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## 2006 BIA TFM Students Celebrate Graduation!

~Dave Koch



Left to right; Treon Fleury, Range Technician, Crow Creek Agency; Emily Cammack, Fuels Specialist, Southern Ute Agency; Donald Povatah, Fire Management Officer, Hopi Agency.



Left; Kenneth Jaramillo, Assistant Fire Management Officer, Southern Pueblos Agency; Right: Ray Hart, Fuels Specialist, Blackfeet Agency.

Five BIA students completed the final requirements of the 18-month Technical Fire Management Program (TFM) in April. TFM is an academic program designed to improve the technical proficiency of fire and natural resource management specialists. The curriculum is rigorous and includes subjects such as statistics, economics, fuels management, fire ecology, and fire management planning.

The program is designed for GS 6-11 employees who intend to pursue a career in fire and currently occupy positions such as assistant fire management officer, fuels management specialist, wildland fire operations specialist, engine foreman, hotshot superintendent, and others. TFM targets applicants who lack a 4-year biological science, agriculture, or natural resources management degree. Students who successfully complete TFM are awarded 18 upper division college credits, which contribute toward the education requirements necessary for federal jobs in the 401 occupational series. As such, the program is considered a convenient "bridge to profession" for our fire management workforce.

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TFM is administered by the Washington Institute, a Seattle based company that was created in 1985 to provide specific, customized training and education for natural resource managers.

The academic program culminates with the preparation of a formal, science-based analysis of a natural resource issue or problem. This analysis (or project) must then be orally defended before a panel of subject matter experts.

This year's graduates and their projects include:

- Treon Fluery, Range Technician, Crow Creek Agency, "Net Present Value Analysis of Three Treatment Alternatives for the Carpenter Area";
- Emily Cammack, Fuels Specialist, Southern Ute Agency, "Optimization Analysis for Bandelier Fire Use Module, 2001-2005";
- Donald Povatah, Fire Management Officer, Hopi Agency, "Economic Comparison of Fuel Treatments within the Pinyon-Juniper Habitat Type in Black Mesa, Arizona";
- Kenneth Jaramillo, Assistant Fire Management Officer, Southern Pueblos Agency, "Economic Analysis of Fuel Treatment Alternatives in the Middle Rio Grande Bosque";
- Ray Hart, Fuels Specialist, Blackfeet Agency, "Economic Analysis of Managing Creeping Juniper on the Blackfeet Reservation".

The Bureau of Indian Affairs Training Section at the National Interagency Fire Center manages the application process for Indian Country. We have averaged three students/year over the last five years. Interest in the program is increasing with the adoption of the GS-401 Fire Management Specialist position in 2002 for many of the Bureau's key fire management positions. However, attendance at

TFM is not a requirement to obtain one of these positions. Conventional Bachelor of Science degrees in Forestry, Wildlife Biology, Range Management and other natural resource management disciplines are also acceptable, if not recommended pathways.

For information on the TFM program, contact Dave Koch at (208) 387-5577 or visit the Washington Institute website at <http://www.washingtoninstitute.net/> for more

information. The deadline for application is generally in mid-May.

*"A very great vision is needed and the man who has it must follow it as the eagle seeks the deepest blue of the sky."*

Crazy Horse

## Firefighter Retirement

~ Michael Gilmore, Firefighter and Law Enforcement Retirement Team

Many of our Bureau firefighters have special firefighter retirement which allows them to retire earlier than most federal employees. Under the Federal Employee Retirement System, eligible employees can retire at the age of 50 if they have accumulated at least 20 years of covered experience.

Most firefighters are hired under standard position descriptions which have already been approved for this special retirement coverage. When a young fire employee receives their initial appointment, they generally have what is known as primary coverage. They retain this coverage so long as they do not have a break in service or move from a covered position to a non-covered position. Sometimes, employees move from a position which has primary firefighter coverage (for example, a senior firefighter position) to one which has secondary coverage (for example, a dispatcher).

Under FERS rules, in order to be eligible for secondary firefighter coverage an employee must meet three criteria:

1. He/she, while covered under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. § 8412 (d), moves directly (that is, without a break in service exceeding 3 days) from a rigorous (primary) position to a secondary position;
2. He/she has completed 3 years of service in a rigorous position, including any such service during which no FERS deductions were withheld; and
3. He/she has been continuously employed in a secondary position or positions since moving without a break in service exceeding 3 days, except that a break in employment in secondary positions that begins with an involuntary separation (not for cause), within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 8414(b)(1)(A). For further clarification see 5 C.F.R. § 842.803.

It is important that firefighters receive the retirement benefits they are entitled to under the special retirement provisions. If you have any questions, contact the FLERT office at (208) 334-1556 or visit their website at <http://flert.nifc.gov/>.



