

FLN Networker No. 191: August 19, 2015

The FLN Networker is a publication of the Fire Learning Network—a partnership of the USDA Forest Service, Department of the Interior (BIA, BLM, National Park Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service) and The Nature Conservancy—intended to foster communication within the network and among its friends. Submit comments, links and subscription requests to Liz Rank.

For more about the FLN, visit www.conservationgateway.org/fln or contact Lynn Decker.

News from the Field

California: A report from the July **workshop and field exercises** of the **Western Klamath Restoration Partnership** is in the attached *FLN Notes from the Field*.

Central Appalachians: The **Central Apps FLN** has provided a nice **recap of highlights** from the first half of the year. Details about their spring **burning, monitoring** work, **publications** and more are in the attached *FLN Notes from the Field*.

Central Appalachians: Sam Lindblom (slindblom@tnc.org) is a **co-author** of an important article in *Conservation Biology*, “**Clarifying the Role of Fire** in the Deciduous Forests of Eastern North America: Reply to Matlack” ([abstract](#)). This article (Stambaugh et al. 2015) is a **response to a review article** published by **Glenn Matlack** in late 2013 ([abstract](#)). Matlack’s review has generated much dialog among public and private land managers and stakeholders across the eastern U.S., and **sparked controversy** over his call to “limit the use of prescribed burning” in the region. According to Marek Smith (marek_smith@tnc.org), Sam and the other authors—Michael C. Stambaugh, J. Morgan Varner, Reed F. Noss, Daniel C. Dey, Norman L. Christensen, Robert F. Baldwin, Richard P. Guyette, Brice B. Hanberry, Craig A. Harper and Thomas A. Waldrop—**reaffirm our state of knowledge** of fire in eastern forests and the impacts associated with the removal of this ecological process from many systems. (A **preview of this response** was presented by **Morgan Varner** at the **Central Apps FLN workshop** last November.)

Matlack’s reply to this article is also in the [June issue](#) of *Conservation Biology*.

Idaho: The **Island Park Sustainable Fire Community** recently hired a **new coordinator**, **Les Fadness** (ipsustainablefire@gmail.com). He’s provided a nice **update on the group’s recent work** in the attached *FAC Net Notes from the Field*.

North Carolina: Congratulations to **Mike Norris** (mnorris@tnc.org), who recently received the **2015 Special Effort Award** from the **North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council**. The award was for “his **exemplary leadership** of a **Prescribed Fire Training Exchange** in North Carolina, supporting Sandhills partners burns, promoting prescribed fire while **leading by example** with safely burning 2,200 acres.”

North Carolina: Dean Simon (dean.simon@ncwildlife.org)—co-lead of several landscapes in the **Southern Blue Ridge FLN**—is a **co-author** of the [article](#) “Do **Silvicultural Practices to Restore Oaks Affect Salamanders** in the Short Term?” published this month in *Wildlife Biology*. This research was conducted on Cold Mountain Game Lands.

Resources: TEK / Seeds

TEK: After the Third National Climate Assessment was issued (May 2104) with a chapter on the impact of climate change on tribal peoples, an **informal working group** developed to address **traditional ecological knowledge**—or, knowledges, in their terminology, intended to cover whole systems of knowledge. This group has since developed “**Guidelines for Considering Traditional Knowledges** in Climate Change Initiatives.” The [guidelines](#), along with a primer and other resources, are on their website.

An [essay](#) by members of this working group, “The **Ethics of Traditional Knowledge Exchange** in Climate Change Initiatives,” was recently published in earthzine.org.

Seeds: The **Department of the Interior** has announced a new **National Seed Strategy** (vision: the **right seed in the right place at the right time**). According to the [press release](#), “The Seed Strategy does not change or create new policy, but provides a **framework for increased collaboration** and a common set of goals by using the collective resources of participating agencies. It also aims to provide all land managers—federal, tribal, state, county, and private—the tools they need to address ecological restoration at all levels.” The press release has links to the strategy web page and other related resources.

Reports: Fire Management Futures / Wildfire Cost / Social Cost of Carbon

Fire Management Futures: The **Forest Service (Northern Research Station)** has released the [report](#) “Wildland Fire Management Futures: Insights from a Foresight Panel,” based on the work of a panel of **seven futurists** and **two wildland fire professionals**. Central to the **five key areas** of agreement they came to was the idea of **fire resilience**—living with fire—rather than waging a war on fire.

