



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Central Appalachians FLN Annual Workshop & Avenza Shared Learning Event

Harrisonburg, Virginia & Shenandoah National Park
November 7-9, 2017

This year, 76 people from 23 agency units gathered for the annual workshop of the Central Appalachians FLN. The group focused on welcoming new partners into the collaborative and strategizing to address workforce and capacity limitations, a frequently identified barrier for getting more good fire on the landscape.

The Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists (CAFMS) kicked things off with an Avenza PDF Maps Shared Learning Event. Participants got comprehensive hands-on training in the mobile app, and were invited to share suggestions for adapting the software to meet needs of fire practitioners.

The next day started with FLN Director Marek Smith sharing inspiring examples of collaboration from the national FLN and offering a glimpse into the future of fire adapted landscapes and communities. Then Kevin Hiers (Tall Timbers Research Station) led a lively discussion about overly specific management goals as a barrier to effective conservation. Adam Coates (Virginia Tech), new to the collaborative, introduced his work and advances in the university's Wildland Fire Ecology Program. Lessons learned from the 2016 Southern Appalachian wildfires were shared by Helen Mohr (CAFMS), and Dan Olsen shared thoughts on forest management and fire from a Forest Supervisor's perspective. Using the Lower Cowpasture Restoration and Management Project and the North Shenandoah Restoration and Management Project as examples, District Ranger Elizabeth McNichols and Jean Lorber (TNC) explained what it takes to pull off a landscape-scale collaborative restoration project.

These sessions were followed by four flash presentations on research in the region—including fire effects monitoring highlights (Nikole Simmons & Lindsey Curtin), canopy gap analysis (Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy), restoring Virginia grasslands (Ryan Klopff) and impacts of prescribed fire on ticks (Elizabeth Gleim).

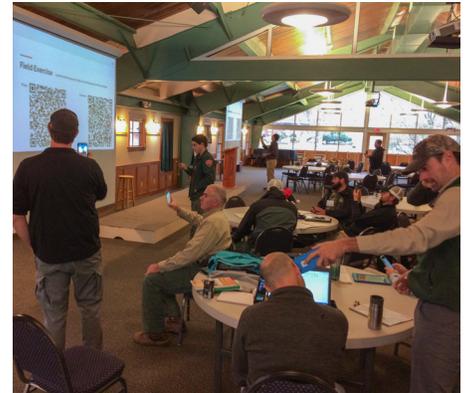
The day's work wrapped up with participants breaking into facilitated groups to generate ideas for capacity-building in four categories: building qualifications, burn prep and operations, fire effects monitoring, and burn plans and NEPA. Each group reported back with proposed actions items for addressing identified challenges.

The next day, amid near-freezing drizzle, Forestry Tech Joe Jarrells welcomed the group of more than 30 to Shenandoah National Park to reflect on the 2016 Rocky Mount Wildfire. Lead Fire Effects Specialist Lane Gibbons passed around maps and photos while detailing a multi-tiered understanding of the fire effects built with data ranging from measurements taken on the ground up to landscape-scale remote sensing. The Ivy Creek Overlook was the next stop on the tour, where Interpretive Specialist Claire Comer highlighted media and outreach efforts during the wildfire. Another short hike, to explore a pocket of high-severity fire effects, capped off the 2017 workshop.

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Above: Participants upload geo-referenced PDF maps for hands-on training in the Avenza mapping app. © TNC (Laurel Schablein)

Below: The FLN workshop included a day of wide-ranging discussions and flash presentations, and a day in the field reflecting on the effects of last year's wildfires. © TNC (Marek Smith)



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



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Slides from presentations at this workshop are posted on the Conservation Gateway:
http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/FireLearningNetwork/RegionalNetworks/Pages/CApps2017_WorkshopPresentations.aspx