Great Plains FLN

Loess Hills, Iowa

Partner Agencies & Organizations

Agren, Inc.
Harrison County Conservation Board
Iowa Department of Natural Resources—Loess Hills State Forest
Iowa Department of Natural Resources—Wildlife
Iowa Department of Natural Resources—Forestry
Iowa Department of Natural Resources—Private Lands
Loess Hills Alliance
Pheasants Forever
Plymouth County Conservation
Pottawattamie County Conservation Board
The Nature Conservancy
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service—Private Lands Program

Beyond Our Borders

Our focus is on private lands management—how do we engage and build capacity for landowners to manage their oak woodlands and grasslands with fire? We have supported and encouraged landowner associations in the northern Great Plains and we have supported volunteer fire department prescribed fire cooperatives.

What We've Learned

It takes continued plugging away to make progress. On private lands, fire acreage will vary from year to year, since fire is only one of the many tasks a landowner has to consider during the year. But the overall trajectory for using fire is going up in the region.

Above: Private lands burning. When burning on private land it can be challenging to find enough crew members. In this case, the landowner collaborated with students from a nearby college to provide fire experience for the students and crew members for the burn.

Top right: Partner meeting. The Loess Hills Fire Partners gather for quarterly meetings, in this case in the field to examine fire effects from a large cooperative burn.

Bottom right: Fire training field day at the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board shop at Hitchcock Nature Center. Offering basic fire training (S130/190) is critical for maintaining the capacity of day-crew hires for county and state agency partners. With the online course followed by a hands-on field day, private individuals are able to take the training without interfering with jobs and other responsibilities.

Recent Successes

Our biggest accomplishment has been the continued success of training exchanges and the local variation of "cooperative training burns." The cooperative burns have enabled partners to work together, accomplish larger burns and share techniques and equipment ideas. In the spring of 2013, partners completed an 800 acre burn on a mix of private and state lands—a burn that had been years in the making.

A Current Challenge

One challenge as we go forward includes adjusting to changes in staffing—when individuals leave, there is an adjustment period as the group re-organizes leadership roles.

Looking Ahead

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with local partners on sharing burn staff. Partners are committed to helping each other as needed on cooperative burning more so than in years past. We also have several Loess Hills landowner groups that are exploring forming neighborhood associations.

FLN

The Fire Learning Network is supported by Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency through Collaboration: Landscapes, Learning and Restoration, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information, contact Lynn Decker at ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.

An equal opportunity provider

For more information, contact Susanne Hickey at shickey@tnc.org or (402) 558-8099

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