



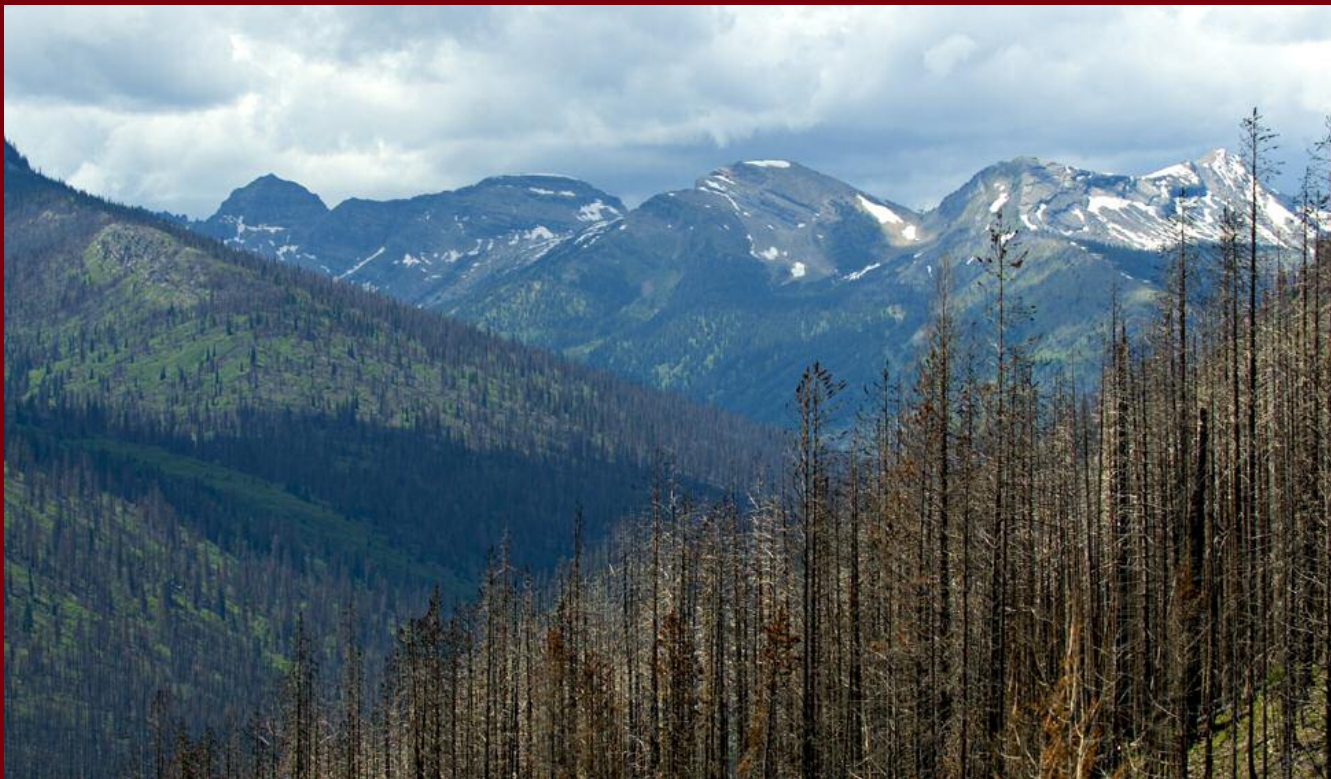
P.O.V.

Season **18**

Discussion Guide

The Fire Next Time

A Film by Patrice O'Neill



www.pbs.org/pov

Letter from the Filmmaker

OAKLAND, CA, 2005

Dear Colleague,

I didn't know what I was getting into when I started making **The Fire Next Time**. Over several years of filming, I fell in love with the Flathead Valley and the remarkable people who live there. I realized the dangerous divisions in this community do not just belong to the valley. These are the same conflicts and challenges facing many places: economic dislocation, growth, change, anger, fear and devastating loss. I believe the people in this story present a vivid snapshot of our democracy—revealing both its strength and vulnerability.

In his 1963 book about the perilous divisions in the country's race relations, James Baldwin warned of "the fire next time." Forty years later, we have borrowed his eloquent language to pose another urgent warning. In this one place, over a short period of time, we see how quickly a volatile atmosphere can turn dangerous, when the power of media is able to spark the flames of conflict and silences those who might otherwise speak up.

What would you do if this were your town? What happens when we stop listening to each other? When do our political divisions make us stop seeing each other as people? What can we do together as citizens to foster a sense of community despite our differences?

I made this film for the people on the side lines who may know their town is in trouble but don't know what to do about it.

When we screened **The Fire Next Time** in the Flathead Valley, hundreds of people gathered to grapple with the deep conflicts in their town. They came up with some very creative ideas that many are now trying to implement. The story does not end with the broadcast of this film.

We'd like to hear about your solutions and share them with others facing similar problems. By learning from each other, maybe we can all be more prepared for the fire next time.

