

FAC Pathways Tool: Catalyzing Place-Based Fire Adaptation

The FAC Pathways tool is designed to help users identify a common container, boundaries, or shared characteristics to help define their community; determine an initial “community archetype” to guide their fire adaptation journey; and then suggest fire adaptation practices, tools and approaches used by similar communities.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 10 years, the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network has helped communities work across sectors and silos to examine their portfolio of fire adaptation practices and evaluate what is working or not working. One consistent conclusion from these efforts is that there is no singular way to adapt to wildfire. This practitioner experience aligns with long term research from social scientists including Dr. Travis Paveglio and his collaborators (including Dr. Matt Carroll, Dr. Daniel Williams, Dr. Catrin Edgeley, Dr. Pamela Jakes, and Dr. Amanda Stasiewicz). Their investigation of different wildfire adaptation processes and social settings concludes that fire adaptation isn’t a one-size fits all approach, but rather a lens through which we can continue to change our relationship with fire. That open-endedness, while essential, can be difficult to navigate. One common question community members and practitioners ask is, “Where do I start?” In response to this, the FAC Pathways Tool was developed to blend cutting edge practitioner and researcher knowledge.

OBJECTIVE

“Catalyze the creation of nuanced pathways to fire adaptation by providing practical guidance, effective knowledge transfer, and time tested implementation methods

RELATED LITERATURE

Travis B Paveglio, Annie Schmidt, Michelle Medley-Daniel, The Fire Adapted Communities Pathways Tool: Facilitating Social Learning and a Science of Practice, *Journal of Forestry*, Volume 122, Issue 2, March 2024, Pages 194-205, doi.org/10.1093/jofore/fvad044

METHODOLOGY

Community fire adaptation and risk reduction is incredibly complex. It involves everything from the built environment to landscape stewardship and human behavior. Given the increase in fire spread and severity, it is a question of increasing urgency how we can effectively and rapidly build adaptive capacity into all of these components. But both long term research and practice have shown us that there is no one singular way for people to adapt to living with fire. So how do we bring all of our tools and varied expertise together to support communities in developing and implementing fire adaptation practices that are effective, impactful, and best tailored for local conditions?

In response to this question, The Fire Adapted Communities Pathways Tool (FAC Pathways Tool) was developed jointly by a team of fire adaptation practitioners from the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network and social scientists from the University of Idaho. This Tool combines decades of research on community wildfire adaptation with practitioner-based knowledge and experience. It helps users select an initial “community archetype” and then suggests fire adaptation practices, tools and approaches that have been successful in similar communities. Users can then select and prioritize practices based on local needs. The accompanying guide also suggests ways the tool can inform progress on fire adaptation across regions, and identify the most effective programs, grants or assistance for supporting community adaptation.

RESULTS

Practitioner’s use of the tool shows the ongoing need for planning and partnership tools that help them design and implement proven adaptation projects. Specific feedback indicated that practitioners were hoping to use the Tool for needs assessment and gap identification, and also wanted more guidance on writing their own archetypes.

CONCLUSION

Feedback from Tool users demonstrate that knowledge transfer and implementation guidance from fellow practitioners are effective ways to increase fire adaptation practice in place. Suggestions for aligning the Tool prompts with other planning efforts such as Community Wildfire Protection Plans show routes forward for new user guides and Tool development.

