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Welcome to Firefighter Bootcamp ~ The Sycuan Rookie Training Model

~ Dave Koch, NIFC



Sycuan Academy included helicopter operations training.

~ Photo Gary G. Ballard

It's Sunday afternoon and firefighter recruits slowly assemble at the academy barracks. They come from various parts of the country, representing diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. All have one thing in common: to experience a firefighter rookie training program unlike anything else in the country. There are a lot of unknowns. Mysterious stories about past academies flow from one student to the next. Nervous anticipation builds.

At 1400, students are prodded to attention by the barking of instructions from former Marine Corps drill instructors (DIs). Students quickly form two lines as the DIs' order them to stand at attention. They are introduced to the founder of the Academy, former Marine Corp Sergeant and Chief of the Sycuan Fire Department Hank Murphy

who quickly inspects the disheveled students and indoctrinates them with academy philosophy, expectations, procedures, and logistics. (Chief Murphy implemented his academy vision 10 years ago.)

The next order of business is gear issuance, the shaving of heads (yes, it all comes off), and the first round of physical training for the day. Each academy day begins at 5:00am with intense physical training as the first order of business. The recruits do PT twice a day, sometime more. Those that last the entire 21 days can expect to be stronger, faster, and have more endurance than they've ever had. There is a physical transformation that takes place with these recruits.

During the academy, there is little time for entertainment. Recruits are generally



Sycuan Academy students back row l to r: J. Diaz, J. Ordonez, K. Milstaed, G. McClellan, D. Mylar, J. Benham, B. Drake, M. Flores, B. Watte, C. Warfel, F. Ulrich, K. Pardi. Front Row l to r: R. Rosenthal, J. Davis, P. Brass, S. Hays, A. Santana, C. Rivera, M. Ruiz, E. Castro, B. Jean, J. Vervelde, and Capt. Juan Mendez.
~ Photo Gary G. Ballard

exhausted by the end of the day. Sleep is all they think about. Their dreams are either filled with thoughts of home-cooked food or, nightmarish images of being chased by fire, drill instructors, or chaparral vegetation sporting vindictive smiles and poorly matched outfits purchased at Wal-Mart (well, maybe not that last part).

Recruits learn how to work with engines and construct progressive hoselays; they learn how to construct fireline and conduct burnouts; they work with helicopters and sling loads; and they experience coyote tactics, line spikes, and night operations.

The BIA-Sycuan Fire Fighting Academy is a joint effort between the Sycuan Fire Department, the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, and the Bureau of Indian affairs. It is a 21-day Marine Corps style "boot camp" for entry-level firefighter certification and job placement.

The strength of the Sycuan Wildland Fire Academy lies in the blending of two successful organizations. In Marine Corps boot camp, as well as in the Sycuan Academy program, recruits learn how to be followers first, and leaders second. The Sycuan Fire Department believes that in order to be an effective leader, one must be an effective follower. When recruits enter the Marine Corps (or the Sycuan Wildland Fire Academy) they learn quickly how to receive and follow orders.

Former Marine Corps DIs (drill instructors) are assigned to the recruits

and supervise every aspect of their lives at the academy. Recruits learn quickly that there are "consequences" for their actions, something that they may not have experienced in their upbringing. It is strict enforcement of rules, adherence to protocol, and discipline that sets the Sycuan fire academy apart from other firefighter programs.

The success of the Sycuan Wildland Fire Academy can also be partially explained by its ability to dismiss recruits with attitude problems, lack of motivation, inability to work in a team environment, or inability to perform physical job requirements. While they do not subscribe to a "no child left behind" philosophy, they do not take pride in removing recruits from the program. Every effort is made to develop recruits while complying with mandatory minimum standards.

Recruits complete the following training while at the academy: S-110, Basic Wildland Fire Orientation; S-130, Firefighter Training; S-133, Look Up, Look Down, Look Around; S-190 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior; I-100 Introduction to ICS; S-211 Portable Pumps and Water Use; S-212, Wildland Fire Chain Saws; S-271, Helicopter Crewmember; and 16 hours of basic first aid and CPR training. Each academy graduate is entered into the Incident Qualifications and Certification System IQCS.

When students graduate, the prospect of being placed into seasonal fire positions with the Sycuan Tribe or other fire programs is very good. Of the 23 graduating in 2007, all were placed.

Battalion Chief Ray Ruiz, Sr. is the Director of Training Operations at Sycuan and Superintendent of the Golden Eagles Interagency Hotshot Crew. Says Chief Ruiz: "The mission at the Sycuan Training Center is to develop future leaders. Our academy is unique. Not everyone agrees with our rookie training tactics, but

the fruits of our labor are evidenced by the personal transformation that often occurs in the recruits. We seek to provide them a foundation of discipline, respect, duty, and service to the public that will not only benefit them in their fire careers, but in their personal lives, regardless of the career path they take."

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

The Sycuan Wildland Fire Academy holds yearly academies between the months of April and June. Interested individuals should contact the department at the following address:

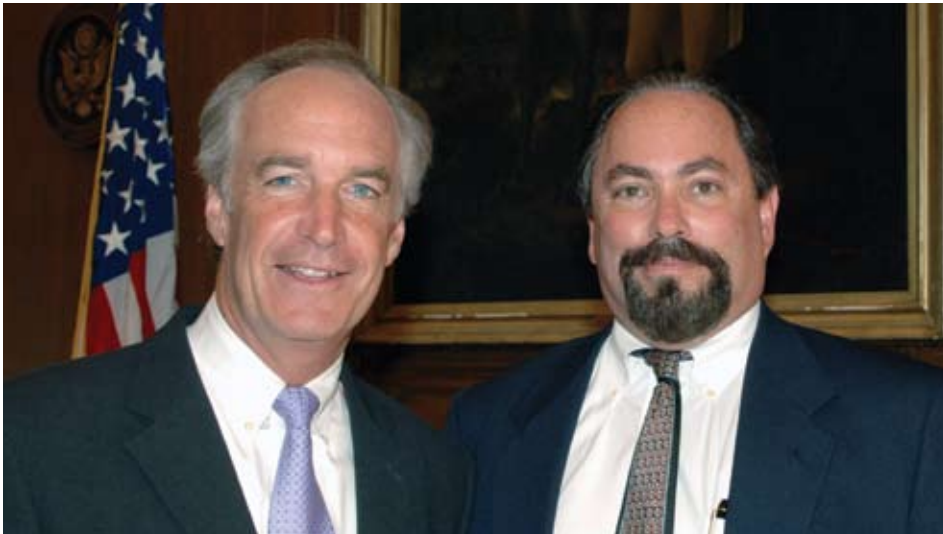
SYCUAN FIRE DEPARTMENT
5449 Sycuan Way
El Cajon, California 92019
Phone: (619) 445-2893