# Mt. Rushmore 2005

~ Reeve Armstrong and Pat Phillips

Last September, helitack and other fire personnel from the Pine Ridge Reservation assisted National Park Service Staff on a helicopter backhaul project at Mt. Rushmore National Memorial. The Park Service administers Mt. Rushmore and contracts the periodic cleaning of the monument's surface with high pressure washers. This equipment must then be flown off the monument in sling loads. Because of windy conditions during the backhaul operation, all of the cargo gear (nets, swivels, and lead lines) had to be hiked up to the sling site on the top of the monument. Over 30 loads of cleaning apparatus (pressure washers, hose, rope, barrels, and planking) were airlifted during the operation.

The following is a photo essay of the operation.



**BIA employees, back row NPS employee; Reeve Armstrong (NIFC); James Two Charger (HEMG-Rosebud); Robert Rendon (Pine Ridge); NPS employee; Melvin Rossman (Pine Ridge); Pat Brewer, Pine Ridge; Brian LaFriere (HEMG-White Earth Reservation)  
Front row; second from left Marjoe Janis (PineRidge); Pat Phillips (NIFC); Melvin Rossman (Pine Ridge); 2 NPS employees.**





## Winnebago Agency Honored...

~ Nedra Darling

### 2006 at National Fire Plan Awards Ceremony

Source: press release issued by Nedra Darling, Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

The BIA Winnebago Agency Fire and Fuels Management Group was honored March 7 at the Department of the Interior National Fire Center's 2006 National Fire Plan Awards ceremony held in Phoenix, Arizona. National Fire Plan awards are given annually in recognition of outstanding accomplishments related to the implementation of the Department's National Fire Plan (NFP). The Winnebago Agency Fire and Fuels Management Group received the 2006 Award for Excellence in Hazardous Fuels Reduction.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Director W. Patrick Ragsdale recognized the Winnebago Agency Fire and Fuels Management Group citing "their leadership, teamwork, partnership-building skills, innovation and commitment to excellence" as a primary reason for the award.

The Fire and Fuels Management Group was honored for its multi-year work on the ST-Bar Ranch Fuels Reduction/Range Rehabilitation Project, whose long-term goal is the restoration of the mid-grass prairie ecosystem on the Santee Sioux Indian Reservation in northeastern Nebraska. Starting in June 2001, the agency has worked closely with the Santee Sioux Nation to significantly reduce non-native floras which have flourished over the past 100 years on the tribe's

115,000-acre reservation at the expense of native prairie grasslands and are a source of fuel conducive to conflagration fires.

The Winnebago Agency, which was responsible for overall management and direction of the project, worked with the Santee Sioux tribal community and other affected tribes and BIA and state agencies in Nebraska and South Dakota. The assembled team included representatives from the Santee Sioux Nation, Omaha Tribe and Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska and the Yankton Sioux Tribe, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and Crow Creek Sioux Tribe of South Dakota, as well as the BIA agencies serving those tribes, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Nebraska State-chartered Natural Resources Conservation District.

Led by the Fire and Fuels Management staff, the ST-Bar Ranch project team set out to accomplish the goal of enhancing the productivity of the Santee Sioux reservation's native rangeland for livestock and wildlife production through hazardous fuel reduction while restoring the balance to its mid-grass prairie ecosystem. The team was able to train and employ tribal members in the elimination of hazardous fuels and utilize local businesses to support fuel reduction crews thereby bringing economic benefits to the tribal communities involved.

The projected long-term outcomes for the project include increased



ST-Bar Ranch Project pre-treatment photo. Red cedar has overtaken this entire area, choking out native grasses and creating a tremendous fuel loading and fire hazard.



Cured red cedar slash-field, six weeks prior to broadcast burning treatment in the ST-Bar Ranch Project.



ST-Bar Ranch Project 2-year post-burn landscape view

wildland fire safety to the public and firefighters, reduced risk of unwanted fires to communities, infrastructure and resources, strengthened rural economic sustainability, increased public education about the importance of hazardous fuel reduction activities, improved resiliency and sustainability of wildland ecosystems, fewer lands severely degraded by wildland fires and reduced cost to the Federal government for wildfire suppression and rehabilitation.

Introduced in 2000, the Department of the Interior’s National Fire Plan is a 10-year comprehensive strategy to suppress wildland fires and rehabilitate fire-damaged areas. The ST-Bar Ranch Fuels Reduction/Range Rehabilitation Project employed three of the four primary goals of the Plan: Reduce hazardous fuel, restore fire-adapted ecosystems and promote community assistance for accomplishing these goals. For more information about the National Fire Plan, visit [www.fireplan.gov](http://www.fireplan.gov).

