The afternoon of the 2017 FAC Net field exchange focused on building stronger partnerships within the network. Local crews from North Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Douglas Fire Departments led network members through a series of field-based leadership exercises designed to highlight the importance of clear communication, and to build effective teamwork. Overviews, material lists, instructions and notes for the activities are detailed below.

**General Instructions**

The group was broken into teams of 5-6 individuals. There were 10 groups, so there were two “break” stations and two “informational exchange” stations interspersed with the team-building activities.

Each group spent 15 minutes at each station, and the agenda also allowed for a five-minute gap for groups to rotate between each station.

Some of the activities required a group leader, as indicated in the table below. For those activities, facilitators asked the group to select the leader. It was encouraged that no person lead more than one station, so long as there were enough people on the team. The instructions were directed primarily to the team leader. The rest of the group was designated as “team members.”

Facilitators were reminded that there are no wrong solutions. Also, if at any point someone was uncomfortable completing an activity, they could stand out and observe.

**Stations** (* indicates leadership activity)

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**Materials List**

- Five large/medium notepads and pens, one for each facilitator
- 14 radios: 5-10 for facilitators, two for “Remote Teams,” two for timekeeping and safety
- Ten small notepads and pens for “Written Prescriptions”
- Twenty-one sticks approximately 1 foot long, similarly sized and shaped for
“Hazardous Fuels” and “Understanding Needs”
- Twenty-one tree cookies approximately 5 inches in diameter, similarly sized and shaped for “Hazardous Fuels” and “Understanding Needs”
- Twenty-one rocks approximately baseball sized, similarly shaped for “Hazardous Fuels” and “Understanding Needs”
- Two diagrams (one easy and one hard) for Hazardous Fuels
- Six ability sheets for Hazardous Fuels (available on pg. 8)
- Twenty paper plates for “Written Prescriptions”
- Ten whistles for “Written Prescriptions”
- Sixty-eight bandanas for “Written Prescriptions”
- Two pencil diagrams for “Remote Teams”
- Twenty unsharpened pencils for “Remote Teams”
- Six rule sheets for “Understanding Needs” (available on pg. 9)

A. Storytelling

Overview
A team leader told a story about a project to one team member (in private). That team member relayed the story to another team member, until each team member heard the story. The last person to hear the story then answered a mock reporter’s questions (the facilitator is the reporter).

Materials
- Notepad and pen for facilitator

Instructions
Telling our stories is an important part of our fire adaptation work. One component of leadership is developing narratives and communicating our stories in ways that keep our most important points intact. Often our stories get passed from person to person and place to place, and they may change along the way. In this exercise you will pass a story through your team, focusing on clear communication and intent.

Take two minutes to develop a 60-second story about a fire adaptation project or program that you were involved with, and provide several important details about people or places that your project involved. Be sure to pick a project that the rest of your team isn’t familiar with.

Select a team member and communicate your one-minute story to them without the rest of your team hearing. Then that team member will tell your story to another team member.
privately, and so on, until the final team member has heard the story, or we're out of time. The final team member to hear the story will then be "interviewed" by the mock reporter and asked about the key points of your story.

Any questions? Your two minutes starts now.

**Facilitator Notes**

- Allow the leader to determine the "storytelling" order before starting.
- Keep time for the team leader.
- Listen in on the first storytelling session and take notes about key points of the story. Focus on (ideally) two "big ideas" as well as several small details that are likely to get lost in translation.
- "Interview" the final person in front of the entire group. Start with a general question about one of the big ideas. Then ask questions about the small details. The final question should be about the other big idea.
- Record the team leader's name and any interesting observations about the exercise.

**B. Tahoe Network of Fire Adapted Communities Creative Consult**

**Overview**

Groups participated in a fast-paced brainstorming exercise (called “creative consult”) to identify potential ways that Nicole might be able to successfully motivate FAC action among this community, 70 percent of which are part-time residents.

**C. Hazardous Fuels**

**Overview**

A team leader led team members (with their eyes covered) through a field of paper plates that represented “hazardous fuels,” and with only the use of a whistle, helped his teammates cross the field without stepping on the hazardous fuels.

**Materials**

- Twenty paper plates to act as "hazardous fuels"
- Whistles (one for each group)
- Seventy bandanas (or you can have participants close their eyes)
- Notepad and pen for facilitator
Instructions

Brief lapses in clear communication can have substantial consequences in our work. This is especially true for wildland firefighting and prescribed fire, where leaders must clearly weigh benefits with real risks for every action taken.

In this exercise you will guide your team (with their eyes covered or closed), one at a time, through a field of obstacles, represented by paper plates, using only a whistle. If any team member steps on an obstacle they will be told they're "out" and will open your eyes and exit the field. You have three minutes to come up with a plan with your team, after which your team will have their eyes covered, and you'll only be able to communicate with the whistle. You'll have 10 minutes to guide your team through the obstacles.

Any questions? Your three minutes starts now.

Facilitator Notes

- Everybody gets a bandana to take home, including the team leader.
- If anyone is uncomfortable wearing a bandana over their eyes, just ask them to keep their eyes closed.
- If anyone is uncomfortable walking without seeing, they may stand out.
- Clear all actual tripping hazards and obstacles before the activity starts.
- Record the name of the team leader and any interesting solutions or observations.

D. Written Prescriptions

Overview

A team leader recreated a picture (that only he or she has a drawing of) by asking team members to move various materials in and out of the “picture frame,” outlined by tape or flagging on the ground. Team members had restrictions on what they could and could not do, but only the members themselves know those restrictions, and the only way that they could communicate with the leader was through nodding their heads “yes” and “no.”