Patrice O'NeillFilmmaker, **The Fire Next Time***Filmmaker Patrice O'Neill*

Photo: Chris Peterson



Table of Contents

Credits, Acknowledgements

4	Introduction
5	Potential Partners
5	Key Issues
6	Outreach Event Ideas
7	Background Information
7	Flathead Valley
7	Land Use
8	Logging
8	Talk Radio
9	Hate Speech
9	Not In Our Town
10	Selected People Featured in the Film
12	Using This Guide
12	Planning an Event
13	Facilitating a Discussion
13	Finding a Facilitator
13	Preparing Yourself
14	Preparing the Group
15	General Discussion Questions
16	Discussion Prompts
16	Framing the Discussion
16	How Are We Informed as Citizens?
17	What Role Do You Play?
17	How Do We Communicate with Each Other?
18	Dealing with Disagreement
18	Share Your Solutions
19	Taking Action
20	Resources
24	How to Buy the Film

Guide Writer

Dr. Faith Rogow
Insighters Educational Consulting

Guide Producers

Cara Mertes
Executive Director, P.O.V.

Eliza Licht
Community Engagement Manager, P.O.V.

Shabnam Ahamed
Community Engagement Assistant, P.O.V.

Design: Rafael Jiménez

Copy Editor: Michelle Wildgen

Thanks to those who reviewed this guide:

Pamela Calvert
Co-Producer/Campaign Director, The Working Group

Patrice O'Neill
*Filmmaker, **The Fire Next Time***

Chris Seifert
Director of Outreach, Montana PBS

Melinda Smith
Senior Mediator, RESOLVE, Inc.

Julie Stein
Conservation and Conflict Consultant

Introduction

The Fire Next Time, an hour-long documentary, profiles two years in the life of a dangerously divided town. The film, set in Kalispell, Montana, shows how heated rhetoric around rapid change, economic displacement and political disagreements can devolve into hate, intimidation and violence.

Tears in the community fabric began with the loss of timber and aluminum industry jobs—long a part of Kalispell's economic backbone. A radio talk show host further stoked the resentment, blaming environmental regulation and declaring environmentalists "the enemy."

In addition, a major forest fire in the Flathead National Forest literally sparked community anger over Forest Service policies (and the actions of environmentalists)—which some people claimed contributed to the fire.

An influx of "outsiders" also fueled the debate. Their willingness to pay high prices for housing was making life difficult for longtime residents, many of whom were already facing financial troubles resulting from layoffs. With the population increase came an increase in retail development that further exacerbated environmental concerns.

While some community members attempted to address local tensions, fear and intimidation silenced others. Few in the Flathead Valley region realized just how serious the fight had become until February 2002, when police arrested right-wing militia member David Burgert and discovered an enormous weapons cache and a hit list of local government and law enforcement officials. Some residents saw this militia as the outgrowth of rising tension in the region over environmental regulation and forest management policy.

This film gives the viewer a window into a community struggling with change and transition, and experiencing high levels of uncertainty as a result. The film's events also provide a ray of hope—communities can reframe conflicts and transform relationships.



Northwest Montana residents stand together in the face of profound divisions.

The Fire Next Time shows both the stresses that provoke a community to unravel and the efforts to repair severed connections. Its combination of personal portraits with an examination of systemic influences provides an excellent tool for outreach, especially for people interested in improving community members' problem solving and listening skills.



Potential Partners

The Fire Next Time is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- **Your local PBS station**
- **Groups that have discussed previous PBS and P.O.V. films relating to community conflict, including *Not In Our Town*, *Farmingville*, *Flag Wars* or *Two Towns of Jasper***
- **Groups focused on any of the issues listed to the right**
- **High school students**
- **Media owners, media makers and journalists**
- **Faith-based organizations and institutions**
- **Environmental groups**
- **Civic organizations**
- **League of Women Voters**
- **League of Conservation Voters**
- **Academic departments and student groups at colleges, universities, community colleges and high schools**
- **Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning, such as P.O.V.'s national partners Elderhostel Learning in Retirement Centers, members of the Listen Up! Youth Media Network or your local library**
- **Other communities grappling with fast growth, change and transition**

Key Issues

The Fire Next Time is an excellent tool for dialogue because it tries to see from the perspectives of many community members. The film will be of special interest to people interested in exploring or addressing the issues below:

- **Anti-bias education**
- **Civics/civic engagement**
- **Community-building**
- **Communities in transition**
- **Conflict resolution**
- **Conservative political movements**
- **Democracy/democratic process**
- **Ecology**
- **Education**
- **Environmental policy**
- **Environmental protection**
- **Forestry**
- **Government, role of**
- **Hate crimes**
- **Hate groups**
- **Hate speech**
- **Human rights**
- **Identity**
- **Journalism**
- **Land management**
- **Land rights**
- **Law enforcement**
- **Libertarian politics**
- **Media literacy**
- **Native Americans**
- **Natural resource preservation and management**
- **Park Service policy**
- **Personal property rights**
- **Politics/local government**
- **Power of place**
- **Public policy**
- **Race and racism**
- **Rural communities**
- **Talk radio/shock jocks**
- **Tolerance**

Outreach Event Ideas

Use a screening of *The Fire Next Time* to:

- Hold a meeting to discuss a local dispute from multiple perspectives, with local mediators facilitating round-table discussions for problem solving among citizens. Have the group use this experience to craft a set of guidelines for further dialogue.
- Convene students, parents, staff and community members to examine and/or create a hate speech policy for a local school district.
- Host a town hall meeting on the film's topics, such as issues of growth, environment and land use.
- Invite local media to participate in a forum on the role they play in encouraging or alleviating local conflict.
- Kick off a membership campaign for an anti-hate or human rights organization in your community.
- Organize a training workshop with state or federal agency personnel working with communities on similar issues (Bureau of Land Management, fish and game bureaus, forest service or park managers).



Timber Mills like this one in Columbia Falls have been major employers in the Flathead Valley.

