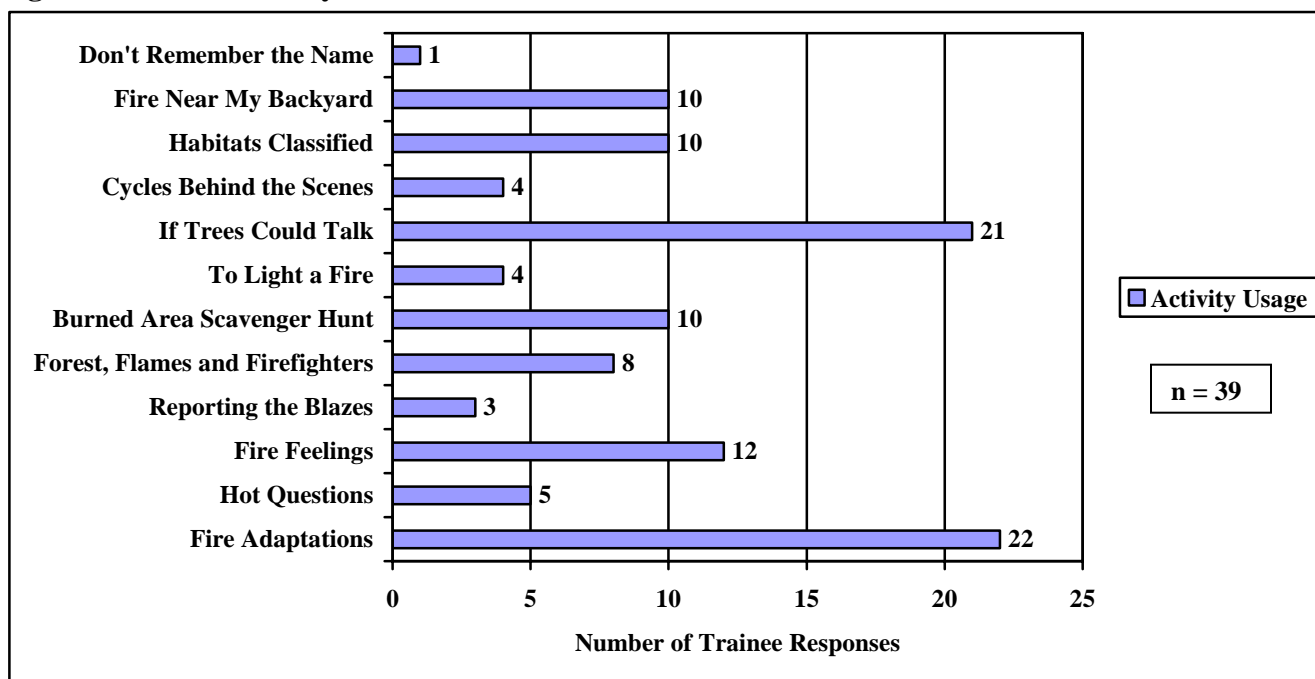


Figure 12: FIFE Activity Use¹

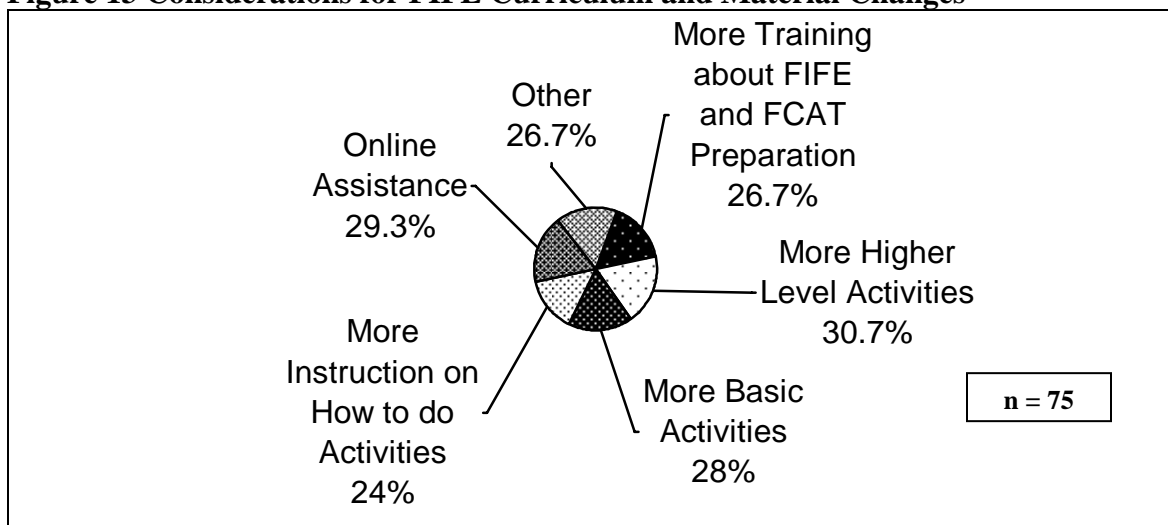
¹Trainees could choose more than one activity when responding to this survey question.

The survey was able to determine not only how trainees use the FIFE components, but how some had adapted the materials to their particular teaching situation. The survey also collected information on how educators would like to see the materials and training program improved for future use. This information is valuable for future revisions of the curriculum and improvements to the program. Twenty-two percent (22%) said they had adapted the curriculum in some way. Eleven percent of the educators had also created lesson plans featuring FIFE material. The majority of educators that have adapted FIFE material or have created their own lesson plan(s) are open to sharing their lesson plans. Most (67%) have already shared the FIFE curriculum with other educators. Some explanations for changes to the original FIFE material included:

- Incorporating more age appropriate or learning level appropriate material
- Shortened exercises and activities due to the time availability
- Adapted activities to use while in the “field” to focus more intently on fire ecology
- Adapting the habitat discussion for specific Florida regions (e.g. south)
- Combining FIFE with other “exciting” visual materials such as the IMAX presentation of “Wildfire”

Overall, when asked how the FIFE curriculum and materials could be made more useful, trainees offered several important suggestions (Figure 13). These included online assistance (29%); higher level activities (30%); and “other” suggestions (26%) such as an updated video or DVD about fire ecology that can be paused easily after segments have been delivered (this was accomplished with the launch of the FIFE DVD in 2007), more audio/visual materials, and more activity ideas that contain a “hands-on” approach towards fire education.

