

Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT)

A cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior

FIRE NETWORKS WORKSHOP

May 22-25, 2018

Wenatchee, Washington

PERFACT has been working for several years on fully integrating the landscape, community and training strategies being developed and carried out by members of the various networks in the places they work. Over time, it has become increasingly evident that these efforts are made more powerful when several are “stacked” in a location. In specific locations around the country members of different networks have met together and worked together, and collaboration across networks in these places has enriched and accelerated work. In Wenatchee, we were able for the first time to take this to the national scale, with leads from all the networks meeting together at one large workshop.

This workshop brought together the four national learning networks developed and supported by the Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT) cooperative agreement—the Fire Learning Network (FLN), Fire Adapted Communities Learning

Network (FAC Net), Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX) Coaches Network and Indigenous Peoples Burning Network (IPBN)—along with the Washington State Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (WAFAC), a statewide network inspired by and modeled on the FAC Net.

As planned, this allowed for important connections—both expected and serendipitous—to be made.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The workshop brought together about 130 key network members and partners to advance our place-based work across the country by providing opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and facilitating connections that will lead to more cross-network action.

To accomplish this, the workshop was designed to:

- strengthen relationships within each network,
- facilitate evolution and improvement within each network, and
- build relationships between members of different networks.

“The annual workshop is something that I look forward to more than anything in my entire job. The face-to-face communication is life changing!”

PLACE-BASED LEARNING

The workshop was held in central Washington, which had experienced catastrophic wildfires in 2014 and 2015, in order to distill lessons from those fire seasons, and from the remarkable work that has been accomplished since then by the networks in the state. Among the session highlights were:

- flash presentations that allowed rapid introductions to a wide range of topics,
- a variety of exercises and informal gatherings structured to encourage new connections between networks and geographies and provide space for renewing existing relationships,
- a presentation and discussion of ongoing post-fire recovery led by recovery case managers from a community hit hard by fires,



A “share back” session evaluation was conducted in the round. © TNC (Marek Smith)

- skills sessions that covered applying trust theory to build resilient collaboration, cultivating effective relationships with legislators, establishing equitable partnerships in the fire worlds with indigenous peoples, and strategies for expanding the use of prescribed fire,
- role-playing and wildfire simulation exercises that forced participants to work through unfamiliar parts of the decision-making process (and demonstrated tools useful for both planning and community engagement), and
- a roundtable with Washington Governor Jay Inslee and other influential policymakers, at which network members were able to share key insights from their work.

Members of the Okanogan County Long Term Recovery Group brought artifacts and compelling stories of their work with survivors of the 2014 and 2015 wildfires in the state. For participants whose work mainly focused on other parts of the wildfire cycle, this presentation was eye-opening, and many people noted it as a high point of the workshop. © TNC (Liz Rank)

“I can’t begin to tell you what a great week you provided to all of us network members last week.... I came home with lots of ideas and a long to do list and it all came from my interactions with everyone and the presentations we had....”



WHAT WORKED?

The workshop organizing team conducted a thorough evaluation of the workshop, including an online survey for participants, an after action review by PERFECT staff, and follow-up assignments.

According to the workshop evaluations, the most valuable aspects of the workshop were:

Networking opportunities (including meeting new people) (21)

“Networking and connections I made, especially in the informal sessions”

Post-fire recovery session (9)

“The presentation on Wednesday afternoon about the recovery stories was especially poignant and made me think about how I could apply some of these lessons learned in my own community to better prepare for the possibility of wildfire.”

Learning from others to inform my practice (5)

“The opportunity to learn what is working in other locales”

A specific skills session (4)

Meeting people from the other networks (4)

The most common response (12) to the question about the least useful part of the workshop was “None.” Other answers showed no clear pattern, with several mentioning a specific breakout session, the role playing exercises (“we’re all too nice”), and a few notes about logistics and too much sitting.

We also asked about the strengths and weaknesses of all the networks meeting together. There were few surprises in the responses: Strengths included the opportunity to learn more about other networks’ work and how we all fit together (18), networking and collaboration opportunities (9), efficiency for members from places where multiple networks are operating (6), and inspiration (5). Weaknesses included the difficulty in getting to meet everyone or build deep connections (6), having less relevant content by trying to meet too many needs (5), needing more time for individual network work (4)—and being overwhelming (2). A number of responses fell into a middle ground category—“I liked meeting together, but think we need to meet separately, too.” In post-workshop discussions, it was decided to follow this plan, with networks meeting separately in 2019.

A DIVERSE GATHERING

Participants in the workshop had about 90 different job titles ...

