

Forest & Economy – Public Policies: insights from 30 years of forest governance

Porto, 18 May 2023, 8th International Wildland Fire Conference

Jelle Behagel, Associate Professor Forest and Nature Conservation Policy at Wageningen University



Outline of this talk

- The need for a governance framework for wildfires.
 - Focus on changing land(scape) use and management practices.
- Lessons from global forest governance:
 - Connecting the global to the local level.
 - Translating policy into practice.
 - Producing and using diverse knowledges.
- Looking ahead.

Wildfires are increasingly in the focus of “high politics”



From politics to governance

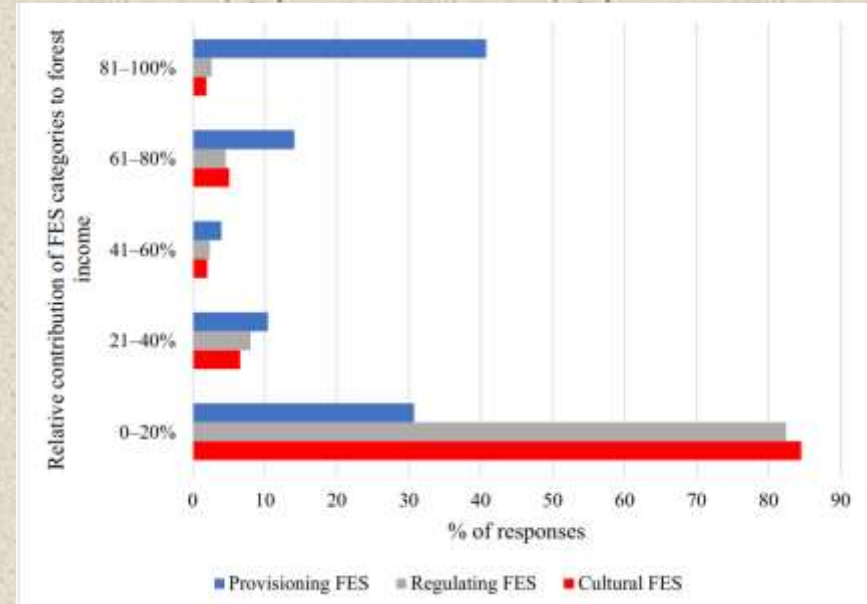
- Trade-offs between different societal values and interests require the formulation of visions and strategies.
- Such visions and strategies need to be translated into policy instruments that address management and land use practices.
- Many policy instruments require support from active science-policy interfaces.

Societal values and interests



Societal values and interests

- In the EU, income for local owners highly depends on timber production.
- But societal values point to recreation and nature conservation as key policy aims for forested lands.
- Balancing economics, biodiversity, and fire resilience requires negotiating trade-offs.



Translating policy to practice



Translating policy to practice

- Legal instruments are at the basis of land use management and practice but can also impede change.
- Certification and market-based instruments can be limited in scope but have clear impact on management practices.
- Subsidy schemes need to be context-specific in order to be able to compete with other income strategies.
- Governments implementing new policy programmes directly (e.g. on public lands) requires institutional and sometimes cultural change.

Bridging science and society



Bridging science and society

- Knowledge production and use are entwined.
- Science-policy interfaces range from linear to co-production
- Coproduction stimulates knowledge uptake and the inclusion of other knowledges, including Indigenous and local knowledges.



Learning from global forest policy



ENVIRONMENT

Rio Earth Summit (UNCED)

- Agenda 21
- Rio Declaration
- Forest Principles
- CBD
- UNFCCC
- UNCCD

IN OUR HANDS
EARTH SUMMIT '92
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The global-local nexus



Alternative pathways of influence

■ Markets

- FSC, PEFC
- Carbon credits
- ESG criteria

■ Global norms

- Community forestry
- Sustainable Forest Management
- Zero deforestation



Changing practices

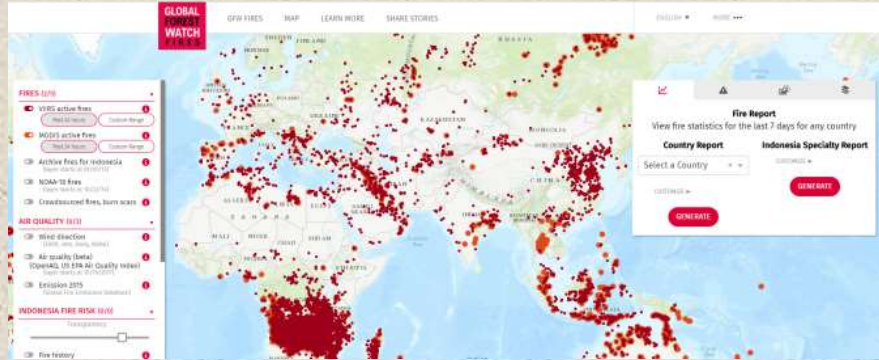


Leveraging change

- Changing practices requires a combination of multiple policy instruments
- Cultures and values are more difficult to change than financial incentives and regulations



Production and use of relevant knowledge



Co-production supports policy impact

- Increased remote sensing abilities have led to more options for transparency and accountability on deforestation.
- Local, traditional, and Indigenous knowledges are increasingly recognized and included in management planning.



Looking ahead for wildland fire governance: suggestions a forest policy perspective



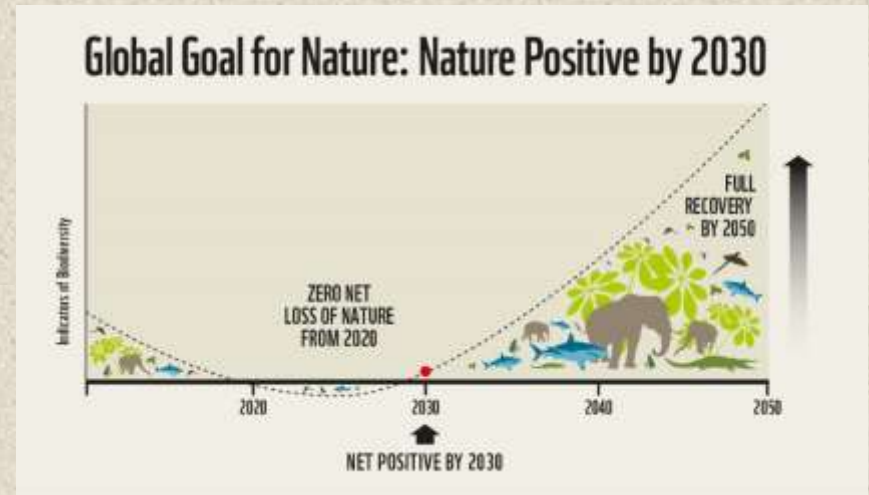
Leverage the attention for restoration to (re)build fire resilient landscapes

- UN decade on restoration
- “Effective restoration” major target in UN Global Biodiversity Framework
- Upcoming (hopefully) EU nature restoration law



Connect to enthusiasm for nature-based solutions and becoming nature positive

- Large companies (i.e. IKEA, GUCCI, etc.) are making nature positive pledges
- Financial institutions are exploring investment opportunities in nature-based solutions.
- Nature-based solutions are considered key to the EU Green deal.



Make “fire-smart” an integral part of being climate-smart

- Climate-smart forestry is receiving lots of attention and climate-smart toolkits are being developed for forest managers.
- Fire resilience can be included more explicitly. Policymakers can make researchers more aware of this and vice versa.



**Thank you for
your
attention!**