## Administration

# Casual Pay Center

~ Debbie Bidaburu

The first quarter of 2006 for casual pay is off to a great start. In our attempt to continue to provide consistent and excellent customer service to the field, we welcome your comments and suggestions.. Following is a list of commendations and recommendations to the BIA for their casual pay help this year :

### Commendations

- The percentage of issues (documents that cannot be processed without further information and/or correction) has continued to decrease since January, and BIA currently has the lowest percentage of issues of all three agencies.
- For the most part, OF-288s are complete with cost codes, signatures, and completed approving official memos to accompany the batch to process.
- You will soon receive our request to update our list of Approving Officials so we will have an

accurate list of names to contact. This person is key to timely processing of OF-288s and resolving other administrative issues. The support provided by these individuals has contributed to the success of the Centralized Casual Payment Center, thank you.

### Recommendations

- Lost checks continue to be a significant workload to track and reissue and more importantly, delay payment to casuals. Lost checks most often occur when a casual has a closed bank account and did not request to remove the information from our system, or a lost treasury check due to a bad address, either from moving or not being registered at the PO Box
- o There are currently 35 lost checks and 58 returned wage and earnings statements that we need a valid address for. The CPC has reissued 175 lost checks so far this year.

- If the address is different on the casual’s OF-288 than the net check destination address in our system, we *hold* the timesheet for an issue to prevent a possible lost check. This results in the Issue Lead calling the field to check on valid addresses.

### Other frequently seen issues are:

- Position codes and/or AD classifications that are inconsistent with the Pay Plan.
- Duplicate hours: overlapping hours on the same timesheet or previously paid hours from a past timesheet are duplicated.

**We strongly recommend that before sending a casual’s timesheet, they submit updated information (W-4s, Direct Deposits, Address Change Forms or EFT Removal Forms) if there is a change in their net check destination address.**



# Broken Bow Fire Response Group - Excellence in Collaboration

~ Dick Streeper, Inter-Regional Fire Management Officer, Oklahoma City



Burn out operations in mixed hardwood pine stand, Southeastern Oklahoma.

In the summer and fall of 2005 the southeast corner of Oklahoma received very little precipitation and experienced extended periods of very high temperatures. The Oklahoma Department of Food and Forestry and the Ouachita National Forest became very concerned with the growing potential for extreme fire occurrence. Oklahoma forwarded their concerns to the Southern Area Group of State Foresters and the Forest Service prepared and submitted severity requests for additional suppression resources.

The dry trend continued into the winter months. The Eastern Oklahoma Region of the BIA became concerned over these conditions and were receiving reports from several volunteer fire departments throughout the state that fires were becoming increasingly difficult to suppress. A field review conducted by Ron Morrison, BIA Fire Control Officer, confirmed severe drought conditions as evidenced by very low live fuel moisture readings in hardwood vegetation.

The State of Oklahoma has suppression responsibility within the protection area for Trust lands under

reimbursable agreement with Eastern Oklahoma Region of the BIA. Within that agreement the State can request BIA assistance. The BIA supports the State's volunteer fire departments under the Rural Fire Assistance program.

By early winter the Forest Service acted by moving locally available resources to the area and brought in additional outside resources under severity funding authorization. The State and BIA pre-positioned their available resources as well to high potential, fire prone areas. By December, 2005 the BIA was bringing in outside resources under support action. A series of meetings occurred with affected cooperators and the Arkansas/Oklahoma Interagency Coordination Center set up daily conference calls to facilitate the exchange of information and provide coordination and cooperation between the Forest Service at the Forest and the District levels, with Oklahoma at the State and the Southeast Area Office, the Choctaw Tribe, and the Eastern Oklahoma Region of the BIA.

As directed in the National Fire Plan 10 year Comprehensive Strategy resources were pro actively mobilized

and then shared across private, Tribal, and public lands and administrative boundaries. By working together the fires that occurred were suppressed effectively with minimal resource damage, acres burned, and property loss, and only minor injuries to fire fighters. The State responded to over 250 fires during December and January, 76 of which involved or threatened Trust lands. The Forest Service had 34 fires as well. Weyerhaeuser Corporation suppression resources were also involved. In total for all the fires involved, only 5 structures valued at \$31,000 were destroyed while 109 structures valued at over \$3 million were threatened but saved.

The magnitude and duration of the fire potential in 2005 was met with a level of collaborative suppression response that hadn't occurred previously in Southeast Oklahoma and is worthy of recognition. All parties were engaged, problems that were encountered were resolved or set aside for later resolution, and the focus remained on the fire suppression objective. Many lessons were learned during this fire season. The lines of communication that were established will simplify future mutual aid incident response.

Thanks to those who supported the Broken Bow Fire Response Group suppression effort!



Fire Control Officer Jack Reed and Crew, BIA Osage Agency

## “Big Mo” Burn Brings Agencies Together

~ Scott Posner, Wildlife Biologist, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest



“Big Mo” collaborative efforts

In a cooperative effort in May the Washburn Ranger District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest conducted a prescribed fire with the help of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The burn unit was located in the Moquah Barrens Wildlife Management Area and so was nick-named “Big Mo”. Due to the large 1,200 acre unit, the Forest Service required many resources to light and safely conduct the burn. 32 firefighters completed the burn in 7 hours. The interagency crew worked well together and communications remained strong, even when a wind shift turned the backing fire into a head fire and resources had to relocate to the opposite side of the unit to contain the fire.

