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Fort Apache Hotshots Celebrate Silver Anniversary!

~ By Ron Miller, Supervisory Forester, Fort Apache Agency;
Ralph Thomas, Former Fort Apache Hotshot Superintendent;
Mark Burnette, Squad Boss, Fort Apache Hotshots

*“You call yourself a
firefighter and I must
bow to you.
I must tip my feathers
to you.”*

*~ Chairman Ronnie
Lupe addressing the
Fort Apache Hotshots
during their 25th
anniversary banquet*

The Fort Apache Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) hosted their 25th year reunion in style at the White Mountain Apache Tribe’s Hon-Dah Casino and Resort on October 29, 2007. Over 315 people attended this historic event. Guest speakers included the White Mountain Apache Tribal Chairman Ronnie Lupe, Former Hotshot Superintendents Gibson Pinal and Ralph Thomas, Former Fort Apache



Then & now ~ Above: The Fort Apache Hotshots at home on a thinning block during the early years in 1984. Below: The Shots in 2006 on assignment in Glacier National Park, Montana.



Agency Fire Management Officer Ken Butler and others. An entire royal court of tribal representatives and crown dancers also livened up the evening.

Ralph Thomas, who served as Hotshot Superintendent from 1984-1993, discussed some of the earlier days. “The earliest days were pretty rough getting acceptance from other agencies and their hotshot crews but we proved ourselves on the line. I think the longest tour was 42 days straight. There were no time frames at all back then. You didn’t know when you’d come home. On that 42-day assignment alone, we fought fires in Utah, California, Montana, and Oregon. We helped open the door for other BIA crews across the country.”



Crewmember wears the 25th Anniversary shirt.

Former Acting Hotshot Superintendent Varnell Gatewood Jr. gave an excellent PowerPoint presentation which brought back a host of memories to those present. Varnell recalled that “We as a tribe made this work. We are warriors as were our ancestors.” He also thanked the hotshot families and noted how invaluable their day-to-day support was to the program as a whole.

There was plenty of reason to celebrate this 25th anniversary. The Fort Apache IHC was the first Native American Hotshot crew when they were established in March, 1982. Ken Butler, FMO for the Fort Apache Agency at the time remembers wanting to establish a hotshot crew because “our guys already had a lot more experience than other hotshot crews around the country.” The crew was hand-picked from local Type 2 crews based on important criteria such as their work ethic, positive attitude, abilities, endurance and willingness to endure the tough conditions. A total of 114 firefighters have had the honor of

being called a Fort Apache Hotshot during this first 25 years.

Through the years the Fort Apache IHC has been on hundreds of fires all across the United States. An annual report from 1998 discusses how the Fort Apache hotshots began the season on the Sheep Ranch Fire in Minnesota in April and then moved on to assignments in Florida, Oregon, Colorado, Nevada and Montana. As stated in the report “the crew performed in an exemplary manner.” And this was not an isolated year. Some of the more exotic assignments have included a stint in Alaska, a hurricane assignment in Puerto Rico, and a fire off the Mississippi coast on Horn Island. “We had a 45-minute boat ride out to that fire,” recalls Brian Quintero, current assistant Superintendent for the crew. “There were dolphins swimming next to our boat.”

Four Type 1 Incident Management Teams (IMTs) were brought in to manage over 2,500 firefighters and the numerous aircraft, engines and dozers needed to fight the incredible blazing inferno. Even among all those dedicated professional firefighters, the Fort Apache IHC distinguished itself. Rick Lupe, former superintendent of the crew and a Division Supervisor for one of the Type 1 IMTs during the fire, specifically chose the Fort Apache Hotshots to help in the last ditch effort to stop the fire’s northeast spread. Rick and the crew were declared national heroes when their efforts succeeded in stopping the “monster” before it hit the community of Show Low, Arizona in all its fury. ABC’s Nightline with Ted Koppel recognized the major contributions of this special hotshot crew in a documentary aired nationwide after the fire. Rick Lupe was honored as Grand Marshall of the Show Low parade the following month.



Crew on fire on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona.

Probably one of the crew’s greatest challenges, however, occurred at home. In June, 2002, the Rodeo and then the Chediski Fire started on the Tribe’s own turf. Before it was over the Rodeo-Chediski Fire consumed 455,000 acres (276,000 acres on the Reservation) and over 450 homes.

Sadly, after his heroic efforts, Rick Lupe died from burns sustained on a prescribed burn the following year. A bronze statue of Rick now stands in front of the town library in Pinetop-Lakeside, Arizona--a fitting reminder to all of the extreme sacrifice he gave to the people and communities that he

loved. His funeral, complete with a Department of Interior Honor Guard was attended by many dignitaries and included entire hotshot crews. Letters of condolence also poured in from all parts of the country and included ones from the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Interior,



Memorial to former Fort Apache IHC Superintendent Rick Lupe.



Fort Apache crew buggies on the Navajo Mountain Complex on the Navajo Indian Reservation in 2006.

and the Governor of Arizona. The Governor also provided the U.S. flag that draped over Rick's casket.

Trenton Prins, the current superintendent for the crew, didn't speak at the banquet but confided, "I've always looked up to the Fort Apache Hotshot crew. It is a great honor and privilege for me to be working with a crew with such a legendary status in the fire world."

White Mountain Apache Chairman Lupe summed up his remarks to the current and former members of the Fort Apache Hotshot crew that had gathered

for this historic event: "You are one of the best. I have heard it so many times and I honor you. God bless you."