Background Information

Flathead Valley

Like many places in the state of Montana, the Flathead Valley has experienced major growth in recent years. Located about 60 miles from the Canadian border, Kalispell (pop. 16,391) is the largest town in the area. Between July 2002 and July 2003, the valley's population increased by about 2,000, from 77,441 to 79,485. The most recent (2004) population estimate for Flathead County was 81,217 (Montana Department of Commerce, Census and Economic Information Center). That population is routinely swollen by visitors to nearby Glacier National Park, which attracts nearly two million people each year.

As population growth necessitates more planning and development in the region, the issue of land use is becoming increasingly critical. The stakes are particularly high in the Flathead Valley because most of the land isn't available for development: 94 percent of the country is designated as either National or State Forest Land, Wilderness, Agricultural, or Corporate Timber Land, which means development is confined to remaining 6 percent of the area.

(ceic.commerce.state.mt.us)

Resource Industries

Economist Larry Swanson of the Center for the Rocky Mountain West is an expert on regional economies in Montana. At a 2004 economic forum on the Flathead Valley, he told participants that logging and other resource-based industries have historically been a major income source in the area and a big part of the local economy, but they have declined during the last two decades. According to Swanson, these industries' share of all labor earnings in the Flathead Valley fell by nearly 50 percent between 1980 and 2000. "The Flathead Valley in many ways personifies both the opportunities and the challenges presented by the Rocky

Mountain West's rapidly changing economic conditions," Swanson writes. "As the traditional economic foundation of timber and agriculture share the stage with exploding growth in the human resources sectors, natural resource management has surfaced as a controversial and divisive issue."

(<http://www.crmw.org/MontanaOnTheMove>)

Land Use

Because Montana is rich in natural resources, the state faces a longstanding conflict about the best use of public lands. In the Flathead Valley, as in many places, disagreements have extended beyond the harvest of timber to include debates over matters like fire prevention methods, suburban sprawl and zoning policy, use of motorized recreational vehicles (like off-road vehicles, ATVs and snowmobiles) and road closures.



Northwest Montana communities are divided by clear-cut differences over how to use land.

Background Information

Legislation

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 provides that the 261 million acres of public lands run by the Bureau of Land Management be managed "...in a manner that will protect



Arborist Mike Raiman puts his life on the line protecting Montana's environment.

the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use" (43 U.S.C. 1701 (a)(8)). The law also provides that the public lands be managed in a manner that "recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals..." (43 U.S.C. 1701 (a)(12)).

In 2003, the Montana Legislature enacted the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The act recognized that factors such as population growth and industrial expansion profoundly impacted the environment, but also avoided heavily regulating how private property could be used. The act reads, "The

legislature, recognizing the profound impact of human activity on the interrelations of all components of the natural environment...recognizing the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to the overall welfare and human development, and further recognizing that governmental regulation may unnecessarily restrict the use and enjoyment of private property, declares that it is the continuing policy of the state of Montana, in cooperation with the federal government, local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures... to recognize the right to use and enjoy private property free of undue government regulation, and to fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Montanans." (75-1-103. Policy. (1)).

Talk Radio

The format adopted by radio host John Stokes gained popularity in the US in the early 1990s. In her report, *Talk Show Culture*, researcher Ellen Hume wrote, "According to *Broadcasting* magazine, between 1988 and 1992, the number of radio stations describing their formats as 'talk' jumped from 238 to 875." Today, 899 stations identify themselves as "talk," and another 1,016 as "news and talk." These figures do not include approximately 1800 religious or variety format stations that play some talk (newsgeneration.com/-radio_resources/stats.htm). According to a Gallup poll on 'How Americans Get Their News,' [December 31, 2002] 22 percent of Americans rely on talk radio as their primary news source, a percent that nearly doubled from 12 percent in 1995." (<http://www.gallup.com/>)

According to Hume, hosts who put callers on the air were a distinguishing feature of talk radio in the 1990s. She found callers and hosts were made up disproportionately of angry, conservative white men and about 70 percent of the estimated 8,000 hosts identified themselves as conservatives, according



Background Information

to one magazine survey. She also found that the hosts' and callers' most popular scapegoats were government and the mainstream media.

(www.ellenhume.com)

Hate Speech

The First Amendment of the US Constitution guarantees the right of people in the United States to say whatever they please, except for a few narrow circumstances when speech is deemed obscene, libelous or dangerous. Two of these circumstances have been used to challenge some of the speech that talk radio hosts like John Stokes use:

a) Libelous speech. Under U.S. law one is not entitled to make false statements about a person or company. The consequences for committing libel are not criminal but the subject of the libelous remarks may sue in a civil court. However, libel is often difficult to prove because a plaintiff must not only prove that libelous remarks were made, but that they caused concrete damage.

b) Speech that creates unsafe conditions. A quintessential example of this type of speech would be yelling "fire" in a crowded theater. In addition, making specific threats against people is against the law. In recent years, some have argued that hate speech should be legally considered dangerous speech and should be outlawed, because it can incite people to violence (and therefore be construed as a threat) or create a climate in which violence or harassment might occur.

Legal challenges to hate speech have had mixed results. In 2003, in the *Virginia v. Black* case, the U.S. Supreme Court found that municipalities could ban cross-burnings in cases where the intention was not merely to express a point of view, but also to intimidate. Earlier decisions, however, made it clear that cross-burnings could not be banned simply because they made people angry.

