

# Women in Fire Training Exchange WTREX

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**The Women in Fire Training Exchange (WTREX) strives to conquer challenges that women face in the world of wildland firefighting, natural resources management, and conservation. The WTREX is a two-week prescribed fire training event that will support female fire practitioners to work boldly in leadership roles. During this event, women will be challenged to display courage, tenacity, integrity, and resilience while functioning proficiently in a variety of roles. WTREX will provide a safe and supportive learning environment for women to strengthen their operational and leadership skills.**



Photo Courtesy of FLN

According to the USDA Forest Service, only 10% of wildland firefighters are women. As a consequence of these limited numbers, only 7 in 100 supervisory positions in wildland fire are filled by female leaders. The chance you will work for a female Division Supervisor is 1 in 30. In response to these numbers, Ms. Bequi Livingston of the USDA Forest Service's Regional Office in Albuquerque, NM developed the "Women in Fire Boot Camp" to increase the number of women working in wildfire. (Story, Tom. "Grass Roots Efforts Begin to Increase the Number of Women in Fire". Wildfire Today. 20 Sept. 2014). With the recruitment initiative underway, there is a recognized need to develop a program that bolsters and invests in women's leadership in the fields of wildland fire, natural resource management, and

conservation.

The Fire Learning Network (FLN), a partnership between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and Department of Interior supports experiential training through prescribed fire training exchanges (TREX); since 2008, 44 training exchanges have provided nearly 1,500 training opportunities and treated more than 78,000 acres with ecological fire across the U.S. and internationally. While attending a TREX in spring of 2015, female fire practitioners began exploring the idea of utilizing a prescribed fire training event as a venue to develop operational and leadership skills of women in fire. A women's TREX (WTREX) will offer a rare opportunity to bring together a wide range of female fire practitioners for two weeks of hands-on prescribed fire implementation, leadership training and shared learning.

The training will build capacity on multiple levels. TREX supports local efforts to implement prescribed fire and improve practitioner preparedness to meet the challenges of a complex fire environment, while improving forest health, enhancing wildlife habitat and protecting communities and watersheds. WTREX will build new regional and national networks of female fire practitioners, enabling further collaboration. WTREX will also provide participants with opportunities to build fire qualifications, establish new personal and working relationships with other women in fire, and identify and pursue leadership and other critical positions in the wildland fire service.



Photo Courtesy of Lindsey Curtin, USFS



Photo Courtesy of Will Harling, Mid-Klamath Watershed Council



Photo Courtesy of Rebecca Wilson, VA DCR



Photo Courtesy of Lenya Quinn-Davidson, NorCal Prescribed Fire Council



Photo Courtesy of Scott Greenberg, TNC



Photo Courtesy of Rebecca Wilson, VA DCR

## Objective

A diverse group of international and domestic fire practitioners will work together to share and build their experience in prescribed fire practices, fire effects, and other conservation efforts affecting forests and grasslands in northwestern California.

The Northern California Prescribed Fire Council has successfully conducted three Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges over several years and has agreed to host the first Women in Fire Training Exchange. The training exchange will likely take place on private, tribal, USFS and BLM lands in northwestern California in locations such as the Klamath River basin, Hayfork, Weaverville and Whiskeytown. The training will be organized as an incident, using the Incident Command System. Participants will serve in qualified and trainee firefighting positions on a burn team and will assist with preparing, scouting, briefing, igniting, holding, mop-up and patrol on numerous controlled burns dispersed throughout the area. Participants will also complete pre-and post-burn monitoring, train with equipment, practice leadership skills and learn about local fire ecology and management. The work will take place in diverse ecosystems in northwestern California, including prairies, oak woodlands, mixed-conifer forests and chaparral. The training will include field trips to areas recently burned in wildfires and to prescribed fire and fuels treatment project sites. Participants will interact and work with local scientists, land managers and fire practitioners. In addition, participants will practice preparing for and conducting interviews with the media and interested public.



Photo Courtesy of Rick McEwan, TNC



Photo Courtesy of VA TNC

***WTREX empowers women wildland fire fighters to be bold leaders by providing a training environment that supports leadership development and relationship building in addition to experience in prescribed fire practices.***

Women in Fire Training Exchange is 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. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs).



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