



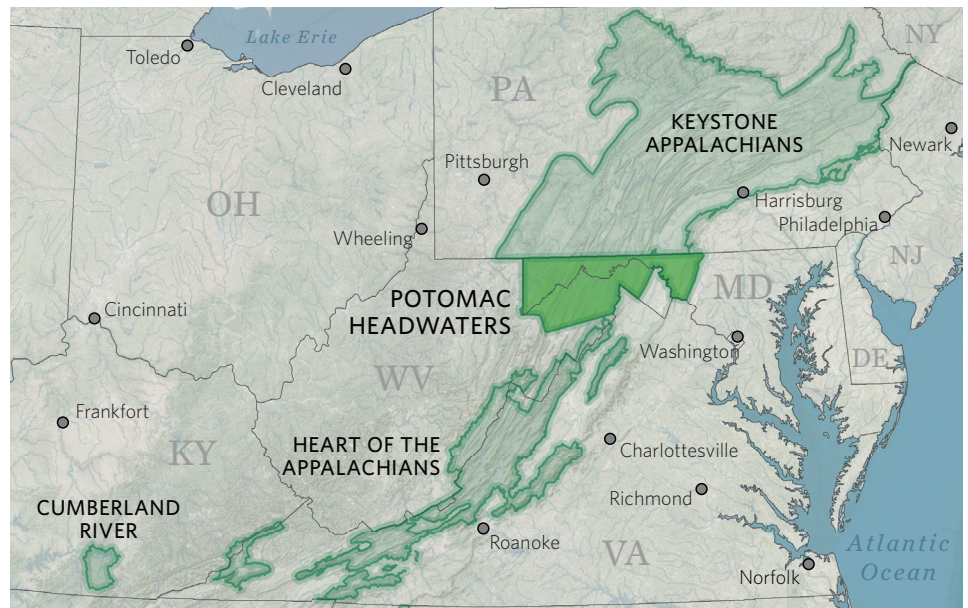
Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Central Appalachians FLN Potomac Headwaters Kick-off Workshop

Frostburg, Maryland
January 24-25, 2017

A January workshop kicked off the work of the Potomac Headwaters landscape in the Central Appalachians FLN. This new landscape serves as a key connector, stitching together the northern and southern portions of the regional network, which now spans nearly 19 million acres. It also leverages the regional network's collaboration goals with new partnerships and expertise. About 60 people—landscape partners in Maryland and West Virginia, along with FLN colleagues from Pennsylvania and Virginia—took part in the workshop.

The workshop started with a history of the Central Appalachian regional FLN's impacts on resilient forests from Marek Smith. He was followed by Ben Jones of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, who shared success stories of building capacity and gaining broad stakeholder support for fire in the state through the Keystone Appalachians FLN landscape. Turning to the Potomac Headwaters landscape, Monte Mitchell gave an overview of the Maryland DNR fire program. Sean Weaver discussed a notable 16-acre burn within the City of Frederick watershed; this particular fire



The Potomac Headwaters joins three established landscapes in the Central Appalachians regional FLN.
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presented opportunities to work through challenges with city officials as well as for narratives about good fire in local press. Turning to the link between science and management, Helen Mohr introduced participants to the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers & Scientists and the Joint Fire Science Program, and then Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy focused more locally, with a synopsis of fire history in western Maryland.

A choice of breakout sessions followed these presentations: The "Central Appalachian Fire Research" session focused on knowledge sharing and discussion of future research needs in the new landscape. The "Collaborative Fire Planning and Monitoring" session broke into several smaller groups and, using maps of the nearby Sideling Hill Wildlife Management Area, carried out a spatial planning exercise together.



One of the breakout sessions provided hands-on practice in a spatial planning exercise using maps of the Sideling Hill WMA, which participants visited the next day.
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PRESENTATIONS

- Marek Smith (TNC), "History and Overview of FLN and Resilient Forests"
- Ben Jones (Pennsylvania Game Commission), "Building Capacity to Use Prescribed Fire for Wildlife Conservation and Resilient Landscapes"
- Monte Mitchell (Maryland DNR), "Overview of Fire in Maryland"
- Sean Weaver (Maryland DNR), "Frederick Watershed Pitch Pine Burn"
- Helen Mohr (CAFMS/USFS), "Overview of the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers & Scientists and the Joint Fire Science Program"
- Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy (USFS), "Fire History of Western Maryland and Surrounding Areas"
- Jim Smith (TNC/LANDFIRE), "Understanding Regional Scale Data and its Application" (Wintry weather stranded Jim at an airport, but he was able to give his presentation via webinar shortly after the workshop.)

A field visit to the Sideling Hill WMA on the second day included discussion an ongoing study of fire scars, led by Dr. Lauren Howard of Arcadia University for the Nature Conservancy. Dr. Howard described the dendrochronology methods and shared tree “cookie” samples that recorded wildfires from as far back as the 1800s. A TNC preserve is nested within the Sideling Hill WMA, which provided an opportunity to talk about burning across boundaries, and the adjacent residential area allowed for lessons learned for effective community engagement and fire adapted communities efforts.



Right: On the workshop’s field day, participants were introduced to the Sideling Hill WMA (top), then discussed dendrochronology methods that allow exploration of 200 years of fire history at this site (bottom). © TNC (Matt Kane)



A “cookie” slice showing fire scars that document local fire history back into the early 1800s. © TNC (Seyern Smith)

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



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