



**Semi-Annual Report
July–December 2021
Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and
Fire Adapted Communities Together**

(PERFACT)

In compliance with Agreement No. 21-CA-11132543-096

Submitted by:
The Nature Conservancy

Submitted to:
USDA Forest Service
February 14, 2022



The Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT) cooperative agreement supports the Fire Learning Network (FLN), Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TRES), Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net) and Indigenous Peoples Burning Network (IPBN). Together, the Fire Networks apply six broad strategies that support the three goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, and increase the number and range of people and institutions involved in, and responsible for, various aspects of fire management. They help build equitable and inclusive partnerships that underlie effective and sustainable work together. And they develop resources that inform, support and connect this expanded fire management community.

A

Expand the scope of ownership of, and responsibility for, fire management.

Work under this strategy is wide-ranging—from building public support for active fire management and tolerance for smoke and other risks of prescribed fire, to bringing in new sectors, to support for truly all-hands, all-lands implementation on the ground. This might be expressed as moving toward co-ownership: “These are our landscapes, our communities, our fires—our problems, our solutions.”

In southwest Colorado, Wildfire Adapted Partnership has built a partnership with a local realtor association. Training—such as mitigation field tours and a home ignition zone course—is now available to realtors, who are an important conduit to get information to new residents. Highlights and lessons learned were shared with practitioners across the country in the FAC Net blog post “New Moves: Partnering with Local Real Estate Agents.”

• • •

Many wildfire preparation guides for residents target property owners. The Tahoe Network of Fire Adapted Communities took a step toward empowering renters with the publication of “Prepare for Wildfire: A Guide for Lake Tahoe Long-Term Renters.” FAC Net support “helped us address a gap in our program and helped make our program more equitable, more accessible, and more valuable for Lake Tahoe residents.”

• • •

In a program inspired by, and adapted from, those of network members in Ashland and Santa Fe, the Flagstaff Fire Department has provided HEPA filters to 96 households. The filters and an accompanying clean air website help residents manage smoke exposure, thus increasing social acceptance of good fire.



Above: Cascadia TREX, from Twitter account of Rep. Kim Schrier; opposite: Observatory Mesa Burn, Flagstaff TREX © Eric O'Conner

B

Support and maintain equitable partnerships.

Sharing ownership and responsibility requires partnerships that are robust, in which all stakeholders have a role and voice, and where power and responsibility are distributed equitably. Intentional investment in these relationships builds a foundation for working, innovating and learning together, and for the transmission of new methods and best practices.

Using customized presentations, historical accounts, information exchange and unstructured discussions, two cohorts of the Beginners Working Group continue to prepare non-Indigenous partners in the Fire Networks to begin building equitable fire partnerships with tribes.

“It had always concerned me that in our planning meetings there was no or very little representation by our local tribal nations. The Beginners Working Group provided me with information that supplemented some of the things that I had already been researching, such as information on treaty agreements, Bureau of Indian Affairs historical role, and respectful ways to approach and work with Indigenous people. The group provided a safe environment to ask questions, share experiences and offer support.”

...

In a series of virtual workshops, the Heart of the Appalachians FLN landscape updated its strategic plan ten years after its first strategic planning process. The plan will make annual work planning more collaborative, help share the partnership's vision and strategies, create consistent language across complementary efforts, and help partners track progress in building enabling conditions for sustained fire management.

C**Increase local and individual capacity.**

Shared ownership of fire demands more of people, communities and organizations in fire-prone landscapes. This requires investment in a wide range of leaders and resources—from community organizing and facilitation skills, to mitigation crews and emergency response capacity.

The Yurok, Hoopa Valley and Karuk tribes continue to pursue multiple complex fire projects, largely independent of IPBN funding, including a spatial fire management plan that will meet cultural fire management goals, support community involvement, and meet BIA fire planning requirements.

D**Build and diversify a workforce for co-management of fire.**

The wildfire challenge requires growing the work-force beyond what federal and state agencies alone can be expected to provide. The complexity of the challenge calls for bringing more diverse viewpoints, skills and life experiences to bear.

