



# Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field



Photo: Nancy Lee Adamson

## North Carolina TREN

Prescribed Fire Training Exchange—February 15-28, 2015

Neither rain nor snow nor ice could slow down the North Carolina TREN. A hardy group of prescribed fire practitioners braved the elements to participate in a Prescribed Fire Training Exchange in the North Carolina Sandhills. Despite some of the coldest temperatures on record and precipitation in the form of rain, snow and ice, the 58 participants shared knowledge and techniques to enhance controlled burning skills.

As is typical of TREN, participants with a wide range of skill levels and from diverse geographies—in this case from 15 states and Spain—came together to teach and learn from one another. Thirty organizations were represented, along with one private landowner. Thirty-five of the participants were working on their position task books for NWCG qualifications.

The North Carolina TREN got off to a good start—one the second

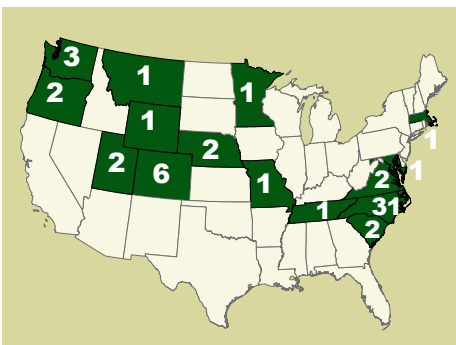


Participants improved conditions for longleaf pine seedlings. Photo: TNC/Kara Karboski

day, participants worked together to burn 163 acres of longleaf pine habitat on three tracts owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NC WRC). As the weather took a turn on the third day, with a rainy mix not conducive to burning, the training and knowledge exchange was just beginning. The next few days were spent learning about the need for fire in the longleaf ecosystem, local ecology, weather monitoring and forecasts, smoke modeling, medical planning, operation of pumps and engines, firing techniques, and other topics, with lessons both in and out of the classroom.

### Participating Agencies & Organizations

- Bureau of Land Management
- Department of Defense—Camp Lejeune, Fort Bragg, Joint Base Lewis-McChord
- Duke University
- Fort Bragg
- Mecklenburg County
- National Park Service
- National Center for Landscape Fire Analyses
- Northern Prairies Land Trust
- Nebraska Game and Parks
- North Carolina State Parks
- North Carolina Forest Service
- North Carolina State University
- North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission
- The Nature Conservancy
- University of South Carolina
- Xerces Society
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Forest Service
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



While North Carolina was, of course, well represented at this TREN, participants came from across the country. They brought with them varied ecological and fire culture experiences that enriched the event.



TREN participants taking part in a field tour with author and ecologist Bruce Sorrie.

Photo: Nancy Lee Adamson

**Four days later**, the participants got back out to burn some more, treating 102 acres of longleaf pine on NC WRC and TNC land. They also conducted pile burning on private lands, which served as a training opportunity for participants to work on skills to suppress a “wildfire.” The weather held the next day, allowing 258 acres of burning on three tracts owned by TNC and one on private lands.

**The weather** then went from bad to worse—but morale remained high, and the dedication to training did not end. Classroom and other non-burning field training continued. And on the last day of the TREX, participants were rewarded, when a small burn window allowed for one more acre of burning, and all of the

participants had a chance to practice their skills at initial attack on several “wildfires.”

**During this TREX**, about 525 acres of longleaf forest were burned on both private and public lands. But by many accounts the most valuable aspect of the TREX was the exposure to the techniques, approaches and cultures of fire programs from many different organizations and different states, and learning about experiences in different fuel types.



Creative use of ice on the ground brightens your outlook when you are trying to burn.

*Photo: Jose Luis Duce*

**Despite the poor weather, we maximized the training opportunities on each burn by having solid plans, motivated participants and well-coordinated operations at each prescribed fire.**

Mike Norris, Incident Commander

LOGS#	NCTNC RX 0009 SH	ACRES
2-16 <sup>th</sup>	NCWRC-172	20 ac
2-16 <sup>th</sup>	SASSAFRAS 1	53 ac
2-16 <sup>th</sup>	NCWRC-16B	90 ac
2-20 <sup>th</sup>	MOSS FOUNDATION	90 ac
2-20 <sup>th</sup>	OB4	12 ac
2-20 <sup>th</sup>	GREEN SWAMP MOON J.	64 ac
2-21 <sup>st</sup>	SASSAFRAS 2,3	165 ac
2-21 <sup>st</sup>	CALLOWAY 32	29 ac
2-21 <sup>st</sup>	MORGAN 2	
<b>WEEK-1</b>		<b>524 ac</b>

A log of the units treated in the course of this TREX kept participants updated.



What can you burn with southern snow on the ground? Piles! When weather did not permit broadcast burning, pile-burning provided participants with experience in wildfire suppression techniques while reducing excess fuels.

*Photo: Katelynn Jenkins*



Left: A happy module, post-fire.

*Photo: TNC/Margit Bucher*

**For more information** about this TREX, contact:

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**For more information** about TREX being offered elsewhere across the country, visit:

<http://nature.ly/trainingexchanges>

Funding for this TREX was provided by the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) Prescribed Fire Working Group led by North Carolina State University, The Nature Conservancy, the Fire Learning Network, the North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council and others.

The North Carolina Chapter of The Nature Conservancy took the lead in coordinating logistics, planning and prepping burn units, and providing Incident Commander Mike Norris. Based on how well this TREX went, he is already starting to make plans for another TREX in May 2017.

TREX are part of *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. For more information on PERFACT, contact Lynn Decker ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.



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