Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Bureau of Indian Affairs has named Josh Simmons as the new Director of Fire Operations for the Branch of Wildland Fire Management. Simmons succeeds Dalan Romero, who retired at the end of 2017.

Simmons comes from BIA Pacific Region where he has spent the past 13 years. In 2014, he transferred from the Regional Fuels Management Specialist to become the Regional Fire Management Officer. In this capacity, he worked closely with many Federal, State, County, and other local government agencies and served on the California Wildfire Coordinating Group. He will build upon this experience representing the BIA on the National Multiagency Coordinating group in Boise, Idaho.

While managing the regional prescribed fire and fuels management programs, Simmons participated in BIA's Pathways to Leadership Program, serving a detail as the Acting Deputy Regional Director for the Rocky Mountain Region in 2012. He also represented the Intertribal Timber Council and BIA in the development of the Cohesive Strategy and Flame Act. During his seven years as the Regional Fuels Management Specialist, Simmons also had the privilege of serving two seasons as a Captain on the Golden Eagles Interagency Hotshot Crew, and as a field coordinator for BIA's Fire Mentoring Program.

Prior to to his fire and fuels management experience, Simmons served two years as Pacific Region's Environmental Compliance Specialist conducting Phase One site assessments and managing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes for the Fee to Trust program for California Tribes.

Simmons began his fire management career in 1999 on the Mescalero Apache Hotshots, based out of Mescalero Agency, New Mexico. During his three years with the crew, he moved from a first year firefighter to an Assistant Hotshot Superintendent. In the off-season, Simmons pursued a natural resources degree, enabling him to participate in the BIA's National Center for Cooperative Education in Natural Resources Program, now the Office of Trust Services Student Internship Program. As a student trainee, Simmons worked throughout Idaho, Washington, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming.

Upon earning a Bachelor's of Science degree in Environmental Studies with an emphasis in Fire Science and Planning, Simmons became the Timber Sales Forester in 2004 at Mescalero Agency managing timber sale contracts and implementing silvicultural prescriptions.

Simmons is an enrolled member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, but grew up with his family on the Mescalero Apache Reservation in south central New Mexico. He is a proud father to Frances Simmons, his eleven-year-old daughter.

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