

PRESS RELEASE

KARUK TRIBE AND MID KLAMATH WATERSHED COUNCIL

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Klamath Prescribed Fire Training Draws Diverse Participants to Get Good Fire on the Ground

Orleans, CA - This year's annual Klamath River Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX) features more cultural burning than ever before. The innovative, hands-on educational event enters its ninth year this fall, building on a foundation of collaborative partnerships and indigenous leadership.

The Klamath TREX event runs October 10-22, with political momentum to support prescribed fire practitioners running high after the passage of California legislation last year. [Senate Bill 332](#) both reduces liability for burn bosses and effectively recognizes cultural fire practitioners as qualified "burn bosses."

Klamath TREX is hosted by the Karuk Tribe, Mid Klamath Watershed Council (MKWC), Salmon River Restoration Council, and The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with state and federal fire managers. This year, over 100 controlled burn practitioners were selected from nearly 200 applicants from 12 states, nine countries, and 95 separate organizations. These participants will give and get the training and hands-on experience needed for qualifications at different roles assigned during a prescribed burn operation. This exchange of knowledge and expertise will build capacity to conduct burning operations in communities across the globe.

"Intentional burning has always been key to our survival," said Bill Tripp, Director of the Karuk Tribe's Department of Natural Resources. "Karuk people have been using fire to manage the land for time immemorial. Now it's time to bring fire back as a management tool to achieve objectives ranging from community safety to food production, water quality, and increased high-quality materials available to our basket weavers. To do that, we need to teach and learn fire. TREX allows us to build the burning capacity we need."

Burn units for TREX this year include ones planned for cultural purposes and where the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WGRP) is implementing a pilot project to demonstrate how manual and mechanical thinning combined with prescribed fire treatments can

successfully restore fire process around high risk neighborhoods where fire has been excluded for over a century.

“The real fire crisis in the West is the absence of frequent fire on the ground and resulting catastrophic fuel loading. For us, the emergency doesn’t end when the wildfires are put to bed,” said Will Harling, Co-Director of MKWC and WKRP Co-Lead. “If we are going to protect communities from being wiped off the map, protect our rivers from deadly debris flows, and restore cultures that depend on fire, we need to scale up our prescribed fire efforts more than a hundred fold. KTREX is an opportunity to build the skills to bring Good Fire back to your community.”

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Editors notes: