

# LEARNING Networks *notes* FROM THE FIELD

## Day by Day: Notes from the Cascadia TRES

Cle Elum, Washington  
April 28-May 10, 2019

A great team of 18 people—from Colorado, Idaho, Maine, Montana, Oregon and British Columbia as well as Washington, and from 15 agencies and organizations—gathered for the third Cascadia TRES. Based in Cle Elum, the crew supported burning with partners on Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest units.

Kara Karboski (Washington RC&D) from the TRES organizing team and Anjel Tomayko (Washington DNR), the TRES PIO trainee, sent daily updates to about 80 partners and stakeholders throughout the event.

### APRIL 28

Cascadia TRES kicked off with an orientation and then a site visit to Roslyn Ridge, where crews from the previous two Cascadia TRES burned. Those burns—in the fall of 2017 and 2018—were conducted to help restore the forest and reduce the risk of wildfires to the town of Roslyn.

### APRIL 29

The TRES crew met with partners from the Cle Elum Ranger District, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy to expose the participants to the context of fire in Washington, learn about the fire ecology of the state, and discuss their respective burn programs. They then went for a site visit and met with WDFW staff at the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area, in preparation for supporting their burns.



The TRES Team and Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife fire staff discuss the burn unit at the L.T. Murray Wildlife area on Monday, in preparation for burning on Tuesday. © WA RC&D (Kara Karboski)

### APRIL 30

The TRES team supported the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife in burning 14 acres at the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area. There were many great learning opportunities for all, and they put some good fire on the ground. The burn, which followed a thinning operation, was intended to help restore habitat on the landscape: fire and thinning go hand in hand to restore these forests.



A TRES participant helps put good fire on the ground at the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area. © Eric Kiehn

### MAY 1

Part of the TRES team—along with an additional engine from the Yakima Training Center—returned to the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area to continue working with WDFW staff on the Hutchins Unit.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the TRES team joined the Cle Elum Ranger District in support of burning on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, near the town of Liberty. However, during the test fire it was determined that conditions were not conducive to achieving burn objectives, so the decision was made not to continue with the burn. So those crew members rejoined the group at the Hutchins Unit to support burn operations. They burned a total of 44 acres, meeting WDFW objectives. The WDFW Lands Division manager made a site visit to observe operations for what was the agency's first prescribed burn of the season; she was pleased with the results from the previous day and the current day's progress.

On this burn, TRES participants remained in the roles they had filled on the previous day, giving them opportunities to build on their learning as the burn operations were expanded for more acreage. TRES are organized so that decisions like this can be adjusted to suit participant needs. After action reviews (AARs) were held at the burn unit each day for the entire burn team, and were followed by TRES-specific AARs back at camp; this enabled the leaders to gather both burn-specific feedback and TRES program feedback.



TREX participants put in a check line at the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area.  
© WA DNR (Anjel Tomayko)

### MAY 2

The TREX team returned to the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area to continue supporting burn operations on the Hutchins Unit. After their arrival, a no-go decision for burning was made due to high winds, so crews spent the day securing the line around previously burned sections. In addition, staff from the Department of Natural Resources—the State Forester, Forest Health and Resiliency Division Manager, and Wildfire Division Manager—met with TREX leadership and partners from The Nature Conservancy, WDFW and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest staff at the Hutchins Unit.



KIMA-TV from Yakima tapes a crew briefing. The station ran a 2:45 story about the training on May 2.  
© Eric Kiehn

### MAY 3

TREX continued to assist with the Hutchins Unit at L.T. Murray Wildlife Area, completing burning on 24 acres. A smooth transition was made to rotate position assignments between sections to provide additional learning opportunities.



TREX participants being mentored on lighting techniques.  
© Eric Kiehn

### MAY 4

By the end of the first week of TREX, participants had spent five days assisting Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife with burning the Hutchins Unit at L.T. Murray Wildlife Area. The seven acres burned today brought the total burning to 90 acres. This commercially thinned unit—600 acres in all—has challenging terrain and heavy fuel loading. Because of this, treatment with fire is being implemented in small sections to achieve low-intensity effects. TREX assistance has helped WDFW meet its objectives and expectations for the unit, while providing valuable experience to TREX participants.



Putting good fire on the ground at the Hutchins Unit.  
© WA RC&D (Kara Karboski)

### MAY 5

TREX participants assisted with burning 12 more acres of the 600-acre Hutchins unit, getting experience with the challenge of maintaining low-intensity fire in a unit with heavy fuel loading, ladder fuels and steep terrain. In this situation, the number of acres treated is secondary to achieving the desired effects within the burn plan.



TREX participants conduct ignitions at the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area.  
© WA RC&D (Kara Karboski)

## MAY 6

The work WDFW and Cascadia TRES are accomplishing together at the Hutchins Unit is contributing to a larger effort to restore forest and aquatic health across the Manastash-Taneum landscape. Increased efforts to coordinate forest health treatment actions across ownerships and larger landscapes are emerging across central and eastern Washington as part of the state's 20-Year Strategy to restore forest health (read more at <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/ForestHealthPlan>).

