



# Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

## Klamath River TREX October 2014

### Community Engagement through Active Use of Social Media



Comments on MKWC September 30 posting

The Klamath Prescribed Fire Training Exchange took place October 1-11, treating lands near and between communities along the Klamath River in northern California. The Mid Klamath Watershed Council (MKWC) led the social media way with great daily (or nightly) updates about TREX burning—and got good community response from the residents of an area that spends much of each summer smelling the smoke of wildfires.

These updates were posted to the MKWC’s Facebook page. Most were also re-posted to the “Salmon River and Orleans Complexities” page, which was started during the 2013 wildfire season and has continued as the go-to source for information about local fire, with over 1,400 members.

#### September 30

MKWC and a diverse array of local, tribal, state and federal partners are preparing to bring fire back in a good way to the Middle Klamath region. Starting tomorrow, we will be conducting controlled burns here and there down the river. We will be moving around to not concentrate the smoke for any period of time in one neighborhood. There will be evening presentations and a community potluck on Sunday October 5th, and Friday, October 10th at 6pm at the MKWC office in Orleans for folks to hear about what’s going on and meet the diverse team of folks that is implementing the Fall 2014 Klamath River Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX). For more info, call MKWC at 530-627-3202.

#### October 2

The Klamath River Prescribed Fire Training Exchange successfully implemented about 30 acres of pile burning yesterday around Orleans on Day One of TREX. Tomorrow we are going up to Godfrey Ranch and Blue Ridge on the Salmon River to conduct broadcast burns near mid-slope homes impacted by the ‘77 and ‘87 fires. Friday we will be burning at Horn Field and Bull Barn in Forks of Salmon and Rainbow Mine near Sawyers. For those of you following the Salmon River and Orleans Complexities webpage during this year’s fires, this is the same Rainbow Mine that had fire on all sides and lost two structures a couple months back. There is a 20 acre unburned piece right below the main structures that was unburned in the fire. This weekend we will be returning to Orleans to burn the 90+ acre Tshanik unit that runs from Gold Dredge Road to the mouth of Camp Creek. This is the site of the 2001 and 2013 Orleans

Fires that threatened the town of Orleans. We will be having a community potluck on Sunday, October 5, around 7 pm with presentations from Margo Robbins from the Yurok Cultural Fire Management Council, Bill Tripp from the Karuk Dept of Natural Resources, and myself. Come down and meet the amazing group of firefighters that are helping us bring fire back to this country in a good way.



Photo: Thomas Dunklin

### October 3

Day Two of the Fall 2014 TREX was one of my best burning days ever. Sam Berry burning his own place with the support of the TREX team was a model for the future of fire management. As I get to know the amazing group of 50+ firefighters who were crazy enough to sign up for TREX, I am inspired more than ever by their dedication to restoring the process of fire to these hills, and having a good time doing it. So much learning and sharing and burning today, all in a big horseshoe below the Berry home, which itself was built by the Red Cross after the original home burned in the the 1987 Fire. Tomorrow we will burn up at Rainbow Mine, patrol the burns at Godfrey and Blue Ridge, and finalize the lines and the burn plan for the 85 acre Ta-shun-ik unit in Orleans for burning Saturday (if we get all the permits in place...) Big shout out to Calfire, USFS, and air quality supporting this TREX as much as they have!



Tom Fielden, our fearless leader and Incident Commander. His experience burning on the Salmon River through the years is evident through his application of fire to the ground. He takes the time to teach the how and why of prescribed fire like few folks I have worked with.



Heather Rickard, one of the many talented women that are part of the Klamath River TREX. Bill Tripp encouraged us to recruit women to participate since historically much of the burning was done by women in these hills. Their understanding of the balance between making and taking life with fire may just be what we need to restore a healthy relationship to fire.

### October 4

Successful 20 acre burn at Rainbow Mine this afternoon and evening. Lots of cured heavy fuels and deep duff layers dictated that we take our time and burn into the night. Small but amazing crew. Hats off to all of them: Jim Wills, Jose Duce, Adam Hickl, Scott Harding, Sam Commarto, Ken Staples, Brock Luedthe, Tomorrow it appears is a go for the 85 acre Ta-shun-ik burn in Orleans. We will have several engines, 42 firefighters, a water tender, and other local contingency resources. Nancy Bailey went door-to-door today to check in with folks about the burn. Chris Root finalized the many permit docs to get the necessary permits and variances (with a team helping).

Guy Duffner and Jose Duce keep cranking out solid Incident Action Plans in the wee hours. Jim Wills is keeping an eye to the proverbial backdoor, those units already burned that are waiting for drier fuels to be receptive. Daily patrols have been visiting each burn site, putting in line and watering things down. Time for bed and some rest.

### October 4 (on the Salmon River & Orleans Complexities page)

It feels so good to live in a place where landowners, even ones who have had fire on all sides but one, who have lost homes only months before to wildfires, realize the opportunity of that "good black" to implement larger prescribed burns below their homes to prevent future wildfires from burning up more structures. Dick and Heather Watts up at Rainbow Mine were happy to host the Fall 2014 Klamath Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX) to do just that.



Not only were photos regularly uploaded to the Facebook page during the event, many were captioned with useful and engaging information.

All photos in here are from the MKWC Facebook page.



Making fresh deer browse in a masticated black oak/madrone stand.



Sam Berry finishing up lighting the masticated unit below his home around 10 pm last night.



Evening planning meeting in the field with the jefes, Jose Luis Duce and Jim Wills.



Brock Luedthe having some late night fun. This unit was actually brutal on the lighters.

