



## Table of Contents

Director.....	1
Aviation.....	2
Budget.....	4
Operations.....	5
Planning.....	7
Prevention.....	9
Training.....	12

## Message from the Director

Lyle Carlile, NIFC

It is a pleasure to provide information for the first BIA Fire Management Newsletter. A newsletter will be a great way to communicate news and information related to Indian Country wildland fire management issues. These are interesting and challenging times for all of us and sharing information regarding the challenges and the excellent things happening around the country will greatly benefit the program.

The intent of this quarterly newsletter is to provide the reader a sample of current issues, success stories, personal achievements, and opinion from fire management employees throughout Indian Country. Although many of the stories contained in this first edition originate from national office staff, we anticipate future issues to be composed of grass roots stories.

Our fire management program continues to face significant challenges. We appreciate the feedback and recommendations we have received from the Regional Offices in mitigating budget and other program challenges while maintaining quality fire management services to our customers. At our February Regional Fire Meeting in Boise each fire management officer shared strategies to deal with the challenges we face. By working together, sharing issues and ideas at all levels within the organization, we will successfully address the challenges and continue to develop and improve the program. Sharing information will assist us in continuing to carry out our responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives.

I know this newsletter will be a great success and hope each issue contains information you find of value. I encourage you to provide articles and information for future issues. Please be safe and have a great year.

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Submit your article and high resolution photographs for the next issue of Smoke Signals through your Regional Office, Dave Koch~208/387-5577, or Laurel Simos~208/387-5313. Your article will be professionally edited so don't worry about spelling! Fax: 208/387-5580.



## Unseasonable Fire Season in Oklahoma

Dennis Lamun, NIFC Aviation

Just because it was Christmas didn't mean the fire program could take a break for the season. The holidays brought fire conditions to Oklahoma and Texas that usually are not experienced until March. Extremely dry and windy conditions coupled with the checkerboard nature of land ownership presented the BIA with some suppression challenges.

Suppression responsibility in Oklahoma is largely shared between the State and the BIA, with fragmented ownership contributing to the

difficulty in determining whose land is threatened at any given time. A State of Oklahoma Type II Incident Management short team provided overhead support while initial attack operations were largely managed by various RFD and agency engines. Air operations were provided by the BIA and included numerous SEAT modules and Air Attack platforms.

Because of the season, the availability of heavy airtankers was limited, and the tanker base in Ft. Smith had to be opened up. An additional base was

eventually opened in Ardmore as well, but most of the BIA and State initial attack activity was performed with SEATs. At the peak of the activity, as many as six SEAT modules were in use, with SEAT support modules located strategically throughout the State. The complexity of the operation and numbers of resources committed resulted in the assignment of a Geographic Area SEAT Coordinator (SEATCO), to manage the modules and keep them positioned in the most expedient locations. This role was filled alternately by Vern Northrup of



Air Tractor AT802





**Air Tractor AT802**

Fond du Lac, Todd Couture of Ronan, and Bruce Jordain of Red Lake. Air Tactical Group Supervision was provided by Joel Kerley, National Office Aviation Technical Specialist, with administrative support from Dave Underwood from the Southern Regions. SEAT managers were activated from BIA, BLM, State, and Forest Service, and trainee assignments were utilized to increase the number of qualified managers.

Initial attack resources were augmented by two National Guard helicopters. Although structures were lost in some areas, many more were saved, including homes on Tribal, private, and State lands. This was due,

in part to direct attack tactics in use by the SEAT modules. Wind intensity made material dispensed from SEATs more effective when dropped directly on flames than when used to build line alone, and this led to the use of alternative fire suppressant products in addition to conventional retardants. Newly approved fire suppressant gels are designed as direct suppressants

and extinguishing agents, and create thermal barriers that are effective for structure protection as well as in wildland fire fuels.

One inconvenience was particularly noteworthy – a couple of mornings the temperatures were so low that there

was concern about the doors freezing up on the aircraft. In Oklahoma, sometimes fire doesn't conform to the normal fire "season".



