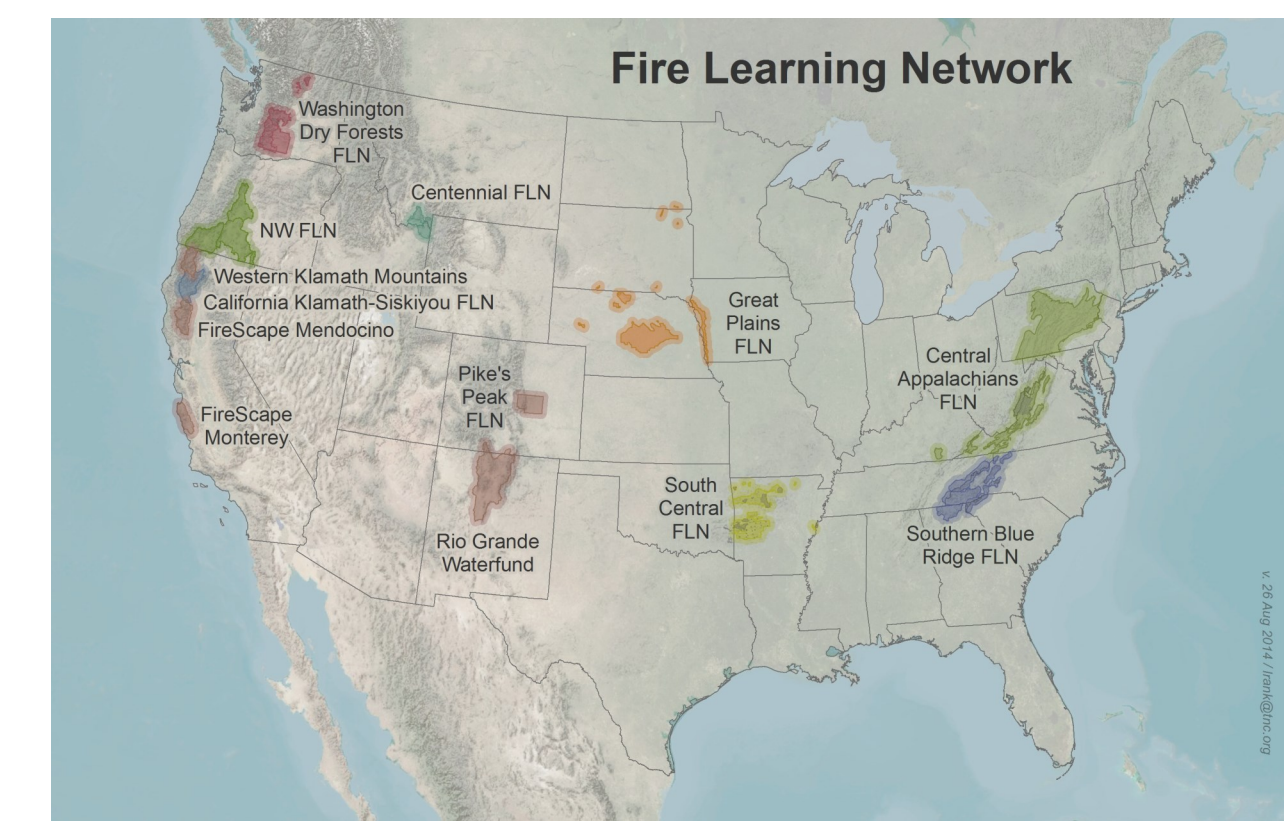


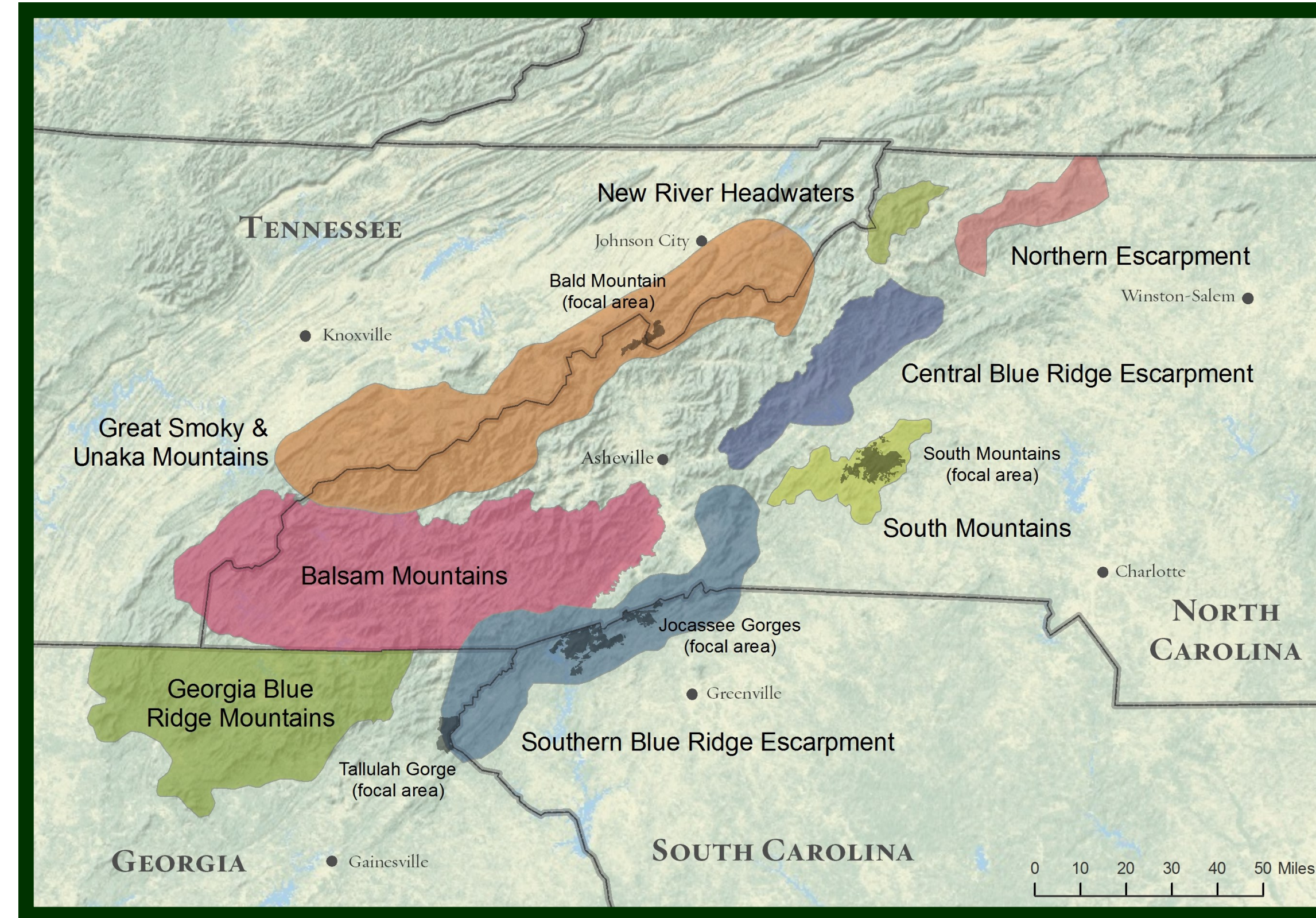


# The Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network: A collaborative partnership to restore fire-adapted ecosystems and sustain resilient natural and human communities in the southern Appalachian Mountains.

Beth Buchanan\*, Margit Bucher\*\*, Wendy Fulks\*\*  
\*US Forest Service, \*\*The Nature Conservancy



The Fire Learning Network (FLN, [www.conservationsgateway.org/fln](http://www.conservationsgateway.org/fln)) engages dozens of multi-stakeholder projects to accelerate the restoration of fire dependent landscapes to sustain both natural and human communities. By restoring this balance, the ecological, economic and social values of the landscapes can be maintained and the consequences of catastrophic wildfire reduced. The Southern Blue Ridge FLN (SBR FLN) spans three million acres across the southern Appalachian Mountains in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. State, federal, NGO and university partners in eight landscape teams collaboratively set goals, and share and apply the best available science and management practices to develop resilient ecosystems. The SBR FLN, now in its ninth year, continues to improve common vegetation maps, models and tools. This year saw landscape-scale growing season burns, multi-agency prescribed fires and a multi-day fire. Partners also actively engage in Joint Fire Science Program's consortia, whole system planning by The Nature Conservancy, a Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration project, state prescribed burn councils, and the Fire Adapted Communities Network. With a history of well-attended workshops, numerous collaborative projects, and sharing knowledge through webinars and 'The Networker' newsletter, the FLN has developed many strong working partnerships, which in turn get more fire on the ground.



