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Leadership Success in the Swamp

~ Mark D. Masters, BIA-NIFC



Simeon Gipson, Okmulgee Agency in the foreground of a night burnout on the Big Turnaround Complex. Photo ~ Forrest Blackbear, Eastern Oklahoma Region

Historical drought conditions in the far Southeastern U.S. made for a challenging spring fire season there. Oklahoma Native American firefighters experienced extensive mobilization and deployments to assist with suppression efforts in recent months, particularly in Georgia and Florida. Since late April the following Type 2 handcrews, consisting entirely or partially of Oklahoma Native American firefighters, were mobilized by the Arkansas-Oklahoma Interagency Coordination Center (AOICC):

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cheyenne & Arapahoe #7013 | Apache/Seminole #7022 |
| Chickasaw/Wewoka #7014 | Cheyenne & Arapahoe #7023 |
| Pawnee #7015 | AR-OK Multiagency #7024 |
| Apache #7016 | Multiagency #7025 |
| Cherokee #7017 | Pawnee #7027 |
| Iowa #7018 | Interagency #7028 |
| Creek/Seminole #7019 | Caddo #7029 |
| Caddo #7020 | Interagency #7030 |
| Interagency #7021 | Interagency #7032 |
| | Interagency #7033 |

The crews mobilized to the Southeast this spring had higher performance evaluations and fewer disciplinary problems than in the past. John Nichols of the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas was sent to serve as an Interagency Resource Representative (IARR) in support of the Mop-up Command Incident being managed by the Georgia Forestry Commission. During his two and one half week assignment, Nichols had the opportunity



Big Turnaround Complex from the air.

of routinely observing Oklahoma Native American handcrews excel in exhibiting a “safety first” attitude. He also witnessed the crews providing mentorship and guidance to structural firefighters while working together in Task Forces. Upon completion of his assignment Nichols distributed a memo highlighting these successes.

Nichols stated that “for the first two weeks, the only operational field personnel with wildland firefighting experience were the [Native American] crew bosses and crew members of the Region 8 (Southern Region) type 2 handcrews. These personnel were

Photo ~ Mark Masters, BIA-NIFC

critical in helping the rest of their respective Task Forces understand wildland fire safety protocol.”

Nichols discussions with many of the Georgia Mutual Aid Group (GMAG) structural fire Task Force Leaders indicated that they “were very glad to have the immediate access and support of the wildland fire crew bosses”. They also said they had “relied heavily on their fire expertise”, especially during a four day period when high wind events associated with subtropical storm Andrea (just off the Georgia/Florida coast) found several of the Task Forces in “situations more akin to initial attack than mop-up”.



Okeefenokee NWR wildlife!

Photo ~ Mark Masters, BIA-NIFC

The crew bosses ensured that crews adhered to the standard wildland fire safety protocols.

Improved performance of Oklahoma firefighters can be directly attributed to the following factors:

- ~ The development of the **Oklahoma Native American Crew Management Board**, a self-governing board comprised of elected officials from various local tribal fire management programs who work closely with BIA and U.S. Forest Service agency representatives.
- ~ The implementation of a **Crew Management Policy** providing consistent guidelines and direction for tribal fire management programs related to the following areas: administration, recruitment, employment eligibility, application, mobilization, crew rotation, home unit responsibilities, rules of conduct, injury compensation, performance ratings, demobilization and disciplinary guidelines.
- ~ BIA/NIFC funded **fireline leadership training** sessions offered in Oklahoma and attended by firefighters from both the Eastern Oklahoma and Southern Plains Regions.

Another trend demonstrating advancement in the Oklahoma Native American Crew Management Program is the placement of Native Americans in the critical leadership positions for both Native American and Interagency Crews.

In the future, additional leadership training opportunities as well as continued guidance and support by the Crew Management Board will serve to improve fireline safety. We expect continued positive feedback about our crews no matter where they go.

◆
 “Do, or do not. There is no try’.”

~ Yoda (‘The Empire Strikes Back’)



Casual Payment Center Nearing End of Third Season

~ Sandra Braseth, Assistant Center Manager

With its third fire season nearing an end, the Casual Payment Center is saying farewell to its seasonal staff. With school in session, students and teachers are returning to the class room; however some continue to work at the CPC in the evenings. We pride ourselves on the knowledge and experience of our staff members with 75% returning from last year and only 25% newly hired this season.

During the months of July and August 2007, the CPC averaged approximately 2400 OF-288s per week, with approximately 1750 of those coming from BIA. During the first eight months of 2007, 17,700 payments were processed for BIA which represents approximately 74% of our volume.

Lost Checks have surpassed the 500 mark through mid-August reaching 525 reissued payments and 45 outstanding payments. Compared to the 2006 total of 665 reissued checks, The Treasury Department restricts the delivery of payments to addresses registered to a resident/owner of a mailing address (street or PO Box) to

ensure the Treasury check reaches the intended payee.

We encourage all agencies to work closely with their casuals and update mailing address changes to ensure the W-2s reach workers on a timely basis. We have a deadline again this year of December 1, 2007 to received updated information. We processed 150 requests for reprinted W-2s last year and would like to decrease this figure in 2007.

The Casual Payment Center staff would like to thank the Approving Officials who assisted in the processing of time for agency casuals. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kristy Valentine, Center Manager or Sandra Braseth, Assistant Center Manager at 877-471-2262.