*"A man, as a general rule, owes very little to what he is born with - - a man is what he makes of himself."*

Alexander Graham Bell



# Financial and Business Management System

Maggie Moran, NIFC Budget

**What is FBMS?** FBMS is the Financial and Business Management System. It is a single, integrated tool that will help Interior’s bureaus to manage their many unique missions. An integrated suite of software applications, FBMS will help bureaus to manage a variety of administrative functions, including: Budget Formulation, Budget Execution, Personal, Real, and Fleet Property, Core Financials, Acquisition, Travel, Financial Assistance, and Enterprise Information Management. By improving financial and business processes and incorporating state-of-the-art technology, FBMS enables DOI to become a more effective and efficient business management organization.

**The key benefits of this program are:**

- Fewer data calls
- Single sign-on
- One-time data entry at the source
- Less time spent on administrative processes
- Access to real-time accurate business information
- Allow better decision-making process at the field-level
- Free-up time for mission-focused programs

**Why is DOI undertaking FBMS? Currently, DOI’s systems:**

- Are expensive, complicated, and difficult to operate & maintain
- Do not share standard data or business processes among all Bureaus
- Require multiple user logons

- Require heroic efforts to close and balance
- Divert staff from data analysis to transactional processing and data calls
- Make integration of budget and performance information complicated

FBMS offers a number of important benefits, including: standardization of data, business processes and related technology, integration of currently fragmented processes, and improved responsiveness to internal and external customers through easier access to information. Our current financial management systems do not provide integration across all of our business functions. The Department and all of the Bureaus agree on the need to replace the current financial management and administrative systems. This is true in other Federal agencies as well; in fact, DOI is one of a number of agencies planning modernization efforts.

Overall, Bureaus (and Interior as a whole) are not able to respond quickly and effectively to the fast-paced, ever-changing environment in which they operates. FBMS will ultimately provide timely access to information across all bureaus within Interior. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is tentatively scheduled for implementation 1 October 2009 or Fiscal Year 2010.

This information was provided from the DOI website.

## Quicktime

Quicktime is a web-based T&A system that allows employee entry of time, as well as traditional timekeeper data entry. This system is currently housed and maintained by the Department’s National Business Center [NBC] in

Denver, Colorado. The Bureau will transition from traditional timekeeper data entry to individuals encoding their own time. The system provides for extensive editing to ensure that data meets relational edits and regulatory requirements. T&A’s must be validated and certified through electronic signatures before updating and producing payroll interface files.

Quicktime currently has a payroll interface with the Federal Personnel and Payroll system [FPPS]. Since FPPS is an old DOS based system, we currently need an automated way of getting ABC\_M data intergrated with our payroll data. The new system will allow staff to quickly and efficiently report time spent working on activities [as defined in the Activity Based Costing (ABC) program]. Time worked on such activities can be accurately associated with the labor/ payroll time reported in Quicktime.

The new system [Quicktime] will replace BIA’s current use of the FPPS T&A module for capturing time. All labor/payroll accounting data will be input into Quicktime, along with any job number and the four digit ABC\_M code. All Bureau’s must be on Quicktime prior to the FBMS deployment due to the interface between FBMS and Quicktime. Testing and Design will be performed April 2006 thru June 2006, followed by full implementation Bureauwide 1 October 2006 [Fiscal Year 2007]. Implementation of ABC codes for non-labor/payroll expenses will begin in Fiscal Year 2007.

This information was presented at the DOI-BIA/Combined Administrative Meeting in San Antonio, TX [6-10 March 2006]



## National Hotshot Meeting

The BIA National IHC (Interagency Hotshot Crew) Meeting, organized and facilitated by the crew superintendents, was attended by approximately 40 in Phoenix in early January.

The purpose of this annual event is to conduct a comprehensive after action review of the previous season, focusing on successes and failures in the program while identifying strategies for improvement during the upcoming fire season.

The BIA Hotshot Program is managed by Jacqueline Hawley, Deputy of

Fire Operations at NIFC. Since Ms. Hawley took over the BIA IHC program in 2004, she has concentrated her efforts on building a program that is competitive with other federal agencies, while maintaining the heritage and spirit of Indian Country. Congratulations were extended to the Golden Eagles IHC based near San Diego, CA; the Bear Paw IHC based near Havre, MT; and the Navajo IHC from Ft. Defiance, AZ for becoming certified this year. Ms. Hawley noted that “all Bureau funded IHC crews are required to complete the certification process annually”.