Wildfire Cost: The details behind all the recent news stories are available in the **Forest Service** [report](#) “The Rising Cost of Wildfire Operations: **Effects on the Forest Service’s Non-Fire Work**.” As the report title suggests, it includes information on spending reductions in other areas resulting from increases in suppression costs, and the implications of those reductions.

Social Cost of Carbon: “Flammable Planet: Wildfires and the Social Cost of Carbon” was published by the Environmental Defense Fund, the Institute for Policy Integrity and the Natural Resource Defense Council last fall. According to the [report](#), damage from the **additional wildfires resulting from climate change** is **not currently included** in assessments of the **social costs of carbon** emissions, leading to those costs being underestimated. This report **estimated cost ranges**, for various sectors, for the U.S. and globally.

Article: Risk Perception

Risk Perception: According to the authors of the [article](#) “Understanding Gaps between the **Risk Perceptions** of Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) **Residents and Wildfire Professionals**,” these groups “**disagree on both subjective and objective aspects of risk** even when considering seemingly straightforward, individual property attributes, but the direction of that disagreement is not consistent across measures.” This is further complicated when weighting risk factors into an overall assessment. The authors stress the need to **carefully articulate** what is meant by “risk,” and replacing the idea that “people underestimate risk” with more specific statements.

In the News: Yosemite after Fire / BuzzFeed on Fire

Yosemite after Fire: Scott Stephens (fire science) and Sally Thompson (hydrology) were guests on **NPR’s Science Friday** last week, talking about post-fire changes in Yosemite in a [segment](#) called “**How Big Blazes Shape Landscapes**.”

Buzzfeed on Fire: BuzzFeed has more than cute cats and DIY for Millennials—they recently ran a pretty nuanced [story on wildfire](#), “California Isn’t Actually in the Middle of a Wildfire Apocalypse.”

Jobs: Burn Crew Member / Fire Mgmt Tech / Restoration Manager

Burn Crew Member: The Missouri chapter of **The Nature Conservancy** is hiring a burn crew member (**FFT2**) for a six-person crew. Details are available on the Conservancy’s [careers page](#) (job ID 43399); applications are due by **August 31**.

Fire Management Technician: The **Florida Division of Recreation and State Parks** is seeking to fill a park services specialist position on a **fire management team**. Details are available on the [state job site](#) (position number 37970903-51403956); applications are due by **August 31**.

Restoration Manager: The Ohio chapter of the **Conservancy** is seeking an **oak openings restorations manager** to work in a six-county region of northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. Details are available on the Conservancy's [careers page](#) (job ID 43414); applications are due by **September 3**.

Webinars

August 26

Climate Change and Fire in the Southwest

noon Pacific / 1:00 Mountain / 2:00 Central / 3:00 Eastern

Larissa Yocom (Northern Arizona University) will be the presenter on this Southwest Fire Science Consortium webinar.

Information: http://www.eventbrite.com/e/climate-change-and-fire-in-the-southwest-registration-17882799936?utm_campaign=6184c299a0-JFSP_NOI_ClimateFireWebinar

**October 23
rescheduled**

Compositional and Structural Changes over Time with Different Fire Regimes in Linville Gorge, NC

11:00 Pacific / noon Mountain / 1:00 Central / 2:00 Eastern (1.5 hours)

In this **Southern Blue Ridge FLN** webinar (originally scheduled for August 18), **Cassandra Pallai** will discuss research conducted in Linville Gorge based on resampling plots originally put in during 1992 for her Master's project at Duke University. The plots have been resampled (by Waldrop and others) periodically and give a nice sampling of different fire regimes in Linville. Plots within the Table Rock Fire footprint were recently sampled, and Pallai combined those results with the original sampling and Waldrop's resampling to study compositional and structural changes over time with different fire regimes. ([Add to your calendar.](#))

Join the webinar: <https://nethope.webex.com/nethope/j.php?MTID=mcbea28b7c21b57ed9ec7d7f00d791e11>

FLN and FAC LN Workshops & Field Tours

September 14

Pike's Peak FLN Field Tour / CO

Partners will visit to the Sourdough and North Slope prescribed burn project sites.