Australia New Zealand United States International Exchange Program

~ Bodie K. Shaw, Deputy Director BIA-NIFIC

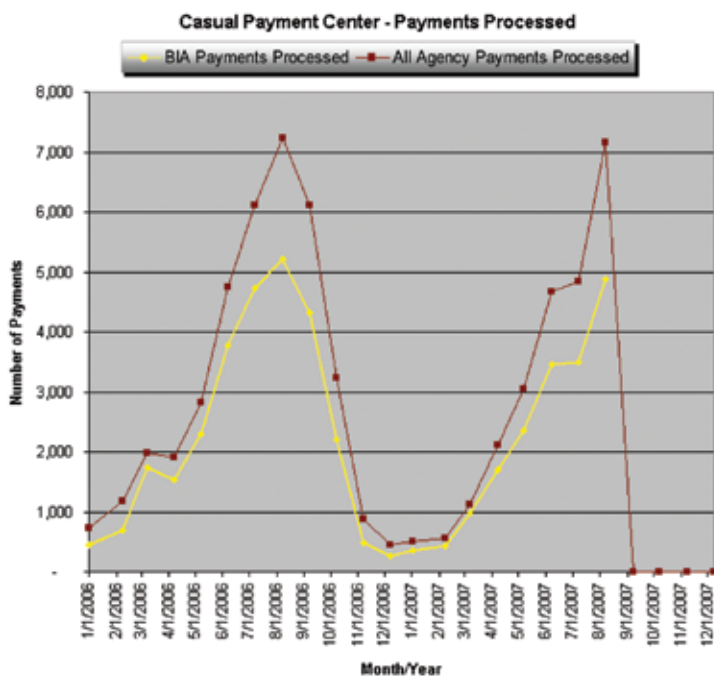
~ Alan Goodwin, Deputy Chief Officer, DSE-VIC AUS

In April of this year, Bodie Shaw and Alan Goodwin prepared a briefing document to update NFAEB Members regarding a potential exchange program between the Department of Sustainability and the Environment (DSE-VIC-AUS), Country Fire Authority (CFA), New Zealand Fire Services Commission and the National Interagency Fire Center (US). This article captures the highlights of this briefing document.

On May 4, 2007 in Canberra, Australia, Secretary Kempthorne (DOI) made the announcement of the AUS/NZ-AUS Exchange Program along side the US Ambassador to Australia, Robert McCallum. On May 9, 2007, the Secretary was joined by Secretary Johanns (Agriculture) and four international Ambassadors (Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Mexico) and made the same announcement in Washington DC.

Both Secretaries announcement of the AUS-US Exchange Program centered on:

- Providing an opportunity for Departmental staff to expand their professional experience and expertise, and thus achieve personal development through working in US and AUS/NZ wildland fire/bushfire management agencies;
- Bringing/exchanging new ideas,



approaches and work methods to workplaces in the Departments with respect to land management concepts and management; and

- Fostering an exchange of culture, knowledge, experience and professional contacts relevant to both AUS/NZ and the US with focus on wildland/bushfire under the umbrella of natural resource management.
- Defining and establishing firm legal parameters and expectations for overseas operations concerning wildland fire/bushfire activities: suppression; prescribed fire; ICS and AIIMS equivalencies; RFA/Community Assistance/Education and training for instance.

The Secretaries were briefed regarding budget costs being a relative non-factor; selected individuals would exchange positions and domiciles; i.e., food and lodging would be absorbed by current payroll with the respective individuals. Exchange rates would have to be assessed at the time to get a true picture of other nominal costs associated with an exchange.

Given the announcement by the Secretaries and the AUS/NZ Ambassadors over the past few weeks, there is tremendous interest in the opportunity to expand on our existing Arrangement with Australia and New Zealand. There was, and especially

now, strong political support for this in concept from the highest levels of the respective governments. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Goodwin propose delivering a draft exchange policy that has been vetted through the US (State Department, DOI and AG) and AUS/NZ (Premier's Office and the NZ Fire Services Commission) by the next NFAEB meeting in June.

CONTACT: Bodie K. Shaw, Deputy Director, BIA-NIFC at 208-387-5620 and Alan Goodwin, Deputy Chief Officer, DSE-VIC at 8-011-613-9412-4777

Stewardship Contracting ~ Bumps in the Road

~ Jim Erickson, ITC Fire Technical Specialist



The Forest Service has had the authority to enter into stewardship contracts since 1999 under Section 347 of the FY1999 Omnibus Appropriations Act (P.L. 105-277). This authorized the Forest Service to enter into up to 28 pilot stewardship projects designed to help achieve land management goals on the national forests, and to help meet the needs of local and rural communities. In 2003 Congress extended this authority (P.L. 108-7) to both the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to enter

into long term (10 year) contracts for a period of up to ten years (2013). This basically gives them the authority to utilize this authority to extend projects over the next 20 years (10 year contracts awarded in 2013 would end in 2022).

Congress saw further to expand this authority on July 24, 2004 by authorizing tribes to enter into sole source contracts with these two agencies under the Tribal Forest Protection Act (P.L. 108-278). This

law allows tribes to request specific projects on federal lands that border or are adjacent to tribal lands if they "pose a fire, disease or other threat to" tribal forest lands, rangelands, or communities. To date many tribes have expressed interest in entering into these arrangements with their federal partners. Tribes that have entered into stewardship arrangements include Hoopa with the BLM, White Mountain Apache with the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Viejas and Ewiaapaayp Band of Kumeeyaay Indians with the Cleveland National Forest, and the Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians and the San Bernardino National Forest. At least seven other tribes are in various stages of analysis and negotiations with their federal partners on additional projects. This tremendous interest reflects that tribes are interested, ready and willing to step outside their reservation boundaries to exert their sovereign rights and serve as good neighbors to manage for healthy ecosystems, economies and communities.

Early in this process the federal agencies and their partners have experienced both success and hurdles associated with the development and implementation phase of a new law. Some areas, like the White Mountain Stewardship Contract on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, have experienced significant success and growth. In the first two years nearly 100,000 acres have gone through planning and NEPA compliance, over 18,000 acres have

been treated, and 380,000 green tons of biomass have been removed from the forest and utilized. Along with these on-the-ground treatments many jobs have been created in treating the forest and processing the material. Yet, on other projects the challenges have been much more pronounced. Often times NEPA compliance holds up project initiation. Other times project scheduling, restrictions to access, project scale, administrative rulings, available funding, agency conflicts, and individual paradigms result in delays, project modifications, challenges, and less than effective performance.