### Laurel Simos and Dave Koch

The effort to improve the hotshot program has not been without trials though, as two of the Bureau funded crews, Northern Pueblos IHC based in Espanola, NM and the Morning Star IHC based in Carson City, NV were both disbanded due to programmatic difficulties in 2005.

Ms. Hawley encouraged the crews to “be proactive with respect to management. Successful crew leaders take ownership of every aspect of the program, and reduce the reliance on management and others”. Budget management, project work such as thinning and burning, facilities management, recruitment and retention of personnel, and crew availability were major topics of discussion.

The IHC leadership committee invited many speakers to this year’s meeting to update the hotshots on programs directly effecting their operations.

Fitness was a major theme this year as John Gould, BIA Safety Program Manager cited Medical Standards program data which indicated that “70% - 80% of the BIA firefighters in all age categories are either overweight or obese”. Regarding the Medical Standards Program, John said that “employees need to make sure they show up for their appointments. Every time they miss an appointment, the taxpayer spends \$100 unnecessarily.”

Continuing with the fitness theme was Keith Sallis, Fitness Specialist with the Indian Health Service in Ft. Defiance AZ. Keith said that “supervisors should be an example to their employees” challenging their employees through a well organized



**Front:** Mike Lamere, Supt. & John Gardipee, Asst. Supt., Bear Paw IHC.  
**Middle:** Lyle St. Goddard Supt., & Eli StillSmoking Asst. Supt. Chief Mtn. IHC.; Carlos Nosie, Jr., Supt. & Leroy Brown Sq. Boss, Geronimo IHC.; Ray Ruiz, Sr. Supt. & Juan Mendez Asst. Supt., Golden Eagles IHC.; Tony Parks, Supt. & Troy Cachini Asst. Supt. Zuni IHC.  
**Back:** Lew Mendez, Supt. Mescalero IHC; Dan Philbin Supt. and Brian Quintero, Asst. Supt. Ft. Apache IHC.; Tony Holliday, Supt. & Edmund Francis, Asst. Supt. Warm Springs IHC.; Nathaniel Nosie, Asst. Supt. Navajo IHC.

program of both cardiovascular and strength training. Says Sallis, “Employees need to be cognizant of the foods they are eating, and go back to basics”. Good nutrition is not rocket science but “if you don’t plan your meals ahead of time, you will make ill-advised food purchases when the crew stops at the convenience store”. Keith had the group participate in three types of high result, low stress abdominal muscle exercises.

The Bureau Superintendents voted unanimously to adopt the fitness criteria as outlined in the “Fit to Work” publication. The policy will be implemented in 2007. Both existing employees and new hires will have to pass the Work Capacity Test at the arduous level as well pass the “Fit to Work” standard in order to retain their jobs.

Like much of the interagency fire community, the Bureau hotshots were involved in the 2004/2005 Hurricane season. As the fire community becomes more engaged in the “all-hazard” incident response environment, we can learn from people such as Jim Thomas, Forest Staff Officer, Wasatch Cache NF and John Lee, Western Region BIA who both made presentations on their experiences in the South. Jim, a Type-2 Incident Commander said that “the conditions

teams encountered were at times extremely primitive compared to fire camp and I encourage everyone to be as self sufficient and prepared as possible prior to dispatch”. John Lee described a day in the life of a Type-2 hand crew during hurricane response whose job duties primarily involved logistical tasks. Both presenters noted that working directly for the people impacted by the hurricanes was a very rewarding experience and different than saving vegetation on the fireline.

Marguerita Phillips, a USFS Smokejumper outlined the Smokejumper Detail program in Missoula. Says Phillips, “the program is open to all permanent employees and begins in mid-May each year”. Anyone interested must adhere to the Forest Service standards for fitness requirements for smokejumpers.