Figure 13 Considerations for FIFE Curriculum and Material Changes



Results: Retention of FIFE Information

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the risks and benefits of prescribed fire. These were the same questions that they were asked in their presurvey prior to participating in the FIFE workshop. Follow-up evaluation respondent answers were paired with their initial presurvey responses. The total number of paired responses was 96. The reason for this comparison was to determine if there was a long term change in knowledge and attitudes about prescribed fire following the FIFE workshop. Short term change is evidenced by the post workshop evaluations administered after each training. Long term change is harder to measure and the follow-up evaluation provided us with a unique opportunity.

Although there were not significant changes in attitudes about the risk of prescribed fire, there were significant changes in the knowledge and attitudes about the benefits of prescribed fire (Table 5). For example, while only 68% of respondents felt that better wildlife habitat was a large benefit of prescribed fire prior to attending a workshop, 88% of respondents felt this way months and even years after attending FIFE. Seventy percent of participants felt improved forest lands was a large benefit of prescribed fire prior to attending the workshop and 94% felt this was a large benefit after the workshop. Ninety-one percent of respondents felt that prevention of wildfires was a large benefit of prescribed fire in the follow-up study. **These responses are excellent and show that FIFE is resulting in long term changes knowledge and attitudes about the benefits of prescribed fire as a land management tool!**

Table 5. Fire in Florida's Ecosystems Training Workshops Comparison of Participant's Original Presurvey Responses (2000-2007) to Follow-Up Evaluation Survey Responses in 2007 (N=94 completed evaluation surveys)

