The Southern Blue Ridge Network is engaging more than 20 entities in four states in a process that accelerates the restoration of landscapes that depend on fire to sustain native plants and animals. Partners include but are not limited to:

- State agencies including Forestry, Wildlife Resources, Parks & Recreation and others
- The Nature Conservancy, Land Trust for the Little Tennessee, Wildlaw
- National Park Service (Great Smoky Mountains NP and Blue Ridge Parkway)
- US Forest Service (Nantahala, Pisgah, Cherokee and Chattahoochee NFs & Southern Research Station)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Universities (University of Tennessee, Texas A&M, Western Carolina University)

**What is a Fire Learning Network (FLN)?**

- A landscape-scale collaborative effort to accelerate the restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems
- A nationwide effort that operates through regional and local partnerships
- Funded by the National Fire Plan

**The Southern Blue Ridge FLN:**

- Initiated in 2007 by a diverse group of partners including federal and state agencies, Universities, and NGOs including The Nature Conservancy
- Comprised of 7.7 acres of public and private land in the Southern Appalachian Highlands, USA
- **Our vision:** To increase the capacity for prescribed burning and improve the collective ability to achieve meaningful fuel reduction and ecological restoration objectives

**Where are we working?**

- The Southern Blue Ridge FLN features 7 distinct “Landscapes” and 4 “Focal Areas” where collaborative projects are being implemented.

**The Collaborative Process**

**Step 1.** Through a series of workshops, partners identified 4 fire-adapted forest communities:

- Pine-Oak Heath
- Shortleaf Pine-Oak
- Dry-mesic Oak-Hickory
- High Elevation Red Oak

Conceptual models were created for each of the fire-adapted communities to document the state of the knowledge and to guide development of desired future conditions.

**Step 2.** A landscape model was used to determine the relative amounts of each fire-adapted community within the Southern Blue Ridge FLN Landscapes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape Area Name</th>
<th>Total Acres</th>
<th>Total Acres Fire Adapted</th>
<th>Oak-Hickory</th>
<th>Pine-Oak-Heath</th>
<th>Shortleaf Pine-Oak</th>
<th>High Elevation Red Oak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balsam Mountains</td>
<td>235,582</td>
<td>96,806</td>
<td>(41%)</td>
<td>7,924</td>
<td>(34%)</td>
<td>33,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Escarpment</td>
<td>230,526</td>
<td>113,205</td>
<td>(58%)</td>
<td>55,513</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>7,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nantahala Mountains</td>
<td>625,044</td>
<td>100,098</td>
<td>(44%)</td>
<td>57,024</td>
<td>(28%)</td>
<td>31,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New River Mountains</td>
<td>94,762</td>
<td>17,707</td>
<td>(19%)</td>
<td>1,294</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>3,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Smoky and Unaka Mountains</td>
<td>625,044</td>
<td>100,098</td>
<td>(44%)</td>
<td>57,024</td>
<td>(28%)</td>
<td>31,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Blue Ridge Escarpment</td>
<td>867,413</td>
<td>150,026</td>
<td>(55%)</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>(29%)</td>
<td>8,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Mountains</td>
<td>215,558</td>
<td>180,309</td>
<td>(87%)</td>
<td>47,165</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>16,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4,023,790</td>
<td>1,737,509</td>
<td>(52%)</td>
<td>976,716</td>
<td>(56%)</td>
<td>362,330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 3.** Partners developed implementation plans for Focal Areas within the FLN Landscapes.

These plans identified objectives and timelines as well as barriers and solutions.

**Step 4.** Follow through – Burns are implemented; fire effects data will be analyzed & shared.

**Step 5.** Partners reconvene to share successes and lessons learned with other FLN members, thereby enhancing learning and facilitating future success.

**Step 6.** Explore where restoration can be expanded from focal areas to the larger landscapes and partner with the Appalachian Science Consortium to bring the best current science to the work.

**Partners**
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