



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Taos TRES

April 8-19, 2018

Taos, NM

The three primary goals of any Prescribed Fire Training Exchange are treatment, training and outreach. What happens when weather or other factors prevent you from burning? For experienced cadre members of the TRES Coaches Network at this event, the solution was to emphasize the training and outreach when treatments were not possible.

Red flag conditions and a flurry of wildfires led the hosts of the Taos TRES to decide not to use fire. The organizing team rapidly reworked the agenda and let the participants know of the new plans. Participants enthusiastically embraced the scheme, and so the Taos TRES team proceeded to engage in a series of training activities that tested their abilities and afforded them opportunities to learn and practice new skills, including those for ICT5, ENGB, FIRB, and RXB2 and RXB3 positions.

The TRES team worked through numerous training scenarios, took part in fire management field trips, worked with a neighborhood association to conduct home preparedness assessments, and integrated a UAV team into a scouting mission that turned into a full blown initial attack exercise that was a great training opportunity for one of the ICT5 trainees. The team also visited the Southwest Interagency Coordination Center, scouted burn units, worked on fire effects monitoring skills and procedures and engaged in a five-hour prescribed fire Simtable simulation.

Finally, snow fell one afternoon. Seizing the opportunity, the team was able to coordinate with local contractors and authorities to secure permission to burn a dozen piles, which provided valuable training for one of the RXB3 trainees.

The team also helped lay the groundwork for upcoming work, scouting and completing smoke permitting documentation for the Chama TRES later in the month. TRES coaches were also able to remain over the weekend, and provided important support to the New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council as it hosted a private landowner workshop.



After a day in the field scouting burn units and discussing treatment options with managers (top), participants caught a glimpse of bighorn sheep in the Taos Gorge (bottom left) on their way back to the incident command post.

© Chama Peak Land Alliance (Caitlin Barbour); CSU (Mike Caggiano)

Bottom right: A break in red flag conditions allowed participants to get some live fire experience, burning a dozen piles. © José Luis Duce

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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 about PERFECT, contact Marek Smith (marek_smith@tnc.org).



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