1. How do you view the following risks of prescribed fire?			
Car accidents due to smoke from prescribed fire...			
How large is the risk?			
large risk	10% pre	→	7% post
medium risk	17% pre	→	18% post
small risk	68% pre	→	75% post
don't know	5% pre	→	0% post
Spread of prescribed fire to neighboring property...			
How large is the risk?			
large risk	8% pre	→	6% post
medium risk	36% pre	→	17% post
small risk	48% pre	→	77% post
don't know	8% pre	→	0% post
Harm to wildlife from prescribed fire...			
How large is the risk?			
large risk	14% pre	→	8% post
medium risk	24% pre	→	24% post
small risk	54% pre	→	66% post
don't know	8% pre	→	2% post
2. How do you view the following benefits of prescribed fire?			
Better wildlife habitat resulting from prescribed fire...			
How good are the benefits?*			
large benefit	68% pre	→	88% post
medium benefit	21% pre	→	11% post
small benefit	4% pre	→	1% post
don't know	7% pre	→	0% post
Improved forest lands resulting from prescribed fire...			
How good are the benefits?*			
large benefit	70% pre	→	94% post
medium benefit	22% pre	→	5% post
small benefit	2% pre	→	0% post
don't know	6% pre	→	1% post
Prevention of wildfires resulting from prescribed fire...			
How good are the benefits?*			
large benefit	71% pre	→	91% post
medium benefit	13% pre	→	8% post
small benefit	9% pre	→	0% post
don't know	7% pre	→	1% post
Maintenance of the natural landscape resulting from prescribed fire...			
How good are the benefits?*			
large benefit	66% pre	→	88% post
medium benefit	27% pre	→	10% post
small benefit	1% pre	→	1% post
don't know	6% pre	→	1% post

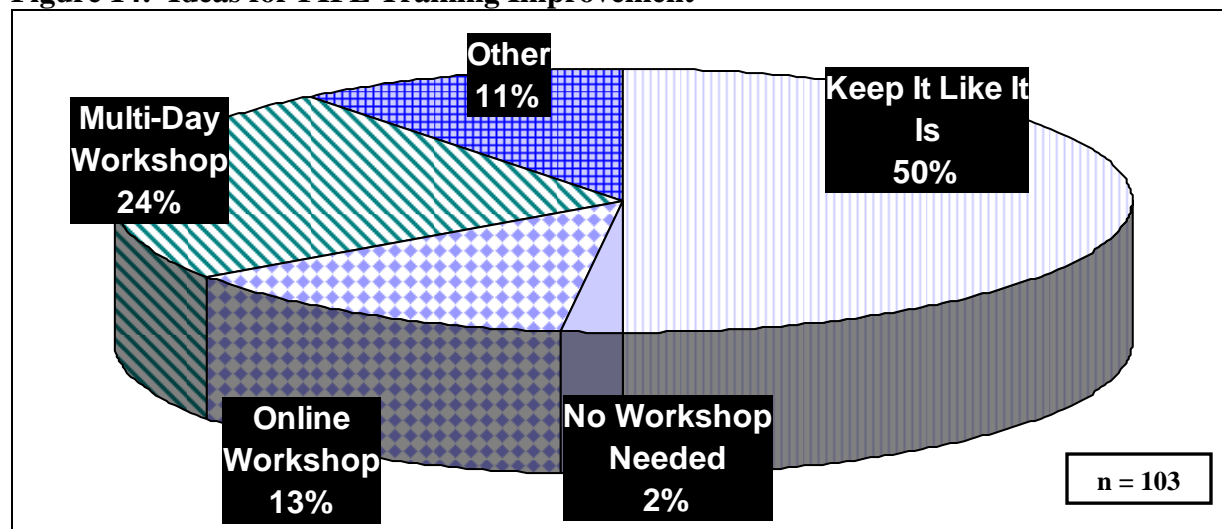
Due to missing data points, effective n=79 to 95 for analysis.

