



SOUTHERN Fire Exchange

Uniting Fire Science and Natural Resource Management



SFE Fact Sheet 2016-3

Commonly Referenced Wildland Fire Initiatives, Programs, and Networks

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Numerous agencies, organizations, and collaboratives conduct activities related to wildland fire. Understanding all of their different roles and objectives can be confusing! This fact sheet provides brief descriptions of some of the most common wildland fire initiatives, programs, networks, and other efforts taking place around the country.

National Level Initiatives for Fire Management and Information Sharing

Joint Fire Science Program Fire Science Exchange Network

The Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) Fire Science Exchange Network (FSEN) was created in 2010 to accelerate the awareness, understanding, and adoption of wildland fire science information by federal, tribal, state, local, and private stakeholders within ecologically similar regions. The Fire Science Exchange Network connects fire managers and researchers at the local level and shares research findings from wildland fire research funded by JFSP and other entities.



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As of 2016, fifteen regional exchanges exist, covering the entire U.S. Six major principles guide the FSEN: to be inclusive; to serve as neutral science partners; to be end-user driven; to operate collaboratively; to pursue innovative communication methods; and to facilitate the flow of fire science information. The Fire Science Exchange Network strives to connect you with the fire science you need. While each regional exchange is unique, most offer free webinars, workshops and field tours, research summaries, and newsletters. You can find your region's exchange website by visiting the JFSP website at https://www.firescience.gov/JFSP_exchanges.cfm.

Fire Learning Network

In 2002, the Nature Conservancy (TNC), the USDA Forest Service, and agencies within the U.S. Department of the Interior (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Fish & Wildlife Service and National Park Service) launched a joint strategy known as The Fire Learning Network (FLN) to address the complex issues facing fire managers and land management across large landscapes with varying ownerships (TNC, 2014).



The core philosophy of this network revolves around collaborative planning, implementation, adaptive management, and information sharing. Regional network workshops, field learning exchanges, and topical workshops help to bring partners together from several landscapes to share knowledge, restoration tools, products, and ideas across regions. In addition to workshops and learning exchanges, FLN distributes a biweekly newsletter, several other short publications, and an annual field guide to the network and others interested in wildland fire. For more information on a FLN near you, check out the Fire Learning Network website at www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/FireLearningNetwork/Pages/fire-learning-network.aspx.

National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

As the fire community and other key stakeholders witnessed the increasing costs for wildfire suppression and the increasing complexity of fire issues, they realized a strategic and collaborative approach was necessary. This culminated in the development of the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act (FLAME) Act of 2009 that set the stage for the development of The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy in 2010. This strategy represents a calculated approach to working collaboratively among stakeholders across all landscapes, taking advantage of the best science to make meaningful progress towards three important components of wildland fire management: resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities and firefighter safety (OWF, 2016). The overarching national strategy was used to develop regionally specific action plans that support the national strategy priorities at regional and local levels. To learn more, visit www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy.



Prescribed Fire Information, Resources, and Training

Prescribed Fire Councils

As of 2015, thirty-one Prescribed Fire Councils (PFC) exist in 27 states across the country (Melvin, 2016). Members consist of agency staff, land managers, private landowners, forestry consultants, academic professionals, and other interested parties. Many PFCs host annual meetings for prescribed burn managers and landowners as a continuing education function that provides updates on relevant policy, fire management information, research, and lessons learned. The PFCs represent a collaborative strategy to assist prescribed fire managers in addressing new and increasingly complex challenges to prescribed burning. Their philosophy is that in regards to prescribed burning, no single agency can address concerns over public health and safety, ecological stewardship, liability, public education, and air quality regulation. In order to effectively address these issues and overcome persistent challenges, a diverse group of public and private leaders formed the National Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils in 2007 that later became a non-profit corporation called Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils, Inc. For more information or to learn more about a Prescribed Fire Council near you, visit www.prescribedfire.net.



Prescribed Burn Associations

A Prescribed Burn Association (PBA) is an organized cooperative between a group of landowners and other local citizens to conduct prescribed burns. PBAs promote the safe and responsible use of prescribed fire through increasing landowner access to education, training, technical support, funding, equipment for burning, and hands-on experience to achieve multiple management objectives. Contributing members share knowledge, experience, and equipment to increase the application and safety of prescribed fire as a management tool, while simultaneously reducing the risks of conducting burns (Weir, 2010). Experience has shown that PBAs are also more efficient at accomplishing prescribed burns because they can organize the required labor and support quickly within the often narrow window of desired weather conditions. More than 60 Prescribed Burn Associations currently exist in nine states. This fact sheet contains more information about the value of forming a PBA: <https://southernfireexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016-2.pdf>.

