

The Restoration of Fire Adapted Systems on the Gila National Forest in SW New Mexico

Marcia R.Andre – Forest Supervisor – Gila National Forest





**Many years ago
there emerged a
realization that
many of our
public lands were
out of whack due
to, in part, years
of aggressive and
successful fire
suppression.**



The current trend is larger more destructive fires.

The exclusion of fires from fire adapted systems will eventually lead to loss of what it is we are attempting to preserve

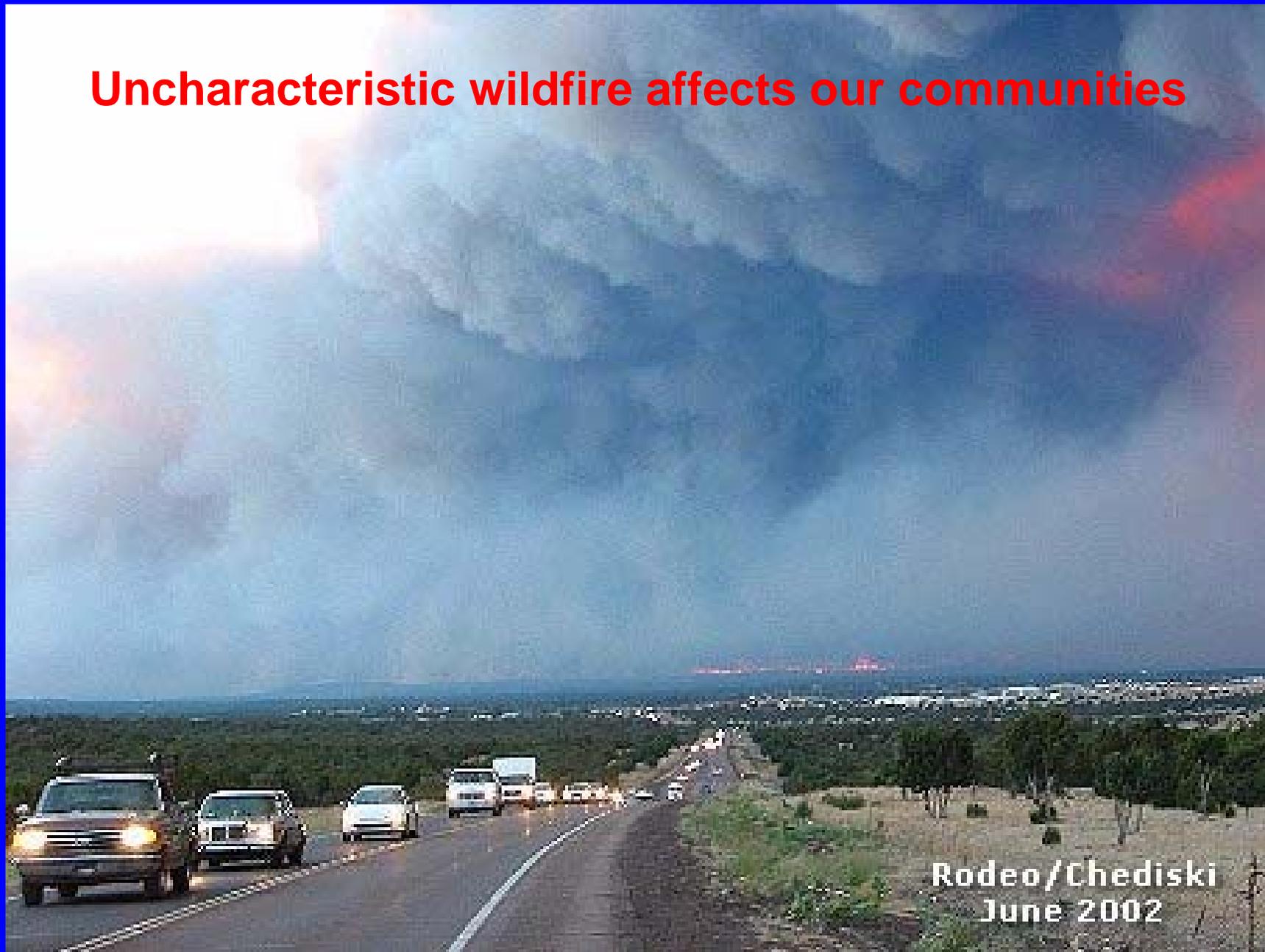


**Uncharacteristic
wildfire affects our
families**



**And our basic
services**

