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Fuels Treatments Aid Suppression Efforts Resulting in Less Damage from Wildland Fire

~ Vernon Stearns, fuels Manager Spokane Indian Reservation
~ Gene Lonning, NW Regional Fuels Specialist



Low severity burn from the Line Fire around homesites with Fuels Management treatments conducted 3 years prior to the wildfire.



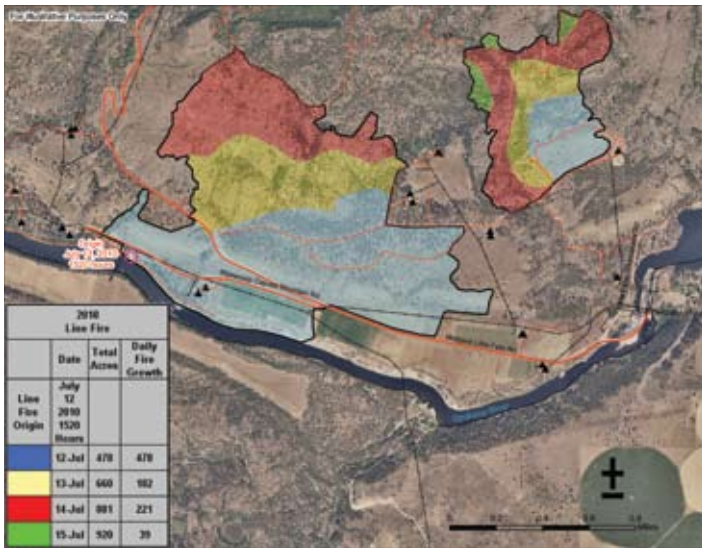
High severity burn from the Line Fire west of the homesites that did not have any forest treatments prior to the wildfire.

SPOKANE INDIAN RESERVATION

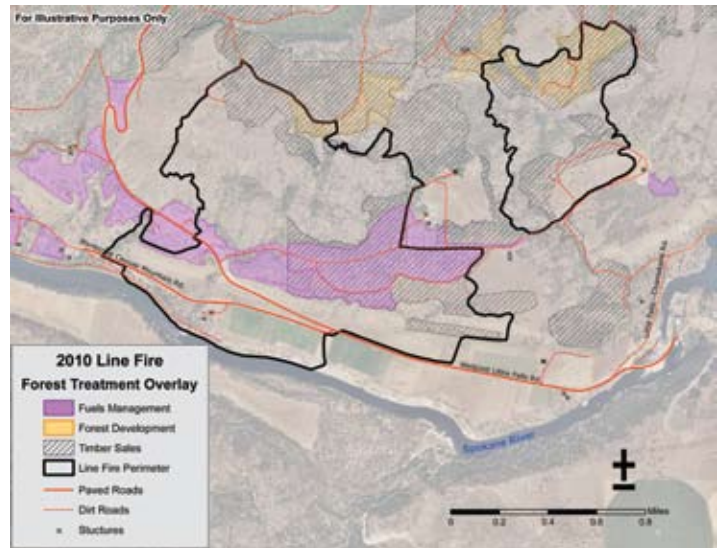
A Red Flag Warning for high winds was issued on July 12, 2010 for the Spokane Indian Reservation and fire weather Zone 686. The Line Fire was called in by the Wellpinit Lookout at approximately 1520 hours. Both the Spokane Tribal Fire Management and Washington Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR) responded and

organization. Suppression efforts concentrated on starting to pinch off the fire and do structure protection on the home sites and other structures to the east. The fire was mapped at 478 acres by the end of the first burning period on the 12th (See wildfire progression map). This included a spot fire that was discovered over a half mile to the east of the main fire.

worked the fire for five operational periods, up to the 19th, before transitioning back to a local Type 3 team. The fire was declared contained on the 21st and put into patrol status. Estimated costs at containment were approximately \$1.357 million. At the height of the suppression efforts, there were approximately 300 folks aiding in the suppression efforts. These included 1 hotshot crew (Vale), 1 type



Map shows the various forest treatments conducted prior to the 2010 Line Fire on the Spokane Indian Reservation



Map shows the daily growth of the 2010 Line Fire.

discovered wildfires on both sides of the Spokane River. The fire on the WA DNR side burned up to an agriculture field on the flats above the river and was contained at less than an acre. As the Spokane Tribal Fire Management personnel worked on their fire, the WA DNR aided in the fire investigation & determined that the point of origin for both fires coincided with a high voltage powerline that crossed the Spokane River

The Wellpinit RAWS site recorded steady winds at 15-20 mph, with gusts up to 35 mph between 1400 and 1700 on the 12th. The howling winds pushed the fire upslope and caused it to spot across the Wellpinit Little Falls Road and the fire experienced rapid rates of spread with frequent spotting. One structure, a large metal storage building owned by the Tribe, just above the River, caught fire and was consumed almost immediately after the fire started to spread uphill.

After transitioning from initial attack, Spokane Tribal Fire Management staffed the fire with a Type 3

On the 13th, Spokane Tribal Fire personnel ordered a Type 2 Incident Management Team and continued to take suppression actions. By the end of the second burning period, the fire had been herded around the home sites to the east of the main fire. Very little preparation was needed along the roads and dozer lines in these areas, as Spokane Tribal Fire personnel held these lines and let the fire burn to them. The winds had subsided somewhat, aiding in the holding efforts along roads and dozer lines. Fire size for the main fire and spot were estimated at 660 acres. The major concern in the transition to the Type 2 team was the spot fire burning back into the main fire.

