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# USFLN Restoration Café – 2006

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## Conversations and Ideas

Portland, OR

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The Nature Conservancy, Global Fire Initiative and USFLN

<http://tncfire.org/usfln>

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### ***CAVEAT REGARDING THIS REPORT***

Café Conversations are designed to explore questions that matter. The report consists of the **compiled opinions of participants** and is intended to broaden the understanding of how the USFLN is perceived internally and externally. It is a tool for continued dialogue as members work together, talk broadly, think in new ways and hear different opinions. What follows are the voiced concerns of four dozen people who work and listen widely.

The reader may note many instances where s/he might refute a statement, disagree with a point of view, or challenge a perception. This report does not interpret points of view or refute perceptions; rather, it is intended as a prompt for further dialogue and a tool for understanding and action.

## BACKGROUND: USFLN

### U.S. FIRE LEARNING NETWORK

In the United States and many other parts of the world, fires are behaving differently now than they have throughout history, largely as a result of human actions. An estimated 53% of U.S. forests and rangelands have altered fire dynamics (Schmidt et al 2002). The U.S. Fire Learning Network is engaging over 70 multi-agency, community-based projects in a process that accelerates the restoration of landscapes that depend on fire to sustain native plants and animals and share the lessons learned with other project staff, scientists and policy makers.



Ten regional FLNs and their anchor sites

More information at: <http://tncfire.org/usfln>

Network projects cover more than 75 million acres. Operating at local, regional and national levels, the U.S. Fire Learning Network seeks to overcome barriers to implementing ecologically appropriate fuels reduction and restoration projects.

### GOAL OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

*The USFLN met to harvest, distill and build upon four years of U.S. Fire Learning Network learning in order to accelerate the restoration and conservation of fire-adapted landscapes.*

### CAFÉ CONVERSATIONS

Sixty-four individuals from the BLM, NPS, Nature Conservancy, USFS, academia, tribal communities, private companies and invited guests attended all or part of the one-day USFLN annual meeting on March 30, 2006. Of those, approximately 46 participated in café conversations. The Restoration Café meeting technique was based on The World Café concept developed by Juanita Brown with David Isaacs and the World Café Community.

1. The assumption supporting using Café Conversations as a way of doing business is that “knowledge emerges in response to compelling questions. [People respond to] questions that are relevant to the real-life concerns of the group.” *The World Café: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter.*

2. The intention of the Restoration Café was to draw on the collective experience and knowledge of individuals in a setting conducive to creative thinking and fearless problem solving.
3. The outcomes of the Café are both tangible and intangible: FLN practitioners can learn what many of their peers consider the most pressing needs and most exciting successes in order to respond to the former and build on the latter. Team building and expanded networking is a valuable foundation for learning, teaching and applying action on the ground. The entire process is directed toward reaching the Network's goal of restoring and conserving fire-adapted ecosystems.

Following are a general overview of the mechanics of the conversation technique, summaries of key points, recurring themes, and suggested action items as noted by the table hosts who monitored conversations.

Distillations reflect the **reporter's understanding of the table conversations** based on raw notes and some summaries supplied by conference facilitators, and by comments offered in follow-up phone conversations.

## COMPELLING QUESTIONS

A team of table “hosts” – speakers at the annual meeting versed in focused topic areas and TNC employees working within the FLN – were asked to respond to ideas and questions posed by the USFLN meeting planners and then to offer their own suggestions for discussion. The questions were narrowed to:

1. *What activities or circumstances promote learning at the project level within your regional fire learning network?* Facilitator: Bruce Goldstein, Assistant Professor, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, Virginia Tech
2. *What tools and incentives do people need to monitor, use, and share their findings with FLN members?* Facilitator: Bob Unnasch, The Nature Conservancy, Global Conservation Approach Team, Conservation Learning Program
3. *What gets in the way of participants across the FLN implementing lessons learned and how can those obstacles be overcome?* Facilitator: Marcy Schnitzer, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, Virginia Tech
4. *What are the main barriers to participating in FLNs and how might they be overcome?* Facilitator, R Bruce Hull, Professor of Natural Resources, Virginia Tech
5. *What skills, abilities, and tools are needed for people to succeed at leading collaborative restoration projects?* Facilitator: Laura McCarthy, The Nature Conservancy, Western U.S. Forests and Fire Restoration Program Director

6. *How can learning networks contribute to effecting larger conservation impacts nationally and internationally?* Facilitator: Ayn Shlisky, The Nature Conservancy, Acting Director of the Global Fire Initiative
7. *What is FLN success and how can it be measured?* Facilitator: Lynn Decker, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fire Learning Network Director
8. *In addition to ecological and fire science, “cultural knowledge” is important. What does that mean to you, and how can we integrate it into the FLN?* Facilitator: Germaine White, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Natural Resources Department
9. *What enabling infrastructures, processes or tools can be used to support collaboration with Federal partners?* Facilitator: Anne Jeffrey, US Department of the Interior (retired)
10. *What would it take to increase the public’s acceptance of fire on the ground?* Facilitator: Wendy Fulks, The Nature Conservancy, Communications and Learning Manager
11. *How can we get the right people and ideas moving so that the best science is being tested/implemented on the ground?* Facilitator: Merrill Kaufmann, USFS, Rocky Mountain Research Station (retired)
12. *What are the really tough challenges that continue to get in the way of restoring fire-adapted ecosystems?* Facilitator: Ed Brunson, The Nature Conservancy, Fire Education Program Director