Uncharacteristic wildfire affects our communities



Rodeo/Chediski
June 2002

And, it affects our forests and watersheds



Fire is a natural part of the western landscape

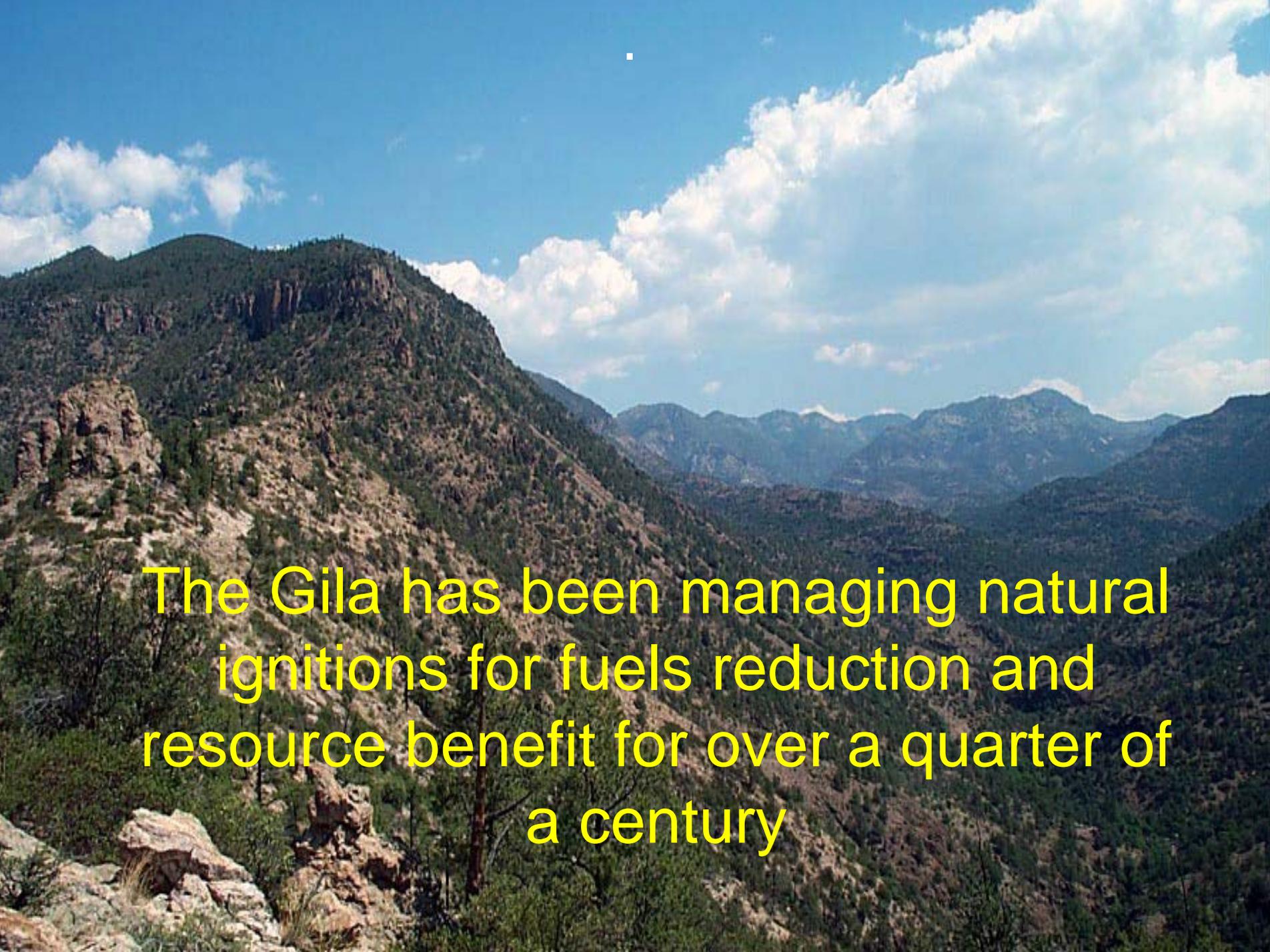


Healthy Ecosystems



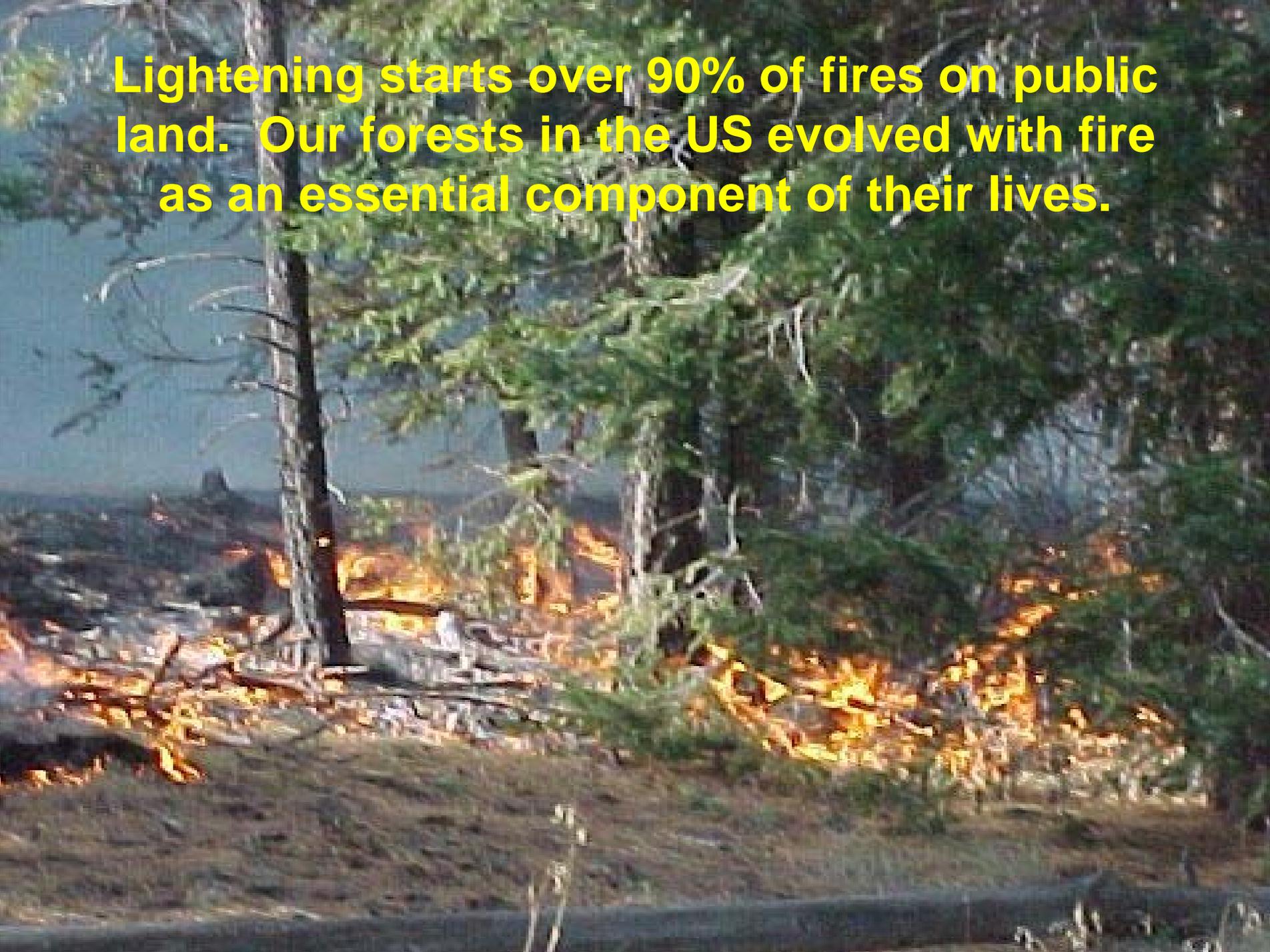
Basis for meeting peoples' needs and values.