On the 14th, suppression was transitioned to Washington Interagency Incident Management Team 5 (WAIIMT5). Firelines were completed around both fires, now estimated at 881 acres by end of burning period. On the 15th the fire grew only 39 acres to 920 acres, attributed to burn out operations to help secure the fire lines. WAIIMT5

2 crew, 2 heavy and 1 light helicopter, and several engines, tenders and dozers. During the first two days of suppression, 3 retardant loads were dropped from a type 1 air tanker out of the Moses Lake Retardant Base, the CL 215 (Fire Boss) out of Deer Park dropped a bunch of water, and the Colville Tribal Type 3 helicopter flew three fuel cycles dropping water and providing other support.

After the team close out between WAIIMT5, the Spokane Agency Superintendent was given a letter from the Incident Commander Dave Lentz. The body of this letter is attached, with no additional explanation needed.

From Dave Lentz: *After our closeout meeting, we approached our Fire Behavior Analyst and requested more specifics regarding the impact the Spokane Tribe's forest practices and fuels management had on fire behavior during this incident. What follows are his more detailed comments.*

From Matt Castle, FBAN, WAIIMT5: *Fuel conditions at the time of the fire were a combination of very dry fine*



Post fire effects in an area treated by Fuels Management prior to the Line Fire with minimal scorch and mortality.



Post fire effects in an area treated by Forest Development prior to the Line fire with minimal scorch and mortality.



Post fire effects in an area of the Line Fire without any pre-fire treatments that experienced mixed-severity fire effects.

dead fuels, and moderate 10 and 100 hour fuels, above average fuel moisture in the 1000 hour fuels, below average Energy Release Component values, with greener than average live fuels. The Spokane Reservation has a very active Fuels Management Program, actively using a variety of treatments including commercial thinning, prescribed burning, and non-commercial thinning and pruning to reduce the potential impacts of fire on the landscape.

During the initial run of the fire during the wind event on July 12th, the Line Fire moved through multiple fuel types including short grass, shrub, and timber litter. Fire behavior during the wind event could be described as “extreme” due to rapid rates of spread, moderately long range spotting, and flame lengths in excess of 6’. Fire behavior in the following days was moderate, and suppression efforts were greatly aided in areas of fuel treatment. Areas of fuel treatment allowed for direct attack, less destructive line construction (hand line vs. dozer line), and successful burnout operations. During initial attack operations, aircraft delivered retardant was more effective in areas of fuel treatment by allowing the retardant to efficiently reach the surface fuels which were carrying the fire. Often times fire suppression burn out operations require pre-treating (similar to the fuel modification work done by the Spokane Tribe) the area near the containment line to reduce fire intensity, which is costly and time consuming – this was not necessary due to the fuel treatments already in place.

In areas of heavy timber, previous fuel modifications clearly reduced the mortality associated with fire damage. In addition, the treatments aided in suppression activities by reducing the potential for crown fire and reducing the intensity of the fire, allowing for direct attack and reducing the risk to firefighters on the ground. In areas where treatment activities had not occurred, there is contrasting damage to the resources (areas of thick reproduction had torched, resulting in heavy mortality, and increased heat on overstory trees.)

In summary, the fuels modification practices of the Spokane Tribe and the resulting reduction in fire intensity serve as an example of the benefit of such practices. The Line Fire would make a fine tour stop for those curious about the benefits of such practices and the value of them. In addition, further monitoring of the fire effects including soil stability and overstory mortality may provide further evidence of the success of the program. The size of the fire may not have been significantly different without the treatment, but the long term effects and timber mortality certainly would have been greater, not to mention the suppression costs.

From Dave Lentz: *I hope this helps you highlight your fuels program at the Spokane Reservation. We found it to be one of the more extensive and effective we have encountered. The result for us was we could be effective at a much lower cost, which not only saved money, but also reduced exposure to firefighters overall.*

The Spokane Tribe manages their Fuels program in

conjunction with planned timber sales. Environmental Assessments are completed on a timber sale basis and include other identified post-harvest treatments, such as Fuels Management and Forest Development projects. The bulk of their fuels work generally follows commercial harvest and is completed with other identified forest development precommercial thinning projects. The Spokane commercial forest is largely regulated at this point, with most of these forest lands on their fourth cutting cycle. The fuels management program is a key management tool being used by the Spokane Tribe to keep their forests well managed and regulated. In order to implement forest treatments, the Spokane Tribe contracts out the work to the local public through a bid/draw process thus creating numerous jobs for the local workforce. Reducing budgets to their fuels program would have a profound negative effect on the management of their forest lands, on which they are dependent as a major source of revenue in the management of all their Tribal programs.



Crews holding and conducting burnout operations along side a road that did not require any prep work due to the conducted pre-fire forest treatments.



Observed fire behavior in an area with forest treatments on the Spokane Indian Reservation during the 2010 Line Fire.



An area adjacent to the Line Fire with Timber Sale, Prescribed Fire, and Pre-Commercial thinning treatments.



An area adjacent to the Line Fire with Pre-Commercial thinning treatments conducted by the Spokane Tribe's Forest Development program.



Collaborative forest treatments implemented through Timber Sales, Prescribed Burning, and Pre-Commercial thinning on the Spokane Indian Reservation.

Bodie Shaw Honored for His Work with International Affairs

~ Robyn Broyles, BIA~NIFC Fire Communication and Education Specialist

Bodie Shaw, Deputy Fire Director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, has been recognized with an Award of Appreciation from the National Wildfire Coordinating Group for his work in strengthening international relationships between the United States fire program and partners in the Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) program. NWCG Executive Board Chairman Bill Kaage presented the award at a ceremony at the National Interagency Fire Center.