Fort Apache Hotshot Superintendents

1982-1983	Gibson Pinal
1984-1993	Ralph Thomas
1993-2001	Rick Lupe
2003-2005	Dan Philbin
2006-2007	Trenton Prins

* Varnell Gatewood and Marco Minjarez also filled in as Acting Superintendents for the Fort Apache Hotshots.

have been trying to comprehend the complexities, and plan for the coordination and management of these fires.

During this past fire season, the Agency Administrators of the Boise, Salmon-Challis, and Payette National Forests got together and took a critical look at the large fires within their jurisdictions. They not only acknowledged these fires could not be "put out" by traditional suppression efforts, they also accepted the fact that their large fires were going to burn until nature produced a season ending event. These administrators took a look at the "big picture". They decided to collaborate, and in doing so, created a "Mega-WFSA", which encompassed fires burning on all three forests. The Mega-WFSA provided for consistency, and eliminated the



Administration

Large and Long Duration Fires ~ Appropriate Management Response

~ Rowdy Muir, IC, Great Basin Type 1 IMT

This is an excerpt from a more detailed "Lessons Learned" document by Rowdy Muir. This document focuses primarily on the subject of Appropriate Management Response (AMR).

Over the past several years we have seen an increase in large, long duration fires. As a result, these fires have required more involvement from Multi Agency Coordination Groups, Agency Administrators, Line Officers, Incident Management Teams, Fire Management Officers, and other land managers who

potential conflict of differing priorities under the circumstances of having multiple fires with multiple IMT's. It also gave IMT's the opportunity to adjust tactics and strategies according to the values to protect. These managers looked at the reality of the situation and made the **true** appropriate management responses. These courageous managers may have set a new standard and paved the way for the future of fire management.

The following bullets are some my 2007 "Lessons Learned":

- Large and long duration fires make a huge impact to grazing, wildlife, agriculture, and the way of life in a community. It doesn't matter where the fires are. Regardless of the appraised value, the acres that are burned and the impact it has on those acres are similar from one fire to the next. Loss of grazing allotments and wildlife habitat are equal to the loss of structures and the devastation which occurs in the urban interface. The impacts are life changing to all the individuals involved. In other words, my desert is as important as your trees.
- It often takes a great deal of patience to implement "appropriate management response". There is an incredible amount frustration involved when allowing fire to move across the landscape in an understory type burn without interference. We're taught to be aggressive, burnout, contain and control. We are "suppression" oriented and we want to put the fire out. It is not in our culture to want to let a fire continue to burn. However, we should look at opportunities to backfire and burnout under low to moderate prescriptions. There is nothing "wrong", and are many things "right" with a fire that is accomplishing fuels reduction, and promoting good vegetative growth vs. the results of massive burnouts under extreme conditions. We need to learn to mix and match our tactics to achieve our suppression goals while providing for vegetative health.
- Our national training curriculum needs to be adjusted so the whole spectrum of fire management strategies is considered. Currently,



Cascade Complex August 2007

Photo ~ Bryan Day, BLM NIFC

our suppression tactics are comprised of digging line (using natural barriers etc.) and mopping up. We need to incorporate chipping, use of massive pump and sprinkler systems, cabin wrapping, GPS, thinning, gel applications, etc. to our training curriculum. The days of mopping up large and long duration fires are for the most part, gone, however there will always be situations where the use of mop up will continue.

- Mega-WFSA's are great tools which allow for a variety of strategic and tactical options. They can provide a management team with options to suppress where needed, confine where needed, and monitor where needed. Operations personnel have the tools to implement true AMR. The need to better understand "values to protect" is time consuming but critical. It may involve keeping the fire from crossing a certain road, away from a specific stream or meadow, or away from any other area identified for protection. The flexibility to use multiple tactics on one incident or

complex is a phenomenal idea. It allows managers to use full suppression, limited suppression, confinement, containment, control, or let the fire do what it wants to do in a specific area. Sometimes, we get locked into using single tactics and strategies. This multiple strategy philosophy should be seriously considered for adoption and use on public lands. This gives us an opportunity to take away the lines that border us from RX, wildfire, and wildfire use, and practice all three under one umbrella.

- Mega-WFSA's must be crafted carefully, so as not to become so large and costly that cooperators are afraid to become partners in this process. Whether the suppression or management costs are \$1 million or \$10 million, one or two percent can break a county or state budget.

- Allow communities to use their own fire protection districts to take responsibility for their own community. The community pays taxes for these services and has a right to receive the protection they are paying for. Rather than preventing or limiting these organizations from protecting their community, help them to work through State Homeland Security representatives for assistance. In many cases, under emergency declarations, the federal government will assume 75% of the cost for suppression efforts. Homeland Security officials are often able to find additional resources for the community.
- When faced with large and long duration fire probability, the public may be unwilling to accept AMR as a strategic plan. The public does not know what AMR really means since the term itself is ambiguous and non-descriptive. When AMR has been explained during public meetings, the public will usually

accept AMR and allow managers to implement it. It is the responsibility of the local management unit to have candid, open and honest discussions about AMR with the public. This should be done immediately, in order for managers to present both short and long term plans. This

communication should always be done prior to the arrival of an IMT and will go a long way to providing for a stronger and more trustworthy relationship with the community.

Please take the opportunity prior to the next fire season to look at some

of the innovative strategies, tactics, and oversight you witnessed in 2007. Review the use of creative approaches, open minded thinking, and anything else which contributed to successes. Then, please share your experiences with the fire community so we can all benefit from your "lessons learned".