Cal Pino, Southwest Region Fire Management Officer discussed the tradition of the Native American firefighter. Mr. Pino echoed Ms. Hawley’s goal that “IHC superintendents are administrators who need to understand budget, program management, policy, and set high standards for individuals on crews. They must ensure all individuals have the knowledge, skills and ability to do the hotshot job.” He challenged superintendents to break down the cultural barriers with respect to hiring. This sentiment was echoed by one of the hotshot superintendents who felt the need to eliminate Indian preference hiring so that the most qualified people can be hired. “Crew success is more important than skin color.”



**Keith Sallis (standing), Fitness Specialist with the Indian Health Services in Ft. Defiance AZ challenged Hotshot Superintendents, Assistant Supts., speakers and other guests to try some abdominal strengthening exercises during the “Health and Nutrition” portion of the meeting. The photo shows the least challenging of three progressively difficult exercises.**





# Introduction to the Planning Section

The Planning Section at NIFC exists to provide continued high-quality FPA (assistance and review) and Fire Management Planning support to the field. With respect to FPA development and application, we represent the BIA and tribes through the Steering Committee (SC), Interagency Coordination Group (ICG), and Project Development Team (FPA Core Group). We strive to enhance fire planning by utilizing spatial technologies (digital data, GIS, map outputs, etc). We provide technical support to resolve inadequacies with historic planning data (weather and occurrence data) and assure new data is collected and reported accurately. Our section is required to monitor FPA and FMP implementation using readiness reviews while documenting our efforts in annual reports, etc... The Planning Section also develops BIA specific handbooks for fire planning.

The following summarizes some of the current issues our section faces:

## Fire Program Analysis

As of February 15<sup>th</sup>, one hundred thirty four (134) of the one hundred thirty eight (138) Fire Planning Units (FPU) have submitted a Fire Program Analysis Preparedness Module (FPA-PM) run. It is unknown how many of these submissions have been certified and approved per Departmental direction. Still, 97% of FPU will have analyzed their FPU by the February 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. The FPA Steering Committee currently is scheduled to meet the last two weeks of March to analyze FPA-PM submissions to 1) evaluate the FPA-PM software program and, 2) analyze output trends. To what extent the

FY2008 submission will be used is yet to be determined. Minimally, it is anticipated the model outputs will be used to inform the DOI FY2008 preparedness budget request and identify where efficiencies may be realized and implemented.

## Fire Occurrence

In 2005, the Bureau successfully migrated from the Shared Applications Computer System (SACS) to Wildland Fire Management Information System (WFMI). Subsequently, seven Regions requested and were provided a WFMI workshop. These regions realized a dramatic improvement in timeliness and completeness of fire occurrence reporting versus Regions that did not participate in a WFMI workshop. Fall 2006 WFMI workshops will be provided upon Regional request.

Converting to WFMI made a substantial impact in the fire reporting process. Data entry is easier and quicker through the use of drop-down menus. However, WFMI ignores incomplete fire records when generating reports. This causes under-representation of actual work performed when generating fire statistics for GPR. To encourage Units to enter and complete fire occurrence reporting, Units will be required to formally report their fire statistics annually through their Line Officer to the Regional Office. This will assure Line Officers are aware of their Unit fire reporting status.

The Planning Section consists of the following personnel:

**El Jefe (fire planner)** - The mysterious leader of this despicable

**Scott Bradshaw and Steve Larrabee**

bunch defers the public exposure to his henchmen and toadies. Most of his time is spent devising new ways for FPA to conquer the world.

**Rich "Many Hats" McCrea**

**(fire planner)** - Shifts erratically between Fire Planning and Weather assignments to keep El Jefe off his trail. Hobbies include testing coffee filters utilizing old FMPA MEL printouts.

**Pat "Counts His Coins" Phillips**

**(fire planner)** - Disarming folksy demeanor masks fervent frugality. Once required an Agency to limit toilet flushes to once per week. Known to frequent discount BBQ restaurants, especially those offering free drink refills. Hobbies include leafy spurge cultivation and collecting hotel club points.

**John "Cuts Swiftly" Barborinas**

**(fire planner)** - Highly efficient and exceedingly adept in understanding government red tape. Hobbies include freelance handbook editing and driving fast in the slow lane.

**Steve "Runs thru the Night" Larrabee (fire planner)**

- Obsessive in his quest to find optimization. Derives particular pleasure in splitting large FPU, due to a severe case of "David and Goliath" syndrome. Hobbies include developing abstract theories concerning large numbers and pumpkin chunkin.

