Better Together: The Power of Relationships in Fire Management

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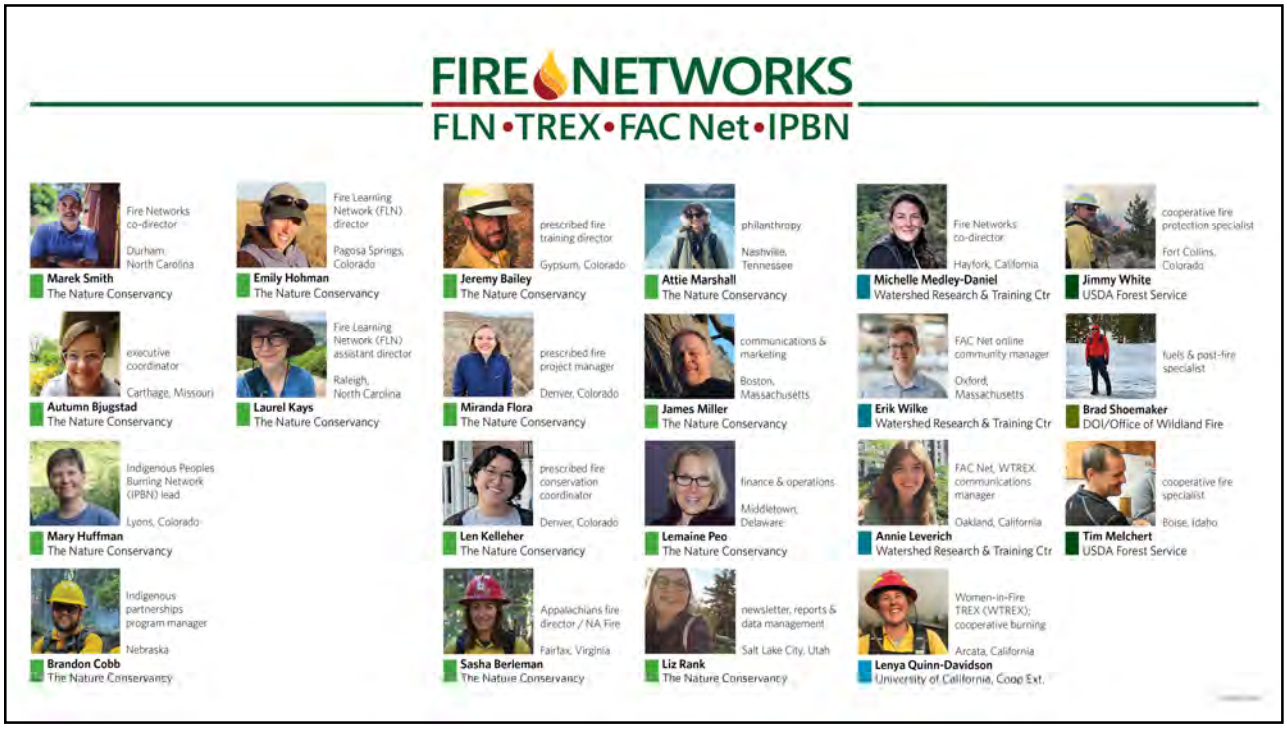
FLN
FIRE LEARNING NETWORK

Thanks for Having Us!