## **DISCUSSION PROCESS**

Twelve small tables were set up in a “café style” – comfortable round four-foot tables with cloths, candles, butcher paper, Sharpie markers and numbered signs. Coffee, tea, cold sodas and snacks added to the informal setting. On three walls, organizers posted butcher paper with “big themes” on them as prompts. Lights were lowered and music played in the background. Table “hosts” who helped form the compelling questions in their areas of expertise were seated and greeted the attendees when they entered and sat.

Individuals received “menus” in advance of the Café opening that listed the questions for discussion. Participants were asked to review the menus, choose three questions of interest and visit the appropriate tables for conversation. Table hosts and participants wrote on the butcher paper table cloths while talking; many posted insights on large paper boards (see Appendix C: Items from the Big Wall). Each conversation lasted half an hour, at which time a break was called and the participants moved to the next “choice” from their menu. Overall time allotment was two and a half hours for the afternoon’s work.

The Restoration Café concluded with hosts offering summaries of their table conversations and with participants posting notes on the walls with ideas and actions to be harvested by the moderator and included in this report.

Following the meeting, facilitators wrote up the table notes and summarized what each thought were the Repeated Themes, Great Ideas, and Action Items discussed at their tables. Their responses, the information collected by the Café moderator and interpretations of both comprise the remainder of this report.

## **RESPONSES AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **THE CAFÉ PROCEDURE**

Attendees were enthusiastic about the Café procedure and recommended it be incorporated as a way of communicating, connecting, and developing better methods of working (see Appendix D: Evaluations). Among the opinions expressed:

- Some think that Café conversations should *start* workshops, rather than end them. Opening workshops with the opportunity to meet one’s colleagues and initiate thoughtful conversation is valuable for further face-to-face work. Noted one participant, “We can’t continue working closely when people are heading out the door and running for airplanes.”
- Organizers should build in time for reflection on ideas and possibilities. Having the Conversation as a workshop opener allows that.
- Many believed that Café Conversations should be longer in duration. With two and a half hours and three table switches, some people felt rushed. A few attendees suggested that an entire day could be focused on the activity, while others wanted more time at tables with questions they cared about.
- The “compelling question” that each table considered was sometimes not all that compelling. Some tables held more interest than others, pointing to the need to determine the group’s purpose in meeting and how best a focused question could be formed to elicit group wisdom and experience for practical application.
- The purpose of the Café should be completely transparent. Individuals are more likely to participate if they see “what’s in it” for them. Very specific, compelling questions related to precisely defined outcomes encourage the best thinking.

### **CHALLENGES**

Because the Compelling Questions at the Restoration Café were posed to encourage dialogue about “problems” regarding the Network’s primary goal *to restore and conserve fire-adapted ecosystems*, the conversations tended to focus on challenges. There was little reported conversation in terms of what is working; rather, people focused on what was perceived as NOT working well or on areas of opportunity for improvement. (Reporter’s note: perhaps a

future conversation could be developed around exploring the successes of the network.)  
Individuals stated that:

- Communication, both internal and external, needs attention.
- Leaders – both within The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and outside the organization – are believed to be unaware of and/or not supportive of learning networks.
- Collaboration is vital to success and often difficult to accomplish.
- True cross-pollination of ideas and methods within FLN membership needs work; often people feel like they are reinventing the wheel and not building on knowledge within the network.
- Setting goals/outcomes and measuring success is haphazard and needs retooling.
- Increasing participation in FLN activities is important; getting buy-in is tough.
- There is usually insufficient a) time, b) money, c) personnel and d) scientific knowledge to do the job.

## **IMPLEMENTING FLNs**

A craving for information, participation, and improved systems of communication within the FLN was evident in the conversations. Attendees want to more easily share lessons learned with each other, and save time and money in the field.

- Many participants felt that senior management in their particular organizations were largely unaware of the organization (USFLN) and its activities. This hinders greater and more effective participation in the network.
- More people and agencies should participate in the learning network in order to facilitate funding, design appropriate activity (strategies, workshops, action on the ground) and find the right labor pools.
- “Collaboration” is a key word for FLN members. Encourage it. Fund it. Talk to each other. Find partners. Show results. Begin again. Collaboration saves time and money.
- Lack of time, funding, partner engagement and capacity are always problems no matter at what level or on which project one is working.
- Regional FLNs need to hold workshops focused on the development of explicit management goals and then move to translating the goals into workable projects.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Participants repeatedly voiced the opinion that communication, both internal and external, is vital to FLN success. Working in a vacuum is not productive and often FLN members feel like they are working alone within the network. Communication at all levels, both internally and with partners, prospective partners, the public and other constituencies is critical. Among the responses:

### *Successes*

- One respondent noted that his burn crew “learned a lot about communication by associating with the Conservancy, whose crews are more open both to one another and to the media and other organizations.”

