

# MEDIA ADVISORY



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## Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX) coming to your area

PICKENS, S.C.—Media in upstate South Carolina and western North Carolina are invited to cover an exciting two-week prescribed fire training exchange called TREX that will be held on 10 different agency properties around the mountains of South Carolina and portions of North Carolina Oct. 29–Nov. 9, 2018.

Wildland fire professionals from around the world will descend on Pickens, S.C. Oct. 29 to set up a home base from which they will venture into five counties on both sides of the N.C./S.C. border to conduct prescribed burns, also called controlled burns, at more than 40 locations.

The purpose of the training is twofold:

- Build capacity for more prescribed burning in the mountains by providing professional training for practitioners of multiple skill levels;
- Reduce accumulated fuels to minimize negative impacts of future wildfires while also enhancing wildlife habitat.

Participants will learn, practice and share knowledge, skills and experience in a unique, hands-on training environment. TREX will focus on the ecological, social, communications and operational dimensions of planning and implementing controlled burns.

Fittingly, the Southern Blue Ridge TREX, only the third of its kind held east of the Mississippi River in the program's 10-year history, takes place during the two-year anniversary of the Pinnacle Mountain Fire at Table Rock, S.C., and the Party Rock Fire at Lake Lure, N.C.

Included in this media kit are fact sheets about controlled burning and the TREX training model, as well as a map of the Southern Blue Ridge TREX Focus Area that shows the ownerships of the conservation lands where the prescribed burns will be conducted. Future TREX media advisories will follow, each containing specific information about daily burn plans and locations.

The Nature Conservancy is sponsoring this TREX training event in conjunction with multiple partner agencies. For more information, please visit <https://apfire.wixsite.com/sbtrex2018>.

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### Media credentialing

Media interested in covering any day(s) of the two-week event must be credentialed by TREX public information officers.

Please contact Kristen Austin (see contact info above) or contact the PIO team on Twitter at [@SBR\\_TREX](https://twitter.com/SBR_TREX) to schedule your visit to one or more of the 40+ burn locations on the schedule.

Video/photo opportunities and interviews will be made available to all credentialed media. Of particular interest to journalists will be the large-scale controlled burns that will be conducted at a variety of locations, across varying landscapes and for different objectives.



# PRESCRIBED FIRE

## A FOREST MANAGEMENT TOOL

### What is prescribed burning?

Prescribed, or controlled, burning is the skilled application of fire under planned weather and fuel conditions to achieve specific forest and land management objectives. Controlled burning is an ancient practice, notably used by Native Americans for crop management, insect and pest control, and hunting habitat improvement, among other purposes. The practice continues today under the direction of land managers who understand the appropriate weather conditions, fuel loads and atmospheric conditions for conducting such burns. These carefully applied fires are an important tool to reduce wildfires, enhance wildlife habitat, and keep the hundreds of million acres of forested land in the South healthy and productive.

