

Fire Learning Network

Partners work by **accelerating** the development of prototype fire adapted communities in a **landscape context** ... accelerating integrated efforts for restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes through multi-scalar collaboration, **effective planning** processes & transformative learning and **networks** ... building social and operational capacity for response to wildland fire in a changing world ... accelerating the adjustment of landscape-level strategies for a changing climate ... **integrating** science, cultural knowledge & **adaptive learning** to resolve key barriers to transformative resilience.

The Fire Learning Network is a network of hundreds of partners in 30 landscapes across the country; many of the landscapes work together in regional networks, and all are committed to sharing their challenges, expertise and learning nationally. FLN members collaborate to do what is needed locally to promote the resiliency of fire-adapted ecosystems and the safety of the communities that are a part of them. The efforts needed to do this range from collaboratively setting goals and making plans to meet them, to building, integrating and sharing the science and local knowledge needed

for adaptive management decisions, to public outreach that builds support for those actions, to training that provides the workforce for them, to the relationships that support the safe and efficient implementation of restoration treatments. With over 12 years of innovation and learning behind it, the FLN has built a strong foundation for a robust and evolving body of work. As regional FLNs have matured, they have taken a variety of paths, depending on local needs and partners, and the barriers and opportunities they face. Partnerships built through the FLN now form

the basis for a wide variety of work that promotes both ecosystem and community resilience.

The FLN's methods and partnerships have given rise to other successful programs under the Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency through Collaboration (PERC) cooperative agreement, such as prescribed fire training exchanges (TRES) starting in 2008 and Scaling-up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency (SPER) implementation projects starting in 2011. Most recently, the lessons learned from the FLN have been applied to the formation of a new and complementary network, the

Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, which furthers the Cohesive Strategy goal of making human communities part of the ongoing work in fire management for safer, more resilient natural and human systems. (The article "Adopting a Learning Network Approach for Growing Fire Adapted Communities" in *Fire Management Today* describes this.) Beyond PERC, the FLN is nurturing and steering a new generation of prescribed fire councils. And, on a yet larger scale, FLN strategies can be found in the Cohesive Strategy revised regional implementation plans.



Southern Blue Ridge FLN partners break for lunch at Jumping Off Rock during a field tour of Jocassee Gorges at the May regional workshop.

In large part due to the work of this FLN, burning in the region is becoming more routine: For example, this spring the north rim of Tallulah Gorge had prescribed fire for the third time in seven years. Another 2,000-acre unit just five miles to the west received fire the same day. This was undoubtedly the most acreage burned in a single day in Rabun County, GA. And despite the smoke, there were no complaints from the public.



Data are recorded during a plant community monitoring project jointly carried out by The Nature Conservancy and the Forest Service on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest. In both the South Central and Southern Blue Ridge FLNs, partners have developed uniform monitoring protocols across wide landscapes to support adaptive management.

The Fire Learning Network is supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency through Collaboration (PERC): Landscapes, Learning & Restoration*, 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).

