

Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT)

A cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior

This partnership works to restore our relationship with fire by helping us get to “right fire”—where good fire can do its necessary work on the landscape, and both human and natural communities are better able to live with fire. We work in key places with individual people, and also at regional and national scales. We also leverage the connections between those scales. This work is accomplished through:

- the Fire Learning Network (FLN), fostering collaboration for restoration and integrated fire management in landscapes across the country;
- the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net), which is doing the same with communities adapting to wildfire;
- Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TREX) and cooperative burns, providing experiential training opportunities that integrate a range of people, places and aspects of fire;
- targeted restoration action under Scaling-up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency (SPER);
- the Indigenous Peoples Burning Network (IPBN), supporting traditional burning practices and cultural revitalization; and
- the Burned Areas Learning Network (BALN), bringing people together for pre-fire planning for better post-fire restoration.

These efforts—the FLN and those that it has inspired and incubated—are interconnected and continue to support each other. We and our partners are starting to see that our impacts are greater and results more durable where multiple overlapping and complementary efforts are directed. And as the strategies are becoming more interwoven, they are becoming more powerful.



Ignitions on the Eagle Creek SPER burn in northern California. © WRTC (Dave Jaramillo)

FLN staff, leads and partners in California were involved in working out what is being called CalTRES—a remarkable state-wide cooperative prescribed fire training and cooperative burning pilot program. The program is modeled on TREX, while also drawing on other successful training models. CalTRES will be a flagship initiative of the capacity-building workgroup under a new Region 5 Fire Partnership MOU.

The goal of this partnership is to help us all live with fire—with fire adapted human communities, resilient natural landscapes, and the operational and social capacity to flourish in a challenging, changing fire environment. Our efforts are rooted in collaboration, and they integrate the best available science and cultural knowledge with a strong emphasis on co-learning and adaptive management.



RECENT WORK

In the first half of 2016, PERFACT supported:

- 12 Fire Learning Networks (FLNs) encompassing 33 landscapes and 80 million acres;
- 18 community-based Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net) organizations in 15 states, as well as 3 state-wide efforts and mentoring 2 other state-wide and regional efforts;
- 4 Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TRES), a Volunteer Fire Department Training and a cooperative burn that together provided training and experience for 215 people while treating 4,876 acres with fire;
- 3 SPER III projects working to enable landscape-scale “right fire;” and
- design workshops for two new networks--the Burned Area Learning Network and the TREX Coaches Network--to expand the scope of fire issues addressed, and the potential scale of TREX, respectively.

FLN and FAC Net partnerships and TREX events also leveraged more than \$3 million in additional funds for treatments and other actions that will build forest, watershed and community resilience.

“Thanks to you all for your ongoing support, trust and mentorship. In spite of the amount of work it takes to plan and pull of a TREX of this nature, I find I am at my best, most excited and most engaged self when I’m working on advancing the goal of getting good fire on the ground and engaging the community in the process. So I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this movement.”

Expanding our Scope and Reach

This spring, PERFECT grew in ways that are expanding both the number of people we reach and breadth of fire management issues we are addressing together. The developing Indigenous Peoples Burning Network and Burn Area Learning Network each add a new facet to our work—incorporating cultural burning traditions in the first case and post-fire recovery planning in the second. The FAC Net added a new affiliate membership category that, with the support of a new website, now allows any interested individual or organization to engage with the network. And network design is underway for a new TREX Coaches Network that will help build and support a cadre of people able to lead TREX and mentor others in doing so, to increase the scale of TREX delivery.

“TREX have been an outstanding strategic success. But under our original delivery model, we cannot increase delivery to the scale needed to meet the goals of PERFECT. The goal of the TREX Coaches Network is to develop a national network of 50-100 TREX coaches who can organize, plan and deliver TREX across the country. A core leadership team is assimilating what we learned in the design workshop and moving forward on launching this new network in the coming year.”



Indigenous Peoples Burning Network

At the January IPBN workshop participants explore changes in the Yurok-Hoopa-Karuk landscape, comparing aerial photos from the 1940s and contemporary satellite imagery.

© TNC (Mary Huffman)

In a second workshop this spring the IPBN began a two-session Healthy Country Planning process patterned after similar efforts by aboriginal people in Australia. Participants set a goal of increasing the number of families involved in family-led burning, articulated characteristics of family-led burns (in contrast to agency or NGO-led burns) and identified their next steps.

Building Capacity to Do More

Building community and partnership capacity takes many forms. TREX continue to focus on various means of increasing local and regional capacity for fire management, from providing experience and taskbook evaluations for agency fire personnel to bringing new burners into the field; they also build capacity by demonstrating that multi-agency and multi-ownership burning is not only possible, but can be more effective than everyone going it alone. This spring, a variation on TREX brought partners in Iowa together for a week of cooperative burning. Aspects of TREX were adapted into a three-day burn training for volunteer fire departments in northern California. And a long-period of relationship-building with the state fire agency there, CAL FIRE, led to an agreement that will

support a three-year CalTRES training program based on the lessons of TREX.

