



# Increasing Prescribed Fire Capacity: Prescribed Fire Councils

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**CHALLENGE** California accomplishes relatively little prescribed fire even though 54 percent of the state’s ecosystems are fire-dependent, and almost the rest are fire-adapted. Practitioners have worked in isolated bubbles, accomplishing burning on their own landscapes, but until recently had no forum for working on shared challenges, celebrating successes, or expanding their impact.

**SOLUTION** A professor at Humboldt State University made a pitch for prescribed fire councils, which at the time were common in the Southeast, but had not yet taken hold in the West. A small team decided to move the idea forward, and the Northern California Prescribed Fire Council ([www.norcalrxfirecouncil.org/](http://www.norcalrxfirecouncil.org/)) was formed.

**COSTS AND LOGISTICS** The funding required to support the council is minimal—usually just enough to cover 50-60 hours of staff time and some expenses for the annual meeting. But this investment provides the continuity and basic foundation for the council to maintain momentum.

**WHY IT WORKS** By providing a venue for collaboration, shared learning, science delivery and networking, the council has set the stage for a whole host of efforts, including training, policy, private lands burning, and more. Annual meetings of the council are like family reunions, and the sense of camaraderie and trust that the council has built will continue to advance collaboration and culture change around prescribed fire.



The Northern California Prescribed Fire Council has built strong friendships, which are the building blocks of progress.  
Top: 2017 annual meeting, Point Reyes National Seashore  
Bottom: 2018 annual meeting, Mount Shasta

Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (Trex) are part of *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together* (PERFACT), a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior.

For more information about work under the PERFACT agreement, contact Marek Smith at [marek\\_smith@tnc.org](mailto:marek_smith@tnc.org) or (919) 794-4374. For more about TREX, contact Jeremy Bailey at [jeremy\\_bailey@tnc.org](mailto:jeremy_bailey@tnc.org) or (801) 599-1394 .



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