Advisory Board Member / Area Fire Advisor / Assistant Director / Assistant Director, Fire / Assistant Fire Management Officer / Associate Director of Global Diversity Equity & Inclusion / Associate Professor / Board Chair / Board Member / Board President / Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer / Chief Operations Officer / Collaborative Coordinator / Collaborative Forestry Program Manager / Communications Coordinator / Communications Manager / Community “Sparkplug” / Community and Landscapes Project Coordinator / Community Engagement Consultant / Community Outreach Director / Conservation Coordinator / Conservation Director / Consultant / Cooperative Fire Specialist / County Forester / Deputy Director of Eco-Cultural Revitalization / Deputy Regional Forester / Director of Fire Management / Director of Forest Conservation / Director of Forest Restoration and Fire / Director of Policy and Partnerships / Director of Stewardship / District Manager / District Ranger / Executive Director / External Affairs Director / Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator / Fire and Fuels Coordinator / Fire and Fuels Program Director / Fire Brigade Chief / Fire Chief / Fire Ecologist / Fire Management Officer / Fire Management Specialist / Fire Manager / Fire Mitigation & Education Specialist / Fire Mitigation Specialist / Fire, Fuels and Forestry Program Director / Fire, Landscapes and Communities Coordinator / Firewise Coordinator / Foothills Restoration Specialist / Forest Division Chief / Forest Ecologist / Forest Program Coordinator / Forest Program Director / Forester / Fuels Coordinator / Fuels Planner / GIS Specialist / Good Neighbor Authority Statewide Coordinator / Land Owner Assistance Forester / Landowner Assistance District Manager / Liaison / Mitigation Planning Program Manager / Module Lead / Network Coordinator / President (NGO) / Program Associate / Program Coordinator / Program Manager / Project Coordinator / Project Manager / Public Information Officer / Recovery Coordinator / Regional Manager and Policy Assistant / Research Associate / Restoration Director / Restoration Partnership Coordinator / Right-of-Way Maintenance Lead / Risk Analysis Branch Chief / Senior Policy Advisor / Service Hydrologist / State Hazard Mitigation Officer / Stewardship Crew Lead / Training Specialist / Volunteer Firefighter / Water Resources Manager / Wildfire Analyst / Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator / Wildfire Risk Reduction Coordinator / Wildlife Biologist / WUI Coordinator / WUI Specialist

... and came from about 65 organizations:

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management / Ashland Fire & Rescue / Bureau of Land Management / Cascadia Conservation District / Chama Peak Land Alliance / Chelan County Fire District 1 / Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council / Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition / City of Boise / City of Santa Fe Fire Department / Coalitions & Collaboratives, Inc. / Colorado Forest Restoration Institute / Community Fire / Cook and Lake County / Cultural Fire Management Council / Deschutes County / Dovetail Partners, Inc. / Eagle County / FEMA Region 10 / Fire Adapted Colorado / FirePoppy Consulting / FireWise of Southwest Colorado / Flowery Trail Community Association / Forest Stewards Guild / Four Mound Firewise / Gravitas Peak Wildland Fire Module / Hidden Valley-Swauk Fire Adapted Community / INFOCA (Andalucia) / Island Park Sustainable Fire Community / Jackson County Fire District 3 / Karuk Tribe / Kittitas County Conservation District / Lake Wenatchee Fire & Rescue / Lake Wenatchee Fire Adapted Community / Latino Community Fund of Washington / Lincoln County Conservation District / Mid Klamath Watershed Council / Mottek Consulting / Mt. Adams Resource Stewards / National Park Service / National Weather Service / New Jersey Fire Safety Council / Okanogan Conservation District / Pheasants Forever / Project Wildfire / Prometheus Fire Consulting / Quiet Warrior Racing & Consulting / Salmon River Restoration Council / San Juan Islands Conservation District / Seattle City Light / Sinarmas Forestry / Sustainable Northwest / Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team / Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative / Terra Fuego Resource Foundation / The Nature Conservancy / U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service / University of California Cooperative Extension / University of Colorado / USDA Forest Service / Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands / Virginia Department of Forestry / Washington Department of Natural Resources / Washington Emergency Management Division / Washington RC&D Council / Washington State Conservation Commission / Watershed Research and Training Center / Wildland Restoration International



Left: Preparing for a role-playing exercise on the shore of Lake Chelan © TNC (Liz Rank)
Above: FAC Net working session © WRTC

MORE ONLINE

FAC Net blog post

<https://fireadaptednetwork.org/its-the-relationships/>

FireScape Mendocino blog post

<http://mendocinofirescape.blogspot.com/2018/06/building-capacity-for-prescribed-fire.html>

Media—Governor’s Roundtable

http://www.ifiberone.com/columbia-basin/inslee-greets-wenatchee-wildfire-networking-conference/article_050744c4-5f7e-11e8-98a2-5fa8f5eb7e6a.html

Okanogan County Long Term Recovery Group

<http://www.okanogancountyrecovery.com/>



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PERFACT is an equal opportunity provider.

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