



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Southern Blue Ridge FLN Winter Workshop

Asheville, North Carolina

December 2012

Twenty-nine partners in the Southern Blue Ridge FLN met on December 12 in Asheville, North Carolina to share success stories from landscapes across the network, and to begin planning for 2013.

Landscape Highlights for 2012:

Balsam/Nantahala Mountains

Teams from these two landscapes have combined their efforts, and will focus on outreach to increase burning on private lands across the newly-joined region. The North Carolina Forest Service has received a grant to provide basic fire training, a few internships, personal protective equipment and some funding to Haywood Community College to increase capacity for burns under the Career & College Promise program.



Central Escarpment landscape

Central Escarpment

The Grandfather Restoration Project—and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program project in this landscape—used some of that funding for a helicopter, which allowed Forest Service staff to triple the number of acres burned last year as compared to the long-term annual average. NEPA planning is also underway on three projects in this landscape. As restoration work is scaling up, increased public outreach will be needed to garner public understanding and support.

New River Headwaters

This landscape team will begin discussions on high elevation bald management in 2013.

Northern Escarpment

The Blue Ridge Parkway staff is taking leadership in the collaborative planning for a 4,000-acre burn under a multi-agency memorandum of understanding developed by FLN landscape partners. Media outreach has begun well in advance of the planned burn.

South Mountains

Partners credit collaboration with Forest Service Air Resource Specialist Bill Jackson for the successful implementation of a 1,700-acre multi-ownership burn that was collaboratively implemented by state

agencies last spring. Jackson modeled smoke dispersal for the burn, which allowed for improved smoke management on the multi-day burn, reducing the smoke impact on nearby communities.

The number of acres treated with prescribed fire has been more than doubled in this landscape and three high-priority burns identified with the 'ecomath' tool have been implemented.

Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment

Landscape-level restoration is underway in the 14,000-acre Warwoman Landscape Management Project, which the Grouse Society, Southern Research Station and Wild Turkey Federation have joined as partners.

In 2013, South Carolina partners in the Jocassee Gorges will join Tallulah Gorge as a focal area in this large, three-state landscape. Watershed wildfire contingency planning by the Conservancy's South Carolina chapter is raising awareness and bringing partners to the table to begin landscape-level restoration planning in this area.

Finally, this landscape will host the next SBR FLN workshop in May 2013, which will present an opportunity to see the results of the

highly effective growing season burn conducted in shortleaf pine habitat last summer.

Unaka/Great Smoky Mountains

In the early part of the year, partners in this landscape were able to implement 21,000 acres of burns on Forest Service lands across the Cherokee National Forest and 500 acres in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. No burn permits were granted in the fall, due to dry conditions.

In addition, efforts to integrate restoration plans developed by Cherokee Restoration partnership into the priority burn areas identified through the 'ecomath' approach developed by the FLN are underway. Ecological zones

and vegetation types are being mapped to expand the applicability of the ecomath burn prioritization tool to the southern district of the Cherokee NF. This FLN landscape is likely to expand its reach southward next year.

In summary, the SBR FLN keeps growing—expanding its landscapes; adding new partners, such as the Foothills Conservancy; and spreading the use of new tools, like the ecological mapping approach and ecomath tool to prioritize burns. All landscapes have identified a need to better promote successful burns—in the public media, *FLN Networker*, and through fire councils—to increase support for their work in 2013.

Participating Agencies & Organizations

Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists
National Park Service—Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains National Park
North Carolina Forest Service
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
The Nature Conservancy—North Carolina, South Carolina
USDA Forest Service—Chattahoochee, Cherokee, Francis Marion & Sumter and Pisgah & Nantahala National Forests
USDA Forest Service—Southern Research Station
Western Carolina Alliance
Western Carolina University

Upcoming Opportunities to Meet and Learn

Webinar: Using LiDAR to Map & Assess Forest Structure

January 25, 2013 / 2:00 Eastern

Based on a recent assessment of North Carolina landscape, Josh Kelly will demonstrate the use of LiDAR to map and assess forest structure, and to compare current conditions to reference conditions determined by LANDFIRE biophysical settings (BpS).

Add to your calendar: <https://nethope.webex.com/nethope/j.php?ED=17777362&UID=0&ICS=MRS3&LD=1&RD=2&ST=1&SHA2=bIB/n/mi3wSRG2cKAvc6md5WyWTFvf941q9GfaPc9Ys=&RT=MIM2>

Join webinar: <https://nethope.webex.com/nethope/j.php?ED=17777362&UID=0&PW=NNDE0NzI2ZTM3&RT=MIM2>

Conference: Prescribed Fire and Indiana Bats

April 16-17, near Robbinsville, NC

This workshop, hosted by the Consortium for Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists, will help provide guidance in adjusting burn windows to protect Indiana bats, which is a becoming an increasing challenge in many landscapes.

Information: <http://www.cafms.org/node/44>

FLN Workshop: SBR FLN Annual May Workshop

Save the date: May 21-23, Unicoi State Park, GA



Low-elevation pine-oak forest in the Tallulah Gorge focal area of the Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment landscape © Mike Brod / USFS

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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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