Bodie, accompanied by his family, spent nine months in Australia as part of an exchange with his counterpart, Alan



Bill Kaage presented award to Bodie Shaw at a ceremony at the National Interagency Fire Center.

Goodwin, deputy chief officer for the Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment, who spent that time in the United States also accompanied by his family. A primary goal for each was to explore the other country's working relationships at the local, state and national levels.

While in Australia, Bodie developed and facilitated implementation of bushfire suppression agreements and operational plans for six Australian states, including Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia; two territories, including Australian Capital and Northern territories; and New Zealand.

Bodie also was instrumental in initiating a legal review of liability issues and concerns that ultimately led to legislation in both countries that resolved those issues and further opens the door for future exchanges of expertise, knowledge and skills.

"The positive outcomes resulting from Bodie's efforts will provide international benefits for years to come and his work has international implications that reflect positively on the U.S. fire management program and Indian Country," ~ Lyle Carlile BIA Fire Director and NWCG Executive Board Member.

On separate occasions, the U.S. Ambassador to Australia, the U.S. secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, and senior fire leadership in both countries have recognized Shaw for his outstanding contributions to international fire program partnerships. His work has fostered the advancement of shared knowledge and expertise in all aspects of fire management.

Although informal study-group exchanges among the United States, Australia and New Zealand have occurred since the early 1950s, it's only been in the past decade fire program leaders have taken increasingly greater advantage of such global resources and sharing knowledge, expertise and capability. Since 2000, 670 personnel from the United States and Australia have assisted and learned from each other during times of the most severe wildfire and bushfire seasons. Throughout nine mobilizations (six to the U.S. and three to Australia,) exchange activities have strengthened international relations, created valuable partnerships, and helped better serve citizens in each county.



Aviation

The FireWatch Cobra - A new Tool to Assist Indian Country

~ Robyn Broyles, Fire Comm/Ed. Specialist, BIA~NIFC

In its pursuit to deliver top-of-the-line, safe and effective aviation resources, the BIA is looking at a new aerial supervision/ remote sensing program called the FireWatch Cobra. This interagency resource is gaining altitude in

California and in the Great Basin states as its capabilities and uses become more widely known in the interagency fire community.

Owned by the USDA Forest Service, the geo-referenced Bell 209 Cobra helicopter is a resource capable of providing air tactical group supervisor/ helicopter coordination, remote mapping with color and infrared (IR) imagery, video and audio data recording and real time audio/video downlinks from the aircraft to a base unit on the ground.

When the FireWatch is ordered, the incident receives a platform equipped with an IR camera, color camera, laser range finder and multi-channel



FireWatch at Lucky Peak Helibase, Idaho.

~ Photo by Robyn Broyles

microwave transmitter capable of down linking real time color or IR camera images. The geo-referenced FireWatch is equipped with seven radio frequencies and multiple infrared video systems that enhance communication, navigation and intelligence gathering capabilities never before seen in an aircraft.

“bird’s-eye-view” of what the ship sees while flying. Fire managers can take advantage of the live video down linking capabilities to see fire behavior and broadcast to appropriate sources when needed which is helpful for briefings and media relations. Lastly, when the technology becomes overwhelming, a GIS technician operating a data van provides GIS assistance and troubleshooting when needed.



Joe Sanchez, DynCorp Mechanic displays portable handheld video screen for bird’s eye viewing.
~ Photo by Robyn Broyles

What does this technology mean for the fire community? Incident Management Teams can receive perimeter maps reflecting hot spots, line construction progress and other GIS data at any time to assess future needs. The IR camera can locate hot spots, determine their exact location and provide information to ground crews. Using a portable hand held video screen called the rover portable view system, ground resources can watch a real-time video from a live feed that allows firefighters a

The next time an Incident Management Team finds itself in Indian Country, remember the sky is the limit and perhaps this high-tech aviation resource will find its way onto your helibase.

For more information about the FireWatch Program visit <https://p2.secure.hostingprod.com/@www.firewatchcobra.com/ssl/>



sites is not feasible, considering time, distance, and budget constraints. Secondly, many of the treatments being completed in Alaska are in close proximity to individual homes located on scattered native allotments, because many of the fuels treatments are designed towards reducing the hazardous fuels vegetation around these homes in an effort to protect life and property, and associated nearby villages. Keeping these factors in mind, The Alaskan Regional BIA Fuels Staff developed monitoring requirements that would address all of these considerations while meeting BIA Fuels Monitoring Requirements.

The Forestry and Fuels Staff from the incorporated tribal organization, Chugachmiut, have taken the initiative to institute the new requirements

Fuels

Implementing Monitoring Requirements in Alaska

~ Laura Atkins and Kim Kelly

This past year, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Alaska Region, began utilizing newly developed monitoring process in their fuels contracts with for the tribal fuels crews. When considering how to best monitor fuels treatments in Alaska, there are many factors that have to be considered to

efficiently and successfully capture hazardous fuels treatment effectiveness. For example, much of the landscape that require fuels treats in Alaska are highly remote, requiring access to be gained through small chartered aircraft or river boats; therefore, frequent access to the fuel treatment



Denali fuels crew member monitoring treatment site.

(instituted by the Interagency Fuels Committee and BIA Fuels Staff) by developing a workflow process that utilizes both fuels treatment monitoring documentation and the use of digital photos.

For the 2010 Spring and Summer Season, the Forestry and Fuels Staff created a fuels treatment monitoring form to address hazardous fuels effectiveness, and monitoring reporting requirements. This monitoring form includes:

- Clearly defined fuels project treatment objectives;
- Fuels project treatment effectiveness;
- Validation of fuels project treatment objectives;
- Recommendations or changes to treatment objectives, treatment type, or monitoring protocols.