- One respondent noted that TNC “brought new tools to his government crew that helped them gather information on the impacts of burns and to conduct monitoring.”

### *Challenges*

- More cross-FLN person-to-person discussions are needed to work on shared problems and opportunities.
- Visits to landscapes and in-depth reporting on methods and outcomes are needed.
- Members within the network need to know what tools are available to them.
- Tangible results make good communication topics – communicate within the network n more depth about progress and pitfalls.
- It is a continual challenge for field-level staff to get the “restoration” message through to mid- and senior-level managers.
- Clearly defining and communicating goals is important.
- Some participants suggested that regional FLN hold workshops focused on developing explicit management goals and translating the goals into workable monitoring projects.”
- Many feel that lessons learned in the field, at workshops, and by experienced individuals are being lost because a formal process of reporting is not being followed.

### *Working with partners and stakeholders*

- Agency hierarchies need to be informed about the benefits of working within FLN
- Agency hierarchies should be encouraged to build incentives for their staffs to become active in the FLN.
- Outreach should be consistent and persistent.
- Far broader audiences should be involved in the FLN. We need to reach them with compelling messages and incentives to join and act.
- Truly external audiences like the public need information constantly.
- Do more “listening” to partners. Once you know where the resistance points are, incremental progress can be made.
- The FLN has to be “sold” – must be presented as a “value added” opportunity in every message.

## **COLLABORATION**

Every table discussed the necessity of collaboration, though only two tables (Questions 5 and 9) were specifically offered collaboration as the topic. Among the points of view:

- Working together builds trust, which opens up new opportunities for coordination, such as allowing one another’s crews to operate relatively freely across jurisdictions.
- Knowing one’s partners’ constraints is important to collaboration. One respondent noted that he felt he couldn’t call a meeting to discuss smoke with the public without extensive pre-planning and permission from lawyers and administrators, and then the meeting could be subject to Federal Advisory Committee Act.

- Federal agencies have trouble moving outside of their boundaries. However, TNC works across boundaries, and so is a great partner. TNC, and by extension, the FLN, builds alliances that the agencies can't.
- The trend is to work towards more collaboration and entering more MOUs.

## **LEADERSHIP**

- Many voiced concerns about top-down approaches to strategy and decision-making.
- The message was repeated that many leaders seemed out of touch with actual work on the ground. (There was no clear delineation or definition of who the leaders are: internal or external to FLN.)
- Leadership and mentoring of new programs and emerging leaders, i.e., the transferring of lessons learned and modeling of behavior between networks, is critical.

## **MONEY**

- While leadership is a key to implementation, people are busy, and lack of funding is a barrier to success.
- Some agencies, programs and staff compete for the same pot of dollars.

## **SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS**

The following suggestions are compiled directly from facilitator's reports and the notes posted on the wallpaper around the room. The numbers do not indicate frequency of comment, but are intended as markers for future discussions:

1. Use and disseminate a military-style "after action report" to promote learning.
2. Encourage innovation and variety.
3. Regional FLNs should hold workshops focused on the development of explicit management goals that can be translated into workable monitoring projects.
4. Develop a virtual forum to share projects and results.
5. Assign a "lead" person to push teams along in the reporting and accountability arenas.
6. Pursue a mechanism that teaches how to monitor ecological impacts efficiently at a geographic scale that matters.
7. Set up an effective system, including mentoring, to transfer lessons learned both to individuals and among networks.
8. Develop a "Who To Call" list to enhance quick communication when on-the-ground implementation is the goal.
9. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding to be used among agencies and TNC that helps agency personnel engage in FLN activities.
10. Develop and disseminate a list of benefits to joining an FLN with ideas that expand on success stories, e.g., show value added.
11. Coordinate distribution of project funding through FLN.
12. Develop list of other networks that could be tapped for teaching/learning possibilities.
13. Bring international partners to workshops and translate information.

14. Join other networks.
15. Use Anne Bradley's SWFLN networking metric to track connections.
16. Organize and clarify the definitions of success.
17. Organize and clarify measures based on those definitions.
18. Develop good incentives for collaboration. Go beyond National Fire Plan awards to look at regional/state level.
19. Publicize the awards, their winners, and the rationale behind the recognition.
20. Each federal agency in the partnership should assign a point-of-contact who can facilitate communication and contact among the appropriate parties.
21. Look at the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) 2006 memo that defines "Cooperative Conservation" and use it as an avenue for developing measures of success.
22. Develop a "tool" like a one- or two-page fact sheet that shows how our actions benefit people and landscapes that we can give to potential collaborators.
23. Identify local opinion leaders and groups that share our view and enlist their help in delivering our message.
24. Develop strategies to cultivate and engage the media.
25. Use national outreach efforts to reinforce local efforts.
26. The public doesn't know how good the prescribed burn crews are. Call the media so they can witness the crews in action.
27. Work with hunters, master gardeners, Toastmasters and other non-tradition audiences to carry the fire message, e.g., invite broader audiences to the table.
28. Rather than just "preaching to the choir," enlist the choir in outreach activities.
29. Keep the implementation money flowing.
30. Educate managers at senior levels regarding the need for continual restoration and maintenance actions.
31. Take proactive action on smoke management.
32. Develop tools to help build institutional trust.
33. Budget time more realistically.