AUTHORS

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AFFILIATIONS

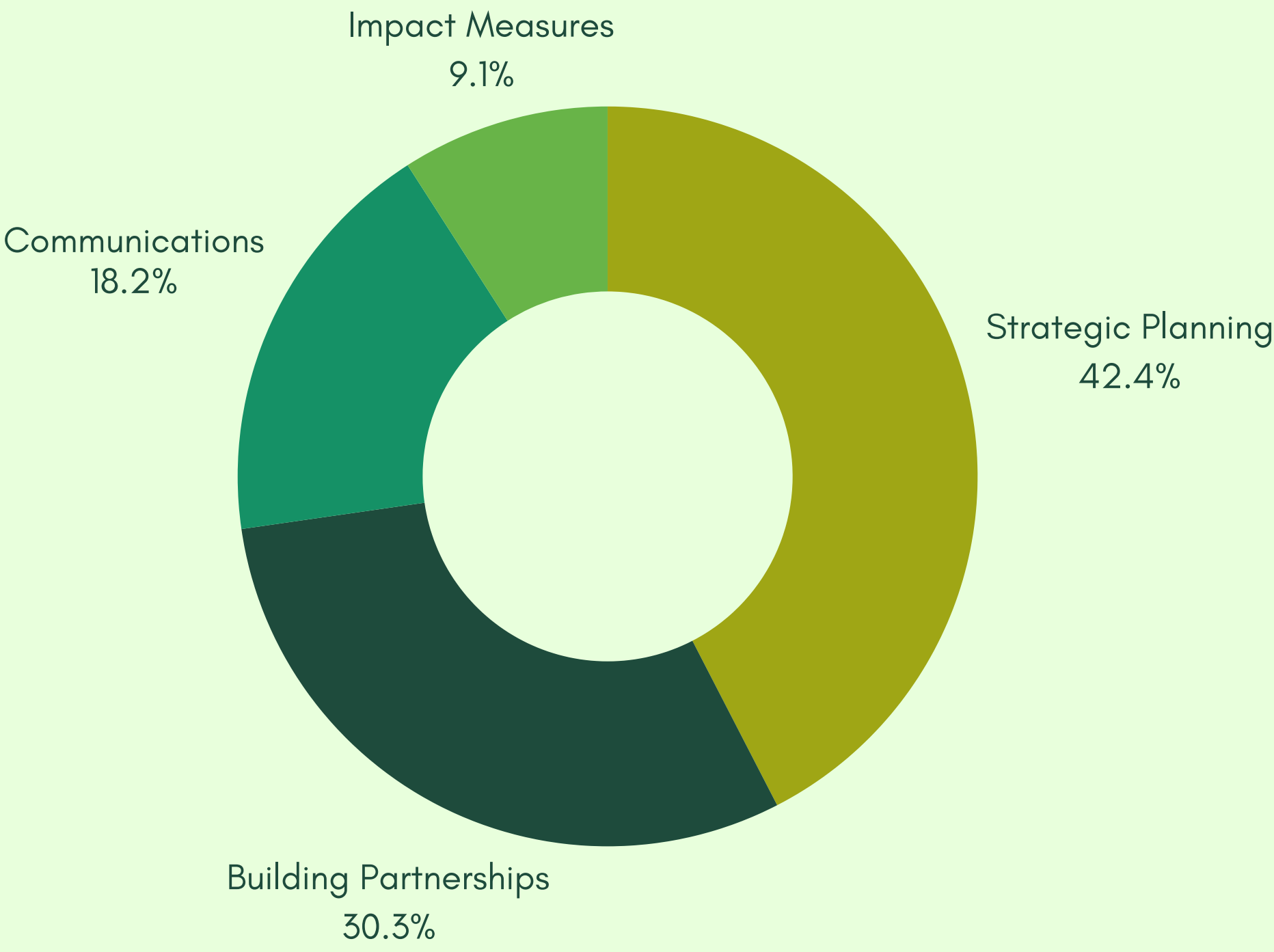
University of Idaho, Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (fireadaptednetwork.org)



**FIRE ADAPTED
COMMUNITIES**
LEARNING NETWORK

ANALYSIS

FAC Net staff and researchers from the University of Idaho and Northern Arizona University conducted workshops and trainings to support distribution and implementation of the tool. Community leaders and fire adaptation professionals from within FAC Net membership also used the facilitation guide and trainings to deploy the tool in California and Montana. In addition to working through the archetypes and fostering cross partnership collaborations, users of the tool have identified four additional ways in which the Pathways Tool assists their efforts to increase fire adaptation: Strategic Planning; Communications; Building Partnership; and Measuring Impact.



FAC Net members tested the tool across a wide variety of landscapes, from the Boundary Waters in Minnesota, to the forests of Montana, and oak woodlands of California. The focus on community led process was the key to successful deployment.