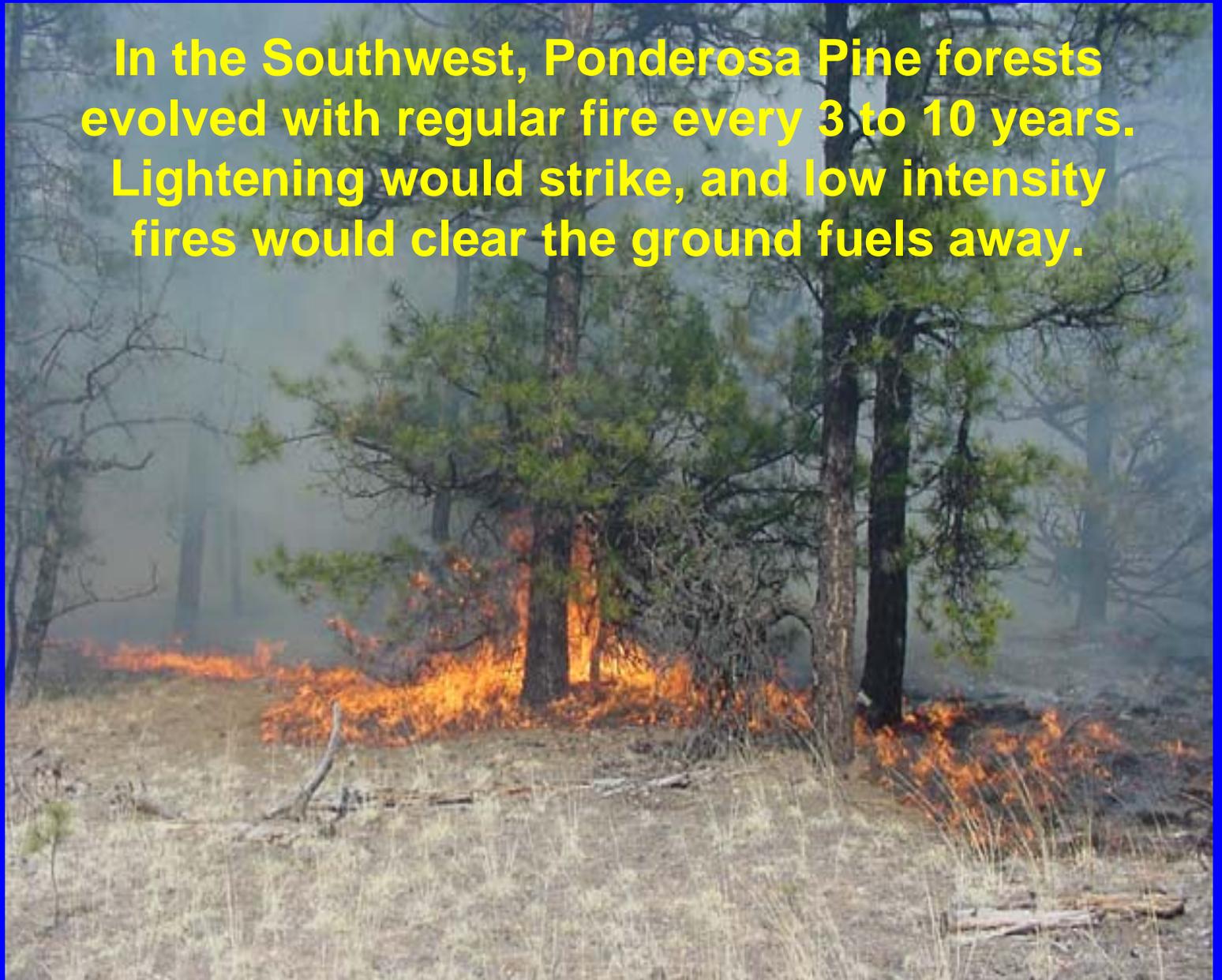


The Gila has been managing natural ignitions for fuels reduction and resource benefit for over a quarter of a century

Lightening starts over 90% of fires on public land. Our forests in the US evolved with fire as an essential component of their lives.



In the Southwest, Ponderosa Pine forests evolved with regular fire every 3 to 10 years. Lightning would strike, and low intensity fires would clear the ground fuels away.



The larger ponderosa pine's thick bark insulated them against the fire.