Information: Paige Lewis (paige_lewis@tnc.org)

**October 20-22
new listing**

Central Appalachians FLN / Pembroke, VA

This will be a combined offering of the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists (fire history workshop) and Central Appalachians FLN (annual workshop). There will be presentations from the region's leading fire history researchers on the first day, followed by a full-day field trip to research sites and recently-burned units, and an FLN working meeting on the third day. A more detailed agenda will be available soon.

The group rate for rooms at the Mountain Lake Lodge ((800) 346-3334) is available through September 21; ask for the Fire History Workshop/Central Appalachian FLN room block.

Register: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1mE_UGCeGnzIFkEX08sIRlw0gorvLSATTMyIUzCDIj8/viewform?c=0&w=1

FLN Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges

- Sept. 15-Oct. 5** **Spanish-Language TREX / northern NM**
This training exchange will be held in and around the Santa Fe National Forest, and will bring together participants from several countries and across the U.S. (The application deadline has passed.)
- Sept. 29-Oct. 11** **Klamath River TREX / northern CA**
This TREX will provide communities along the Klamath River with experience and training on how to plan and implement controlled burns, protect communities from wildfires, and prepare for managing wildfires for resource benefits. (The application deadline has passed.)
- Oct. 20-Nov. 1** **NorCal TREX / northern CA**
At this TREX a diverse group of international and domestic fire practitioners will work together to share and build their experience in prescribed fire practices, fire effects, and other conservation efforts affecting forests and grasslands in northwestern California. (The application deadline has passed.)

Conferences, Workshops, Training, Etc.

- August 26-27** **Patch Burn Grazing Meeting / Pratt, KS**
Information: <http://blogs.missouristate.edu/gpfirescience/2015/04/28/call-for-abstracts-2015-patch-burn-grazing-meeting/>
- September 16** **Firing Operations and Initial Attack in Grassland Habitats / WA**
Joint Base Lewis McChord, the Center for Natural Lands Management and the Washington Prescribed Fire council will be hosting training opportunities targeted for firefighters working on firing boss task books or wishing to increase their experience with initial attack on grassland fires. Anyone who is NWCG qualified and current is welcome. Note: *date is tentative*.
Information: see flyer attached to [FLN Networker No. 188](#)
- September 22**
new listing **Pitch Pine-Oak Management in Central Pennsylvania: Habitat Restoration in Progress / near Harrisburg, PA**
Participants on this Pennsylvania Prescribed Fire Council-hosted field tour will discuss prescribed fire and management of dry oak and oak-pine communities. RSVP by **August 21**.
Information: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/e2093863b4879c06a3bdd3e72/files/CAFMS_newsletter_vol_5_issue_2.pdf
- September 24-26** **Colorado Wildland Fire Conference: Creating Fire Adapted Communities / Snowmass Village, CO**
The conference theme will be “Fire adapted communities—who owns the risk?” FAC Net staffer Molly Mowery will be among the keynote speakers at this conference.
Information: <http://www.wildfire-colorado.com/>
- October 20-21**
new listing **Fire History in the Appalachians / Pembroke, VA**
See the listing for the Central Appalachians in the FLN Workshops section.
- October 22-24** **Backyards & Beyond: Wildland Fire Education Conference / Myrtle Beach, SC**
Information: <http://www.nfpa.org/training/backyards-and-beyond>

- October 27-28 deadline** **Climate Adaptation for Conservation—Training & Coaching / Memphis, TN**
The Wildlife Conservation Society is offering this two-day workshop (ideally for project teams of 2-4 people). Applications are due by **August 24**.
Information: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/39a0cc0894768df6b3230129f/files/TrainingFlyer_OctoberWCS_Final_II_1_.pdf
- October 28-29 new listing** **Restoring the West 2015: Restoration and Fire in the Interior West / Logan, UT**
Information: <http://www.restoringthewest.org/>
- November 16-20 deadline** **AFE Fire Ecology & Management Congress / San Antonio, TX**
Additional offerings with this conference include an Rx310 course and several field tours, including one to Aransas NWR. Note: the deadline for poster presentations is **September 1**. Information: <http://afefirecongress.org/>
- December 8-9 new listing** **Introduction to State-and-Transition Simulation Modeling of Landscape Vegetation Dynamics / Durham, NC**
The TNC LANDFIRE team is sponsoring this two-day training using ST-Sim software, including modeling concepts, creating simple models of vegetation change, running the models and interpreting the results.
Information: <http://wiki.syncrosim.com/index.php?title=Courses>

Send News, Links & Comments

Lynn Decker – ldecker@tnc.org – Lynn is in Boise August 18-20.