Some tribes have even received disinterest from their federal counterparts due to a wide variety of reasons. Some agency personnel do not understand the TFPA, others are overwhelmed with their regular work load, and still others are not interested in taking on new projects and procedures. Some also have more traditional beliefs and depend on such treatments as timber sales over stewardship contracts to accomplish land treatments. There even are times when the belief that “no treatment” is the best management technique. Whatever the reason, this lack of enthusiasm to manage the land for ecosystem health results in frustration for tribes exploring the opportunity to share their traditional knowledge with their neighbors. The limited financial and personnel resources available to tribes to take on new work load make these ventures risky at best. Tribes that have entered into contracts find the attitude of their federal partners to vary greatly from agency to agency and from region to region. Some are very supportive, others not so.

So why is the White Mountain Stewardship Contract so successful? The Intertribal Timber Council took the opportunity during our recent board meeting at Hondah, Arizona to visit this project and see why it was so successful in treating so many acres. The one obvious observation was that people were working together for a common good and collaborating on outcomes, options and solutions. This

process began nearly ten years prior to the project with the building of a diverse partnership that identified common themes for a healthy local forest, economy and community. This involved identifying a “Zone of Agreement” to establish the values and principles that would guide this project through planning and implementation. The ability to get together to discuss and negotiate solutions has led to a trust and respect that yields results and not conflict. The success of this process can be reflected in the over 100,000 acres that have gone through NEPA compliance without any challenges. Having these acres on-the-shelf allows the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest to take advantage of the reallocation of year-end hazard fuel monies within the Forest Service to accomplish additional acres that their annual budget could not fund.

The lesson this teaches is the importance of local interest groups taking the time to get to know each other, understand the values each hold important, and then identify a “zone of agreement”. This zone is unlikely to be any one person’s ideal management scheme, but it can be a starting point to proactively treat our forest ecosystems, build additional trust, and trend away from reactive management actions like fire suppression, fire salvage, bug salvage, erosion prevention, stream rehabilitation, and other after the fact responses. The long practiced tribal tradition of keeping the forest ecosystems healthy to begin with provides many more environmental benefits than doing rehabilitation after an event. Tribal ecological knowledge has long acknowledged this basic premise of living with nature and not trying to dominate it. The environment will adapt to whatever influences are imposed upon it. Mostly it reflects today the relationship we as people have with each other. If there is turmoil between us the ecosystem shows that. Overstocked forests are a reflection of our distrust for each other and the response of doing nothing to manage the land. But by doing nothing we have done so much to take it out of balance and

put it at risk. Overstocking, species conversion (Ponderosa pine to Douglas fir and true firs; Pinion pine to juniper), unnaturally hot wild fires, erosion of valuable soil resources, insect outbreaks at record levels, and drastic ecological shifts leading to species disruptions and extinctions are but some of the symptoms that reflect our inability as humans to reach consensus. To do nothing is as wrong as doing something harmful to the ecosystem.

The real challenge for those seeking the opportunity to practice good land management on federal lands is to first form effective partnerships, and this takes time. The fast pace of today’s world demands instant decisions, but these decisions are not what is needed for our environment or for stewardship contracts to succeed.

A tribal elder once shook his head at me when I was young and said “Why do you always have time to do things twice, but never the time to do them right the first time?” This lessons remains with me to this day. Investing time early on will pay in the long run.

Bob Chadwick, an ex-Forest Service employee, came to the Colville reservation year ago and showed many of us his “consensus process”, one that he learned from tribal elders throughout his Forest Service career in dealing with tribes. His basic premise is that it is more important to do things right than to do things fast. Making strong relationships will take time and will yield much greater rewards. Get to know your neighbors like you know your brothers. Stewardship of the land will follow close behind.

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“Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.”

~ Sherlock Holmes
 (by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,
 1859-1930)

White Mountain Stewardship Project

The Forester's Log is a monthly column written by forester Mary Stuever. Mary can be contacted at sse@nmia.com.

There is a lot of buzz about cutting trees in the forests of the east central Arizona White Mountains. For the most part, the buzz isn't coming from chainsaws because chainsaws are too inefficient for this operation. This is a story about efficiency and the government. This is a story about the White Mountain Stewardship program on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.

"We're out here at least twice a month giving tours about this project," explains Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Supervisor Elaine Zieroth. The group she is addressing on this day includes tribal forestry leaders from across the west. Many tribes are interested in getting in on the ground level of the newest way of doing business with the Forest Service: via the Stewardship Contract. Well into the third year of a ten-year contract, the White Mountain Stewardship Program is an ideal model of efficient action, both in the woods and in the offices.

The idea behind Stewardship Contracting is simple. The Stewardship Contract combines removing commercial wood products with acquiring forest treatment services. Before Stewardship Contracting, these were separate projects. A timber sale focused on removing commercial wood products from the forest. A thinning contract focused on removing small non-commercial trees in order to leave healthier forests. The Stewardship Contract pulls the two practices under one entry, and forest health and wildfire protection objectives drive what happens in the woods. The commercial aspects of the operation offset the costs of getting the acres treated.

Our tour stops at a landing in the woods east of Show Low, Arizona. The stand consists of ponderosa pine trees, with smaller oaks and junipers growing underneath the

~ Forester's Log © Mary Stuever

pine. The seasoned foresters in our group suggest that most of the pine trees appear to have started growing around 1919, which was an optimal year for ponderosa pine establishment in the American Southwest. The fire managers point out how the dense patches of oak and juniper provide fuel ladders that make the stand before the treatment susceptible to crown fires.

A local White Mountain resident, Walker is one of the principle owners of Future Forests LLC, the company that has the 10 year contract to treat 150,000 acres of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. Dwayne's resources include machines called fellerbunchers, forwarders, and skidders that munch and crunch their way across the landscape transforming hundreds of thousands of tons of green biomass into wood products.

