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Dear Lynn,

As requested, here are the results from the check writing and landscape walk activities at the 2007 FLN Annual Meeting in Tucson.

Regards,

Bruce

This document briefly summarizes the data collected through two exercises at the recent National Fire Learning Network workshop in Tucson, Arizona March 7-9, 2007. The two exercises were a funding related activity (*check writing activity or money exercise*) and a *landscape walk passport activity*.

The funding activity presented each workshop participant with five checks and an imaginary \$50,000. Throughout the workshop, as participants discussed their FLN work with others and learned about other FLN projects, participants were instructed to "fund" projects that they thought had potential to accomplish good fire restoration related work by writing a check to the project sites of their choosing and depositing their checks in deposit boxes placed in the conference rooms where workshop events were held. Each check had brief questions printed on the front and back that asked participants to describe why they chose to fund particular projects. The first question asked participants to identify their affiliation with the FLN and gave six example affiliations (project site leader/participant; regional leader; national FLN management; partner agency; funding agency; other). Question two asked: *What about this project's history says "success!" to you?* Question three asked: *What about this project's plans say "success!" to you?*

The second activity, the landscape walk passport activity, took place during the landscape walk portion of the workshop. The landscape walk was a poster session in which each project site represented at the workshop designed a poster and table that described their project work and accomplishments. Workshop participants then toured each site and had the opportunity to ask questions of project representatives stationed at their respective tables. All participants were given a “passport” that included a page for each project represented. Each page of the passport provided participants with space to make three observations regarding the sites they visited.

Sites receiving four checks or more and associated themes

Four general themes arose across the sites that received the largest number of checks in the check writing exercise. These themes were: diverse activities and objectives; leadership and personnel; geographic/biodiversity priorities; and evidence of effective partnerships. Statements categorized as recognizing diverse activities and objectives reference a site’s accomplishments such as getting Rx fire on the ground, completing planning activities or holding fire education workshops. Statements concerning leadership and staff reference leadership qualities such as dedication, commitment and enthusiasm for project work that help move projects forward as well as statements that describe essential staff characteristics or that suggest site leaders need additional staff help in order to accomplish their numerous and difficult work objectives. Geographic and biodiversity priorities reference the geographic and ecological significance of a site that makes the landscape an especially relevant and exciting site for FLN activities. The final theme, effective partnerships, contains respondent’s broad recognition of the importance and effectiveness of partnerships and collaborative efforts at the five sites that received four or more checks in this exercise.

The following bullet points represent key themes identified for each of the five sites receiving four or more checks.

Centennial Valley* (5 checks)

*Landscape is new to FLN; all statements w/in *Future* category

Future Statements

- Strong partnership relations (effective partnerships)
- Multiple objectives (fire, fish, etc.) (diverse objectives)
- They have laid great scientific foundation for their work (geographic/biodiversity priorities)
- Working on area on the edge (geographic/biodiversity priorities)
- magnificent landscape (geographic/biodiversity priorities)
- Projects ahead of problems
- Nathan told story w/ great enthusiasm and that is what gets funded (leadership and personnel)

Loess Hills (4 checks)

History statements

- involvement and engagement of private landowners (partnership)
- demonstrated Rx burning (fire accomplishments)
- limited resources, staff (leadership and personnel)

- great well established partnerships (partnerships)

Future Statements

- increasing implementation capacity
- dedicated staff (leadership and personnel)
- long term planning, out 25 yrs.

Lower Cedar River (6 checks)

History Statements

- Dynamic leader (leadership and personnel)
- Americorps (partnerships)
- Partnership has grown and strengthened (partnerships)
- excellent development and shaping of workforce w/ partners (partnerships)
- Prescribed fire workshops (fire accomplishments)

Future Statements

- energetic lead (leadership and personnel)
- setting up for the long term (fire accomplishments and leadership)
- it has people on the ground who will make the area successful (leadership and personnel)
- investment in staffing (leadership and personnel)
- Building of fire cache (fire accomplishments)

Onslow Bight (4 checks)

History Statements

- Margit's enthusiasm (leadership and personnel)
- excellent partnerships (partnerships)
- biodiversity hotspot (geographic/biodiversity priority)
- only 1.5 yrs but have gotten \$
- use of Landfire RA (fire accomplishments)
- high Rx fire capacity (fire accomplishments)

Future Statements

- really working the historical fire regime and vegetation (geographic/biodiversity priorities)
- enthusiasm and commitment (leadership and personnel)
- collaboration and partnerships (partnerships)
- Margit needs staff help to get all done (leadership and personnel)
- CWPP work should attract \$

Refugio-Goliad (4 checks)

History Statements

- experience running mobile fire crew (fire accomplishments)
- well established partnerships w/ private landowners (partnerships)

- able to get large amount of fire on ground (fire accomplishments)

Future Statements

- planning focus
- funding sources
- plan to hire better staff (leadership and personnel)
- engaging their partners (partnerships)

Funding and Comments from FLN Participants at Various Levels of Landscape and Network Participation and Management

Three different groups of FLN participants identified themselves on the survey: FLN site leaders (n=24); national FLN managers (n=6); and partners (n=5). FLN managers tended to grant larger amounts of money (average grant: \$25,000) than the other two groups (project leaders: \$18,636; partners: \$16,000). Additionally, FLN project leaders tended to be more consistent and narrow in their comments regarding their reasons for funding particular projects. National FLN managers and partners, alternatively, tended to more broadly and equally weight funding criteria.