Engines from the BIA and the USFWS came from as far away as Michigan and the Necedah and Horicon National Wildlife Refuges in Wisconsin to help. The USFWS even brought their “Marsh Masters”, which were able to traverse the brushy hills of the Moquah Barrens with ease. Not only were the engines able to provide the Forest Service with much needed resources but personnel gained valuable experience burning different landscapes and fuel types. In exchange for their assistance, the BIA and USFWS hope to use personnel and resources from the Forest Service on prescribed fires on their lands in the future.

The Washburn Ranger District greatly appreciates the assistance of these agencies that are willing to help out in such short notice as burn windows in this neck of the woods are short and unpredictable. Without such cooperation and assistance among the federal agencies, the Forest Service would not be able to conduct these ecologically important and much needed prescribed fires. Though it may seem like just another prescribed fire to some, the “Big Mo” burn is a critical step towards the restoration of the fire dependent pine and oak ecosystem of the Moquah Barrens. Without prescribed fire, this habitat will continue to be lost.

The Washburn Ranger District has also begun a new permanent prescribed fire monitoring program with the help of Student Conservation Association (SCA) workers provided by the BIA Great Lakes Agency. In 2005, SCA workers trained Washburn District wildlife personnel in the use of FIREMON fire monitoring protocols and helped establish the first set of permanent plots in the “Big Mo” unit. With such plots, the Washburn Ranger District hopes to better understand the optimum frequency for implementing burns in the Moquah Barrens in order to replicate desirable vegetation patterns and species composition. This interagency cooperation is an important step in the restoration of this unique ecosystem.

## Operations Committee Established

The BIA-NIFC office established the BIA Fire Operations Committee in March 2006. Andrew Bellcourt, Operations Section Director at NIFC, created this committee in order to provide a forum to discuss operational issues within the BIA. Says Bellcourt, “Other Federal agencies have had active fire operations groups for quite some time. This will give the Bureau fire management program an opportunity to bring forth BIA and interagency operational issues and keep abreast of operational changes in the fire community such as narrowband radio conversion, fire shelter conversion, IFPM, etc., that will effect our people on the ground.”

The purpose of the Fire Operations Committee is to provide a single BIA wildland fire and safety group to oversee and monitor Bureau and Tribal fire operations safety practices and make recommendations to improve firefighter safety.

The membership of the committee consists of the BIA-NIFC Assistant Director-Fire Operations, the BIA-NIFC Fire Safety Specialist, five Regional Fire Management Officers and three Agency/Tribal fire management staff. To provide a diverse perspective, the membership will be comprised of individuals from high, moderate and low complexity fire programs. At least one of the Tribal committee members will be from a Compacted or Contracted fire program.

For more information, contact Andy Bellcourt at 208-387-5372.

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*“The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor”*

Vince Lombardi



# 2006 Civil Servant of the Year!

~ Daria Day

The Federal Executive Board of Minnesota presented White Earth wildland firefighter Steve Lafriniere with the 2006 Civil Servant of the Year award Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup> in Minneapolis. The award is intended to recognize civil servants for their extraordinary service to community and government.

When Hurricane Katrina rocked the Gulf Coast in August of 2005, emergency responders from all corners of the United States responded to the call for aid. The Minnesota Interagency Fire Center in Grand Rapids coordinated the deployment of several crews of wildland firefighters to assist in recovery efforts. These crews, which are comprised of dedicated men and women who are well trained in felling trees and working in hazardous conditions, were the first resources to arrive in the stricken area and begin the clean up and recovery.

Steve Lafriniere, who serves the White Earth Reservation community as a wildland firefighter for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Minnesota Agency, spent the first several weeks after the disaster stationed on the NASA Stennis Space Center. As squad boss, Steve guided firefighters from throughout MN as they helped to coordinate the movement of emergency supplies at the center, distribute supplies at disaster relief sites, clean up school areas and start the long process of digging out from under the mass of fallen trees and debris in communities like Diamond Head, Pearlington and Waveland, MS.

The large accumulation of dead vegetation led to high wildfire danger levels throughout Louisiana and Mississippi. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, in partnership with the Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs and White Earth Reservations, provided firefighters for the stricken region throughout the winter of 2005 and the spring of 2006. Crews were



Steve Lafriniere with his award

called back to Minnesota in April in preparation for the Midwest spring fire season.

“It is a real honor to have one of our firefighters recognized in this way,” said Greg Peterson, Fire Management Officer for the BIA MN Agency. “These guys devoted a lot of their time and energy to helping out. Steve’s leadership and attitude helped to keep everyone motivated and safe. We are very proud of him.”