Not In Our Town

The Fire Next Time is the latest film in the *Not In Our Town* series. The original *Not in Our Town* documentary (1995) told the story of how the citizens of Billings, Montana, joined forces to resist bigotry in their town. Over the past decade, hundreds of communities have been inspired by the Billings story to start anti-hate campaigns in their own towns.

In Kalispell, a local radio station is aggravating a complicated set of issues—including anti-governmental extremism and divisions over growth, forest policy and the recreational use of public land. The *Not In Our Town* producers were invited to the town to help support a new anti-hate campaign and document the process.

The general precedent (set in a 1969 Supreme Court ruling in *Brandenburg v. Ohio*) is that the government may not "forbid or proscribe advocacy of the use of force or of law violation except where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing *imminent* lawless action." In a famous 1995 radio example, talk show host G. Gordon Liddy was held to be within his rights to give instructions on how to shoot a federal agent because the FCC did not deem that his remarks produced immediate danger.

Background Information

Selected People Featured in *The Fire Next Time*



Brenda Kitterman – A former police officer who helped spearhead efforts in Kalispell to stand up against racism and the militia movement.



Pam Kennedy – Mayor of Kalispell who spoke out against the threat of violence after the discovery of a domestic terror group's hit list of local leaders.



Mike Raiman – An active conservationist, Mike has operated a tree service in the Flathead Valley for the past 20 years, and now works with his sons, Steve and Bob Raiman. He was drawn into Flathead Valley land use debates after he discovered a plan to clear-cut on the Swan Mountains behind his home.



Gary Hall – Republican county commissioner, a self-described “peacemaker” struggling with contentious local debates about forest policy and growth.



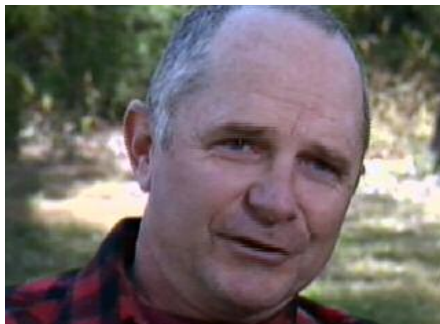
Scott Daumiller – A vocal advocate for opening public lands in Northwest Montana to logging and recreation. Scott grew up in the Flathead Valley, has worked at Stoltz Lumber Company since high school, and is now a mill supervisor.



John Stokes – Host of a controversial two-hour daily talk show on Kalispell radio station KGEZ. Formerly a real estate developer and political aspirant from Washington state, Stokes bought KGEZ and began broadcasting in 2000.



Background Information



Keith Hammer – Environmentalist and head of the Swan View Coalition, a non-profit environmental organization that has worked to close roads and limit logging on public lands. Keith grew up in the Flathead Valley and was a logger for six years.



Frank Garner – Kalispell police chief who discovered his name on an anti-government group's hit list—along with other local civic leaders and law enforcement officials. In the aftermath of that revelation, he worked with other residents of the Flathead Valley to address the divisions in the community. Frank is the president of the Montana Association of Chiefs of Police and a leader in Big Brothers and Sisters.



Bob Muth – Teacher whose students participated in the Martin Luther King essay contest.



Randy Hansen – Flathead High history teacher who strives to promote even-handed discussions among his students. Randy has been teaching for 26 years.



J.B. Stone – A vocal supporter of wise use policies who has published hundreds of letters and articles on property rights and personal freedom.



Using This Guide

This guide is designed to help you use *The Fire Next Time* as the centerpiece of a community event. It contains suggestions for organizing an event as well as ideas for how to help participants think more deeply about the issues in the film. The discussion questions are designed for a wide range of audiences. Rather than attempt to address them all, choose one or two that best meet the needs and interests of your group.

Planning an Event

In addition to showcasing documentary films as an art form, screenings of P.O.V. films can be used to present information, get people interested in taking action on an issue, provide opportunities for people from different groups or perspectives to exchange views, and/or create space for reflection. Using the questions below as a planning checklist will help ensure a high quality/high impact event.

- **Have you defined your goals?** With your partner(s), set realistic goals. Will you host a single event or engage in an ongoing project? Being clear about your goals will make it much easier to structure the event, target publicity and evaluate results.
- **Does the way you are planning to structure the event fit your goals?** Do you need an outside facilitator, translator or sign language interpreter? If your goal is to share information, are there local experts on the topic who should be present? How large an audience do you want? (Large groups are appropriate for information exchanges. Small groups allow for more intensive dialogue.)
- **Have you arranged to involve all stakeholders?** It is especially important that people be allowed to speak for themselves. If your group is planning to take action that affects people other than those present, how will you give voice to those not in the room?
- **Is the event being held in a space where all participants will feel equally comfortable?** Is it wheelchair accessible? Is it in a part of town that's easy to reach by various kinds of transportation? If you are bringing together different constituencies, is it neutral territory? Does the physical configuration allow for the kind of discussion you hope to have?
- **Will the set-up of the room help you meet your goals?** Is it comfortable? If you intend to have a discussion, can people see one another? Are there spaces to use for small breakout groups? Can everyone easily see the screen and hear the film?
- **Have you scheduled time to plan for action?** Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even when the discussion has been difficult. Action steps are especially important for people who already have a good deal of experience talking about the subject(s) on the table. For those who are new to the issue(s), just engaging in public discussion serves as an action step.



