

# Fire Learning Network

A cooperative program of the Forest Service, Department of the Interior agencies and The Nature Conservancy, the FLN has a 16-year track record of helping to restore our nation's forests and grasslands and to make communities safer from fire.



The Fire Learning Network supports public-private landscape partnerships that engage in strategic planning, implementation and monitoring. This builds the trust and relationships critical to durable, sustainable collaborations that facilitate work across boundaries and leverage a diversity of investments. The FLN also provides a means for sharing the tools and innovations that increase capacity and enable strategies to get to scale.

This year, the FLN is focusing on expanding and diversifying participation in cross-network peer



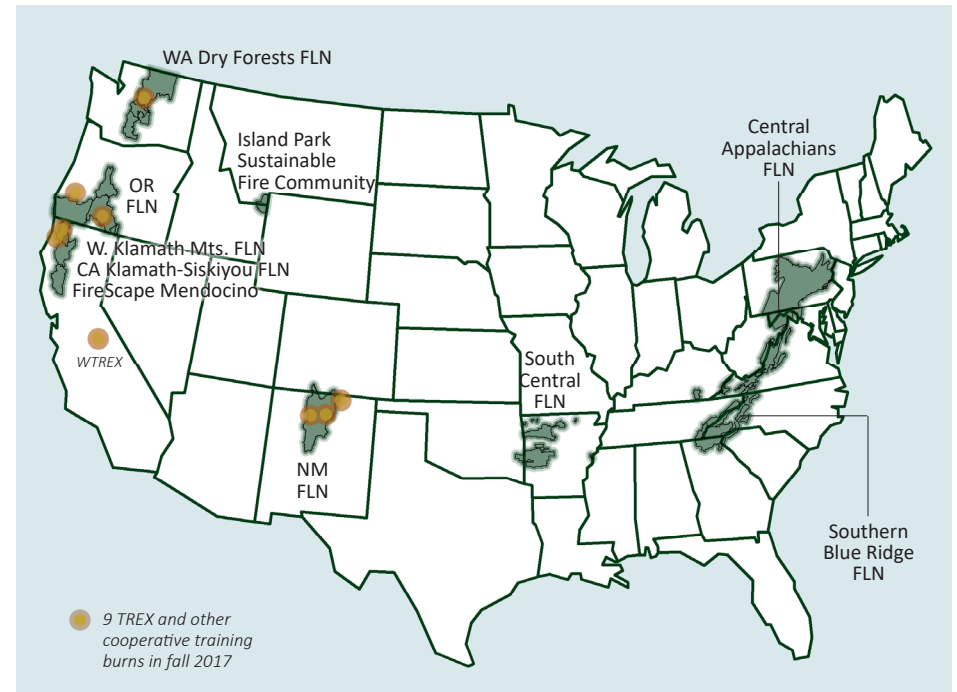
exchanges and cultivation of emerging network leaders. For example,

- California Klamath-Siskiyou FLN assisted a promising new partner in the San Francisco Bay Area with formulating a regional prescribed fire strategy and supported a field learning exchange with private landowners in partnership with FireScope Mendocino;
- South Central FLN partners from Arkansas hosted agency representatives from Tennessee for a shortleaf pine-oak woodland restoration workshop;
- Central Appalachians FLN leaders served on the planning team and took part in the Women in Fire TRES, and diversified their own annual workshop planning committee with rising leaders from several state and federal agencies; and
- Western Klamath Mountains FLN supported an emerging tribal community leader's participation in a Yurok-Hoopa-Karuk IPBN landscape workshop.

*Top:* A burn boss trainee briefs TRES and local fire agency resources at the McCartney Creek prescribed burn during the Cascadia TRES in Washington. © Cheryl Barth

*Bottom:* A trainee at a cooperative training burn hosted by the California Klamath-Siskiyou FLN conducts his first after action review.

© WRTC (Dave Jaramillo)



This fall, ten regional FLN networks and large landscapes advanced a shared vision of integrated and adaptive fire management through 27 landscape collaboratives across the country.

Several FLN collaboratives and landscape partners were recognized for their accomplishments in 2017. The Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project, part of the Deschutes Basin landscape of the Oregon FLN, received the 2017 Forest Service's Chief's Honor Award for their work on the West Bend Project. The Grandfather Restoration Collaborative, in the Central

Escarpment landscape of the Southern Blue Ridge FLN, received the 2017 Restored and Resilient Landscapes Award from the USFS Southern Region. CAL FIRE awarded its Partnership Awards for Superior Achievement to Will Harling, Lenya Quinn-Davidson and Margo Robbins, all key leaders in the California Klamath-Siskiyou or Western Klamath Mountains FLNs.

## Highlights from around the Network: July-December 2017

### California Klamath-Siskiyou FLN

Fall 2017 was a **landmark season for cooperative burning** in Humboldt and Trinity counties, with FLN partners conducting four live-fire trainings totaling more than 320 acres. These burns not only improved firefighter qualifications and helped them complete position task books, but changed the way that landowners, VFDs and CAL FIRE look at private lands burning, greatly expanding perspectives and opportunities across the counties.

