



FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES LEARNING NETWORK

Notes from the Field

Community Field Trip Provides Opportunity for Shared Learning

Island Park Sustainable Fire Community

The **Island Park** Sustainable Fire Community is a FAC Learning Network hub that works in an area extending from Island Park, just north of Ashton, Idaho, into West Yellowstone, Montana. Island Park is also a Western Cohesive Strategy pilot project. Targhee National Forest land surrounds much of the town of Island Park and its unincorporated neighborhoods. Few homeowners live in Island Park year-round, and many only visit their homes for a handful of weekends each summer.

As the summer came to a close, the collaborative hosted a series of field trips designed to update members on recent accomplishments and to facilitate discussion about a number of issues.

On the first day, the group visited the Yale Creek, Palmer Summer Homes and Stonegate neighborhoods, where landowners have created defensible space in the home ignition zone. The collaborative provided funding for four of these demonstration sites in 2014, and each treated property has a sign indicating that it is a "Sustainable Fire Property." In addition, the collaborative hired two outreach coordinators to go door-to-door in the Yale Creek and Stonegate neighborhoods and have conversations with homeowners about wildfire risk. Their interviews indicate that the sustainable fire property signs are getting noticed

and that neighbors are talking with one another about fire. Although there are some residents who oppose tree removal, many others are interested in mitigation.

The next morning, the collaborative convened its monthly meeting and then the group visited some fuels treatments in and around West Yellowstone, Montana, close to the boundary between the Targhee and Gallatin National Forests. Forest Service staff from the two forests coordinate their work closely and have taken steps to ensure their fire plans are similar. (Due to the prevailing winds, wildfires on the Targhee can and do threaten homes and other values in Montana.) Gallatin National Forest staff also coordinate closely with the West Yellowstone Fire Department, conducting joint fuel reduction projects in wildland-urban interface areas.

And on the following day, the group visited an aspen restoration project near Henry's Lake, Idaho and a proposed fuels reduction project adjacent to the Yale Creek neighborhood. Discussions touched on litigation, the challenges associated with getting homeowners to accept prescribed fire as a restoration and fuels reduction tool, conifer encroachment into aspen, Douglas fir regeneration and options for improving ingress/egress for Yale Park residents.

August 26-28, 2014

Island Park, ID



Top: Field trip participants discuss aspen restoration and prescribed fire near Henry's Lake, Idaho. *Photo: Wendy Fulks*
Bottom: Signs are raising awareness about the Island Park collaborative and the need to create defensible space around homes. *Photo: Guy Duffner*

For more information about the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, visit FACnetwork.org or contact:

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The Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Learning Network is part of the *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.



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