



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

National Fire Learning Network Leaders Workshop

June 13-15, 2017
Orleans, CA

The majestic Klamath Mountains of northwestern California, with their wild and scenic Klamath and Salmon Rivers, provided the backdrop for the annual Fire Learning Network (FLN) leads workshop this year. Partners in the Western Klamath Mountains FLN hosted 20 leaders of regional FLNs across the country for the three-day workshop. Sandy Bar Ranch, the Karuk Tribe Department of Natural Resources and the Mid Klamath Watershed Council deserve special thanks for providing the excellent venues and logistical support. There could not have been a better setting—these people, in this place, with the deep integration of cultural and ecological history of fire—for FLN leads to gather and review accomplishments from the past 15 years, share lessons learned, strengthen ties within the network, and plan the network's future direction and coming year's work.



The Klamath River from Sandy Bar Ranch
© TNC (Marek Smith)

The first day's agenda featured a joint session with the host FLN's driving force, the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WKRP), providing the opportunity to discuss its projects and challenges, how those integrate with the multi-scalar FLN, and their approach to integrated fire management in the Klamath Mountains. Since developing a strategic plan using the Open Standards process in 2013, WKRP has aligned its actions in a manner that demonstrates

implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy in terms defined by tribal and local communities with consideration of regional and national goals. Arguably, nowhere else in the country are all the components of the Cohesive Strategy being as actively developed as they are in this region.



The cultural use of fire and traditional ecological knowledge play fundamental roles in the Western Klamath Mountains FLN's fire management strategies.

Above: Bill Tripp, Deputy Director of Eco-Cultural Revitalization with the Karuk Tribe Department of Natural Resources, highlights how the cumulative body of traditional and contemporary knowledge, practice and belief has melded through various assessments, research projects and analytical tools to help inform solutions to the region's complex fire problems. © TNC (Darren Borgias)

Below: Dr. Frank Lake, Research Ecologist with Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station, entertains the group with legends, instruments and songs, hand-made goods and cherished regalia during the evening session "Northern California Native American Stories: Lessons from the Land." © TNC (Darren Borgias)

Moving into the field on the second day, FLN leads explored private lands and the Six Rivers National Forest while deliberating a wide range of topics—the effects of prescribed fire after high severity wildfire, mechanical and prescribed fire treatments in the wildland urban interface, management of high severity fire footprints, getting to scale with prescribed fire, invasive plant species and fire, fire and cultural-use species and tribal food security, use of traditional burning to achieve modern resource objectives, and fire effects and vegetation monitoring. These moments of co-learning about what local partners have been successful with (and challenged by) in the Western Klamath Mountains provided a natural



Will Harling and Bill Tripp, co-leads of the Western Klamath Mountains FLN, share the objectives and outcomes from a Roots and Shoots project burn unit on the Orleans Ranger District of the Six Rivers NF. The project was primarily designed to improve the growing conditions of species essential for tribal practitioners and basket weavers. © TNC (Darren Borgias)



FLN leads populate a timeline of major outcomes of regional networks along the 2002-2017 history of the network.
© TNC (Marek Smith)

segue into reflections on the major FLN outcomes and accomplishments across the country over the past 15 years, and discussions of the processes and mechanisms that were essential to achieving those results.



Nick Goulette (California Klamath-Siskiyou FLN), Reese Lolley (Washington Dry Forests) and Sam Lindblom (Central Appalachians) discuss fire effects from the West Simms prescribed fire. That burn, spanning private and tribal lands, was implemented as part of a larger suite of fuels treatments around the town of Orleans.
© TNC (Marek Smith)

Among the goals of the workshop was the creation of intentional opportunities for developing relationships, fostering team cohesion, and facilitating co-learning between FLN regional network leads and with new FLN Director, Marek Smith. This was a key focus of the third day—the cohort of peers validated their shared vision of the FLN and developed ideas for what they will collectively advance and how they will structure and maintain the network to be successful. Areas of particular interest included improving and innovating methods of sharing FLN successes, expanding and diversifying participation in cross-network peer exchanges, developing succession plans for regional network leadership, designing approaches for more local partners to “touch” the national network, and continuing to cultivate and invest in leaders who build durable institutions, collaborating to solve our nation’s fire problems.



Moments for small group dialog, discovering opportunities for cross-network activities and co-work among regional network leads, extended into the evening hours.
© TNC (Marek Smith)



Left: Tying it all together, Bill Tripp talks about the region’s fire-adapted forests and communities and highlights opportunities for prescribed fire and managed wildfire. Fittingly, Offield Mountain, a sacred ceremonial site of the Karuk Tribe, rises in the background.

© Salmon River Restoration Council (Karuna Greenberg)

For more information, contact:

Marek Smith
marek_smith@tnc.org

The Fire Learning Network is part of *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together*, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information about PERFECT, contact Lynn Decker: ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.



An equal opportunity provider