## Southern California Tribe Organizes Fire Crew

~ Pauma Fire Crew

In 2003 Southern California experienced a difficult fire season on tribal land. Fires took the lives of 3 people and destroyed 67 homes. The Pauma Band of Mission Indians wanted to help local Tribes and surrounding communities with fire suppression and hazardous fuels reduction following this destructive fire season, so they decided to organize the Pauma Reservation Fire Crew. The Tribe received training and RFA

funding from the BIA’s Pacific Region which allowed them to organize and train a Type 2 hand crew. By October 2005, the Pauma Fire Crew had been trained and red-carded.

In December of that year, the newly organized crew gained vital experience conducting a prescribed fire on the Tule River Indian Reservation, burning over 100 acres of slash piles in the redwoods and sequoias, a complex project due to the importance of this ecosystem. The Pauma and Tule River Tribes shared costs and resources on this project. The crew also supported the BLM’s California Desert District when they assisted with a prescribed fire in an ecologically sensitive wetland.



The Pauma Fire Crew

The Pauma Fire Crew continues to initiate and support hazardous fuels reduction projects, urban interface fuels mitigation projects, and removal of bug killed trees on the Pauma Indian Reservation as well as on their five thousand acre Palomar Mountain Mission Reserve. The Pauma Fire Crew looks forward to supporting the interagency fire community during the 2006 fire season. The Crew extends their thanks and appreciation to Ron Recker, Regional Fire Management Officer, Pacific Region; Jim Fletcher, Agency Superintendent, Southern California Agency; the Tule River Tribe, and BLM’s California Desert District fire management staff for their support during the development of the Pauma wildland fire program.

## Wildland Fire Investigation on Tribal Lands

~ Gary Hilton, Fire Prevention Forester Midwest and Eastern Regional Offices

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has in recent years actively pursued development of a wildland fire investigation program. Accurately identifying fire cause trends is critical to the success of a fire prevention program, and it is equally important in determining those responsible for unwanted fire. In cases that involve negligent acts, the responsible party may be pursued for recovery of suppression costs and trust property damages including rehabilitation, as well as other expenses. In those cases involving arson or other criminal acts, identifying and apprehending the perpetrator is of vital public interest as is the collection of damages.

Over the past decade, the fire investigation profession has undergone significant changes. These have, in part, resulted from Supreme Court decisions and the evolution of the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigation, (NFPA 921), into a document that is used with increasing frequency by investigators and litigators alike.

In May of 2000, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Board unanimously approved the chartering of the Wildland Fire Investigation Working Team. Members of the team include senior fire investigators from both United States and Canadian agencies.

The working team has completed design and development of the following fire investigation curricula: FI-110, Origin Protection for First Responders; FI-210, Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Determination; and FI-310, Wildland Fire Investigation-Complex Case Development (new course). Completion of FI-210 and the associated task book leads to certifications as an origin and cause wildland fire investigator, and successful completion of FI-310 and its taskbook leads to certification as a case manager wildland fire



Gary Hilton and Jim Nanamkin (attorney role players) review merits of criminal case prepared by students enrolled in FI-310.

investigator. At the case manager level, the focus will be on those skills needed to successfully develop complex civil and criminal cases. Additional skills required for certification at this level will include an intermediate knowledge of fire behavior and origin and cause determination, the ability to manage an investigation team, an enhanced knowledge of civil and criminal processes, investigation strategies specific to serial arson cases and a knowledge of the investigation methodologies associated with those phases of an investigation beyond the preliminary origin and cause determination.

The first conducted session of the FI-310 (alpha version) class was held in March of 2006 in Eagle, ID. Members

of the national fire investigation working team served as the instructor cadre for this class. Bureau of Indian Affairs representatives to the working team, Jim Nanamkin of the Pacific Regional Office and Gary Hilton of Midwest and Eastern Regional Offices served as instructors and district attorney role players for the week long session.

Del Ostenberg, Colville Agency; and William Fisher, BIA cooperater from Washington State represented Indian Country among those in attendance as students. Paul Steensland, working team chair remarked, "By picking the best and the brightest to critique and peer review this course, we would come out at the end of the week with a much stronger product".

## Prevention

The class is designed to prepare either a law enforcement or fire staff wildland fire investigator to manage a fire investigation team. Case organization, documentation, behavioral analysis, team management, investigative techniques, case planning, evidence management, interviewing, case presentation, and testimony are all covered.

This alpha test was very successful. It is a difficult and complicated class to conduct and was the culmination of over two years of hard work by the Working Team. It requires numerous instructors as there is a large



Investigators Del Ostenberg and Bill Fisher along with other team members prepare for a pre trial conference with prosecuting attorney.

amount of practical exercise requiring role playing. The information presented here will be of enormous help in designing and implementing fire investigation teams. These teams could range from small (several team members) to large and complex serial arson task forces.