Capacity in other areas can also limit partnership effectiveness—for example, working through challenging situations collaboratively takes skillful facilitation and leadership. PERFECT staff provide this for groups as they begin their efforts together; then use a “teach a man to fish” model. This spring a Facilitative Leadership workshop was held for members of the FireScope Mendocino core team and Mendocino NF leadership team. Last year the core team of the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership used this workshop, developed by the Interaction Institute for Social Change, and it has helped the group move toward more extensive and productive work, with FLN facilitation stepping back to a mentoring role.



Building Capacity

Lighting operations at a VFD training in Trinity County, CA (left) and high-fives on completing a workshop on Facilitative Leadership in FireScope Mendocino (right).

© WRTC (Dave Jaramillo),
TNC (Mary Huffman)

Prescribed fire training for volunteer fire departments and leadership training for core teams demonstrate the range of capacity-building needs—and opportunities—identified in and met by the networks.

PERFACT: Spanning the Country, Stacking Efforts for Impact

“Stacking” PERFACT Efforts in Washington

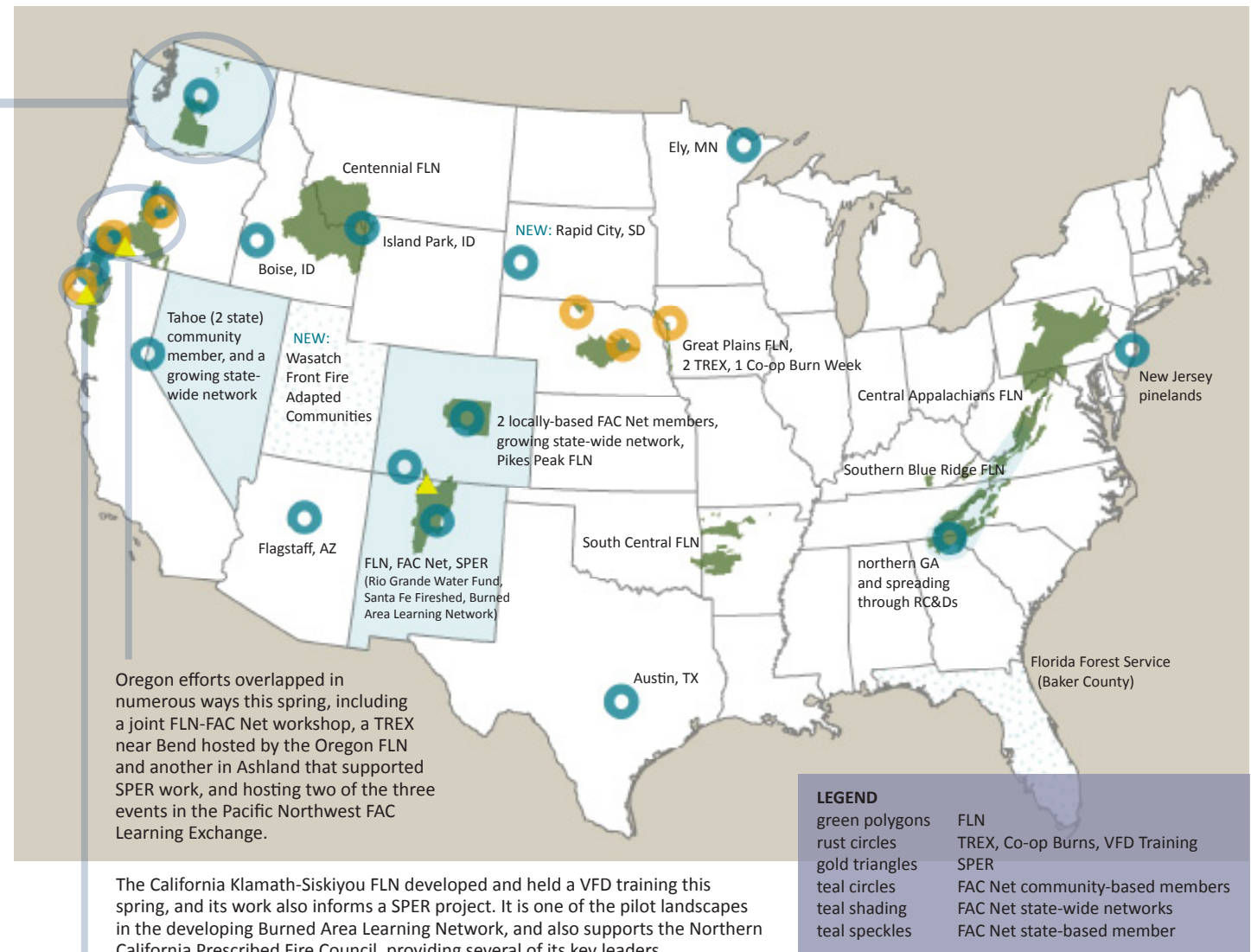
In Washington, efforts are stacked and overlapping so thoroughly that it no longer makes much sense to try to tease them apart. FLN work here began in the Tieton (later broadened and renamed Tapash) landscape near Yakima in 2007. In 2013 this FLN began incorporating FAC efforts into its work, as it became clear that a community focus was essential to the landscape work. By this spring, PERFACT support was touching numerous coordinated efforts that address the myriad aspects of living with fire—from the Washington Prescribed Fire Council to the state-wide Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network to the new Burned Area Learning Network.