Applicants must be 18 years of age or older, have a high school diploma or equivalent, be in good physical conditioning, and have a positive "can do" attitude. ◆



Sycuan Academy students

~ Photo Gary G. Ballard



Dirk Kempthorn, Secretary of the Interior and Arch Wells, Deputy Director of Trust Services, BIA
~ Photo Tami Heileman, DOI

Arch Wells Retiring

~ Bodie Shaw, BIA-NIFC

Arch Wells, Deputy Director of Trust Services, BIA, Washington DC will retire July 1, 2007. A native of Lewistown, Pennsylvania, Wells served previously as the acting Regional Director for the BIA's Southwest Region in Albuquerque, New Mexico, beginning in 2002. His former positions also include Trust Resources Protection Manager, Southwest Region, BIA (2000-2002), BIA Chief Forester, Washington DC (1995-2000), BIA Forest Development Forester, Washington DC (1993-1994), BIA Natural Resources Manager, San Carlos Apache Agency, Arizona (1991-1993), BIA Forest Development and Management Planning Forester, Western Regional Office, Phoenix, Arizona (1984-1991), BIA Forester, Hoopa Agency, California (1979-1984), and served in the Peace Corps, Colombia, South America (1976-1978).

Wells earned his Master of Science degree in Natural Resources Management from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (1976), a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry from University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (1974), and a Bachelor of

Science degree in Natural Resources Management with a minor in Geology from Marietta College (1973). Arch and his wife Sharon, also a Bureau of Indian Affairs employee, live in Washington, D.C., however, upon retirement; both will reside in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Arch Wells was appointed acting Bureau Deputy Director, Office of Trust Services (OTS) for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 2004. As the Bureau Deputy Director, he has been responsible for all activities associated with management and protection of Trust and restricted lands. This protection involves the oversight of national programs that include forestry and wildland fire management, probate, safety of dams, irrigation and power systems, energy resources, land, title and records, minerals management, and fisheries, wildlife and parks.

Mr. Wells will always be remembered for the noteworthy achievements he has made for the benefit of Indian people and their natural resources; all told, a federal career that has spanned over 30 years. Arch Wells'

achievements are quite lengthy and notable; they speak to the heart and integrity of him as an individual.

As Chief Forester in Washington, D.C., Arch was instrumental in monitoring Indian issues and providing "heads-up" to the ITC Executive Committee. He battled with the Administration to protect, highlight and enhance Indian sovereignty, elevated awareness of tribal issues, and nurtured government-to-government consultation. Arch's impacts on Indian forestry and wildland fire management were extensive and varied, including:

- Established an indefinite Intergovernmental Personnel Action (IPA) for the ITC Technical Specialist (Don Motanic)
- Ensured the BIA was involved in the early stages of the National Fire Plan (he has continued to push for BIA and tribal interests as a member of WFLC)
- Monitored and shepherded the evolution of Trust Asset Accounting and Management System (TAAMS) and its impacts on Indian Forestry
- Oversaw the move of the Branch of Forest Resources and Planning (BOFRP) from Portland, Oregon to Lakewood, Colorado
- Served as a member of the US Forest Service's "Tribal Relations Task Force"
- Participated as a BIA representative in the US Forest Service sponsored "Sustainable Forestry Roundtable"
- Expanded the Forestry Cooperative Education program to include over 20 students nationally
- Regularly worked on ITC issues as presented by the ITC board
- Developed and enhanced the BIA's relationship with Haskell Indian Nations University (Lawrence, Kansas) in regards to promoting native student involvement in the natural resources field for the National Center for Cooperative Education program.

For the past three years as acting Deputy Bureau Director OTS, Arch

has continued to be a strong advocate for the Indian forestry and wildland fire management programs. He has been a tireless ambassador for the programs in numerous forums such as: Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), the new Fire Executive Council, the Trust Executive Steering Committee, BIA's Senior Managers Meetings and at various tribal sessions and forums.

Arch's career is marked with situations where his presence resulted in improvements to the agency or agencies under his jurisdiction. From his days as a regional forest development officer, where he regularly assisted agencies in the development and implementation of their programs and accomplishments, to his participation in national policy development, he always produced measurable results. He participated in writing the report "Native American Woodland Resources: A National Overview", which is still in use today. As a silviculturist, Arch supported the Tri-Regional Education in Ecology and Silviculture Education by participating as a BIA certification team member and facilitating internal bureau prescription reviews prior to the official certification review. This process was critical for the silviculturists' preparation for certification, and enhanced the success of the deliverable program to Indian County.

Arch's leadership has benefited many forestry and fire programs as well as producing future program leaders throughout Indian Country. From a programmatic perspective, as the Phoenix Area (Western Region) Forest Development Officer, and Chief Forester, Mr. Wells' was uncompromising when it came to excellence in the silviculture, forest management, inventory and planning, woodlands management and integrated resource management planning.

Maybe Arch's strongest characteristic was his tenacity and ability to see through bureaucratic rhetoric. He was instrumental in elevating ITC's exposure to the level of the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and the necessary exposure to get Indian issues on the federal radar screen.

Arch was instrumental in the ever-evolving relationship between the ITC and tribes with respect to operations involving the US Forest Service. Mr. Wells continually strove to help the US Forest Service understand that they also had a Trust responsibility and that government-to-government consultation was not the same as public forums for the general public.

Today we are seeing some of the fruits of his labor with the establishment of the US Forest Service "Office of Tribal Relations".

Wells is the 2007 winner of the "Earle R. Wilcox Forester at Large Award". Congratulations to Arch on both his retirement and this prestigious award!

Kempthorne and Johanns Thank International Firefighting Partners for Aid in 2006

~ Shane Wolfe , DOI



Participants in the appreciation reception included, from left, Merrill Saleen, Fire Operations Officer with the Bureau of Land Management; New Zealand Ambassador Roy Ferguson; Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne; Australian Ambassador Dennis Richardson; Mexican Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan; Canadian Deputy Chief of Mission Claude Carriere; New Zealand Minister of Trade Negotiations Phil Goff; Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns; Bodie Shaw, Deputy Director, Wildland Fire Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Jeffrey Stern, Secretary Kempthorne's White House Fellow and former wildland firefighter and battalion fire chief in Colorado.
~ Photo Tami Heileman, DOI

WASHINGTON –Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne and Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns today formally thanked the ambassadors of Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and Canada for their nations' assistance last summer, when they dispatched hundreds of their wildland firefighters to help quell forest and rangeland fires in the western United States.

