



## President Barack Obama Confers Doctorate Degree to Kishan Dawn Lara

~ Dave Koch, NIFC



Arizona State University Commencement May 13, 2009 President Obama congratulates Dr. Kishan Dawn Lara, daughter of Walt "Blacksnake" Lara. See Blacksnakes Corner on the back page for Dave Koch's article.



## Table of Contents

Administration.....	2
Fuels.....	4
Operations.....	6
Planning.....	9
Prevention.....	10
Training.....	14
Blacksnakes Corner.....	15

# National Women’s History Month at the Northwest Regional Office

~ Laura Atkins, SCA, NWRO



Women being honored at ceremony.

~ Laura Atkins

Joining President Barack Obama, Bonneville Power, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the US Coast Guard at the Federal Building in Portland, Oregon, observed National Women’s History Month in March, 2009. The theme for this year’s National Women’s History month was, “Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet.”

All month the lobby of the Federal Building displayed a placard that highlighted some of history’s most notable women. In addition, 6 women who work throughout the Federal Building were chosen based on their notable service in environmental careers to be recognized and to share their experiences at an honorary event on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Providing the introduction to the event was Scott Aikin, Natural Resource Branch Chief, BIA NW Region, who is a member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Tribe. He began the event with a traditional song called, “Grandmothers Song.” About the song Scott comments, “It represented to me the meaning of the importance of the day’s events in that we receive so

much wisdom from our Grandmothers about how to be caring human beings. Through them, so many of us in the world have been given the foundation to be empathetic and caring and therefore can move to realize we have a responsibility to care for this Kum-dae-qua (Mother Earth).” Scott chose to participate in the event in large part out of honor of being asked to do so. He also believes very strongly in the importance of the topic that was presented; woman who speak on behalf of the environment’s needs.

“We all need to do this (men and women), but who better than women, who through our mothers represent the source of our worlds caring and nurturing foundations.” It was a great way to begin this event that honored the achievements of so many great women.

Keynote speaker for the event was Arlena Fitch-Gordon, Diversity Manager for the Defense Industrial Security

Clearance Office in Columbus, Ohio, and National Vice President for Training of Federally Employed Women. Ms. Fitch-Gordon presented a highly motivational speech on the history of women taking the lead in green careers.

Next, a panel of Federally employed women took to the stage to provide insights into their careers. Chosen from the BIA’s NW Wildland Fire Management Division to be recognized was the Northwest’s very



Melody Steel in front of placard

~ Melody Steel



**Karrie Stevens, Fire Management Specialist (Ecosystems)**  
~ Melody Steel

own, Karrie Stevens. She, along with the other honorary members of the panel was asked a series of questions about her achievements, hardships, and life choices. When asked how Karrie had begun her career in fire, Karrie explained that the career chose her.

## Welcome New Employees!

~ Nancy Lee Wilson  
~ Amber Derby  
~ Jonathan Lightfoot  
~ Dawn Eagle Star



**Nancy Lee Wilson**

**NANCY LEE WILSON** - USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fire Planner/Fire Behavior, NIFC, Boise, Idaho.

Nancy began her career in fire in 1976, as a seasonal employee on the Umatilla National Forest, Pomeroy Helitack Crew. She worked the rest of the 70's on the Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger Station. The 80's saw

Karrie was destined to become a home economics teacher, but before she could begin her studies she stumbled onto a job with the Forest Service on a Young Adult Conservation Crew. After a season of working in the forest she found she was no longer interested in cooking or dinner place settings and preferred eating "C-rats" and sharpening hand tools.

Another woman recognized from the BIA's NW office was Melody Steele. Melody Steele works as a Planning and Inventory Forester. She oversees 45 tribes for the inventory and planning process. She identifies her primary goal as designing partnerships for Preservation of "Biological Legacies" on Federal Lands. Her personal interests include 3D stereo photography and horseback packing and has done the Pacific Crest Trail.

Melody reflected on what encouraged her to get into the field of forestry. Melody was told by her mother that being in the forest was more

her working in Dispatch, as a Brush Disposal Crewmember, in a Lookout, and doing Stand Exams. Nancy became a permanent employee working in fuels in 1990, on the Siuslaw National Forest. In 1991, she accepted the Fuels Operations position on the North Fork John Day District on the Umatilla National Forest. Nancy transferred to the Deschutes National Forest, Crescent Ranger Station in 1994, working in fuels operations/planning. She became the Assistant Fire Management Officer on the Willamette National Forest, McKenzie Ranger District in 1998, until October of 2003. Nancy was the Fire Planner for the Umatilla National Forest from 2003 until June, 2005. She became the Fire Management Officer for the BIA Umatilla Agency serving the Umatilla Tribes near Pendleton Oregon for four years until accepting the Fire Planner position at the National Interagency Fire Center in April 2009.

Nancy is qualified as a RXB1, DIVS, ICT3, and FBAN.

Nancy received an Associate Arts & Science Degree in 1977, from Yakima Valley Community College, and attended Central Washington University for two quarters. She completed Technical Fire Management in 2000, with credits through Colorado State

educational then going to school. Of her 42 years of employment, 36 years have been with natural resources. She has attended nine universities for her natural resource education. One highlight in her career was making an important scientific discovery of how fungus communicate... another key highlight has been making forestry connections around the world in Germany, Russia, and Madagascar. One could enter into this field as a technician "fire fighter" or as a professional with a four year degree. Melody indicated her greatest challenge to overcome was being a woman in a man's world in forestry and strongly urges "being a chameleon. Just do it and do not think about your physical appearance (being a woman). Do your job. Enjoy your job and persevere. Never quit!"

