

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT HIGHLIGHTS: 2007 - 2010

FIRE TRAINING

Training offered under the Fire, Landscapes & People (FLP) agreement filled essential needs that are not met by more traditional training programs. This work continues under the Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency through Collaboration (PERC) cooperative agreement.

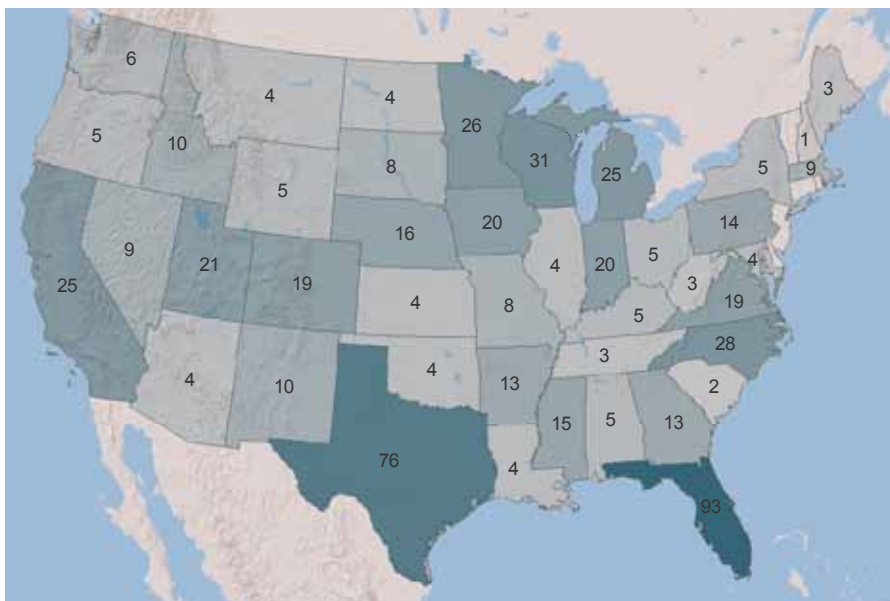
Strengths and Innovations

- Training offered under the agreement emphasizes **ecologically-based** use of fire, both in the curricula and in the attitudes and backgrounds of the cadre.
- FLP training is highly **experiential**—students work with live fire, engage in drills and full-scale exercises, and have significant interaction with cadre and other students in the field. These experiences better connect students to the learning—and to each other and to the trainers. Courses deliver learning outcomes and capacity-building to students and cadre alike.
- Training is focused on addressing key **bottlenecks**—ICT4 and RxB2—and local **capacity** issues in priority places.
- Events deliberately **integrate organizations**—both internally and externally—and build networks among practitioners and managers, ensuring that the value goes beyond immediate skills acquisition.
- Training is often delivered in tandem with other aspects of the agreement, such as the Fire Learning Network or education, making the experience more **holistic** and extending its reach.

In short, the agreement has affected the national—and, increasingly, international—prescribed fire curriculum to increase the emphasis on ecological burning, experiential learning and facilitated on-the-job training, and has delivered fire training that builds long-lasting partnerships that will pay dividends long into the future.

The agreement delivered courses that fill gaps in capacity or alleviate training bottlenecks:

- **Crew Boss Academy**—This week-long event incorporates four NWCG courses (I-200, L-280, S-230, S-234) and is designed to develop the leadership skills and basic knowledge needed of a single resource boss and those filling similar roles.



Home-Unit States of Participants in Crew Boss Academy, Engine Academy, Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges, RX-310, RX-410, and Workshop on Ecological Burning

Through these courses, FLP delivered critical training to 700 participants over the four-year period. Students came from home units in 43 states (left), as well as Belize, Chile, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Peru. Florida and Texas were particularly well-represented, because those states hosted numerous training events.