Outline

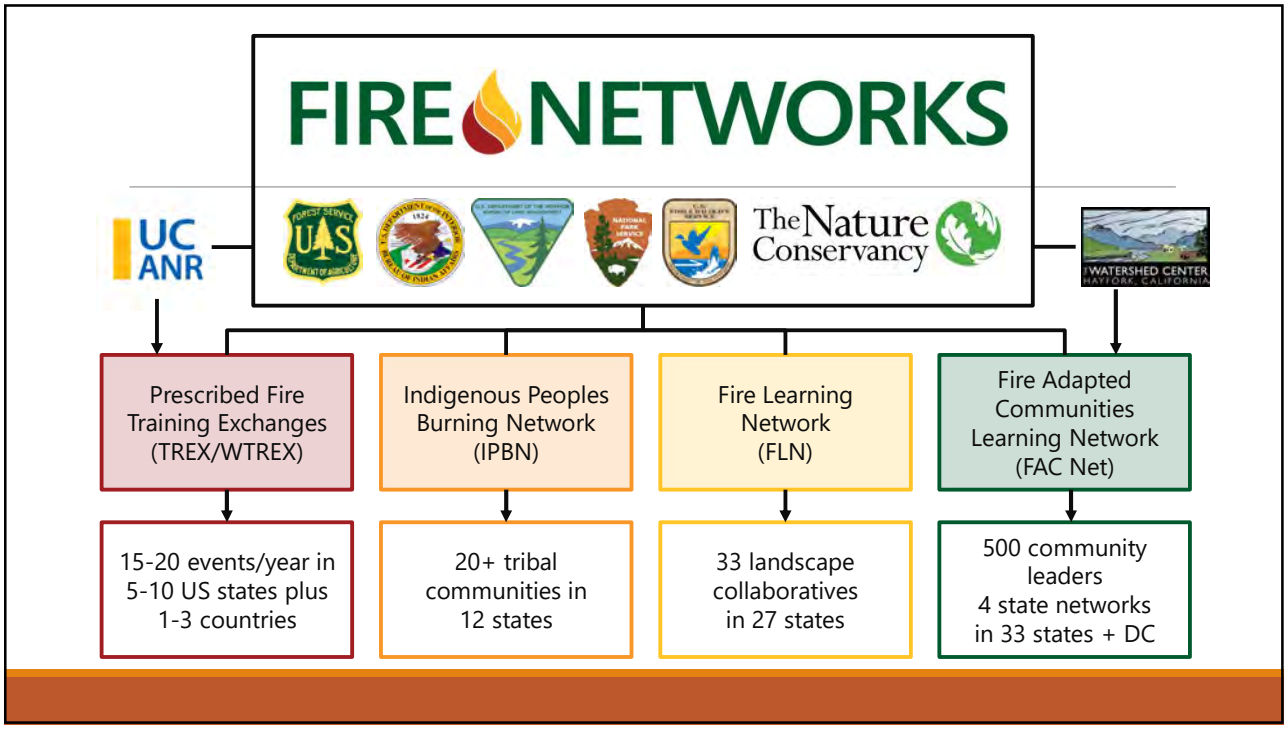
- The FLN & Fire Networks
  - What is the FLN/Fire Networks
  - History of the FLN
    - Spinoff of other networks
    - Inspired programs like CFLRP
    - Shift in focus to relationships as core
- Our approach
- Case studies



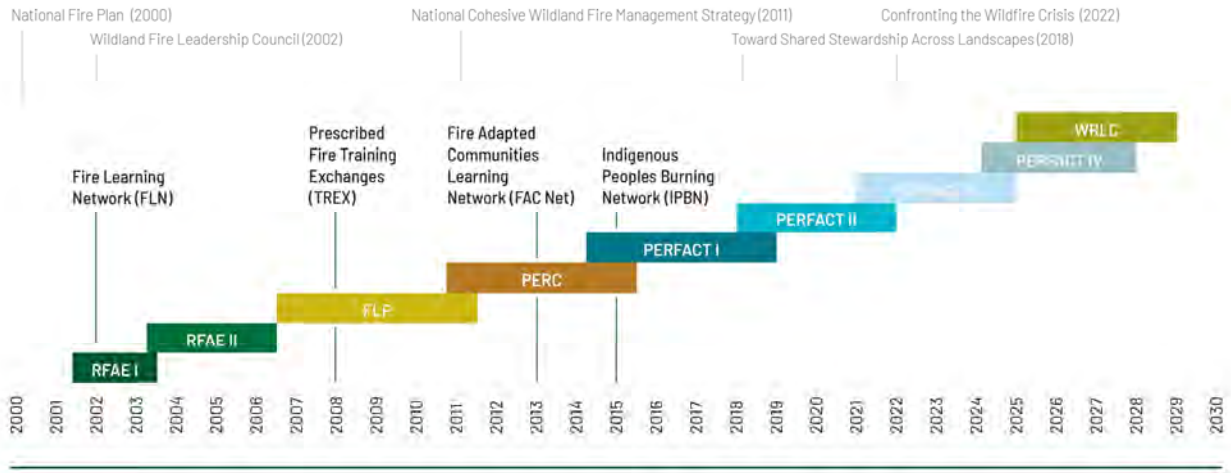
FIRE NETWORKS

FLN • TREX • FAC Net • IPBN

WWW.FIRENETWORKS.ORG



History of Cooperative Agreements Between the USDA Forest Service, Department of the Interior and The Nature Conservancy



RFAE – Restoring Fire Adapted Ecosystems
FLP – Fire, Landscapes and People: A Conservation Partnership
PERC – Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency through Collaboration: Landscapes, Learning and Restoration
PERFACT – Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together: Collaborative Engagement, Collective Action and Co-ownership of Fire
WRLC – Wildfire Resilient Landscapes and Communities

v. 20 Apr 26

THE CURRENT FIRE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

EVENTS — Above water: 10% of behavior

- Severe wildfires damage forests and rangelands, and harm communities
- Heavy or long-term smoke creates health concerns
- Wildfires release carbon
- Post-fire flooding threatens water supplies
- Suppression spending depletes agency budgets

