Fire Learning Network

The Fire Learning Network is a network of hundreds of partners in 30 landscapes across the country; many of the landscapes work together in regional networks, and all are committed to sharing their challenges, expertise and learning nationally. FLN members collaborate to do what is needed locally to promote the resiliency of fire-adapted ecosystems and the safety of the communities that are a part of them. The efforts needed to do this range from collaboratively setting goals and making plans to meet them, to building, integrating and sharing the science and local knowledge needed

Southern Blue Ridge FLN partners break for lunch at Jumping Off Rock during a field tour of Jocassee Gorges at the May regional workshop.

In large part due to the work of this FLN, burning in the region is becoming more routine: For example, this spring the north rim of Tallulah Gorge had prescribed fire for the third time in seven years. Another 2,000-acre unit just five miles to the west received fire the same day. This was undoubtedly the most acreage burned in a single day in Rabun County, GA. And despite the smoke, there were no complaints from the public.

Partners work by **accelerating** the development of prototype fire adapted communities in a **landscape context** ... accelerating integrated efforts for restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes through multi-scalar collaboration, **effective planning** processes & transformative learning and **networks** ... building social and operational capacity for response to wildland fire in a changing world ... accelerating the adjustment of landscape-level strategies for a changing climate ... **integrating** science, cultural knowledge & **adaptive learning** to resolve key barriers to transformative resilience.

for adaptive management decisions, to public outreach that builds support for those actions, to training that provides the workforce for them, to the relationships that support the safe and efficient implementation of restoration treatments.

With over 12 years of innovation and learning behind it, the FLN has built a strong foundation for a robust and evolving body of work. As regional FLNs have matured, they have taken a variety of paths, depending on local needs and partners, and the barriers and opportunities they face. Partnerships built through the FLN now form

the basis for a wide variety of work that promotes both ecosystem and community resilience.

The FLN's methods and partnerships have given rise to other successful programs under the Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency through Collaboration (PERC) cooperative agreement, such as prescribed fire training exchanges (TREX) starting in 2008 and Scalingup to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency (SPER) implementation projects starting in 2011. Most recently, the lessons learned from the FLN have been applied to the formation of a new and complementary network, the

Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, which furthers the Cohesive Strategy goal of making human communities part of the ongoing work in fire management for safer, more resilient natural and human systems. (The article "Adopting a Learning Network Approach for Growing Fire Adapted Communities" in Fire Management Today describes this.)

Beyond PERC, the FLN is nurturing and steering a new generation of prescribed fire councils. And, on a yet larger scale, FLN strategies can be found in the Cohesive Strategy revised

regional implementation plans.



Data are recorded during a plant community monitoring project jointly carried out by The Nature Conservancy and the Forest Service on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest. In both the South Central and Southern Blue Ridge FLNs, partners have developed uniform monitoring protocols across wide landscapes to support adaptive management.

The Fire Learning Network is supported by Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency through Collaboration (PERC): Landscapes, Learning & Restoration, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information, contact Lynn Decker (Idecker@tnc.org).



Northwest
FLN

W. Klamath Mountains FLN
California Klamath Siskiyou FLN
Menacino Firescape

Great Plains FLN

Central
Appalachians
FLN

Parashant
Partnership
Rio Grande
Water Fund

Rio Grande
Water Fund

Rio Grande
FLN

South
FLN

South
FLN

Central
FLN

FLN

Rio Grande
Water Fund

EXAMPLES FROM SPRING 2014

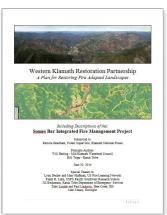
EFFECTIVE COLLABORATIVE PLANNING: WESTERN KLAMATH MOUNTAINS

A series of landscape planning workshops started last fall was hastily suspended one day into the second workshop when the first of several wildfires broke out at the edge of town. This spring, the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership returned to the task with renewed vigor, completing the remaining five workshops in five months. Along the way, the group developed a set of guidelines for itself, which exemplify the way the FLN can work:

- We are results-oriented.
- We work toward having beneficial fire operating throughout our landscape.
- We incorporate cultural values and traditional ecological knowledge into our work.
- Our activities seek to build our local workforce.
- We use the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation as our guide to adaptive management and collaboration.

By June they had outlined three integrated projects, one in each national forest district in the landscape. While the projects are at different stages of development, each will:

- include both public and private lands;
- include an integrated workforce of public land managers, tribal members,
 Fire Safe Council members and other community members;



- use three types of treatments for fuel reduction and upslope restoration: manual fuel removal, mechanical fuel removal and prescribed burning;
- prioritize treatments based on multiple local values; and
- include a small business coaching element using principles of social entrepreneurship.



The Happy Camp project is the furthest along, with 40,000 acres of NEPA-ready projects, existing partnerships and an engaged Fire Safe Council.









LANDSCAPE LEVEL STRATEGY: RIO GRANDE WATER FUND

A landscape in northern New Mexico has been part of the FLN almost continuously since the network began in 2002. The scope—both geographic and in issues addressed—has been much less constant, as the FLN adapts to changing needs and opportunities. Partners there have worked deeply and locally in the Jemez Mountains, for example, but were also key leads in the regional Southwest Climate Change Initiative.

This year, the FLN has again embraced a new role and focus, and is playing a leading role in the Rio Grande Water Fund. The project is truly landscape -scale, encompassing the entire watershed (over 7 million acres) that serves the Santa Fe area. The partnerships are similarly broad, including a full range of stakeholders (see logos, right). The work of the Water Fund is innovative, as they seek to demonstrate a funding model that is sustainable and based on tangible benefits to the region, to conduct the treatments that will protect the water supply, forests and communities from wildfire. The work is also integrated, spanning all areas of the PERC agreement, bringing together the FLN, FAC Learning Network, prescribed fire training exchanges and SPER implementation projects in ways that complement and support each other.





MULTI-SCALAR COLLABORATION: SOUTH CENTRAL FLN ~ NW FLN

The South Central FLN supports robust working partnerships among state and federal land management agencies throughout the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas. Partners meet regularly to discuss a variety of shared management issues, and their collaborative work ranges from planning and burning together on individual projects to helping steer two Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program projects.

The lessons learned in developing their program of cooperative work are now helping a landscape half the country away. The Northwest FLN in Oregon invited SC FLN leader McRee Anderson to mentor Forest Service and Conservancy partners in a workshop held this spring, planning a TREX they will jointly host.