- **Engine Academy**—This week-long event incorporates S-211 and S-214, providing students with training in engine tactics related to prescribed fire and wildfire, pumping operations, equipment repair, hose lays and engine safety, as well as an introduction to urban interface tactics and hazardous materials. Students spend four of six days in the field, practicing and applying techniques. This training, focused on engine operations and the wildland-urban interface, is primarily aimed at non-federal practitioners, thus increasing the fire community’s capacity to use prescribed fire in this complex setting, and improving firefighter and public safety.
- **NWCG Courses**—Several NWCG courses are strategically offered to meet critical needs by reaching practitioners who may not otherwise be able to access the training necessary to advance fire in their landscape. Basic courses—*Basic Firefighter* (S-130), *Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior* (S-190) and *Annual Refresher* (RT-130)—are offered prior to prescribed fire demonstrations and training exchanges to enable participation from key capacity-building partners such as volunteer fire departments, private landowners, NGOs and state agencies. Similarly, *Introduction to Fire Effects* (RX-310) and *Smoke Management Techniques* (RX-410) courses were provided through the PFTC, and on landscapes in North Carolina, Utah and Washington where the training advanced restoration progress by allowing fire managers to address obstacles to the prescribed burning needed in those systems.
- **Workshop on Ecological Burning**—This is a week-long professional development event for firefighters seeking qualification as a burn boss. It is designed to provide practitioners with a firm grounding in the knowledge, skills and abilities required of a burn boss, with an emphasis on the principles of integrated fire management, which addresses fire in the context of both the natural and socioeconomic systems in which fire occurs. Those who complete this course are awarded a RX-301 (formerly RX-300) certificate.

FLP developed innovative training that addresses old needs in new ways:

- **High Reliability Organizing (HRO) / Train the Trainers regional workshops**—FLP staff jointly developed these workshops with the Lessons Learned Center and served as trainers at three early sessions of the workshops. HRO stresses a focus on anticipating—and thus preventing—major problems in order to improve safety and effectiveness; these workshops have brought a greater awareness of these principles to agency and Conservancy staff, as well as the wider fire community.
- **Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges**—These training events bring together participants from a wide variety of organizations and backgrounds to work together on two-week prescribed fire assignments, develop skills and be evaluated by peers. Each training exchange incorporates presentations from experts on local ecology, develops fire management skills, and provides extended and in-depth experience for participants. Also included in the curriculum is outreach with local media and networking opportunities with other fire professionals. The exchanges often include volunteer fire departments, ranchers, and other practitioners who do not otherwise train to NWCG standards, by providing them with the basic training needed to engage with NWCG-trained crews. Bringing these practitioners into the fold confers numerous benefits, including increasing capacity for burning in a region, and improving the ecological effects of fire, and the standards at which it is conducted.



Firefighters from the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service review maps and ignition patterns during a controlled burn at a Prescribed Fire Training Exchange on The Nature Conservancy's Niobrara Valley Preserve

- **Wildfire Exchange Assignments**—While agency staff often have extensive wildfire experience and use the prescribed fire exchanges and courses offered by PFTC to develop skills and be evaluated by peers, Conservancy and other NGO fire leaders have few opportunities to gain wildfire experience. FLP has partnerships with key federal operating units that host Conservancy fire leaders on wildfire assignments; this allows participants to work on initial attack and wildfire crews, and to develop these skills and be evaluated by peers.

“From a training standpoint, I couldn’t have asked for more. To have the opportunity to learn from all of you, who come from different backgrounds and experiences, was priceless. Sometimes in this field, we get blinders on and think that the only way to operate is the way that you’ve always been doing it. My eyes have been opened to the fact that there is more than one way to skin a cat. It was so valuable to get to practice and observe techniques that I’ve only read about. There’s a much bigger world out there than what I’ve been in, and I am inspired to experience it!”

*Fire Prevention Specialist, USDA Forest Service
Prescribed Fire Training Exchange*

- **National Interagency Fire Planning Committee**—At the Committee’s request, FLP staff completed an assessment of need for an interagency training curriculum for Fire Planners. The findings, based on focus group and survey data and presented to the Committee in early 2011, fundamentally shifted the way the Committee is moving to fill this professional development need.

FLP also partnered with the Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC) and provided leadership for training sessions and workshops that have broadened the base of land managers who are fire savvy:

- **Agency Administrator Workshop for Prescribed Fire**—This workshop serves line officers and other agency staff responsible for managing burn programs. The curriculum is flexible, depending on the needs of attendees, but typically covers understanding the elements of the burn plan and the Go/No Go checklist, the roles and responsibilities of the agency administrator in managing a successful fuels management program that includes prescribed fire, methods for gaining and maintaining public support for prescribed fire, and understanding the agency and personal risks and liabilities associated with prescribed fire programs and how to mitigate them.
- **Resource Specialist Workshop for Prescribed Fire**—Based on the success of the Agency Administrator workshop, in 2009, FLP staff led the development of a second workshop for non-practitioners whose jobs affect burn programs. Again, the curriculum is flexible, but may address the difference in fire effects between wildfire and prescribed fire, fire use for resource benefit, concerns and mitigation steps needed to incorporate resource needs with fire program needs, and an introduction to resource management programs that successfully conduct a burn program through an interdisciplinary approach.