"Through our mutual exchange of firefighters, information and technologies, we strengthen the capabilities of our nations to meet the formidable challenges of wildland fire management," Secretary Kempthorne said. "Our closest neighbors – Canada

and Mexico – and our close allies from across the Pacific – Australia and New Zealand – deserve our special thanks for their cooperation and their help."

"Our wildfire collaboration is an important partnership," said Secretary Johanns. "We are grateful to the firefighters from Australia, Canada, Mexico and New Zealand who last year stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our firefighters on the fireline. I'm confident that I speak on behalf of USDA and indeed all Americans, when I say thank you to our international firefighting partners."

Representing their respective nations were Australian Ambassador Dennis

Richardson, New Zealand Ambassador Roy Ferguson, Mexican Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan and Canadian Deputy Chief of Mission Claude Carriere.

In the 2006 fire season, the four nations sent several hundred firefighters to assist the United States in battling wildland fires in the West. The Departments of Interior and Agriculture, through the National Interagency Fire Center, also send firefighters to help fight wildland fires in these countries.

During the official reception at the Interior Department, Kempthorne and Johanns presented the ambassadors with chrome-plated pulaskis, a firefighting tool, and engraved plaques, expressing the nation's thanks.

Secretary Kempthorne Thanks Australian Firefighters for Assistance in Battling U.S. Wildfires

~ Chris Paolino, DOI



Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne thanks Australian firefighters Neil Cooper, Hilton Taylor and David Ingram who recently traveled to the United States to assist U.S. firefighters in battling wildland fires in the West. Kempthorne, joined by U.S. Ambassador Robert McCallum, expresses appreciation at a May 4 meeting at the Ambassador's Residence, U.S. Embassy, Canberra, Australia.

~ Photo DOI

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA - Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne today in Canberra, Australia, met and personally thanked Australian firefighters who recently traveled to the United States to assist U.S. firefighters in battling wildland fires in the West. Kempthorne, joined by U.S. Ambassador Robert McCallum, expressed appreciation to Neil Cooper, Hilton Taylor and David Ingram during a meeting at the Ambassador's Residence at the U.S. Embassy in the Australian capital city.

In 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2006, Australian firefighters were deployed to assist their U.S. counterparts in suppressing wildland fires in Colorado, California, Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho. In 2006, 114 American firefighters from the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, reciprocated, assisting Australian counterparts in firefighting efforts in the state of Victoria. The exchange of firefighters is a result of a cooperation agreement between the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and participating Australian fire agencies.

"These men and women who traveled from Australia to the United States to assist our firefighting efforts deserve our thanks for risking their lives with such bravery and such professionalism," Kempthorne said. "This cooperation in firefighting is just one example of the close U.S.-Australia relationship that so often results in the United States and Australia standing side-by-side."

Kempthorne is leading a Presidential Delegation to Australia to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea.

"Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws."

~ Plato (427 ~ 347 B.C.)

Crew Assistance Opportunities on Incidents

~ Jan Everett, HRSP Program Manager, USFS ~ Northern Rockies

Human Resource Specialist (HRSP) Position

The HRSP is available on Incidents to provide a point of contact for incident personnel to discuss human resource concerns. They act as a **neutral party** and make a concerted effort to involve the appropriate incident personnel to resolve issues informally, quickly, legally, and at the lowest impacted level. The HRSP will:

- Listen with full attention
- Determine the extent of the issue
- Determine who needs to be involved in problem resolution
- Engage in basic fact finding
- Facilitate the problem resolution process

A HRSP can help crews or individuals with a variety of issues and problems including:

- Family/Personal emergencies
- Conflict/Lack of Mutual Respect
- Conduct issues/problems
- Facilitate problem resolution
- Initial Defusing process for Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and if required, CISM Liaison
- Liaison (resource ordering, logistical support, coordinating, liaison between crews and CISM Clinician) for success of CISM process

The HRSP is available to assist crews or individuals with Human Resource related training. They can provide Mutual Respect training or they can inbrief crews with information of Incident Management Team expectations.

The HRSP's are on Incidents to assist you with your Human Resource issues, questions, and concerns. Be sure to ask for their assistance.

All-Risk Assistance

~ Gini Broyles and Maggie Moran,
BIA-NIFC

First Response to a disaster is the job of local government's emergency services with help from nearby municipalities, the state, and volunteer agencies. In a catastrophic disaster, and, if the governor requests, federal resources can be mobilized through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Those requests are for search and rescue, electrical power, food, water, shelter and other basic human needs.

It is the long-term "Recovery" phase of a disaster which places the most severe financial strain on a local or state government. Damage to public facilities and infrastructure, often not insured, can overwhelm even a large city.

A major disaster could be the result of a hurricane, an earthquake, a flood, a tornado or a major fire in which case the President makes a determination regarding supplemental federal aid. The event must be clearly more than state or local governments can handle alone. If declared, funding comes from the President's Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which is managed by FEMA, as well as disaster aid programs of other participating federal agencies.

Other Federal agencies providing disaster assistance under their own authorities independent of the Stafford Act are to use their own funding.

Federal agencies providing assistance under the Stafford Act via mission assignments may seek reimbursement from FEMA for eligible costs incurred during performance of the mission. Federal agencies receiving

reimbursement from FEMA are to credit the funds to the correct appropriation. Each Federal agency involved is responsible for:

- Maintaining documentation to support requests for reimbursement;
- Notifying FEMA when a task is completed;
 - ◊ Submitting partial or final reimbursement requests within 90 days of completing a task.
 - ◊ Applying proper financial principles, policies, regulations, management, and internal controls to ensure full accountability for the expenditure of DRF funds.

June 1st marks the official start of the 2007 Atlantic hurricane season. The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is "predicting a 75 percent chance that the Atlantic hurricane season will be above normal". With the start of the hurricane season NOAA recommends that those in hurricane-prone regions have preparation plans in place and keep a close eye on weather conditions as they develop in your regions. If your area is under a hurricane watch or warning you can obtain detailed weather information on the NOAA web site at <http://www.noaa.gov>.