Left in the woods, this material is referred to by firefighters as "fuel"



Members of the Intertribal Timber Council tour the White Mountain Stewardship Project on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. Tribal leaders are actively looking for opportunities to be involved with Forest Service stewardship contracting.

Photo ~ Mary Stuever

The ecologists note that the blue grama grass and juniper trees indicate that this is a rather dry site for the pine, and not one of the more productive timber stands.

In fact, as we compare the meager deck of saw logs with the huge pile of small diameter poles, it is clear that this forest could not be thinned by cutting only commercial wood products. Even though the small trees will be chipped and used to make wood pellets, the cost of handling the trees to take them out of the woods is greater than the value of the wood fiber going into the pellet mill.

Dwayne Walker has plenty to grin about as he addresses the group.

and folks in the White Mountains are especially conscientious of fire threats since the 2002 Rodeo-Chediski Fire scorched almost a half-million acres of the region and burned hundreds of homes. One of the reasons the White Mountain Stewardship Project is successful is because of widespread support by area residents.

Community support is measured in intensive efforts at collaboration and coordination and the list of individuals and organizations that are involved in the project is extensive.

"The White Mountain Stewardship Project didn't just happen overnight," explains Molly Pitts, the Executive Director of the Northern Arizona

Wood Products Association, an organization that represents over 50 companies and individuals whose livelihood is dependent on forest products. "There has been over a decade of trust building between all kinds of community members to be able to back this kind of effort." Walker admits that his books have been audited three times this year to insure that his costs are commensurate with the payment he receives for the work accomplished. A 16-member citizen Monitoring Board meets

monthly to insure social, economic, and environmental objectives are being met by the project.

The White Mountain Stewardship Project is crafted to work for the White Mountain community and address local issues and concerns. However, as the first large Forest Service Stewardship program, there are plenty of lessons here for other regions to study and perhaps emulate. Our particular tour group looks forward to building long-term relationships that

involve tribes in the management of national forests. As each community defines how the concept of stewardship contracting will play out in their forests, there is new hope for combining the concepts of 'efficiency' and 'government' throughout the west. For an in-depth third party report on the White Mountain Stewardship

Contract visit http://www.eri.nau.edu/joomla/files/NewsEvents/ERI_Bklet_WhiteMtns_S-1.pdf.



Fuels

Red Lake Forestry Greenhouse

~ Paul Pooler, Fire Ecologist Midwest and Great Plains Regions



Joe Harris, Forester at Red Lake and Gloria Whitefeather-Spears at the greenhouse in Redby, Minnesota.

Since the late 1800's, man's activities have drastically altered the structure of the Red Lake Forest in Northern Minnesota. The most notable change has been the reduction on pine acreage. Logging, fires and poor natural pine regeneration have continually reduced pine acreage.

The Red Lake Indian Forest was established by the U.S. Congress in 1916 and provided for management "... in accordance with the principles of scientific forestry, with a view to the production of successive timber crops..." A provision of the act included the establishment of nurseries for reforestation purposes.

The Red Lake Forestry Greenhouse propagation program was established at Red Lake in 1934 to grow containerized tree seedlings from seed for timber stand improvement on tribal forest lands. In 1978, the greenhouse was rebuilt and later moved to Redby, MN where seedlings have been grown for the past 20 years. Most seedlings are used for reforestation on Red Lake lands; however, some are also grown for other reservations in the lake states and for other agencies such as the Minnesota DNR, and the Superior and Chippewa National Forests.

The Criterion style greenhouse has produced 58 crops consisting of more than 18 million tree seedlings. Other projects include red and bur oak seedlings propagated for an Oak Savannah Restoration project, white spruce and Jack pine seed orchards and a seed bank that is located at the greenhouse.

The manager of the Red Lake Greenhouse is Gloria Whitefeather-Spears. Gloria has worked at the greenhouse for 29 years.

"Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal."

~ Henry Ford (1863-1947)

Oak Savannah Restoration Project

~ Paul Pooler, Fire Ecologist Midwest and Great Plains Regions



Oak seedlings in foreground on the Oak Savanna project at Red Lake

Recognizing the need to regenerate and protect oak savannah habitat from unwanted wild fires, the Red Lake Division of Forestry has developed a conservation plan in conjunction with the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Environmental Quality Incentive Program and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

The Oak Savannah Project area is approximately 14 acres in size and has a history of wildfire that exceeds normal fire activity associated with oak savannahs. The high fire activity is a threat to the savannahs ability to regenerate itself. Additionally, agricultural practices close to the oak savannahs have introduced several varieties of non-native grasses and other herbaceous plants that have displaced native grasses and shrubs.

During the fall of 2005, acorns were collected from various locations throughout the Red Lake Reservation. Variations of oak include red and burr oak. The acorns were planted, raised and monitored the Red Lake Green House in Redby, Minnesota. In the spring of 2007 the seedlings were planted on the project area.

In addition to the oak seedlings, a seed mix of native grasses and forbs including switch grass, Indian grass, and big bluestem were planted in the project area to help preserve the under story. Also to help protect the area from unwanted fire, a 20 foot fire break has been established around the periphery of the site.



Fuels Reduction Projects Help Save Homes on the Colville Indian Reservation

~ Gene Lonning, NW Regional Fuels Specialist



Manila Creek - Casterdale House looking South West

~ Photo Gene Lonning

On Monday, September 10, 2007 at approximately 1130 hours the Manila Creek Fire was reported to the Mt. Tolman Fire Center. The fire was located in a relatively open, mixed ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir stand. Suppression resources dispatched to the blaze included five engines, a water tender, three dozers, a type three helicopter, two CL215s (super scoopers), two heavy air tankers, an 11-person hand crew, and miscellaneous overhead who managed the fire as a Type-3 incident.

