

# Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

Our mission is to connect and support people and communities who are striving to live more safely with wildfire. The FAC Net is a catalyst for spreading best practices and innovations in fire adaptation nationwide.

## People. Place. Fire.

Fire adaptation is about resilience. It's about enhancing adaptive capacity in communities and ecological systems. To better live with fire we must mitigate risks, prepare for impacts, weigh trade-offs and work together—before, during and after wildfires.

FAC Net's core principle is that the best way to spread effective fire adaptation strategies is to connect peer practitioners. FAC Net successfully weaves these relationships, providing forums for exchange and innovation, and demonstrating what's possible. With robust peer support, coaching and mentoring for emerging groups, FAC Net is helping communities around the country on their unique journeys to live more safely with wildfire.

Over the last six months, the network has grown to include well over 100 people in 28 states, who represent the full gamut of organizations and agencies engaged in wildfire resilience work. Together, our members and partners are creating the relationships and connections that are the foundation of resilience, and forging new ways of relating to one another and to the places they live.

## Inspiring Practitioners to Take New Action: Netweaving People, Practice & Resources

FAC Net fosters a culture of learning and exchange that has sparked several members to adopt strategies from their fellow FAC Net partners. For example:

When the New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council needed a boost, our member from the Forest Stewards Guild used his FAC Net connections to figure out its next move. Their liaison—who also serves on the board of the National Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils and as the Director of the Northern California Prescribed Fire Council—was the perfect person to help them strategize. “She definitely inspired the New Mexico council to take on more.” Following her meeting with New Mexico leaders, they have set a date for a workshop and are determined to be bold in their prescribed fire mission.

Project Wildfire shared their organizational model with the Yakima Valley Fire Adapted Communities Coalition (a member of the state-wide network, WAFAC). The Project Wildfire business plan and structure are being used to “inform and inspire the formation” of both the Yakima effort,

and that of WAFAC members in Chelan County. Similarly, in Oregon, members in Ashland are considering adopting Project Wildfire's flagship “FireFree” model, which they discovered and have seen at work as a result of strong ties built through the FAC Net. Practitioners from central Washington were also helped with prescribed fire outreach strategies and advice about how to best leverage forest health collaboratives.

FAC Net members in Rapid City worked with colleagues in Santa Fe and western Colorado on a rapid assessment mapping strategy for their primary WUI hazard zone. They also helped members in Austin with code adoption by sharing Rapid City's best practices document and custom tailored WUI building materials and vegetation management ordinance draft.

In central Oregon, network members invited a resident from one of their Firewise communities to a long-term recovery learning exchange hosted by network members. The resident returned home and began working with his neighbors to expand their



## The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

helps society live more safely with wildfire...

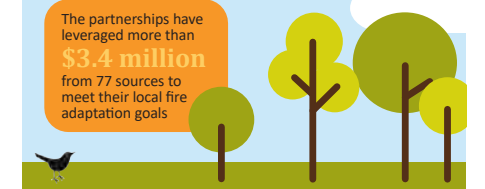
Network members are some of the most advanced community resilience practitioners in the country, and through the FAC Net, they are spreading better ways of living with wildfire—ways that recognize the role of fire in our ecosystems, provide alternatives to costly fire suppression, and protect the lives of citizens and firefighters.

**21** FAC NET CORE MEMBERS &  
**89** AFFILIATE MEMBERS WORK  
IN COMMUNITIES IN **28** STATES

CORE MEMBERS  
ADDED **162**  
NEW PARTNERS  
(JANUARY-JUNE 2017)

FAC Net works with  
**720** more than  
partners to  
advance community  
fire adaptation

The partnerships have  
leveraged more than  
**\$3.4 million**  
from 77 sources to  
meet their local fire  
adaptation goals



*“Participation in FAC Net provides access to expertise not found elsewhere. It is an invaluable resource.”*

Participants in the long-term recovery learning exchange co-hosted by the Chumstick and Project Wildfire in Hood River (OR) went home inspired to action. For example, the City of Ashland is partnering with the chamber of commerce on a business preparedness program, including offering a local version of the workshop. © WRTC (Emily Troisi)



focus from just mitigation in their neighborhood to community-wide efforts before, during and after fire. As a result of that same learning exchange, efforts to plan for business resiliency and long-term recovery are now a priority for the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, which is going through a business preparedness program certification and plans to host its own long-term recovery workshop next year.