Native American Month... The NIFC Celebration

~ Laurel Simos, NIFC



The Umatilla Intertribal Drum Group opens the event.

Photo ~ Bryan Day, NIFC

BIA and the other NIFC agencies celebrated Native American Month at the Fire Center in Boise, Id. In respect to Veterans Day, the theme for this occasion was to remember our firefighters and our veterans.

The Umatilla Intertribal Drum Group drummed and sang for the 80 people who attended on November 7. BIA Fire Director, Lyle Carlile, opened the

event with a message to remember our fallen firefighters and our veterans.

The festivities began at the Wildland Firefighters Monument and moved indoors where the scent of Indian Tacos filled the building.

Burk Minor, Director of Public Relations for the Wildland Firefighter Foundation thanked participants for

providing support to the foundation and told the group he is, "honored to be a part of this celebration".

Teresa Wesley, coordinator and host for the event, recognized an honored guest, Jack Wilson, BLM Director of Fire and Aviation, ret., and WWII veteran.

Teresa thanked all of the volunteers and fry-bread makers who had stayed up particularly late the night before, for providing this delicacy. Teresa went on to say "We are here to commemorate Native Americans and interlink those warriors who fight fires on homeland soil with those who fight in foreign lands. Born as warriors, our people are taught to protect their homeland as soldiers or as wildland firefighters." She went on to say, "They fight for the safety of family, home and country."

Teresa also said, "The Wildland Firefighter Foundation provides healing for the families of those who have died while firefighting and to those who have been injured. We are here to remember the ones that don't come home." After the recognitions, the group was treated to a lunch of homemade Indian Tacos.

Human Resource Specialists Add 'Sole' at Incidents

~ Lori Johnston, HRSP, USFS Southern Region

Incident Management Teams almost always include a Human Resource Specialist (HRSP) to provide a point of contact for incident personnel to discuss human resource concerns. Occasionally they spot a situation where they can help a crew member walk a little easier.

HRSP, Mary Nunez and HRSP Trainee, Larry Sandoval recognized such a situation while on a fire in Montana during the 2007 season. The camp crew was made up of students from a Kentucky Job Corp center. They were

assigned to the Saw Mill Complex in Montana, a long way from home. Mary and Larry noticed that two of the students were wearing inappropriate footwear; one student had her boots taped together with duct tape and the other was wearing tennis shoes. The HRSPs knew that proper footwear was required on an incident and that these young people needed boots for their work.

The HRSP's contacted a Montana Job Corp Center Director, who graciously arranged for the students to receive a new pair of boots. Imagine the smiles on these student's faces when they were presented with brand new boots at the



These students stationed in Montana this summer were a long way from their Kentucky home. The names of these individuals were unavailable to Smoke Signals



Duct tape keeps this well worn boot in one piece.

morning briefing. You might say the Human Resource Specialists brought heart and "sole" to their work!



Fuels

SCA Awards Dinner Great Plains Region

~ Paul Pooler, Fire Ecologist Midwest and Great Plains Regions



Photo Caption: Certificate of appreciation presented to team leader, Molly Lundberg by Paul Pooler, Regional Fire Ecologist, at the awards dinner in Sioux City, Iowa.



From left to right: Alex Wade, Paul Pooler, Megan Spain, Duwayne Traversie, Molly Lundberg. Front row is Sver Sundgarrrd.

In November, the Student Conservation Association (SCA) hosted an appreciation dinner for the Great Plains South Team members in Sioux City, Iowa. Certificates of Appreciation from the Great Plains Region, BIA were awarded to each SCA team member.

In 2007, the task for the Team was to collect field data for nine reservations to help study the effect of fire and other land management practices throughout the Great Plains Region. A total of 125 pre-treatment plots were

established at Sisseton, Cheyenne River, Pine Ridge, Crow Creek and Rosebud reservations. Multiple post-treatment plots were re-measured at Yankton, Crow Creek, Lower Brule, Santee and Omaha reservations.

The work performed by the SCA team members was above and beyond the expectations of the Great Plains Region. The information gathered will be used for future prescribed fire planning and will help create a foundation for monitoring plan objectives.

Greening the Super Bowl

~ © Mary Stuever, Forester's Log, Dec. 2007



Two hundred thousand pine seedlings are staged ready to plant on the vast denuded regions of the 2002 Rodeo-Chediski burn. Most of the trees are in the shade house at the McNary greenhouses but many baskets are scattered through the woods, next to planting units. The melting snow is saturating the soil leaving perfect tree planting conditions. I have seven tribal entrepreneurs with signed contracts ready to plant when the roads dry out enough to get into the remote areas.

Unfortunately, we are out of funds. I am signing paperwork to layoff thirty-one employees. I am telling the contractors to have hope. I am trying to find it myself.

The Tribal Leadership and I have focused for years on trying to find money to plant trees. The Tribe asked the Bureau of Indian Affairs's Fort Apache Agency to help us find a half-million dollars this year to plant these seedlings. This spring the government gave us \$54,000. They promised another \$50,000 but had to take it back because of their own funding shortfalls. The Tribal Leadership made several trips to Washington D.C. to speak with our Congressional delegation. Events like Hurricane Katrina or the war in Iraq took precedence over putting trees back into vastly burned pieces of remote reservation land.