Guy Duffner – gduffner@tnc.org – Guy is in Boulder, CO August 31-September 5.

Heather Montanye – hmontanye@tnc.org – Heather is out August 20-21.

Jeremy Bailey – jeremy_bailey@tnc.org – Jeremy is out August 19-25.

Mary Huffman – mhuffman@tnc.org – Mary is in Salmon River and Happy Camp, CA August 23-29.

Wendy Fulks – wfulks@tnc.org – Wendy is in the office.

Liz Rank (editor) – lrnk@tnc.org – Liz is in the office.

To stop receiving the FLN Networker, please reply to this message and include your request in the body of the message.

Full Links

News from the Field—Central Apps FLN—*Conservation Biology*: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.2015.29.issue-3/issuetoc>

News from the Field--NC—Oak restoration-salamander article: <http://www.bioone.org/doi/pdf/10.2981/wlb.00076>

Resources—TEK—Guidelines: <https://climatetkw.wordpress.com/guidelines/>

Essay: <http://earthzine.org/2015/07/31/the-ethics-of-traditional-knowledge-exchange-in-climate-change-initiatives/>

Resources—Seeds: <http://www.doi.gov/newsp/pressreleases/interior-department-releases-national-seed-strategy-for-landscape-scale-rehabilitation-and-restoration.cfm>

Reports—Fire management futures: http://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/pubs/gtr/gtr_nrs152.pdf

Reports--Wildfire cost: <http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/2015-Rising-Cost-Wildfire-Operations.pdf>

Reports—Social cost of carbon: <http://costofcarbon.org/files/Flammable Planet Wildfires and Social Cost of Carbon.pdf>

Article—Risk perception: <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/48876>

In the News—Yosemite after fire: <http://www.sciencefriday.com/segment/08/14/2015/how-big-blazes-shape-landscapes.html>

In the News--Buzzfeed on fire: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/jimdalyrmp/leii/wildfire-apocalypse>

Jobs—TNC careers page: <https://careers.nature.org>

Jobs—FL job: <https://jobs.myflorida.com/view-job.html?optlink-view=view-824361&ERFormID=newjoblist&ERFormCode=any>

The Fire Learning Network is supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together: Collaborative Engagement, Collective Action and Co-ownership of Fire*, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Bldg, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Western Klamath Restoration Partnership

Workshop 11

Orleans, California
July 21-23, 2015



Above: Participants worked in small groups to flag take and leave trees in a field exercise that sparked useful conversations.

Right: After working together in the field, participants reconvened to share updates and further discuss management practices and options. Photos: MKWC/Will Harling

The Western Klamath Restoration Partnership continues to be busy. In July, the collaborative group’s eleventh workshop drew about 40 people for three days of discussion and work together. The workshop was designed around three themes: fuels treatments, pre-NEPA work and information sharing. Things kicked off with a field trip into the Rodgers Creek pilot project area for a first-hand look at some of the steep terrain and limited access that will factor into subsequent planning conversations. Discussion centered on topics like “How much tree mortality are we willing to accept?” with regard to benefits and impacts of implementing projects, and “How do we work in riparian areas?” and “Where exactly do we focus treatments?”

The group also went into the field to discuss potential fuels treatments in both natural stands and pine plantations along a road on a ridge located just below private property with structures. For this exercise, attendees were divided into five groups, and each group spent some time marking both stand types in their designated areas with orange (take) and blue (leave) flagging. The group then came back together and talked through the example markings and thought processes that each of the small groups had used to mark their sample plots. Conversation topics were varied, ranging from desired canopy cover to historic cultural burning practices to managing for threatened and endangered species. Afterwards, members of the group felt that the exercise helped garner a “feeling

of accomplishment” in daylighting potential zones of agreement regarding fuels treatments.