In Minnesota, members in Ely used experience and insights from the network to support the development of a strategic communications plan. They also modeled their “Living with Fire” event, co-hosted by the state DNR, on curriculum from Oregon FAC Net members.



A community workshop in Island Park (ID) used a Simtable—a sand table with maps and other data projected onto it—to powerfully explore community risk. © Simtable

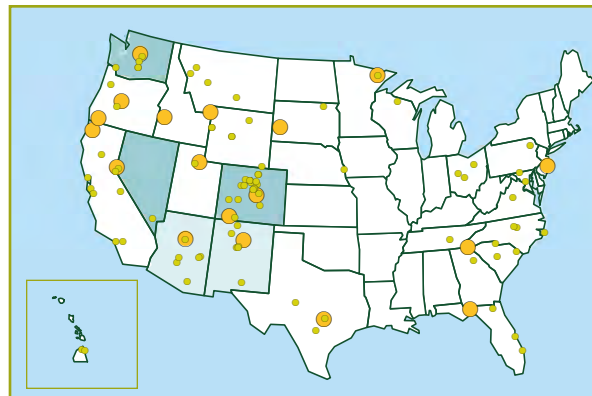
## Coaching New and Emerging FAC Efforts

FAC Net was launched with members from relatively mature community fire adaptation approaches. We’ve since added several strategies that expand the network’s reach beyond these early adopters. With a flourishing affiliate member program, core members who are mentoring other communities, and partnerships to jumpstart local capacity, FAC Net is honing our coaching and mentoring skills.

At the local scale, we’re working with nearly 100 affiliate members, many of whom are just getting a start in their fire adaptation work. We’re also mentoring several communities as they grow more robust fire adaptation efforts. For example, in Idaho, members from Island Park credit the mentoring and support they’ve received through FAC Net for helping them achieve the excellent outcomes they are seeing: “In April we held our first virtual sand table exercise and we had approximately 40 participants, many of whom had never participated in our past events. We also tried a

spring slash pick up for the first time, and have 101 people signed up, greatly exceeding our expectations!”

FAC Net is also investing in coaching and mentoring organizations to launch their own state-level fire adaptation networks. According to WAFAC staff, FAC Net “has introduced WAFAC to network evaluation tools, workshop support structures, network resources such as publications, guides, webinars, and people that have helped us develop strategic thinking and implementation.” Colorado, Nevada and Washington have active state-wide networks, and partners in Arizona and New Mexico are in the scoping and design phases of launching them.



## Hosting and Supporting Learning Events

FAC Net members led more than 90 local and regional workshops this spring. In-person gatherings strengthen relationships—which are at the very core of effective networks and collaboratives—and are also the best way to share knowledge and move initiatives forward.

In February, members from Oregon and Washington held a learning exchange focused on long-term recovery planning. Participants included leaders from the business sector, planning departments and non-profit social service organizations. Led by Washington State Emergency Management staff (managers for the private industry, long-term recovery, and limited English proficiency programs) and The Nature Conservancy’s Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, “participants learned and participated in activities that set the foundation for pre-planning for long-term recovery by identifying existing conditions that would enhance or impede a community’s ability to recover, constraints and roles of organizations, and organization networks that would help support recovery efforts,” according to organizers.



*“The FAC Network ... has without a doubt improved and accelerated the outcomes we have been able to achieve thus far.”*

In April, Lake Tahoe members welcomed FAC Net members from across the country for the annual workshop. The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team coordinated a valuable field exchange for participants that “strengthened inter-network connections, provoked new ideas, and benefitted [local] programs.” When not in the field, members learned more about one another’s fire adaptation practices, using a unique portfolio process to uncover strengths and identify opportunities for co-work and co-learning.