There is one bright spot in our situation. In C-1 Wash tribal entrepreneurs are still planting trees thanks to Super Bowl XLII. Among the many efforts oriented toward hosting the February 3, 2008 event in Phoenix is the concept of "greening the Super Bowl." The

National Football League's (NFL) Environmental Program which includes recycling and conservation efforts also is hosting several tree planting projects including 42 acres on tribal lands of the White Mountain Apache.

C-1 Wash lies just above the isolated community of Cibecue on the western end of Fort Apache Indian Reservation in east central Arizona. A short distance down the mountain near the Red Dust Arena an unemployed tribal member started the Rodeo fire in 2002. The Rodeo-Chediski fire burned 277,000 acres on the reservation and destroyed over 50,000 acres of commercial forest. This forest fed the sawmill in Cibecue, but without the forest, the Tribe was forced to close the mill. Cibecue's unemployment rate doubled, leaving only a quarter of the residents with jobs. Then again, I just laid off seventeen more people from that community.

With special post-fire rehabilitation funding available immediately after the fire, the Tribe has planted 1.5 million trees on approximately 10,000 acres. However, over 80 million trees were killed by the fire. In areas where some trees survived, the forest is naturally regenerating, but many of the tribe's canyons along the Mogollon Rim burned so hot that no seed trees survived.

When faced last spring with an opportunity to grow more seedlings, knowing I had no secure funds to plant them in the fall, I took the "Field of Dreams" approach. "Grow them and the money will come."

Our hopes now lie in telling our story and hoping our tale will connect us to the funds we need for tree planting both immediately and in the long-run. We hope visibility of our program with Super Bowl XLII will help us find additional grants and donations.

The NFL's Environmental Program partners with the Arizona Super Bowl XLII Host Committee, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Arizona's Office of the State Forester, the Arizona Cardinals and the Salt River Project. They are also sponsoring tree planting with schools in the Phoenix Area and an additional 42 acres on the north end of the Rodeo-Chediski burn

on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. These projects reduce the environmental impact of hosting the Super Bowl. Restoring forests creates a wide variety of economic, aesthetic and environmental benefits and leaves a permanent legacy of Super Bowl XLII in Arizona.

Tribal members are planting the trees under contract with the tribe. As part of the post-fire economic recovery; tribal members have received training in small business and technical skills so that they are able to run their own businesses. Three local contractors will directly benefit from the Super Bowl planting.

Approximately 30,000 acres in the burn still need to be reforested. The tribe is hoping to plant a half million to a million trees annually for the next 20 years. A long-term tree planting program will provide economic opportunities to tribal members who live in the communities that have been devastated by the fire. Not only is the tribe focused on healing the land by planting trees, but by fostering tribal members as tree planting entrepreneurs, tree planting becomes a pathway for healing people too.

The Forester's Log is a monthly column published in newspapers and magazines primarily in the American west. Stuever is the Acting Tribal Forest Manager for the White Mountain Apache Tribe. She can be reached at mstuever@wmatforestry.com.



Omaha Tribal Bison Project

~ Paul Pooler, Fire Ecologist Midwest and Great Plains Regions

Andy Baker, Natural Resource Officer, for the Winnebago Agency has overseen this project from the conception. Andy stated this is one of the most fulfilling projects he has worked on during his time with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Along with Andy, Mike Tyndal, Director of Wildlife and Parks, stated their main objective is to keep stocking rates low enough to avoid over utilization as well as presenting visitors with an opportunity to observe bison in an active and healthy tall grass ecosystem.



Bison now graze in healthy tall grass.

In 2003, the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska made the decision to convert more than 100 acres of Missouri river bottom farmland into tall grass prairie for the introduction of bison. Reseeding combined with mechanical treatment and prescribed fire has returned a healthy tall grass ecosystem that many tribal members thought to be lost.

Using a mix of Big Bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass and switch grass combined with native forbs has created an ecosystem that is capable of supporting a small herd of bison for use by the tribe and its members.



Andy Baker (left), Natural Resource Officer, Winnebago Agency, oversaw the transition from farmland to tall grass prairie; Mike Tyndal (right), Director of Wildlife and Parks, in the project area.

Northwest Region: SCA & FIREMON

~ Laura Atkins, SCA Intern, BIA Portland

This past summer, Student Conservation Association (SCA) crews were assigned to the Yakama, Coeur d'Alene, and Warm Spring tribes in the Northwest Region. Their mission: FIREMON (fire effects monitoring and inventory protocol). Coming from all parts of the country, these three crews came together for the overall purpose of collecting the valuable FIREMON data.

FIREMON is a method of collecting data (i.e. fuel loads, topography, vegetation, trees, cover frequency, and plot description) to determine fire behavior in a location. This type of monitoring is crucial in collecting data for documenting fire effects, assessing ecosystem damage and benefit, evaluating the success or failure of a burn, and appraising the potential for



From left to right: Joey Deneke, Heather Lyons, Karen H. Poutier, Kyle Ochs, and Meg Chapman

future treatments. The FIREMON system consists of a sampling strategy manual, standardized sampling methods, field forms, Access database, and a data analysis program.

Beginning in January 2007, SCA crew leaders and interns were recruited for the upcoming season. The interns arrived at the three project sites on May 25th to get acquainted with their respective area and teammates. Internship training was held in McCall, Idaho on May 29th-June 6th providing training on FIREMON protocols, backcountry driving, wilderness first-aid, and CPR. The teams returned to project sites after the training, and began the first official day of work on June 11th. The interns' last day was November 21st while crew leaders will stay at their sites until December 1st.

