

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.

This partnership works to restore our relationship with fire by helping us get to “right fire”—where good fire can do its necessary work on the landscape, and both human and natural communities are better able to live with fire. As partners, we work in key places with individual people, and also at regional and national scales. We also leverage the connections between those scales. This work is accomplished through:

- the Fire Learning Network (FLN), fostering collaboration for restoration and integrated fire management in landscapes across the country;
- the Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Learning Network, which is doing the same with communities adapting to wildfire;
- prescribed fire training exchanges (TRES), experiential training opportunities that integrate a range of people, places and aspects of fire; and
- targeted restoration action under Scaling-up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency (SPER).

These efforts—the FLN and those that it has inspired and incubated—are interconnected and continue to support each other. We and our partners are starting to see that our impacts are greater and results more durable where multiple

overlapping and complementary efforts are directed. As the four strategies are becoming more interwoven, they are becoming more powerful.

Fire Learning Network

More than thirty landscapes—most working as part of regional networks—are now active in the FLN. In addition to long-established partnerships, collaborative groups in the early stages of their FLN work are growing in California and Colorado. The FLNs under development generally focus on using a collaborative planning process that brings stakeholders together to work through where they want to go and how they can get there. The more established FLNs, having done this planning work, are now engaged in a diversity of place-specific activities and adaptive learning.



Last summer youth interns installed interpretive signs developed by the Central Appalachians FLN. The signs talk about the vital ecological role fire plays in the forest, as part of a larger strategy to increase the social license for the prescribed fire needed in this landscape. *Photo: TNC/Marek Smith*



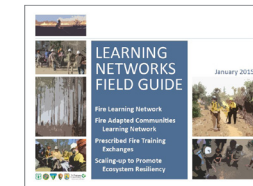
These include hosting workshops to share knowledge and develop local tools, as well as those that support the work of landscape-scale projects and statewide prescribed fire councils; they nurture the development of fire adapted communities, host prescribed fire training exchanges, monitor fire effects on bird populations, develop interpretive signage, and publish restoration resources. In doing so, they engage hundreds of diverse partners, from state and federal agencies to researchers and private citizens, and from coast to coast.

Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

Modeled after the FLN, the FAC Learning Network was launched in April 2013 with a workshop for representatives and partners from eight community-based “hub” organizations. In March 2014, another set of organizations joined, and 17 are now active in the network. Collaborative teams at each hub receive financial, technical and peer network support to implement and innovate fire adapted community concepts and best practices in their pilot communities, and to share them within the network and beyond. Communities have worked on projects as diverse as updating CWPPs and county-wide integrated fire plans, securing funding for mitigation projects, and gathering and sharing the lessons learned from first-hand experiences



FACNetwork.org is the public face of the FAC Learning Network. In addition to information about the network and links to a range of resources, there is a blog, updated twice weekly, where staff and community leads alike share useful tools, success stories and lessons learned.



The newly-revised field guide gives an overview of the scope of FLN, FAC Learning Network, TRES and SPER efforts and highlights the variety of local efforts.

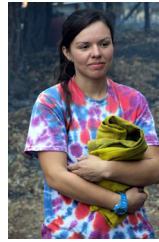
with wildfires. The network communicates regularly through an online workspace (Podio) and public blog (<http://facnetwork.org/>), as well as in quarterly peer-learning webinars and an annual workshop.

Staff and network members are working with researchers Sarah McCaffrey (USFS Northern Research Station) and Bruce Goldstein (University of Colorado), to increase the rigor of network operations and activities, and investigate how networks and the FAC approach contribute to growing community resilience. This will help the network make the greatest possible impact on the development of fire adapted communities nationwide.

Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges

Training events combining experiential learning and principles of integrated fire management are now being held in numerous locations each spring and fall. The integration of professional wildland firefighters with less-traditional training partners at these events expands both the capacity of the fire community and its breadth of knowledge. It strengthens the ability to conduct controlled burning effectively and with full social license, and develops connections that are helping wildfires be managed with sensitivity to local plans and concerns. TRESX also actively engage local, regional and national media, and help participants communicate key messages with skill.

Since 2008, 38 events have served more than 1,100 practitioners and treated more than 79,000 acres. The earliest TRESX were in FLN grasslands, but they are now offered in forested landscapes and quite frequently in wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas, in support of fire adapted community efforts as well as landscape-scale ecological restoration. TRESX efforts are



The fall 2014 Klamath River TRESX integrated the participation and knowledge of about 80 fire practitioners, the majority of whom were local residents. Seventeen of these individuals fulfilled the requirements for Firefighter Type II and received certification on completion of the TRESX. This collective effort, which treated more than 240 acres of private and tribal lands adjacent to dozens of homes and buildings, directly contributed to restoring fire adapted communities along the Klamath River and to an empowered, engaged local workforce.
Photos: Mid Klamath Watershed Center

now at an important growth point—in the past year or so it has almost simultaneously moved toward larger crew sizes, spread into new geographic areas (and habitats), become more closely tied to fire adapted communities efforts, and become more locally based. Numerous participants have attended multiple events, and are becoming sources of leadership and support. Staff support is now shifting from running the events to mentoring others. Efforts are shifting toward helping this model—and this integrated way of viewing fire management and doing prescribed fire—become adaptable, self-sustaining, and ever more widespread.

Scaling-up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency

Under the first two phases of SPER, modest amounts of implementation funding are targeted to either fill gaps in a landscape, or provide a catalyst to accelerate work. Prescribed fire, thinning, helicopter logging and invasive species management treatments are conducted under SPER, mainly on relatively small, strategically-placed parcels that leverage and connect existing or planned treatments on federal lands.

SPER II is now nearing completion, with five landscape-based projects wrapping up work on about 3,000 acres of treatments in support of fire adapted communities through the FAC Learning Network or FLN. In addition, SPER II supported several prescribed fire training events aimed at building local capacity while conducting treatments near at-risk communities.

Working Together

Staff and partners at all levels work to tie the networks, training and implementation into a larger whole. FLNs and FAC Learning Network hubs meet and work together on projects, and both have hosted TRESX to increase

their capacity to do the work they have identified as necessary for resilience. Similarly, SPER implementation projects treat areas identified as priorities by the network partnerships, and in many cases provide the burn units needed for TRESX training opportunities.

Learning and sharing knowledge also span all areas of work. In addition to the essential person-to-person contacts within and between the networks and the communities of practice we foster, we share through publications and connections with the larger conservation and fire adapted communities world, and with the general public, either directly or through the media. Each of these in its way helps develop the set of conditions that will enable the wider spread of right fire.



Northern New Mexico is one of the places where all four PERFECT efforts are coming together to support and accelerate each other. In addition to FLN (Rio Grande Water Fund) and FAC Learning Network efforts, two TRESX were held in the fall, and SPER implementation work is wrapping up.

Photo: Liz Rank/TNC

Fire Learning Network, Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, Scaling-up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency and Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges and are supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency 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. For more information, contact Lynn Decker at (ldecker@tnc.org) or (801) 320-0524.

More Online

Fire Learning Network

<http://www.conservationgateway.org/fln>

Prescribed fire training exchanges

<http://nature.ly/trainingexchanges>

Fire Adapted Communities

<http://facnetwork.org/>

FLN Networker (biweekly newsletter)

<http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/FireLearningNetwork/FLNNetworker/Pages/fln-networker.aspx>