



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Indigenous Peoples Burning Network

Workshop #3
January 15-16, 2016
Orleans, CA

Seventeen members of the Hupa, Karuk and Yurok tribes—along with guests from the Six Rivers National Forest and the Mid Klamath Watershed Center and two Fire Learning Network staff—met in mid-January for their third workshop. Among the outcomes of the workshop was a name change for their collective effort, to the Indigenous Peoples Burning Network.

Through interactions over the course of the workshop, the group:

- learned about upper level management priorities for the Six Rivers National Forest. The Forest Supervisor emphasized the importance of the Forest Service working with collaborative groups like this network and the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership to develop the “social license” needed to move good projects forward.
- discussed plans to participate in Forest Plan revision for the Six Rivers National Forest. This will include reviewing and discussing the current Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and participating in public meetings.
- used aerial and satellite imagery from the 1940s and 2010s to visualize changes in vegetation cover and other features of their ancestral territories at the landscape scale.
- continued their exploration of fire effects and treatment options by touring an area burned during this fall’s Klamath River Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES). The Simms Gulch burn unit was of particular interest because the burn was designed to reduce fuels without thinning before burning (the control lines had received thinning treatment, however).

Local TRES organizers also began to discuss inviting members of other tribes to participate in TRES events in the future, including the idea of creating an Indigenous Peoples TRES in the future. This would require developing some new elements under the guidance of tribal members.

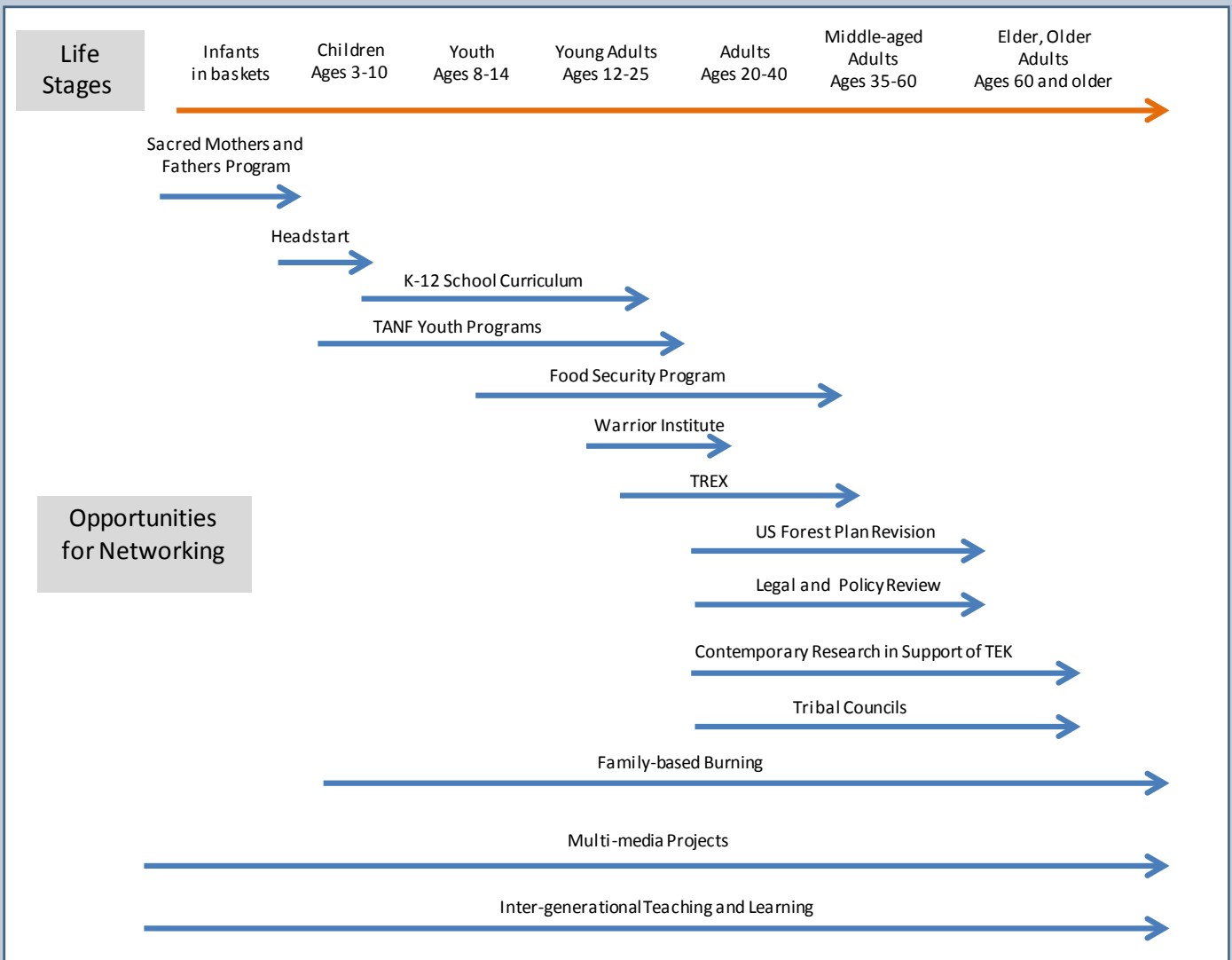
Participants in the workshop also reported on networking and group activities that had taken place since the previous workshop. This wide-ranging work included:

