

Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges and Cooperative Burning

Experiential training events in support of landscape restoration and resiliency, fire adapted communities and workforce capacity-building

This spring, TRES teams mobilized for eight events that ran a total of 90 days. All told, 318 people built their skills and fire networks, and accomplished 14,437 acres of prescribed burns in six states—California, Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, New Mexico and Oregon. As usual, the burn teams worked around rainstorms and snow, dry spells and red flag days, finding the windows to get good fire done. They also talked about good fire—among themselves, with community members, and to reporters—laying the groundwork for acceptance of even more fire on the landscape to come.

Each TRES is organized as a Type 3 Incident under the National Incident Management System. Participants—from fire agencies, universities, volunteer fire departments and local

communities—serve side by side in qualified and trainee firefighting positions on the burn teams. Together they prepare, scout, brief, ignite, hold, mop up and patrol on numerous controlled burns. They also complete pre- and post-fire monitoring, train with equipment, practice fire line leadership skills, and learn about local fire ecology and fire management.

After the spring prescribed fire season, the new TRES Coaches Network held its kick-off workshop. Thirty-three people—experienced TRES coaches and up-and-coming leaders—came from around the country and around the world, from NGOs, government agencies and private contracting. They met to build a network that will create deliberate connections among the numerous TRES leaders who year after year plan, coordinate and lead TRES events. When these leaders are better connected to each other, they can better support one another, and better serve their own communities and the larger fire community.

Woven throughout the spring as well was planning for the fall TRES season, which includes TRES in California (Klamath River, Women in Fire, NorCal), New Mexico (Rio Trampas Watershed), Oregon (Umpqua) and Washington (Cascadia).

Training, Treatments & Outreach

Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges and cooperative burns provide:

- hands-on training and NWCG position task book opportunities
- prescribed fire treatments that meet local objectives
- outreach to community leaders, media outlets and land managers

Spring 2017 TRES

NEBRASKA

Loup River TRES

March 13-25

Niobrara Valley Preserve TRES

March 17-April 2

In the tall grass prairies of the Great Plains, the Niobrara Valley Preserve and Loup River TRES provided opportunities for professional firefighters, university students, tribal members and private practitioners to learn about large fires in open grasslands. Fast-moving fires in grass require thoughtful planning and timely execution; 85 participants gained important experience and knowledge in these grassland TRES, and took it back to home units and institutions across the country and around the world.



Left: A firefighter from Spain ignites a blackline at the Loup TRES, preparing to burn when conditions became suitable.

© Pheasants Forever (Ben Wheeler)

Right: Crews prepare for monitoring on a wet day during the Niobrara TRES, creating photopoints and marking redcedar trees to track mortality from a planned prescribed fire.

photo via Facebook

Spring 2017 TRES & Cooperative Burning



© Elizabeth Azzuz

			people	acres
Loup River TRES	NE		45	3,000
Niobrara Valley Preserve TRES	NE		40	2,848
Loess Hills Cooperative Burn Week	IA		57	2,516
Ashland TRES	OR		35	252
Central Oregon TRES	OR		49	2,030
Chama TRES	NM/CO		28	176
Yurok TRES	CA		24	31
Luera TRES	NM		40	6,100
TOTAL:			318	14,437

What Does a TRES Leader Do?

(What DOESN'T a TRES leader do?)

TRES leaders organize planning calls, take notes and follow up with other leaders. They apply for or review grant proposals, and coordinate with attorneys so they can execute a fire management agreement. They answer hundreds of questions from prospective hosts and participants, and recruit people for the Incident Management Team. They organize the participants and solicit for extra equipment like engines or PPE. TRES Coaches also ensure there are enough burn plans, prepped burn units, burn bosses, lodging and meals for everyone. They help develop talking points for firefighters, send out invitations to the media, and talk to reporters. TRES leaders send out final instructions to the participants and try to make sure that everyone has reasonable expectations. They organize the burn teams, and are on site, shaking hands and making introductions on the first day. ... and then the TRES gets started.

IOWA

Loess Hills Cooperative Burn Week

March 20-28

Less than one tenth of one percent of Iowa's native prairies remain, mainly nested in the steep slopes and exposed ridges of the Loess Hills landform adjacent to the Missouri River in western Iowa. A cooperative burning week led by the Loess Hills Fire Partners is successfully increasing the number of acres treated in these fire-dependent grasslands, and increasing the capacity for a range of local landowners to continue expanding burning to maintain these rare systems.

OREGON

Ashland TRES April 30-May 13
Central Oregon TRES May 1-14

There were once again two TRES in Oregon this spring—the third annual Central Oregon TRES, near Bend, and the second annual Ashland TRES, in the southwestern part of the state. Both of these TRES generated great community outreach opportunities as the burn teams worked with local government officials to burn around the edges of the communities in support of local strategies.

NEW MEXICO / COLORADO

Chama TRES May 1-14
Luera TRES May 30-June 10

Working with state foresters and private landowners, the Chama and Luera TRES in New Mexico demonstrated the value of having burn teams organized and ready to seize burn opportunities. These rural TRES were targeted to improve forest health in important watersheds and support productive, healthy grasslands.



Top: Lighting along a ridge on the Murray Hill burn during the Loess Hills burn week. © Iowa DNR (Matt Dollison)



Bottom: All hands move a hose lay as the crew makes adjustments for an operational transition on the Yurok TRES. © Naomi Tora

CALIFORNIA

Yurok TRES May 16-23

Many tribes in northern California continue to practice traditional uses of fire to maintain access to important plants and animals that provide food, materials for traditional practices like basketry, and ceremonial regalia, and to reduce the wildfire threat to remote mountain communities. Along the Klamath River, the Yurok TRES has become an important semi-annual event that is building the Yurok Tribe's ability to plan, lead and staff their own burn teams.



Above: A Chama TRES crew uses a dot ignition pattern on a burn on the San Juan NF in southwest Colorado. © Nicholas Olson

Left: An Ashland TRES crew provides structure protection while burning around homes on a tract of private land in Applegate Valley. © TNC (Darren Borgias)

MORE ONLINE

TRES Coaches Network workshop—*Notes from the Field*—<http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/FireLearningNetwork/USFLNPublications/Pages/Notes-TRES-CoachesWorkshop-2017.aspx>
Fighting Central Oregon Wildfire with Fire—*Bend Magazine*—<https://bendmagazine.com/fighting-central-oregon-wildfire-fire/>

Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges are supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together* (PERFACT), a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information, contact Lynn Decker at (ldecker@tnc.org) or (801) 320-0524. PERFACT is an equal opportunity provider.