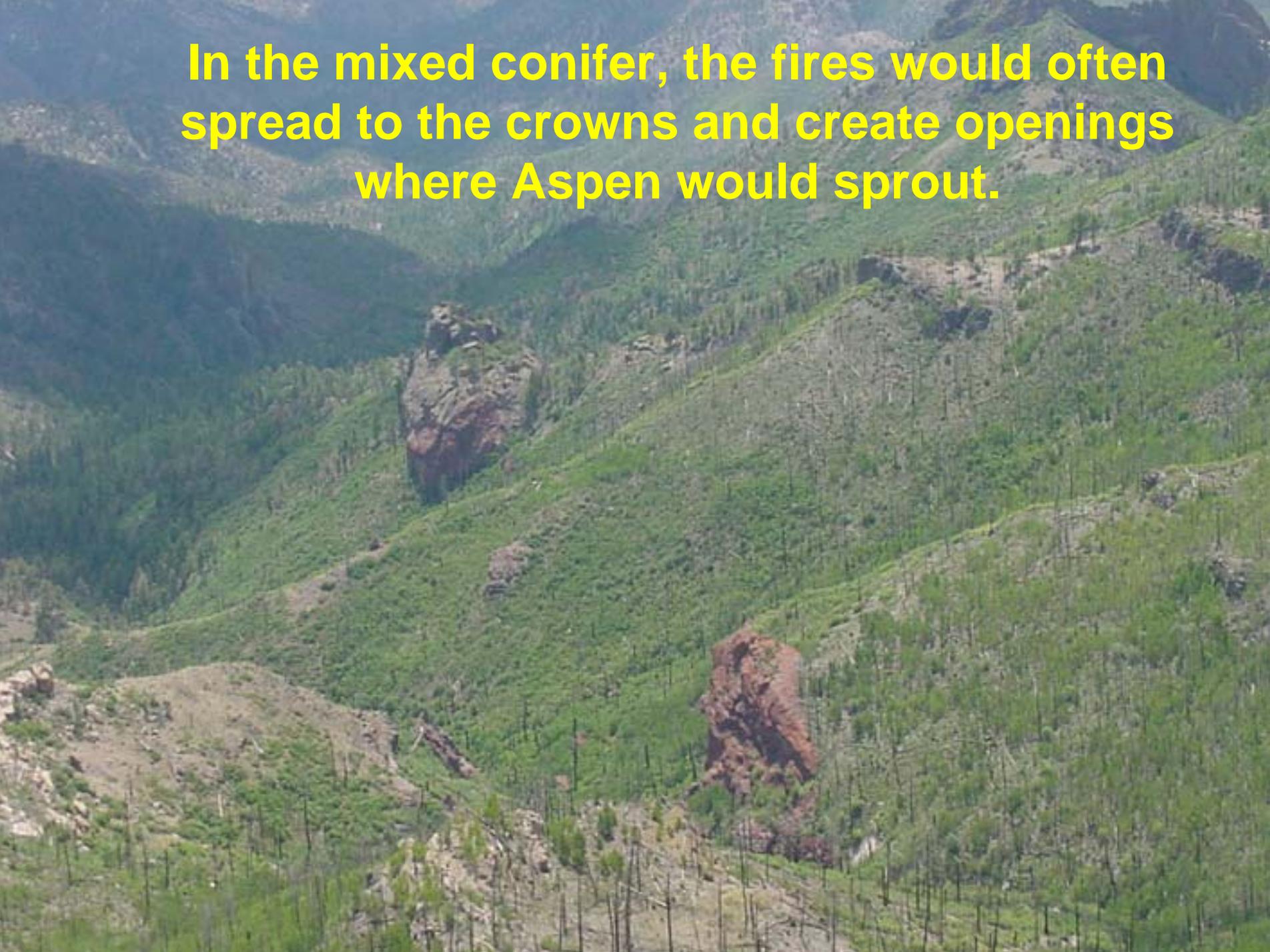


Fires frequently burned for weeks or months

Our PP forests were almost savannah-like with, lush grass and an open appearance.



