



# Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

## Central Appalachians FLN Annual Workshop

November 5-6, 2014  
Warm Springs, VA

**More than 80 participants** from 14 different agencies and organizations attended the annual meeting of the Central Appalachians Fire Learning Network. Dr. Morgan Varner, Assistant Professor in the Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech and Chair of the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils, kicked off the meeting with a keynote presentation on the Past, Present, and Future of Fire in the Eastern United States. Subsequent presentations included updates from the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists, a summary of the recent synthesis of the Fire-Oak Literature of Eastern North America, lessons learned from the national Fire Learning Network, an analysis of the effects of prescribed fire on forest overstory, and a report on dendrochronological studies on North Fork Mountain, West Virginia. Additional presentations included updates from the Monitoring Working Group and Communications & Outreach Working Group, along with an introduction to two new projects in West Virginia and Kentucky funded by the Two Chiefs' Restoration Initiative. An interactive panel session helped address barriers to implementation and provided a forecast for prescribed fire from federal, state and private perspectives.

*Right:* Twenty-three people took part in the field trip on the second day. Despite 40° temperatures and driving rain for most of the morning, they visited four burn units, with varying fire entries, in the Warm Springs Mountain Restoration Project, a collaborative initiative spanning lands owned by The Nature Conservancy and the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests. Discussions covered topics ranging from aerial ignition techniques, forest structure and composition monitoring results, fire history studies, and interagency cooperation. *Photo: TNC/M. Smith*

**Steve Smestad**, Assistant Fire Management Officer for the Warm Springs and James River Districts of the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests, was the recipient of the inaugural Central Appalachians FLN Partnership Award. In the partnership's eight-year history, Steve has been at the table since day one, participated in fire history discussions, attended ecological modeling workshops, sat through situational diagramming sessions, helped develop the first monitoring program, designed firelines around



Steve Smestad accepting the Central Appalachians FLN Partnership Award  
*Photo: TNC/Marek Smith*

and personally walked more burn units in this landscape than we can name, and served as burn boss on some of the largest units our partnership has attempted to burn together. He has probably single-handedly been responsible for putting more fire on the ground through the FLN than anyone.

Jason Hattersley, Timber Sale Administrator and frequent Division Supervisor for the Warm Springs and James River Districts of the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests, gave what was arguably the most entertaining and practical presentation of the day. Entitled *My Phone is on Fire: Apps for the Fireline*, Jason's presentation detailed some of today's most useful smartphone applications and web sites for both wildland fire and prescribed fire management. In addition to the standard built-in camera and compass, Jason's favorite phone apps and web sites include:

- Avenza PDF Maps
- Burnt Planet
- Firefighter RH Calculator
- Google Earth
- GPS Kit Pro
- IRPG+ Pro
- NOAA Hi-Def Radar
- Peak.AR
- National Weather Service Fire Briefing Page
- Weather Underground Wildland Toolkit
- Wildfire Pro / Wildfire Info



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The Fire Learning Network (FLN) is 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, contact Lynn Decker ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524.



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