**Bureau of Indian Affairs**

**For Release:** April 18, 2018
**Contact:** PIO Contact Name and phone number

**Media Advisory - DRAFT

Media Invited to Attend Wildland Firefighter Wilderness First Responder Field Training**

**Oklahoma City, OK** – On April 20, a field exercise will take place to test the wilderness first aid skills of 22 Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribal wildland firefighters from across South Dakota.

This is the first time Pine Ridge Agency will host wilderness first responder training. Since the Bureau first offered the training in 2012, over 650 firefighters from Indian Country have certified, providing critical services to more than 50 wildland fire crews across the nation.

Media interested in seeing the field exercises should meet at the Oklahoma National Guard Regional Training Institute, Ok April, 20 at 1p.m. Brian Tonihka, BIA Regional Fire Management Officer, will provide interviews and a media escort to see the firefighters perform training.

**What is Wilderness First Responder Training?**

Wildland firefighter’s primary working environment is the outdoors, which presents unique challenges when providing first aid services. To address this, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Wildland Fire Management began the “BIA First Aid Project” – a wilderness medicine curriculum designed to teach firefighters basic first aid skills.

During the weeklong course, firefighters learn how to manage complex logistical medical transports; mitigate extreme environmental conditions, identify and use improvised equipment and how to interface with local emergency medical support responders. In short, the training teaches firefighters how to think creatively and act quickly using the resource available to them so they can perform life-saving actions to get their fellow firefighters to definitive care. More information about the BIA Wildland Fire First Aid Project can be found at: <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/dfwfm/bwfm/safety/first-aid-project>

**What:** Field visit to see wilderness first responder training exercise. An interview with BIA Regional Fire Management Officer, Brian Tonihka will be available.

**When:** 1:00 p.m. April 20, 2018

**Where:** 6500 N. Kelley Ave, Oklahoma City, OK.

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