The Associated Press pinpointed five of the most vulnerable coastal spots: Galveston, Texas; Miami, Florida; New York City, New York; Lake Okeechobee, Florida; and the Outer Banks, North Carolina. NOAA experts have selected 13 to 17 named

storms already predicted for the 2007 season, with 3 –5 possibly becoming major hurricanes.

Here are some administrative reminders for the times we are called upon to assist:

Establishment of All-risk Incident: The BIA-NIFC Budget Management Section is responsible for providing administrative direction for "all-risk" events through memorandum to the Regional Directors. Budget Management will establish appropriate accounting strings which must be obtained prior to dispatching **any** resources. The Budget Management Section works very closely with our GACC interagency personnel to gain critical information regarding the disaster. That information will aid in the timely and accurate set up of accounts. All costs must be tracked by mission assignment. It is very important to work as a team to ensure all parties have the correct information. Correcting errors that could have been prevented doubles our work load.

Resource Order(s): Obtain a copy of your resource order. The Resource order proves the single resource was mobilized to an all-risk incident. A crew manifest is required if a crew is mobilized. These supporting documents are required by FEMA and are to be e-mailed, faxed or sent via snail mail to NIFC Budget Management. The resource order also provides Budget Management personnel with the Mission Assignment number for billing purposes which is very important for reimbursement.



Purchase Card Log(s): It is imperative that purchase card holders use the purchase card log that is in the Incident Business Management Handbook (NWCG HB2, Tool Kit Page 32 of 33).

A charge card statement is not required **if a complete purchase card log** is submitted as supporting documentation. FEMA requires that each purchase be itemized and the purchase card log satisfies this requirement. Please keep all receipts in case FEMA or their many auditors request to see items purchased.

Payroll Coding: Remember, payroll hours code 113 is not allowed on all-risk incidents. Holiday code 050 is also not allowed. Holiday worked code 051 is allowable. Please call BIA-NIFC Budget if you have any

questions coding time during an all-risk incident.

Supporting Documentation:

The best policy is to send **all documentation** regarding an all-risk assignment to the BIA-NIFC Budget Management section. This may include a resource order, travel authorization, travel voucher, purchase card log, cell phone bill documents, and purchase authority documents. It is better to have too much information than not enough!

“Talent does what it can; genius does what it must.”

~ Edward George Bulwer-Lytton
(1803 ~ 1873)

Have a safe 2007 hurricane season!

Point of Contact Information

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Fuels

Northwest Regional Office Fuels Workshop Recap

~ Gene Lonning, NW Regional Fuels Specialist

During the week of January 9-11, the Northwest Region conducted a Fuels Workshop at the Coeur d'Alene Casino in Worley, Idaho. At one point, there were over 60 folks in attendance. This draw was largely due to presentations on the new 40 fuel models and BEHAVE + 3.0.3 which took up most of the second day of the workshop.

Highlights from the first day included award presentations to seven of the nine major fuels programs within the region for exceeding FY06 fuels targets, six fuels program leads for outstanding fuels program work over the past several years

and to Mark Schaff, Spokane Fuels GIS, for work done at the Pacific Northwest Coordination Center during last summer's NW wildfire season. Presentations started with a LANDFIRE Overview by Jeff Jones, one of the LF gurus. This was followed by a presentation by Eric Geisler, Fuels Specialist, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, entitled "**Coeur d'Alene Risk Assessment & Project Prioritization**". (Covered in the Sept, 06 Smoke Signals edition, Cooperative Fuels Treatment Prioritization Project, pg 9). This project is a wall to wall risk assessment for all lands within the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Reservation boundaries including other federal, state, private & private commercial lands. This assessment was over two years in the making and will be used to validate and update a multi-year fuels project plan schedule.

The second day included a presentation by Joe Scott, one of the authors of "**Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models: A Comprehensive Set for Use of Rothermel's Surface Fire Spread Model**" (Scott, Joe H. & Burgan, Robert E., June 2005). He explained how these additional fuel model calculations were derived and how they were designed to augment, not replace, the original Anderson 13 Fuel Models. Also, three different presentations were done on BEHAVE + 3.0.3. These included an overview by Patricia Andrews, Fire Behavior Research Scientist; fuel model assumptions and interpretation in BEHAVE + by W. Matt Jolly, Research Scientist; both at the Missoula Fire Sciences Lab and a contingency example using BEHAVE + by Tobin Kelley, AFMO. Both Patricia Andrews and W. Matt Jolly are



L to R: Gene Lonning presents awards for outstanding fuels program work; Scott Rodgers, Colville; Brent Demko, Yakama; Tim Droegmiller, Nez Perce; Eric Geisler, Coeur D'Alene; Kevin Ritzer, Spokane; and Darrell Clairemont, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

from the Missoula Fire Sciences Lab and Tobin Kelley is on detail to the Lab. (For their contact information, call Gene Lonning at the NW Region, 503-231-2175).

Other main topics for the workshop included a discussion on the plan to use LANDFIRE data and develop a risk assessment for the Spokane Reservation. The intent is to develop this as a cookbook process that can be duplicated on other reservations where LANDFIRE data is completed and available. From this risk assessment, the Spokane folks will

Forester's Log: Sawing into the Tribal Forest Protection Act

~ © Mary Stuever, Assistant Tribal Manager, White Mountain Apache Tribe

"It's pretty clear from the majority of stumps out there, that the sawyers on your crew know what they are doing," the Forest Service contract inspector tells me. There is a story in every stump, told from the holding wood, the face cut, and the back cut. The stump tells of experience, knowledge, care, and skill. In the area we are discussing the challenges of cutting the dead standing trees are complex.



These tribal sawyers are working on our first Forest Service project contracted under the 2004 Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA). The act was passed in response to several tragic southern California fires in 2003. The legislation clears the way

then develop a multi-year (hopefully five years out), prioritized project plan. (Note: this meets the NFP goal of project prioritization and explains the methodology for developing the priorities that should stand up to an outside audit.) There were also presentations by the National and NW Tri-Regional (Alaska, NW and Rocky Mountain) Monitoring Leads, Mary Taber and Karrie Stevens respectively, on expectations for monitoring. The goal is that the NW reservations will have monitoring plans in place within one to two years.

for tribal crews and resources to assist with management activities on neighboring national forests. Tribes can recommend projects that will protect their interests on public lands. If the funding is available, they can non-competitively contract with the agency to complete the work.