The Coeur d' Alene crew, comprised of Meg Chapman, Joey Deneke, Karen H. Poutier, Kyle Ochs, and Heather Lyons also had a very successful internship. Patrick Warker, former SCA staff member and current Fuels Planner for the tribe noted how the SCA interns were very flexible in completing tasks for the tribe. They participated in numerous activities including fuels project monitoring, fire suppression, fire prevention, and other fuels management activities.

Throughout the six month internship, the crew was able to establish over one hundred and twenty photo monitoring plots. This form of monitoring provides a quick and simple way to visually observe change in stand structure over time. In addition to



From left to right: John-Royce Boehrs, Katie Sombat, and crew leader Tom Hanson



From left to right: Laura Atkins, Brent Demko, Anne Patrie, Ian Matthews, Blake Jordan, not pictured: Derek Vincent.

these plots, the crew also monitored forty FIREMON plots that had received treatments in the previous season.

Other tasks that the team stepped up to perform included using global positioning systems to delineate forest roads within treatment units and the accomplishments of the Tribal Fuels Crew, promoting wildland fire prevention at several community events, functioning as on-the-job mentors to high school students from the Tribe's Summer Youth Work Program, training Fuels Crew members in monitoring field methods, and researching the possibilities of biomass utilization.

The Warm Springs crew, Tom Hanson, John-Royce (J.R.) Boehrs, and Katie Sombat had a successful summer. Despite the eventful Warm Springs fire season, the crew was able to get out and collect data in areas not affected by the fire.

Every day was different for this crew; on average, they would begin at seven, driving to the reservation and then out the field. They worked ten hour days for four days a week. The crew successfully monitored ninety-seven FIREMON plots, and collected photo monitoring data on seventeen plots. While in the internship, the crew was able to receive instruction on S-130/S-190 Basic Wildland Firefighting/Fire

Behavior, S-212 Wildland Chainsaw, and the online training of Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) from the University of Idaho. The crew worked side by side with fire management, forestry, and natural resource management of Warm Springs. This allowed the crew to take in valuable cultural information from the tribe such as the importance of natural resources such as hydropower, forest products, and ranching for the Warm Springs economy.

The staff at Warm Springs was also able to offer tips on places to visit in off time. Katie was able to visit Smith Rock State Park, the Deschutes National Forest, Lake Tahoe, the Oregon coast, Lake Simtustus, and many other exciting places. After the internship, she will be looking for a job in the Environmental Science and/or Restoration Ecology. J.R. visited many interesting places including the Willamette National Forest, Three Sisters Wilderness, Cove Palisades State Park, and the Oregon Coast. He plans to obtain a professional position in GIS/Cartography with an environmentally focused organization. Tom was able to visit Crater Lake National Park, the Oregon coast, Smith Rock State Park, and explore the National Forest lands throughout Central Oregon. He plans to continue in the Ecology and Natural Resources field.

The Yakama SCA crew, made up of Ian Matthews, Blake Jordan, Derek Vincent, and Anne Patrie was able to complete a very busy fire monitoring season. Fuels management at the tribe had the crews focus on three pre treatment areas. These areas are comprised of sixty plots, and the crew was able to collect information on each. This kind of accomplishment will be very helpful for future monitoring of the sites. The data collected will be some of the first in the region to be computed with the Fuel Characteristic Classification System (FCCS) software.

Throughout the internship, the crew participated in various educational experiences including: wilderness first aid training, off-road driving/defensive driving, wildland firefighter, GIS, FIREMON methodology, local plant identification, CPR, Fire Regime Condition Class online training, fire education/Smokey events, and various cultural learning opportunities.

Crew leisure included: Mt. Adams, Mt. Rainier, Mount St. Helens, San Francisco, the Columbia River Gorge, Portland, Prosser, Seattle, and Orcas Island.

Ian plans to live and work in Portland after the internship. Blake is looking for an environmental conservation/policy job in the southeast D.C. area. Derek plans on finding a job in environmental science that will support him to pursue his interest in



From left to right: James Colhoff, Alex Whistler, Cory Winnie, John Szule, Len Diaz, Terry Shand, Gene Lonning, Laura Atkins, Karrie Stevens, and Melody Steele

photography, art, music, and other various media. Anne is hoping to work in the area of ethno botany.

At the Northwest Regional office, the SCA fire education position beginning in April of 2007 has brought many opportunities and experiences. Working with the prevention specialist, fuel ecologist, fuel specialist, and budget analyst, the tasks are wide-ranging.

Residing in Portland, Oregon, I find myself busy at work and enjoy exploring this beautiful part of the country. While in Portland, office duties can include anything from taking notes for a fire prevention conference call to compiling a comprehensive fuel treatment

summary for the past three years using National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) data. Outside the office, duties have included: Firewise training, a Regional FMO/ Fuels meeting, EPA Smoke Management meetings, Flathead Fire Readiness Review, fulfilling Radio Operator duties on two 2007 wildfires, SCA FIREMON field days with the crews, volunteering for Keep Oregon Green at the State Fair, a Juvenile Fire Setting conference, fire school, and field assistance to coworkers.

The next few months look to be very busy with a variety of tasks such as learning and applying the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS), learning the Fuels Characteristic Classification System (FCCS) software and using it to apply fire monitoring data, and setting up two regional meetings.

After this internship is completed in April of 2008, I will be looking to complete another SCA internship, hopefully at the same location and position.

More information on FIREMON can be found online at: <http://frames.nbii.gov/firemon>



Combined Efforts

~ Laura Atkins, SCA Intern, BIA Portland



Photo on left shows area prior to fuels treatment; right shows post-treatment.