The event was highly informative and empowering. Achievements by women in service to the planet have been many, and their hard work is very much appreciated.

University, passing her final project without edits. She has also done continuing education through the University of Idaho.



**Amber Derby**

**AMBER DERBY** - BIA Casual Payment Center.

Born in Tacoma, Washington to my wonderful mother Sandy and father Bruce, I grew up in Graham, Washington and graduated from Bethel High School in 2001. Shortly after turning 21, I joined the Navy Reserves as an Equipment Operator in the Seabees.

I went to boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois and Equipment Operator "A" School in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

When I returned home after training, I joined the International Union for Operating Engineers. I worked for several contractors in Washington before being deployed overseas in 2006.

I moved to Boise, Idaho in June 2007 just three months after returning home from deployment. I continued in the Operating Engineers Union gaining employment with Western Construction. In July of 2008, I decided to withdraw from the union and enroll full time at Boise State University.

Currently, I am going for my Bachelor's degree in Accounting and am now working at the Casual Payment Center for the Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs in the SCEP program. Some of my favorite things about living in Boise include: the nicer weather, the smaller population, the friendly people, rafting the Payette, hiking, snowboarding, and being close enough to the city to enjoy it.



**Jonathan Whitefoot**

**JONATHAN WHITEFOOT - BIA Law Enforcement**

Jonathan started his law enforcement career in the early 1990s as a tribal police officer with the Yakama Nation. From there he worked in the criminal investigations division and then as the Public Safety Commissioner. He also over saw the tribal court system for a time at Yakama Nation.

In 2002 he joined the BIA Office of Justice Services as a special agent at the Northern Cheyenne Agency where he went on to become the Chief of Police. After serving for three years, Jonathan then went to work at Central Office West as a Correctional Program Specialist in Albuquerque, NM. There

he worked with bureau and tribal correctional facilities.

Jonathan then was selected as a special agent and instructor for the Indian Police Academy in Artesia, New Mexico. During this time, and at the request of W. Patrick Ragsdale, Deputy director of OJS and Danny Breuninger, Acting Associate Director of OJS, Jonathan started working with BIA-NIFC staff in developing a working relationship between law enforcement and fire.

Through discussions and better understanding of what the fire program was going through on criminal arson investigations throughout Indian Country, Mr. Ragsdale and Mr. Breuninger felt there was a need to have a special agent dedicated to these investigations. Jonathan applied and was selected to this position. He has been at NIFC since June 2009.



**Dawn Eagle Star**

**DAWN EAGLE STAR - BIA Budget and Finance.**

The Budget and Finance Section at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, has a new addition. Dawn Eagle Star has accepted the promotion position of Budget Analyst for NIFC. She has come from the Rocky Mountain Region as the Forestry's Budget Analyst for the past 3 years, assisting the region, the tribes, and agencies with day to day functions, business, and provided technical assistance. She was new coming in to the fire world learning different areas that fire/forestry deals with and has since gained some great

experience. Dawn has background in the Finance area as well, she held a position in the Branch of Accounting also at the Rocky Mountain Region as an Accounting Technician for 7 years, so her knowledge and background with both Finance and Budget tie right in with the position she has taken on here at NIFC.

Dawn is an enrolled member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation out of Mayetta, Kansas, but was raised and has resided most of her life in Billings, Montana, where she has began her government career with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Dawn, Terry, Ryan, Kirsten, and Scotty are looking forward to beginning their new lives in Boise, Idaho.



## Bristol Bay Forestry

~ Laura Atkins, SCA, NW Region

The Bristol Bay Native Association's Forestry Department, located in Dillingham Alaska, has a lot to be proud of for 2009. Utilizing Hazardous Fuels Reduction program funds, the Forestry Department completed Firewise assessments on local Native allotment lands. There are approximately 423 Native allotments in the Dillingham and neighboring Aleknagik area, with many structures (cabins or houses) located on them. With potentially combustible vegetation adjacent to home sites, the Firewise assessments were much needed in this remote corner of the world.

The treated areas contained moderately dense stands of paper birch and white and black spruce, interspersed with areas of tundra and grass. Also included were areas of heavier stocked white spruce stands, with an estimated



**Karrie Stevens, Larry Adams, Tom Dearlove, and Harold Andrew looking at work completed on native allotment. ~ Photo by Laura Atkins**

15% of the trees dead or dying from bark beetle infestation.

The crew began work on February 9<sup>th</sup>, and continued until March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009. It should be noted that during this period there was significant snow cover on the ground with temperatures regularly dropping well below zero. As an outside observer used to more amiable working conditions, the thought of having to wear snowshoes so as to not fall through the snow while working or having to protect tool components from cold weather breakage produces a high amount of respect for the hardy crew members involved in the operation.

The crew consisted of a project/field supervisor and six crew laborers hired from the Dillingham area. Using Firewise principles, the crew worked to increase the defensible space on Native allotments. There were a total of eighteen sites treated, with each approximately one acre in size.