**Reeve "Powerball" Armstrong (fire management planning)**

- Detail oriented in his quest to track GPR required fire management plan status in real-time. Hobbies include

using FMP acreage numbers to pick weekly Powerball numbers.

**Mike “Dancing Bear” Ellsworth (FPA Training)** – Highly skilled in developing and presenting FPA training courses. Hobbies include break-dancing during “breaks” at FPA training courses. This eventually led to FPA developing and adopting the official swirley FPA logo.

**Jerry “drive-by” Barnes (FPA Implementation)** – Currently newest Planning Section employee. Over-zealous in his pursuit to implement FPA world-wide. Hobbies include over-complicating simple issues and driving slow in the fast lane.

**Old Zuni RAWS Site**

Recently Zuni Agency moved their RAWS. The original station was setup more than 10 years ago and it was next to several buildings which adversely influenced winds speeds and temperatures, and it did not meet NRDRS standards. Don Geesling, the FMO, worked with the Agency and Zuni Tribe to find a good location and complete the required paperwork. Don also consulted Predictive Services in Albuquerque and meteorologist Rich Naden, visited the location and approved it. It ended up being a 3 year process as Don had to complete the NEPA process and obtain a business lease from the Tribe. In addition an archeological survey was required and a land survey. Don renamed the station in the weather information management system (WIMS) to “Zuni Butte” and he had to

make sure the proper clearances were obtained. Requirements will vary from Agency to Agency and Tribe to Tribe but the take home message is you may have to complete some paper work if you want to move your RAWS. It is also very important to consult with the National Weather Service and Predictive Services before you even consider moving a RAWS.

In March, of 2006 the fence was setup at the new location which is 20 miles south of the Agency in a remote area on a southwest facing slope on a gentle slope. The vegetation in the area is comprised of bunchgrass and widely scattered pinyon/juniper, so the RAWS will have good exposure to the wind. In April of 2006 the existing RAWS will be taken down and moved to the new site. A technician from Forest Technology Systems (FTS) will be there to setup the sensors and make sure the station is working properly. The Zuni Butte RAWS is being upgraded from a telephone modem to a satellite transmitter, and which will bring it up to standard. The BIA National Interagency Fire Center programmed funds for both the upgrade and for the assistance from FTS in moving the station.

**Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS)  
Properly Locating RAWS**

Properly locating a remote automated weather station (RAWS) is critical, for permanent stations. Permanent RAWS are used in the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) to determine fire danger and for fire operations. NFDRS RAWS need to be located in a wildland environment and away from buildings, roads, and airports, to ensure weather conditions are representative of where fires might burn. It is also important to locate your RAWS in a small clearing away from trees to that it will pick up the full effect of the wind.

Generally you want your NFDRS RAWS to represent the worst case sort of environment so they are often setup on south facing slopes, where the temperatures are more extreme. Guidelines and standards for locating a station are in the NWCG NFDRS Weather Station Handbook, PMS 426-3. This handbook can be obtained on the Interagency RAWS webpage at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/raws/>

**Rich McCrea and Don Geesling**



**Original RAWS Station**

obtain a new national weather service six digit ID, as it was moved so far from the existing station. The Zuni Butte RAWS had historic properties and tribal cultural sites very close by, so it was important to

**New Zuni RAWS Site – under construction**

Thanks to the hard work by Don Geesling, FMO at Zuni, and his assistant FMO Bryston Bowannie, and the Regional Office FMO, Cal Pino, this RAWS station has been moved to a very good location. Hopefully as you read this, the Zuni Butte RAWS is dutifully collecting weather data and the Agency is cataloging the 1300 hour observation on a daily basis, making a permanent archive in WIMS.



**New RAWS Site under construction**



## Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe Wins National Fire Plan Award for Community Assistance

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation have produced an award-winning multi-media fire education project called "Fire on the Land." The project was nominated in late 2005 for a National Fire Plan Award for Excellence in Community Assistance. The Tribe received the award in Phoenix in March, 2006.