Part of the monitoring form also requires taking digital pictures at the fuels treatment site that can best display the condition of the fuels to be treated. Digital photos in the four cardinal directions are taken pre- fuels treatment, and post fuels treatment.

This form can be completed right before the fuels are to be treated, and directly after the treatment has been finished; therefore, reducing travel costs and time constraints.

As this process is implemented at Chugachmiut, Fuels and Forestry

staff are finding ways to best display the fuels treatment data, treatment location, and photos collected during the monitoring process and captured via the monitoring form. One method being explored is to input the

monitoring form document data, the location of the monitoring site, as well as the pre- and post treatment photos into a Geographic Information systems (GIS) program ArcGIS, to display the spatial distribution of fuels treatments and their respective monitoring sites.

Good work to the Fuels staff and Fuels crews at the Alaska Chugachmiut for rising to the challenge and by implementing the new monitoring requirements into the hazardous fuel treatment reduction program!

With a better understanding of the need for clearly defined fuels project treatment objectives, documentation of the fuels treatment effectiveness (through fuels monitoring documentation and geo-referenced digital photography), fuels treatments can be designed to be effective and meet project objectives.



Denali fuels crew member measuring perimeter of fuels treatment site.

Eagle Trail Fire Success Story

~ Laura Atkins

On May 26th, 2010, lightning ignited fuels that started the Eagle Trail Fire. Location of the fire was just ½ mile south of the village of Tanacross, Alaska. Also threatened was the Eagle Subdivision of Tok, Alaska, located about twelve miles west of Tok off the Alaska Highway and within close proximity of the fire.

Multiple initial attack resources responded to the fire on the 26th, including helitack, air tankers, smoke jumpers, and fire engines. By mid-day May 27th, the fire had crossed the Alaska Highway and the Tanana River and forced both Tanacross and the Tok Eagle Subdivision to be evacuated.

An Alaska Type 2 Incident Management Team arrived on the evening of May 27th and assumed

command of the fire. A burnout was completed around the Village of Tanacross on May 28th, and for the next couple of days, fire crews worked day and night to secure lines around Tanacross and the Eagle Subdivision.

Largely credited to the success of fire suppression efforts was a fuels treatment that had been completed in 2005 around the village. It was noted that when the fire got to this fuel break, it switched from being a crown fire to a ground fire. In the 2005 treatment, crews had removed the tall white and black spruce, and thinned a mix of hardwoods, cottonwoods, birch and brush which slowed and redirected the fire. As quoted from the newsminter.com Fairbanks article, “Local effort secures Tanacross as wildfire grows along Alaska Highway.”



~ Photo by Kadeon Jimmy, Yukon crew member

TCC Hazard Fuel Reduction Projects, and the Success Story at Tanacross

~ Will Putman, Forestry Director, Tanana Chiefs Conference Forestry Program

The successful protection of the community of Tanacross from the Eagle Trail Fire on May 27 was due in large part to the existence of an area around the village that had been subjected some years ago to a hazardous fuel reduction treatment in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). This apparently successful treatment is now garnering much attention, and is highlighting the potential importance of these projects.

The first phase of the Tanacross project was initiated by the village of Tanacross itself and implemented by the Bureau of Land Management/Alaska Fire Service (BLM/AFS), with the cooperation of a number of agencies and organizations, including Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), State of Alaska Division of Forestry, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. After this initial phase, TCC, with funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), continued with a phase 2 of the project in 2005, contracting

with the Village of Tanacross to treat an additional 27 acres, expanding the scope of the initial treatment by BLM/AFS. It is this treatment that appears to have been so successful at preventing the Eagle Trail fire from overrunning the village of Tanacross on May 27, 2010.

Following the project at Tanacross, BIA has continued to fund TCC to conduct similar projects at communities throughout interior Alaska. To date, projects have been completed at Tanacross, Healy lake, Dot lake, Hughes, and Nikolai, with projects currently being initiated at Alatna, Allakaket, and Minto.

TCC Forestry works with the communities to design the projects, lay out the projects on the ground, buy equipment, train the workers, and administer the overall execution of the project. The bulk of the funding is used to subcontract directly with the local village council to hire the

Tanana Chiefs Conference President, Jerry Isaac states, "I would strongly recommend other (Interior) communities to do projects like that." Tanacross is Isaac's home village.

One Native fire crew involved in the fire suppression efforts was the Yukon crew, from the Alaska Tribal organization, Chugachmiut. On June 19th, the crew was able to meet the Governor, Sean Parnell, as he traveled to Tok to meet with those who battled the fire. Parnell commented on the successful coordination of the fire crew's resources that contributed to saving lives and the minimized destruction of the wildfire.

As of June 24th, 2010, the Eagle Trail fire had consumed 17,934 acres of fuel and was listed as 93% contained. This fire is an excellent example of the importance of how hazardous fuel reduction projects can reduce the damaging effects of fires on the land throughout Indian Country.

workers from the local village. A typical village project usually involves treatment of about 30 acres on the periphery of a community by thinning and clearing the existing vegetation to create a shaded fuel break. A shaded fuel break is designed so that the trees are left on the site, but the tree crown canopy is not dense enough to carry a crown fire, allowing firefighters to fight a fire on the ground and protect the community. Lower branches of the remaining trees are pruned so as to prohibit a ground fire from climbing up into the tree canopy. Thinning slash and other ground fuel is stacked and burned or other wise removed from the site.