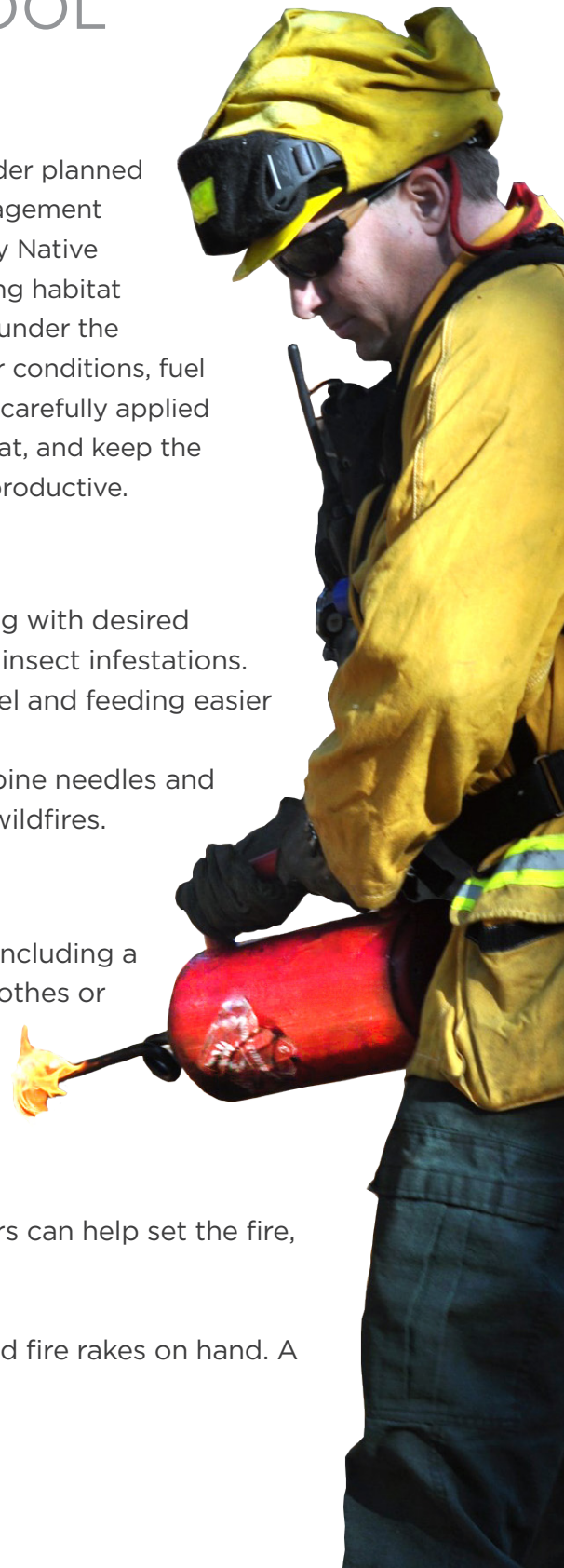
### Benefits

- ▶ **Forest management:** removes unwanted brush that is competing with desired species. It can also help prevent or control certain diseases and insect infestations.
- ▶ **Wildlife management:** removes thick undergrowth, making travel and feeding easier for some species.
- ▶ **Wildfire hazard reduction:** reduces the amount of fuel (leaves, pine needles and twigs) on the forest floor, which can help prevent catastrophic wildfires.

### Safety and equipment

- ▶ Always wear the proper personal protection equipment (PPE), including a hard hat, goggles/safety glasses, leather gloves, fire-resistant clothes or clothes made of natural materials, and leather boots.
- ▶ Use existing firebreaks and natural barriers, including roads, ponds and plowed fields. If needed, additional firebreaks should be created using hand tools, a bulldozer or by watering around the area the day of the burn.
- ▶ Work with a crew of at least three or four people. Crew members can help set the fire, control it and mop up.
- ▶ Use a drip torch to start the fire.
- ▶ During the burn have sprayers filled with water, shovels, axes and fire rakes on hand. A chainsaw is also a good tool to have available for cutting snags.

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# PRESCRIBED FIRE

## A FOREST MANAGEMENT TOOL

### Where to learn more

- ▶ Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers & Scientists  
<http://www.appalachianfire.org/appalachian-fire-references-guides/>
- ▶ Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network: Considerations for Wildlife and Fire in the Southern Blue Ridge  
<http://www.sbrfln.com/wildlife-fire-effects-handouts.html>
- ▶ Conservation Gateway  
<https://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/Pages/fire-landscapes.aspx>
- ▶ Southeast Prescribed Fire Initiative  
<http://serppas.org/focus-areas/southeast-prescribed-fire-initiative/>
- ▶ Fire Research and Management Exchange System (FRAMES)  
<https://www.frames.gov>
- ▶ North Carolina Forest Service  
[http://www.ncforestservice.gov/fire\\_control/fc\\_prescribedfire.htm](http://www.ncforestservice.gov/fire_control/fc_prescribedfire.htm)
- ▶ South Carolina Forestry Commission  
<https://www.state.sc.us/forest/mpb.htm>

The Nature Conservancy is sponsoring this TREC event in conjunction with multiple partner agencies. Please stay tuned for future announcements about this exciting training event. And for more information please visit <https://apfire.wixsite.com/sbretrec2018>.



# Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency and Fire Adapted Communities Together



Left to right: The 2014 Klamath River TRES drew about 80 people, 17 of whom fulfilled basic NWCG firefighter requirements and received FFT2 certification on completing the TRES. The Loup River Valley TRES brought together fire practitioners from federal and Nebraska state agencies, NGOs, private contractors, municipal firefighters from several fire departments in Colorado, and practitioners from various agencies in Spain; this range of experiences in different fire management systems contributes to robust learning at TRES. A special weekend session on firing operations for VFDs was added to the 2015 Niobrara TRES to improve the local capacity to respond to wildland fires with safe and effective burnout techniques. *Photos: MKWC, Stéfano Arellano, José Luis Duce*

## TRES Facts: 2008-2015

The Central Oregon TRES in May 2015 marked the 40th prescribed fire training exchange offered by the Fire Learning Network and its landscapes and partners. Those 40 events provided more than 1,350 training opportunities, while completing 76,821 acres of ecologically- and socially-appropriate prescribed fire.

Good planning, patience and a flexible, nimble approach enabled events to go forward in the face of potential obstacles ranging from blizzards, flooding and ice storms to state-wide burn bans. The resulting burning has helped manage woody encroachment into grasslands, supported forest restoration efforts, maintained culturally-important resources, and reduced fuels near communities.

### Diversity in Action

TRES have ranged in size from 10 to 100 participants (median: 28). They have treated as few as 37 acres (the first Yurok TRES in California, burning for cultural resources) or as many as 6,200 acres (2011 Niobrara TRES, in the grasslands of northern Nebraska).

Participant skill levels range from local youth or college students on their first prescribed burns earning their basic firefighter qualifications to people getting the experience needed to qualify as burn bosses or other specialized positions. Backgrounds range from private landowners to wildland fire professionals, resource managers and researchers to municipal firefighters and air quality regulators.

## Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TRES)

**Begun in 2008** as a way of easing bottlenecks in training the prescribed fire workforce, these training events have since been adapted to meet a number of essential needs. They continue to serve seasoned wildland fire professionals in need of specific experience, as well as students and new firefighters who are beginning to shape their careers. Training exchanges also provide opportunities for agencies to work together and learn efficient ways to coordinate their resources and burn windows; give local fire departments training that helps them better respond to wildland fires; support tribes working to renew traditional burning practices; and help rural communities working to make themselves safer from wildfire.

### Build Local Capacity for Safer Fire

Training exchanges that focus on providing basic firefighter training—and integrating local fire and forestry contractors, local government agencies and non-profit conservation organizations—are providing basic job skills training, creating relationships and building trust among groups. The training and certification of individuals enlarges and improves the skill level of a new workforce, the relationships and trust built help fire management service providers find qualified crews, and TRES participants find federal and private jobs in the field. Training exchanges also demonstrate how groups can cooperate and collaborate, and by working together, increase an area's available fire management capacity.

