

March 2005

FLN



DISPATCH

*Emerging Lessons From
The Fire Learning Network*

FIRE LEARNING NETWORK A cooperative project of The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service, and the Dept. of the Interior, the network was created in 2002 to catalyze efforts to reduce hazardous fuels across the country. Part of the larger joint program *Restoring Fire-Adapted Ecosystems* that includes fire education and training components, the network operates at both local and national levels to overcome barriers to implementing ecologically appropriate fuels reduction and restoration projects.

<http://tnc-ecomanagement.org/fire>

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY FIRE INITIATIVE This 15-person team is working to assess, abate and prevent fire-related threats to biodiversity conservation around the world. In the U.S., the Initiative is working with a variety of partners to promote ecologically appropriate fire management, develop and implement science-based planning tools and monitoring techniques, and further fire education and training efforts.

<http://nature.org/fire>



The Nature Conservancy
SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

Putting it all Together: Accelerants for Success was the theme of the 2005 national Fire Learning Network meeting held February 8–10 in New Bern, North Carolina. The meeting provided a venue for regional network participants to discuss challenges and lessons learned, showcase regional and project-level successes, and learn about recent developments and new opportunities related to fire restoration.

Jim Hubbard and Corbin Newman, U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service National Fire Plan leads, respectively, shared their perspectives on how the Fire Learning Network is facilitating collaboration and helping ensure that long-term ecological restoration is an outcome of National Fire Plan projects. Hubbard and Newman stressed that collaboration is a priority for the agencies, and the Fire Learning Network plays a unique role as a catalyst for action within a collaborative context.



One highlight of the 2005 national FLN meeting was a day-long field trip that included a stop at this wildland-urban interface treatment area.

—Photo by Wendy Fulks

2005 NATIONAL MEETING OVERVIEW AND STATISTICS

- There were 82 participants from 21 states and the District of Columbia.
- There were representatives from the USDA Forest Service, Department of the Interior, Department of Defense, state agencies, universities, The Nature Conservancy and private industry.
- Plenary talks covered a variety of topics including fire training, education, policy, and monitoring.
- The first in-person FLN Advisory Council meeting was conducted in association with the meeting.

Regional network participants presented numerous examples of successful collaboration and landscape-scale restoration. A few of these are highlighted below.

In the Southeast, where a regional FLN is just getting underway, 60% of priority conservation areas are threatened by altered fire regimes. Successful partnerships such as North Carolina's Onslow Bight Landscape Forum are using prescribed fire and other tools in areas that are important for recreation, military training and timber production and as habitat for endangered species.

The FLN is “helping network participants in the Northeast capitalize on their greatest strengths: commitment and collaboration,” said Stephanie Gifford, leader of the Northeastern FLN.

The Southwest FLN is launching a collaborative forest restoration project in the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico.

In Arkansas, thanks in part to collaborative efforts spearheaded by the Southcentral

FLN, 300,000 acres, or 10% of the Interior Highlands ecoregion, are now moving toward “desired future conditions.”

According to participants, one of the most important outcomes of the national FLN meeting was strengthened relationships among people and projects that are facing similar barriers to fire regime restoration. “The strategies we’re employing to promote prescribed fire on private lands in the Great Plains can also be used in other regions” said Susanne Hickey of Iowa’s Loess Hills program.

GET INVOLVED!

If you’re interested in participating in a regional or national level meeting, or just learning more:

- Browse the FLN Web site
<http://tnc-ecomanagement.org/fire>
- Join and contribute to the FLN listserv
<http://tnc-ecomanagement.org/fire/resources/#listserv>
- Contact TNC or agency leads:
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Anne Jeffery, Dept. of the Interior anne_jeffery@nifc.blm.gov; 208-387-5458
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