PATTERNS AND TRENDS — Below water: 90% drivers of behavior

- Native people and cultural burning all but removed from landscapes
- Fire suppression as default is highly successful at excluding fire for a century
- Forests grow unnaturally dense, habitats degraded
- Lack of beneficial fire and loss of biodiversity in fire-dependent landscapes
- Fire regimes in some landscapes shift to more frequent and intense fires
- Drought frequency and severity increasing in the West

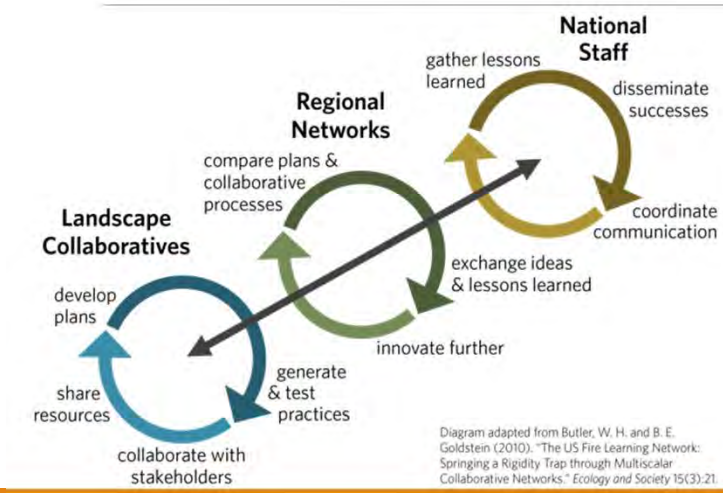
UNDERLYING STRUCTURES — Where we looked for "leverage points"

- Large, complex federal fire management system designed for suppression, with strong economic incentives and performance measures
- State fire and land management agencies mandated to extinguish (not manage) fires
- Decision-making processes for fire management exclude many stakeholders
- Limited, less diverse and undedicated workforce for prescribed fire, community mitigation and other proactive ecosystem restoration activities

MENTAL MODELS

- The government owns fire, will save us from fire
- All fire is bad
- We're fighting a war on fire
- We'll always be able to control wildfires
- Prescribed fire is too risky
- People won't accept the smoke

Our Vision of Viable Fire Cultures



How We Work

How We Work

FLN Staff

- Flexible annual funding
- Training and professional development opportunities, including an annual workshop
- News, funding, and other information often not shared more broadly
- Opportunity to connect, learn from and support each other

Project Managers Leading Local Collaboratives

Feedback from practitioners on barriers, needs, and successes to inform policy and programs

Funding, training opportunities, & network connections, & other information

FLN

Agency Leadership, Policymakers, & Other Decision Makers

Local Collaborative Members & Other Partners

Where We Work

The FLN is made up of place-based collaborations working in landscapes and communities across the US.

Our Friends & Peers

We believe that relationships are foundational - only through relationships is it possible to fundamentally change how communities throughout the United States understand, relate to, and live with wildland fire while promoting the healthy landscapes we all need.

Case Study: Loup TREX & TREX as a Strategy

Supporting TREX

TREX Guidebook

Considerations for Planning a Prescribed Fire Training Exchange

Selkirk TREX ©Kara Karboski/Washington RCD

FLN FIRE LEARNING NETWORK

TREX

firenetworks.org/resources

Case Study: PBA Learning Exchanges

Case Study: Blackfoot Valley

- Working towards collaborative burning
  - TREX as a strategy
  - Building prescribed fire expertise, community
  - Expanding burn windows
  - Exploring community-based burning
- Improving state policy environment & passing legislation