In a pilot project, the Fire Networks hired 18 short-term, part-time, NWCG-qualified fire practitioners, including three burn bosses. Over the course of the fall they were deployed in squads of three to seven personnel to provide a targeted capacity boost to sites in California, Georgia, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico and North Carolina; many of the crew members also worked on position task books while deployed. This effort borrowed from previous models used across the network, including the call-when-needed crew model discussed by Adam Warwick in a pair of podcast episodes over the summer.

**E****Expand the enabling infrastructure and knowledge networks for a shared management system.**

A broadened fire management system will require new ideas, new practices and new ways of communicating them among players. Agency structures and institutional knowledge will remain core to safe and effective response, but as other individuals and organizations assume their roles, innovations will be required. Similarly, as learning in the field becomes increasingly dispersed and local, new ways of capturing and sharing it will be needed.

F**Shift the regulatory, policy and funding environments to support integrated fire management.**

Hundreds of network members and partners across the country are identifying challenges and finding and refining ways to meet them. They are a valuable resource to inform the policy environment—at all levels—so that we can, collectively, more effectively meet our goal of living better and more safely with fire.

In California, PERFECT staff member Lenya Quinn-Davidson serves on the Science Advisory Committee and the Prescribed Fire Working Group of the Governor’s Forest Management Taskforce. The Working Group recently released its “Strategic Plan for Beneficial Fire,” to which Lenya and other PERFECT partners contributed significantly.

In the Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative landscape, The Ember Alliance led two pile building workshops for landowners as part of their work to develop a pile burning PBA to expand fuel treatment capacity in the region.

Adapting to the pandemic and to local needs, the Butte County Cal-TREX held a training weekend, then continued as an on-call burn team. This lessened the logistical load, and allowed community members who couldn't commit to a full TREX to participate. This fall the crews—more than 100 people, including students, volunteer firefighters, land managers, federal partners, private landowners and small business owners—burned 14 units together. Long-term investments in the TREX co-leads—as TREX participants and, later, TREX coaches—contributed to the success of this model.

FLN support allowed the addition of two trainers from the Pueblo of Jemez to take part in Forest Stewards Youth Corps Fire Crew Training that provides NWCG training to youth crews that support prescribed fire. These trainers brought their extensive experience to the class, and had an opportunity to work on their teaching skills. This engagement provided quality training and S-212 certificates to three youth crews, started the Pueblo of Jemez employees on a path to becoming certified chainsaw instructors, and it exposed the youth crew members to the perspectives of the Pueblo of Jemez forestry crew.



© Forest Stewards Guild (Sam Berry)

FLN support enabled Mid Klamath Watershed Council staff to engage with the regional effort to establish draft potential operational delineations for the North Coast Resource Partnership area, which covers eight counties in northwest California. MKWC staff play a key role in engaging partners and facilitating this project.

FAC Net hosts multi-month learning groups on topics of widespread interest. This fall the Smoke Learning Group wrapped up its work, the results of which are gathered in the FAC Net blog post “Gathering Smoke: Sharing Resources and Output from the Smoke Learning Group.”

“Although we’ve made significant progress on many of our goals, our most significant accomplishment this year has been our ongoing learning and sharing with other FAC Net members. With financial support (and social permission) to build into our work day time to connect with and learn from peers in this work, our hearts and minds (and subsequent work plans) have been able to consider wildly new strategies and approaches for guiding our state towards increased wildfire readiness and resilience.”

In New Mexico, PERFACT staff and FLN and FAC Net members provided input to the development of the state’s certified burn manager rule-making process. The rule is pending finalization. This certification is being developed as an outcome of the 2021 Prescribed Fire Act, which changed the liability definition for prescribed fire in the state.

Oregon SB762, which took effect in July, directs the Oregon Department of Forestry to develop a certified burn manager program. The bill was supported by Oregon FLN leaders and informed by network leaders’ experiences in other western states.





**FIRE ADAPTED
COMMUNITIES**
LEARNING NETWORK



**INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES
BURNING
NETWORK**



The Fire Networks are supported by Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information, contact Marek Smith (marek_smith@tnc.org).

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call toll free voice (866) 632-9992, TDD (800) 877-8339, or voice relay (866) 377-8642. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Photo above: Butte County Cal-TREX © Jason Halley; front cover Pacheco Canyon pile burn © Forest Stewards Guild (Eytan Krasilovsky)