© Hannah Letinich (2), CWSC (Hilary Lundgren)

Gathering to Learn and Share

Fundamental to much of what PERFACT does is getting people together. On a local scale, this can mean providing natural partners a forum for meeting—an obvious, though not always easy, step toward better work together. But, depending on circumstances PERFACT meetings and workshops bring in past (or potential) litigators, people from often-neglected departments, or stakeholders who may not fit traditional categories. This diversity not only helps prevent conflict down the road, but makes a more robust and better informed path for getting there.



"The conversations and networking fostered by the Network is really powerful. Interacting with such an inspiring group of engaged fire-focused practitioners was incredibly stimulating and helpful. I made connections with people working on issues similar to ours. What was truly remarkable was how innovative many of the solutions truly were. I didn't expect to come away from the annual workshop with new and brilliant tools/solutions to make our upcoming CWPP update relevant and integrated across multiple spectrums of fire management, but I did. Many were things that we have been thinking about and struggling to find elegant solutions to, and it is so helpful to have other innovative examples and diverse thought to work from."



Southern Blue Ridge FLN

More than 85 people took part in the SBR FLN's eleventh regional workshop this May. This workshop usually fills to capacity well before the registration deadline—an indication of its value to participants across this wide network.

We are now also increasing our efforts in bringing people together within regions, across the country and among our networks to share—and build—knowledge together. For example, this spring FAC Net members in the Pacific Northwest held a series of three learning exchanges in three of their "homes" (Deschutes County (OR), Leavenworth and Wenatchee (WA) and Jackson and Josephine Counties (OR)); in the course of this, they realized that another set of exchanges is needed, this time bringing



National Learning Networks Workshop

Hosted by FAC Net member Florida Forest Service in Jacksonville, April 25-29, 2016.



Pacific Northwest FAC Learning Exchanges

A tour of a biomass facility was part of the June exchange held in Jackson County, OR.

© WRTC (Michelle Medley-Daniel)

The process of designing and implementing these exchanges also offered many valuable lessons that are being compiled into a handbook and short video that will help other FAC Net members host successful exchanges as well.

in more of the local partners in each place. In southern Oregon, the FLN and FAC Net held a joint workshop, knitting together the landscape and community, social science and ecology, in an event that was eye-opening for all. Nationally, we moved from holding FAC Net and FLN workshops in the same place the same week to having a single integrated Learning Network workshop—that also included the IPBN, SPER leads and a partner from the BALN. In addition to being useful, this was symbolic, creating a solidarity among network members and networks that wasn't there before.

Taking it to the Larger Community

The lessons—and people—of PERFECT contribute to other state, regional and national efforts in fire management, resiliency and other aligned interests. For example, this spring, FLN leads and partners took part in the Governor's Wildland Fire Advisory Panel listening sessions, and in California, are on the Prescribed Fire Working Group of the Governor's Tree Mortality Task Force. Regionally, we have been in dialog with the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC) for several years. We are currently helping with network design and proposal development to support a network of forest landscape learning collaborations, to bring fire issues into their network and help us on policy issues. These efforts—and the tremendous work they do—resulted in their receiving funding this year to advance a more robust network effort. Nationally, this spring many of our members were instrumental in the success of the Working Toward Resilient Landscapes and Communities collaborative restoration workshop, held in Denver in April. FLN members were asked to serve on the planning committees for four of the six workshop tracks, and asked to present on important panels. In this way, the FLN contributed significantly to workshop

discussions in the areas of collaboration and engagement, working together effectively, the future of collaboration, restoration as science in action, collaborative restoration, the future of collaborative stewardship, and monitoring. As in the other cases, over the coming months, what these FLN members learned from the workshop will be shared with others in our networks, enriching our work in turn.

More Online

Fire Learning Network

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

FAC Network

<http://FireAdaptedNetwork.org>

Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges

<http://nature.ly/trainingexchanges>



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