For this first project, our Tribal Chairman sent a letter to the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest Supervisor recommending that we partner together to protect the newly constructed boundary fence between the reservation and the forest located in the 2002 Rodeo-Chediski burn. The towering dead pine trunks were rotting and falling on the new fence at alarming rates. Clearly the trees needed to be put on the ground to protect the fence. The Forest Service agreed and found some funds to start the first 21 miles of the project. The tribe provided funds for the reservation side of the fence, but because of salvage logging done right after the fire, the number and size of trees on the tribe's side were smaller.

The contract was signed last fall, but winter snows kept the crews out of the woods. As soon as the roads dried out, tribal saw crews spent a week completing the nine miles not restricted by Mexican Spotted Owl activity.

Any dead tree within a tree height of the fence was cut down, as long as it could be safely accomplished. On



Kim Kelly, Pacific Northwest Coordination Center thanks Mark Schaff for his contributions during last year's fire season.



the Forest Service side, which did not have a post-fire salvage sale, many trees were quite large and challenging. The wood, which for the most part has been dead for four to five years, was often rotten complicating its interaction with the teeth on the saw's chain and the holding wood's ability to guide the timing and direction of tree's fall.

The sawyers have a mix of experience, including working as loggers and advanced fire fighters. Rated by firefighting standards based on field tests, "A" sawyers are novices who have size limitations and need additional supervision, while "C" sawyers are "elite" saw wielders. For this project, our crew included one

“C” sawyer, a few “A” sawyers, a logger who hasn’t yet been classified, but the majority fell in the “B” sawyer category. The Forest Service also uses the same standards and safety guidelines for their saw work.

The tribal crew leader carefully monitored the costs and kept accurate records, allowing the tribe to charge the Forest Service only for project-related expenses. The crew follows guidelines in the WMAT Tribal Forestry Operations Plan, which includes OSHA job hazard mitigations, emergency procedures, and policies that protect cultural resources, guide work ethics, and provide for a drug and alcohol-free work environment. The crew worked quickly and efficiently, determined to convince the neighboring agency to learn to rely on their expertise.

In addition to this first TFPA contract, the tribe has recently signed a “Participatory Agreement” with the national forest which will allow the federal agency to utilize tribal forestry employees on an “as-needed” basis. When the Forest Service identifies

projects and funding, they can develop a simple plan, signed off by the line-officer and the tribal forest manager, and put tribal employees on a project with a minimum of paper-work. The employees remain on the tribal payroll, but the costs are reimbursed to the tribe by the federal government.

This win-win situation allows the tribe to focus on employee development, and provide uninterrupted benefits to employees, while allowing the Forest Service access to a work force that can shrink and swell as project funds are available. Meanwhile, tribal employees, who are also trained firefighters, are available to the forest as initial attack wildfire resources. One of the Forest Service’s objectives is to expand tribal employees’ knowledge of Forest Service operations, thus increasing the opportunity for cooperation between the organizations. Continuing our discussion on stump stories, the Forest Service inspector has noticed a few less-experienced sawyers on the contract. We quickly fess up, explaining that we are using the contract work to provide some on-the-job training to less experienced

sawyers. The crew leader explains that he tries to keep our “A” sawyers on the reservation side of the fence where the trees are smaller and not as closely spaced together. We all agree that sawyer safety is our top concern, and that the contract is proceeding well, efficiently and in a safe manner.

I can only hope it is the beginning of a long and active chapter of Forest Service and tribal cooperation.



The Forester’s Log is a monthly column written by Mary Stuever, Assistant Tribal Forest Manager for the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Mary can be contacted at sse@nmia.com.