To reduce the potential for crown fires spreading to structures, a 30 foot buffer around the structures was treated. Dead or dying trees were removed. Ladder fuels were either removed or limbed. Trees within 100 feet of the structures were thinned to reduce crown fire potential. This work was accomplished with one chainsaw and an assortment of hand tools (pole saws, handsaws, axes, and sleds).

The felled trees and large pieces of wood produced by the treatment were stacked in a central location 30 feet from buildings on the allotment owner's property. This biomass will be utilized by the landowner for heating homes and stream baths (very common in this region). With the current price of heating oil between 6 and 7 dollars per gallon, the cost savings from biomass utilization will be well appreciated. The remaining slash was removed from the property and burned off site by the local city landfill.

The total budget for this project was \$75,000. Phase One obligations are complete; remaining funds will be used for additional and final Native Allotment treatments.



**Dillingham Firewise Crew Picture: left to right James Boguiluk, Tom Dearlove, Paul Kropoff, Ryan Brannon and Pat Chiklak, front Patti Byrne**

Multiple goals for the project were successfully achieved. Homeowners were able to have a firewise assessment completed on their home site. Considered among the most important is the homeowner's opportunity to learn about the principles of Firewise. The information learned has a long term effect; the methods used will likely be used again by the landowner. Additionally, the positive impacts of this project will likely spread by word-of-mouth around the communities, making other homeowners aware of Firewise and the importance of reducing hazards around their house. Another important accomplishment was the temporary employment of six local residents, the majority of which were Native. A recognized goal of Bristol Bay Native Association is the hire and training of Native residents. The crew members received training to implement hazard fuels reduction treatments. The local crew, now proficient with fuels reduction, will also pass these methods on to others. Finally, the treatments provided tribal members with a cost effective alternative for home heating

In a 'thank-you' letter to the Bristol Bay Native Association, one homeowner described how he was hesitant to remove any of his beloved trees on his property. After the treatments were completed, he is a complete believer in the importance of removing the fuel. He is now enjoying

his view of the Nushagak Bay (previously obstructed by the trees), benefitting from the sun streaming through his windows providing free solar heat gain, and his garden is receiving more sunlight.

The location of Dillingham, Alaska might be remote, but the excellent

fuels reduction produced by the Bristol Bay Native Association Forestry Program truly makes them stand out to anyone who has the opportunity to visit this beautiful part of the country.

*For more information contact the Bristol Bay Native Association Forestry Program within the Natural Resources Division.*

*Molly Chythlook, Natural Resources Director; Harold Andrew, Forestry Program Manger; Tom Dearlove, Forester*

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“The only thing that separated us was our agency name. Our cohesiveness really developed,” said Mike Campaseno, a firefighter with GRFD.

According to Jessie Zuniga, also from GRFD, over the course of traveling approximately 1,000 miles, the crew had plenty of time to get to know each other. Pima Agency crewmember, Caley Zeek said the distance gave them plenty of time to bond over music, their families and working within their respective agencies.

## Operations

# Pima Agency/Gila River Indian Community Fire Fighters

~ Mihio Manus, Managing Editor, Gila River Indian News



**Gila River Fire Department (GRFD) fire truck**

Sacaton - When Gila River fire-fighting agencies were called upon to assist with a fire in Willow Creek, Calif., both the Pima Agency and the Gila River Fire Department (GRFD) responded to the call.

Historically, this pairing is significant because the two agencies don't normally work in tandem. The Pima Agency handles wildfires that happen within the Community while GRFD takes care of the structural fires. However, given the opportunity, GRFD was able to send along two crewmembers that both had wildfire experience to accompany the Pima Agency crew.

Isiah Martinez, from the Pima Agency crew, said that in talking about their careers, they opened each other's eyes to the differences between the Pima Agency and the GRFD, which contributed to the crews bonding and becoming friends as well as team members.

“Sitting together we learned about each other and built a group together,” Zuniga said.

This type of cohesion, or camaraderie if you will, is instrumental in establishing a base of trust and security that comes into play when working in dangerous situations. Crewmembers have to be able to trust each other with their lives in many instances.

The Northern California fire, which became known as “The Hells Half Complex” was devastating. It spread over 20,000 acres and the crews were sent into very rugged regions. Zuniga said that in merely traveling to their assigned area they would pass two to three fires. Over the course of the fire, 15 firefighters lost their lives.

While in California, their duties ranged from prepping and adding equipment to the vehicles to running drills as part of on site training.



Connecting fire hose

“We did our drill 3 or 4 times and each time we got better,” Zeek said. “It was a surprise to other crews that we were a split crew.”

The crew was distinguished as the ‘go-to’ truck if someone got hurt. Mike Campaseno said, “That’s pretty important. We weren’t just another crew digging line.”

Out of the 40 plus trucks assigned to their division, the unified Pima/ Gila River crew was one of the last two trucks to remain on the scene. According to Alan Sinclair, Fire Management Officer for the Pima Agency, “It says a lot to be one of the last crews there.”

Sinclair said that one of the biggest benefits is that the crews get to know each other. It’s a lot easier to start working together when this happens and it also promotes mixed crews,

which, in turn, benefit their working relationships.

“It requires a certain level of trust to work cohesively together,” he said. ‘We’re trying to build cohesively.’”

Working together will also benefit how the fire crews work together within Community boundaries. “Two crews responsible for emergencies make it significantly more effective,” said Dave Martin, Deputy Chief for GRFD. “It can grow and turn into a good thing for the Community.”

In cross training the fire fighters, both the Pima Agency and GRFD hope to stimulate interest within their firefighters into the duties of each particular department. Ultimately, the goal is to generate Community interest in firefighting careers and let them know that opportunities are out there.

*Reprinted with permission.*



Fire trucks

## Learn to Burn!

~ Carl Romnes, FMO, Jicarilla Agency

*News from the Ignition World*

As the BIA representative on the Interagency Aerial Ignition Working Group (IAIG) and the Interagency Ground Ignition Working Group, I would like to give you an update on the latest, greatest, and hottest things in the Ignition World.

On the Aerial Ignition side the new Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide should be available by this fall. The Ground Ignition Working Group is working on a guide, but it will not be

printed until the spring of 2011 at the earliest.

I received calls from a few of you about which plastic spheres to use in the Premo Mark III aerial ignition device. Premofire (Vanguard Plastics) recently ended its relationship with Aerostat Inc. which supplied repair services for the Mark III and was a source of the plastic spheres.

Premofire Fireballs can now be purchased directly from Premofire which has two warehouses; Texas and Florida. Repair of the machines can now be obtained from B&M Aircraft Services in Greenwood, MS and Fire

and Aviation Resource Services in Alexander, NC.

Aerostat Inc. in Leesburg Florida will still maintain the machines but is not endorsed by Premofire. Aerostat has now begun manufacture of spheres. These were extensively tested by the Missoula Technology and Development Center. No problems with jamming occurred when using them in the Premo Mark III. The potassium permanganate in the spheres was of a smaller and more consistent grain size, no problems were encountered with ignition.

The Interagency Helicopter Operations Steering Committee recently issued a letter approving the purchase and

use of the Aerostat spheres after recommendation of the Interagency Aerial Ignition Group.

Premofire issued the following warning: "Should Aerostat spheres be used in the Premofire MK III dispensing equipment we will not be responsible for any damage their use may cause to the MK III equipment nor will we be responsible for the safe operation of the MK III dispensing equipment during aerial maneuvers". It is up to each individual user as to their comfort level, of which plastic sphere to use.

The IAIG recently approved the purchase of the SEI Red Dragon aerial sphere dispenser. This dispenser uses a smaller sphere than the Premo MK III, they are called Dragon Eggs and are colored orange and black. The machine and spheres were extensively tested and proved reliable. The dispenser is smaller, lighter (28 lbs less), and can hold more spheres than the Premo MK III. One other benefit of this new machine is that the competition it has caused has lowered the price of the Premo MK III, both units now sell for \$8500.00.

Improvements to gelling agents for use in helitorches and terra torches, has taken some of the mystery out of gelling of gasoline. Most users of these devices used the powder gelling agent Fire gel (Sure Fire) or the liquid gelling agent Petrogel. Gelling success was at the best spotty, affected by fuel temperature and the batch of gelling agent. A new gelling product that was approved by IAIG for use is Flash 21, which is produced by Astaris Canada LTD. This product contains 2 parts, Flash 21A and Flash 21B. This is added to the fuel while mixing. Flash 21A is added first then Flash 21B. One bottle of each per 45 gallons of fuel makes a great terra torch mix. It is recommended to use 1.5 bottles of each be used for gelling for helitorch use, which requires a thicker gel.

The Flash 21 is considerably more expensive than powder. Advantages are quick and consistently good gel. It will also stay in the gelled state for months whereas the gel made with powder goes back to a liquid state overnight and becomes un-useable and has to be disposed of. Whereas with the Flash 21 if a burn goes out of prescription the gel can be used months latter.



Example of perfect gel for Helitorch use.

~ Photo by Andy Mora

Another gelling product that has been tested by Missoula Technology and Development Center is Halliburton MO-85 and MO-86. The Jicarilla Apache Helitorch Module recently tested this product on the Pine Flat Prescribed Burn on the San Carlos Reservation. The attached picture shows the perfect gel for helitorch use, which was made with this product. This picture was taken at helibase, where the gel was tested before it was ferried out to the burn site, which can be seen in the background. Unfortunately rain came in and shut down the burn after only 3 barrels.

This Halliburton product is mixed at the same ratios as the Flash 21 and seems to make an even thicker gel. At this time it only comes in larger containers and has to be put in quart sized containers. It is about 45% cheaper than the Flash 21. It is not as readily available at this time as the Flash 21 is.

Some of you may have used slingshots to launch plastic spheres for ground ignition operations. The slingshot will launch a sphere 150 to 200 feet. This method takes time to prepare the spheres in the shop and is quite slow to use in the field. The PyroShot launcher was developed by Field Support

Services of Chamblee, Georgia. It uses compressed springs to propel the sphere. It is designed to use the SEI Dragon Eggs and will propel the sphere approximately 50 ft.

Two other sphere launchers that use compressed CO2 to propel the sphere have recently been developed. The Field Support Services PyroShot High Speed is a hand held launcher with a range of up to 350 ft. SEI has developed the Green Dragon launcher that is ATV mounted and has a range of up to 210 ft. Both of these launchers are designed to use the SEI Dragon Eggs.

