



Media, Partnership, and Prescribed Fire Restore Wildlife Habitat Near Lake James, North Carolina

The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is a national collaborative effort to bring a broad cross-section of stakeholders together to address wildland fire management challenges. The Strategy directs wildland fire planning activities and has three primary goals: restore and maintain landscapes, develop Fire-Adapted Communities, and improve wildfire response.

Activity	Impact
# acres involved in prescribed fire	154

During January 2015, a successful prescribed fire on 154 acres near Lake James, North Carolina was possible due to a partnership between the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC), The Nature Conservancy and the US Forest Service; favorable weather conditions; and media coverage.

WRC's Wallace-Gray Tract is characterized by mixed oak, hickory, and pine forests containing a dense rhododendron/laurel midstory. This midstory can limit habitat that supports abundant and diverse wildlife. A primary land management objective by the WRC and The Nature Conservancy is to "open" the midstory (removing or reducing the rhododendron) to improve habitat for songbirds, ruffed grouse, small mammals, and deer. Prescribed fire reduces this shrub midstory while also reducing hazardous wildfire fuels.

The January 2015 prescribed burn was successful not only in its efforts at habitat enhancement and fuels reduction, but also in the multi-media news coverage of the burn. Adam said, "Here in the mountains the only time you see fire on the news is when it is destroying houses in the west. So, people have no basis – no historical reason – to trust that we can control fire. It is going to take time to develop that trust. We'll get there. It is just a new idea...You need to show the benefits." Video, images, and a "story" can bring an unknown or misunderstood land management activity, like prescribed fire, greater public acceptance. The successful outreach efforts to highlight this prescribed burn and continued outreach of the burn's result can lead to approval of future burns.

Success stories highlight regional wildland fire accomplishments that support implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy in the Southeast. The stories demonstrate how the Southeast is improving its "fire resiliency" through technology, education and outreach, forest management, collaboration, and more. Success stories also serve as a model for other communities to follow.



Images from the Lake James prescribed burn in January 2015. Credit: Adam Warwick, The Nature Conservancy

Additional Information:

Multi-media burn coverage: <http://blogs2.citizen-times.com/photography/2016/02/09/the-sunday-frame-prescribed-burn/>

Contact: Adam Warwick, Southern Blue Ridge Stewardship Manager, The Nature Conservancy, North Carolina Chapter, awarwick@tnc.org

Partners: The Nature Conservancy, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, U.S.D.A. Forest Service



Southern Regional
Extension Forestry

