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In the spring of 2018, BIA began advertising student internship positions to work in the BIA, Office of Trust Services Pathways Internship Program. After receiving a healthy number of applicants, BIA selected seven interns for the 2018 year to explore careers in wildland fire management.

In its third year of the Program, BIA now has 15 interns in the Program, just five students shy of full capacity. This buffer allows new students to enter the program annually while letting existing students complete their degrees in natural resources.

As in years past, there continues to be strong backing from fire management units willing to take on the responsibilities of mentoring new interns. Without agencies willing to host interns, the program would not be as success. This year 13 units placed Host Requests for interns. These agencies include Standing Rock, Wind River, Mescalero, Crow, and Northern Cheyenne. Navajo and Eastern Oklahoma Regional Offices will also be hosting interns in 2018. Additionally, Tribes manage 40 percent of Indian Country's fire management programs, so it is fitting that interns will also be working for the Osage, Red Lakes, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

A highlight of the 2017 program was the successful placement of three students who completed the Program and are now beginning their careers in fire and resource management. Kyle Blackman, accepted a job as a senior firefighter with the Mission Valley Initial Attack crew filling a vital leadership role as a squad boss. Grant Hopkins completed his Natural Resource Management degree with an emphasis in fire ecology and accepted a firefighter position with the Umatilla Agency. Russel Felicia, graduated with a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries with a minor in Range management. He recently accepted a job as a Range Specialist at Rosebud Agency.

As the western fire season begins to ramp up, we are looking forward to working with fire managers who can provide interns with the vital opportunities and experiences they need to develop as employees, which will help them begin successful and meaningful careers.

Everyone can be a recruiter. If you know of a high school or college student interested in pursuing a degree in natural resources, they may be eligible to apply for one of these excellent internships. For questions about the Wildland Fire Student Internships, contact the Fire Internship Program Coordinator, Craig Cook, at treesfire@skc.edu or call 208.761.8653.

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