Planning

Use of LANDFIRE Data in Wildland Fire Risk Long Term Assessments

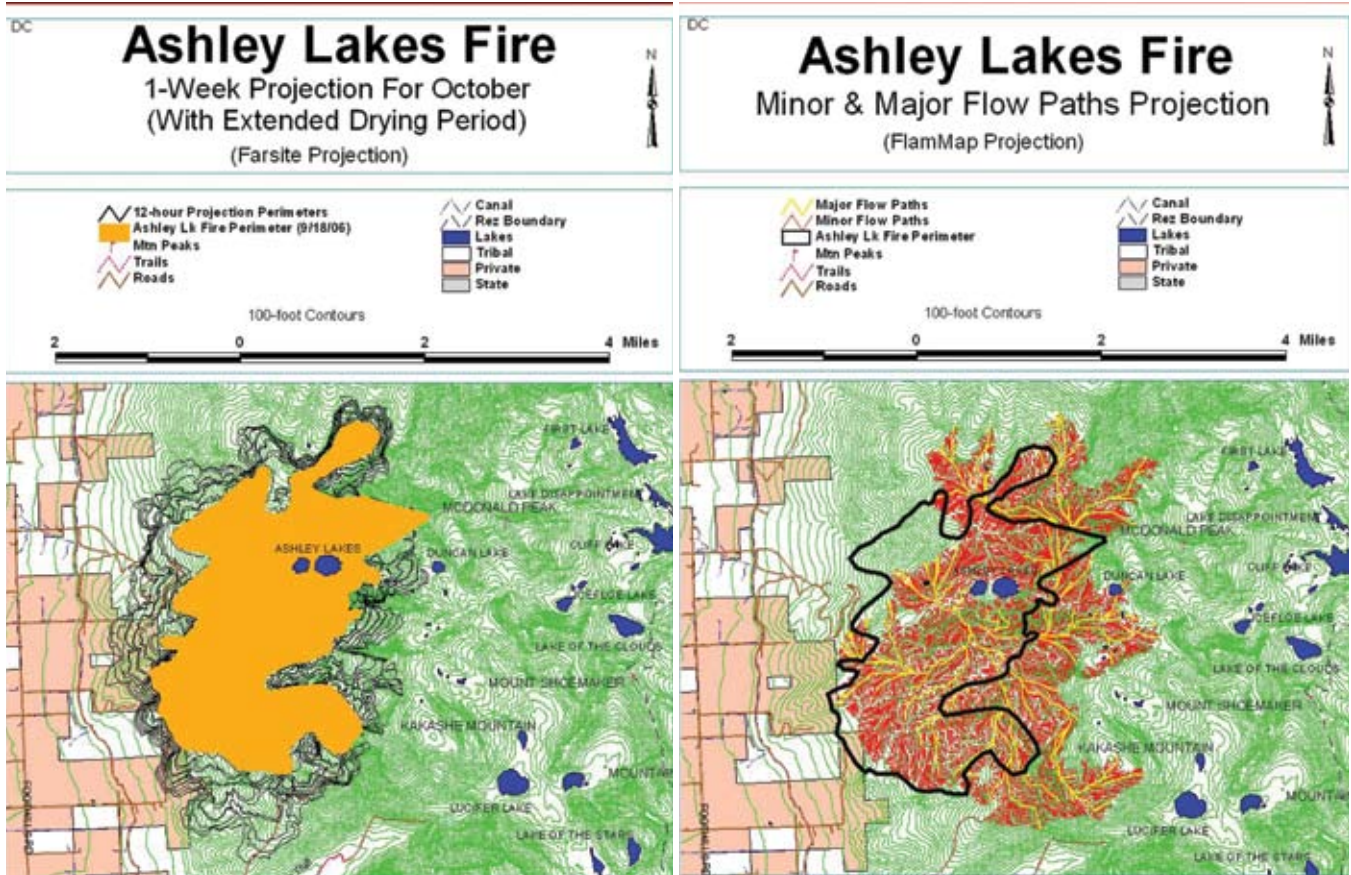
~ John Barborinas, NIFC

A fire weather and behavior long term risk assessment was developed for the Ashley Lakes Fire in the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness on the Flathead Indian Reservation in September of 2006. The fire was managed by the fire management staff of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes with assistance from other federal, state, and local fire personnel and equipment, including NOAA and NWS for short and long term weather forecasting, and

the Missoula Fire Lab (USFS) for LANDFIRE data assistance.

A long term assessment is used to determine the relative risk of a fire reaching identified values (such as a structure or valuable resource) for various time periods. The outputs assist in the development of strategy and tactics for managing the fire. To help in projecting where the fire is likely to move, fire simulation models like FARSITE and FlamMap

require landscape data such as fuels and topography as base layers. FARSITE also exports GIS shape files that can be easily used to create professional looking maps for reports and presentations. Until LANDFIRE data was available, acquiring the data locally and converting it into acceptable format was time consuming and difficult when it was even available. Since the summer of 2006, the Remote Sensing Applications Group has transferred LANDFIRE



Wildland Fire Projections Maps using two simulation models on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Description: FlamMap and FARSITE fire spread projections using LANDFIRE data layers: fuels, crown cover information, elevation, slope, and aspect.

data onto DVDs with an easy to use template in Arc GIS that allows for quick conversion of data layer files into an acceptable format for FARSITE and FlamMap.

The landscape data layers are used in FARSITE to create a landscape file (.lcp) which is the basis for all fire projections that are performed in FARSITE and FlamMap. Additionally, some data within certain layers, such as fuels, can be easily changed in the landscape file within FARSITE. For example, on the Ashley Lakes Fire, FARSITE was projecting fire spread high in the Mission Mountains when local knowledge and aerial observations confirmed a lack of spread in sparse fuels. The fuel model within FARSITE was adjusted and subsequent simulations were more representative of actual spread. This allowed for more accurate outputs for use by fire managers.

This process of simulating fire spread on the existing LANDFIRE data

allows local fire managers to assess modeled outputs and recommend adjustments to help the Long Term Fire Behavior Analyst calibrate the FARSITE model to actual conditions. This information then can be used to assist in making more permanent revisions to the LANDFIRE data base at a later date.

Without the LANDFIRE data, fire spread projections would have been done by hand on a topographic map. Detailed projections beyond a day or two get very time consuming when done manually resulting in less accurate longer term fire behavior forecasting for fire managers. Hand drawn maps are also less accurate and not professional looking.

LANDFIRE data is also being used in the Fire Planning Analysis and the “FS Pro” fire spread probability system. LANDFIRE data can also be used in fire spread projections for prescribed burn contingency planning as well.

Data quality is the underlying theme of how effective all of these programs will be in simulating fire spread and risk assessment. Poor or inaccurate data will lead to poor decision making and ultimately fire professionals not believing the outputs and thus, not using the data. A system that allows for timely updates of the LANDFIRE database will help its usefulness and appeal to the fire community.

Acquiring the data layers to create the landscape file required in fire spread prediction models has always been a major challenge In Indian Country. LANDFIRE data that is readily accessible and reasonably accurate allows for real time analysis and assessments of risk from active fires. FARSITE enables the user to simulate fire behavior on the modeled landscape, make adjustments to the data when errors or inaccuracies are found to calibrate the computer model with observed fire behavior. This results in more accurate risk

assessments needed by superintendents and other line officers when making critical decisions for fire operations and management teams.

If you would like assistance in using these products to assist in the management of an existing problem fire, or the planning of a future one,

contact BIA-NIFC: John Barborinas @ 970 563-9483 or Rich McCrea @ 208 387-5558.



Prevention

Eastern Cherokee, North Carolina Fire Department Mutual Aid Assist, Saves Homes

~ Steve Swimmer, Prevention/Mitigation Eastern Cherokee Agency



L to R; Volunteers AJ Bird, Wilson Oocumma, and Tom Simons. Cherokee Fire Department personnel Steve Smith, Sam Tiger, Aaron Williams and Chief Mernie Taylor. This command vehicle was on the fire. Firefighters formed a protection squad that worked along side the engine to protect as many homes as possible.

Rural volunteer and other local fire departments are the nation's first line of defense against fire starts in the wildland urban Interface (WUI) and surrounding landscapes. The ability of local firefighters to contain a fire incident through quick and efficient initial response can dramatically reduce large – scale wildfire impacts to the public and to the environment.

On Sunday March 11, 2007 Cherokee Emergency Dispatch received such a call for assistance from the Bryson City, North Carolina Fire Departments. The call went out for any and all

voluntary fire departments to respond to the Grassy Branch Community to assist in an out of control wildland fire occurring on very steep and densely forested slopes just out of the town of Bryson City a township 20 miles west of the Eastern Cherokee Indian reservation.

When the first Cherokee volunteers arrived at the fire, one of the incident commanders directed them to go on up the narrow curvy road to help protect some very high dollar homes in harms way at the head of the fire. Flames could be seen racing up the long steep

slopes through the thick underbrush in a box canyon near the homes needing protection.