Using This Guide

Facilitating a Discussion

Controversial topics often make for excellent discussions. By their nature, those same topics also give rise to deep emotions and strongly held beliefs. As a facilitator, you can create an atmosphere where people feel safe, encouraged and respected, making it more likely that they will be willing to share openly and honestly. Here's how:

Preparing Yourself

Identify your own hot-button issues. View the film before your event and give yourself time to reflect so you aren't dealing with raw emotions at the same time you are trying to facilitate a discussion.

Be knowledgeable. You don't need to be an expert on environmental issues, talk radio, hate crimes or conflict resolution, but knowing the basics can help you keep a discussion on track and gently correct misstatements of fact. In addition to the Background Information section above, you may want to look at the suggested websites and books in the Resources section on p.20.

Be clear about your role. You may find yourself taking on several roles for an event, e.g., host, organizer or even projectionist. If you are also planning to serve as facilitator, be sure you can focus on that responsibility and avoid distractions during the discussion. Keep in mind that being a facilitator is not the same as being a teacher. A teacher's job is to convey specific information. In contrast, a facilitator remains neutral, helping to further discussion without imposing his or her views on the dialogue.

Know your group. Issues can play out very differently for different groups of people. Is your group new to the issue or have they dealt with it before? Factors like geography, age, race, religion and socioeconomic class, can all have an impact on comfort levels, speaking styles and prior knowledge. Take care not to assume that all members of a community will share the same point of view. If you are bringing together different segments of your community, we strongly recommend hiring an experienced facilitator.

Finding a Facilitator

AS THE FILM DEMONSTRATES, COMMUNITY CONFLICTS ARE COMPLEX AND CAN BE DANGEROUS. IF YOU INTEND TO USE *THE FIRE NEXT TIME* AS PART OF AN EFFORT TO HELP A COMMUNITY RESOLVE PRE-EXISTING CONFLICTS OR TENSIONS, WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND HIRING AN EXPERIENCED FACILITATOR.

Some university professors, human resource professionals, clergy and youth leaders may be specially trained in facilitation skills. In addition to these local resources, local law schools and national groups such as the Study Circles Resource Center, the Consensus Building Institute, the Public Conversations Project, the Association for Conflict Resolution, the National Association for Community Mediation and the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution may be able to provide or help you locate skilled facilitators.



Using This Guide

Preparing the Group

Consider how well group members know one another. If you are bringing together people who have never met, you may want to devote some time at the beginning of the event for introductions.

Agree to ground rules around language. Involve the group in establishing some basic rules to ensure respect and aid clarity. Typically such rules include no yelling or use of slurs and asking people to speak in the first person (“I think....”) rather than generalizing for others (“Everyone knows that...”).

Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard. Speak and listen with respect. Be clear about how people will take turns or indicate that they want to speak. Don’t interrupt others and monitor your airtime. Plan a strategy for preventing one or two people from dominating the discussion. If the group is large, are there plans to break into small groups or partners, or should attendance be limited?

Talk about the difference between dialogue and debate. In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants try to understand each other and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and actively listening to each other. Remind people that they are engaged in a dialogue. This will be especially important in preventing a discussion from dissolving into partisan political debate instead of an examination of political process, rural issues and/or civic participation.

Encourage active listening. Ask the group to think of the event as one about listening as well as discussing. Encourage participants to listen for input that challenges as well as reinforces their own ideas. You may also consider asking people to practice formal “active listening,” in which participants listen without interrupting the speaker, then re-phrase to see if they have heard correctly.

Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of his or her own experience. Who we are influences how we interpret what we see. So everyone in the group may have a different view about the content and meaning of the film they have just seen, and all of them may be accurate. It can help people to understand one another’s perspectives if people identify the evidence on which they base their opinion as well as share their views.

Take care of yourself and group members. If the intensity level rises, pause to let everyone take a deep breath. You might also consider providing a safe space to “vent,” perhaps with a partner or in a small group of familiar faces. If you anticipate that your topic may upset people, be prepared to refer them to local support agencies and/or have local professionals present. Think carefully about what you ask people to share publicly, and explain things like confidentiality and whether or not press will be present.



General Discussion Questions

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. If the mood seems tense, you may want to pose a general question and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion.

Unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can't engage until they have had a break, don't encourage people to leave the room between the film and the discussion. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won't lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question such as:

- **If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would it be and what would you ask?**
- **Did anything in this film surprise you? If so, what and why?**
- **What insights, inspiration or new knowledge did you gain from this film?**
- **Two months from now, what do you think you will remember from this film, and why?**



Ex-cop Brenda Kitterman protects her daughters Tricia and Elizabeth from extremist threats in Kalispell, Montana.

Photo: Robin Loznak



Discussion Prompts

What would you do if you loved the place where you lived, but things were changing quickly, and you saw the fabric of town life unraveling? If neighbors you used to wave to suddenly became enemies?

Framing the Discussion

List the various issues raised as part of the conflict in Kalispell (e.g., environmental protection, the power of government to regulate, economic transitions and loss of jobs, racism, hate crimes, etc.). What are the links between these issues? What are the flashpoints in your community?

Teacher Bob Muth observes, "We've always been able to sit down and respectfully disagree, and now it's turned to violence." In your view, how could that progression happen? What might people do at various points along the way to stop that progression?

Brenda Kitterman says that a "vocal minority has been keeping the majority of the community silenced." Others claim that until John Stokes started his radio program, no one would say out loud what most people really thought. Why are claims about being a minority or majority significant?

In a country that has traditionally valued freedom of speech, it can be difficult to draw the lines between language that entertains or offends, and language that constitutes hate speech or endangers others. Think about where you would draw the line.