Other agencies and organizations are also involved in these fuel reduction projects. The State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage have done work to protect Alaska's larger communities and elsewhere. Of particular note is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which has also worked directly with small communities in rural Alaska to install fuel breaks. It is interesting that the project at Tanacross, which has served as one of the first examples of a fuel reduction project in Alaska, will now also serve as the first example of a fuel



Eagle Trail fire

reduction project in Alaska that has successfully protected a community from an actual wildfire.



Prevention

Arson Investigator of the Year!

~ Soledad Holguin, Wildland Fire Prevention Specialist, Pacific Region

Jim Nanamkin, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Regional Fire Prevention Officer for the Pacific Region, was

presented with the “Arson Investigator of the Year” award at the WeTip National Conference on April 23, 2010.

Jim is a tribal member of the Colville Indian Reservation in Washington State. He has been an instructor for numerous courses and has encouraged first responders to attend the “Wildland Fire Observation and Origin Scene Protection for First Responders” (FI-110). He has instructed at Colville Indian Reservation, San Carlos Reservation, Mooretown Rancheria, Round Valley Indian Reservation, Tule River Indian Reservation, Hoopa Reservation, Ft Meade, South Dakota, and Oklahoma City, as well as at the

2010 California Interagency Fire Prevention/Education/Mitigation Conference and the Intertribal Timber Council Workshop.

Jim has served as a mentor for fire prevention personnel throughout Indian Country. He provides educational outreach to tribal members and promotes the importance of protecting tribal communities from unwanted fire. Jim has provided technical assistance to tribes as they develop juvenile firesetter coalitions to educate youth on the effects of unwanted fires within tribal communities. His insight has given tribal members an opportunity to envision the possibilities of revisiting time-honored Native American Traditions and values, to educate youth to understand the difference between safe fire and unsafe fire.

Jim has used his expertise as a lead investigator to identify the cause of all types of fire starts. These include arson fires, equipment fires, children playing with matches and those started by juvenile fire setters. It also includes identifying timber and fire trespass issues. He has taught FI-210 in California, Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, South Dakota, Minnesota, North Dakota and Oklahoma.

Jim has made the most of the WeTip Arson Reporting Hotline and encourages community members to consider the availability of the WeTip Hotline as a method to report crimes. Jim has been able to use the WeTip information along with data collected at the fire scene to determine the individuals involved in the fire starts. The information provided to WeTip by community members demonstrates support, and can provide valuable leads to the investigation teams. This collaboration between Tribal Council, Community Members, the Fire Investigator and Law Enforcement leads to a successful wildland fire investigation.

WeTip is about getting results; local people can report criminal activity, and continue to remain in their communities, safe from retaliation.



Sue Mandell, WeTip National Director of Marketing and Jim Nanamkin, Pacific Region BIA Fire Prevention Officer

human-caused wildfire issues on the Wind River Reservation. A fire prevention communication plan was also developed for the agency.

The team generated numerous new signs and posters that will be used on the reservation to educate the public about wildland fire management, with a focus on fire prevention messages. There are some very talented people in graphic design, that are working with prevention teams this year to create effective messages with signs, posters and handout materials.

Another emphasis of the team was to develop fire investigation skills among some team members, while showing a presence on the reservation that fires are being reviewed to determine cause and origin. During the team assignment ten fires were investigated and members completed components in their INVF and PETM task books. This team represents one of seven wildland fire prevention and education teams in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Regions during a six month period during the spring and summer.

Wind River Team Educates and Investigates

~ David Peters, Interface/Prevention Specialist, NIFC

A team of six people worked out of Lander, Wyoming from July 20 - August 2 for the people on the Wind River Reservation. The team focused on educating the public about safe fire practices in order to keep their communities safe from wildfire threats. Two of the major events the team participated in were the Northern Arapahoe Powwow and the Fremont County Fair Parade.

Since the team had a public information officer, there was major focus on media in order to spread the fire prevention message. Team members did media interviews with two TV stations, radio spots for one radio station in Lander, two stations in Riverton, and one in Ethete, as well as a new article for the Wind River News. Public outreach also focused on making people aware of open burning, debris barrel safe burning practices, kids and fire safety, home survivable space (Firewise – mowing and other home protection practices) and campfire safety. These are the key



Smokey at parade at Wind River



Team at Powwow Wind River Rez



Smokey in ATV at parade in Wind River



Back row L to R: Sid Bailey, Bruce Running Crane, Rick Weasel
Front Row L to R: Gina Chavis, John Daugherty, Dave Bell, Robin Whiteplume

Tule River Youth Intervention Program

~ Soledad Holguin, Wildland Fire Prevention Specialist, BIA, Pacific Region

Jim Nanamkin, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Regional Fire Prevention Specialist for the Pacific Region, believes that in order to have a good fire prevention program, it isn't enough just to know whether or not a fire is "human caused" or "miscellaneous." One must know what the ignition source is.

The BIA at the Pacific Region began putting emphasis on wildland fire investigation in order to determine the ignition source and the occurrence of intentional human involvement. Although, adult arson is not ruled out in this equation, youth continued to surface as one of the leading human causation across Indian Country. It was through wildland fire investigations that the facts began to unfold; youth as young as five and up to 17 (male and female) were using fire in an unsafe manner.

In 2007 during a wildland fire investigation, BIA Wildland Fire Investigator Jay Hinshaw came across several fires that had been set

by four individual's ages 4, 5, 8, and 9. Jim Nanamkin, was requested to travel to Tule River Reservation to assist the investigator. They used the Oregon Model Juvenile Fire Setter Interviewing Tool to interview the four children, and during the interviewing process it was discovered that this was not the first fire that had been set by the children.