Results: The Future of FIFE

To help attract future educators towards FIFE curriculum, Pandion wanted to understand what type of training format is most preferred and beneficial for educators with busy and diverse schedules. Half of the trainees surveyed thought FIFE was best offered as it currently is as a one-day workshop where hands-on instruction and free materials are given (Figure 14). A notable percentage of trainees (24%) agreed that FIFE could be improved by offering a multi-day training (up to 3 days), with lodging and food included, during the summer months to immerse educators into the field of fire ecology. This could provide time for trainees to learn about and work with the curriculum and better understand the role of prescribed fire in the field. Some of the “other” suggestions for future updates included:

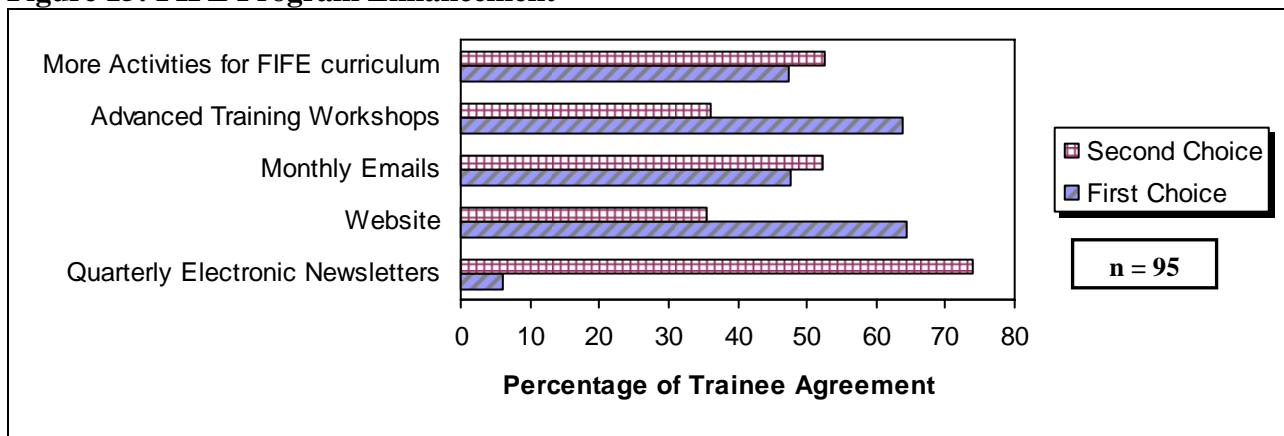
- A prescribed fire “field-trip” as part of the one-day workshop
- Age targeted workshops (e.g., one workshop for Pre-K through grade 5, another workshop for grades 6-12, and another targeted for adults)
- Offer “advanced” follow-up workshops for trainees that have already taken the one-day workshop
- Offer a variety of workshops such as half-day, multi-day, and online. This allows educators to decide what is best for them.