The fire investigation working team members support the concept that either law enforcement or a fire staff investigator could serve as wildland fire investigation case manager. An extensive background in fire behavior, burn patterns, and operational suppression tactics are required for successful origin and cause as well as case management investigations. The development of a partnership between fire and law enforcement is essential for successful case management. The position of the working team, including the BIA representatives, is that the fire investigation credentials follow the requirements of 310-1 qualifications system guide. Task books for origin and cause investigators and case managers plus all other IQCS requirements should be met.

BIA and Tribal experienced origin and cause investigators should consider taking this class when it becomes available. A number of origin and cause investigators within Indian Country are working at the case manager level out of necessity, without the proper training. This class will remedy that situation.

*"I do it for the people, dawg"*

~ Mike Amicarella



# All Risk Incidents

~ Gini Broyles, Budget Analyst NIFC

1 June 2006 opens the 2006 Atlantic Hurricane season. The outlook from the National Weather Service indicates an 80% chance of an above-normal season. They predict a very active season with 13-16 named storms, 8-10 hurricanes, and 4-6 major hurricanes with the strongest activity during the months of August thru October. However, they do not currently expect a repeat of last year's record hurricane season.

The Wildland Fire Management program must be prepared in the event we are called to provide all-risk assistance. When you are dispatched to provide assistance, it is critical that you immediately notify the NIFC, Budget Management team.

What does this mean to you? Prior to departing for your assignment, you will need to fax your resource order and mission assignment to 208.433.6424. Upon return to your home unit you will need to provide the following documentation.

### Documentation:

- Copies of all receipts (**mandatory**)
- Resource Order(s)
- Mission assignment
- Manifests for crews and teams
- Assignment Extension Form
- Travel Authorization(s)
- Travel Vouchers with copies of receipts
- Memorandum for exceeding allowable per diem
- Complete charge card log with copies of receipts, dates and description of procurements
- Supervisory memorandum documenting when seasonal employment has ended and individual was rehired to provide all-risk assistance outside the normal season.
- Contracts and Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements with copies of receipts, invoices, etc.
- Any correspondence concerning an All-Risk Incident assignment.

Documentation should be combined with each mission assignment performed.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires 100% documentation in order for Federal agencies to receive reimbursement for allowable costs covered under each Mission Assignment. This means that when Bureau personnel respond they must provide **ALL DOCUMENTATION** to the Budget Management Team.

Remember, sending in too much information is better than not enough! A special thanks to all those who provided assistance and relief to the people and lands that the hurricanes affected.

## Firefighters Still “Playing” in the Sandbox

~ Dave Koch

Wildland firefighters are placed in situations every day during fire season that require decisions to be made in a time constrained environment. Here’s an example:

You have been assigned as the leader of a six-person squad tasked with patrolling and holding a section of fireline on a 100 acre brush fire that was just recently contained after a hard fought battle. Your crew boss has confidence in your ability to hold that section of fireline. Your personnel are hot and tired but remain enthusiastic after 6 hours of initial attack hotline activity. While patrolling the line your squad discovers and contains a few small spot fires generated by embers from reburn activity within the original containment line. Reburn activity continues. The lookout you have posted reports two and possibly three new spot fires 100’ and 150’ directly down slope from your squad’s position. What will you do? What should you do?

One way to practice how you might react to these situations is through the use of Tactical Decision Games (TDGS). Although there is no substitute for experience of the real thing, use of TDGS can improve pattern recognition skills, refine the decision making process, and improve fireline communications. TDGS are basically role-playing paper exercises and in the case of sand table exercises (a form of TDGS) can incorporate three dimensional terrain models. The reason for doing TDGS is to provide firefighters with an opportunity to 1) practice the decision-making process, and 2) practice communicating that decision to others. TDGS provide a simple, adaptable, and effective method of repeatedly challenging a firefighter with tactical situations

that include limitations of time and information. By requiring a solution to the situation and the ability to communicate it in the form of clear instructions, the firefighter will gain precious experience and skill in actual tactical decision-making.

Because the purpose of a TDGS is to build breadth of experience in decision-making and communication, it is important to employ this process frequently at the crew level. In addition to developing individual decision-making skills, the practice will allow crewmembers to learn from each other and to gain an understanding of how each crewmember makes decisions. Each game played, like every fire experienced, will add to a firefighter’s collective reservoir of experience.

### Sand Table Exercises

The Sand Table Exercise (STEX) is a tactical decision game that employs a three-dimensional terrain model with various props to represent either assets or liabilities. Advantages of the STEX over the two-dimensional maps other exercises employ include: enabling the learners to “experience” the terrain features of their problem; engaging learners by engineering

a learning environment that fosters proximity; eye contact; free movement, and presents the learner an almost irresistible attraction to get their hands on the problem. Another benefit is the lesson of perspective that many fireline firefighters don’t have the opportunity to experience or learn. The sand table impresses the importance of “top-sight”, the ability to see how individual pieces of the problem fit into and affect the whole, thus preparing squad and crew level firefighters for tactical and strategic command. The sand table presents some challenge of portability but when conditions and logistics allow, it is the medium of choice for TDGS.