**Building on these on-the-ground relationships**, a small group met in December to discuss formation of the Humboldt Prescribed Burn Association, which is anticipated to officially launch this spring. And with financial support from the California Deer Association and other private donations, partners continued to develop their prescribed fire equipment cache that included three slip-in units (one 200-gallon and two 50-gallon), 30 hand tools, 6 drip torches, about 800 feet of hose, two backpack pumps and an equipment trailer.

*Right:* In October, a group of volunteer fire departments, non-government organizations and private landowners completed a 140-acre training burn on a private ranch in Humboldt County.

© UC Extension (Lenya Quinn-Davidson)



### Central Appalachians FLN

*Left:* Partners made smoke observations during a cooperative burn at Sideling Hill Creek Preserve in western Maryland. The burn unit had been featured in planning exercises and a field tour at the first Potomac Headwaters FLN landscape workshop in early 2017. That workshop, along with assistance from many key partners, including the Maryland Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources—Heritage and Conservation Corps, made the burn possible.

© TNC (Matt Kane)

The annual regional workshop in November was once again well attended, with 76 people from 23 agency units participating. Through small-group work sessions, participants made significant progress towards **building capacity in four critical areas**: planning, burn prep, fire qualifications and fire effects monitoring. Planning of the workshop was, in itself, a step toward increased capacity as the planning committee included ten people from five agencies. The Virginia Department of Forestry also announced that its staff will be able to participate in prescribed burns hosted by other agencies. This **new policy, long sought by staff and partners**, will open doors for co-management and training opportunities and bring essential equipment to the partnership.

### FireScope Mendocino



Informed by an FLN field learning exchange and armed with the technical support he needed, a landowner conducted pile burns on his Round Valley ranch this fall and is preparing several others for burning over the winter.

© Chris Baldo

Staff from the Mendocino NF, CAL FIRE, Watershed Research and Training Center and Environmental Protection Information Center met with private landowners in the Covelo and Round Valley area in November. This field learning exchange, coordinated by community engagement specialist Jana Carp, was designed to foster relationships and share resources for prescribed fire, on both public and private lands. As a result, several **landowners are now planning to implement controlled burns** on their properties. In addition, the Mendocino NF added a burn project on the Estell grazing allotment to their 2018 program of work, and began pre-NEPA planning for several other projects.

## Island Park Sustainable Fire Community



credit: USFS (Liz Davy)

Wildfire Awareness Days kicked off this year with an evening presentation at the Conservancy's Flat Ranch Preserve. The Forest Supervisor from the nearby Salmon-Challis NF shared his experience in using prescribed fire in lodgepole pine for mitigating future wildfires. Saturday then brought a half day of activities and information exchange about wildfire preparedness—along with some good community fun.

Later in the month, homeowners from five neighborhoods participated in a series of "Are You Prepared for Wildfire?" workshops built on a successful sand table wildfire simulation exercise held last spring. The workshops provided opportunities to interact with staff from the Caribou-Targhee NF and Fremont County Emergency Management, and helped community members to **refine evacuation plans, define neighborhood escape routes and emergency vehicle access areas, and plan fuels reduction activities.**

## New Mexico FLN



A sign in the Manzano Mountains warned motorists of the risk from post-fire flooding.

© Forest Stewards Guild (Zander Evans)

The Burned Area Learning Network (BALN)—a community of practice for post-fire planning, response and recovery—continues to engage new partners through leadership of the New Mexico FLN and a subaward with the Forest Stewards Guild. The Santa Fe City Water Division has begun **using BALN products for its analysis of post-fire risk** to reservoirs and they have engaged in planning initiatives for the Santa Fe Fireshed. Water Division staff serve as lead communicators with local government and have provided funds to facilitate public events. The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition has also initiated a post-fire response plan, and BALN leads are producing a new newsletter for managers who have attended workshops or expressed interest in learning more about burned areas and post-fire practices.



## Oregon FLN

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency deployed a weather balloon to collect data on smoke emissions during a controlled burn at Sycan Marsh Preserve. © TNC (Craig Bienz)

The Big Coyote Fuels Reduction Project, enabled by the first Supplemental Project Agreement in USFS Region 6 under a new **Master Participating Agreement between the FLN and USFS, facilitated cross-boundary treatments** on more than 1,100 acres in 2017.

