FLN

Fire Learning Network
Notes from the Field

Klamath River TREX
Controlled Burn Training
Tallies Successes

Orleans, CA   ~   October 1-13, 2018

A wetter than expected first week of the Klamath River Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX) didn't stop participants from getting good work done on the ground. In fact, the damp start afforded diverse participants a chance to focus more on training than in past years.

Between burning hundreds of piles of woody debris on private properties in preparation for future broadcast burns, participants paused to learn from veteran firefighters and local fire managers about how to wield a drip torch in different situations, using a variety of firing patterns to achieve intended burn effects. The slower pace also allowed for presentations on the Karuk Tribe's cultural uses of burning ranging, from improved basket materials and elk habitat to healthier huckleberry patches and safer communities in the face of wildfire.

Drier weather during the second week of TREX put the group inside a safe "burn window" when temperatures, humidities and fuel moistures cooperated with prescribed burn efforts. This window provided trainers

and trainees with critical firing and holding experience needed to get firefighting qualifications recognized by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

"I'm tired and smelly and sad to leave," first-time firefighter trainee Sara Worl said at the end of TREX.

The deliberately blackened acreage and capacity building both move TREX organizers such as the Karuk Tribe, Mid Klamath Watershed Council, US Forest Service, and Nature Conservancy's Fire Learning Network closer to reintroducing fire at a large scale in a place that historically burned at regular intervals. However, many parts of this rugged, remote

Klamath River TREX 2018 by the numbers:

- **96** people from more than **25** organizations and **7** states (plus Spain) took part this year

- **61** training assignments within a Type III Incident Management framework

- **279** acres burned in the wildland-urban interface around local towns and homes

- **104** documented contacts with locals about the need for prescribed fire

- **65** social media posts, with more than **2,000** engagements

The Ishi Pishi unit was highly anticipated, challenging and a long time coming—the team has waited for years for conditions to be right to burn this unit.

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country haven't burned for 100 years or more due to federal fire suppression policies. Watershed managers and fire management agencies alike have recognized that this type of scaling up is essential for us to use fire on our own terms with local resources while creating jobs and revitalizing tribal culture.

"We didn't just get good work done on the ground. We also raised the level of our own training and capacity substantially, in skill sets ranging from radio communications and map reading to our ability to be resourceful and proactive and fit into a Type III Team structure. I also think we were way better at anticipating and responding to local concerns, especially related to smoke, thanks to real-time data and analysis," according to Erica Terence, Mid Klamath Watershed Council outreach and development director, and, for two weeks in October, Klamath TREX public information officer.

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For more on the TREX strategy, visit:
> http://nature.ly/trainingexchanges

Karuk Tribe:
> http://www.karuk.us

Mid Klamath Watershed Council:
> http://www.mkwc.org

Participant Organizations

Amah Mutsun Land Trust
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
CAL FIRE
Capstone Fire Management
Central Coast Prescribed Fire Council
Chama Peak Land Alliance
Cultural Fire Management council
Deer Creek GIS
Douglas County (Colorado)
Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians
Firestorm Wildland Fire Suppression
Gestión Ambiental de Castilla-La Mancha (GEACAM)
Humboldt State University
Karuk Tribe
Long Tom Watershed Council
Mid Klamath Watershed Council
National Park Service
National Weather Service
Orleans Volunteer Fire Department
North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District
Stanford University
Susanville Indian Rancheria
The Nature Conservancy
University of Oregon
USDA Forest Service
Whispering Pines Volunteer Fire Dept
and individual volunteers

Participants came from California, Colorado, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota and Spain.