Thanks to the hard work of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal (CSKT) firefighters in

cooperation with the state's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Wild

Horse Island, a Montana state park located on Flathead Lake, is receiving much needed wildfire fuel reduction

treatments. These treatments, which are taking place in pine stands on the south lake shores, are providing relief for state owned land as well as a dozen privately owned properties.

A \$90,000 Montana State Forest Health grant, provided by the DNRC, is funding the project. In a truly cooperative effort, the state's department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks provides transportation to and from the island, the DNRC provides the crew leader, and the physical labor is being done by six firefighters from the CSKT Division of Fire. Thus far, the crew has thinned, piled, and burned excess fuels on forty acres, at a rate of approximately two acres per day. Efforts are focused on younger stands of ponderosa pine and result in the opening up of the dense mass of trees. Eventually, treatment will extend to more than 100 of the 2,164 acres which make up the island.

This type of collaboration between state and tribal agencies is being noticed by the public and getting attention from the media. Vince Devlin, reporter for the *Missoulian*, highlighted the project in a recent article, stating "Logging Wild Horse Island means improving health of

diseased, overcrowded forest." He reported that this is the first time a project of this size has taken place since the island was established as a state park in 1993. Devlin further stated that many years of fire suppression on the island has led to a weakened pine stand and reduced the vitality and vigor of the trees, leaving them vulnerable to an infestation of the Western bark beetle. As the beetles kill the trees, the forest becomes more flammable; thinning out the overcrowded, infested trees reduces the chances for a wildfire that would destroy forest and homes.

Another example of agencies working together is present in the Lake County Fuels Reduction Program, which gives property owners within the county an opportunity to reduce the amount of fuels in wildland urban interface areas. In addition to grants from the BIA and DNRC, the county provides matching funds to administer the program.

Over the past three years, more than 250 properties have been assessed by a county forester, and nearly 600 acres have been treated. Several of these Lake Co. properties treated are adjacent and linked to CSKT fuels treatments. Also, nine individual property owners on Wild Horse Island

have completed a fuels reduction project on their land using Lake Co. fuels reduction project money. Total acreage of projects on the island totals eleven acres of private property.

Grants provide for 75% of the cost of treatment, which includes thinning, piling, and slash removal. The process begins with an application for assistance, followed by a forester's assessment of the proposed project. Once approved, the property owner makes a decision to do the work himself or hire a contractor. Upon completion of the project, the forester performs a final inspection, assuring that the work meets grant specifications. Not surprisingly, the busy 2007 fire season in Montana increased awareness of the need for fuels reduction and affected the number of applications received by the program.

Factors such as large fuel loads from years of suppression and continued drought conditions increase the probability of intense wildfires in Indian country, making combined efforts like these imperative for the survival of a healthy forest.

The Warm Springs fire camp crews are very dedicated to their profession, said Ken Lydy, assistant fire management officer at Warm Springs Fire Management.

"The crew members go through training in the spring, in preparation of fire season. They go through the training as volunteers, without pay, which shows their dedication", said Lydy. He mentioned also that he is trying to find a way to fund the training sessions, so the people who participate can be paid for their time.

The camp crews consist of the crew leader, and eight to 10 crew members. They travel by bus to the fires, and then stay in the field anywhere from a couple of days to over a month.

The crews provide support to wildland fires under any fire management



Operations

Fire Camp Crews Bring Local Benefits

~ Dave McMechan, Spilyay Tymoo

During the summer months, Warm Springs Fire Management has more fire camp crews than any other organization in the Northwest.

During the summer months of this year, seven fire camp crews from Warm Springs helped in the response to 15 separate fires in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

The Warm Springs fire camp crew program, in its fourth year, provides jobs that help the local economy, said Bobby Eagleheart, camp crew leader.

During 2007, the camp crews from Warm Springs earned total wages of \$528,160. The income provides a boost to the Warm Springs economy, said Eagleheart.

jurisdiction. In most cases the jurisdiction is that of the U.S. Forest Service. The agency of jurisdiction provides the funding.



Warm Springs Camp Crew poses at the Warm Springs Complex. Smoke Signals was unable to obtain the names of these individuals at time of printing.

Warm Springs usually has eight fire camp crews. This year the number was seven, as one camp crew leader was out due to injury. During the summer, 130 people participated in the camp crew program. They logged a total of 46,283 paid working hours.



One of the Warm Springs Camp Crews works in the Supply Unit on the Warm Springs Complex.



Prevention

An Opportunity

~ Robert C. Graham, SCA FEC Intern, Chickasaw Agency - BIA

I graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA with a B.A. in English this May and headed to Chickasaw Nation two months later.

“What’s in Chickasaw Nation?” many people I knew asked.

“An opportunity,” I replied to one friend.

I had no opinions about Chickasaw Nation, no friends or relatives, and no substantive background in the position SCA (Student Conservation Association) the Chickasaw Agency BIA hired me to fill. I hoped to learn about my fire prevention internship and felt confident in my presentation skills; I knew going into my deal that SCA and the Chickasaw Agency expected me to discuss the importance of being Firewise with Chickasaw Nation citizens. As I began learning about the fire prevention aspect of my

internship, I recognized that I needed to learn more about the place and people I would serve.