Jim Nanamkin and the Tule River Fire Department (TRFD) requested to be placed on the Tribal Council agenda. With Tribal Council support, a mandatory meeting was set with all the key players: Tribal Council, BIA, TRFD, parents and children. Some of the parents saw no harm in youth fire setting. Without anything in place, Tule River Tribal Council and the

TRFD were unable to implement fire safety recommendations and education for the families.

Captain Aaron Franco of the TRFD was present during Jim's interviewing process and desired to work with the youth. That was the beginning of the youth intervention dialog between the TRFD, Tule River Tribal Council, and the BIA. The Tribal Council and TRFD developed contracts to be signed by the children and their legal guardians. The contracts are community oriented. The children are given instruction on fire prevention and safety education in addition to age appropriate community service projects. The Tribal Council made the decision that the community service would be for 200 hours.

In 2009 several small fires were started on the Tule River Reservation at a location described as "Painted Rock." The TRFD responded and during the suppression of the fire, Captain Franco identified several "children of interest" and the BIA was contacted. Seven males ages 8-15 were found to be responsible for several fires.

After the investigation reports were completed, the Tule River Tribal Council, TRFD Chief Santos, Captain Franco, and Jim Nanamkin met. In addition to these key players, Daria Day, contracted by the BIA to develop a Youth Fire Intervention Program for the Tule River Tribe was included. It was agreed by all parties to form a coalition and through education and community service; youth would learn how unsafe fire affects their community. Also within the coalition



L to R: Brian Duffy, Fire Chief Santos, Zane Santos, Captain Franco

the tribe wanted to reintroduce the youth to the cultural values of traditional and ceremonial fire use. The focal point was that through community service and education the youth would earn their status as, "tribal members in good standing."

With support from the Tribal Council, tribal departments became involved in the coalition. For the parents who do not want to participate in the program, the Tribal Council will hold the legal guardian of the child responsible for the costs of suppression and resource loss.

The Tule Tribal Council decided to enforce 200 community service hours. Since the program to date, has not met the 200 hours, feedback from the youth and parents regarding the experience has not been documented. However, Captain Franco has received very positive comments from the community.

One of the elders said, "It is good to see young people out during community events assisting us by serving meals and cleaning tables."

Parents of a youth in the program said, "My child is communicating with

me and actually helping around the home."

Many of the children in the community interested in being members of the program have asked Captain Franco, "How do we get to join and do all those neat things?"

Captain Franco recently said, "What I need now is a similar program for the other children in the community who want to be involved."

It takes a lot of people, each taking small bite, to make a Youth Fire Prevention Program a Community effort!

Intervention Training

~ Soledad Holguin, Wildland Fire Prevention Specialist, BIA, Pacific Region



Tule River Indian Reservation - children at the "All My Relations Pow Wow"

In March 2010, Jim Nanamkin, Fire Prevention Officer, invited Judith Okulitch, Program Coordinator Youth Fire Prevention and Intervention Program, Oregon State Fire Marshals Office and Daria Day, Bureau of Indian Affairs Contractor, to set up training at Tule River for the Tule River tribal departments and neighboring federal, county and city agencies.

The training was to educate participants on how the Oregon Model screening tool assists in the juvenile fire setter intervention process. BIA provided three case studies and participants used the knowledge they had acquired to determine what would

be an appropriate intervention process for each incident.

During this same training, Educational materials developed by Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office, were made available for review. Judy Okulitch provided valuable information and case study stats that have been gathered by several sources within her department. Also discussed were the childrens educational materials which teach them to understand the difference between a safe fire and an unsafe fire.

Daria Day, BIA Contractor, shared the status of the Youth Firesetter Coalition Guidebook which she is developing

for the BIA. Daria has gathered good information from her contacts throughout Indian Country. She shared what other tribes are proposing in their coalition structure to mitigate juvenile fire setter issues.

The involvement of the participants from each department is important; as it demonstrates to the youth the importance of community. The intervention program is a visual and hands-on experience for the youth, and gives them a sense of contribution. It also is an education about understanding the contributions necessary from the community and tribal departments to serve, protect, and provide a safe environment within the reservation boundaries. Every tribe is unique in traditional guidance, education and support of their youth. Tule River Indian Reservation is well on its way to developing a coalition that has a good fit for their community.



Judy Okulitch, Program Coordinator Youth Fire Prevention and Intervention Program and Daria Day, BIA Contractor.

Training

Menominee Hosts C-Faller Certification Course

~ Jeremy Bennett, Menominee Fire Management Officer

~ Ron Waukau, Menominee Fuels Specialist

The first ever BIA C-Faller certification course east of the Mississippi was hosted at Menominee May 13th through May 15th. 12 Students participated in the 3-day course, which started off with a morning discussing policy, safety, felling methods, and the other aspects that make a C-Faller.

At the beginning of the course the students learned that they would be required to use a conventional face-cut and could not use a bore or plunge-cut for back-cuts. The open faced face-cut and boring back-cut are very common cutting techniques taught and used throughout the Midwest and especially in association with Menominee logging operations. Some discussions occurred surrounding the safety and effectiveness of both the conventional cut and boring back-cut. "There was a lot of discussion regarding FISTA (a local saw certification program) during the training. However, all of the students acknowledged the fact that the method we teach, which is simply the tried and true conventional cut, is the only teachable method which allows the faller to put the tree exactly where they want it, every time. From a safety standpoint, this is critical." ~ Dave Koch.

As someone who has learned the conventional face-cut/back-cut method for felling trees, when I moved to Wisconsin from Colorado I was amazed to see how often the boring back-cut is used. Some of it may be associated with more efficient production but also logging operations in the Lake States includes a variety of species of trees, some of which require the bore cut to fell safely. Ultimately, the students that had a lot of time on a saw and had confidence in their



2010 Menominee C-Faller students and instructors

abilities had no problem adjusting to any type of cut.