## APPENDIX A: REPORT SUMMARY OF TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Each table host noted key issues and ideas from the table, even if participants strayed from the topic. All were tasked with reporting back on the conversations in terms of General Notes, Repeated Themes, Great Ideas and Action Items. In addition to individual table conversations, participants were encouraged to post comments on “wallpaper” placed around the room with various prompt headings. The following is the reporter’s **overview of key perceptions** based on the notes provided by table hosts and by participants who posted on the wallpaper.

**Café Question One:** What activities or circumstances promote learning at the project level within your regional fire learning network?

Repeated themes

- Learning other groups’ communication styles helps everyone achieve goals.
- Innovation and openness generate trust and results.

Great ideas

- Novelty can prompt people to new response actions – shake people out of old habits.
- Teach each other: TNC has been able to prompt change in government groups by example in the field.
- Building trust with partners also opens up new opportunities for coordination.

Action items

- Use and disseminate a military-style “after action report” to promoting learning.
- Encourage innovation and variety.

**Café Question Two:** What tools and incentives do people need to monitor, use and share their findings with FLN members?

Repeated themes

- The general feeling is that senior management lacks consensus on goals.
- Goals and production targets are set outside of the planning process, making them difficult to quantify and measure.
- Goals are “handed down from above.”

Great ideas

- Look to Colin McGuigan and his team in Minnesota for insight on the successful monitoring program that has partner support.
- Ask for input from the silvicultural community and state wildlife agencies who have been working at a “geographic scale that matters.”

Action items

- Regional FLNs: hold workshops focused on the development of explicit management goals that can be translated into workable monitoring projects.
- Develop a virtual forum to share projects and results.

- Assign a “lead” person to push teams along in the reporting and accountability arenas.
- Pursue a mechanism that teaches how to monitor ecological impacts efficiently at a geographic scale that matters.

**Café Question Three:** What gets in the way of participants across the FLN implementing lessons learned and how can those obstacles be overcome? (Per the table host’s notes, “conversations veered off-topic.”)

Repeated themes

- Leadership is a key to implementation.
- People are busy and funding is a challenge.
- Working with federal agencies is challenging because of restrictions placed on those agencies.

Great ideas

- Draw on experience of leadership and repeated workshops in order to make adjustments and build on the needs of the region.
- Listen to those who resist in order to learn how to overcome or otherwise address the resistance.
- More people can be brought into the process by asking current participants for names of others to contact.

Action items

- Set up a system of mentorship in order to transfer lessons learned both to individuals and among networks.
- Develop a “Who to Call” list to enhance quick communication when on the ground implementation is the goal.

**Café Question Four:** What are the main barriers to participating in FLNs and how might they be overcome?

Repeated themes

- Agency hierarchies are uninformed about FLNs.
- When informed, hierarchies do not encourage staff to join.
- Money is limited, as are people and time.

Great ideas

- Make cold calls – the best way to get participation is to ask.
- Exploit personal networks and use word-of-mouth.

Action items

- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding to be used among agencies and TNC that helps agency personnel engage in FLN activities.
- Develop and disseminate a list of benefits to joining an FLN with ideas that expand on success stories, e.g., show value added.

- Coordinate distribution of project funding through FLN.

**Café Question Five:** What skills, abilities, and tools are needed for people to succeed at leading collaborative restoration projects?

#### Repeated themes

- Abilities include being able to listen, be flexible, diffuse conflict, recognize and respect difference, develop friendships, work fairly, and keep things moving when processes slow down.
- Leaders must be clear about goals, objectives and milestones, and at the same time avoid setting a “top down” agenda.
- Value-added must be emphasized – “What’s in it for me?” question has to be answered.
- Leadership should model collaborative behavior with listening, humor, authenticity, honesty, organization, reinforcement, positive attitude and thinking about how to get to the next step.

#### Great ideas

- Leaders who represent organizations with different missions are still capable of collaboration.
- Share the workload as a way to engage all participants.
- Education can be an outcome of the collaboration process.
- To build relationships, start locally, act face-to-face, and proceed slowly.
- Document interactions and processes in an understandable way to show progress.

#### Action items

- Use teams: some individuals are people-people and others are technical-people. Model collaboration by using both types who work together to run projects.

**Café Question Six:** How can learning networks contribute to effecting larger conservation impacts nationally and internationally?

#### Repeated themes

- Fact sheets may not be useful communication tools – more should be done to communicate FLN value and lessons to others.
- “Value added” of FLN needs to be sold.
- Leveraging other networks can expand our reach.
- Be mindful of the influences of language and culture.