A map created by the Chickasaw Nation Division of Housing, Geography, and Statistics shows that Chickasaw Nation boundaries span over thirteen of Oklahoma’s counties. Governor Bill Anoatubby belongs to a strong legacy of governors that dates back to the time when the Chickasaw Nation negotiated with the United States Government and relocated from Mississippi to Oklahoma during the Trail of Tears.

I look forward to learning more about the Chickasaw Nation and am excited about attending the All Nation Pow Wow December 1, the first of its kind in Ada, OK, as an opportunity to broaden my knowledge about the Chickasaw Nation.



Chickasaw Nation Princesses: Alexis Walker, “Little Miss”; Katie Newport, “Junior Princess”; Jaisen Monetatchi, “Senior Princess”. ~ Photo by Robert Graham

The Nation holds its annual meeting festival/parade during October, which is also National Fire Prevention Month. Forestry Technician and Fire Prevention team leader Sheldon Sankey told the rest of the team,



From left to right: Pat McDowell - Prevention Specialist; Tommy Schultz - Range Tech.; Robert Graham - SCA Intern; Smokey Bear, Joe Lail - Range Tech; Sheldon Sankey - Prevention Tech. ~Photo Unknown Teacher

Range Technicians William Schultz and William Lail, Firefighter 1-Kent Johnson, and myself that we would focus on the Firewise concept 'Defensible Space' for this year's annual meeting festival/parade. The program was designed as an outdoor classroom setting. I looked to the festival/parade as an opportunity to see if teaching fit my abilities and interest.

Mow your lawn; tell Dad or Mom mow the lawn. Keep clean gutters and your home address visible. For four days the Fire Prevention team talked to 55 classes (totaling 1,079 students), about defensible space strategies, prepared enough goodie bags for the 1,000 plus crowd, and chronicled our experience through a series of photographs, many of the pics featuring Capitan Mountain, New Mexico's finest, Smokey Bear. I'm a high energy dude, and I got to expend every ounce teaching and interacting with students – awesome experience.



Smoke plays stickball with unknown player at the Chickasaw National Capital
~ Photo Sheldon Sankey



Prevention program demonstration at Pennington Park, Tishomingo, Oklahoma during the Chickasaw Annual Meeting and Festival, ~Photo by Sheldon Sankey

Spending the first week of October at Chickasaw Nation Annual Meeting & Festival/Parade prepared me well for the next three weeks of National Fire Prevention Month. Rock star Smokey Bear accompanied the Fire Prevention Education team to the six Tribal Head Start programs in the Chickasaw Nation to speak with 400 students. "Don't Play with Matches!" and "Stop, Drop, and Roll!" struck with the Head Start crowd most. But how could the Fire Prevention team know that the concepts stuck? The team visited Duncan Head Start last and two days before Chickasaw National Annual Harvest, an event many of the Head Start kids attended. Cautious not to steal the fire from Halloween, the Fire Prevention team took turns asking kids what Smokey Bear says as we dropped candy in their goodie bags. The team took a consensus and agreed that we

heard "Don't Play with Matches!" most frequently – not a bad deal.

I learned much during October and look to the rest of my term to accomplish a few goals. I hope to work with the Fire Prevention team to create fire prevention curriculums designed for high school students and participate in fuels reduction projects at Kullihoma Reservation. I'm also interested in learning more about the ways in which numerous tribes used fire to manage the ecosystems in which they lived.

Many thanks to the Chickasaw Nation, SCA, and BIA for giving me an opportunity of a lifetime.

P.S. I fought my first fire a few weeks ago. I'll tell y'all how it went on the next one.

"I really didn't want to take the class but am so glad I did!"

"Best class I ever took!"

These were some of the course evaluation comments made after students completed NWCG M-410, Facilitative Instructor training sponsored by the BIA January 7-11, 2008, in Sycuan, California at the Sycuan Resort. The Sycuan Fire Department supplied fabulous onsite logistics assistance.

Nineteen students attended the course which meets the requirements



Training

Becoming an Effective Facilitative Instructor

~ Steve Jackson, Lead Instructor, NWCG M-410, Facilitative Instructor;
Fire Operations Supervisor, Salt Lake BLM Field Office

"I am armed with a tool that I can't wait to use. I get to teach my way!"

"Great class! From the rumor mill, I knew I needed the class, but wasn't excited about taking it...but now I'm glad I took it!"

referenced in the NWCG Field Manager’s Course Guide to instruct 200 level or higher courses. In addition to helping one to become compliant with federal policy, this course also focuses on ways to improve:

- the quality of instruction at the local, geographic, and national level;
- interaction with other teachers and course coordinators in a cadre environment;
- skills for conducting meetings, briefings, After Action Reviews; and
- any communication scenario where information sharing within dynamic groups is the key.

This year’s course continued the tradition of combining individuals from a variety of fire positions and locations from the wildfire community in an arena where they are encouraged to try techniques and methods that reach far beyond fire topics. Furthermore, Tribal and Bureau employees not working in Fire Management are also encouraged to participate.

The benefits of this course can be realized by anyone, regardless of occupation. The ability to communicate effectively, to engage an audience, and to create a trust climate that facilitates a positive learning environment is a universally acknowledged essential ingredient in the recipe for individual, family, or corporate success.

Throw in a cadre with a passion for mentoring and sharing the skills of teaching and leading, and you get a week where the course evaluations speak for themselves.

The Branch of Fire Management hosts the M-410, Facilitative Instructor course annually, on the second week of January. It is also hosted by Regional Training Centers and some colleges. For more information, contact Dave Koch at 208.387.5577.