Figure 14: Ideas for FIFE Training Improvement



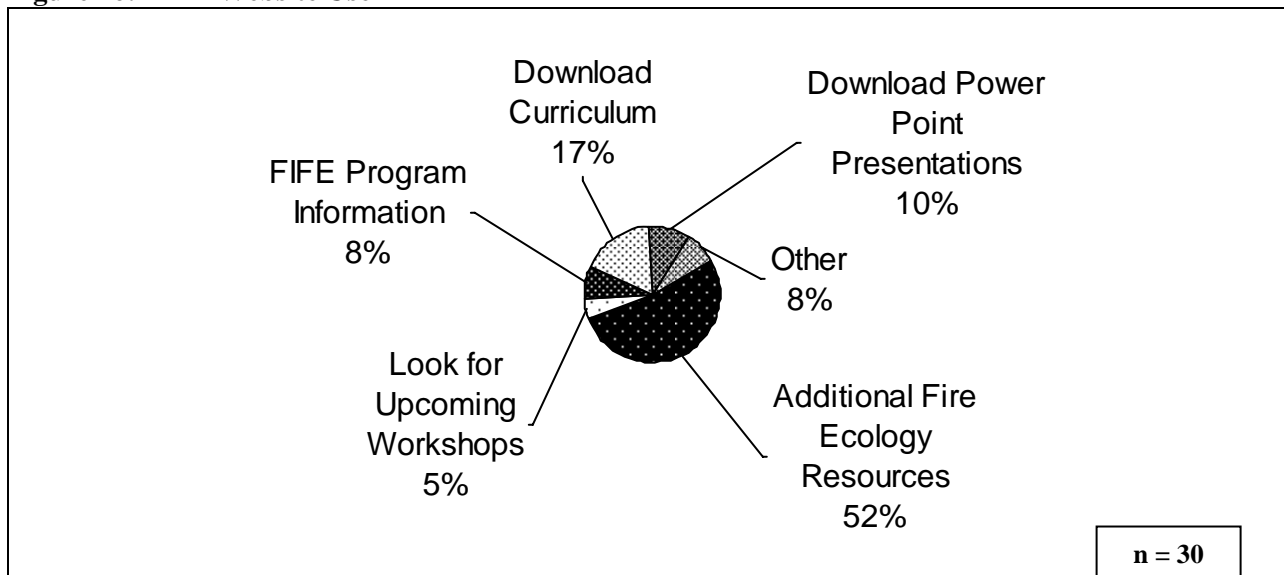
The majority of educators (91%) who attended a FIFE training workshop since 2000 felt that they were prepared to teach FIFE activities. Although the present approach to the FIFE workshops has been successful, like all ongoing programs there is room for improvement. It is evident that FIFE is utilized after workshop attendance, but the evaluation showed that educators would still like to have access to additional resources to help teach about fire in Florida (90% of 103 respondents). When trainees were presented with a list of options for ways of receiving additional information, the most frequent first choice response was the availability of a website with current fire information for educators (Figure 15).

Figure 15: FIFE Program Enhancement



The FIFE website (www.fl-dof.com/training_education/FIFE/) is utilized by only 27% of the trainees, which leaves room for improvement in marketing the website and updating its resources. Of the trainees that use the FIFE website, 52% visit the website to gain additional fire ecology information (Figure 16), which makes website maintenance critical for educators that currently use the site and those that would like to see it improved.

Figure 16: FIFE Website Use



Results: Comments on the FIFE Program

Respondents were asked to comment on the FIFE program. The following are some of their comments and recommendations for program improvement.

I think this is a great program and especially relevant now. Until I took this course I didn't not truly understand the purpose and necessity of prescribed burns. I think teachers are a great way to help educate the public about prescribed burns. It may even be beneficial to invite public officials/ community leaders to attend a workshop. I think setting up a location for teachers to access information about available programs and workshops sponsored by state, federal or private programs would be helpful. The problem is making sure teachers get the information. County department heads are a great resource, but a back up plan would be good. I know there is a lot out there that I don't even know how to begin to access it.

I plan to use the FIFE materials extensively in the future as the Museum continues its longleaf pine restoration project. So far I have found your materials invaluable. Thanks!

I used this program this year and I was really glad I did, as we had so many fires in our area recently and the information the students learned was very relevant.

It may be useful to see a presentation by a teacher (who has utilized the program on a regular basis) to his students.

The FIFE is an excellent course on Fire Ecology that has made a major difference in how teachers and students view the role of fire in our ecosystems. Fire dependent and fire adapted communities abound in Florida and need fire to remain viable.

I was unaware of the website. I like the idea of a website so that I would be able to get information when I am looking for it and not take training months ahead of when I might use it. I will have to check out the website this summer while I am planning curriculum for next year!

Virtual field trips are very useful in the classroom with budgetary restraints so I would suggest adding them to the web resources.

Integration with the present Science curriculum is needed.

Add more activities for elementary-aged students that contain less heavy reading. Having the option to include language arts is nice, but as a science teacher I'm interested in more science and activities in the lessons.

More student activities that can be done in classroom or on-line

Field hands-on activities.

