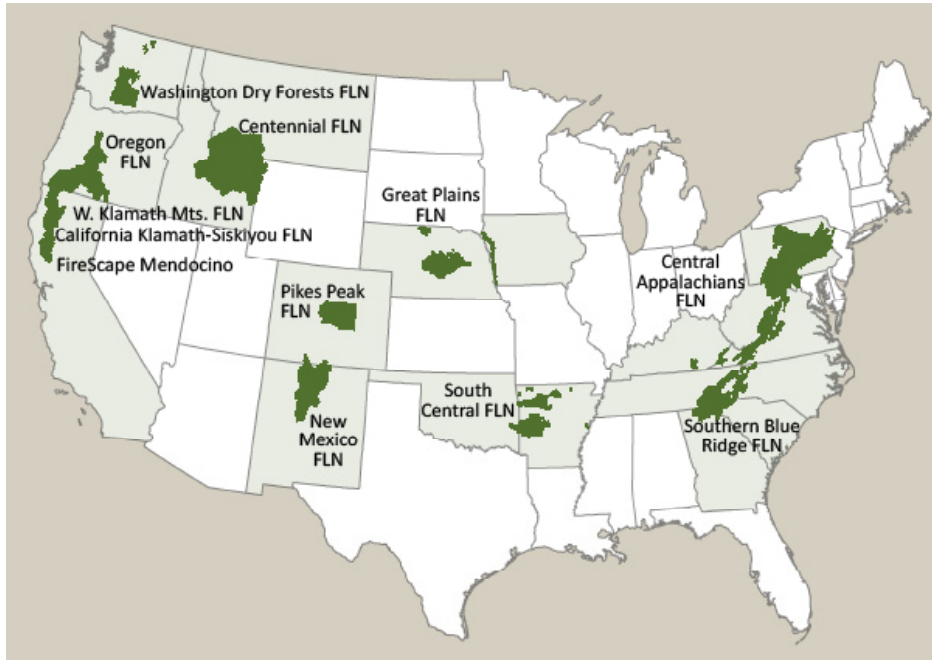


# Fire Learning Network

A cooperative program of the Forest Service, Department of the Interior agencies and The Nature Conservancy, the FLN has a 14-year track record of helping to restore our nation's forests and grasslands and to make communities safer from fire.

Highlights from around the Network: January-June 2016



The FLN currently supports 12 partnership groups. These include multi-state regional networks with numerous landscapes in the Central Appalachians, Great Plains and Southern Blue Ridge; groups with multiple landscapes within a state, in Arkansas, Oregon and Washington; and large single-landscape projects in California, Colorado, Montana and New Mexico. Some of these partnerships have been in the FLN since its start in 2002 and are exploring new areas in which to collaborate and learn. Others have more recently begun the FLN journey, and are using the resources of the network to help them set their courses together.

At all levels, the FLN continues to assess challenges and opportunities, work with old partners and reach out to new ones, push at boundaries and try new things, learn and change as needed. What the FLN has long been working toward has now been captured nationally in the goals of the Cohesive Strategy: resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities, and safe and effective wildfire response.



## Central Appalachians FLN

Five participants from four agencies and organizations in the Heart of the Appalachians landscape's Monitoring Working Group share a light-hearted moment at the annual refresher workshop. © TNC (Nikole Simmons)

"This underscores an often overlooked, yet critical aspect of the FLN: relationship building. Workshops, field trips, trainings and small group meetings all provide opportunities for partners to get to know one another, talk about non-work issues and engage in social activities, all of which generate better communication and cohesion on burn day, wildfire incidents and other activities that greatly benefit from coordinated teamwork, and so accelerate our collective work."

## FireScope Mendocino

In a field exercise focused on potential treatment prescriptions, teammates discuss options for vegetation management at the site of a WWII lookout. © TNC (Mary Huffman)

In addition to planning workshops based on the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, FireScope Mendocino core team members and staff from the Mendocino NF leadership took part in a Facilitative Leadership workshop with a trainer from the Interaction Institute for Social Change. The skills developed in that workshop will contribute to their capacity to facilitate working groups, workshops and community meetings as they plan and implement their work.



## California Klamath-Siskiyou FLN

Members of Trinity County VFDs conduct a burn during a May training developed and hosted by the FLN to increase local fire management capacity. © WRTC (Dave Jaramillo)

"Volunteer firefighters in Trinity County generally have very limited wildland fire experience aside from initial attack and structure protection during larger fire events. By engaging with the fire chiefs and training firefighters from several departments, we built skills and started forging relationships among CAL FIRE, local VFDs, WRTC crews and contract firefighters. Since our landscape strategy involves contracting with local VFDs for personnel and equipment to help burn on private lands in our communities, this cohort of firefighters is now better able to service those needs. They will also be better prepared when they respond for initial attack on wildfires and will have better working relationships for extended wildfire events."





### Great Plains FLN

Firefighters conduct a 223-acre prescribed burn on private land during the Loess Hills Cooperative Burn Week in April. © TNC (Emily Hohman)

“Our partners in the Loess Hills of Iowa do not follow NWCG standards, which creates challenges in engaging with them through a TREX (which are organized under those standards). While MOUs can bridge this gap, there is still a bureaucratic and sometimes a psychological barrier to engagement....By following partners’ standards during cooperative burning, we are able to fully engage partner staff in planning, prepping, writing burn plans and leading burns on their own land—a level of ownership and engagement that was sometimes lacking during TREX in Iowa ....The Cooperative Burn Week is a TREX in intent but not name...and is a modification of the TREX model that better fits the Loess Hills landscape and partners. Recently, interest has been expressed in using this modified approach in other areas of the northern Great Plains.”