Before the shift change (scheduled for 1200 hours, on Tuesday), suppression resources were getting ready to implement tactics to cut off the northern progression of the fire and contain it at 250+ acres. Unfortunately, the wildfire slopped over quickly constructed containment lines into a steep, heavily timbered drainage to the north around 1130

hours. At that point, a type 2 Incident Management Team was ordered and by 1700 hours the wildfire, which was close to being corralled once again, blew out all along the northern containment lines, making big runs up toward Keller Butte.

Colville suppression resources continued to fight this wildfire Tuesday afternoon into Wednesday evening, until it transitioned to the Type 2 IMT. At this point, the wildfire was approximately 2 miles west of two homes along the Manila Creek Road, another home approximately 2 miles west towards the Mt. Tolman Fire Center, and numerous other structures in the vicinity. The objective following the blow-up was to cut off the northerly spread of the wildfire using dozer lines constructed east and west of Keller Butte, and tie into the 2001 Buffalo Lakes Wildfire to the west and to a north-south road system that passed right by the Mt. Tolman Fire Center to the east.

To complicate efforts on the Manila Creek Fire, a new fire was reported to the west. This fire, named the Timberline, was mostly in grass and brush. The two CL215s and two heavy air tankers were re-routed to this start, along with most of the remaining initial attack resources. The Timberline had a lot of potential to get very large and threaten numerous structures, thus the re-prioritization of suppression resources. The Timberline was contained at 614 acres that evening.

The transition to a Type-2 IMT on Wednesday brought hope of relief so Colville forces could go back to initial attack duties. This hope was short lived however, as the weather forecast brought news of a frontal passage and a red flag warning for high winds out of the north. By 1430 hours, containment lines that had been holding the fire to the west and south were breached as the fire spotted and ran south of the Manila Creek Road. At this point, we feared there was nothing to stop the fire’s southerly progression, until it hit Lake Roosevelt to the south and the San Poil River to the east, with many more homes and structures in it’s path.

As fire began this southerly run, it was also spreading east along the Manila Creek Road and drainage. This put houses and structures at risk in the Swawilla basin, and structure protection resources were ordered around 1400 hours. These interface structures were on the flats near Roosevelt Lake in flashy cheat grass and bitterbrush/sagebrush habitat. Both of the houses, west of Mt. Tolman, along the Manila Creek Road, were vacant at the time the fire began to spread east and plans for Colville resources to burn out around these two houses during evening hours were implemented at approximately 2100 hours.

An evacuation plan was put together Wednesday morning for the Mt. Tolman Fire Center – San Poil District Office. The primary goal of this evacuation was to move out all personnel working and living there, and re-locate the initial and extended attack dispatch operations and other initial attack personnel and equipment to a temporary location so as not to disrupt IA operations.

Also, over the course of Wednesday afternoon, operations section folks from Type 2 IMT worked with Colville Type 3 overhead to develop new strategies for this evolving suppression effort. The Type 2 IMT agreed to a “running take over” of the Manila Creek Fire at 1200 Hours but, other than team overhead (and the Colville resources already on the fire), resources were in short supply. As resources arrived (including a couple hotshot crews) and Division Supervisors developed suppression strategies, they were sent out to the line to support operations. The Wednesday night shift only had a strike team of engines, with their

primary objective to save structures in the Swawilla basin.

Trigger points were identified (see map next page) by the operations personnel from both teams at approximately 1700 hours. At 1948 hours, the wildfire had spread east, over the 1100 Road. The crossing of the 1100 Road was a pre-established evacuation trigger point, calling for evacuation of personnel within one hour’s notification. At 2010 hours, the wildfire spread up and crested the ridge directly west of the Center Road, triggering the evacuation of all personnel, excluding suppression resources. Evacuees were instructed to rendezvous at the Keller Longhouse for a head count. From there they moved to the Keller Clinic. Dozers were sent to put control lines around the Mt. Tolman Fire Center and prep the Mt. Tolman Road for burn-out operations that were implemented later that evening.

The burn out operations commenced around 2359 hours, with 4 engines, 1 dozer and approximately 10 hand crew personnel, plus miscellaneous overhead. They started at the Manila Creek Road intersection and worked their way north, slowly conducting the burn out operations. Overnight, there was very little humidity recovery and they faced light, down canyon southerly winds, which tended to push embers down canyon and across the road. By 0600 hours, on Thursday, September 13, they had finished over a mile of burn out and tied in with their escape route road (which would take them back east and south to the Manila Creek Road).

Night operations resources were relieved that morning for much needed rest. From that point, the FMO and

Project Name	Treatment Name	Acres	TreatmentType(s)	Mo/Yr Completed
San Poil	San Poil	542	Broadcast	5/04
San Poil	Tolman HFR Rx Burn	1206	Broadcast	3/04
San Poil 2006	Tolman HFR Rx Burn	46	Broadcast	5/06
Alice Creek	Casterdale Rd	12	Thin/Hand Pile & Burn	12/05 & 12/06
Alice Creek	Keller Area Structures	59	Thin (didn't count Hand Pile & Burn)	9/05
Alice Crk 2006	Casterdale Pile Burn	16	Hand Pile Burn	11/06
Keller Ridge HFR	KR Fuel Break	33	Thin/Hand Pile & Burn	9/06

HFR treatments that have been accomplished since 2004 in the areas of this wildfire.



Manila Creek - Casterdale House looking South.

AFMO took a box of fusees and burned out the rest of the road completing this operation by approximately 0900 hours.

The ability to successfully complete the burnout under difficult fire weather conditions was direct result of Hazard Fuel Reduction projects completed in recent years in the area surrounding the Mt. Tolman Fire Center. The table (previous page) illustrates HFR treatments that have been accomplished since 2004 in the areas of this wildfire.

The WUI thinning, hand piling and burning treatments surrounding the two homes along the Manila Creek Road provided for a burn out operation that may not have been successful had the area not been treated. The understory thinning and ladder fuel reduction treatments facilitated a burn out with lower intensity surface fire, which we believe saved these two homes and accompanying outbuildings.