Funding from FLN managers

Average amount \$25,000

When thinking about elements of a project's history that show signs of success FLN managers at the national level highlighted five themes equally. These themes were resources received as a result of FLN efforts; project leadership; use or application of science in modeling or planning efforts; strong, effective partnerships and on-the-ground fire management accomplishments such as RX burning or development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). When considering future work at project sites FLN managers chose to fund projects that showed potential for identifying and receiving resources for additional planning or implementation, and concrete accomplishments or objectives for which to apply money to.

Key statements

History statements

- NFP grant (resources received)
- only 1.5 yrs but have gotten \$ (resources received)
- knowledge at regional leadership level is consistent and strong (leadership)

Future statements

- improved coordination should lead to more acres burned (partnership and fire accomplishments)
- continue working in difficult fuel models despite outside comfort zone (application of science, leadership, partnerships)

Funding from project leads

Average amount \$18,636

Three themes relating to a project's history received emphasis from project leaders when funding FLN work. These themes were strong leadership, partnership and on-the-ground accomplishments. When considering a project's future plans project leaders again recognized leadership qualities and partnerships. Additionally, when considering future plans project leads also emphasized plans to apply science to modeling and planning processes.

Key statements

History statements

- excellent example of TNC, citizen, Fed collaboration (partnerships)
- demonstrated Rx burning (fire accomplishments)

Future statements

- really working the historical fire regime and vegetation (application of science to planning)
- planning focus (application of science to planning)

Funding from partner agencies

Average amount \$16,000

When making funding decisions based on project history members of FLN partner agencies tended to recognize effective partnerships with well defined roles and relationships, the application of science in planning and modeling efforts, sites that can serve as models for other landscapes interested in fire and ecosystem restoration. When thinking about a project's future plans members of partner agencies recognized leadership qualities, and strong partnerships with well defined roles among partners. However, very little data was collected in this category.

Key statements

History statements

- feds are doing NEPA
- got BLM involved
- good planning tools

Common Themes and Observations Identified in Answers to Two Survey Questions and Landscape Walk Passports

Common responses to “What about this project’s history says “success!” to you?”

To more clearly understand the breadth of responses to the question “What about this project’s history says “success!” to you?” it helps to look at themes that received the most responses (nine responses or more) and slightly fewer (between five and eight responses). Three themes were identified by nine or more responses: partnerships, outreach, and on-the-ground fire restoration accomplishments such as Rx burning. Three themes received between five and eight responses: leadership, planning, context. *Partnerships* refer to collaborative endeavors among FLN leaders and other land management or stakeholder organizations and personnel. *Outreach* pertains to activities that help educate community members and partners about the importance of fire and

ecosystem restoration and can lead to the development of strong partnerships. *On-the-ground fire restoration* activities contain responses that stress the importance of accomplishing Rx burns or other restoration projects or activities. *Leadership* refers to responses that highlight important characteristics of FLN project leaders or staff that were significant in furthering progress at project sites. *Planning* contains statements regarding the importance of accomplishing planning activities such as prioritization models, development of fire councils. Lastly, the *context* category refers to the significance respondents placed on the geographic, ecological and social context of a particular site. Respondents placed increased value on FLN work at particularly fragile or contested landscapes such as those with rare ecosystem values or conflicted community settings.

Examples of statements in each category are listed below:

- excellent example of TNC, citizen, Fed collaboration (partnership)
- great well established partnerships (partnership)
- Prescribed fire workshops (outreach, fire accomplishments)
- able to get large amount of fire on ground (fire accomplishments)
- communications pieces (outreach)

Common responses to “What about this project’s plans say “success!” to you?”

Three themes received nine or more responses to this question. They were: leadership, planning and partnerships. Themes that received between five and eight responses were: context, on-the-ground fire accomplishments, and serving as a model for others. This category—serving as model for others—refers to respondents’ perception that activities or processes deployed at a site may serve as a model for managing and operating a network elsewhere.

Examples of statements in each category are listed below:

- working on area on the edge (context)
- partially part of greater Yellowstone (context)
- have personnel to bring success (leadership)
- starting to address problems/barriers other than science (planning)
- increasing implementation capacity (planning)
- Great demonstration potential w/ museum tie in (serve as model for others)

Common themes in Landscape Walk Passports

When looking across the landscapes visited by all participants the observations recorded in passports were identical to the themes identified as important in making funding decisions. Common observations touched on the following elements: outreach materials, partnerships, ecological and social context, on-the-ground fire accomplishments, and leadership and personnel. Less common among the passports, but still receiving significant documentation were observations regarding resources received and the application of science to modeling and planning efforts.

Conclusions

General themes for measuring success

The purpose of this exercise was to determine basic criteria and indicators that FLN participants use when measuring or evaluating the success of FLN projects. A secondary objective of this effort was to determine if differences exist in the ways that FLN participants from different levels of the project (national management, project leadership or partner agencies) measure success. While the results of this funding exercise do not go far enough to fully explain the evaluation framework at work in the FLN the data collected here can supplement other data that works towards this objective.

Several basic themes were identified as important for measuring success through this data collection effort. These themes were: partnerships and collaboration; leadership and personnel; application of science to monitoring, modeling and planning efforts; on-the-ground fire accomplishments; resources received; and geographic, ecological and social context. Evidence suggests that more detailed indicators of achievement of these themes exist, and may be different at various levels of the network, although the two exercises summarized here did not uncover these elements.