The workshop wrapped up with a day packed with updates from the Salmon River, Happy Camp, and Orleans-Somes Bar focal areas as well as work to further refine the pre-NEPA purpose and need statements for the Rodgers Creek pilot project. Forest Service fire ecologist and geographer Carl Skinner gave a captivating presentation on landscape-level fire management. A parting piece of advice he gave the group was to diversify fuels treatments, especially since uncertainties like drought and climate change are such important parts of the equation.



For more information about the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership, contact:

Will Harling
will@mkwc.org

The FLN is part of the *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT)* cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more on PERFACT, contact Lynn Decker at ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.



An equal opportunity provider



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Central Appalachians FLN Summer 2015 Update

Spring Burning

Although a slow and snowy start to spring dampened our hopes for a more productive spring burning season, with the collaborative spirit of the FLN, partners in the Heart of the Appalachians landscape (in Virginia and West Virginia) still achieved nearly 9,000 acres of controlled burns. Among the highlights was the 400-acre Summers Mountain burn in the Highland Wildlife Management Area. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) teamed up with The Nature Conservancy, Wildland Restoration International and the USDA Forest Service to carry out this largest burn in DGIF history and the first in Virginia where Forest Service staff have burned on DGIF lands. The burn was a huge success due to enabling conditions set in place by the FLN—such as a new prescribed fire policy for DGIF and MOUs between all partners—that allowed all of these organizations to participate.

Partners in the Keystone Appalachians landscape (in Pennsylvania) conducted 9,300 acres of burning across Pennsylvania Game Commission, Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PADCNR) and Conservancy lands. Excellent cross-boundary coordination was evidenced by Conservancy staff from Maryland assisting the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and PADCNR with the Underwood Trail Burn near State College, while Conservancy staff from Pennsylvania were assisting the Pennsylvania Game Commission with another burn.

Western Wildfire Details

With the National Planning Level now at PL5, its highest level, and many western states under red flag warnings, many of our FLN partners have been deploying for wildfire details in the western part of the country. Staff from area forests and units of the USDA Forest Service and National Park Service as well as several Conservancy chapters are serving on wildfires in Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming.

Top: Tim SanJule of The Nature Conservancy keeps an eye on the Bear Loop prescribed burn in the Warm Springs Mountain Preserve.

Center, bottom: Staff from Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, The Nature Conservancy, Wildland Restoration International and the USDA Forest Service conducted the Summers Mountain prescribed burn in the Highland Wildlife Management Area.

Photos: TNC/Marek Smith; VA DGIF/AI Bourgeois



Monitoring Progress

The Heart of the Appalachians FLN Monitoring Working Group held its third annual Plant Identification and Protocol Refresher Workshop this year, in a new two-day format. Eighteen participants from the Conservancy, Forest Service and Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation spent the first day at Hungry Mother State Park identifying plants, with a focus on ericaceous shrubs. The second part of the workshop consisted of a Forest Structure and Composition Protocol review and the installment of four new monitoring plots in the Huff Hollow burn unit on the Eastern Divide Ranger District of the Jefferson National Forest. The new workshop format allowed for plenty of identification practice and discussion and will better ensure consistency in data collection across the landscape.

In the Keystone Appalachians landscape, monitoring collaborations continue among the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Penn State University, Arcadia University and the Conservancy. They are working to identify ways to move forward on the pre/post-burn vegetation monitoring initiative that was started in 2013. Monitoring during burns is also being integrated, through use of FEMO-qualified personnel. This collaboration led to a Fire Monitoring Workshop this spring, sponsored by the Center for Landscape Dynamics at Penn State; this evolved to include several additional faculty (including social scientists) and staff from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Fort Indiantown Gap military installation.

Training Highlights

A diverse group of prescribed fire practitioners gathered in the Sandhill and Piedmont regions of North Carolina in February for the second Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREN) held east of the Mississippi. TRENs were developed by the national Fire Learning Network, and provide wildland fire practitioners with training and learning opportunities while offering host units qualified personnel for complex burns. The North Carolina TREN was hosted by the Southern Blue Ridge FLN, North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council and their partners. Despite an unexpected amount of ice and freezing temperatures, more than 500 acres were treated during the event. Among the 40 participants advancing their skills there were representatives from the Central Appalachians FLN, including two employees from the Conservancy (Virginia and Maryland chapters) and one from the Forest Service (George Washington & Jefferson National Forests).