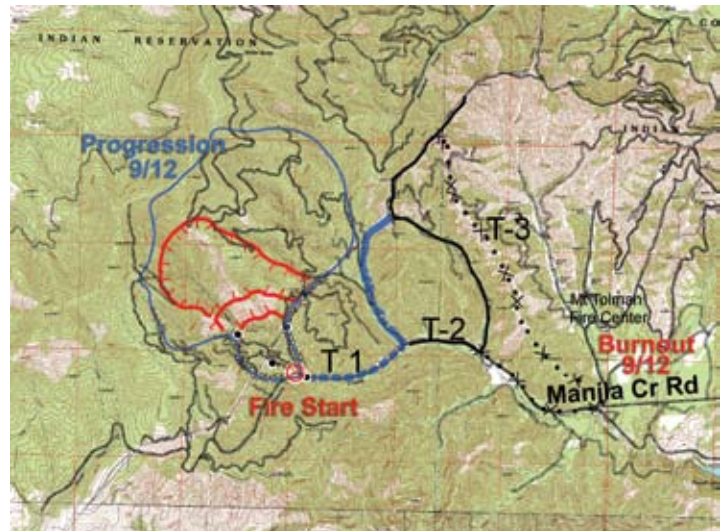
The San Poil project broadcast burn treatments in the area of the Mt. Tolman road reduced fine fuel loading on the ground and ladder fuels, which in turn, greatly decreased the fire behavior adjacent to the road, creating a lower intensity underburn that greatly reduced mortality in the closed canopy Ponderosa pine stand. The bottom line for the Mt. Tolman Road burn out operation is that it successfully stopped the eastern progression of the fire, north of the Manila Creek Road. If this had not been completed successfully, there is a very good chance that the wildfire could have continued to burn east and burned thru the town of Keller.

Some additional facts concerning the Manila Creek Fire:

- Final acreage at containment = 26,805
- Determined to be arson caused; investigation on-going.
- Destroyed in the wildfire were a small bus, travel trailer, and an old cabin.
- ERCs were still in the mid 80th percentile and the BI for the days of the blow up were extreme.
- Fire Containment: Friday, 21 Sept, 07; Type 2 IMT transitioned back to a Colville Reservation Type 3 IMT.



Manila Creek Fire Progression Map, 9/12-21/07. Progression mapped for 9/12, 9/13, 9/14 & final 9/21



Manila Creek Fire Trigger Point Map for evacuation of the Mt Tolman Fire Center, 9/12-13/07

- Most resources de-mobbed from Type 3 IMT by end of shift, September 25, 2007.
- Planning for timber salvage has started; estimates of 10-30 million board feet of salvage timber to be removed

The FMO, Ike Cawston, had several observations about how this suppression effort evolved, with some of the key points listed below:

- He was in awe over the explosiveness and extreme rapid spread of this fire, especially this late in the fire season.
- He continues to be humbled by the unselfish commitment of fire fighters (specifically referring to the volunteers that were willing to put in an extra shift in order to burn out and help secure the Mt. Tolman Fire Center).
- There are and should always be lessons learned from any such experience; “We can always learn something and improve”.
- Fire fighting is a team effort; it can’t be done single handedly. He feels that he is privileged to be working with a great team.



Fuels Reduction and Fire Response on Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation Wisconsin

~ Dave Pergolski, BIA - GLA Fuels Management

In 2003 the Great Lakes Agency started Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fuel reduction projects on the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation (LCO) near Hayward, WI. The first project that was done was fuel reduction, and fuel breaks around two communities, Drytown, and Water tower. These areas have a 100 acre young red pine plantation in the center that is about 20 years old with grassy openings. The area was showing an increase of juvenile fire starts, most of which had been suppressed at small acreages (>5). This area had the potential for intense fire behavior on the very high fire danger days.

With consultation from the tribe and the foresters we decided not to remove any of the pines because of their value. The fuels treatments implemented were



Increase defensible space, ladder fuel removal.

to increase the defensible space around homes; create fuel breaks around the plantation; mow high ignition areas; and reduce the ladder fuels between the breaks and homes.

On April 29th it was a Red Flag day with the humidity's around 15%, temperature in the 80's, and winds out of the west at 12-17mph gusting to 25mph. The area WIDNR had pre-positioned extra staff and tractor plows from the southern part of the state because of the extreme fire danger. The GLA-BIA contracts all wildland fire suppression at LCO to the state, however the BIA staff was on call.

The fire started at around 1300 on the west side of a red pine plantation. Eric Crowe chief of the LCO VFD was the first on scene, and the WIDNR was not far behind them. The WIDNR Hayward Ranger Kim Lemke was the Incident Commander. With the extreme fire conditions the fuels in the area, and being in the WUI, he ordered additional resources from local fire departments, and law enforcement.



LCO VFD preparing to fight fire when it drips to the ground.

Six fire departments the Sawyer City Sheriff, and LCO Police had the evacuation of 55 homes underway within 13 minutes of the initial report. A SEAT was ordered after initial size up to support the tractor plows and structure branch.

The fire moved quickly to the east through one pine plantation and into a young aspen stand and then continued into the Drytown



Sustained crown fire going through plantation; fuel treatment around the LCO Boys & Girls Club

pine plantation. When the fire hit the Drytown plantation the winds picked up and it quickly became a sustained crown fire heading toward about 55 homes to the east. The suppression started at the heel of the fire and worked the flanks with 2 tractor plows on each flank; they were using indirect tactics, and burning out the line as they progressed. A 10 foot wide break had been constructed to stop surface fires in 2003/04, which is maintained every spring. It is located between the plantation and the woods directly adjacent to the homes. The crown fire easily jumped the break and went to the woods adjacent to the homes. In 2004, all the ladder fuels had been chipped in a 60 foot area around the homes. Due to this treatment the fire fell to the surface and the firefighters were able to safely suppress the fire before it reached the homes. Eric Crowe the LCO VFD said “Without those treatments, the fire would have for sure got into the big pines next to the houses and we would have had no chance to save the homes until after the fire went by.” That fuels treatment along with the good coordination between fire departments and the WIDNR saved the structures.