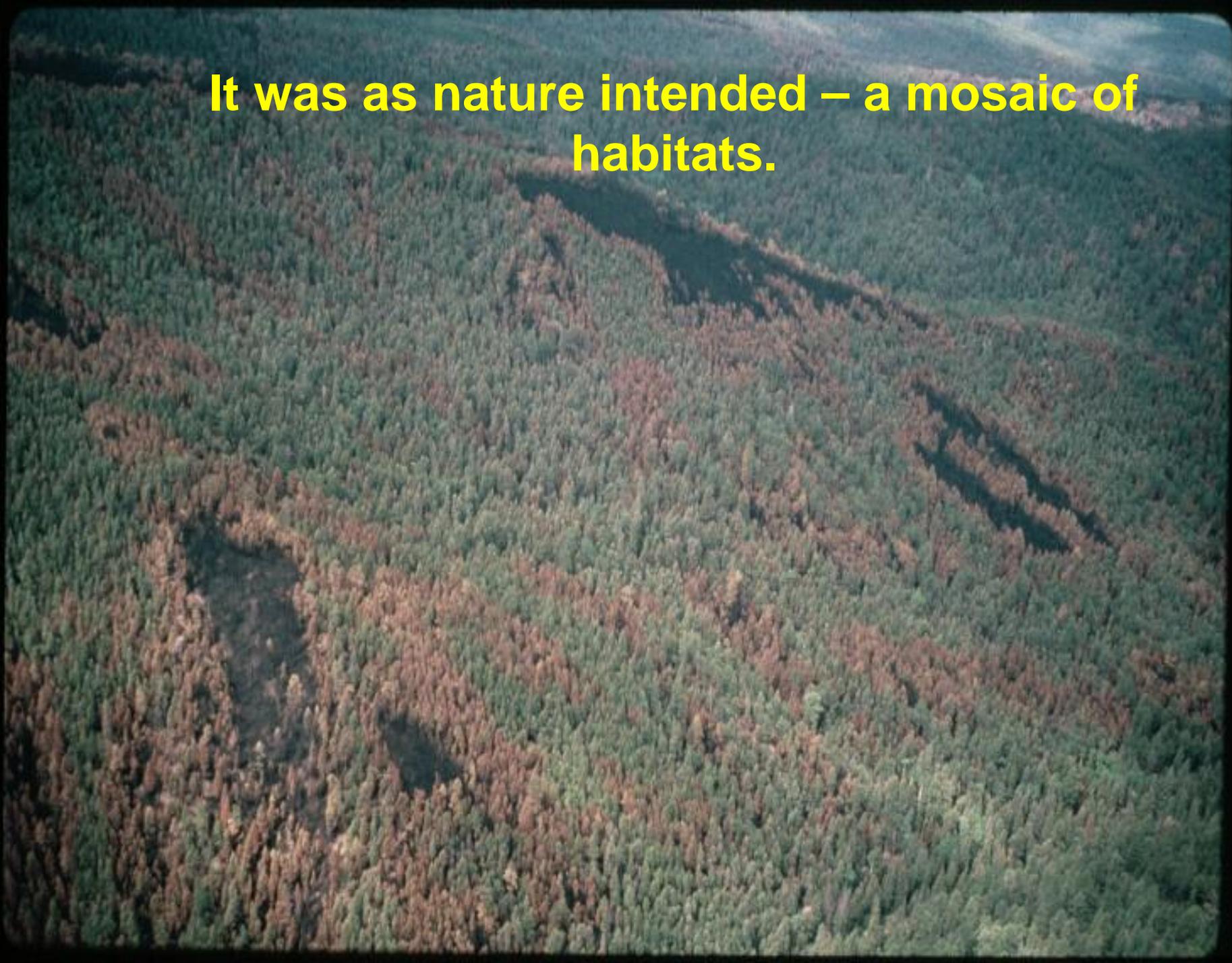
In the mixed conifer, the fires would often spread to the crowns and create openings where Aspen would sprout.



Our pinyon juniper forests were less dense and crowded. There was more water in our creeks, and more food for wildlife.



It was as nature intended – a mosaic of habitats.



Managing natural fires is not “Let Burn.” Natural fires are closely monitored to ensure that they stay within a predetermined management area.



Management action points are clearly defined to protect sensitive habitats and areas



And to protect threatened and endangered species



An aerial photograph of a mountain range. The peaks are covered in snow, and the slopes are densely forested. A valley is visible in the foreground, with a winding road or path. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

And to protect special recreational areas

And to protect cultural resources



Long term improvements to the health of our forest must involve the reintroduction of fire:

- ✓ as a result of wildfire
- ✓ using management-ignited prescribed fire
- ✓ managing natural fires for resource benefit



Guess Which Stand of Trees Could Survive a Fire?