This is the first wildland fire education project developed in Indian Country, perhaps anywhere, with a unique cultural perspective. The project provides documented history on the indigenous use of fire, describes the effects of fire exclusion on the landscape, and then reinforces current fire use applications and management planning efforts for ecosystem restoration. The Bureau of Indian

Affairs' funded project consists of four elements: the traditional Salish Coyote story, *Beaver Steals Fire*, in storybook format and also depicted in a short movie, an interactive DVD, and a website. The project was released during the 2005 winter season, as this is the traditional time to tell Coyote stories.

The storybook and short movie of *Beaver Steals Fire* is mainly intended for elementary school children. The Salish tale explains how fire was obtained from the sky by the animals. The story reinforces the theme of respect for fire and awareness of its significance.

The interactive *Fire on the Land* DVD

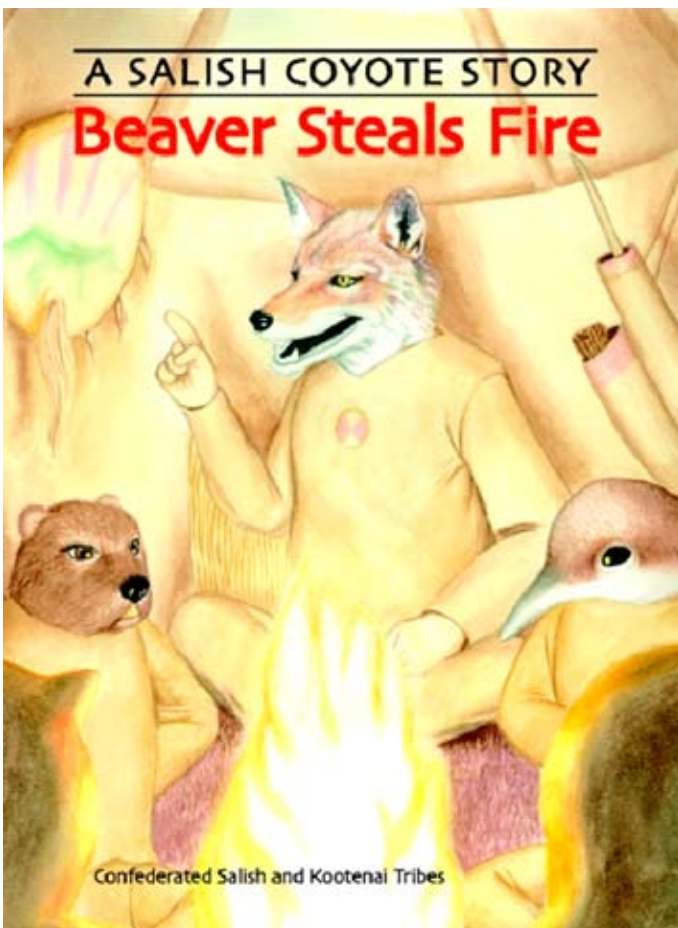
is geared towards older students. The information contained on the DVD is extensive and covers the traditional use of fire and fire management by the Salish and Kootenai peoples. Using a photo gallery depicting historical and current forest conditions, a database on fire adapted species, historical journals and contemporary essays, elder interviews, and modern day fire management insight, the DVD does an amazing job of explaining indigenous use of fire and the creation of a cultural landscape, which has ultimately been altered by a century of fire suppression.

The website consists of the information from the interactive DVD and is designed for anyone interested in the traditional use of fire by the Salish and Kootenai peoples.

"Fire on the Land" most importantly gives a Native American voice to the fire use conversation. This project demonstrates that the Salish and Kootenai people were wise fire managers for millennia. It not only is an impressive learning tool, and an excellent education template for other agencies and tribes, but the project shows great pride in the indigenous history on the landscape.

—◆—  
*"Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence!"*

Winston Churchill



Story Book Illustrations by Sam Sandoval CSKT

# Fire Prevention Program Update

Sam Scranton, NIFC

In the past four years, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Fire Prevention Program has grown from a presence on just a few agencies to encompassing nearly half of Indian Country. There are currently 34 completed and approved Wildland fire Prevention Plans which cover 163 tribes and have created 45 new prevention positions (89% of which are filled). There is a goal to have a functioning Prevention Program at every agency with a human caused fire start problem by 2010. We are well on our way.