## Our Partners in the Southern Blue Ridge

- Atlanta Botanical Garden
- Benton MacKaye Trail Association
- Chestates/Chattahoochee RC&D
- Clemson University
- Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists
- Firewise
- Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina
- Forest Stewards, Inc.
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources—Tallulah Gorge State Park
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources—Wildlife Resources Division (Game, Nongame)
- Georgia Forest Watch
- Glenn County, Georgia
- Land Trust for the Little Tennessee
- Mountain True (formerly Western North Carolina Alliance)
- National Park Service—Blue Ridge Parkway; Great Smoky Mountains NP; Southeast Regional Office
- North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation (including South Mountains, Stone Mountain, Lake James, Gorges State Parks)
- North Carolina Forest Service
- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- South Carolina State Parks (Table Rock, Devils Fork, Keowee, Toxaway)
- The Nature Conservancy—including Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee chapters)
- The Ornate Society
- Towns County (Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDA Forest Service—Chattahoochee-Oconee NF (including Blue Ridge RD, Chattooga River RD, Conasauga RD and Supervisor's Office)
- USDA Forest Service—Cherokee NF (including Unaka RD and Supervisor's Office)
- USDA Forest Service—National Forests in North Carolina: Nantahala NF (including Cheoah RD, Tusquitee RD, Nantahala RD), Pisgah NF (Grandfather RD)
- USDA Forest Service—Region 8 Regional Office
- USDA Forest Service—Southern Research Station
- Western Carolina University



Margit Bucher, TNC North Carolina



Mike Brod, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest; Josh Kelly, Mountain True



AI Cire, VA Department of Conservation and Recreation; John Moncre, George Washington & Jefferson National Forest



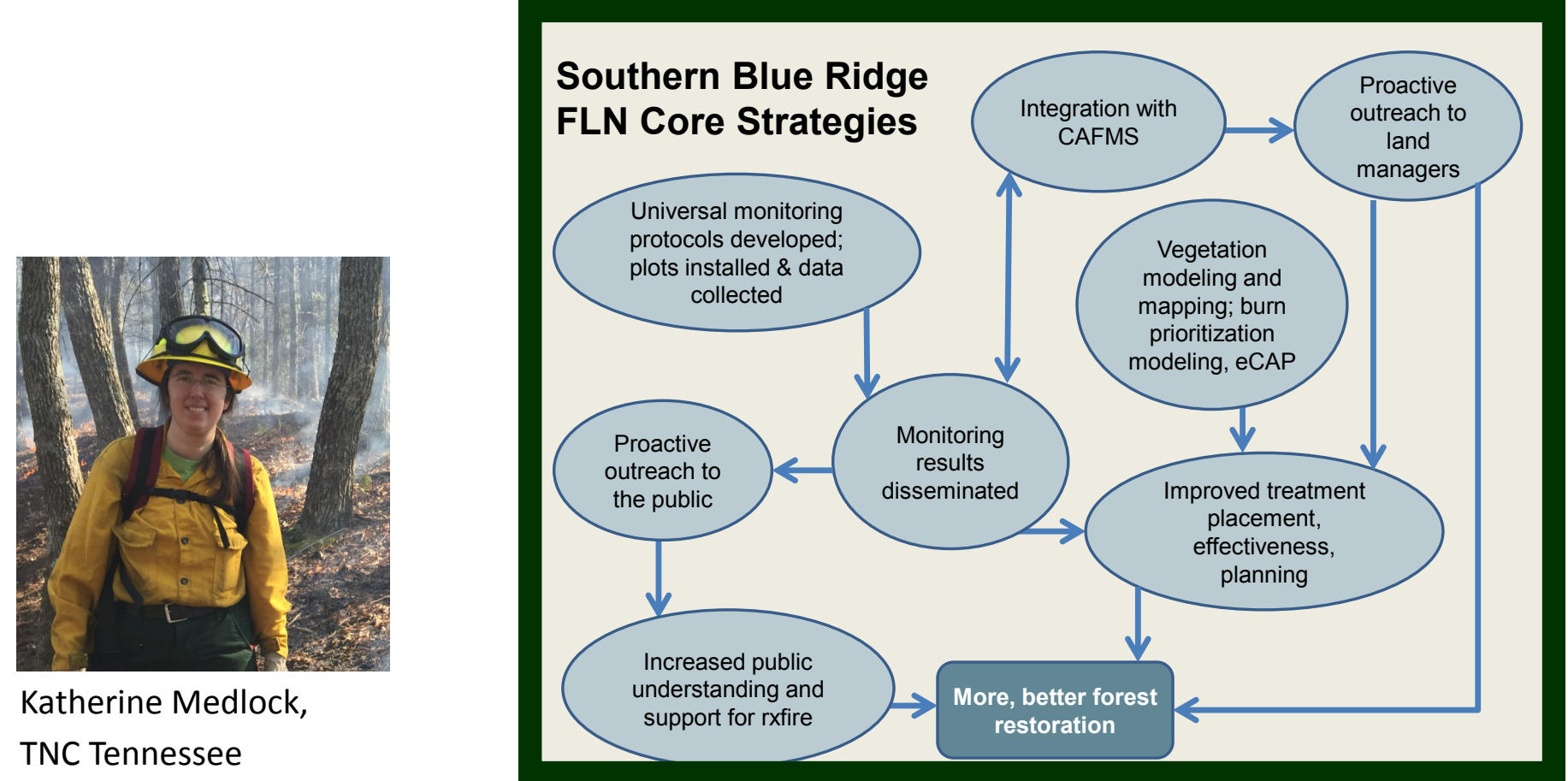
Nikole Swaney, TNC Virginia; Aaron Bennington, George Washington & Jefferson National Forest at 2015 TREX



