After a few unsuccessful tries at the end of last spring’s burning season, when the weather failed to cooperate, partners hiked back up the mountain to try it again. The 1,950-acre Lake James burn was split into two sections, with an upper section of 850 acres and a lower one of 1,100 acres. There was great weather on the first day. Burning was delayed by an equipment malfunction that held up the helicopter, but another helicopter was available, allowing the completion of the upper 850-acre section. The next day, work began on the bottom portion; this was stalled shortly after noon by an unpredicted rain shower, allowing ignition on only about 50 acres. The following day had very high winds, so the crew worked to monitor the burn, with no active firing. On the fourth day, the weather finally cleared up again for a great day of burning that allowed completion of the remaining acres.

FLN monitoring plots had been installed in this unit by Forest Stewards and Western Carolina University, who will also collect the post-burn data next year. Partners are particularly looking forward to seeing the results, since this was the second time the unit has been burned, and the effects of multiple burns within a single unit on the Grandfather District are of great interest.

Smoke monitoring is part of the Grandfather project’s smoke management program, and on this burn mobile smoke monitoring stations were deployed for the first time. Grandfather District staff are assessing the information and will share through a blog post on https://grandfatherrestorationproject.wordpress.com.

Photos: TNC/Adam Warwick (above), USFS/Lisa Jennings (top of page)

The Fire Learning Network (FLN) 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, contact Lynn Decker ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.

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