Nationally, 83% of all wildland fires are human caused.<sup>1</sup> Due to our enhanced prevention and fire investigation efforts, this number has dropped to 75% for lands under the Bureau of Indian Affairs' jurisdiction. In addition to the increasing number of Fire Prevention Program, part of our success should be attributed to the growing pool of certified Fire Investigators. In 2005 there were official Fire Investigators on approximately 350 fires, resulting in 15-20 arrests and a number of other cases with persons of interest. With

<sup>1</sup> Five year average from 2000-2004.

greater demand for investigations from the regions and the field, these numbers will likely go up in 2006. On a related note, a *Bureau of Indian Affairs Fire Investigation Handbook* is currently being written, with a target release date of early summer 2007.

The *Bureau of Indian Affairs National Fire Prevention Handbook* underwent a revision in 2005, and is now available for download on [www.inside.bia.gov](http://www.inside.bia.gov), under the NIFC link. Some changes to the *Prevention Handbook* include: all planned WUI activities will now go through the WUI program, not community assistance; new prevention plans will now need to complete the input under the WUI fuels treatment section of RAMS, already approved plans will complete this section when they are revised; and in FY2007 any Student Conservation Association requests must use a project proposal form, which are due in to NIFC by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

If you would like additional information about the Fire Prevention Program, please contact your Regional

Fire Prevention Specialist:

*Navajo, Southwest, and Western Regions*  
**Val Christianson**  
 Southwest Regional Office—BIA, Branch of Forestry  
 1001 Indian School Road, NW  
 Albuquerque, NM 87104  
 (505) 563-3375  
[val\\_christianson@nifc.gov](mailto:val_christianson@nifc.gov)

*Eastern and Midwest Regions*  
**Gary Hilton**  
 Midwest Regional Office, BIA  
 Whipple Federal Building  
 1 Federal Drive, Rm. 550  
 Fort Snelling, MN 55111  
 (612) 713-4400  
[mail373015@pop.net](mailto:mail373015@pop.net)

*Eastern Oklahoma and Southern Plains Regions*  
**Pat McDowell**  
 Oklahoma Fire Center  
 301 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 311  
 Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
 (405) 609-8872  
[pat\\_mcdowell@nifc.gov](mailto:pat_mcdowell@nifc.gov)

*Pacific Region*  
**Jim Nanamkin**  
 Pacific Regional Office, BIA—Branch of Forestry  
 2800 Cottage Way  
 Sacramento, CA 95825  
 (916) 978-6148  
[mail364912@pop.net](mailto:mail364912@pop.net)

*Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Regions*  
**Lee Schmunk**  
 53 Sheridan Street, Office 203  
 Fort Meade, SD 57741  
 (605) 720-8010  
[lee\\_schmunk@nifc.gov](mailto:lee_schmunk@nifc.gov)

*Alaska and Northwest Regions*  
 (Will Start March 6, 2006)  
**Lenny Diaz**  
 Northwest Regional Office, BIA  
 Division of Forest Management  
 911 NE 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 Portland, OR 97232

*National Interagency Fire Center*  
**Sam Scranton**  
 3833 S. Development Avenue  
 Boise, ID 83705  
 (208) 387-5794  
[sam\\_scranton@nifc.gov](mailto:sam_scranton@nifc.gov)



Chief Gregory Pyle, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Smokey Bear at the Choctaw National Labor Day Festival



# BIA Takes Leading Role in the New Oklahoma Wildfire Prevention Coalition

Sam Scranton, NIFC



The Bureau of Indian Affairs has taken a leading role in the creation and early stages of the newly developed Oklahoma Wildfire Prevention Coalition. Pat McDowell, BIA Regional Fire Prevention Specialist, was recently elected co-chair of the group, along with a representative of the State of Oklahoma.

Representatives from the BIA Southern Plains and Eastern Oklahoma Regional Offices at the Oklahoma Fire Center have joined forces with a multitude of interagency partners to form the Coalition. Membership is open to those who support the concept that many of Oklahoma's wildfires are preventable. Coalition participants who have joined the BIA include: Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry; Oklahoma Forestry

Division; Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation; Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation; US Fish and Wildlife Service; US Forest Service—Black Kettle National Grasslands and Ouachita National Forest; National Parks Service; Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management; the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); the Choctaw Nation; and both the Farm Bureau and Farmer's Union insurance agencies.