The C-Faller position or qualification has been somewhat of an elusive and controversial position especially in recent times. A number of fatalities and injuries have led to much more oversight and stringent certification processes. Discussions with interagency partners have exposed a lot of different standards and various methods for certifying a faller at all levels. There is no qualification in PMS 310.1 for A, B, or C-Faller. Yet we put these positions on our red cards. There are task books that are adopted for some DOI agencies (BLM, NPS and F&WS) but no adoption of interagency standards. I am confident that the BIA C-Faller certification process is one of the highest quality felling training courses, and the Agency's faller certification process is a good model for anyone to follow.

As a Unit Fire Management Officer, it is necessary to have access to a certified C-Faller. A C-Faller certification is necessary to certify any B-Faller level sawyers. We rarely need to actually use a C-Faller on a fire situation but have plenty of need for B-Fallers. B-Faller skills are necessary to perform most hazard fuels reduction and is a critical position on every hand crew, so it should not be a surprise that the expectations of a C-Faller are to teach others. A few excellent/competent sawyers did not

receive certification because they currently lack the skills to teach the skills effectively. As an organization the BIA has an exceptional C-Faller certification process. Certification in this position is not handed out to every student who attends the course. Students have to not only prove they are proficient sawyers but have something more. I am glad that a very high certification standard is maintained.

Ultimately it's not only about getting certified. Every student learned very valuable techniques and came away better sawyers. They all learned something that they can take back and teach to less experienced sawyers.

Sid Bailey from Standing Rock Agency said, "It is about time the BIA had this training for tribal programs (Eastern) so we can know the correct and safe way to bring down a big tree. The training benefits all of us because we can bring this back home to our programs and show them what we learned. The size and quality of the trees were very good!"

12 students participated in the course, which was quite a large class. Of the 12 prospective C-Faller candidates, 3 gained certification. A significant amount of skill, confidence, and the ability to teach others are necessary for becoming certified as a C-Faller. Congratulations to Gary Krueger, Great Lakes Agency, Tony Frechette,

Menominee, and Charles Gauthier, Keewanee Bay Indian Community for obtaining C-Faller certification.

The C-Faller qualification is a much needed qualification in any unit in order to certify B-Fallers. To accomplish good fuels reduction projects and have solid wildland crews or modules, good/competent and safe sawyers are necessary. The Menominee Fire Program looks forward to the next opportunity to host this course again in the future.

Other Quotes:

Travis “Trapp” Blacketter, from Fond Du Lac said, “Awesome! Everyone that can qualify should go through it. The style of teaching is great and most of the class is hands on. This is

the best way to learn. Good quality instruction and good trees.”

Jeff Einberger, from Grand Portage said, “Awesome! A good opportunity. We’ve been waiting to do this for many years. We appreciate the instructors and the host for putting the training on.”

Kyle Golus, from Yankton Agency SD said, “It’s a valuable experience cutting larger trees. We can take it back to our agency and show our fellow wildland firefighters. Keep it going!”

Dave Pergolsik, from Great Lakes Agency said, “This was a great experience. We had some good discussion between eastern and

western felling techniques and all who attended came out better fellers.”

He also noted “MTE was the perfect place for this certification to take place east of the Mississippi. The MTE fire cadre did an excellent job coordinating and ensuring that everyone had a great experience. We should do this here again”

“I think these trees we were cutting were probably the biggest some of these guys had ever cut.” said Dave Koch

John Blanchard, from Fon Du Lac said, “This is my first time seeing this technique used. It is much needed training. The size of trees were adequate. Good host!”

BIA’s Most Recent S-520 Graduate

~ Dave Koch, BIA~NIFC

In March of 2010, Laurel Simos, Visual Information Specialist and Editor of the Smoke Signals Newsletter, became BIA’s most recent graduate of S-520, Advanced Incident Management, offered by the National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute in Tucson, Arizona. Laurel is one of only 10 Bureau or Tribal employees to complete this course.

The course is required for any person desiring to fill a national level interagency Type I Incident Management Team (IMT) position as an Incident Commander, Planning Section Chief, Operations Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, Finance Section Chief, Safety Officer, or Information Officer. To qualify for this course, Individuals must be functionally certified and qualified at the Type II level for the position they will be filling at the course.

The course has traditionally been a stressful “rite of passage” for those wanting to serve on Type 1 IMTs. Although some classroom instruction is presented, the focus of the course involves running the students through a series of complex simulated incidents where they are expected to effectively perform their functional roles within the IMT environment. Individual performance is evaluated during this simulation and must meet established criteria for successful completion of the course.

Congratulations Laurel, great job!



L to r back row: Buck Wickham - Coach, L to r middle row: Allison Jackson - FIO, Bruce Carlisle - OSC, Mike Lindberry - FIO, Jeff Pendleton - IC/coach, Rob Allen - coach. L to r front row: Laurel Simos - LSC, Sam Phillips - SOF, Christie Neil - PSC, Shawna Legarza - OSC

The following are the 10 BIA and Tribal Students that have successfully completed this course:

George Leech	Retired Ft. Apache FMO	January-82
David R. Provincio	Geronimo Hotshot Superintendent	February-91
Charles Recker	Eastern Region FMO	January-93
Ken Lydy	Warm Springs AFMO	February-99
James R. Anderson	Eastern Region Fuels Specialist	February-05
Tom A. Lowry	Talihina FMO	February-05
Tony Beitia	National Safety Specialist	January-08
Gary Risling	Hoopla Tribe FMO	January-08
Steve Heppner	Alaska Region FMO	March-09
Laurel Simos	National Visual Information Specialist	March-10

~ Walt Lara - Yurok Forestry



Boat Dance

Many have shared personal stories with me about the year's events. A theme of hope and prosperity seem to be strong after more than a hundred years of devastating threat to our way of life. I am seventy-six years old and have lived to see a culmination of years of hard work. This work included preservation, restoration, and revitalization in culture, traditions and environment for the Yurok people. I am in awe of the sacrifices, dedication and resiliency of those before me. And, my heart smiles at the young people who follow.