Materials

- Ten small notepads and a pen for team leaders
- Six sticks (approximately 1 foot long, similarly sized and shaped)
- Six tree cookies (approximately five inches in diameter, similarly sized and shaped)
- Six rocks (approximately baseball sized, similar size and shape)
- Two tableau pictures for the leader (one "easy" and one "hard")
• Six different ability sheets, one for each team member (pg. 8)
• Notepad and pen for facilitator

Instructions

Often our fire adaptation work involves breaking down a complex vision into its component pieces and developing simplified steps to implement them, all while being mindful of who on our team is best suited for each task. In this exercise, you will utilize written communication to communicate a prescription to your team members who each have specialties and limitations on their capabilities.

You've received a picture of a tableau with rocks, sticks and trees (“tree cookies”). Your job is to instruct your team to recreate the tableau as closely as possible using the materials in the staging area. You may not touch the materials, and you can only communicate with your team by delivering written instructions to your team members. Verbal communication among the team is not allowed during the exercise.

Each of your team members is only allowed to manipulate one material. Some can only pick up staged materials and place them in the tableau, and others can only pick up materials in the tableau and stage them. They have received a slip of paper informing them of their abilities for this exercise.

To deliver a prescription hand the note to a team member. If they can carry out all instructions, they will do so, and then hand the slip back to you. If they are unable to complete all instructions listed, they will immediately hand it back to you.

Any questions? You have 10 minutes, starting now.

Facilitator Notes

• Hand out the abilities sheets to everyone except the team leader before reading the exercise instructions. There are six sheets, and all of them need to be distributed to complete the game regardless of group size. If there are less than seven in the entire group, some people can receive two abilities sheets.
• Record the name of the team leader and any interesting solutions or observations. If the exercise seems too easy after the first one or two teams, use the tableau picture marked "hard" for the next exercise and reevaluate.
G. Remote Teams

Overview

Groups were broken into two teams, and one group constructed a complex shape built out of pencils. They then gave the other team directions on how to recreate the shape over the radio.

Materials

- Two radios, one for each team leader
- Twenty unsharpened pencils (10 for each group)
- Two different tableau pictures (facilitator use only)
- Notepad and pen for facilitator

Instructions

For this exercise, two team leaders are required. Leaders, split the team into two equal groups.

Our fire adaptation work frequently involves sharing leadership responsibility and working across distances where face-to-face communication is infrequent, and we have to rely on less-rich communication channels.

In this exercise, each group is presented with a tableau of pencils. You will have 10 minutes to switch the tableaus provided, so that the shape provided to Group 1 is recreated by Group 2, and the shape provided to Group 2 is recreated by group 1.

Each leader is provided with a radio. You can only use radios to communicate (hold down the key to speak, do not change the channel knob, and be aware that we are on a public channel).

Any questions? Go to your stations. Your 10 minutes starts now.

Facilitator Notes

- You may need to instruct the team leaders in radio use.
- Record the name of the team leader and any interesting solutions or observations.
I. Understanding Needs

Materials

- Fifteen sticks (approx. 1-foot long, similarly sized and shaped)
- Five tree cookies (approx. 5 inches in diameter, similarly sized and shaped)
- Fifteen rocks (approx. baseball sized, similarly shaped)
- Six different rule sheets, one for each team member (pg. 9)
- Notepad and pen for facilitator

Instructions

In fire adaptation work, leadership is more than directing, delegating, and coaching. It also requires collaboration and facilitation, and bringing together diverse perspectives to craft mutually agreeable solutions.

Each of your team members has received a secret rule sheet indicating conditions that must be satisfied with the objects in the tableau. In this exercise, your task is to build a tableau that satisfies each of your team members' secret rules. Team members are not allowed to verbally communicate with you.

Each team member will use the available supplies to build a tableau in front of them that satisfies their secret rule. You will have 10 minutes to build a single tableau that satisfies everyone on your team. At any time you may ask any of your team members whether they are satisfied with the tableau you have built.

If they are satisfied, they will give you a thumbs-up.

If they are NOT satisfied, they will give you a thumbs-down, and you may request that they build a new tableau that also satisfies their secret rule.

Any questions? Your 10 minutes starts now.

Facilitator Notes

- For groups of seven, every team member (except the leader) gets a rule sheet. For groups of six, you will step in as an additional team member and receive a rule sheet. Don’t distribute more than one rule sheet to any team member.
- Record the name of the team leader and any interesting solutions or observations.
You can pick up rocks from the staging area only and must place them within the tableau. You cannot touch trees or sticks. (1)

You can pick up trees from the staging area only and must place them within the tableau. You cannot touch rocks or sticks. (2)

You can pick up sticks from the staging area only and must place them within the tableau. You cannot touch rocks or trees. (3)

You can pick up rocks from within the tableau only and must place them in the staging area. You cannot touch trees or sticks. (4)

You can pick up trees from within the tableau only and must place them in the staging area. You cannot touch rocks or sticks. (5)

You can pick up sticks from within the tableau only and must place them in the staging area. You cannot touch rocks or trees. (6)
There must be at least 3 trees, and exactly 2 trees must be touching.
(1)

There must be no more than 5 rocks, and each rock must be touching either a tree or a stick.
(2)

There must be at least 2 sticks, and each log must be touching either a tree or a rock.
(3)

There must be no more than 2 sticks, and sticks must NOT touch trees.
(4)

There must be no more than 3 trees, and each tree must be touched by a rock.
(5)

There must be at least 5 rocks, and exactly 2 rocks must be touching.
(6)