Top: Al Cire (Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation) and John Moncure (USDA Forest Service) collect forest structure and composition measurements in the Huff Hollow burn unit on the Eastern Divide Ranger District of the Jefferson National Forest. *Photo:* TNC/Laurel Schablein

Bottom: Nikole Swaney (The Nature Conservancy) and Aaron Bennington (USDA Forest Service) participate in a FEMO module as part of the North Carolina TREN. *Photo:* TNC

News from Prescribed Fire Councils

The Pennsylvania Prescribed Fire Council held its annual meeting in mid-February. Having received 501(c)3 non-profit status, the council elected its first nine-member board of directors at this meeting. Presentations and discussions at the meeting highlighted how fire is being used for massasauga, oak and native grassland management, emerging smartphone apps, and how aerial ignition is being used in the Appalachians for effective burning of larger units.

On September 22, 2015, the Council will host a field tour to discuss prescribed fire and management of dry oak and oak-pine communities. Participants will discuss issues ranging from maintaining oak forests to restoring woodlands, savannas and scrub oak-pitch pine barrens with combinations of fire, timber harvest and other methods. Contact Ben Jones with the Pennsylvania Game Commission (benjones@pa.gov) for details.



Mark Your Calendars

Please hold October 20-22 for a combined Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists fire history workshop and Central Appalachians Fire Learning Network annual meeting at Mountain Lake Lodge, near Blacksburg, VA. The first day will consist of presentations from the region's leading fire history researchers, followed by a full-day field trip to research sites and recently-burned units. An FLN working meeting will take place on the third day.



The abstract of Wayne Tyndall's paper "Restoration Results for a Maryland Shale Barren after Pignut Hickory Management and a Prescribed Burn" is at <http://castaneajournal.org/>.

The full article "Impacts of Wildfire Recency and Frequency on an Appalachian Oak Forest" by Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy is at <http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/48658>.

New Research on Fire Effects in Shale Barrens and Oak Woodlands

FLN partner Wayne Tyndall (Maryland Department of Natural Resources) authored a paper in the June issue of *Castanea* titled "Restoration Results for a Maryland Shale Barren after Pignut Hickory Management and a Prescribed Burn." The research examined changes in the herbaceous layer after herbicide and prescribed fire treatments. This work emphasizes the biodiversity importance of woody plant management and periodic ground fires to shale barren restoration.

FLN partner Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy (USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Center and Monongahela National Forest) published a research article in the July issue of the *Journal of Forestry* titled "Impacts of Wildfire Recency and Frequency on an Appalachian Oak Forest." Results from this study suggest that frequent fires are correlated with a significantly lower total basal area and greater



abundance of oak saplings. Although the findings generally support the use of repeated prescribed fire as a management tool in oak forests, the recency of fire, fire severity and fire-free intervals should be considered to further improve oak reproduction and restore oak-dominated forests.

National Workshop of FLN and Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

Pat Sheridan, District Ranger for the Warm Springs and James River Districts of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, represented the Central Appalachians FLN at the national workshop of the FLN and FAC Net in New Mexico in June. The workshop provided opportunities for seeing the results of work in the Santa Fe landscape, as well as for capturing and sharing learning, both within and between networks. A poster featuring the Central Appalachians FLN was presented at the workshop; it is posted on our page on the Conservation Gateway (see the link on the last page).

Prescribed Burning ♦ Restoring a Fire Adapted Landscape

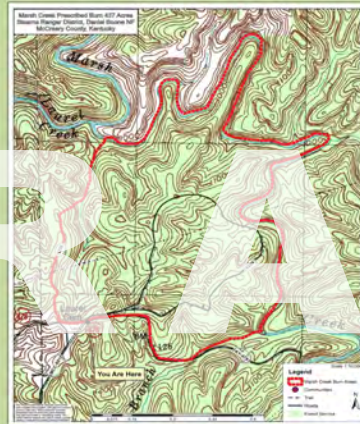


After a significant period suppressing fires, controlled burning is now recognized as a valuable tool. It removes layers of dead grass, leaf litter, and duff that inhibit the germination and growth of native grasses, wildflowers and trees. Controlled burns can thin crowded forests, resulting in less severe disease and insect pest outbreaks.