As the Forestry Wildland Fire Field Coordinator, as well as, Cultural Specialist for the Yurok Tribe, I can appreciate the Pacific North Coast environment on such a personal level. The Tribe's stewardship extends approximately fifty square miles from Preston Peak to Chimney Rock, from Chimney Rock to the Three Sister's Rocks along the Pacific ocean, extending seven miles out to Say-we-na, aka Redding Rock, south to Trinidad Head, to the head of Little River, across Panther Gap, over to Coyote Peak and back to Preston Peak. This region of redwood, fir, and hardwood timbers nourish our gathering areas and dance grounds.

One mile on each side of the Klamath River and the Pacific Coast lines host our traditional villages, burial grounds and dance houses. From the beginning of time my people have been stewards to the forest, rivers, mountains and all that live within. Today the forests are maintained through Tribal Forestry Management, Wildland Fire and Fisheries Programs. The responsibility and connection to our environment is also expressed through our ceremonies.

During the spring we celebrated the Flower Dance, a young woman's rite-of-passage ceremony, at Sumeg Village. Although the Village is located within the State Park boundaries, the Yurok tribe takes responsibility in the up-keep and repair of the dwellings. Not only is the Flower Dance ceremony conducted at the Village, but extends three miles along the coastal beach. It was the first ceremony to

be forbidden during the coming of non-native peoples in the eighteen hundreds because of the conflict in philosophy between missionaries and Native tribes. These differences caused a negative shift among our people. In the past several years, Flower Dances have been in the planning stages and an understanding of harmony and balance are being restored.

Shortly after the Flower Dance, myself and a few hundred more participated in the healing ceremonial Brush Dances held at the Sumeg Village in Hoopa, and at the mouth of the Klamath River. We also celebrated the ten day White Deer Skin dance in which we pray for the renewal of the world. The ceremony began at Weitspus, where the Trinity flows into the Klamath. On the third day dancers participated in an intricate part of the ceremony called the boat dance with six new redwood canoes. To see these spiritual beings lined up along the water's edge was overwhelming. The White Deer Skin dance culminated seven days later up around Lake Prairie, covering approximately two-hundred and fifty acres. Prior to the last ten years, the dance was asleep for eighty years. Ten days after the White Deer Skin dance we celebrated our Jump Dance and prayed for the continuance of mankind. In our view, the restoration and revitalization of our traditional prayers are pivotal to the survival of this world and humankind.



Jump Dance

Pecwan, along the Klamath River, was the site of the Jump dance. We brought back this dance approximately thirty years ago. And, in keeping with our ceremonies, groups (sides) representing villages along the river danced, one after the other, completing three to seven rounds a day, depending on the weather and so forth. This year after twenty years of planning, we had a third side represented known as the late "Joe Jerry" camp. This side was absent for ninety-one years. Over the years, the struggles to restore or revitalize a dance have been the lack of regalia, dancers, participants and the fear of not getting it right! Everything seemed to fall into place in spite of the first few days of rain. The dance fulfilled a promise to the "Keepers of the Treasures" that have passed on. Thirty years ago we started

with a handful of elders and community members. This year regalia keepers came from all over. People camped up and down the river. There were six camp kitchens, three dress camps, six new traditional redwood canoes banked along the river and young people with "old skills." After the dance ended we had to return a canoe to Klamath, twenty miles down the river. It was encouraging to have young men volunteer to paddle the nineteen foot canoe. Sam sat in back of the canoe with a paddle, Isaiah and Preston pushed the noses of the canoe out into the river and then jumped in. I stood on the bank and watched the three shirtless Indian boys slide the boat quietly along the top of the water. Each had the teaching of an ancient skill held in their hearts and minds. I knew that it would be a nine hour tour through wilderness, and in places, swift water. However, I didn't tell them. I envisioned a black bear approaching the river that would pause along the shore, as the canoe stealthed through the water. A pair of bald eagles that would act as guides above, with a sharp eye they would study the team of travelers. Below the light rising from the moon that would glisten off the multitude of salmon swimming closely along the sides of the canoe. If all went well, and in keeping with the timeline of the ceremony, they would dock at Klamath Glenn before the moon crest the horizon.

As a smile warmed my heart, the canoe cut swiftly through the riffle at Johnson and out of sight. I listened closely for the faint sound of the paddle cutting into the river before I walked back up the beach toward my truck. The dance grounds were quiet with the smoldering campfires and the out-of-place look of B & B toilets stationed here and there. I asked the boys the next day how the

trip was. They all sighed deeply as the emotions crossed their faces and all they could say was "awesome!"



Deerskin Dance

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!

"If a man does his best, what else is there?" ~ General George S. Patton (1885-1945)

Distribution

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Thank you!

If you don't see your article in this issue of Smoke Signals, you should see it in the next. Thanks again for the high quality articles and excellent response!

Article Submission Checklist

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

- High resolution jpg photos
- Name of photographer
- Photo captions
- Names of people in photo and where they work

- Contact name, number, and email address