### New Mexico FLN

A February workshop brought together a well-chosen handful of network members and partners with expertise and experience in post-fire recovery and network design to lay out a plan for launching a new Burned Area Learning Network. © TNC (Guy Duffner)

The need for taking aggressive action related to the growing challenge to our forests from the post-fire effects of large and severe wildfire has become increasingly clear to the New Mexico FLN over the past few years. After working locally for some time, this spring a team was brought together to build out a network that can serve other locations facing similar issues. A generative network based on the FLN model was designed by the team, and will be supported through the FLN for the first year. The network’s aim will be to improve scientific understanding, policy and management practices for burned areas to enhance the long-term resilience of ecological systems and provide for human safety.

### Pikes Peak FLN

A monitoring team of FLN partners from TNC, USGS, Rocky Mountain Tree Ring Research, Coalition for the Upper South Platte, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute and Colorado Parks & Wildlife came together to develop and implement a prescribed burn monitoring plan.



### Oregon FLN

Central Oregon TREX participants hold a post-burn after action review. © TNC (Pete Caligiuri)

“We are quite proud of our ability to plan and deploy two Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges\* in Oregon this spring. Both were designed to provide holistic training in ecology, monitoring, operations and communications to prescribed fire professionals from around the country and world. They also complemented ongoing efforts with local partners, forest collaborative groups and the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network to engage local communities in dialog related to fire adapted communities and forest restoration. Expanding TREX to two sites in Oregon this year also helped attract attention to the TREX model for increasing the pace and scale of prescribed fire treatments across the region in multiple National Forests and BLM Districts, as well as the Forest Service Regional Office.”



### Southern Blue Ridge FLN

Partners in the SBR Escarpment landscape discuss the plan for a 2,800-acre burn that will span the North Carolina-South Carolina border. “We have continued capacity-building for prescribed fire throughout our landscapes, and have been able to scale-up burn acres. The increased capacity is due to increased partnerships between organizations that enables burning across ownership boundaries, greater sharing of newer information (such as advances in smoke modeling and expanded seasons for burning), and additional resources in the region like the TNC on-call fire crew and two Forest Service R8-supported modules; these are available for 12 weeks to assist with multiple burns.”

“FLN support is enabling the PPFLN to continue to grow, build trust and share lessons learned at the local and national level. We have also strengthened our relationship with the Pikes Peak Wildfire Prevention Partners and...taken part in their workshop targeting

participants such as insurance agents, realtors and mitigation contractors. Being part of this workshop allowed us to engage with new and important audiences about prescribed fire that we had not reached in the past.”



### South Central FLN

In February, participants in the Shortleaf Pine Initiative workshop hosted by the FLN toured Big Piney and West Frasier Lumber shortleaf restoration sites to discuss the do's and don'ts of restoration. The long-term state-wide partnerships of this FLN have provided a firm foundation that has been essential to the successful launch of this range-wide, multi-partner initiative to restore shortleaf pines.

© TNC



### Washington Dry Forests FLN

Participants in a training workshop on the Individuals-Clumps-Openings method completed marking on a stand on DFW land that will be thinned this summer under the Manastash-Taneum Resilient Landscape plan.

© Hannah Letinich

In addition to continuing their long-term work in the Tapash landscape, this FLN is working extensively with fire adapted communities efforts, post-fire recovery (including as part of the Burned Area Learning Network), the Washington Prescribed Fire Council and meetings with the Governor's wildland fire advisory panel. Lessons learned from this broad array of work helped support the development of the state's Forest Resiliency Burning Pilot (ESHB 2928), which established a pilot project to increase the use of prescribed burning.

### Western Klamath Mountains FLN

A group of Forest Service specialists on the Interdisciplinary Team for the Somes Bar Integrated Fire Management Project review the effects of a controlled burn conducted during the fall 2015 Klamath River TREX. This burn was an initial treatment after a century of fire exclusion.

© MKWC

"The Somes Bar IFM Project proposes to use the same strategy employed in the West Simms unit—linear manual and mechanical perimeter treatments allowing for safe reintroduction of fire to the interior—at larger scales to restore good fire to landscapes ahead of the next wild-fire. Many have been skeptical about prescribed fire without pre-treatment, so the West Simms unit is a perfect laboratory for people to see first-hand how controlled fire can restore forests while minimizing impacts to threatened and endangered species."

Somes Bar is one of three geographic subareas—along with Happy Camp and Salmon River—where working groups of the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership are now collaboratively contributing to NEPA analyses as part of planning implementation projects.



The annual Learning Networks workshop, held in Jacksonville (FL) in April, encouraged connections not only within the FLN, but between members of the FLN and the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net) and the Indigenous Peoples Burning Network (IPBN).



*"Numerous field trips, workshops and collaborative meetings have improved consensus among stakeholders—especially biologists and fire workers—about appropriate uses of prescribed fire in sagebrush ecosystems and westslope cutthroat trout watersheds. Dialogue is more effective than any amount of research, planning or environmental review for develop relationships where biologists and fire workers better understand each other's constraints, goals and concerns. This has created an environment where practitioners are willing to experiment and learn together because they trust that the broader team has clear, unified goals for managing sagebrush and watersheds for sensitive fish species."*

— Centennial FLN



### Fire Learning Network

<http://www.conservationgateway.org/fln>



The FLN is 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 (ldecke@tnc.org) or (801) 320-0524.

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