



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

December 2011

Southern Blue Ridge FLN Asheville, NC Landscape Leaders' Workshop

On December 6, the Southern Blue Ridge FLN held its second meeting of year at the National Forests in North Carolina Supervisor's Office in Asheville, NC. Twenty-nine conservation and fire practitioners from eight different organizations and five states came together for this one-day session. The meeting was designed as an opportunity for the network's seven landscapes to share updates on progress made since the May 2011 meeting, and to begin prioritizing network activities for 2012.

Common themes that emerged from the meeting included:

(1) the importance of groups such as the FLN, the JFSP-funded Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists (CAFMS)¹ and the North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council to promote ongoing networking and communication across disparate groups;

(2) the importance of using tools such as Burn Prioritization Modeling and Enhanced Conservation Action Planning to ensure we are burning in the right places, while recognizing that these represent sophisticated "thinking tools" and not reality; and

(3) integrating existing SBRFLN prioritization efforts with other efforts such as the Watershed Condition Framework.

A portion of the meeting was devoted to the group's monitoring efforts. The SBRFLN has installed almost 300 permanent plots in burn units across the network, and data have been collected from each plot at least twice (pre-burn monitoring represents baseline data, and there is also at least one set of post-burn

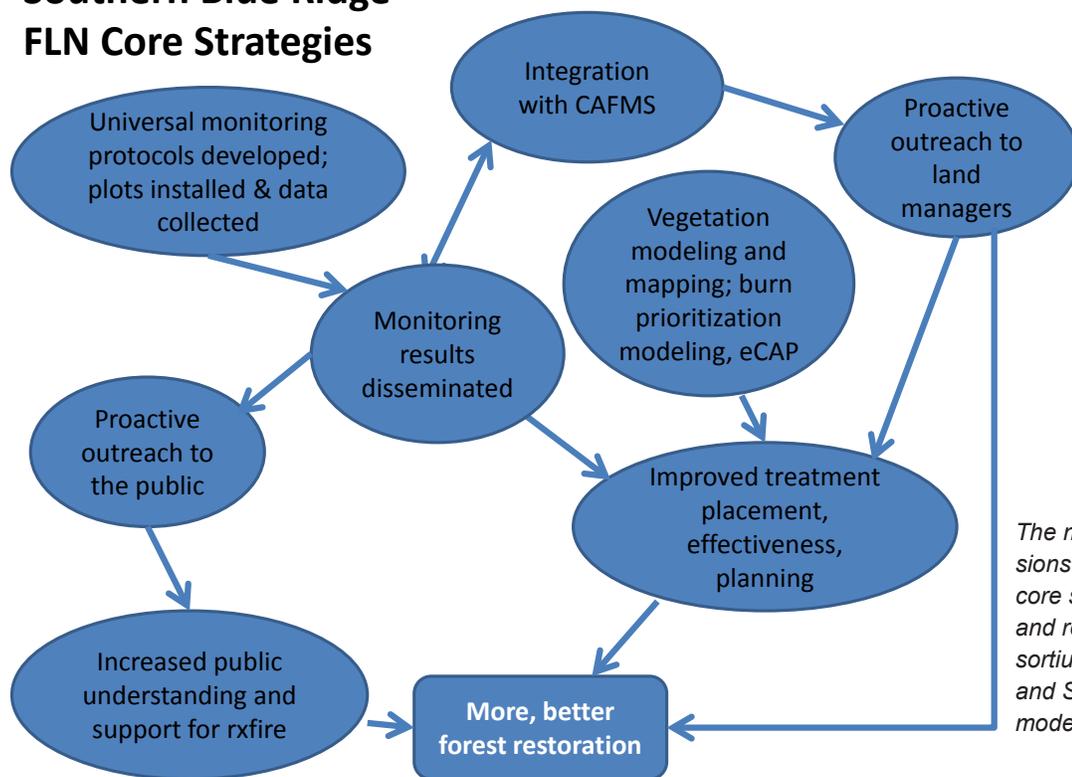
data for each plot). (There are also other, agency-led monitoring programs at several SBRFLN landscapes). Peter Bates (Western Carolina University) previewed some of the monitoring program's results. The SBRFLN monitoring committee took advantage of the Asheville gathering to garner feedback on a revised monitoring data collection form.

CAFMS was represented at the meeting by Helen Mohr and Tom Waldrop. One of their upcoming projects is to develop an online virtual tour of sites in the region where fire management and research/monitoring intersect on the ground (including several FLN landscapes). These places represent a valuable resource for many researchers in the region. The CAFMS web site will direct prospective researchers/visitors to signs (to be erected at the landscapes), so there are some similarities to geocaching.

Additional discussion topics included:

- Brainstorming the best way to coordinate prescribed burning across state lines in order to avoid smoking out communities on good burn days;
- The use of the group's burn prioritization model to inform planning and budgeting decisions, and as a way to facilitate internal collaboration and communication;
- The applicability of various monitoring approaches and tools, including the Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity project, for this group; and
- Observed and expected changes in avian communities as a result of burning.

Southern Blue Ridge FLN Core Strategies



The meeting included in-depth discussions about several of the SBR FLN's core strategies: monitoring methods and results, integration with the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists, and burn prioritization modeling

Participating Agencies & Organizations

- National Park Service
- North Carolina Forest Service
- North Carolina State Parks
- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- The Nature Conservancy
- USDA Forest Service—National Forests in North Carolina, South Carolina & Tennessee
- USDA Forest Service—Southern Region
- USDA Forest Service—Southern Research Station
- Western Carolina University
- Western North Carolina Alliance

¹ Links for items underlined in text:

- Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists
www.cafms.org
- North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council
www.ncprescribedfirecouncil.org
- Watershed Condition Framework
www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed
- Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity Project
www.mtbs.gov

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