The Cherokee Crew began first by yelling into the doorways for any residents then started setting up a hasty structure triage for one home as directed by the incident IC. With the one-way egress now blocked off by the on coming traffic the engine crew had no choice but to engage whole heartedly. As one of the engine crewmember (Jonah Saunooke) opened up the valves all the way other crewmembers (AJ Bird, Wilson Oocumma, Tom Simons, Steve Smith, Sam Tiger, Aaron Williams and Captain Mernie Taylor) quickly started spraying down the structures and surrounding vegetation. To the amazement of the property owners this quick tactic seemed to be working as the fire front skirted around this property only to gain force heading to the next place on up the mountain. However the danger was not over as another ball of orange glow started surfacing down the bottom of the mountain.

This time the property owners and bystanders could not hide their fear



The Pelohi cove area of the Grassy Ridge community.



Johan Saunooke, commanded this engine.

adding to the chaos the Cherokee engine crew had to face. The more experienced crewmembers started taking control and described exactly what was about to happen. They calmly instructed everyone as to the situation at hand and the strategy for survival. They told them by the looks of things, there wasn't much they could do except to get on the uphill side of the road and use the road as protection as much as possible. The crewmembers set up a water shower around their engine to help beat the heat back as the second front passed through the area. The bystanders could see the devastating effects of the same flame front just as it engulfed two houses on up the road.

The Cherokee crew couldn't wait around for congratulations or a pat on the back as they hurried to pack up their hose. Just as they were about to roll on up to the next house a red dog raced out of one house and jumped into the cab of the fire-truck as they pulled out. And so it went, on into the night, home after home, after home with this lone red dog. This was only one story happening on that fire on that night, but it shows how important the basic Firewise concepts can be, both for home protection and for firefighter safety. Nine homes were lost that night, but thanks to the quick thinking men of the Cherokee Fire department, some were spared. The wildland fire management staff of the Cherokee BIA

Agency and the Cherokee Tribal Fire department should be congratulated for their partnerships in cooperative wildland fire training and incident command response.

The destruction of nine homes and 200 acres near Bryson city demonstrate the disastrous consequences of an out-of-

–control wildfire. Dry weather and windy conditions helped fuel the fire that Sunday in Swain County which burned several mountain ridges in the Pelohi cove area of the Grassy Ridge community, a residential area of 27 homes. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Editors Note: It may appear through the creativity of this writer that basic firefighter safety protocol had been compromised. However, this was not the case. In interviewing the Incident Commander and the author it was found that hazards had been properly identified, risks had been mitigated, and LCES was firmly in place throughout the incident.

◆
"Facts are the enemy of truth."

~ Don Quixote
 "Man of La Mancha"

WeTip ~ For a Safer America

~ Soledad Holguin, Fire Prevention Specialist



Back row L to R: Sue Aguilar, WeTip CEO and Vice President; Jim Nanamkin, Regional Fire Prevention Specialist, BIA, Pacific Region

Front row L to R: Dennis Kottmeier, WeTip President; Soledad, Holguin; Sue Mandell, WeTip National Manager and Corporate Accounts

WeTip (Conference held April 26-27, 2007) is a national nonprofit organization, staffing operators that take anonymous tips from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. WeTip takes a “total community involvement” approach to solving and preventing crime.

Jim Nanamkin, Regional Fire Prevention Specialist and Soledad Holguin, Fire Prevention Specialist attended on behalf of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The

presentation was on the subject of the partnership that BIA and WeTip have developed and how the arson hotline has become a valuable tool in Indian Country. The campaign efforts encompass education, mitigation and prevention of wildland fires. The WeTip Arson reporting hotlines gives the community “A Voice Against Crime” to anonymously provide information to local law enforcement, and wildland fire investigators. The WeTip Arson reward on Indian trust lands throughout the United States is \$10,000.

Team Leader, Long Term Fire Analyst, Division Group Supervisor, Communication Unit Leader, Communication Technician, Crew Representative, Trainee Operations Section Chief and Type 2 Burn Boss.

Lee has made certain to educate his teams on the benefits and uses of the WeTip Arson Hotline. He has invited WeTip personnel to several of his region’s training meetings in many of the Great Plains States to inform his teams on how and why to use the WeTip Hotline

WeTip National Statistics	
Tips Taken	454,659
Arrests	15,021
Convictions	7,601
Drugs seized	\$312,138,496
Cash seized	\$ 6,688,540
Recovered Property	\$ 16,587,856
Rewards Paid	\$ 933,265
Arson Damage	\$ 18,501,531

Gary Hilton ~ Arson Investigator of the Year

Midwest and Eastern, Fire Prevention Forester

In recent years, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has actively pursued the development of a wildland fire investigations 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. Most importantly, cases involving arson, identifying the perpetrator is of vital public interest.

In 2001, Gary Hilton went to the Minneapolis/St. Paul area to serve as the Fire Prevention Forester for the BIA Midwest and Eastern Regional Offices. He serves as the Lead Wildland Fire Investigator for the eastern half of the county.

He has been working on wildland fire investigations since 1991. Along with Jim Nanamkin of the BIA Pacific Region, Gary serves as a BIA representative to the Wildland Fire Investigation Interagency Working Team.

Bureau of Indian Affairs Receives National WETip Recognition Awards

~ Soledad Holguin, Fire Prevention Specialist

The Bureau of Indian Affairs was recognized for their contribution to the protection of trust lands and the prevention of crime in Indian Country.

Lee Schmunk ~ Special Service Award

Rocky Mountain and Great Plains, Fire Prevention Forester

Lee Schmunk is a Forester and the Wildland Fire Prevention and WUI Specialist for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Interagency Fire Center assigned to the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Regions.

Lee is red-carded as a Type III Wildland fire Investigator, Prevention



Left: Dennis Kottmeier, WeTip President, Presenting “Woman of the Year” award to Soledad Holguin, BIA, Fire Prevention Specialist, Pacific Region

“The difference between ‘involvement’ and ‘commitment’ is like an eggs-and-ham breakfast: the chicken was ‘involved’ - the pig was ‘committed’.”

~ unknown

The purpose of the Wildland Fire Prevention and Education teams is to assist the local unit in the prevention of unwanted human-caused wildfires. This is more than a full time job. Gary is continually out on assignments working diligently to identify the causes and person responsible for unwanted wildland fires.

Soledad Holguin ~ Woman of the Year
Pacific Region, Fire Prevention Specialist

Soledad Holguin is honored as the "Woman of the Year" for her dedicated

work with the WeTip Corporation. In her capacity as the Pacific Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fire Prevention Specialist she has worked to share the WeTip's anonymous arson reporting hotline. Soledad has gone far beyond the doors of her Sacramento, California office to make a difference in Indian Country throughout the United States

Soledad has demonstrated the ability to understand how the Native American culture can embrace the WeTip program and use it in a way that is proactive and non-threatening.