Don Barger, National Parks Conservation Association; Rob Klein, National Park Service



Ryan Jacobs, NC Wildlife Resources Commission



Katherine Medlock, TNC Tennessee

### Southern Appalachians fire-adapted communities

Pine-Oak Heath      Shortleaf Pine-Oak      Dry-Mesic Oak-Hickory      High Elevation Red Oak

**What the FLN Does:**

FLN partnerships integrate science and local knowledge. FLN landscapes create plans, measure results and adapt their approaches. The FLN makes targeted investments in people and places that catalyze larger-scale change. The FLN has a flexible approach that is constantly evolving in response to research, emerging issues and partner priorities. The FLN identifies gaps in fire workforce development, and delivers targeted training to fill them. The FLN provides experiential training and fireline mentoring to agency fire practitioners to help expand the capacity to use ecologically- and socially-appropriate prescribed fire. The FLN provides experiential training and fireline mentoring to private landowners to help rebuild a culture of fire. FLN staff and partners work at all levels, from national to landscape, to conduct strategic public outreach aimed at building support for ecosystem restoration and fuels management. The FLN helps managers engage stakeholders more effectively in their fire planning efforts.



Dean Simon, NC Wildlife Resources Commission; Marshall Ellis, NC State Parks Commission

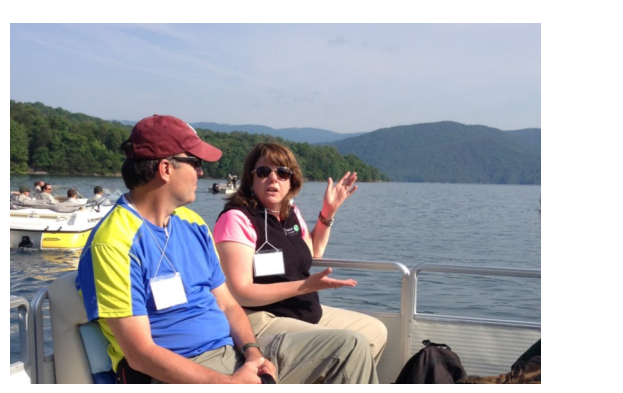


# Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network —

*It's all about the people!*



Lisa Jennings and Greg Philipp, National Forests in North Carolina



Dr. Peter Bates, Western Carolina University; Kristen Austin, TNC South Carolina



Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together is a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior—Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For more information, contact Lynn Decker at [ldecker@tnc.org](mailto:ldecker@tnc.org) or (801) 320-0524.

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