In October, a 900-acre cooperative burn at Sycan Marsh Preserve provided **training for more than 30 people**, and hosted a team of 30 scientists from the EPA, National Center for Atmospheric Research, USFS Fire Research Lab, University of Montana and Western Wildland Environmental Threats Assessment Center. The research team used a multi-scale assessment approach—from micro-fuels plots to unmanned aircraft systems to fixed-winged remote sensing—to quantify fire intensity, behavior and effects. Participants reported that the exchange between fire scientists and fire managers during the burns **delivered one of the best co-learning opportunities possible.**



## South Central FLN

The FLN hosted a five-day shortleaf pine-oak woodland restoration workshop and learning exchange in October. © TNC (McRee Anderson)

Over 20 people from nine agencies participated in a fall learning exchange to assist conservation partners in Tennessee with the **development of shortleaf pine management and restoration.** The workshop highlighted restoration needs, commercial and non-commercial timber sales, red-cockaded woodpecker management, fire effects monitoring, prescribed fire messaging and public engagement. Participants visited several sites in the Interior Highlands of Arkansas, including the Ouachita NF Buffalo Road Shortleaf Pine Restoration Area, the West Frazier Sawmill in Russellville, the Ozark NF Woodland Ecosystem Restoration Project and the Petit Jean Wildlife Management. The field exchange closed at the Mount Magazine State Park West End Restoration and Demonstration Site with discussion of how the partnership promotes high-profile prescribed burns in some of the busiest Arkansas parks.



### Southern Blue Ridge FLN

Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment landscape partners look at the fire landscape as a whole, prioritizing burn units regardless of ownership. *USFS/CAFMS (Helen Mohr)*

Over the summer and fall, five of the nine landscape collaboratives in the Southern Blue Ridge regional network held partner workshops—many taking advantage of windows between wild-fire details in western states to **jointly plan next year’s scope of work and prescribed fire seasons**. The Georgia Blue Ridge Mountains landscape met in Ellijay, Georgia in December, with a record 40 people from 10 agencies participating. Discussions included prescribed fire techniques, wildlife monitoring, local FAC Net efforts to engage communities, and 2018 prescribed fire plans. In the new South Cherokee landscape, the focus was on outreach to existing and potential partners, developing goals, and refining landscape boundaries. The final version of Ecomath, a GIS-based ecological fire prioritization tool, was completed for the South Zone of the Cherokee NF and helped fire managers in **determining fire needs across the landscape**.



### Washington Dry Forests FLN

Broad support for the Cascadia TRES was visible in the range of vehicles from multiple federal, state and local fire agencies parked on site during a prescribed burn outside the community of Roslyn. *© John Marshall*

The Cascadia TRES facilitated the training of 18 individuals from eight federal, state and local agencies from Washington, Oregon and Idaho through 419 acres of controlled burning on Forest Service, National Park Service, non-profit and private lands, and through field and classroom workshops. As the **first TRES in Washington**, it brought positive attention from partners, stakeholders, media (newspaper, TV stations, radio, blogs and social media) and the public to prescribed fire. Engagement with partners throughout the development and implementation of the six burns **demonstrated success, strengthened partnerships and established a foundation** for—and interest in—future burning. Outreach materials, strategies and lessons learned for communicating with the public about prescribed fire and smoke that had been developed through the 2928 Forest Resiliency Burning Pilot were instrumental in fostering community support for the burn that took place just outside Cle Elum.

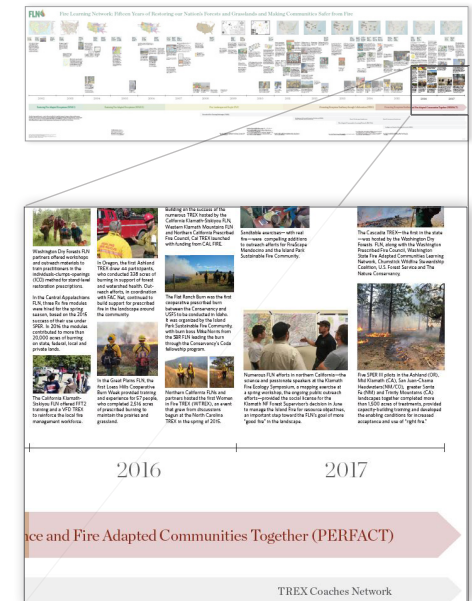
*“We focus often on the resiliency of our landscapes, but the resiliency of our institutions and organizations is important too. It is important to foster partnerships and networks within our landscapes to build the resiliency needed to adapt to unexpected changes, to quickly change directions when needed, and to take on new opportunities when they arise.”*

### Western Klamath Mountains FLN



During the Klamath River TRES, a controlled burn was conducted on a unit that had burned at high severity in the 2013 Orleans Fire. Since that fire burned through town four years ago, FLN partners have been creating a continuous fuelbreak around the community of Orleans to prevent future wildfires from impacting the town. *© Stormy Staats*

The Klamath River TRES gathered more than 80 participants in Orleans and Happy Camp; together they completed **310 acres of controlled burning on 14 separate units**. When burning paused on red flag warning days, participants prepared another 800 acres for future burning. The Klamath TRES Public Information Unit was particularly active this year, **publishing four video updates** (“TRES Connects”) that highlight active cooperative burning, fire effects and cultural fire management; these stories of good fire have been viewed more than 650 times on YouTube.



FLN staff developed a timeline poster highlighting 15 years of accomplishments and success stories from across the network. This project grew out of a team building and reflection exercise at the FLN Leads annual workshop in June 2017, and will serve as a touchstone for the network’s shared history as it moves forward.

The FLN is supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT)*, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior.

*PERFACT is an equal opportunity provider.*