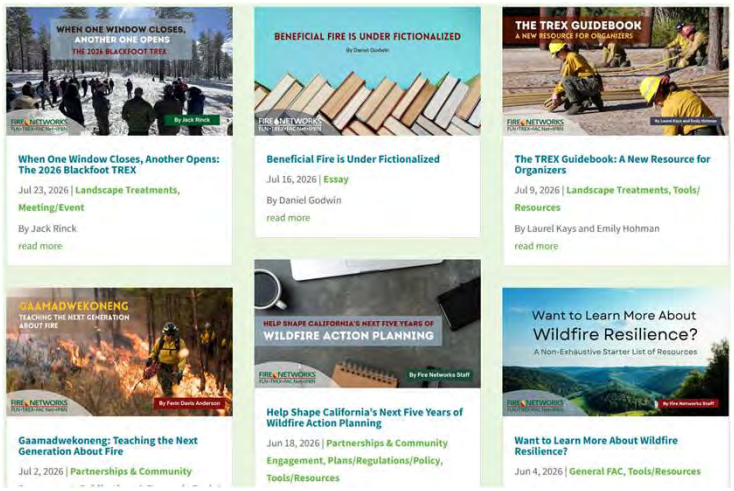
Case Study: Southern Blue Ridge

- Building a fire family
  - Landscape meetings & annual workshop
  - Serving as interim Lead
  - Improving wildfire management through prescribed fire relationships
- Impact goes both ways
  - On-call crew model national impact
  - Original FLN planning process set up years of success

firenetworks.org/manypaths

Resources

- TREX
  - Guidebook https://firenetworks.org/resource/trex-guidebook-considerations-for-planning-a-prescribed-fire-training-exchange/
  - Medical Risk Management Guide https://firenetworks.org/resource/trex-medical-risk-management-guide/
  - Medical Pocket Guide https://firenetworks.org/resource/trex-medical-risk-management-pocket-guide/
  - Activity Workbook https://firenetworks.org/resource/trex-activity-workbook/
- CPBM report https://firenetworks.org/resource/2026-assessment-of-certified-prescribed-burn-manager-programs/
- Recorded webinars including working with media https://www.youtube.com/@FireLearningNetwork



Keep In Touch

THE FIRE NETWORKS BLOG

Networker No. 405: July 8, 2026

The Networker is a publication of the Fire Networks partnership. It is intended to foster communication within the networks and among their friends. Submit comments, information to share, and subscription requests to Liz Rank.

For more about the Fire Networks, visit *https://firenetworks.org/*.

News from the Field

California: Earlier this year the **Watershed Research and Training Center** marked the end of a **pilot project** that supported **prescribed burn associations** with funding from the state's **Regional Forest and Fire Capacity** program with a press release summarizing progress made by the nine PBAs. When the subawards were made in 2022 there were 13 PBAs operating in California; there are **now more than 30 PBAs** in the state.

California: In a LinkedIn post, a participant in last month's **Yellow Star Thistle TREX** expressed excitement about the **hands-on learning**—and **opportunities to use a drone** she brought along.

Oregon: The story "A **Powerful Partnership** Aims to Save an Oregon City From Wildfire. Decision Makers Are Taking Notes" covers the work done by partners in the **Ashland Forest Resiliency Project**, which was created as a **replicable model**, and now continues through the broader **Ashland Forest All-Lands Restoration Project**.

Washington: A recent newsletter of the **Washington Prescribed Fire Council** includes a report from the **Columbia Gorge TREX** held in May.

Southern Blue Ridge: The **20th anniversary** of the **Southern Blue Ridge FLN** is celebrated in the top story of the most recent newsletter of the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists. Learn more about the SBR FLN on firenetworks.org and check out a couple of recent **videos** in the Many Paths series that were filmed in the region.

Australia: The **Natural Hazards Research Australia research project** "First Nations Women, Cultural Fire Knowledge, Wellbeing and Memory" explored the effects of last year's **Australia WTREX**. The **report**—along with **presentations**, a **poster** and a **video**—is available on the project website.

Resources: TREX Guidebook / Evacuation / Smoke / Reforestation / Grief

TREX Guidebook: Thinking about hosting a **Prescribed Fire Training Exchange**? Written by **Fire Learning Network** staff who support the TREX program with input from a wide array of TREX organizers, a **TREX Guidebook** is now available on the Fire Networks website. It provides an overview of **common formats**, **planning considerations** and **questions** to ask when planning a TREX. It isn't a step-by-step instruction manual, but rather a document to help you **think through your goals** and plan a TREX that moves you towards them.

Keep in Touch

THE NETWORKER

Questions?

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Learn More!

- PBA learning exchanges
  - https://fireadaptednetwork.org/science-tuesday-seeing-cowboys-as-catalysts/
  - https://fireadaptednetwork.org/2024-pba-leaders-exchange-in-california/
  - https://fireadaptednetwork.org/insights-from-the-pacific-northwest-pba-learning-exchange/
- Loup TREX
  - https://fireadaptednetwork.org/the-loup-trex-building-community-one-burn-at-a-time/
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1vWWEWi-tw
- https://firenetworks.org/fln/
- https://firenetworks.org/manypaths/