Q: In the guidance, is there anything that helps to recommend protection of riparian habitat?

A: Yes, in many drier areas even riparian areas become flammable, and often this is exacerbated by the presence of invasive species, so keeping the invasives out and (to the degree possible) the natives hydrated (e.g., maintaining flow and/or water table) is a strategy. (Max Moritz)

Q: Are the pine seedlings pictured planted as an ANF restoration project inoculated with mycorrhizae, or do they hope the endemic mycorrhizae survived the fire?

A: We don't usually add mycorrhizae. There is usually a range of heat effects on soils during a fire, and much of the soils do not receive a lot of heat. (Jamie Uyehara)

Q: Milk vetch was mentioned. Is there any evidence fires have helped with endangered plants to have a chance in areas where they have the potential to exist?

A: I know in the 2013 Springs Fire, the fire helped remove the invasive Harding grass in a native grassland we had been trying to restore. Due to the extensive archaeological resources in that area, we suspected that pre-contact native peoples had been regularly burning this area to promote certain species that became much more apparent after the fire. (Barbara Tejada)

A: Yes, this species, which can do well following disturbance such as wildfire, seems to have increased population sizes following the Woolsey Fire. It seems they expanded their populations spatially as well. For example, one just had to drive into the Oak Canyon Community Park in Oak Park, CA, to see hundreds of the endangered Braunton's milkvetch individuals lining the parking lot, spilling over from the adjacent slopes. (Mark Mendelsohn)

Q: In the Woolsey Fire footprint, what was the previous fire history?

A: Fire history from Woolsey varied depending on location. Solstice Canyon in Malibu last burned in 2007. Cheeseboro burned in 2005. (Joseph Algiers)

Q: How do we get our city planners involved more in pre-planning for fire during development approvals?

A: Great question! Earlier involvement is key, and we talked a bit about this in the report I referenced: https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8680_PRINT.pdf

Q: Are the BAER / Long-Term Recovery funds only available to governmental organizations? Are there similar/analogous funds for non-profit land managers?

A: NRCS can help plan for and fund stabilization treatments on private lands.

Q: How does BAER policy address the fact that sometimes monitoring and/or on the ground surveying is required to identify risks and imminent threats, and for large fires, it may take more than a year to identify and determine post-fire imminent threats (especially with invasive species)?

A: BAER treatments must be implemented within one year. Occasionally they will approve maintenance of treatments in the second year (for example, storm patrol of roads). For invasive weeds, the one-year limit still applies. Follow-up needs must be incorporated into the regular program of work and paid for by the Forest. It is possible the BAER team may not identify all threats at the time of the assessment. An interim request can be submitted but it must be within the one-year time frame.

Q: How did you or do you control the invasive mustard?

A: The simple answer is we can't and haven't. At least on a large scale. It's simply too widespread and established. However, on smaller scales, e.g., in restoration projects, we have started experimenting with timed mowing, and planting natives. We are seeing some success on these smaller projects. (Mark Mendelsohn)

Q: What do you mean by removing oaks and having them grow back? Are you cutting them down to stumps?

A: You can coppice many oak species. Cut them down near the base (but not all the way) and they will re-sprout and develop a new tree eventually. It can help reduce pests in the tree.

Q: Unlike other trees that are recommended to trim up 10ft off the ground to reduce the ladder fuels to the tops of the trees, does limbing up the oak trees off the ground threaten the oak tree?

A: I am not an arborist, but I would answer this with a big sometimes! Limbing the trees 10 ft up would reduce ladder fuels and be a great practice to employ in preparation for a prescribed burn, but coast live oaks can resprout, and for the larger trees they need their large branches to resprout if they are to maintain crown structure. The Great Oak on Pechanga is estimated to be a few thousand years old, and has resprouted 3 times and has a crown diameter of over 300 feet (or something close). In other words, common practice says to limb, but the survival of old trees says that it's not always best.

Q: There's a duality in how fire intersects with insects in oaks—it can potentially treat GSOB, but at some point an infected oak is more vulnerable to postfire mortality. How best to determine where/how fire will have the intended treatment effect on beetle infestation?

A: There is definitely a duality to everything. But, the chance of an oak recovering from a GSOB infestation without treatment of some kind is unlikely. GSOB infestation is an annual attack on the tree. Some trees are strong enough that GSOB reproduction is not as successful as in some trees that are weakened, or are ideal for GSOB reproduction due to having many reserved nutrients and a nice healthy bark. In other words, although there will always be tree mortality from wildfire, prescribed or cultural burns, those trees would likely die anyway. And from a land management perspective, the sooner an infested tree is removed from the landscape, the sooner that tree is no longer producing beetles which will infest other trees. … To clarify my response on trees that GSOB attacks, some trees that conserve their resources due to being water limited and not shaded by other trees, are withstanding GSOB attack longer than trees residing inside a closed canopy with access to large amounts of water, even though those trees next to the water look healthier.

Q: How wide were the transects/plots?

A: Each plot is 1 x 1 meter. They are every 10 meters, along a 100 m transect. (Mark Mendelsohn)

Questions and answers have been lightly edited for grammar and clarity.