### Help Communities Become More Fire Adapted

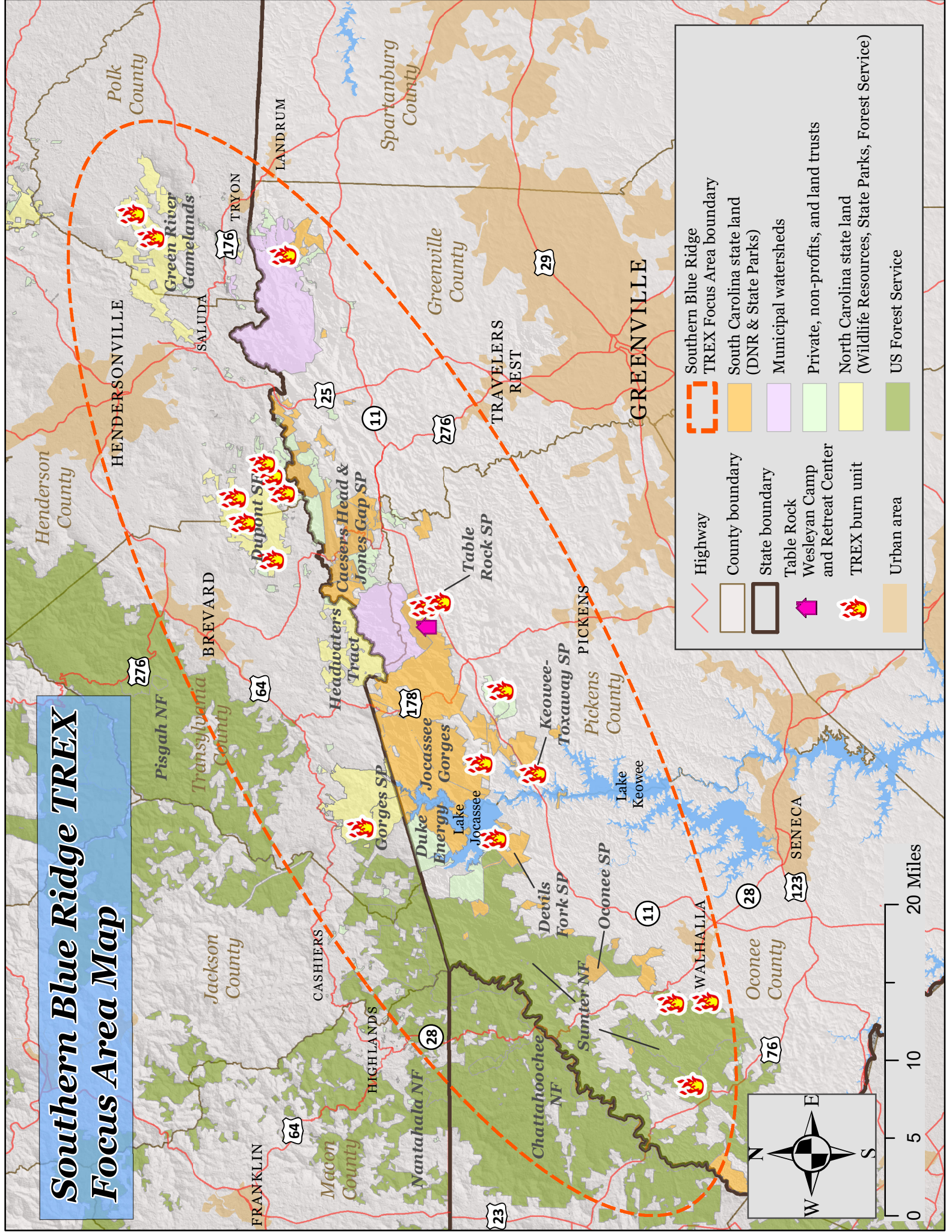
There is probably no better way for a community to prepare for the inevitable approach of unwanted wildfire than to burn in and around the community themselves. There is no doubt that controlled burns can reduce the damaging effects of wildfires and make communities safer. In addition to completing burns near communities and helping local practitioners gain the experience to conduct further burns, TRES events spread this message by integrating visits from local media into their agendas.

### Bring Together Diverse Crews to Foster Learning

Diversity matters. Having a wide variety of participants, mixed together and integrated into burn teams, allows great cross-learning among various fire professionals—federal, state and tribal crews, as well as contract fire crews and municipal firefighters. Bringing students, scientists, researchers, private landowners and regulators into the mix further enriches the learning. It has important and potent effects. Participants are able to spend time with a wide variety of people with different backgrounds and experiences, and everyone gains knowledge, insights and learning. Participants new to wildland and prescribed fire will say, “Wow, I had no idea how organized a prescribed fire is,” after participating in their



# Southern Blue Ridge Focus Area Map



	Southern Blue Ridge TREX Focus Area boundary
	South Carolina state land (DNR & State Parks)
	Municipal watersheds
	Private, non-profits, and land trusts
	North Carolina state land (Wildlife Resources, State Parks, Forest Service)
	US Forest Service
	Highway
	County boundary
	State boundary
	Table Rock Wesleyan Camp and Retreat Center
	TREX burn unit
	Urban area

