



June 29, 2016

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## *A Farewell Letter from Tom Waldrop*

As many of you know Tom will be retiring from the US Forest Service on July 29<sup>th</sup>. On May 1<sup>st</sup> he handed over the role of Principal Investigator of CAFMS to Todd Hutchinson. We sent the letter below out at the beginning of May but wanted to make sure that it gets around to everyone! If you would like to send a letter or photos to contribute to a scrapbook for Tom send them to [helen@cafms.org](mailto:helen@cafms.org).



April 28, 2016

Dearest friends;

Today is my last official day of being the Principal Investigator of the Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists. I am retiring from the Forest Service in July and gradually turning over my duties to several people. Todd Hutchinson of the Northern Research Station (USFS) will take over my duties for CAFMS on Monday (May 2).

The highlight of my 38-year career has been my involvement with fire managers of the Appalachians through the many meetings and conversations that have been supported through CAFMS. I have learned so much from so many of you. My first Project Leader, Doug Philips, said that the true scientists in our field are the land managers. They are the ones who try new things and refine those attempts until they achieve a desirable result. I learned that a successful scientist should develop research around the questions that are asked by managers. Many of you have heard me say this before but it needs to be repeated: essentially everything that I know about fire was taught to me by a fire manager. Early in my career, I was taken under the wings of FMOs like Perry Shatley (Sumter NF) and Tom Kennedy (Chattahoochee NF). Later, I was taught by our very own Dean Simon (NC Wildlife). I will be always be grateful for the time and effort these people have given me.

I discuss these things because they are important and they are the heart of CAFMS and our funding agency, the Joint Fire Science Program. Research results on fire in the Appalachians are becoming more available but there is a lot to be learned. The complexities of using or managing fires in our rugged terrain are not understood by those from outside our area. Success can be best achieved by a collaboration of managers who need information and researchers who can provide information. Each group plays an important role but neither is more important than the other.

CAFMS has been a dream come true for me because it has allowed me to be involved with several things that I love: mountains, mountain people, fire, and science. I have learned a few things over the years and I hope that my research has been helpful to managers. However, delivering research results to people who are anxious to learn has been the best. I encourage researchers to develop close relationships with managers; that will make your work most relevant. I encourage managers to develop close relationships with researchers; that will help you to gain new information.

When we began CAFMS in 2009, we heard a lot of surprising comments. Among them were: “we have a lot of information but it is scattered and too difficult to find,” “managers should read our publications, all the information is there,” “research publications are too specific and difficult to read, especially when units are metric,” “I do not have time to meet and greet every land manager to sell my science,” and “I am uncomfortable calling a scientist that I do not know.” Some of these comments were repeated over and over as we met people from around the Appalachian region. I am hopeful that some of these attitudes have changed through CAFMS and that some of the problems of interpreting research have been solved through synthesis papers and fact sheets that CAFMS has produced.

The future of CAFMS is bright. We have about 700 members and a staff of three top professionals. Todd Hutchinson, our new PI, has a background in research on fire and plant ecology. He and I have worked together for many years on the National Fire and Fire Surrogate Study. Helen Mohr has been the Director of CAFMS since its beginning and plans to continue in that role until she retires. She will continue to spoil you with her excellent organizational skills. Jen Bunty is a new employee who we stole from the Nature Conservancy. She will help us with our website (visit [appalachianfire.org](http://appalachianfire.org) to see her work), fact sheets, and media relations.

Even though I will miss this part of my job, I am anxious to unleash CAFMS to watch it grow and spread. The need for this group and the dedication of its leaders are obvious. Success is almost guaranteed.

My best wishes to all,

Tom Waldrop

## Don't Miss These Newly Released Articles!

### **Shortleaf Pine and Mixed Hardwood Stands: Thirty-four Years After Regeneration with the Fell- and-Burn Technique in the Southern Appalachian Mountains**

Lauren S. Pile and Thomas A. Waldrop

<http://www.appalachianfire.org/top-30-1/2016/6/3/shortleaf-pine-and-mixed-hardwood-stands-thirty-four-years-after-regeneration-with-the-fell-and-burn-technique-in-the-southern-appalachian-mountains>

### **Repeated Application of Fuel Reduction Treatments in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, USA: Implications for Achieving Management Goals**

Thomas A. Waldrop, Donald L. Hagan, and Dean M. Simon

<http://www.appalachianfire.org/top-30-1/2016/6/3/repeated-application-of-fuel-reduction-treatments-in-the-southern-appalachian-mountains-usa-implications-for-achieving-management-goals>

# Meet the New Principal Investigator for The Consortium of Appalachian Fire Mangers and Scientists

## Todd Hutchinson

Todd is a Research Ecologist with the US Forest Service Northern Research Station. He is located in Delaware, Ohio. His current research focuses on the sustainability, biodiversity, and fire ecology of mixed-oak forests. Visit [www.nrs.fs.fed.us/people/thutchinson](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/people/thutchinson) to learn more about him and access details about his current research as well as his publications.



## Meet Our New Information Coordinator:

### Jen Bunty



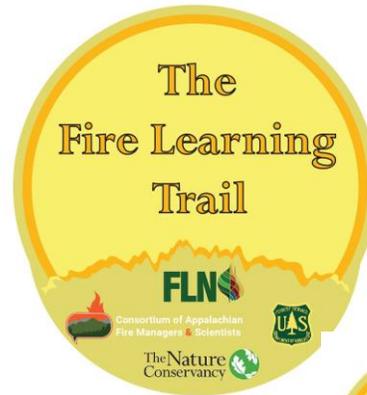
Jen comes to CAFMS after finishing an internship with The Nature Conservancy out of Asheville, NC. She has a B.S. in Biological Sciences with a specialization in Natural Science and a B.A. in Russian both from the University of Florida. She completed her M.S. in Biological Sciences from Clemson University in 2015. While at Clemson she studied tiger prey using camera traps and scat detection in the Russian Far East and had a fellowship at the same time with Eurasia Foundation, which included social media outreach and development of educational materials.

# The Fire Learning Trail is Open!!

The trail includes educational signs and a podcast-style audio tour that is available on free CDs at the Linville Gorge Information Cabin or it can be downloaded from our website or iTunes.

Visit

<http://www.appalachianfire.org/thefirelearningtrail/>



## Upcoming Webinars

**Finding the Best Science Available on Fire Ecology and Fire Regimes in Eastern Ecosystems,  
July 27<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm-2:00pm eastern**

**Regeneration Response to Repeated Prescribed Burning in Appalachian Hardwood Forests  
October 18<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm-3:00pm eastern**

More information at: <http://www.appalachianfire.org/upcoming-events-webinars/>

### Communicate With Us!

facebook



Find us on twitter @APfirescience or find us on Facebook by searching Consortium of Appalachian Fire Managers and Scientists.

### Join CAFMS:

The consortium is for all land managers and researchers in the region who deal with any aspect of fire. To join, simply provide us with some contact information at the web site listed below.

[www.appalachianfire.org](http://www.appalachianfire.org)

Helen Mohr [helen@cafms.org](mailto:helen@cafms.org)

Jen Bunty [jen@cafms.org](mailto:jen@cafms.org)