#### Great ideas

- Partner with other organizations with learning networks and share lessons learned through their networks; take theirs and distribute to our FLNs.
- Document elements of success and/or failure – what brought it about?

#### Action items

- Develop list of other networks that could be tapped for teaching/learning possibilities.

- Bring international partners to workshops and translate information.
- Join other networks.

**Café Question Seven:** What is FLN success and how can it be measured?

Repeated themes

- Success can be defined in different terms: community relationships, fire on the ground, interagency collaboration, trust, social capacity, etc. Be clear when “success” and know that it comes in many forms.
- Ways of measuring must take into account different impacts: both tangible (e.g., restoring the appropriate use of fire) and intangible products and outcomes.
- Once “success(es)” is defined, meaningful measuring can be developed.
- While it is hard to measure intangibles, we must do so.
- Measure success as it relates to specific goals.
- Link outputs to outcomes.

Great ideas

- Ask, “What do funders consider success?”
- Regardless of measurement methods, the quality of the story is most important – stories are worth a thousand numbers.
- Determine how to measure funders’ return on investment in engaging with the FLN.
- Use deliverables as a measure of success.
- Measures of success should be scaled to the size of the proximate outcome. “Small” measures of success are still success.
- The danger of a business model is that widgets are more important than stories.

Action items

- Use Anne Bradley’s networking metric to track connections.
- Organize and clarify the definitions of success.
- Organize and clarify measures based on those definitions.

**Café Question Eight:** In addition to ecological and fire science, “cultural knowledge” is important. What does that mean to you, and how can we integrate it into the FLN?

Repeated themes

- Communication across cultures is a challenge.
- It is difficult to identify culture groups to work with when native peoples have been removed or relocated away from historic homelands.
- Building good working relationships with native peoples sounds easy but takes time and consistency.
- Working across cultural boundaries requires a commitment to a longer-term relationship.

Great ideas

- Identify skills or abilities that ecologists or fire scientists have that can be shared with Tribes.
- Invite tribal participation in projects early in the project planning process.
- Focus on the mutual interest in the resource rather than differences between people.
- People want an opening to tribes. A good way to do that is to ask what we can BRING TO tribes; give them something instead of always asking.
- Keep the same people coming back; quit changing the players. Consistency helps build relationships.

#### Action items

- Expand the FLN fire conversation by being more culturally inclusive.
- Provide cultural awareness opportunities and exchanges.

**Café Question Nine:** What enabling infrastructures, processes, or tools can be used to support collaboration with Federal partners?

#### Repeated themes

- Collaboration is a “best practice” that should be recognized and/or rewarded.
- Congressional expectations are high and there needs to be constant feedback to representatives that productive collaboration takes time. The General Accounting Office has produced numerous reports that are accurate and supportive.
- The current administration is highly focused on hard targets with the Office of Management and Budget expecting agencies to produce measurable results at a constant or increasing rate. How do you educate OMB that time spent on collaboration upfront can result in increased production down the line?

#### Great ideas

- FLNs should partner with learning centers to make collaboration on lessons learned more accessible.
- Focus education and outreach beyond our “usual audiences” of the converted.
- Support and encourage the federal agencies’ trend toward integrating internally in resource management: one project can satisfy multiple targets.
- Grants can be a great way to work across boundaries.

#### Action items

- Develop good incentives for collaboration. Go beyond National Fire Plan awards to look at regional/state level.
- Publicize the awards, their winners, and the rationale behind the recognition.
- Each federal agency in the partnership should assign a point-of-contact who can facilitate communication and contact among the appropriate parties.
- Look at the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) 2006 memo that defines “Cooperative Conservation” and use it as an avenue for developing measures of success.
- It would be helpful to have a “tool” like a one- or two-page fact sheet that shows how our actions benefit people and landscapes which we can give to potential collaborators.

**Café Question Ten:** What would it take to increase the public's acceptance of fire on the ground?

Repeated themes

- A disconnect between national level and local level exists with reference to communication and education needs.
- Communication efforts must recognize regional attitudes about fire and take into account the education level and attitudes of newcomers in any region.
- Effective media engagement and cultivation strategies are needed.

Great ideas

- Be particularly aware of appropriate language, using or responding to local opinion leaders, engaging groups that share our view, and the level of engagement of the general public.
- Keep messages clear.
- Do not underestimate or talk down to the public.
- Enlist partners to finance an ad campaign.
- Use various media and iconic images for various audiences.
- Why not invite community leaders and other members of the public to join FLN meetings?

Action items

- Identify local opinion leaders and groups that share our view and enlist their help in delivering our message.
- Develop strategies to cultivate and engage the media.
- Use national outreach efforts to reinforce local efforts.
- The public doesn't know how good the prescribed burn crews are. Call the media so they can witness the crews in action.
- Work with hunters, master gardeners, Toastmasters and other non-traditional audiences to carry the fire message.

**Café Question Eleven:** How can we get the right people and ideas moving so that the best science is being tested/implemented on the ground?

Repeated themes

- The complexity and/or difficulty of monitoring is often overstated: even without all the answers, we can get started and apply principles of adaptive management.

Great ideas

- Broader audiences need to be at the table.
- Meet other groups on their turf and bring them to us.
- Reach younger audiences.
- Guard against barriers between scientists and practitioners.
- Know when to call in the skills that are needed – don't try to fake it or do without expertise.

#### Action items

- Rather than “preaching to the choir,” enlist the choir in outreach activities.
- See “great ideas” above.

**Café Question Twelve:** What are the really tough challenges that continue to get in the way of restoring fire-adapted ecosystems?

#### Repeated themes

- Finances always an issue.
- Senior management is not aware of many of the challenges.
- Smoke management is problematic.
- Institutional trust is lacking.
- Sufficient time to perform tasks is not allocated.

#### Great ideas

- FLN needs a national smoke management liaison.
- Could use a conflict resolution facilitator.

#### Action items

- Keep implementation money flowing.
- Educate managers at senior levels regarding the need for continual restoration and maintenance actions.
- Take proactive action on smoke management.
- Develop tools to help build institutional trust.
- Budget time more realistically.

## APPENDIX B: NOTES FROM THE BIG WALL

### !AHA! moments posted by Café participants:

- Cultural traditions are maybe the strongest influence.
- Think about funding early.
- Ask members, “Who do you know that we forgot?”
- Leadership models the collaborative behavior.
- Working across cultural boundaries requires a commitment to a longer-term relationship.
- Measures of success should be scaled to the size of the proximate outcome. Don’t be embarrassed by “small” measures of success.
- The words “Prescribe Fire” work so much better than “Control” because people relate to the word “prescribe” = prescription = take one and it makes you feel better. Prescribe fire = working towards a healthy ecosystem.
- Already doing a lot of collaboration outside of FLN
- Use your deliverables as a measure of success (if you need to measure and report something).
- Stories are worth a thousand numbers.
- Know when to call in the skills that are needed – don’t try to fake it or do without.
- Do we really know what we want? Maybe not. Can we map out what we want?
- Collaboration is supported by agencies and/or policy. Collaboration happens between people.
- Go to others on THEIR turf to get things done.
- The danger of the business model: “widgets are more important than stories”
- Incentives are important.
- Have to be able to answer the question, “Why are we doing this?”
- Specific = measurable. Tangible & intangible. Words we choose and the values we give them are cultural issues.
- How do we diversity our OWN group. LOTS of Euro-Americans in the room. Another way to look at the same issues.
- Begin working with children on environmental awareness, such as Project Learning Tree.
- How do we measure/track that treating 100 acres has benefited an additional 500 acres?
- Let’s be comfortable with varying levels of scientific rigor in our strategic planning and monitoring.
- Make sure that the skills of the RFLN coordinator complement those of the landscape lead.
- Keep it relevant to your ultimate outcome.
- Take your message to them on their turf but make sure the message is pertinent to them and matters in some way to them.
- Be a good listener.

### ! Take Action !

- Build relationships: start local, act face-to-face, be able to proceed slowly (patience)
- Document all interactions/processes in an understandable way to show progress.
- Accept the “paradox”: we have the mandates for collaboration and acres/widgets/outputs. Do both; develop K/S/As and individual performance measures for both.

- Develop a framework that details what works and what doesn't for EACH of the FLNs.
- Work with agency to provide direction from the top down that district and forest-level staff ought to actively participate in FLN and try to integrate it with their program of work.
- Reflection: learn from success AND failure. Share these.
- Move fast on clarifying measures of success.
- Develop a "Whom Do I Call?" list to enhance quick communication. "On the ground" implementation is the goal. FLN seed money to get implementation started is needed.
- FLN needs to ID and connect with other existing regional, local, and national networks in the interlocking nodes. (Two circles shown that overlap in the center = areas of engagement or interlock)
- Be honest and share what doesn't work AND failings. Communicate.
- Institute an award for collaboration. Do it on a lower level than NFP. And award can go a long way.
- Convene workshops for "teams" to develop objectives and monitoring programs.
- Use pilot projects to build trust, show success, build advocacy.
- Measure leadership for collaboration with peer review.
- Ask the collaborators to evaluate performance of agencies in "cooperative conservation."
- Tools for collaboration: build local capacity with \$\$\$ resources; training; mentoring; techniques for goals/objectives & keeping process focused; get outcomes; communication.
- Need FLN Ambassadors who can try to figure out whom to engage.
- Need to "spread the love" – we need to show what's in it for them, to those we would convince.
- Part of mentoring is "detailing" federal folks to areas where they are needed. FLN could do that, too.
- Ref: public acceptance of fire – keep communications open and honest. Be careful with "wordage" – prescribed vs. controlled fire.
- Carefully consider the language you use. Don't say "Let it burn" policy.