This workshop was among the best that I have attended in years. The activities and resources are educational, practical, and fun! I have shared the materials with several co-workers and I can't wait to use this program with my students in the fall.

I am very sorry that I haven't been able to use the curriculum. It's just that there is so much pressure on covering the required FCAT material that it has become very difficult to squeeze in supplemental lessons. The workshop was awesome and I really appreciate the opportunity to attend.

I think this is an important aspect of education for our students. I am amazed at how little they know about the importance of fire in our ecosystem and how we have created many of our own problems by not allowing the natural cycle of fire to occur.

Perhaps you could develop some quick, station based activities so that in the course of one class period, several activities could be accomplished.

The workshop was great! I went from teaching middle school science to elem. gifted, to math, and now I am back teaching science. I would like to start the school year out (2007-2008) with teaching Fire in the Florida Ecosystems. In the past few years the fires have increased and I think the student need to be informed about the fires and what to do to protect themselves.

I really enjoyed my workshop and think that the FIFE program is very progressive - I hope it continues to grow which is why I continue to use it even though I now live outside of the area. It's important for students to know how ecosystems differ and for them think outside of their home area. Thanks for keeping this program going and growing!



Future Program Recommendations

As a result of the Comprehensive Follow-up Evaluation, conversations with teachers, and past experiences with educators, program coordinators have recommendations for future program improvements. It is understood that not all of these recommendations can be undertaken at once, if at all. However, it is felt that implementation of these action items will help continue to improve FIFE's effectiveness and reach among Florida educators.

FIFE strategic plan: Create a 5 or 10 year plan for the FIFE program. Include goals and objectives for program outcomes that are concrete and measurable. This plan will guide the program as it moves forward.

FIFE Advanced Workshop: Hold advanced workshops for FIFE trainees (recommended to be held at the Withlacoochee Training Center in Brooksville). The interactive 2-3 day advanced workshop would be open to 20-30 FIFE grads and provides in-depth instruction on fire ecology, fire-adapted ecosystems, and prescribed burning. The FIFE curriculum activities would be used as a basis for the workshop. Participants would have hands on experiences exploring fire adapted ecosystems, working with Division of Forestry staff, and doing fire ecology activities. Participants would have to apply to attend the course. Participants would also be expected to contribute to the FIFE program by creating lesson plans that can be shared online with other teachers. All costs would be paid by the FIFE program and teachers would also receive a stipend.

FIFE Website Updates: Update the FIFE website to make sure links are accurate and the most useful information is available to teachers. Include up to date information on fire related news, resources, and programs – keep this updated monthly. Update the website to make the home page an information source where teachers can go and easily access current events and resources like the following programs:

Project Learning Tree: <http://sfrc.ufl.edu/plt/>

The GLOBE Project: <http://www.globe.gov/>

Florida Master Naturalist Program: <http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/>

FIFE Quarterly E Newsletters: Create a quarterly newsletter for FIFE that provides teachers with program updates and fire news. Send the newsletter out electronically to all past FIFE participants. Make the newsletter a classroom resource with activity recommendations for students and links to interesting fire articles, publications, and resources. Although newsletters have been sent out in the past, they have been a program summary, not a fire ecology resource guide.

FIFE Curriculum Updates: Hire a few excellent Florida teachers to review the curriculum. Hold a focus group to discuss any recommendations they have. Following the focus group, incorporate key updates into the curriculum guide. These changes could include adding or changing activities.

Facilitator Training: There are some educators that have been involved in the FIFE program that would make excellent “supplemental” instructors for the program. These educators are nature center directors, environmental education specialists, and other professionals that are very familiar with prescribed fire (many are certified) and Florida ecology. It is recommended that

there be a pilot program where a few (4-5) of these educators are trained to teach FIFE. Trainees would participate in a workshop where they learn how to instruct the FIFE program and how the workshops should run. Trained instructors would then be able to either schedule their own workshop or Pandion would book a workshop and ask them to teach it. Pandion would do all coordination and would mail materials for the workshop to the instructors. Instructors would be trained, observed, and evaluated by Pandion on their performance. In addition, instructors' evaluations from program participants would be assessed for participant knowledge gained and program satisfaction. The idea behind this pilot program is to increase the number of qualified FIFE instructors and enable the program to reach more participants. Instructors would be paid a stipend for their assistance. Many other K-12 education programs use this model for instruction and we feel, with close monitoring and evaluation, that training a very limited number of additional instructors would potentially have great benefits for the program.