Many of you have experience with burning slash piles and have had problems with getting some piles to ignite. This can be for a variety of reasons; poor pile construction, lack of fine fuels or wet fuels. Some

of us have had to resort to making gelled fuel blivets. With these a high temperature can be reached in a concentrated area until good ignition is accomplished which then can spread though out the pile. These were made by gelling gasoline and generally putting the gel in a zip lock plastic bag. This is a dangerous process due to static electricity buildup that can lead to unwanted ignition. In the new ground ignition guide this method will not be suggested for use. Instead a fairly new product called Heat Source Slash Burner (Also known as FireSnake) is available from Wildfire. These are alcohol based, mixed with wood residue. They are 10 inches long and 1- 3/4 inches in diameter. These blivets may be ignited with a drip torch, fusee, or other means and produce a strong open flame that lasts approximately 20 -30 minutes. They produce a nontoxic smoke, are safe to handle, and burn up completely. They come in 3 gallon re-sealable metal cans with 3 packs of 10 in each can.

*If you need more information on any of products described in this article or on other ignition devices, please contact me at [carl.romnes@bia.gov](mailto:carl.romnes@bia.gov) or at (575) 759-3963.*



# Menominee Incorporates Fitness into Fire Program

~ Jeremy Bennett, FMO



Menominee firefighter engaged in Crossfit training

The Menominee Fire Program has implemented a physical fitness training regime for the 2009 fire season. Although Menominee Fire Fighters have always received excellent performance evaluations, a few of the Fire Fighters were lagging behind other crew members when it came to fitness. The leadership of Menominee's program realized that this was a key area that needed improvement.

Crossfit is the training program Menominee chose to implement for their fire fighters. Crossfit ([www.crossfit.com](http://www.crossfit.com)) is an all purpose PT program that is a favorite among many Special Forces groups, police, military and fire fighting departments. The daily workouts (or WOD's for Workouts of the Day) consist of short intense exercises. It brings in a mix of weight lifting, running, flexibility, endurance, balance, and strength training.



## Planning

# WFDSS Training

~ Scott Bradshaw, NIFC

The Bureau of Indian Affairs hosted their first Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) training course May 19-20, 2009. The training course was hosted at the National Indian Programs Training Center in



The short intense WOD's are enough to satisfy your exercise and PT for the day. The workouts are free; there are minimal equipment needs (everything can be substituted with pull-ups, push-ups, sit-ups, air squats, and simple weight lifting equipment). There is no need for an elaborate gym set-up. Crossfit utilizes the Olympic lifts, body-weight exercises and other exercises including rope climbing and running.

In 2-3 weeks the Menominee Fire Program noticed increased overall crew performance and most importantly, cohesion among the fire program personnel. As an example, on a prescribed fire, a wind shift occurred and the crew's quick response and ability to react and take action on fire threatening the line was contributed to the Crossfit program. Menominee's team of fire fighters has developed an ability to work better together this year than in years past. The on going joke is whenever a situation occurs that requires a little more effort, strength, or concentration, Menominee fire fighters respond by saying "If I were not Crossfit I could not have done that" or "Good thing I'm Crossfit".

Overall, the fitness program has improved Menominee's fire fighting capabilities and the program is confident that those crew members who have been participating in Crossfit will perform better on challenging crew assignments and will reduce their potential for injuries.



Utilizing Crossfit training has improved cohesiveness among Menominee wildland firefighters.

Albuquerque, New Mexico. There were 41 participants from 32 different fire programs in Indian country. To ensure a successful launch of WFDSS training was accomplished, 10 coaches and instructors assisted in the training course.

The training course taught valuable skills that are necessary in using the WFDSS program and website. With the advent of WFDSS usage being mandatory beginning FY2010, further formal training will be provided in the fall of this year. Webinars and eLearning are available on the WFDSS website at: [http://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss/WFDSS\\_Home.shtml](http://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss/WFDSS_Home.shtml).

Direct any WFDSS questions to the Bureau’s WFDSS workgroup members:

- 1) Reeve Armstrong .....(720) 407-0637
- 2) John Barborinas .....(970) 563-9483
- 3) Tom Corbin ..... (406) 247-7949
- 4) Dennis Dupuis ..... (208) 387-5041
- 5) Kim Kelly .....(503) 808-2741
- 6) Dave Koch .....(208) 387-5577
- 7) Greg Peterson ..... (218) 751-2011 x408
- 8) Dalan Romero .....(208) 387-5372
- 9) Nancy Lee Wilson (Chair) .....(208) 387-5558
- 10) Ben Butler.....(208) 387-5222
- 11) Chris English ..... (602) 379-6798
- 12) Mary Taber .....(208) 387-5042



Prevention

# Osage and Boy Scouts of America

~ Dana Cook, Fire Program Manager, Osage Agency, Pawhuska OK

The Osage Agency Fire program was honored to participate in a Boy Scouts of America 100<sup>th</sup> celebration event; The Boy Scout Camporee. The actual celebration of Boy Scouts of America doesn’t start until next year but the first actual troop, a British chartered Troop No. 1 began in Pawhuska Oklahoma in 1909. The Boy Scouts of the United States started a year after Pawhuska’s troop was founded under Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boys Scouts in Great Britain.

About 1,000 Scouts were registered for the event. Troops from all over the World were asked to camp in several different locations around the downtown area, large crowds and tents filled most of the usually empty lots throughout the town. Several exhibit events were planned throughout the weekend, Dozens of activities and booths lined the down town streets with a great emphasis towards



Looking at all the Boy Scouts that were in the parade

the Historical and traditional Boy Scout nature. Large crowds for a free concert were expected and several 4th of July fireworks displays were great reasons to involve Smokey Bear in this event. Osage Agency Fire personnel were privileged to support the Historic event and look forward to even greater events next year involving Boy Scouts of America.

