

## Cross-Boundary Landscape Restoration Workshop

### *Adapting to a Climate-Altered West*

**May 2–4, 2023**

The Cross-Boundary Landscape Restoration Workshop hosted 266 participants from 97 organizations across the country to explore collaborative efforts that restore and reimagine fire-adapted forest landscapes. The workshop was convened by the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute at Colorado State University, the Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University, and the Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute at New Mexico Highlands University), along with many federal and non-federal co-host organizations. The week kicked off with a special presentation and public discussion with author and emeritus professor Stephen Pyne, who described the long history of human relationships with fire. For the next three days, workshop attendees engaged in shared learning and group discussions around the theme: “Adapting to a Climate-Altered West.” Practitioners, researchers, and collaborative partners recounted stories of novel challenges and successes working in fire-adapted forest landscapes, explored paradigms for more inclusive decision-making, and developed recommendations for future collaborative cross-boundary work.

On day one, presentations and discussions set the stage for participants to explore current biophysical, social, and political climates and challenges. Keynotes Susan Prichard (Fire Ecologist, University of Washington School of Environmental and Forest Sciences) and John Waconda (Indigenous Partnerships Program Director, The Nature Conservancy) shared how we can re-imagine fire-adapted forests in western landscapes with place-based adaptation strategies. In the afternoon, participants came together in small groups to discuss emerging challenges they are facing, then heard examples of successful fire management from a panel of on-the-ground fire managers. U.S. Congressman Joe Neguse (CO 2nd District) wrapped up the day by expressing gratitude for the “largely unsung” work that attendees are doing every day to work toward better forest management.



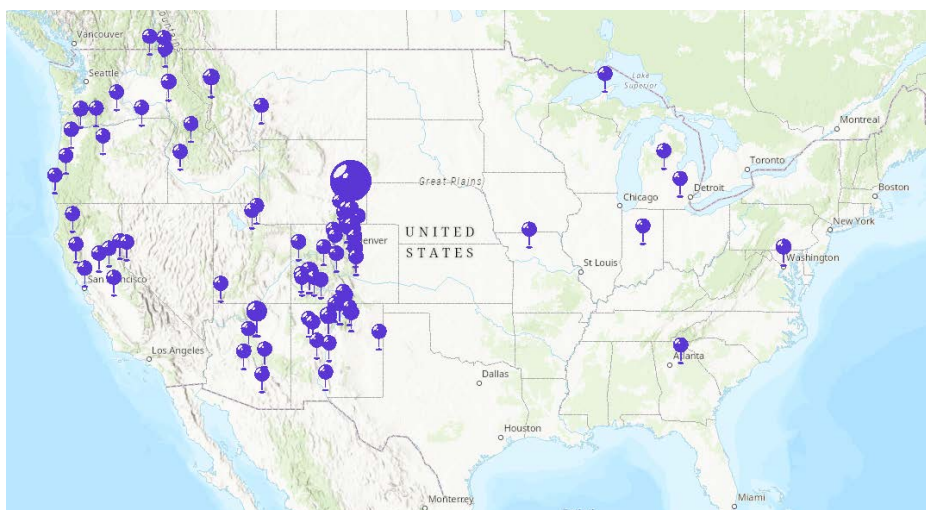
*Emily Hohman (TNC), Jeremy Marshall (USFS), and James White (USFS) share successful cross-boundary fire lessons.*

Day two was all about integrating adaptation into planning and implementation. Chris Swanston (Director, Office of Sustainability and Climate, USDA Forest Service) spoke about responding to climate change, and shared challenges around hard truths, denial, and hope. Learning around climate change continued with lightning talks on tools for climate planning and adaptation, reforestation, and case studies of policies and climate adaptation projects in action. Three state foresters—Tom Torres, AZ; Matt McCombs, CO; Laura McCarthy, NM—shared their thoughts on incorporating cross-boundary planning and implementation into fire-adapted systems, and discussed barriers

and opportunities for adaptation within state forestry. Participants were able to learn together with experts and peers by digging into topic-specific small group discussions on climate adaptation, science communication, tribal-led forestry, fire management, reforestation, collaboration, and other highlighted themes throughout the day.

Activities built a dialogue, started with shared learning from local manager and partners and culminating on day three with insights from and recommendations to leadership. This began with talks from USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station Interim Director Frank McCormick and Research Forester Matt Thompson, who discussed how science can be integrated into decision making and outcome metrics to inform innovative strategies. An energetic tabletop discussion gave participants an opportunity to reflect on their takeaways from the event, and develop recommendations for successful cross-boundary work. The workshop concluded with panel discussions with representatives from tribal, non-governmental, local, and federal agency leadership, including national leadership representatives Joan Mooney (U.S. Department of Interior, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Management and Budget) and Meryl Harrell (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment).

Throughout the workshop, participants and speakers returned to themes of building stronger relationships with one another, the landscapes we work in, and the processes at work on those landscapes. Adapting to rapidly changing climates while leveraging the latest science is a universal challenge amongst participants. However, as participants explored struggles and accomplishments, the workshop helped illuminate opportunities and resources for innovation. As one panelist put it, cross-boundary landscape restoration starts with saying ‘yes’ and leaning into working together. Each individual left with more tools and partners eager to help, as well as a better understanding of their own unique contribution to cross-boundary landscape restoration.



*A map of Cross-Boundary Workshop attendees from the contiguous United States.*

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