The sand table concept may be used as a visual aid to support other training methods such as storytelling, topographic map interpretation, and small-unit after action reviews. Sand tables also can provide a common frame of reference for planning sessions, briefings, and critiques.

The use of sand tables as a training tool has been used for over a century. Early examples include the use of sand tables for teaching the English language to Native Americans as illustrated in this 1903 photo from the Pine Ridge Day School.



“Teaching by use of sandtable, No. 27 Day School, Pine Ridge”

~1903 “Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs”

The military has a long history of use of STEX for training future military leaders. In the following picture, young Marine Corps officers utilize STEX for simulating mission or combat scenarios while strengthening communication skills and the development of commander's intent.

### Leadership Reaction Courses

The Marine Corps also uses an elaborate Leadership Reaction Course to assess small unit leadership. The course, which is fairly elaborate, includes 24 separate exercises which require the "fire team's" leader to brief, re-brief, and debrief his subordinates continually in an effort to complete the exercise. The leader is evaluated not only on how quickly they complete the exercise but in how they accomplish it. Assessment variables include things such as communicating commander's intent, delegation, direction, and

emotional intelligence (command presence). The NWCG course L-280, Followership to Leadership, incorporates the leadership reaction course model.

### Staff Rides

A staff ride is a case study that is conducted on the ground where the event happened. As the facilitator of a staff ride you are not merely a chauffeur for the participants, nor should you be obligated to provide a tour guide's monolog to the participants. What makes staff rides particularly stimulating is that they are group exercises. A staff ride requires active participation by all. Your role should be to encourage discovery learning by providing information references, orchestrating logistics, and serving as a moderator to generate group interaction. You should also become a subject matter expert.



Marine Corps STEX. 2004, Officer Candidate School, Quantico, VA  
~ Photo Dave Koch



Fire Sand Table Exercise 2006, Boise National Forest  
~ Photo Bryan Day

Facilitators should refer to the Wildland Fire Staff Ride Guide on the Leadership Website.

A staff ride should avoid being a recital of a single investigation report. Such reports rarely address the human factors that affect individual decision-making. For this reason, providing participants with a variety of information sources is important. The intent of a staff ride is to put participants in the shoes of the decision makers on a historical incident in order to learn for the future. A staff ride should not



2003 Leadership Reaction course exercise, Quantico, Virginia

~ Photo Jim Cook

be a tactical-fault finding exercise. Participants should be challenged to push past the basic question of "What happened?" and examine the deeper questions of leadership and decision-making: "What would I have done in this person's place?" "How detailed should the guidance from a superior to a subordinate be?" "Can a senior leader make use of a competent but overzealous subordinate?" "What explains repeated organizational success or failure?" The study of leadership aspects in a staff ride transcend time and place.

### Additional Resources

The leadership web site (<http://www.fireleadership.gov/>) is an excellent resource for fire management personnel to assist in developing TDGS training tools for firefighters. The fire leadership training curriculum has evolved significantly over the past several years and includes a hierarchy of courses targeting firefighters from entry level to senior fire staff. Fire management staffs at the local level are encouraged to take advantage of these training resources.

We learned a lot while playing in the sandbox when we were growing up. Sometimes simple tools are the best tools. Keep playing in the sandbox!

*"Leaders lead people, managers manage inanimate objects"*

~ Mike Amicarella

# BIA to Implement New Fire Management Mentoring Program

~ Craig Cook

What is mentoring you might ask? Whether or not you are familiar with the term mentoring, most of us in our lives or careers have experienced some form of mentoring. Mentoring is a relationship between two or more people, one of whom is senior in experience and skill (the mentor), with the purpose of promoting the growth and development of the other(s) (the mentee), according to a mutually understood set of goals. Does that sound familiar? Did you ever rely on a more experienced person that you trusted to turn to for advice or to answer your questions? If you have, you know what it is like to have a mentor.

Having a mentor, whether it is part of a formal program or an informal relationship, can provide valuable support and guidance to the employee navigating the waters of a career in fire management. A bureau mentoring program will help to capitalize on the career life experiences gained throughout the professional careers of our employees and help pass that knowledge on to others.

The purpose of the Mentoring program is to facilitate the development of employees and develop future fire management leaders by utilizing the strength of knowledge and experience within Indian Country in a personal, interactive manner. The bureau will use this program to mitigate the loss of organizational knowledge, and institutional memory, consequently helping our employees achieve their fullest potential in wildland fire management. While in the long term, the program is likely to enhance some careers, it is explicitly not a career placement program. This mentoring program will help to address some of the issues that the agency and its employees face as new generations move into the fire management workforce and more experienced employees retire.