Dana Cook  
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Back row L. to R.: Dana Cook, Andrew Molder, Clint Davis, Eric Eby. Bottom: Brad Hayman



Smokey riding in the parade



Boy Scout Troup Pawhuska Pack 30



Boy Scout Troop from Bartlesville OK BSA Troup 6

## Michelle Reynolds Wins Earl R. Wilcox Award

~ Soledad Holguin, Fire Prevention Specialist Pacific Region

Michelle Leanne Reynolds was presented the Earl R. Wilcox Award at the ITC Award Banquet on April 23, 2009. She was born in Bemidji, Minnesota, 30 miles from her homeland the Red Lake Reservation. From the age of three Michelle was raised in Alaska and didn't know her birthright. At the tender age of 11, she discovered her roots and became aware that she was a Native American tribal member.

Michelle loved the outdoors when she lived in Alaska, and fondly recalls going outdoors to watch mountain goats and Beluga whales; fishing for salmon and halibut; camping and white water rafting. She remembers going raspberry picking and being followed by a bear. Growing up in Bird Creek and Anchorage are Michelle's childhood memories.

Michelle returned to her home reservation at the age of 15; realizing that she was privileged to have done and seen the things she saw in Alaska. Later in her adult life, she has traveled as far north as the Arctic Circle and far south as Tampa, Florida.

Michelle became a volunteer at the Red Lake Fire Department and is motivated by her five children, who are her inspiration in life. She loves working for her own people and loves being



Michelle Reynolds holding her Earl R. Wilcox award at the April 23 banquet.

back in her homeland contributing to her community.

Her contribution to the creation of the Red Lakes Reservation Fire Prevention Plan was the first in the nation and has served as a model across Indian Country. Michelle believes in the Smokey Bear fire prevention message and developed new methods of introducing this message that embraces the Native American Culture.

Projects created by Michelle include a personally designed Smokey Message bag with the fire prevention message in the Red Lakes native language. She assisted in the design of "Smokey's Den" an enclosed trailer that is utilized as a portable fire prevention education center.

In 2006 the prevention program applied for and was awarded the Community Assistance Grant, for the Red Lakes signage project. Interns from the Forestry Program and Tribal College to installed 22 fire prevention signs targeting the communities within the reservation. Her enthusiasm has led to the dramatic reduction of human-caused fires and acceptance by tribal members of the goals and mission of the Wildland Fire Prevention Program.

In 2007 Michelle received a Bronze Smokey Bear Award and is an active member of the Fire Prevention Working Team through the Minnesota Incident Command System partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource. It is easy to understand that when Michelle says, "I love working for my own people." she means it both in words and by her contribution to her homeland. Congratulations to Michelle Leanne Reynolds on being a recipient of the Earl R. Wilcox Award.

# Education Teams/Trailer Support Oglala Sioux

~ Soledad Holguin, Fire Prevention Specialist and Team Leader (Pacific Region)  
~ David Peters, Fire Mitigation/Prevention Specialist ~ NIFC (Great Plains Region)



Red Cloud School

Prior to the arrival of two fire prevention education teams at Pine Ridge Agency this summer, Harold Compton, Deputy Superintendent – Trust Services stated, “In order to address this (fireworks) and other wildfire prevention related issues, the Pine Ridge Agency will have a Wildland Fire Prevention and Education campaign for a month over May, June and July.”

The major theme of both teams was to encourage careful use of fireworks, by stressing: “Look Up, Look Down, and Look Around”. This approach reminds people how to safely use fireworks in their communities. One presentation was developed to demonstrate mapping consequences, which is an educational tool that gives a visual demonstration how a fire affects community members based on a person’s decision.

The first team arrived prior to summer school vacation. The team visited educational facilities and attended community events. During the second tour, the Pine Ridge Agency had a strike team of engines from the Lower Brule, Sisseton, Crow Creek, Cheyenne River Agencies, and from Colman, SD. Two fire investigators and four wildland fire prevention education team members came from

Portland, OR and Boise, ID for this tour. The two prevention education teams consisted of people from Sacramento, CA, Rosebud and Pine Ridge, SD and Billings, MT.

Three Student Conservation Association members also helped out, and found out how hot a Smokey Bear suit can be in June. This team also focused on fireworks safety. However, greater emphasis was spent making contacts with community members that were between 14-24 years of age. This team also taught basic Firewise principles, which are how to make one’s community safer from wildfires, by reducing wildfire hazards in their Home Ignition Zone’s.

The first event for the latter team was two “Smokey Bear Fun Days”, one from Pine Ridge Fire Department, another at the Martin Volunteer Fire Department. The prevention team used the new BIA Nebraska/South Dakota fire education trailer numerous times during their tour. This trailer allows fire managers a unique way to

reach communities. Traditional fire prevention concepts can be delivered, as well as Firewise principles, and ecological messages. It also is a great way to share photos of local fire prevention efforts, which are displayed on the walls. Three general themes (wildland fire prevention, mitigation and prescribed fire) will be displayed on the outside of the trailer. This artwork allows staff to reach people as they travel to various functions. Prescribed fire specialists are also encouraged set up the trailer to do education outreach to communities during their planned ignitions.