- The Yurok Cultural Fire Management Council (CFMC) submitted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the Yurok Tribal Council for approval at its next meeting. The MOU would advance the working relationship between CFMC and the Tribe.
- The CFMC is also developing an MOU for working with the Terra Fuego Resource Foundation.



The Yurok Tribal Chairman (left) exchanges ideas with other network participants.

Photo: TNC/Mary Huffman



Framework for Developing Traditional Fire Practitioners in a Contemporary Context

This diagram illustrates how local programs and activities provide networking opportunities at each life stage in the development of traditional Yurok, Hupa and Karuk fire practitioners in a contemporary context.

Maintaining traditional fire culture is an inter-generational endeavor that requires lifelong investment by the practitioners and the community. Restoration of local fire culture will require the Yurok-Hupa-Karuk IPBN to develop a support network for each stage of life.

- Members of the Yurok Tribal Council are considering refreshing the tribe’s forest management plan to include traditional burning and burning for forest health. The Department of Natural Resources of the Karuk Tribe will share its Eco-cultural Resource Management Plan as a resource.
- The Karuk Tribe and leadership of the Klamath National Forest are working to connect the Karuk’s Eco-cultural Resource Management Plan with the forest’s Land and Resource Management Plan. Authority for this arises from the MOU for the Katimiin Cultural Management Area and adjacent landscapes, the Orleans Somes Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and Federal Land Management and Policy Act.
- The Hoopa Fire Department is working with the Hoopa Valley High School and the District Coordinator for Indian Education to offer a class in wildland fire. The class will include elements of both traditional and contemporary fire management, and successful completion of the course will provide students with the classroom portion of training needed for certification and eligibility for employment as a basic federal firefighter.
- Burn unit selection for the spring Yurok TRES is underway, with planned burn dates of April 3-8; the dates are flexible and dependent on the weather.

Updated: Network Operating Principles

(change since last workshop is highlighted in bold type)

1. We work and pray to fix our world, restoring the balance with fire.
2. With fire, our three tribes work together just as we dance together.
3. We provide a support system among our communities for restoring traditional burning practices. **We do this because Indian People have a responsibility to our home place: the land and the people.**
4. Yurok, Hupa and Karuk communities have leadership, oversight and control of our work.
5. Our elders and cultural practitioners mentor tribal youth in traditional fire practices, while also preparing them for fire-related employment in contemporary fire management.
6. We protect the intellectual property rights of our tribes and respect territorial rights of families.
7. We work toward individuals having the ability to burn their own private spaces.
8. We recognize the need to clear out excessive fuel loading before we can burn in the traditional way.
9. We stay in tune with traditional eco-cultural indicators to plan, carry out and evaluate our fires.
10. We educate agencies and non-governmental organizations about traditional fire by providing hands on learning, conveying principles, and creating a community of practice.
11. We recognize the need to reverse the effects of fire exclusion.

Updated: Current Work Priorities*

(changes since last workshop are highlighted in bold type)

- Family-based burning
- **Fire effects monitoring**
- Hands-on community education
- Legal and policy review regarding sovereign rights to burning
- **Reintroducing fire ceremony**
- Revision of national Forest Management Plans
- TREX—includes filling trainee slots for positions specific to tribes in Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges.
- Warrior Institute and Karuk youth programs

* in alphabetical, not priority, order



Workshop participants compare historical and current imagery of the landscape

Photo: TNC/Mary Huffman

For more information about the Indigenous Peoples Burning Network, contact:

Mary Huffman
mhuffman@tnc.org

The Indigenous Peoples Burning Network (IPBN), Fire Learning Network (FLN) and Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TREX) are 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.



An equal opportunity provider

v. 16 Mar 2016/Mary Huffman