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

~ Albert Einstein



Back row left to right: Laurel Simos, BIA~NIFC, Instructor; Byron Alcantara, Sycuan FD; Learoyd Begay, Navajo; Terry Davis, Karuk Tribe; Emilda Lynch, Navajo; Tanya Steele, Truxton Canon; Robert Serrato, Sycuan FD; Gary Sampson, Warm Springs; Steve Jackson, Lead Instructor, BLM Salt Lake Field Office; Trisha Blackcrow, Fort Belknap; Marshall Thompson, BLM Salt Lake Field Office; Anthony Polk, Fort Yuma; Juan Mendez, Instructor, Sycuan FD;

Front row left to right: Maynard Mahone, Truxton Canon; Everett Isacc, Yakama; Nathaniel Sam, Navajo; William Leon, Sycuan FD; Jeff McBath, Sycuan FD; Jesus Quiroz, Sycuan FD; Craig Martin, Southern Plains Region; Warren Morin, Ft. Belknap; Mitchel Sanchez, Sycuan FD; Patrick Kenny, Instructor, BLM Salt Lake Field Office; Leon Ben, Instructor, BIA~Phoenix.



Students armed with improvised tools, participate in the group presentation exercise. These students have slain the beast.

Blacksnake's Corner

~ Walt Lara - Yurok Forestry

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The Yurok Tribe's Forest Management Plan includes fish, wildlife, endangered species (i.e. co ho salmon, spotted owl, bald eagle, marbled murrelet, etc.), and the ancient relationship between the people and the environment.

When I was very young, my family would spend the summers in a fish camp on Orick beach, located along the Pacific North Coast and bordered by the majestic redwood timber. We lived in a traditional Indian house constructed by my grandfather. He split planks and beams from redwood logs that washed up on the beach. We spent many hours smoking and sun drying surf fish and other kinds of fish. We gathered mussels, wild strawberries, and tullys. Indian families from inland or up and down the coast would come and buy these goods. That's how my grandparents made a living at that time. A gunny sack full of sun dried surf fish would sell for ten dollars. It was hard work for us kids who spent the day turning fish over and running off the sea gulls. In the evening just as it was getting dark the marbled murrelet would fly over. They flew so fast you could not see them, only hear them wiz by. The old folks would say, "You better come in" meaning into the Indian house, "because 'Sa-ath' is coming." 'Sa-ath' is like a spirit in the wind. All of us kids would quickly gather inside the house where the fire was warm and we soon fell asleep to the repetitive sounds of the ocean waves.

Those were the times I would dream of the old stories about the marbled murrelet and the environment that surrounded me. These stories, gave so much meaning to my world.

This story began in the Fall of the year when the sky was full of birds



Orick Beach Fish Camp. Walt's Grandfather, Grandmother, and Mother.

flying south for the winter. One little bird watched from the ground. He had broken his wing and could not fly. He walked through the forest until he came upon a beautiful dogwood tree, filled with large white flowers. "Mister tree, could I winter in your branches?" said the little bird. "Oh no," said the dogwood tree, "I have these beautiful flowers and I can't have you up here." So the tired little bird continued through the forest until he bumped into a large oak tree. "Oh Mister tree," said the little bird, "could I winter in your branches?" "No," said the Oak tree, "I have my acorns hanging here, they are so beautiful. I can't have you up here." The weather was getting colder and bird was getting weaker. Everyday on the ground was a risk for him but he moved on dragging his broken wing through the forest with his head hung low. Suddenly he banged in to a huge tree. The boom was so forceful that it knocked the bird on his back. He stared looking up trying to find the top of the tree. It seemed to reach the sky. The little bird was so frightened by this giant, his voice shook nervously. "Oh m-m-mister ta-ta-tree could I winter in your branches?" "Why sure," thundered the voice as his massive limb swung down and scooped up the little bird and placed him in his branches. Now the Creator was watching all of this and he said, "You, dogwood trees and all your relations, will loose your leaves and those flowers for the winter. And you, Oak trees and all your relations, will continue to loose your leaves and those acorns for the winter. But you, Redwood trees and all your relations,

you will be forever green and be the keepers of the forest as a spirit being."

The Yurok People acknowledge redwood trees as spirit beings, not only from many stories that have been handed down from one generation to the next, but also through our ancient language. The construction of our Redwood canoes are carved with a heart, kidneys and lungs and at the head of the canoe is a braided necklace, replicating a lifeline. The Indian houses are constructed with a heart, located behind the fireplace, and rib cage. Not long ago two of these sacred trees that overlooked the traditional fish dam, in the Cappel creek area, were illegally cut. After the shock and a grieving period an awareness and sense of responsibility emerged. Today, from the stumps of those trees another generation of redwood are growing just like another generation of Yurok people. Eighty percent of our traditional prayer and gathering sites, including Orick Beach, is owned by the Redwood National Park or the U.S. Forest Service. So it goes without saying that we have had to adapt in order to preserve our old ways. It is my wish that we, as forest managers, nurture the ancient and future relationships between man and the environment.

The October 2007 Volume 7 issue of Smoke Signals, page 15 contained an editorial error. The caption beneath the black and white photo should have read, "1954 – Fort Campbell, KY. Walt, upper left hand corner wearing black gloves, was a cadre in Fox Company 2nd Battalion 188 11th Airborne Division. The Smoke Signals staff apologizes for this error.

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

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- Author's name
- Author's title
- Author's agency/location

- High resolution jpg photos
- Photo captions

- Contact name and number;
email address (if have)