During the two Smokey Bear Fun Days, the trailer was visited by over 400 people. The total amount of people reached during the two tours was close to 2000. During this fire prevention tour the trailer was mobilized to several communities and local volunteer fire departments. The trailer provides plenty of storage room to bring fun educational activities to children, as well as adults. The Wildland Fire Prevention Education team enjoyed working with the Pine Ridge Fire Department personnel and serving the people of the Oglala Nation.

The team members consisted of, Soledad Holguin (Team Leader) & Julie White (Pacific Region); Bert Shields (Rosebud Agency); Jim Rodriguez, Tamara Randall, and Jay Thompson (Pine Ridge Fire Department); Julie White (California); David Peters (Montana); Jim Rodriguez, Tamara Randal, Kimberly Hill, and Deanna Big Crow (Pine Ridge Fire Department).



Wolf Creek School

# Sheldon Sankey Awarded Cooperative Conservation Award

~ Kate Lidington, SCA Intern - Chickasaw Agency



Sheldon seen here with Smokey

~ Photo Robert Graham SCA Intern

Here is our submission for Smoke Signals. The author is Ms. Kate Lidington, Chickasaw Agency SCA Intern. The photo was taken by another SCA Intern, Mr. Robert Graham.

Sheldon Sankey, Forestry Technician (Prevention and Mitigation) with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Eastern Oklahoma Region, Chickasaw Agency, was recently awarded the Cooperative Conservation Award. The Cooperative Conservation Award recognizes groups and individuals who have achieved significant conservation results that involve collaborative activity among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, as well as non-government entities. This particular award acknowledges outstanding conservation results in the field of fire prevention.

Working with Sheldon as an intern for the Student Conservation Association has been an educational and rewarding experience. He is incredibly knowledgeable and personable, and he is always willing to talk about both fire prevention and tribal culture. His motivation and enthusiasm for his job are inspirational for all those who work with him.

Sheldon first became interested in fire in 1988 when a program run by the

Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma advertised for ten firefighters to be squad bosses. Sheldon was the youngest of the ten to be accepted to the program. He spent the next three years fighting fires and attending additional training sessions.

He joined the Marine Corps in 1991 and received an Honorable discharge in 1995, after which he worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service for one season, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe for three years while attending Cameron University.

After graduating from Cameron University in 2000 with a degree in Physical Education and Health with a History Teaching Endorsement, he worked for a year with the Southern Ute Agency in Ignacio, Colorado and then the Southern Pueblos Agency for a year in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In between jobs with the Bureau Sheldon continued to work as an emergency firefighter.

Since joining the Chickasaw Agency in August 2005, Sheldon has become an integral part of the Agency's Wildland Fire Prevention Program. He is currently responsible for wildfire prevention and mitigation within the Chickasaw Nation jurisdictional area to include; prevention presentations at local schools, community events, and festivals, and the distribution of fire prevention media. In 2008 alone, his prevention education outreach program staged presentations at over 22 tribal and community events and disbursed fire prevention material to over 7,500 children.

In addition to public presentations, Sheldon is in charge of Hazardous Fuels Reduction, prescribed burns, and he assisted in developing the Agency's forest management plan. He also cooperates with coworker William

"Tommy" Schultz, Range Technician, to maintain the Agency's fire cache and in fire reporting for the National Wildland Fire Management Information system. In addition, Sheldon has included personnel from the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, North Eastern State College, Comanche Tribe of Oklahoma, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Caddo Nation, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Eastern Oklahoma Region; Cherokee Nation, Choctaw Nation, and the Osage, Wewoka, Okmulgee, and Miami Bureau of Indian Affairs in wildland fire training.

Sheldon is a strong advocate for providing quality wildland firefighting training to firefighters, ensuring that firefighters are not only current in their certifications, but also that they stay abreast of emerging developments in the field. In response to the deteriorating numbers in the wildland fire organization, Sheldon has pushed to include all qualified firefighters in advanced-level training and has encouraged firefighters to take on positions of leadership. The Chickasaw Agency currently leads the state of Oklahoma in Crew Boss and Squad Boss personnel. Sheldon himself assists in fire suppression as an Incident Commander Type 4, Engine Boss, and Wildland Fire Investigator (T).

Sheldon's favorite part about fire prevention is the opportunity to make an impact in fire prevention awareness. He considers protecting homes and lives from wildfire to be the most important part of his job. He states, "If we can protect one house, that's worth it." Fire prevention presentations provide the opportunity to spread the message of wildfire safety to children, who go home and tell their parents about how to protect their homes and themselves from a wildfire.

Sheldon traveled to Washington D.C. to receive the U.S. Department of the Interior, "Partners in Conservation" award on May 7, 2009. The award ceremony was hosted by the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, who stated, "These awards recognize the dedicated efforts of 600 individuals and organizations from all walks of life, from across our nation.... They celebrate partnerships that conserve and restore our Nation's treasured landscapes and watersheds, partnerships that engage Native American communities and partnerships that engage youth."



Sheldon talking to children about Wildfire Prevention

~ Photo Robert Graham SCA Intern

After the award ceremony was conducted, Sheldon and Traile G. Glory, the Superintendent of the Chickasaw Agency, attended a reception for the award recipients.