She has done presentations and incorporated incident specific flyers when needed to keep community awareness elevated.

"Once more into the breach, dear friends, once more ...when the blast of war blows in our ears, then imitate the action of the tiger."

~ William Shakespeare, (King Henry V, Act 3, Scene I)



Training

Great Plains Rookie Camp

~ Paul Pooler, Fire Ecologist Midwest and Great Plains Regions

For the past five years, the Great Plains Agencies and Tribes have provided a region-wide fire fighter rookie camp in the Black Hills near Custer, South Dakota. The training is hosted by Camp Bob Marshall which is operated under a special use permit with USDA Forest Service, Black Hills National Forest in cooperation with the Western Dakota 4-H Camp Association.

This five day training provides NWCG-certified training courses including S-130 Firefighter Training; S-190 Introduction to Wild Land Fire Behavior; I-100 Introduction to ICS;



Crew members from Three Affiliated Tribes, ND learn gridding and crew formation.



Trainees at rookie camp get practice deploying shelters.

and L-180 Human Factors on the Fire Line. Besides classroom instruction, outdoor activities include use of hand tools and firing devices, water use, pumps and hose lays, map reading and

compass use, and deployment of safety shelters.

Crew Bosses and Squad Bosses are also provided opportunities to teach

trainees proper squad formation, gridding, and plenty of hiking time in crew formation.

Cadre members are GS or Tribal employees from each of the supporting Agencies or Tribes and have all completed M-410,



Cadre members Brady Ward (left) Cheyenne River Agency and Jim Rodriguez, Pine Ridge Agency, during a break from pumps and hose lay exercises.

Facilitative Instructor. The camp also provides security, EMT's and timekeepers. Trainees stay on site during the training and camp in tents or stay in primitive cabins. Restrooms and a bathhouse are provided as well as catered meals.

Over the past five years approximately 900 trainees have gone through the Great Plains rookie camps.



Cadre members Terry Hodgkiss (left), Standing Rock Agency, and Daigre' Douville, Pine Ridge Agency, discuss training

From Blacksnake's Corner

~ Walt Lara - Yurok Forestry

I am called "Blacksnake" by close friends and by people who simply like the name. Once, somewhere around 1945 when all the Indian kids from Requa, CA were playing, they chose names from comic books of famous gun slingers like Black Bart, Lone Ranger, and Hop-Along Cassidy. After I finished my chores, I joined them, but all the good names were taken. The group told me I had to be Blacksnake, the bad guy hero! Reluctantly, I took the name. The late Bill Trip, who was getting out of the "candy wagon" (crummy), heard the teasing and continued to call me Blacksnake and the name stuck. Bill worked for Coast Redwood Logging Company, located on Ah Pah Road five miles south of Klamath, CA as a timber faller. He liked that I was a hard worker and three years later hired me on, at age 14, during summer vacations. I was to pack his gear and equipment (drag saws, misery whips, wedges and hammers, boards and driver "spring board"), thus began my training in the woods as a timber faller.

In 1952 I enlisted in the Army Airborne, unassigned. My first duty was kitchen police or "KP". My job was to mash the potatoes and mix in the butter. There were two pots on the stove and I thought both were butter. But, one was soap used to scrub the floors. When I poured what I thought was butter into the potato pot I saw big chunks and I knew it was not butter. I did not know what would happen to me if the Mess Sergeant found out so I took out the big chunks, mixed in the butter and served the potatoes to the troops, 6th Army E 20th. All the troops had the GI's but I didn't. I had to make it look like I did so I grunted and groaned like I did.

Walt is the Yurok Forestry/Wildland Fire Field Coordinator, responsible for Forestry and wildland

Fire activities including: Timber Sales Officer; wildlife, fisheries, Tribal member public relations, Cultural coordination, etc. for ground disturbing activities. Walt, a Yurok Tribal member from Moreck (downriver from Cappell Creek) on the Klamath River, is married to a Hoopa Tribal member, has two grown sons and five grown daughters and lives in Hoopa, CA.



Walt "Blacksnake" Lara.

Thanks!

Thanks again to those of you who have submitted articles and photographs. Keep up the great work! Thanks to Walt Lara for his story and we look forward to more from Walt in the future.

Submission Criteria

Please include the author's name, title and location, captions and high resolution photographs attached as separate jpeg files. The article submission deadline for "Smoke Signals" is as follows:

March 1
June 1
September 1
December 1

The greater BIA wildland fire family extends their sympathy to the families, friends and co-workers of the nine structural firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty in Charlotte NC. A sad reminder to our own firefighters who are about to embark on a season of wildland firefighting. Your family and friends need you, so practice your safety skills.

The largest single loss of life for firefighters in America occurred on Sept. 11, 2001, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, when 343 firefighters died. The following numbers are some of the worst documented U.S. fires in terms of firefighters lost:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| April 16-17, 1947: | 27 firefighters killed following fires and ammonium nitrate explosions aboard two ships docked at Texas City, Texas. |
| Dec. 22, 1910: | 21 firefighters killed at a stockyard and cold storage warehouse in Chicago. |
| July 29, 1956: | 19 firefighters killed at the Shamrock Oil and Gas Corp. refinery in Sun Ray, Texas. |
| July 9, 1953: | 15 firefighters killed in a wildfire in the Mendocino National Forest in California. |
| July 6, 1994: | 14 firefighters killed in a wildfire on South Canyon mountain near Glenwood Springs, Colo. |
| March 10, 1946: | 13 firefighters killed in a roof collapse at the Strand Theatre in Brockton, Mass. |
| Aug. 4, 1949: | 13 firefighters killed in a forest fire at Gates of the Mountain, Mont. |
| Dec. 21, 1910: | 13 firefighters and one police officer killed in a Philadelphia leather remnants factory. |
| July 5, 1973: | 12 firefighters killed at the Doxol Gas Co. in Kingman, Ariz. |
| Oct. 16, 1966: | 12 firefighters killed when a floor collapses at a New York City drugstore. |
| June 17, 1972: | Nine firefighters killed in a collapse at the Hotel Vendome in Boston. |
| Dec. 4, 1999: | Six firefighters in Worcester, Mass., died after they were trapped inside a burning warehouse. |

Source: Facts on File, National Fire Protection Association

Distribution

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

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