



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Loup River Prescribed Fire Training Exchange

Central Nebraska
March 14-26, 2016

Firefighters from across the country descended on central Nebraska in March to improve their fireline qualifications and become more experienced with different fuel types and tactical strategies. A total of 18 firefighters from Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan and Nebraska joined forces near Ord and delivered almost 2,500 acres of contiguous, ecologically meaningful prescribed fire over a two-week period.

The Loup River TRES is conducted almost entirely on grasslands that are privately owned. Surveys of landowners involved in previous Loup TRES reveal that our fires considerably reduce the level of eastern redcedar invasion into grasslands and provide thousands of dollars of economic benefits to the land. Additionally, landowners indicate positive effects on populations of greater prairie chicken, mule deer and northern bobwhite as a result of these fires. "The Loup TRES delivers fire at an ecologically meaningful scale, and improves the quality of our central Nebraska grasslands for wildlife as well as local livestock operations," said Ben Wheeler, coordinator of the Loup TRES.

With the 2016 efforts, the Loup TRES has now impacted more than 25,000 acres of central Nebraska grasslands since 2009.

For more information, about the Loup River TRES contact:

Ben Wheeler
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A firefighter from the Bay Mills Indian Community in Michigan installs a wetline during the TRES.



Invasion by eastern redcedar threatens the ecology of grassland communities. Fire is used on the Loup TRES to abate eastern redcedar coverage.

We had a very good group that worked together as a team, and I know whenever I had questions or concerns, someone was right there to help me out. The advice and things I learned on this fire training will be invaluable as I continue to use similar techniques and ideas when conducting prescribed burns in the future.

Pheasants Forever participant
Nebraska

Were it not for this training opportunity, I might not have had a chance to work on my FEMO again for some time. The Loup TRES challenged me in that I had to rapidly integrate with a group of folks who came from very different fire backgrounds.

National Park Service participant
Colorado



Evening and night ignitions were used during the Loup TRES when weather conditions were not favorable for burning during the day.

All photos: Ben Wheeler

Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES) are part of *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 about PERFECT, contact Lynn Decker: ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.



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v. 5 July 16 / B. Wheeler