### !Opportunities!

- Partners can function equally, not as a hierarchy (building capacity within networks).
- Incentives for collaboration. Awards and recognition at a level down from NFP: recognition award that could be communication in publications like Fire Measurement Today; People, Land, & Water.
- We need a "March of the Penguins" type of mainstream documentary to take advantage of FILM to reach the public to tell the STORY of fire.
- Create a database to connect people on topic matter (like TNC's Conservation Project Inventory)
- Why don't we invite community people/leaders to this and future meetings?!
- Regional FLNs could benefit from guidance on how to translate management goals to measurable objectives and initiating monitoring/assessment projects.
- The difficulty/complexity of monitoring is way over-stated. Some simple observational (e.g. natural history) monitoring can be very helpful.
- Do a job sharing exchange/detail among TNC and agency.
- FLN: Measure strategic outputs and take credit for outcomes.
- Get "Good Fire" PR on television, with a celebrity as a narrator.

- Market success stories.
- The FLN should attempt to marry the cultural knowledge of both indigenous and euro-American communities. Seek opportunities for shared learning.
- We need to build trust with our Publics.
- The public doesn't know how GOOD the prescribed burn TEAMS are. Call the media so they can witness professionals in action.
- "Cues to care" concept. Evidence of good stewardship readily absorbed by lay people. Using signage.
- Work with hunters, master gardeners, Toastmasters, etc. to carry the fire message.
- Partners help build relationships. Make presentations to local governments.

### ! Help !

- It's expected that money and chain of command are part of the process, but building institutional trust is a challenge.
- Could use a conflict resolution facilitator
- Challenges of working within limitations of federal agencies.
- Need to define what restoration means. "It depends."
- Need a tool: a one or two-page fact sheet for communication that shows how our actions benefit people/landscapes to give to potential collaborators.
- Need federal agency mandates and money for monitoring.
- Enabling elements to success.

### ! Don't change a thing !

- THANK YOU, TNC!
- So glad the NPS fire education people are here. Thank you!
- Infrastructures to support collaboration with federal partners: CESUs [?], Cooperating Assoc., Learning Centers, SCA
- Communicating ideas & concerns results in potential strategies that make a lot of sense.

General thoughts & miscellaneous items: taken from hosts' report back at close of Café conversations. (If related to a specific question, the number appears first.)

- #8 People want an opening to tribes/native people. A good way to do that is to ask "What can we BRING TO the tribes?" Tribes are asked frequently what they can give; try to give the tribes something for a change.
- #8 Consistency in relationships helps with interaction and relationship-building with tribal people. (Keep the same people coming back; quit changing the players.)
- #5 Assemble teams with varied strengths, then draw on the strength of the whole team.
- #5 Leadership should model the collaborative approach.
- #1 There is a "zone of discomfort" with others in the learning network and a suspicion of learning in general. People may not be comfortable with the idea of learning.
- Use the things we DO NOT have in common as a starting point for work/conversation.
- Get serious about other cultures. Learn their language. (This applies beyond tribal groups.)
- #11 Monitoring could be a lot simpler than we make it.

- #11 TNC should get more involved in communicating issues. TNC needs to promote ideas and take an educator role.
- It's tempting to complain. Let's focus on SOLUTIONS to problems.
- #6 Leverage other networks outside of FLN; they can help.

## APPENDIX C: EVALUATIONS

Grid scores: 1 is low, 5 is high

<b>Pre Meeting</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	
Registration clear					4	8	7	9	28
Organizers good					1	8	13	6	28
IAWF/IAFG combine				2	2	8	7	9	28
Rocky Barker				2	8	5	7	6	28
				4	15	29	34	30	112
	Average			4%	13%	26%	30%	27%	100%
<b>Presentations</b>									
Lynn Decker					1	10	12	5	28
Anne Jeffery					1	11	12	4	28
Merrill Kaufmann					3	13	7	5	28
Bruce Goldstein				4	7	10	5	2	28
Laura McCarthy			1		7	12	5	3	28
Germaine White					1	3	20	4	28
Bob Unnasch			2	1	5	10	5	5	28
Jeannie Patton					3	10	10	5	28
Restoration Café						5	18	5	28
			3	5	28	84	94	38	252
	Average		1%	2%	11%	33%	37%	15%	99%
<b>General</b>									
Facility: Hilton					1	11	14	2	28
Food					1	4	21	2	28
Understand FLN					4	2	15	7	28
Found new ideas				2	2	10	7	7	28
Understand network better				3	1	7	10	7	28
				5	9	34	67	25	140
	Average			4%	6%	24%	48%	17%	99%
Overall rating				1	2	10	12	3	28
Avg. overall rating				0.028	0.071	0.357	0.428	0.107	0.991
				3%	7%	36%	43%	11%	100%

## Comments

### Pre-conference

- Unfortunate that LANDFIRE Session overlapped with FLN meeting.
- Loved the Rocky Barker presentation.
- I could not take advantage of the IAWF/IAFG connection, and would have liked full FLN experience
- Barker's presentation was too long.
- Relationship with IAWF/IAFG was confusing in registration.
- Rocky's presentation, while informative, was a bit lengthy, especially considering that it was an "after dinner" presentation.
- Better scheduling as important talks\* (pertinent\*\*) to OTG fire approaches were MISSED.
- Rocky lost me a few times. However, a good historical account.
- Rocky took too long. Tired old me left early...didn't really know where the talk was going.