Program Components:

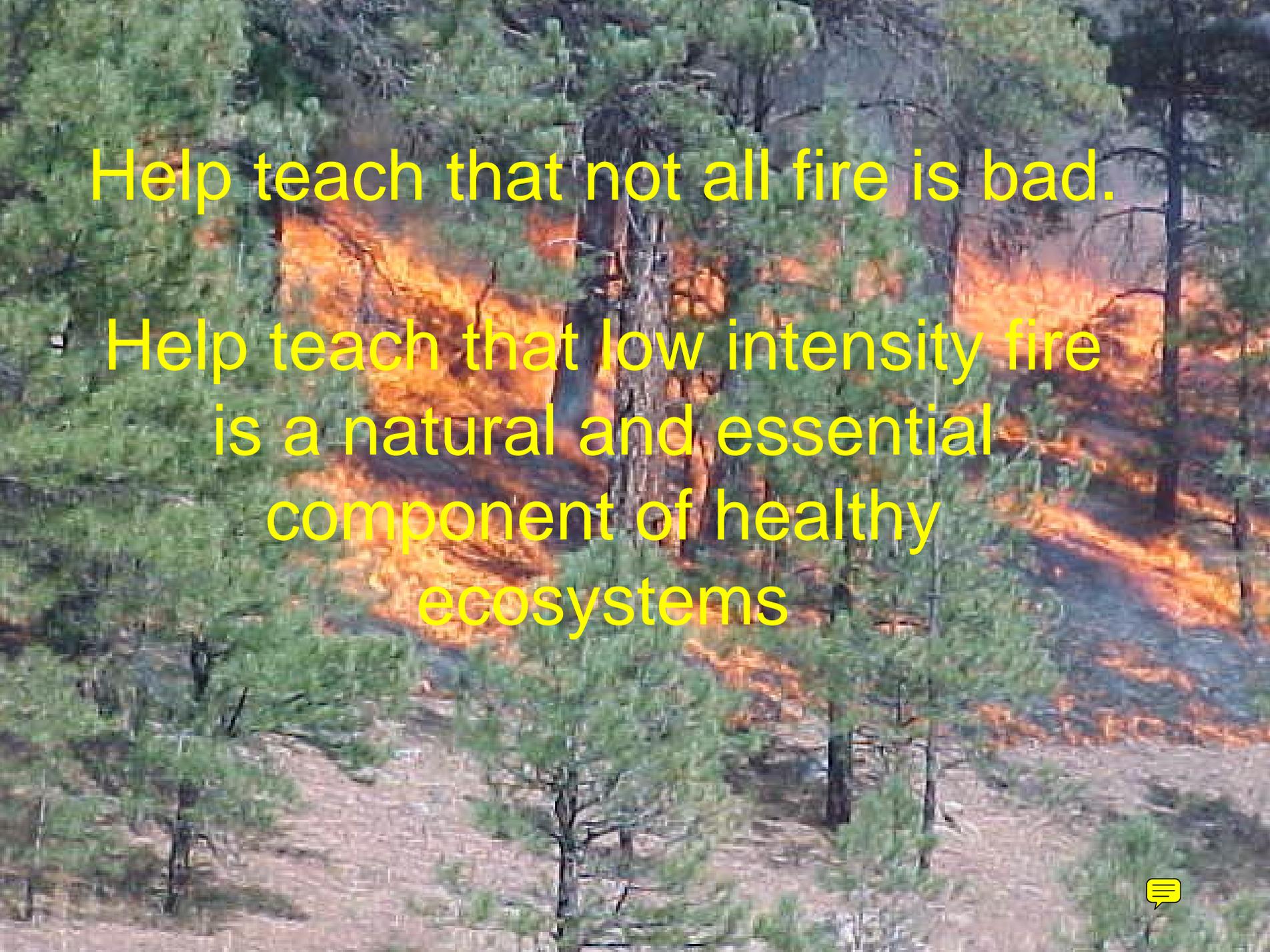
- Community readiness
- Organizational capacity
- Partners





Remember the goose that laid the golden egg



A photograph of a forest fire with yellow text overlaid. The fire is visible in the background, with bright orange and yellow flames rising from the ground. The foreground shows several green pine trees and a dirt path. The text is in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

Help teach that not all fire is bad.

Help teach that low intensity fire is a natural and essential component of healthy ecosystems



Contact information:

**Marcia Andre – Forest Supervisor
Gila National Forest
3005 Camino de Bosque
Silver City, New Mexico 88071
505-388-8301
mandre@fs.fed.us**