## MAY 7

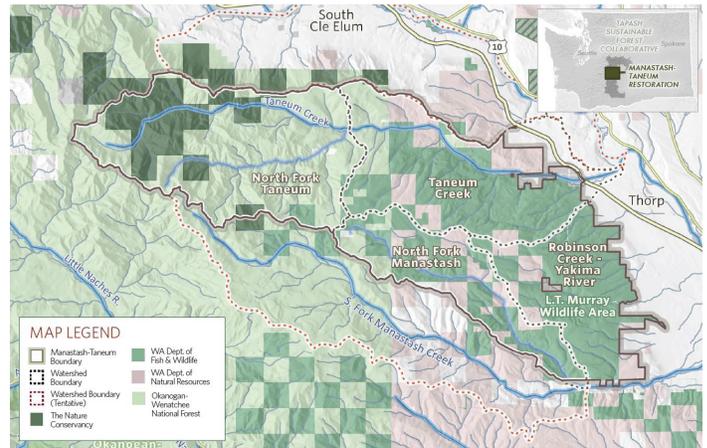
TRES participants split into two groups—one group returned to the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area to continue work with the Department of Fish & Wildlife, while the other headed back to the Liberty Unit to assist the Cle Elum Ranger District. By working with these two different agencies, TRES participants were able to observe and learn from the differing objectives between agencies and sites. At the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area, crews completed 40 acres of the Hutchins Unit. At the Liberty Unit crews completed the 25-acre Fuels 24 Burn Unit.



A TRES participant puts good fire on the ground at the Cle Elum Ranger District's Liberty Unit. © WA RC&D (Kara Karboski)

## MAY 8

TRES participants were again split between the Liberty Unit and the Hutchins Unit to continue assisting the Cle Elum Ranger District and WDFW, respectively. The Cle Elum Ranger group assisted with a 25-acre burn in the Liberty Unit, while the others assisted with mopping up the Hutchins Unit. The media was invited to observe TRES participants during prescribed fire operations at the Liberty Unit. The TRES



Manastash-Taneum landscape. (Learn more about this project in the fact sheet: [http://www.tapash.org/okawen/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Tapash\\_ManastashTaneumUpdate\\_OnePager\\_20161102.pdf](http://www.tapash.org/okawen/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Tapash_ManastashTaneumUpdate_OnePager_20161102.pdf))

Incident Management Team was interviewed, taking advantage of the opportunity to share messages about the value of prescribed fire and its role in the ecosystem, as well as the role TRES has in expanding the capacity of fire managers.



A TRES participant discusses test fire results with Forest Service staff at the Liberty Unit. © Eric Kiehn

## MAY 9

TRES participants wrapped up their learning with a trip to the Wenatchee River Ranger District, near Leavenworth, for a discussion of lessons learned from a 2017 prescribed burn.

## MAY 10

Participants came to TRES from a wide range of places and organizations, with a broad range of skills and abilities, and working on position taskbooks from Prescribed Burn Boss 2 (RXB2) and Task Force Leader (TFLD) to Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2). As the final after action review was completed, participants overwhelmingly felt that their TRES experience went beyond position taskbook signatures. The TRES environment was conducive to learning, asking questions, getting hands-on experience with fire, shadowing, and being transparent.

The TRES environment helped build strong partnerships and relationships that will strengthen and expand our local capacity as we strive to improve our forest health and protect our communities. Working with our partners, we helped them meet their prescribed burning objectives and put nearly 200 acres of good fire on the ground.



© IWA RC&D (Kara Karboski)



“As I drove into town and saw the column of [TREX] prescribed fire smoke above Roslyn, I pumped my fist and felt excitement and pride, and at the same time recalled that just one year ago seeing the same scene my emotions were full of fear and angst.”

—long-time community resident



The Cascadia TREX strengthened the conversation about fire. Partners from the Forest Service, Washington Prescribed Fire Council, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy toured the Liberty Unit with staff from the offices of Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell and Congresswoman Schrier. They discussed the benefits of prescribed fire as a tool for community protection and forest health, the science and history of fire in the state, the increasing social license for prescribed fire, and the importance of public funding to support this work. © TNC (Reese Lolley)

### More Online

Interactive Map: intro to TREX; locations updated during event  
<https://tnc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=70238c2971bb4c49bf0e078f50e237c6>

Media: KIMA-TV  
<https://kimatv.com/news/local/prepping-for-fire-season-crews-burning-off-brush-in-local-mountains>

Media: Ellensburg Daily Record  
[https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/news/safe-flames-roll-through-central-washington-during-prescribed-fire-training/article\\_514dd45a-e3fb-5f6d-8b12-f7b1b0a8d1b7.html](https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/news/safe-flames-roll-through-central-washington-during-prescribed-fire-training/article_514dd45a-e3fb-5f6d-8b12-f7b1b0a8d1b7.html)

Facebook: photos and updates were posted on the Washington Prescribed Fire Council page  
<https://www.facebook.com/warxfirecouncil>

### Participant Organizations

- Baker Creek Restoration LLC
- British Columbia Wildfire Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Ecological Fire Solutions LLC
- Fairmount Fire Rescue
- Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- Kittitas County Fire Protection District #1
- Kittitas County Fire Protection District #4
- Kittitas County Fire Protection District #6
- Lílwat Forestry Ventures
- Resilience Land Care
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Army—Yakima Training Center
- USDA Forest Service—Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Sawtooth National Forest
- Washington Prescribed Fire Council
- Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources

The Cascadia TREX was supported by the Washington Department of Natural Resources and partners on the ground, including the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, The Nature Conservancy, Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council, Washington Prescribed Fire Council and the Fire Learning Network, Kittitas County, and Kittitas County Fire District 1 and 6, among others.

For more about the Cascadia TREX:

Kara Karboski      [kara@washingtonrcd.org](mailto:kara@washingtonrcd.org)

For more about the TREX model:

Jeremy Bailey      [jeremy\\_bailey@tnc.org](mailto:jeremy_bailey@tnc.org)  
<http://nature.ly/trainingexchanges>



Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges are 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 PERFACT, contact Marek Smith at [marek\\_smith@tnc.org](mailto:marek_smith@tnc.org).

An equal opportunity provider