Appendix 1. Comprehensive Follow-up Evaluation of Past FIFE Participants Survey Instrument

1. Survey Directions

Dear Educator- Your time is valuable. Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Since you have attended a Fire in Florida's Ecosystems workshop in the past, we are interested in finding out if and how you have used the curriculum since your training. Your answers are very important and will help us to improve our curriculum and workshops in the future.

In appreciation for your feedback about the program, we will send you:

- * A CD containing the FIFE curriculum
- * Teaching Power Points to teach your students about fire ecology
- * Our new poster, "Florida's Fire Adapted Ecosystems"; hot off the press next month!

This survey can be completed in approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Follow the directions for each question carefully.

At the end of the survey you will click the word "Done" on the conclusion page this will send your survey answers to the database. The screen will then open the FIFE home page. When you see this page you have successfully completed the survey. If you have difficulties with the survey or would prefer to answer the questions via the phone please contact Christine Denny at Pandion Systems, Inc.

Phone (888) 372-4774

Fax (352) 372-4714

Email cdenny@pandionsystems.com

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

2. INTRODUCTION

All participants that complete this survey will receive a CD with the most recent version of the FIFE curriculum and 4 powerpoints you can use to teach your students about fire. Participants will also receive a "Fire Adapted Ecosystems of Florida" poster.

If you would like to receive these materials, please provide your contact information below. If you are not interested in the materials, you are welcome to leave this section blank and remain anonymous.

1. Name

2. Address

3. Phone Number

4. Email

3. Untitled Page

5. What grade or age level do you currently teach?

- Pre-K
- Grades K-2
- Grades 3-5
- Grades 6-8
- Grades 9-12
- Adults
- Other (please specify)

6. What subject(s) do you teach? (check all that apply)

- Science
- Math
- Art
- Language Arts
- Physical Education
- Special Education
- Social Studies
- Other (please specify)

7. Which of the following curricula have you used over the past two years?

Please indicate how often you have used these materials.

	Never	1-5 times	6-10 times	11-15 times	More than 16 times
Fire in Florida's Ecosystems	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Florida Wildfire Prevention	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Living on the Edge	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Project Learning Tree	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Project WILD	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Project WET	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Discovering Florida Scrub	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Schoolyard Wildlife Activity Guide	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

4. FIFE Program Questions

8. When did you attend the FIFE workshop?

2000-2002

2003-2007

9. Have you used any of the FIFE materials within the past 2 years?

Yes, go to question 11

No, go to question 10

10. What are some of the barriers or limitations that you have run into in the past 2 years that have led you to not use the FIFE curriculum? (After answering this question go to question 23). Check only the answer(s) that best describe why you are not using the curriculum.

- No time
- Does not apply to my subject area
- Activities are too advanced for my students
- Activities are too basic for my students
- Too difficult to use
- I don't know enough about fire to use the activities
- I'm afraid it will encourage bad behavior
- Have not had a chance to use them yet
- Not interested in the curriculum
- I don't think the curriculum will help with my students' FCAT testing preparation
- Other (please specify)

11. If you have used the FIFE curriculum in the past two years, which curriculum components did you use? Check all answers that apply.

- Activities
- Educator Background information
- Sunshine State Standards correlations
- FCAT study prompts
- Activity reading passages
- Resource section and glossary
- Videos
- Teaching Power Points
- Posters
- Burning Issues CD ROM

I can't remember what I used

12. If you selected "Activities" in question 11 which activities did you use? (Otherwise skip to Question 13.) Check all answers that apply.