### Presentations

- Merrill and Germaine were "stars" of the day.
- Very good mix of partners and range of speakers. I thought the Café was fun. I look forward to the notes.
- Germaine White was outstanding.
- Had to leave early. "Mighty impressed" with the day and the concept of having a Café conversation.
- Keep the Café activities going!
- The Unnasch and, especially, Major talks should have been designed for the audience with less jargon and assumed knowledge. Some facts with respect to FRCC and LANDFIRE topics were incorrect.
- Definitely do the Café conversations again.
- Good program for a long day.
- Goldstein's presentation was "theoretical" -- not tangible.
- Germaine White gets a "10"
- Definitely do the Café again.
- The Restoration Café activity was great! This approach should be duplicated at future workshops and meetings.
- The energy and enthusiasm amongst participants was very high and resulted in some terrific discussions.
- Restoration Café: If compared to the FLN lead meeting where we made everyone talk and everyone heard the comment, I like the FLN leads process of interaction.
- Never underestimate brevity (need more) and discussion (need much more).
- No overarching objectives identified. Limited "commonality" among presenters. Theme was "success" so need HOW TO.
- Bruce Goldstein: Could you please not whisper your talk? Bob Unnasch, Ditto.

- Great idea to pay for travel expenses for partners! What's needed in our FLN site? One-on-one opportunity (ies) to ask questions (how to get to next level), mentoring, opportunities to visit other FLN sites, how to obtain funding. More presentation from FLN site leaders.
- Merrill was a pessimist.
- Lynn set a good tone of openness and cooperation. Merrill's observations were thoughtful and inspirational. "Talking to ourselves" is a huge issue = preaching to the choir doesn't get us very far. Germaine blew the room away.
- Cultural landscapes was well presented with good presentation style.
- Restoration Café description (Jeannie) could have been shortened and not so flowery.
- Disconnect between Bob U. and Don = not clear to me. Should've stopped Bob and allowed for a "bio" break after lunch. (Adult standard options of a break an hour, especially after meals!) I would rate Bob high and Don low -- didn't fit with the tone of the day to me.

### **General: What worked/didn't work**

- Only stayed for the morning. Gave the workshop a "3."
- Liked what we did, but chances to meet and talk one on one was limited.
- Food was great.
- Intermixing with all partners and leaders all on the same page = worked well.
- The Restoration Café was a great process - very TNC heavy - maybe bring in others. Meeting with fuels group might be opportunity to bring in some of those folks, etc. Do it again!
- Too fast; need time to reflect on subjects presented. Across venues, floors, and buildings. Spread out that required time to exchange between discussion/presentations.
- Food was delicious!
- Worked well overall. Good discussions. Although skeptic at first, I enjoyed and learned most at the FLN Café. Didn't work: technical talk without simplification.
- Café worked well.
- Short breaks did not work well -- need more time to network, learning from each other, socialize.
- Great People
- Not enough time for questions during morning.
- I found out about this by word of mouth. Was this session advertised on the IAWF conference website? (Linda Mazzu, BLM, Linda\_Mazzu@NIFC.BLM.GOV) It was hard to break away from the other session to make time for this. Perhaps it would've been better on Monday or Friday (prior to or right after).
- Need to extend the length of the Café.
- Restoration Café worked REALLY well. You should do it again.
- We should look at outdoor seminars or field trips. There is a need to break up the day and get out in the elements.
- Great interaction between and among participants.
- It would be nice to see better representation from each of the RFLN's (partners, etc.).
- THANK YOU, TNC!!!!

- Too much coming and going during the meeting so maybe longer breaks for more discussion.
- Lost participants Many didn't stick it out. Many hung out outside the active of the meeting.
- Restoration Café worked well. Did not work: more (?) PowerPoint.
- Location poor. Better co-organization with other groups would have increased attendance. Too many TNC. (Where are OUR PARTNERS?)
- Conversations worked well.
- Don't have any more "whisperers" present topics. I loved Don's discussion.
- Restoration Café was a comfortable atmosphere where I felt we could speak honestly. Do the Café again.
- Day went well until mid-way through Bob. His initial presentation was good. The transition to Don was difficult and disjointed. By the time Jeannie came in between post-lunch, up and down lights, energy level was quite low.
- Tone down Café a bit. A bit too formal to be informal. Good concept though.

### **Suggestions for follow-up?**

- Keep growing! And keep working on getting people outside of the box to keep it growing.
- Spread the word about the FLN. \*I always knew it was a TNC thing, but didn't realize the federal role before. \*I'm guessing a lot of ecology types are involved, but maybe reach out to more fuels, WUI, fire ed types, etc. and other audiences. \*Go to them at the local level to extend the invite/share information.