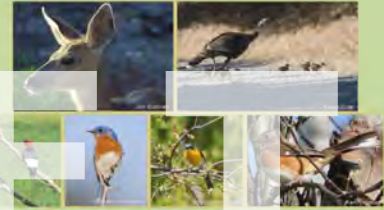
The application of prescribed fire (above) is well planned and performed to enhance native plant species, such as Indian grass (top right) and little bluestem (bottom right).

Marsh Creek Pine Savanna is dominated by pine trees, grasses, and wildflowers. This valuable habitat is being maintained using controlled burning, in addition to mechanical thinning, and mowing.



The area north of County Road 478 (shown in red above) is burned every 1 to 3 years. Mowing is performed yearly, often in strips, to provide varied habitat for animals and plants. A walk along road 6280 (the loop into the interior) will take you through spacious stands of timber and grassy areas that offer forage and protection available for wildlife.

Fire has been an essential natural process in Appalachian landscapes, shaping oak and pine forests for thousands of years. Some fires started from lightning, and Native Americans intentionally set others. Burning opened the forest understorey, increased plant diversity, and improved browse for wildlife. This made travelling and hunting easier. Early European settlers continued to use fire as a tool to shape their surroundings.



Game animals, including deer and turkey (top left), benefit from prescribed fire and mechanical land management practices. Acorns and blackberries are important food sources for many wildlife species. Fire increases fruiting in some plants and improves seed germination for others.

Songbird habitat is also favored by active management. Pictured above (from left to right) are just some of the species that benefit: red headed woodpecker, Eastern bluebird, yellow breasted chat, and Eastern towhee.



Draft version of one of the signs being developed by the Cumberland River FLN landscape and the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists for a self-guided driving tour.

Outreach Efforts

Partners within the Cumberland River (Kentucky) FLN landscape are wrapping up design and fabrication of interpretive signs to be installed on the Stearns Ranger District of the Daniel Boone National Forest. The signs are part of driving tour being developed together with support from the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists. The tour will have eight to ten stops and feature messages about the historic role of fire in the Appalachians; fire effects monitoring; plant, wildlife and fuel reduction benefits of controlled burns; and fire teams and safety.

Welcome New Partner

We are excited to welcome a new partner to the network, the New River-Highlands Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D). The RC&D has been working with communities and homeowners to develop FireWise sites in western Virginia for nearly a decade. Based in Wytheville, Virginia, they have implemented an impressive array of projects, including mechanical treatments and prescribed fire to reduce fuel loads and create defensible space around woodland homes. Interestingly, our connections to Marcus Gray (Executive Director) and Steve Spangler (Contract Forester) came through partners in our sister regional network, the Southern Blue Ridge FLN. And the new relationship couldn't be more timely as the Central Appalachians FLN looks toward becoming a part of the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network. We will greatly benefit from the RC&D's experience working to build resilient communities in fire-adapted landscapes. For an introduction to the RC&D's work, visit their website at <http://newriver-highlandsrcd.org/protecting-woodland-homes.html>.

For more information about the Central Appalachians FLN, contact:

Sam Lindblom
slindblom@tnc.org

Marek Smith
marek_smith@tnc.org

Laurel Schablein
lschablein@tnc.org

Links to products of the Central Appalachians FLN, including reports, posters, interpretive signs and brochure and other materials can be found on the network's Conservation Gateway page at:

<http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/FireLearningNetwork/RegionalNetworks/Pages/CentralApps.aspx>

The Fire Learning Network (FLN) and Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TRES) are part of *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together*, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior.

For more information, contact Lynn Decker ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.



An equal opportunity provider

v. 18 Aug 2015/Laurel Schablein



FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES LEARNING NETWORK

Notes from the Field

Island Park Sustainable Fire Community

Update: Summer 2015

Earlier this summer Les Fadness took on the project coordinator role for the Island Park Sustainable Fire Community (IPSFC), and has hit the ground running. With their Wildfire Awareness Week successfully wrapped up, he shared this update on the recent accomplishments of this collaborative, which has been focusing heavily on assessing risk and helping landowners mitigate those risks.

