

May 2006

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 19-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

A 200-mile-long corridor extending from Fort Collins south to Pueblo, Colorado's Front Range is emblematic of the fire situation in the American West. Fire suppression, regional climate changes and a host of past land management practices have created unhealthy forests that are now burning in uncharacteristic ways, threatening human lives and livelihoods as well as cherished landscapes.

The interagency Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership (FRFTP) was created following Colorado's record fire season of 2002. The FRFTP Roundtable—an extension of the FRFTP—came together in 2004 to develop a long-term vision and roadmap for restoring the forests and reducing fire risk in 10 counties along the Colorado Front Range. The Roundtable comprises 30 stakeholders, including state and federal agencies, local governments and community leaders, researchers, private conservation groups and industry representatives. Two FLN



One Roundtable recommendation is to increase the appropriate application of prescribed fires such as this one in Jefferson County, Colorado.

—Photo by Jen Chase

GOALS OF THE FRONT RANGE FUELS TREATMENT PARTNERSHIP (FRFTP)

(1) Reduce wildland fire risks through fuels treatment projects that are economically feasible, socially acceptable, and ecologically sustainable

(2) Protect communities from wildland fires

(3) Restore fire-adapted ecosystems

To download a copy of the FRFTP Roundtable's report, go to <http://frftp.org>.

veterans, Merrill Kaufmann (USFS retired) and Mike Babler (TNC), serve on the Roundtable working group.

The Roundtable just issued its findings and recommendations, calling for prescribed fire and thinning treatments across 1.5 million acres, with an emphasis on wildland urban interface areas and the lower montane ponderosa pine forests. This work would take place over the next 40 years at an estimated cost of more than \$15 million per year. Approximately 60 percent of the lands in need of treatment are privately owned, and most of the funding available today—approximately \$6 million per year—is for federal lands.

The Roundtable report describes 10 initiatives to help solve this problem, including biomass utilization, stewardship contracting, creating additional private landowner incentives and limiting growth of the wildland urban interface.

It's worth noting that the typical FLN process and the Roundtable methodology both focus on ecology, are grounded in science, address local concerns, and

invite inclusive participation. The Roundtable effort placed special emphasis on enlisting influential groups and individuals to help ensure their recommendations would be acted upon.

So what's next? The Roundtable has recommended that a follow-up Roundtable be convened to help ensure that needed initiatives are implemented. No one expects instant or easy results. According to Kaufmann, "To bring about sustained, effective treatments, we need to change the will of society, agencies and politicians. We're not on the road to success until we actually start changing people's thinking and activities."

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
- Contact TNC or agency leads:
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