Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The spring of 2016 ushered in a new chapter of workforce development for the BIA wildland fire management organization. Seven interns participated in the inaugural year of the BIA's Pathways Student Internship Program.

This year, interns were selected from the Midwest, Northwest, Southwest, Western, and Southern Plains regions. The wide distribution of applicants shows managers word is spreading about this unique career opportunity.

An important component of completing their Internships is gaining the necessary work experience that will prepare them for careers working in Federal service. For students working in forestry and fire positions, duties included gathering forest inventory data and conducting statistical sampling on it. This data will be used to assist fire managers with writing prescribe fire plans. It will also assist foresters with project management planning.

Some interns got certified to use chainsaws and safety equipment as part of their work duties removing hazardous vegetation. This work helps local units accomplish necessary fuels treatments that ultimately help protect communities or restore landscapes.

Interns also accomplished basic firefighter training and began working on their basic fire qualifications. Several worked on engines, helitack and handcrews this summer, traveling far to work on large interagency fires.

In August, five new interns were added to the fire management program and this winter, another advertisement will be announced to recruit more students into the program.

This work is not possible without the work of supervisors who are willing to guide and mentor these new employees in forestry and fire management fields. Your dedication and commitment is helping build Indian Country's next generation of forest and fire managers and we are very grateful for your contributions to the whole organization.

The Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire needs agencies to host Interns as well as finding students willing to apply for these positions. If interested in hosting a student intern, or wish for more information.

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