Requests for risk evaluations continue to roll in on a daily basis. This speaks highly of the nature of the business, the outstanding efforts of Susan and Bronwyn on the outreach staff, and the behind-the-scenes efforts of committee members and volunteers! Susan and Bronwyn have been knocking on doors, staffing booths promoting the program at Wildfire Awareness Week and various other events and venues around the eastern Idaho area. We have an expanding list of 80 property owners signed up for risk evaluations, and 34 more signed up for slash pick-up days. Conservative estimates of contacts include 373 people visiting the IPSFC booths at the various Wildfire Awareness Week venues and more than 120 field contacts by the outreach staff throughout Island Park subdivisions.

In July we lost a veteran team member, Fuels Specialist Scott Waldron, as he gracefully bowed out to pursue other personal and business interests—we wish him all the best. Seth Russell is continuing the evaluation and contracting efforts. Seth and I have split the Island Park arena into manageable sections, so that I can help perform evaluations and move the program forward. Collectively, we have completed 30 home evaluations, which have resulted in six confirmed projects totaling approximately 11.5 acres for treatment. We are working with another five property owners for an additional 4-6 acres of treatment. Many of the homeowners who requested evaluations out of concern for their properties have been reassured by the results of the evaluations, with their properties requiring little or no fuel reduction work to be performed. While we haven't been



Wildfire Awareness Week events in the summer of 2015 featured something for everyone, from informational booths to games, crafts and visits with Smokey Bear.

Photos: USFS/Liz Davy

able to develop a project for each homeowner, we are meeting our goals of making public contacts and performing evaluations—our biggest accomplishment has been the one-on-one education encounters with homeowners.

IPSFC released a bid notice for five project sites and were pleased to meet with seven contractor representatives for the site tour. Of these, we received bids from three companies. It was interesting to note that all the bids came in above the amount the grant is capable of supporting. The overages ranged from several hundred dollars to an excess of \$15,000 for one project. This created a minor setback in our planning and execution, but we're working through this. We are reviewing the bid process, criteria standards, property demographics and other possible reasons for the high bids. Some property owners have stated they are willing to contract with the tree service for the amount above the grant and continue with the work, but others are not so willing to do so.

The process of releasing a bid notice for the slash pick-up days in August and September, but was temporarily grounded by language technicalities. We have been successful in clearing those matters up with the parties involved and are proceeding with the bid announcement.

ISLAND PARK SUSTAINABLE FIRE COMMUNITY VISION

Human and ecological communities of Island Park and West Yellowstone are resilient to fire, insect and disease through awareness, outreach and action.

Public response this summer has been great and even though we're quickly approaching the sunset of the Cohesive Strategy grant, we are still receiving requests. In fact, as I have been preparing this update, I've paused four times to schedule people for three slash pick-ups and two risk evaluations.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the contributions of a local group of Island Park stakeholders for their concern, compassion and generosity. The Targhee Women's Club has awarded the IPSFC an \$800 grant for the purposes of furthering the program's goals. This is a significant contribution and I want the Island Park community to know the deep appreciation we have for being selected as a recipient this year.

We have been joined by some great and valued partners in Fall River Electric Coop, *Island Park Journal*, *Island Park News*,

Standard Journal, Idaho Department of Transportation, Targhee Women's Club, Island Park Fire Department, and innumerable commercial sponsors and volunteers as well as our federal, state and local governing entities. Without them, we would not be nearly as successful as we are.

I hope this update will demonstrate the achievements of the group and encourage everyone to continue the great effort. It's safe to say, there will be more to come!



Fuels cut and ready for removal at one of the four defensible space demonstration projects completed by IPSFC in 2014.
Photo: IPSFC/Jessica Simpson

The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network is supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together*, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior through a subaward to the Watershed Research and Training Center.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



For more information about the Island Park Sustainable Fire Community, contact:

Les Fadness
ipsustainablefire@gmail.com

For more about the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network visit:

<http://facnetwork.org/>