SOUTHERN BLUE RIDGE COOPERATIVE LANDSCAPE

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Southern Blue Ridge is one of the most biologically significant regions in the United States, boasting an unbroken network of our country’s most diverse forest that spans and connects the mountains of Virginia, Tennessee, the Carolinas and Georgia. Yet a third of the national forest land in the region needs active restoration. The Nature Conservancy is participating in several collaborative efforts designed to increase the pace and scale of restoration.

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Partners in the Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network collectively achieved 49,000 acres of prescribed fire, and managed 12,000 acres of wildfires with no homes lost.
- U.S. Forest Service support of $300,000 enabled the Conservancy to hire three seasonal crews to assist with partnership prescribed burns and other restoration work in the Southern Blue Ridge and Central Appalachian landscapes, a very large step towards meeting our restoration goals.
- With Western Carolina University, Clemson University and the U.S. Forest Service, we are finalizing an analysis of six years of fire monitoring data from 12 sites in the SBR FLN.
- Collaborative restoration efforts are popping up everywhere in our region, including a new effort on the South Zone of the Cherokee National Forest, another on the Chattahoochee National Forest and a project in the heart of the Pisgah National Forest.

LOOKING AHEAD

We will continue our partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to create a shared vision, goal and targets for ecological restoration on federal lands. By enabling collaborative landscape-scale NEPA in priority places, we will work to facilitate NEPA for larger areas to increase the efficiency of the process and ultimately implement more restoration projects in priority areas.

IN THE FIELD

Forest Service mountain staff participated in a TREX interagency fire training sponsored by the Southern Blue Ridge FLN. © Margit Bucher/TNC

SUPPORTING NATIONAL PRIORITIES

The Southern Blue Ridge project is supporting national efforts to double the pace of forest restoration by addressing:

- Improving restoration through better forest planning and innovative NEPA tools
- Enhanced partnership tools and emphasis to support federal Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program projects
- Outreach and training to facilitate restoration for fire-adapted forests and communities

WORKING TOGETHER

Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists
Forest Stewards
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Georgia Forest Watch
Greenville Water
Land Trust for the Little Tennessee River
Mountain True
National Park Service—Blue Ridge Parkway
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
National Wild Turkey Federation
North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation
North Carolina Forest Service
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Ruffed Grouse Society
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
South Carolina Forestry Commission
South Carolina State Parks
Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southern Highlands Reserve
Tennessee Division of Forestry
Tennessee Forestry Association
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
The Wilderness Society
Towns County (Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network)
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service—Region 8; Southern Research Station; Chattahoochee, Cherokee, Jefferson, Nantahala, Oconee, Pisgah and Sumter National Forests
Numerous local citizens

LEADING THE PROJECT

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RESTORING THEIR HOME

Our fire restoration work is helping to enhance key food sources like blueberries and oak-hickory mast for the black bear. © Kent Mason

RESTORING AMERICA’S FORESTS