In June, the state-wide Fire Adapted Colorado (FACO) network held a learning exchange focused on home wildfire risk assessments and apps. Eighteen wildfire professionals from across the state came to share their approaches and tools for assessing wildfire hazards and tailoring mitigation actions to individual properties. The workshop was an important learning opportunity for some participants who were new to home assessments. It also daylighted some important nationally relevant issues, including the need for better standardization of comprehensive home assessment recommendations, and the tension between having standards and the need to consider

what a given homeowner is realistically likely to do, because assessors are trying to set the stage for an ongoing, productive relationship. This was the first exchange since FACO’s launch, and represents a key strategy for providing value to members when pass-through funding is not available.



At the close of the long-term recovery learning exchange that brought together partners from Oregon and Washington, participants talk through their next steps with facilitators.

© WRTC (Emily Troisi)

## Demonstrating What’s Possible

Part of the rationale for starting FAC Net was that a network would help demonstrate a wide range of fire adaptation techniques and contexts, providing others with examples of what’s possible. That premise has proven true—and one of the most beneficial things the FAC Net does is



Participants in the Fire Adapted Colorado (FACO) learning exchange discuss potential issues with decks, as part of the larger conversations about assessing hazards and planning mitigation efforts.

© TNC (Wendy Fulks)

amplify successful models. Members achieved several milestones this spring, including significant on-the-ground hazard mitigation work:

- A record number of National Community Wildfire Preparedness Day events were held in southwest Colorado, with FireWise of Southwest Colorado partners hosting 14 events, logging 1,750 volunteer hours.
- The Ely neighborhood mitigation program is steadily growing from “a start of 25 properties in 2014,

to 254 properties in 2016. Once the summer 2017 field season is completed, we will be able to report on the anticipated continued growth. The amount of material removed increased by two-thirds and volunteer hours more than doubled.”

- Project Wildfire’s spring FireFree events “collected over 31,000 cubic yards of vegetation over the course of nine events in four counties. This is the second highest amount of yard debris collected over the life of FireFree, and 10 percent more than last year.”
- Tahoe has added 317 new individual members and is actively coordinating with volunteers in 12 neighborhoods. More than 500 acres of fuel reduction work has been accomplished, along with hundreds of defensible space inspections, chipping requests and community contacts.
- Participation in fuel reduction efforts were at an all-time high for the Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition (CWSC) this spring. They coordinated and hosted five disposal days at the transfer station, and about 188 people brought in 95.9 tons (324 car/truck loads) of material. Where previous efforts

“The legitimacy that comes with a connection to a national network cannot be overstated.”

peaked at 32 loads in one day, these efforts yielded an average of 65 loads a day (19.1 tons). All told, CWSC assisted 232 community members who contributed \$84,936 of in-kind and cash contributions to complete 143.2 acres of fuel reduction.

Beyond hazardous fuel management, members are expanding programs, working with local Forest Service personnel to reach agreement for managed fire, and adding new partners. And they're thinking bigger. In Washington, the Chelan Pilot Project kicked off. It's an “accomplishment that would not have been possible without the FAC Net support of WAFAC.” This project will enable them to support additional communities in their state network, support a Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX) and fund NEPA development for large-scale treatment in the Upper Wenatchee River Watershed. And they're seeing welcome culture-shift beginning. Members in the mid-Klamath region of northern California had their “first successful influence on a managed wildfire decision,” and partners “applaud the efforts of the Klamath National Forest to make this decision, and progress us into a new era of wildland fire management.”

## Renewing and Energizing the People Who Do This Work

“Our involvement with FAC Net has radically changed the way we connect with others outside of our county. FAC Net affiliation gives our program credibility and invitations to move on to other counties and states.”

“FAC Net has provided a set of peers, practitioners and friends to learn and bounce ideas off—FAC Net brings small organizations out of isolation. The network serves as our lifeline.”

“I feel like I am a part of a large movement that is working to change the current trajectory, and FAC Net has allowed me to continue our efforts on a larger scale.”

“The difference our participation in FAC Net has made cannot be overstated; we are more efficient, more effective and better able to succeed.”