This diverse group of Wildfire Prevention Coalition members was brought together by the current extreme fire and severe drought conditions throughout Oklahoma. Participants from the Oklahoma Fire Response had reviewed the materials created by a BIA Fire Prevention Team

that was mobilized in February 2006, were impressed with the quality and content, and as a result it was decided to try a partnership approach to bolster prevention efforts throughout the state. The Oklahoma Wildfire Prevention Coalition is the first group of its kind in Oklahoma dedicated to the prevention of wildfire.

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*"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right."*

Henry Ford

## NIFC Training Section Welcomes Duane Tewa

The Training Section welcomes Duane Tewa to our BIA-NIFC staff. Duane was hired as the new Training Specialist at the Fire Use Training Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Duane comes to the Bureau of Indian Affairs from the U.S. Forest Service where he was the Superintendent of the Sacramento Interagency Hotshot Crew located on the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico. During his twelve years with the Forest Service, Duane worked on engine, helitack and hotshot crews in Arizona and New Mexico. Duane brings valuable experience and leadership to our training organization and looks forward to training our workforce to be the best they can be.

The Southwest Fire Use Training Academy, commonly known as "FUTA", blends formal classroom training with field experience. Two sessions are conducted each year. The spring session begins the last week in February through mid-April and the fall session starts the last week of September through mid-November. Each 8-week session allows participants to attend up to four National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) training courses while the field experience provides the opportunity to complete task books. FUTA exposes trainees to numerous fuels management strategies in a variety of fuel types. Currently, the academy is seeking field coordinators for the spring and fall sessions. If anyone is interested in becoming a field coordinator they can call Duane about the details at (505) 842-3482 or visit the FUTA website at [www.nationalfiretraining.net/sw/futa](http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/sw/futa). Applications for students are also being accepted for the 2006 Fall session. Again, for further details contact Duane or visit the website.



Duane also serves as the BIA Representative on the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (NIPFTC) Steering Committee hosted in Tallahassee, Florida. The National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC) also blends field experience with classroom instruction. Due to the wide "windows" for prescribed burning in South, the success of this program is significant opportunities for application of fire and task book completion. The Center offers four 21-day sessions starting in January and lasting through April. Folks interested in attending this academy can get information from the NIPFTC website <http://fire.r9.fws.gov/pftc/> or contact Duane.

These two training centers compliment one another in the fuels and fire use arena. Both offer excellent course curricula and field experience. If managers or prospective students have any questions regarding these two centers of excellence contact Duane Tewa, BIA Training Specialist at (505) 842-3482 or via e-mail at [Duane\\_Tewa@nifc.gov](mailto:Duane_Tewa@nifc.gov).

Dave Koch, NIFC Training

### Workshops for Forest Management Entrepreneurs

The Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations in conjunction with the Society of American Foresters hosted a pilot workshop on the Warm Springs Reservation in March that was designed to help tribal members interested in working or bidding on forest management contracts. The workshop designer, Bryan Mercier, a Policy Analyst with the Office of Tribal Relations and member of the Grand Ronde Tribe, envisions a modularized curriculum that will teach both forestry management concepts and business skills.

At the Warm Springs pilot workshop, students received a healthy dose of basic forest management concepts such as tree and forest growth, silviculture, stand density measurements, and forestry equipment. Then, students applied this knowledge during an all-day field trip that included a basic forest mensuration exercise in a wildland-urban interface project, a tour of a biomass converting facility, and a tour of a modern sawmill.

The final day of instruction tied it all together. For example, students learned how forest density, composition, and structure affect fuels management contract bid rates. Using knowledge learned in class and aided by before and after photos that included specific stand attribute data, students learned what appropriate bid rates/acre might be and what equipment might be most suited to maximize both production and profit.

For more information, contact Bryan Mercier at 202-205-0980 or [bmercier@fs.fed.us](mailto:bmercier@fs.fed.us).