Fire Adaptations

Hot Questions

Fire Feelings

Reporting the Blazes

Forest, Flames and Firefighters

Burned Area Scavenger Hunt

To Light A Fire

If Trees Could Talk

Cycles Behind the Scenes

Habitats Classified

Fire Near My Backyard

Don't remember the name

13. Did you adapt any of the curriculum activities from their original format?

Yes

No

14. If you adapted the activities from their original format, please briefly explain what you did and which activities you changed.

15. Have you created any lesson plans using the FIFE curriculum?

Yes

No

16. If you did create lesson plans for FIFE, would you be willing to share these lesson plans with other teachers?

Yes

No

Maybe

17. Have you used the FIFE Classroom Presentations (Power Points) in your teaching?

Yes

No

18. Have you shared the FIFE curriculum with other educators?

Yes

No

19. Have you found the FIFE curriculum helpful in meeting FCAT objectives/Sunshine State Standards?

Yes

No, why not?

20. Does the FIFE curriculum provide you with enough background information to teach students about fire ecology?

Yes

No, what do you suggest the curriculum should include to help you prepare to teach the activities?

21. Does the FIFE curriculum provide you with enough instructions to adequately prepare for the activities?

Yes

No

22. What could we do to make the FIFE curriculum and materials more useful to you?

- More training on how FIFE can be used to prepare students for the FCAT.
- More complex, higher level activities
- More basic, younger age activities.
- More instruction on how to do the activities
- Provide more online assistance on how to use the activities
- Other (please specify)

23. Did the training workshop you attended prepare you to teach the activities?

Yes

No, what do you suggest the workshop should include to help you prepare to teach the activities?

24. We are investigating the best way to offer FIFE workshops in the future. As of now, they are offered to all types of educators in a 6 hour session. Some shortened workshops that do not include an afternoon field trip last only 3 hours. Please let us know which format you think would be best for future FIFE education efforts.

- Keep it like it is with a 1 day workshop where you get hands on instruction and free materials.
- The workshop isn't needed- have materials available online for free download.
- Offer the workshop online with education modules, online assessment, and free materials shipped upon successful completion of the program.
- Offer a multi day (3 days or so- lodging and food included) summer fire ecology immersion workshop that includes learning and working with the curriculum as well as time with experts to learn about fire ecology and prescribed fire in the field.
- Other (please specify)

25. Are you interested in additional resources to help you better teach your students about fire in Florida?

Yes

No

26. If yes, please read through the list below and rank your top two options for ways of receiving additional resources.

First Choice

Second Choice

Quarterly electronic newsletters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A website with current fire information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monthly emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advanced training workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. Have you visited the FIFE website since you took the course?

Yes

No

28. If you have visited the FIFE website, how have you used the site?

To search for additional resources for fire ecology

To get information about upcoming workshops

To get information about the FIFE program

To download curriculum

To download teaching Power Points

Other (please specify)

29. Please add any comments about how we can make the FIRE in Florida's Ecosystems program more usefule to you and your students. Add any other comments you may have as well.

5. Questions About Fire

Please answer the following questions about fire.

30. Please let us know how you view the risks of prescribed fire:

	large risk	medium risk	small risk	don't know
Spread of prescribed fire to neighboring property	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harm to wildlife from prescribed fire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Car accidents due to smoke from prescribed fire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. Please let us know how you view the benefits of prescribed fire:

	large benefit	medium benefit	small benefit	don't know
Better wildlife habitat results from prescribed fire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved forest lands result from prescribed fire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prevention of wildfires result from prescribed fire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintenance of the natural landscapes result from prescribed fire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Survey Complete!

The survey is complete! Your input is greatly appreciated as it will be used by the Florida Division of Forestry to improve their educational services. If you have further questions about the survey please contact Christine Denny at Pandion Systems Inc. (888) 372-4774 cdenny@pandionsystems.com.

Once you click "Done" at the bottom of this screen the survey will be electronically sent to the database and the FIFE home page will appear on your screen.

Thank you for your input!