While in Washington D.C., Sheldon also took the opportunity to visit the Native American exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum. While Sheldon enjoyed his time in the Northeast, he was happy to return home to his family and work. As for the future, Sheldon would like to remain involved with the BIA fire management program and to continue in the Bureau's mission: "to enhance the quality of life, to promote economic opportunities, and to carry out the responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska natives."



Training

# 2009 Rosebud Agency Rookie Camp

~ Steven Ipswitch, Fire Management Office, Rosebud Agency, South Dakota

From June 1-4, 2009, Rosebud Agency Fire Management personnel hosted a rookie firefighter class. The class consists of S-190 Introduction to Fire Behavior, S-130 Firefighter Training, L-180 Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service, and I-100, Introduction to ICS.

The class was held at Ghost Hawk Park near the Little White River. A fire camp was set up to give the students an idea of how they will be living when on a fire assignment. As in an actual fire camp, breakfast and dinner was eaten in camp under an awning, and sack lunches were distributed for lunch. Students camped out in tents and sleeping bags in a variety of weather.

During the day, the classroom portion of the training was conducted under a tent with the PowerPoint presentations and videos shown on a screen, with electrical devices powered by a generator.

Field exercises were held for line construction, ignition devices, map and compass, engine operations, hoselays, and practice fire shelter deployment. Live fire, using burn piles, was used during the line construction and ignition devices portions of the training to add realism to the scenario.

Students attended from Rosebud, Pine Ridge, Lower Brule, and Standing Rock Agencies. Instructors came from Rosebud Agency, Lower Brule Agency, and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

Fire Management would like to thank all the students for completing the training and contributing to the fire crews that the Agencies host during each fire season. We would also like to thank the drivers and instructors from Pine Ridge, Lower Brule, and Standing Rock for making it possible for the students to attend this training.

For additional information, contact Steven Ipswitch at (605) 747-2700 or [Steven.Ipswitch@bia.gov](mailto:Steven.Ipswitch@bia.gov).



Camp crew, from left to right: Loren Dragg, Russell Brave, Ted Marshall, Marlene Leading Fighter, and Randy Lowe.



Instructors Marshall "Hoss" Pearman, Bert Shields (both from Rosebud Agency), and Neal Kramer (Rosebud Sioux Tribe).



2009 Rookies and their instructors

Back row: Crew Boss Archie Blue Thunder, instructors Neal Kramer and Rich Coleman.

Middle row, standing: Andrew Watters, Jamie Ghost, Brandon Caldwell, Josh Iron, Lorenzo Brave Hawk Sr., Pete Cordier, Kelly Wooden Knife, Kevin Wilcox, Inyan Wakan Thunder Hawk, Justin Cortez, Harry Lakota, instructor Bert Shields, Boye Blue Thunder,

Kneeling: Domingo Quigley, Ruby Wheeler, Jordan Rahn, Derrell Stevens, Webster Luxon, Mark Stengel, Ryan Eagle Bull.

Not pictured: Derrick Iron Shield, Christian Iron Shield, Raven His Chase, and instructors Robert Oliver, Arnold Jordan Sr., Keith Robertson, Teema LaDeaux, and Rock Lafferty.

## Blacksnake's Corner

~ Walt Lara - Yurok Forestry

*Dave Koch has written this article in honor of Dr. Kishan Dawn Lara, daughter of Walt "Blacksnake" Lara. Walt usually fills this corner of Smoke Signals with something from his world that relates directly to his past, to our present and many times to our future.*

*We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Kishan Dawn Lara on her educational achievement and to congratulate her proud parents as well. We thank them for sharing this occasion of their lives with our readership.*

President Barack Obama conferred a Doctorate Degree in Education to Kishan Dawn Lara May 13, 2009 during a commencement ceremony at Arizona State University. Dr. Lara, age 29 is the daughter of Walt (Black Snake) and Callie Lara of Hoopa, California. She is the youngest of seven siblings.

Dr. Lara, a member of the Hupa Tribe and a Yurok descendant, graduated with the highest honors, summa

cum laude. Her education took her from Humboldt State University where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Native American Studies, the University of Arizona where she received a Master's degree in Linguistics, and finally Arizona State University.

Dr. Lara's passion is to create a better learning environment for Native Americans in Indian communities across the country, and one that is compatible with local Indian values, perspectives, and connections to the natural environment. She contends that there should be a better integration of language and culture within the curriculum and that teaching strategies be "community-based": tied to the important values of the local Native people.

Growing up, Lara was immersed in the culture and traditions of the Hupa and Yurok Tribes. Dr. Lara believes that



Walt "Blacksnake" Lara, father of Dr. Kishan Dawn Lara

this experience growing up has been her "strength" through her lengthy education. She knew she would be a PH.D. someday even as far back as elementary school.

The editors of Smoke Signals believe achievements such as this are worth mentioning as a relatively small percentage of students achieve these academic levels. With Dr. Lara's leadership, perhaps those statistics will begin to change, particularly in Indian Country. Congratulations to Kishan on her achievements, and to her proud parents who undoubtedly had a great deal to do with her success.

## 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

Please start submitting articles for the next issue of Smoke Signals as soon as you can! Thank you!

*"When in doubt, tell the truth."* ~ Mark Twain

## 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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### Article Submission Checklist

- Author's name
- Author's title
- Author's agency/location
  
- High resolution jpg photos
- Photo captions
- Names of people in photo and where they work
  
- Contact name, number, and email address