## October 4

There will be a Community Potluck/Mixer for folks to come and mingle with the 50+ fireworkers participating in the Klamath TREX this Sunday at the Panamnik Building in Orleans. Salmon and refreshments will be provided. Please bring a side dish. There will be presentations on cultural fire management and expanding the use of prescribed fire to protect communities and increase the resources we depend on for our sweet lives in the hills. 7 pm Dinner, 8 pm Presentations. Hope to see you there!

## October 5

Here's just some of the fiery Klamath River TREX folks you will meet if you come down to the Panamnik Building tonight for a salmon dinner (7 pm - bring a potluck side if you can) and some short presentations on why we are burning all over the place.



## October 6 (late pm)

Day 6 of the Klamath River TREX! Whilst one crew burned about 20 acres at the Nichols residence and Horn Field in Forks, and others mopped up at the Godfrey, Blue Ridge, Rainbow, Tshanik, and Nix units, we went on a tour of sacred mountains waiting for ceremonial fire, holes filled with salmon, and others for swimming, and ended up tying in with the Forks burn crew late in the day. To date, we have burned about 170 acres on 11 burn units. Morale is high after we got the porta-potties, local laundry service (special thanks to Malcolm Terence), and a pallet of water (courtesy of Karuk Tribe). Last night we heard songs and stories from Margo Robbins and Bill Tripp of how the Yurok and Karuk people use fire as a tool at the community potluck. And then we had an impromptu dance party until way too late at night! Good people, good fire. Couldn't ask for more.



From left to right:

Brock Luedthe has been rocking it on so many levels. As a firing boss and holding boss, scrambling up and down mountains spreading fire and sharing his knowledge with others. Jill Beckmann blushing after getting a raucous applause for her mad skilz as a firing and holding boss today. Jackie Goodwin is leaving the TREX to attend to her real job with the tribe, but it has been a pleasure watching her develop some serious chops with a drip torch. Come back next year! Andy Goldman and landowner Scott Harding "putting the monkey" to an oak woodland downslope of Scott and Lyra's place. They had to work fast so the heat would help drive the right level of consumption.



Fall 2014 Klamath River Prescribed Fire Training Exchange  
October 1-11, 2014

## Community Potluck / Mixer / Presentations

**Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup> - Panamnik Building**  
7pm – Salmon Dinner (Bring a Side Dish)  
8pm – Presentations



Presentations by:  
Margo Robbins – Yurok Cultural Fire Management Council  
Bill Tripp – Karuk Department of Natural Resources  
Will Harling – Mid Klamath Watershed Council



44 people like this.



**Pimm Allen** So amazing ... Big shout out to all involved ... My great-great gramma would be proud!  
October 6 at 11:58pm · Like · 4



**Greg J. Bennett** Great pictures Will Harling ... forwarded link to my brothers and Dad and told them that this is in our future ... looks great.  
October 7 at 8:17am · Like · 1



**Donna Brucker** It's looking good here at Blue Ridge. Great to get fire back on the ground by choice..... Thanks everybody  
October 7 at 6:56pm · Like · 4





Gabriel Calahen, TNC burner from the far south who drove a whole truckload of radios, Nomex, tools, and other TNC Fire Cache gear from New Mexico to Nor Cal to make this TREX happen. A good man.

### October 8

Day 7 of the Klamath River TREX saw one burn team implementing a 14 acre controlled burn on Slate Creek and another team burning a 12 acre piece near the mouth of Clear Creek. Both were very successful burns with great consumption but minimal damage to the canopy. Today we have started implementing burns at Peach Creek and above Sandy Bar on Ishi Pishi Road. Tomorrow we will be burning up Ti Bar Road, and then this magical fire experience will be wrapping up Friday with documenting training assignments and a final community potluck/after action review. Josh Saxon will be cooking salmon on sticks, and Frank Lake, Will Harling, and TNC TREX program coordinator Jeremy Bailey (who rolls into town tonight) will be giving short presentations. We hope to shoot for dinner at 6pm with AAR and presentations to follow.



Left: Tobey Behr, Firestorm engine captain and snag faller extraordinaire. Above: Mark Dupont blowing the upper line at the Clear unit.

### October 9

Day 8 of the Klamath River TREX: We implemented burns in Orleans above Sandy Bar on Ishi Pishi Road and in the Peach Creek neighborhood across the Klamath River. These were large, steep units that truly tested both trained and beginner firefighters alike. After eight days straight of burning with intermittent night shifts, folks are feeling the effects of fatigue, or as Firestorm IC / Burn Boss Jim Wills puts it, "they're broke off". So far we have burned about 220 acres on 11 different parcels from Weitchpec. All these units have been adjacent to homes for WUI protection, and some have been for cultural resource enhancement. Today the team is mopping up the burns from the past couple days, and implementing prescribed burns at several units up Ti Bar at the Strouss property. Tomorrow we take time to fill out task books and document all the training that has occurred during the TREX. We will have an after action review (AAR) to document lessons learned with agency partners, and with TREX participants, so TREX'es in the coming years go a little more smoothly.

### October 9

Tomorrow (Friday) there will be a free community potluck dinner with salmon cooked on sticks by Josh Saxon and Frank Lake, and short presentations by Frank Lake (PSW Research Station) on the use of fire to improve cultural resources, Jeremy Bailey (US Fire Learning Network TREX Program Director) on TREX across the country and the world, and Will Harling on how the Klamath River TREX is being scaled up to the landscape scale and accomplishments from this TREX. Dinner at 6pm. Presentations at 7pm. Hanging out with all the cool TREX participants - 8pm on!

### For more information this TREX:

**Will Harling**  
will@mkwc.org

### For more on other TREX:

**Jeremy Bailey**  
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TREX 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  
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(801) 320-0524.



All star burn team at Peach Creek unit: Aja Conrad, Skip Lowry and Jill Beckmann.



Jose Luis Duce, the man, the myth, the legend. Burning at Peach Creek last night.



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