“FAC Net has helped to transform preparedness efforts...from a part time ‘do it when I can’ sideline, to create an integral partner that can help train staff, coordinate and carry out needed activities. What we have accomplished in the past three years could not have been done without the technical and financial assistance of FAC Net.”

“I've learned a great deal from network staff and other participants, and the work has shaped my approach to wildfire preparation work. This has been in the form of exposure to social science, strong and well-justified opinions on mitigation work, and through a minimally hierarchal approach to sharing ideas and lessons learned.”

“The relationship with network participants provides a feedback and support loop, where we would not have otherwise had one. The nature of this work is complex and can feel overwhelming and daunting, but the work and the willingness of network participants to share is an endless source of inspiration to do better, to try more, to do different things, to take and adapt the best of what others have learned.”



From top: The annual national FAC Net workshop, hosted by the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team and their partners, included a skills session on diversity and inclusion, leadership exercises on the field day, and opportunities to learn—and plan future work—together. © Jeremiah Osborne-Gowey; TNC (L. Rank)

<http://fireadaptednetwork.org/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/FACNetwork>  
<https://twitter.com/fireadaptednet>



The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network is supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together* (PERFACT), a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and Department of the Interior, in partnership with the Watershed Research and Training Center. For more information about the FAC Net, contact Michelle Medley-Daniel at [michelle@thewatershedcenter.com](mailto:michelle@thewatershedcenter.com).

PERFACT is an equal opportunity provider.

# Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

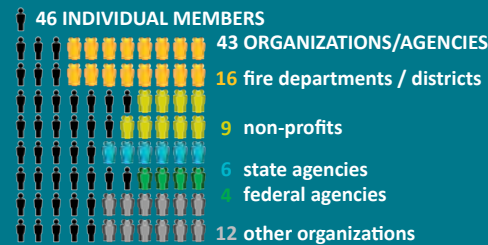
Infographics: How the Affiliate Membership and FAC Self Assessment Tool Are Working



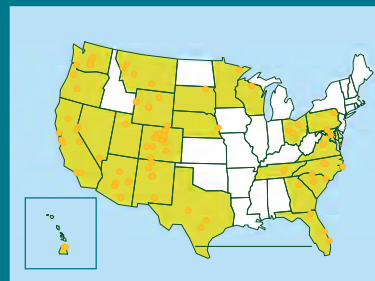
## The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network AFFILIATE MEMBERS

As the value of FAC Net became obvious over its first few years, we looked for ways to plug more organizations and individuals into the network. Since January 2016 people and communities beyond the FAC Net core membership and state-wide networks have engaged as affiliate members, connecting with others online, through webinars, on calls and in person.

### WHO ARE OUR AFFILIATE MEMBERS?

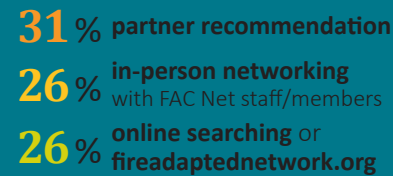


### WHERE ARE OUR AFFILIATE MEMBERS?



89 INDIVIDUALS & ORGANIZATIONS IN 24 STATES

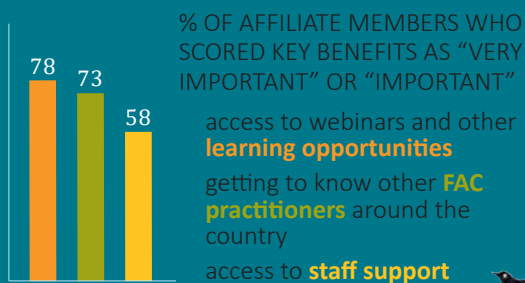
### HOW DO PEOPLE FIND FAC NET?



take-away: an important part of FAC Net outreach for affiliate membership is in-person connections and relationships

take-away: highlights the importance of our website standing in search engine rankings, and continued connection to other partners' websites

### WHAT ARE THE NETWORK'S MOST IMPORTANT BENEFITS?



## The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

### FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

FAC SAT 2.0 has been downloaded 188 times since we made it available in January 2016. We asked people who downloaded it to evaluate its use in, and benefit to, their communities.