Prescribed Fire Training Center

Integrated interagency training plays a key role in increasing prescribed burning expertise of federal fire managers while also enhancing collaborative approaches to fire management, especially on federal lands. The National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC) in Tallahassee, Florida provides a variety of training sessions each year, which include a mix of field prescribed burning experience with a flexible curriculum of classroom instruction for prescribed fire practitioners from around the world. The PFTC is sanctioned by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and operates under the PFTC Interagency Partnership comprised of all major federal land management agencies, the Florida Forest Service, and Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy. For more information about PFTC and its training opportunities, visit www.fws.gov/fire/pftc.



Programs and Initiatives to Reduce Community Wildfire Risk

Firewise® Communities Program

The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise Communities Program began in the 1990s to encourage homeowners and local communities to reduce wildfire risk associated with home construction materials and landscaping. Its program facilitates communication, education, and planning among organizations, community leaders, and homeowners affected by wildfire. Focusing on homeowner outreach, the Firewise Communities Program has created a platform to encourage cooperation between neighbors, resulting in more resilient communities located in the wildland-urban interface. Today, there are more than 1,300 communities participating in the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program in 40 states. The program is co-sponsored by the USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the National Association of State Foresters. For more information, visit www.firewise.org.



Fire Adapted Communities

The USDA Forest Service's Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) initiative is one of the three main components of the National Cohesive Strategy. The FAC initiative is not a program or status, but rather a set of tools and practices that any community may undertake in order to increase its resilience to wildfire. It is a collaborative approach that connects all those who play a role in wildfire education, planning and action with comprehensive resources to help reduce risk. FAC represents a shift in the way communities culturally relate to wildfire, recognizing it as a natural process, and learning to live more safely with it.

A "Fire Adapted Community" incorporates people, buildings, businesses, infrastructure, cultural resources, and natural areas to prepare for the effects of wildfire. FAC provides a framework through which communities in wildfire prone areas work together to become fully prepared for wildfire and for mitigating potential losses. Firewise is a key component of FAC, providing guidance and education for taking specific actions around homes, along with landscaping to reduce fire risk. Other important FAC elements include Community Wildfire Protection Plans, fuel management around communities, and resources and activities described at www.fireadapted.org.



Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net) connects and supports people and places that are actively engaged in learning to live better with fire. Jointly managed by The Nature Conservancy and the Watershed Research and Training Center, and supported by a cooperative agreement with the USDA Forest Service and Department of Interior, the FAC Net shares the best fire adaptation practices nationwide. Members of this network exchange information and work together to help communities live safely with fire by taking action before, during, and after wildfires.



Network members connect through learning exchanges, workshops, online collaboration, staff liaisons and more. Because addressing community resiliency to wildfire takes time, FAC Net members develop powerful, enduring relationships, and are committed to learning from one another through their peer network. Anyone interested in the practices of fire adapted communities can become an Affiliate Member of FAC Net by creating a profile at <http://fireadaptednetwork.org>.

Fire Safe Councils

Fire Safe Councils are grassroots community-based organizations, which share the objective of making communities less vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire. Fire Safe Councils accomplish this objective through education programs and projects, such as shaded fuel breaks or firebreaks to protect area residents against an oncoming wildfire and to provide fire fighters with a place to fight the oncoming fire. As of 2016, they are being implemented in California (www.cafiresafecouncil.org), Nevada, and Montana (www.firesafemt.org).



Since its formation in 1993, the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) has united Californians to speak with one voice about fire safety. CFSC, a statewide non-profit organization, is a leader in encouraging grassroots movements which make communities more Fire Safe, Firewise and Fire Adapted, and there are now more than 100 Councils around the state.

CFSC receives federal grants that provide funding to local Fire Safe Councils and other community organizations in California using CFSC's innovative online Grants Clearinghouse found under the "Grants and Funding" menu. The Clearinghouse enhances existing relationships between communities and state and federal agencies, and helps create new relationships by expanding funding opportunities for eligible organizations and agencies. Through its work with federal and state agencies and Fire Safe Councils, CFSC reaches hundreds of thousands of home and business owners throughout California annually providing local fire prevention grants.

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For more information, visit www.southernfireexchange.org or email contactus@southernfireexchange.org.

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