



Prescribed Fire Training Exchange Notes from the Field

Flint Hills, Kansas

March-April, 2011

Participants in this exchange demonstrated that by working together, ambitious burning goals can be accomplished. This interagency crew was mobilized and hosted in the Flint Hills region of Kansas for two weeks. Consisting of managers from the Army's Fort Riley, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fire staff from the Maries de Cyngre and Flint Hills refuges, and staff from the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve co-managed by the National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy, the training cadre coordinated the burning of about 6,000 acres and provided training opportunities for 11 firefighters. This training also included an introduction to local ecology and land use practices, monitoring protocols, and fire control tactics and strategies. In addition, the crew of cadre and trainees responded to a wildfire, where they integrated with the local county Incident Command System and served as a taskforce of engines on the fire, protecting structures, ranch infrastructure and hay.

Trainee positions ranging from burn boss to prescribed fire crewmember were offered at this exchange, with qualified fire practitioners mentoring and evaluating trainees. Fire managers from the Kansas Forest Service and Fort Riley, U.S. Forest Service firefighters from New Mexico and municipal firefighters from several Kansas communities worked alongside each other throughout the exchange. They



Top: A burn boss trainee from the Carson National Forest (New Mexico) briefs the firing and holding crews on the operations plan for that evening's burn before leading the ignition sequence on the 1,900-acre unit

Center: A Conservancy burn boss (right, in orange helmet) from Texas discusses ignition patterns with a battalion chief from Fire District 1 of Johnson County (Kansas) who attended the exchange as a wildland firefighter type 1 trainee

Bottom: Trainees practice ignition patterns that use flanking fire to create depth along a downwind control line

Spring 2011 Training Exchange by Agency & Role

		The Nature Conservancy	USDA Forest Service	US Fish and Wildlife Service	National Park Service	Bureau of Indian Affairs	Bureau of Land Management	State/Local Government	Military	Other Non-Profit	Private	University	International
Trainee totals:		11	2		2			3	4				
Position	SIRB-FIRB/ENGB	2	1						1				
	FFT1	5			2				3				
	FEMO												
	RXB2 / RXB3	4	1					3					
	cadre		2		3	1							

burned a mix of prairies and woodlands, learning from each other and burning increasingly complex units. Gaining experience and local knowledge as they burned, for example, the crew began burning into the evening when spotting potential was reduced and winds were lighter.



One evening, after responding to a wildfire, the crew returned to the preserve and conducted a controlled burn, treating 2,000 acres of grassland. Above, the fire is lit for the burn.



The following day, the sun set on another 1,200 acres of prairie treated with prescribed fire on the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

Training exchanges are 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 exchanges, contact Jeremy Bailey at jeremy_bailey@tnc.org or (801) 599-1394.



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