- What is the difference between language that is inflammatory and language that is passionate?
- What is the difference between disagreement and personal attack?
- What is the difference between language that provokes and language that incites?

How Are We Informed as Citizens?

At each flashpoint in this conflict, each side thinks they have the facts on their side. Whom do you find most convincing in the film, and why?

The filmmaker notes that "almost a quarter of Americans get their news from radio talk shows." Where do you get your news? Why do you choose those sources? What is the process of fact-checking or source citation in the places you listen to, read or watch for news? How do you know that your news sources are telling the truth?

What do you think of Stokes' practice of inviting teens to do radio shows? Why is teacher Randy Hansen so insistent that students back up their opinion statements with sources?

John Stokes has adopted a style now fairly common among radio talk show hosts known as "shock jocks." Many people applaud this style as honest—as being willing to say what other people think but are afraid to say out loud. Others characterize the style as hate speech. How would you describe Stokes' style?

One participant at an anti-environmentalist rally explains their support for Stokes' radio show by saying, "John's format for freedom of speech is something we really need to get back in this country." In your view, does Stokes' style of radio strengthen freedom of speech in a community? Is giving people an opportunity to say anything they want the same as giving them a voice? Why or why not?

What role can journalists or other local media outlets play in helping citizens deal with difficult conflicts?

Discussion Prompts

What Role Do You Play?

Mike Raiman says that getting involved and not being intimidated is part of the responsibility of being an American. Make a list of what you think the responsibilities of citizenship are, and what you have done in the past year to fulfill those responsibilities.

At the meeting organized by Brenda Kitterman, people expressed a wide spectrum of views about the meaning of hate. How would you characterize hate? Can you cite specific examples of expressions of hate that you have seen in your family or community? How did you respond? How did others respond? How do you wish people would have responded? What do you think you might do next time?

Would you risk harm to your family in order to speak out on an issue you cared about? In the face of intimidation, how would you protect the opportunity for dialogue? What is the impact of fear on conflict?

In the face of rising tensions, what is the responsibility of public officials like Pam Kennedy or Gary Hall? What would you have done in their shoes? How important is public support to leadership in elected positions? How have you shown support for people working on causes with which you agree?

John Stokes seems to make a number of statements not backed up by facts (e.g. "the forest fires were started by arson," "the Third Reich was born out of the environmental community," "There is no racism in Montana," etc.). What would you do if you heard a claim by someone in your local media that you knew was false?



Civic leaders of Flathead Valley, Montana.

How Do We Communicate with Each Other?

Consider Mike Raiman's comment, "Throw a few lies around, target a few people, call them green Nazis, they're not people anymore." Make a list of how each side in this conflict labels the other. Which of the labels are accurate? Which are misleading? How is language used to de-humanize people? What is the connection between language and violence?

Scott Daumiller's reaction to environmentalists' demands that limited his use of the forest is: "These people are taking it all away and they want me to be nice about it." In your view, are there times when angry speech is helpful? How about swearing or yelling? Can you think of instances when it is justified? In your life, what tends to produce angry speech? How might communities address the sources of the anger?



Discussion Prompts

How would you encourage someone to disagree respectfully? What ground rules would you set for a respectful conversation, discussion or dialogue? How do people in the film use or transgress against those ground rules?

Teacher Randy Hansen tells a student that they need to find words other than "a bunch of blue-helmeted Nazis and they should all be executed" to describe the United Nations. He was accused of taking away the student's freedom of speech. How far can a teacher go in demanding respectful language? At what point are they silencing independent student expression or dissent?

Dealing with Disagreement

To practice expressing disagreement without resorting to language that demeans, rewrite these John Stokes comments so they express the same point effectively without being demeaning or resorting to personal attack:

In opposition to regulation supported by environmentalists:

"Environmentalists are 'green slime' or 'green Nazis.'"

"There is no such thing as a reasonable and thoughtful environmentalist."

Opposing a Montana Human Rights Network-sponsored essay contest:

"And on Martin Luther King Day they got into Columbia Falls School and had a little essay coloring contest, and when we told the Columbia Falls District what these groups are all about, they booted them all out of the school. Yeah."

Opposing the convening of an anti-hate meeting:

"Little kumbaya meeting. Little 'can't we all get along' meeting. Please stop the hate, which there isn't any."

Opposing Mayor Pam Kennedy's support for a developer of a subdivision:

"Those commies bought and paid for your mayor and you're getting the best communist money can buy."

On the death of Tary Mocabee:

"The woman was stupid. She fell in the creek and drowned. The woman was a goomba."

Share your alternative expressions with others in the group. Discuss the impact of demeaning language:

- Why would a radio host use demeaning language?
- What does it do to a community?
- How does it affect people's ability to solve problems?
- How does it affect people's ability to find common ground when there are disagreements?

Share Your Solutions

People often come together in the face of a natural disaster, and that was true in the Flathead Valley. How could that moment of cohesion have been used to address the blame and scapegoating that continued afterward? How can the community do it differently next time?

How does rapid change influence the dynamic of a community? How might a community work together so that growth and development harm the fewest people and benefit the most?

If you lived in Kalispell, what would you suggest as the community's next step? What is the best way for a community to move forward in a time of conflict and transition?

What is your community doing to deal with areas of disagreement? Make a list of actions by citizens, leaders or media outlets that have helped everyone deal with a community conflict.

What have you learned from this story that can help you move forward?