After the fire the BIA LCO field foresters worked on getting the dead and dying trees out. They found



Whole tree biomass removal by local contractor for OSB plant furnace.

out the local OSB factory would be interested in the trees as biomass for their furnaces. A contract was signed and they started whole tree cutting, hauling them to the plant seven miles away. Although now the trees gone now, there is still going to be fire danger to the homes from the tall grasses that have replaced the trees. We are looking into prescribed fire to treat the grasses and eliminate the fire hazard in the future.

In conclusion, the BIA Great Lakes Agency WUI fuel treatments

combined with the great coordination of suppression efforts between the WIDNR, Lac Courte Oreilles, Town of Hayward, City of Hayward, Bass Lake, Stone Lake, Round Lake, Spider Lake fire departments, LCO Police Department, Sawyer County Sheriff’s Department, and the LCO Utilities, who had to increase water to the community fire hydrants, saved 25 homes considered to be in imminent danger and a total of 55+ saved if the fire would have continued to spread through the homes.



In Memory

Longtime Employee Honored at Dedication

~ Kim Swaney, Char-Koosta News

RONAN — If you could draw a picture, sharpen an axe, fall a tree, repair any tool, operate just about anything with a motor, ride a Harley, start a fire, or be a devout father, trusted friend and co-worker, and do it all first-rate, well, you may be just be talking about Fred Roullier.

On Tuesday, June 12, family, friends, co-workers, and others recognized



In attendance for the dedication in memory of Fred Roullier, were many of the Montana Indian Fire Fighters, foresters, and Fred’s family and friends.

~ Kim Swaney photo, courtesy of Char-Koosta News

within the forestry industry, took time to pay tribute to Fred Roullier, CSKT's Division of Fire warehouseman. A large boulder with an embedded black-colored piece of granite found by his colleagues was engraved with Fred's picture and a poem written by his good friend, Alan "Gernie" Grenier.

Fred was known in many circles, and why shouldn't he be; he had worked for the tribes for more than 21 years.

At the time of Fred's death, he was one of an elite group of certified "Class C" sawyers in the entire country. In 1991 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs developed the "C fallers" program, Fred was one of the first, if not the first, who completed and received the highest rating a faller could get.

David Koch with the National Fire Center presented Fred's daughter Lindsey with a posthumous plaque on Tuesday, recognizing Fred's contributions to the national program and his accomplishments as a Class C sawyer.

Basil "Baz" Tanner, a friend and colleague, had taken trips with Fred to Washington, Oregon and Kansas more recently to offer training and certification. Most of the stories about Fred, he couldn't tell, teased Baz.

During the dedication, Dan Roullier, Fred's youngest brother had shared a story about his older brother. He had asked Fred to help him cut down some trees for an elder woman up North Crow. Fred would jump at the chance to help someone, especially when it was his family. But before Dan and Fred realized, the fire was next to the house and they nearly had a catastrophe. Dan remembers saying, "We" and in true Roullier form, Fred pipes up, "Whose 'we,' fool?"

Division of Fire Manager Tony Harwood remembered how well Fred knew his job and the pride and creativity he brought to it.



Friends of Fred Roullier including Baz Tanner (L) and Alec Quequesah (R), prepare to light a braided strip of sweetgrass prior to the dedication ceremony.
 ~ Kim Swaney photo, courtesy of Char-Koosta News)

"Right there from square one, he did a top-notch job, even working [sharpening] tools, there were no wasted movements," reminisced Harwood.

Fuels Program Manager, Ron Swaney, spoke about how Fred always wanted to be the leader and how he loved to make fire. While everyone else used a drip-torch to make a fire line on the ground, Fred would be painting the trees, and could still get'r done.

Terry Tanner, Natural Resources Wildland Recreation, had asked Fred to help at Blue Bay campground by removing some old growth timber. "He cut through those trees like it was warm butter," says Tanner.

And as far as Fred's work performance goes, "He set the bar really high," boasts Tanner.

Although Tuesdays are meeting days for the Tribal Council, Ronan District Tribal Council Representative Carole Lankford also paid tribute to Roullier. Four of Lankford's sons: Robert, Brad, Chris and Craig McCrea, all were under Fred's tutelage at one time or another.

Most of the dedication allowed people time to share memories of Fred with his mother, Helen; his sisters, Gayle, Rosemary, Kathy and Roberta; and his brother, Dan; and his daughter, Lindsey; and numerous cousins and friends.

However, it was also a somber moment. Co-worker and friend Dan Guardipe asked the family for forgiveness. Guardipe's son and nephew were also involved in the multi-vehicle accident near CSKT's Division of Fire, as Fred left from work on his Harley Davidson motorcycle that Monday evening last summer on August 28. The accident also claimed the life of Guardipe's nephew, P.J. Finley.

As summer begins, CSKT's Division of Fire employees cannot help but remember how their warehouseman took the time to care for the yard and his fellow employees.

As Alec Quequesah said at the beginning of the dedication ceremony, "We can still feel that sadness. When we think it's going to leave us, we remember the day he left us."

All that are left is the memories, the laughter, the humor and the love for a man who worked hard and played hard.

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The boulder with embedded granite found by colleagues, engraved with Fred's picture features a poem by Alan "Gernie" Grenier.

"Things will get better -- despite our efforts to improve them"

~ Will Rogers (1879 ~ 1935)



Seminole Agency Ready to Host Prescribed Fire Mentoring Hub

~ Craig Cook, BIA-NIFC

The idea behind the mentoring hub concept was to select a place, or agency, that had an ongoing body of work that could serve as a destination for BIA and Tribal fire employees to go on a detail and assist an agency, while gaining needed experience to further their qualifications.

