

# Leveraging the Fire Learning Network

As regional FLNs have matured, they have taken a variety of paths, depending on local needs and partners, and the barriers and opportunities they face. Partnerships built through the FLN now form the basis for a wide variety of work that promotes both ecosystem and community resilience.

PERC programs that have grown from this include:

- prescribed fire training exchanges (TREX) that combine professional training, local capacity-building, treatments and public outreach;
- Scaling-up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency (SPER), which targets treatments to priority places; and
- the Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Learning Network, which is based on, and does work complementary to, the FLN.

Some FLNs also build and support communities of practice through prescribed fire councils, and others provide an important backbone for Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) projects.

At right, four of the many examples of this synergy give a sense of the scope and variability of the reach of the FLN.

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

**In northern California**, all parts of the PERC agreement come together. From its start as an FLN centered on the town of Hayfork, the reach of PERC has grown under the leadership of staff from the Watershed Research & Training Center (WRTC), and now encompasses a full range of actions from collaborative planning and community engagement to capacity-building and on-the-ground treatments.

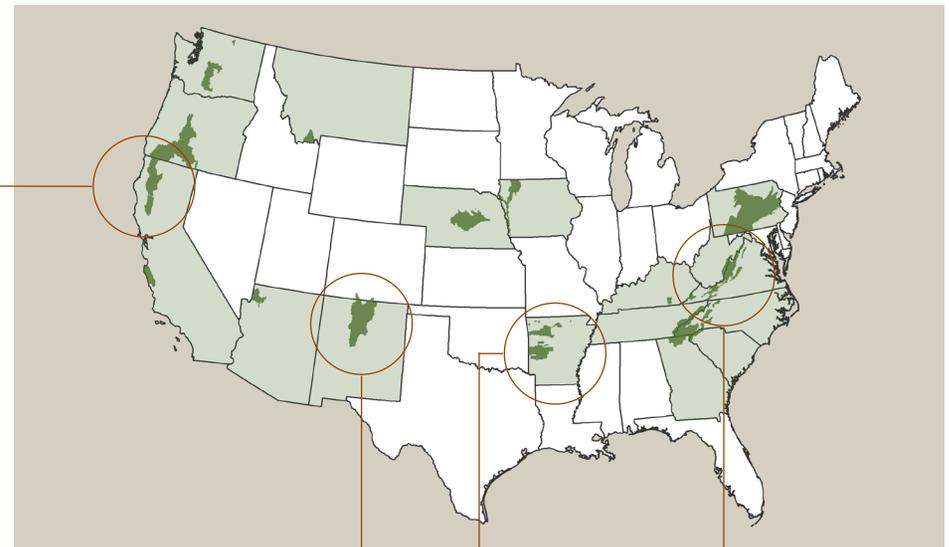
The first major expansion of impact for this FLN came with its key founding and leadership roles in a prescribed fire council. The council was first envisioned for a fairly small area, but it almost immediately expanded to become the Northern California Prescribed Fire Council, exerting a beneficial influence over the entire northern part of the state. It also mentors new councils in the southern Sierra, Washington and Oregon.

In 2011, Scaling-up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency (SPER) funded projects to support treatments to reduce community risk from wildfire began; 336 acres were completed under SPER I and another 100 acres are getting underway with SPER II.

With the launch of the Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Learning Network in 2013, WRTC was ideally placed and suited to lead the new network—and one of the pilot communities, Orleans-Somes Bar is in this landscape, so that FAC work is done at both the local and national level here.

In the fall of 2013, they tied it all together. A prescribed fire training exchange simultaneously built local capacity and community support, completing SPER burns for both forest health and community safety.

building capacity for collaborative  
approaches to integrated fire management



**In northern New Mexico**, several projects are also coming together in a very complementary way. The Forest Guild has come on board as a strong new partner, leading one of the fall's training exchanges. They are also leading one of the SPER II projects, and are planning to host further trainings. The implementation done under these projects supports both a Forest Service-funded CFLR project in the area and the Rio Grande Waterfund, a new FLN landscape being led by an FLN veteran.

**In the Allegheny Highlands** landscape, FLN partners have been cooperatively burning for several years. SPER I funding allowed them to complete some key burns in the landscape, and they are now completing planning for a prescribed fire training exchange that will support regional training needs. This exchange will also diversify the range of experience available through FLN training exchanges, as it will be the first such event held east of the Mississippi.

**In Arkansas**, the South Central FLN has evolved into a robust community of practice for forest restoration and fire management. Partners from state and federal agencies and The Nature Conservancy now routinely work together; current projects include two CFLRPs, a management project for the endangered Indiana bat, and the new regional Shortleaf Pine Initiative. The longstanding partnerships have improved efficiency, which is reflected in the work of the crew hired to conduct the SPER I treatments in the state: they treated 110% of the acres proposed in their work plan.