What role can you play as citizens, civic leaders, activists, journalists, business, religious or social groups to address a climate of fear and mistrust around issues that divide the community?

Taking Action



Whitefish Lake in Northwest Montana
Photo courtesy of "The Fire Next Time"

- Create a *Not In Our Town* proclamation declaring your community's opposition to hate groups. For a sample, see: www.pbs.org/niot/get_involved/sample_proc.html
- Create a non-partisan fact-checkers task force to regularly assess claims made in your local media about controversial issues or people. Publicize the reports on a website and/or partner with local media outlets to broadcast or print your findings.
- Help facilitate community exchanges. Arrange for groups from different perspectives or parts of town to visit one another (e.g., a church might pair with a synagogue or with a church in another part of town). Help pair families to do dinner exchanges in their homes.
- The film ends with the filmmaker asking, "Would you stand with people you disagreed with in your town?" Talk about how you would answer. Then brainstorm plans to arrange for a gathering of people across divisions.
- Choose an environmental or land management issue relevant to your community. Hold education forums on the topic. Bring together a coalition of people to take action on the issue.



Resources

Websites

The film

P.O.V.'s *The Fire Next Time* Website

www.pbs.org/pov/pov2005/thefirenexttime

Access the *The Fire Next Time* website at www.pbs.org/pov for trailers, an interview with the filmmaker and more—including these features:

CASE STUDIES: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SHOCK JOCKS GO TOO FAR?

Have you ever heard your local radio DJ say something that he just couldn't have said — and really shouldn't have? Find out what happened when DJs crossed the line — and their communities reined them in.

Q & A: RESOLVING COMMUNITY CONFLICTS

Melinda Smith is a conflict resolution expert who has worked in Kalispell to help the residents of the Flathead Valley to come to an agreement. She says, "The situation in Kalispell mirrors many conflicts throughout the West."

COMMUNITY SCREENING: KALISPELL SPEAKS OUT

Residents of the Flathead Valley had the opportunity to screen the film in October 2004. Watch streaming video of residents speaking up about *The Fire Next Time* and their own experiences in the Valley.

Combating Hate

www.pbs.org/niot – The *Not in Our Town* website. Check out http://www.pbs.org/niot/get_involved/resources.html for an excellent collection of links to resources on fighting hate.

What's Your P.O.V.?

*P.O.V.'s online Talking Back Tapestry is a colorful, interactive representation of your feelings about **The Fire Next Time**.*

Listen to other P.O.V. viewers talk about the film and add your thoughts by calling 1-800-688-4768. www.pbs.org/pov/talkingback.html

www.tolerance.org – This website project of the Southern Poverty Law Center offers a variety of anti-bias education resources. The home site, www.splcenter.org, tracks the activities of hate groups and reports on hate crimes.

www.adl.org – The website of the Anti-Defamation League includes a database of hate crime symbols, a summary of hate crime laws and resources for combating hate in schools and communities.

www.facing.org – Facing History and Ourselves provides extensive anti-bias classroom resources. Of special interest might be the lesson plan, "Can Journalism Kill? The Case of Rwandan Hate Radio."

www.mhrn.org – The Montana Human Rights Network is mentioned in the film. Their website describes their goals and activities.

www.publiceye.org – The website of Political Research Associates contains a wide range of research and articles on extremist right-wing movements in the US.



Resources

Media Issues

www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week803/cover.html

Bob Abernathy, the anchor of the PBS series *Religion and Ethics*, interviews John Stokes and other residents of Flathead Valley about the impact of Stokes' radio broadcasts.

www.amlainfo.org - The website of Alliance for a Media Literate America provides information on media literacy and links to its member organizations, who offer a wide variety of programs and services.

www.cmpa.com - The Center for Media and Public Affairs' website contains studies on the news media, entertainment media, media coverage of past elections and late-night political humor.

www.pbs.org/now/politics/talkradioresources.html - PBS's weekly magazine news program, NOW, covered talk radio in America and compiled a great list of resources on their site. (February 2004).

www.stateofthemediamedia.org/2005/narrative_radio_intro.asp?cat=1&media=8 - Journalism.org: State of the News Media - Radio. 2005 brought a change of voices, with the movement of one of news radio's best-known anchors and three of radio's most popular shock jocks into satellite radio, the launch of a liberal talk network and the well-publicized movement of one of radio's biggest players into Spanish-language programming. (2005).



Kalispell radio station KGEZ.
Photo courtesy of "The Fire Next Time"

www.publicintegrity.org - Center for Public Integrity. These award-winning journalists conduct investigative research and reporting on public policy issues in the United States and around the world. Read reports on recent FCC fines for indecency (www.publicintegrity.org/telecom/report.aspx?aid=239&sid=200), how companies like Clear Channel came to rule the airwaves (www.publicintegrity.org/telecom/-report.aspx?aid=239&sid=200), and who owns the airwaves (www.publicintegrity.org/telecom/report.aspx?aid=239&sid=200). You can even find out who dominates the dial in your city (www.publicintegrity.org/telecom/Analysis/msaindex.aspx).