Field Coordinators

An important element in the success of each group will be the assignment of a fully qualified RXB2, to serve as a Field Coordinator/Mentor for the group. The Field Coordinator will serve as the primary liaison and mentor between a group of five to seven participants and

Work Schedule

Participants should be prepared for long work days in the field. Although overtime is not guaranteed, certain prescribed fire “windows” may require working up to a 14 hour shift. The participants should plan on working 6 days a week with one day off per week.

2008 Schedule

Group	Travel Day	Work Days	Travel Days
1	Wednesday, January 9	January 10 - 28	Tuesday, January 29
2	Wednesday, January 30	January 30 - February 18	Tuesday February 19

Desired Group Composition:

Participants	Minimum Qualifications	Qualification Status
1	RXB2	Qualified
1 to 2	RXB2	Trainee
1 to 2	FIRB	Trainee
vanes	FFT1 / ICT5 / ICT4 / HECM / PSDO	Qualified or Trainee

Cost Summary

Travel expenses for detailers will be funded through the Regional Blanket Training Accounts. Detailer’s base salary will be paid by the Sending Unit. All overtime earned will be coded and charged to the associated project code.

The Seminole Agency was selected as the pilot Prescribed Fire Mentoring Hub because it offers yearly RX Burn Targets and has a need for extra help to conduct their burning operations. Equally important and leading to the selection of the Seminole Agency was the unique timing of their burn windows which occur in the months of January and February thereby increasing the likelihood that other BIA and Tribal Fire employees will be able to break away from their home units and participate in the program.

the Seminole Agency FMO or Forest Manager.

Travel and Housing

New housing is being established at Seminole Agency to support the incoming detailers. Housing consists of mobile homes and travel trailers located at the Big Cypress or Brighton forestry compounds. Groups may utilize mobile travel trailers at times to minimize travel time to their work sites.

Applications

Applications will be accepted from Bureau and Tribal employees currently working in fire management. Application deadline for this year’s program is November 30, 2007.

Applications should be sent to:

Craig Cook
Mentoring Program Coordinator
National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Ave
Boise, ID 83705-5354

You are probably thinking how to get a piece of Florida sunshine in January. Well, here is how the Program will work.

Cost of travel will be funded by using the Regional Blanket Training Accounts.

Meals

Housing will be equipped with a kitchen which can be used to prepare meals and make lunches. This will make the detail much like a fire camp situation where all meals are provided by the incident.

The program will be able to support two groups of participants this season. Each group of five to seven participants will be organized by the Mentoring Program Coordinator (Craig Cook) from the pool of applicants. Length of assignment will be 21 days, including travel.

Please contact Craig for additional information (208-387-5965) (FAX-208-387-5580)

“A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.”

~ Albert Einstein

Blacksnake's Corner

~ Walt Lara - Yurok Forestry

In my Culture, Yurok Indian children are taught the lessons of foolishness and dangers, among other things, through storytelling. In the beginning of time coyote, who is a great teacher, was out in the mountains picking huckleberries for the winter. He spent the day eating the berries instead of gathering. His grandmother told him not to eat so many huckleberries because he would get a belly ache. As usual Coyote didn't listen.

It began to get dark and he lay down by the fire to keep warm. Coyote's stomach hurt so badly. He got the poops. He pooped so much he had to get up every little while. Oh he was miserable, so he looked around and saw a fir tree just oozing with pitch. Coyote thought a little while and pretty soon he was under that tree and pulled out a handful of pitch. He reached around under his tail and pitched up his murter, aka butt. "Grama don't know what she is talking about!" he said.

Coyote went back to warm his hands over the fire. He turned around to warm his back and the pitch burst into flame. "Yewool!" he screamed and ran off, yelping through the woods.

That's why Coyote has that chard and crooked looking tail. Coyote's kind of a crazy guy and humans mimic his behavior all the time. In these stories there are natural, unrelated and logical outcomes. In this case the natural outcome of eating too many berries gave him a belly ache. His unrelated outcome or pitch solution to the problem didn't help much. The logical outcome of the pitch bursting into flame created a lasting identification of Coyote, from which we can all learn.

As a young man around 16 years old my two friends and I would head up the highway to try and get jobs on the wildland fire lines. At that time wildland fire personnel would stop the drivers along the highway looking for individuals fit for fire duty, unlike the processes of today. After a quick briefing the officials would then send those that met the criteria on into the fire camps to work. Since you would often be assigned to three person crews, my friends and I fit right in and would be assigned to build fire line or put in trenches where there might be the possibility of roll out.

These experiences influenced my life in many ways. One time, I was up in the O'Brien, Oregon area and noticed the smoke jumpers training camp which looked exciting to me. A few years later I became a paratrooper in the Army. After my honorable discharge I went back to O'Brien to sign up and ready to jump again. Unfortunately I was told I would have to go through their training program before I would be accepted. At the time I didn't want to go through that again so, I went home to work in the woods.

When the 60's came around I was a timber faller in the Redwoods. I would go on fires as a faller. Those jobs paid a lot more money than building fire line. Often times brushers would show up at a wild fire and claim to be fallers just for the extra money. They were eventually discovered for what



Walt "Blacksnake" Lara

they were and sent down the road. As an experienced faller I'd witnessed terrible falling procedures from these inexperienced brushers and others.

Today I am a firm supporter of A, B and C Faller Training Certification, a logical outcome to a potentially dangerous situation. We can't identify brushers or other impersonators as fallers from their chard and crooked tails, but we can identify their experience from their Faller Training Red Card Certificates. Timber falling is a dangerous occupation.



1954 – Fort Campbell, KY. Walt, upper left hand corner wearing black gloves, was a cadet in Fox Company 2nd Battalion 188 11th Airborne Division.

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.

Thanks!

Thanks again to those of you who have submitted articles and photographs. Keep up the great work!

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

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 another address please contact us. Please make sure your seasonal fire employees have an opportunity to read Smoke Signals!

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"When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world."

~ George Washington Carver (1864-1943)