FLP also provides key support in the planning, organization and implementation of the numerous experiential training sessions delivered by PFTC.

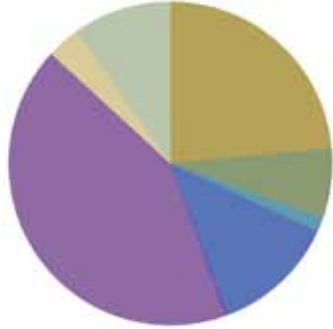
“[The] training was excellent—an ideal introduction to line officers not familiar with fire and a great new perspective for those with field experience. Easily, one of the best, most thorough, most engaging classes I’ve had.”

*District Ranger, USDA Forest Service
Prescribed Fire Workshop for Agency Administrators*

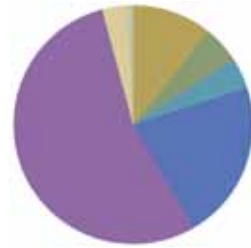
The Prescribed Fire Workshop for Agency Administrators, like all FLP training, is highly experiential, with numerous hands-on activities



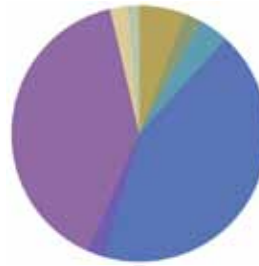
Rx Fire Training Exchanges



Crew Boss Academy



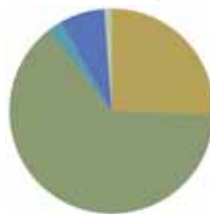
Engine Academy



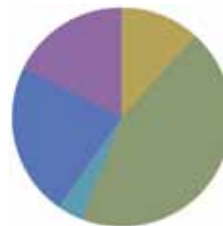
Workshop on Ecological Burning



Agency Administrator & Resource Specialist



Rx310 & Rx410

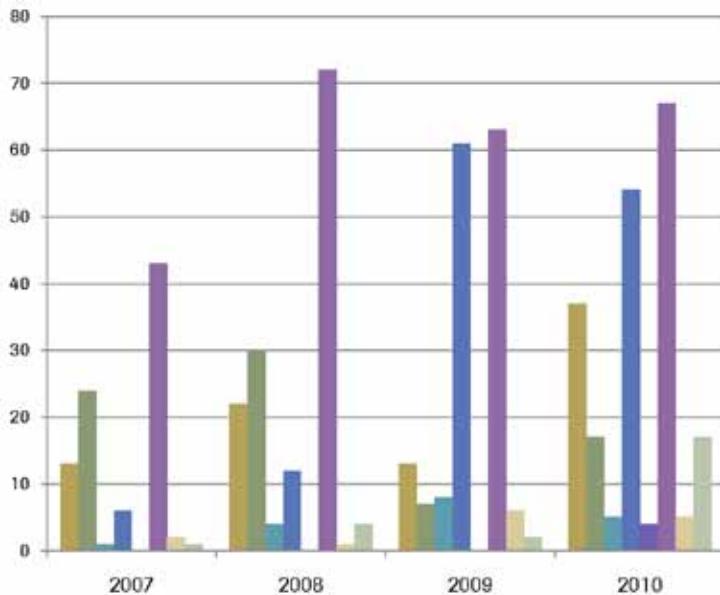


- DOI
- USFS
- other federal
- state & local
- tribal
- NGOs
- educational
- other

Training Participant Affiliations, by Event Type

FLN staff offer a variety of training opportunities, each geared toward a specific need and audience. However, regardless of the primary intended audience, all training offerings bring together students from a variety of backgrounds, enriching both the learning experience and networking opportunities for all.

Note: The charts here are scaled according to number of students in each event type; these range from 30 in the Workshop on Ecological Burning to 213 for the Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges.



Participation in Crew Boss Academy, Engine Academy, Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges, RX-310, RX-410, and Workshop on Ecological Burning, by Year

The number of students served by these FLP training events more than doubled over the four years, from 90 to 206. The organizational affiliations also became more diverse, with greater participation from Department of the Interior and state and local agencies, and educational, private and foreign entities. In 2009, budget constraints restricted federal travel, so FLP staff used the available training resources to focus on other audiences, thus continuing to build capacity during that time.



For more information on the training offered under this cooperative agreement, contact:

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