The mechanics of the program will consist of an open season when applications will be accepted from both potential mentors and from those that wish to be mentored (the mentees). Applications will be accepted from bureau and tribal employees currently working in fire management. Selections will be made in the fall of the year and selected individuals will be notified of their acceptance into the mentoring program. The mentors and mentees will be paired up based on matching the needs of the mentee with the skill sets of the mentor.

The participants will be brought together for formal workshop type training most likely in January or February of 2007. Travel and per diem for this training will be covered by the mentoring program budget for the participants. This training will lay the ground work for the mentoring relationship. The workshop will provide an opportunity to meet face to

face and develop goals and objectives for each mentoring team. After the workshop, the participants will return to their respective jobs and contact will continue by various means such as: phone, email, and occasionally face to face meetings if practical.

We are ready to accept applications now for the upcoming fall selection. If you are interested in receiving an application to be a mentor or mentee, contact the Mentoring Program Coordinator at the contact number below.

Mentoring Program Coordinator:  
Craig Cook  
Phone Number:  
208-387-5965

*"The sun rises in the east and I will fight the great fight, dawg!"*

~ Mike Amicarella



Native American Firefighters

~ Photo by Andrea Booher

# One Week at the Utah Wildfire Academy

~ Rose C. Secakuku



Student camp at Snow College

~ Photo by Rose C. Secakuku

The Annual 2006 Utah Wildfire Academy was held at Snow College in Richfield, Utah this May. The academy had over 300 participants from various Federal, State and local agencies, and was operated as a type 3 incident. The academy benefited new students and was a refresher for veterans. The National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) courses offered at the academy range from basic to intermediate, where both classroom and field exercises were provided.

Most students camped out on the grounds of Snow college while they attended classroom training. Others spent two nights camping in a “fire camp” during field exercises. Field exercises included two days of working on a prescribed fire.

Overall the academy had good interagency participation. The academy course instructors demonstrated their commitment to provide excellent, hands-on training.



Left to right: Eldred Steele, Tyrone Bullcreek, Sammie Duboise, and Milton Hooper of Goshute Nation Fire Services (Eastern Nevada Agency BIA)

~ Photo by Rose C. Secakuku

# William Lodgepole Graduates from University of Montana

~ Jim Roessler

William Lodgepole was awarded a B.S. in Forestry from the University of Montana on May 13, 2006. William is a member of the Chippewa Cree Tribe of North Central Montana. He is also a Fuels Management Specialist with the Chippewa Cree Forestry Department. William has worked hard the last two years to complete his requirements to earn his forestry degree while concurrently keeping up with his fuels/forestry duties at Rocky Boy Indian Reservation. And last but most importantly, attending to his family commitments and responsibilities.

William worked hard, tried his best and now his dedication has paid off. When he received his forestry diploma on May 13<sup>th</sup>, it was because of the goals he set and the commitment he made to see them accomplished.

It is with pride, that the Chippewa Cree Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Rocky Mountain Region watched him commit himself and complete the requirements to earn his degree. We have no doubt that he will be a definite asset and make boundless contributions to the Chippewa Cree Tribe and/or wherever his ambitions take him in the future.

*“Treat the earth well:  
It was not given to you by your parents,  
It was loaned to you by your children.  
We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children.”*

~ Ancient Indian Proverb

# From the Director's Corner

~ Lyle Carlile

I was extremely pleased with the first issue of Smoke Signals. The professional appearance and interesting articles made it a pleasure to read. I have heard numerous positive comments about the issue from our interagency partners as well as from Indian Country. I would like to personally thank all that contributed to the March 2006 issue. This issue of Smoke Signals is coming out during the middle of the western fire season and at the time of peak employment within the fire program. I encourage you to share this issue with the seasonal employees so they can read about some of the exciting things happening around Indian Country.

I am sure this is an extremely busy time for each of you. This year has already been an exceptionally busy year for the Indian Country fire program. The wildland fire situation in Oklahoma this past winter and spring was a significant challenge. The fuels and environmental conditions resulted in rapid rates of spread and an unprecedented number of fires that were difficult to contain and control. Many individuals throughout Indian Country assisted in this effort on Severity and suppression assignments to Oklahoma. I would like to thank all of the Indian Country firefighters in Oklahoma and all of you that responded or supported this effort for a job well done. Thank you!

# From the Publishers

Thanks to all of you who submitted articles and photographs and, thanks to our readers! We're proud to publish your accomplishments, and keep up the great work!

When submitting articles, please include the author's name. Photographs should be taken at the highest resolution possible, because as you can see, it makes a big difference in print. We're happy to edit your submissions for you!

The article submission deadline for "Smoke Signals" is as follows:

March 1  
June 1  
September 1  
December 1

The September issue may be somewhat flexible depending on fire season. If you've submitted an article and don't see it right away, look for it in the next issue.

Please route this publication to your staff. If you need additional copies for your staff, or copies sent to another address please contact us. Please make sure your seasonal fire employees have an opportunity to read Smoke Signals!

Be safe out there this summer!

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