Resources

Community Conflict Resolution

www.acrnet.org - The website of the Association for Conflict Resolution provides information on finding a mediator, participating in a mentoring program and relevant conferences and workshops around the country. It also features a discussion board and an extensive library of articles on conflict resolution education, conflict management systems and ethical standards, among other subjects.

www.cbuilding.org - The Consensus Building Institute works with government agencies, community groups, businesses, advocacy organizations, researchers and educators to develop and put into practice conflict resolution and consensus-building strategies. Their site includes toolkits and handbooks developed for past projects as well as five lessons for public dispute resolution.

www.publicconversations.org - The website of the Public Conversations Project (PCP) contains information on upcoming workshops, stories written by people who have used PCP's approach to conduct community dialogues, as well as links to articles, case studies and related websites.

www.studycircles.org - Study Circles Resource Center's site contains links to their most popular publications, including discussion guides, advice on how to organize community-wide study circles and train facilitators and articles from their quarterly newsletter, *Focus on Study Circles*.

www.ecr.gov - The US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution maintains a national roster of practitioners who specialize in facilitation, consensus building and mediation of environmental disputes.



Rally against environmentalists.
Photo courtesy of "The Fire Next Time"

www.csmonitor.com/commentary/conversations.html - Christian Science Monitor's "Talking with the Enemy" is an eight-part series of articles aimed at helping Americans bridge the red-blue political and cultural divide.

www.pon.harvard.edu/main/home/index.php3 - The Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School is the leading interdisciplinary research center on negotiation. The PON runs nine main research projects (www.pon.harvard.edu/research/projects/) including the Global Negotiation Project, and offers a clearinghouse of publications (www.pon.org/catalog) for educators, scholars and practitioners.

Resources

Natural Resource Issues

www.Sonoran.org – The Sonoran Institute’s website has case studies, resources and tools for Western communities struggling with rapid change and growth.

www.crmw.org/MontanaOnTheMove – The Montana on the Move website includes documentation of the local community initiatives to address rapid change and growth undertaken in the state’s urban centers.

www.lincolnst.edu – The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy offers courses, seminars, lectures and research on topics such as land conservation, land and property rights and land use dispute resolution. The site lists their publications, including their *Land Lines* Newsletter and features a special web site dedicated to their Land Use Disputes project (www.resolving-landusedisputes.org/).

www.fs.fed.us – The website of the USDA Forest Service, the federal agency responsible for managing 150 national forests and 20 grasslands includes information about various forest management projects, including the “Healthy Forest Initiative” (www.healthyforests.gov) which aims to reduce fire danger. Its “Four Threats” section identifies major threats to our nation’s forests and grasslands and includes common, related questions and answers, as well as quick facts and statistics on fire and fuels, invasive species and loss of open space.

sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/01/23/-MNGEOAUTO01.DTL – *SFGate.com*: “At age 100, U.S. Forest Service reviews its mandate; Agency’s focus shifts toward increased use of resources.” The focus of the 100-year-old agency responsible for managing our national forests and grasslands has fluctuated through time and with different administrations, writes *San Francisco Chronicle* Environment Writer Glen Martin. Read more about shifting priorities, from preservation to maximizing timber harvest and the concept of “multiple-use.” (January 23, 2005).



There are deep divisions over logging in Montana’s national forests.

From an Industry Perspective:

www.logging.org – The Montana Logging Association site provides the perspective of the state’s family-owned businesses that harvest and transport logs from forest to mill.

www.evergreenmagazine.com – Information, analysis and perspective concerning issues and events impacting forests, forestry, forest communities and the forest products industry.

From an Environmental Perspective:

www.sierraclub.org/forests – The Sierra Club’s Forest Protection and Restoration campaign website. Includes information on wildfires, how to get involved, forest reports and a recommended reading list.

www.wildmontana.org – The website of the Montana Wilderness Association. Includes information on protecting wilderness, wildlife habitats and recreational activities.

www.redlodgeclearinghouse.org – This site is designed to support collaborative groups committed to resolving resource use conflicts throughout the interior west. Includes an extensive section of case studies of collaborative approaches.



How to Buy the Film

To purchase *The Fire Next Time* please go to www.theworkinggroup.org



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and entering its 18th season on PBS, the award-

winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running series on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. Airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m., June through September, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought over 220 award-winning documentaries to millions nationwide, and now has a Webby Award-winning online series, P.O.V.'s Borders. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information about P.O.V. is available online at www.pbs.org/pov.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Educational Foundation of America, the Ford Foundation, PBS, and public-television viewers. Support for P.O.V. is provided by Starbucks Coffee Company. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET/Los Angeles, WGBH/Boston, and WNET/New York. Cara Mertes is executive director of P.O.V., a production of American Documentary, Inc.

P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education

P.O.V. provides Discussion Guides for all films as well as curriculum-based P.O.V. Lesson Plans for select films to promote the use of independent media among varied constituencies. Available free online, these originally produced materials ensure the ongoing use of P.O.V.'s documentaries with educators, community workers, opinion leaders and general audiences nationally. P.O.V. also works closely with local public television stations to partner with local museums, libraries, schools, and community-based organizations to raise awareness of the issues in P.O.V.'s films.

P.O.V. Interactive **www.pbs.org/pov**

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, P.O.V.'s Borders. It also produces a Web site for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of P.O.V. films through community-based and educational applications, focusing on involving viewers in activities, information, and feedback on the issues. In addition, www.pbs.org/pov houses our unique Talking Back feature, filmmaker interviews, and viewer resources, and information on the P.O.V. archives as well as myriad special sites for previous P.O.V. broadcasts.

American Documentary, Inc. **www.americandocumentary.org**

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying, and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic- engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, on-line, and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

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Front cover photo:

The dramatic landscape of Northwest Montana is the backdrop for searing conflicts over natural resources.

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