



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Washington Prescribed Fire Council Conference

Olympia, WA

March 2014

Strengthening Partnerships to Influence Policy

More than 40 prescribed fire practitioners and stakeholders from across the state came together for two days in early March to learn about fire policy and the ways we can communicate and collaborate with policy makers.

The first part of day one was filled with discussions on two collaborative frameworks and networks centered around fire management, namely the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network and the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Then the Washington Prescribed Fire Council (WPFC) was honored to have the Washington State Commissioner

of Public Lands, Peter Goldmark, begin a dialogue with the group about the Washington Department of Natural Resource's fire policy and forest management priorities. The commissioner invited the WPFC to continue the discussion with him, and the WPFC is actively working on a unified message to identify common interests.

Later in the day participants separated into breakout sessions focused on each of the Priority Action Areas in the WPFC Strategic Action Plan that was developed by WPFC members over the past two years. This year's participants helped to

outline and initiate work on the goals presented in the Strategic Plan. Highlights from these fruitful discussions included developing a proposal for communicating and collaborating with DNR, creating an overall public communication strategy, and planning training exchanges.

On the second day of the conference, the Northwest Fire Science Consortium hosted two panels on building a successful coalition to influence policy, and on using effective tools to communicate with policy makers. These expert panels included great representation of diverse practitioners, academics and policymakers, and encouraged insightful questions and discussions from conference participants.

As the Washington Prescribed Fire Council moves forward over the next few years, tools for communication and collaboration will be essential to promoting the use of prescribed fire across the state and supporting WPFC members at the state level.

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The Fire Learning Network is supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency through Collaboration: Landscapes, Learning and Restoration*, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information about the FLN, contact Lynn Decker at ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.



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Top: The conference drew participants from a wide range of agencies and organizations in the region, including the BLM, Center for Natural Lands Management, Joint Base Lewis-McChord (Dept. of Defense), Kitsap Conservation District, Northwest Fire Science Consortium, Olympic National Park, Oregon Prescribed Fire Council, Oregon State University, Skagit Conservation District, Sustainable Northwest, TNC, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, University of Washington, USDA Forest Service, Washington Cattleman's Association, Wild Fire Services Inc., Yakama Nation and several Washington state agencies (Conservation Commission, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Ecology and Department of Natural Resources).

Center: State Commissioner of Public Lands, Peter Goldmark, joined the group to speak on the DNR's fire policy and forest management priorities.

Bottom: Panel discussions and breakout sessions gave participants a chance to glean information from people with a range of expertise, and to contribute to problem solving in small groups.

Sarah Hamman/CNLM

