

October 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://tncfire.org/usfln>

**THE NATURE CONSERVANCY FIRE INITIATIVE** This 17-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>

I ncreasing the use of prescribed fire and Wildland Fire Use in southeastern Arizona has been a challenge. Recent wildfires have made local communities uneasy; numerous threatened and endangered species, including the Mexican spotted owl, reside in the Huachuca Mountains and can be adversely affected by fire; and there is an uncertain funding climate. Significant international border issues include hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants who pass through this region each year. These groups represent a source of fires, and their safety can be placed at risk during prescribed fire activities.

This story is about a group of agencies and individuals—the Huachuca Area Fire Partners—who persevered with minimal funding to develop a plan that will help manage fire activities across jurisdictional boundaries and otherwise pave the way for the return of regular fire to a roughly 500,000-acre landscape.



Members of the Huachuca Area Fire Partners review maps during a field trip. (From left to right: Dave Gori, Barbara Alberti, Sherry Tune, and Jean Calhoun.)

—Photo by Brooke Gebow

## HUACHUCA AREA FIRE PARTNERS

- **Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch, National Audubon Society**
- **Coronado National Forest**
- **Fort Huachuca, U.S. Army**
- **San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, BLM**
- **The Nature Conservancy**
- **Arizona State Land Department**
- **Babocomari Ranch**
- **Coronado National Memorial, National Park Service**
- **San Rafael Ranch**
- **San Rafael Ranch State Park**

For more information about the partnership or the plan, contact Brooke Gebow at [bgebow@tnc.org](mailto:bgebow@tnc.org) or 520-803-7953.



Brooke Gebow, Southeastern Arizona Preserves Manager for The Nature Conservancy, coordinated development of the plan. This plan follows no particular agency guidelines or template but rather is a collection of material judged important to member partners. “We didn’t let the differences in priorities and procedures across the various parties keep us from putting this plan together,” Gebow said.

The document includes the results of ecological mapping across jurisdictional boundaries; details about planned, large-scale treatments; analysis of effects of projects on listed species and cultural resources; and sections on fire operations, invasive species, monitoring and border-related considerations.

The partners view the plan not as a guide to operations but as a demonstration of collaboration in order to attract support for needed activities. Sections of the plan can serve as the basis for programmatic compliance documents for the projects in the plan. The plan also emphasizes landscape-scale priorities that are general-

ly beyond the purview of single entities. “As we worked over the last three years, we all became increasingly convinced of the need for, but also the feasibility of, working cooperatively on a large scale,” said Gebow. For example, one of the projects the group hopes to implement is a 50,000-acre burn in the Canelo Hills portion of the Coronado National Forest.

The fire plan is undergoing external review and is expected to be final by the end of October 2005. The Huachuca project has been involved in the Fire Learning Network since 2002.

## 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://tncfire.org/usfln>
- **Join and contribute to the FLN listserv**  
[http://tncfire.org/training\\_listservs](http://tncfire.org/training_listservs)
- **Contact TNC or agency leads:**  
Lynn Decker, The Nature Conservancy Fire Initiative [ldecker@tnc.org](mailto:ldecker@tnc.org); 801-320-0524  
Anne Jeffery, Dept. of the Interior [anne\\_jeffery@nifc.blm.gov](mailto:anne_jeffery@nifc.blm.gov); 208-387-5458  
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