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Firefighter Boot Camp

~ David Peters, Interface/Prevention Specialist~NIFC



Getting in shape.

Photo by David Peters

One hundred thirty five firefighters from BIA agencies were trained this spring in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The Bureau rents the Camp Bob Marshall training facility from the 4H organization. BIA agencies in the Great Plains Region have operated this training camp since 2000. Rookie firefighter training was provided by contractors during the initial years of the program. Three founders of the program are still involved today, those being: Terrance Hodgekiss (Standing Rock), Daig Douville (Pine Ridge), and Tony Kennedy (Cheyenne River). This year the agency provided 31 overhead to train a new generation of wildland firefighters. Eleven agencies from the Dakotas and Nebraska sent young men and women to this four day rookie camp. Although 98 percent of the rookies were Native Americans this year, all are invited to this training facility.

Mr. Douville, a Fire Management Officer, was the camp coordinator this year. Daig said, "The camp provides a good opportunity for young men and women to get off the reserve, gain independence from their family, mix-in with people that have various personalities, and they learn to work as a crew." Trainees go without modern comforts, such as: TV, cell phones and video games. The eleven course instructors provided their students with 180 years of firefighting expertise.

Rookies ranged from 18-30 years of age, most being in their twenties. Five of the overhead and 22 of the firefighters-in-training were involved in his year's camp were women. One teacher thinks the greatest strength of the training is the combination of class instruction and hands on experience.

Trainees' mornings begin with mandatory physical fitness. Rookies are encouraged to work-out often to get in shape for their new jobs. To develop a firm foundation in the national wildland fire service, four core courses are taught, those being:



Workout before dinner

~Photo by David Peters



Outdoor engine class

~ Photo by Tamara Randall

I-100, S-130, L-180 and S-190. Each agency provides funds for students to be trained, equipped, drug and pack tested, prior to transporting them to camp. Usually one percent of trainees don't finish the program, due to medical or family issues, or

disciplinary problems. The cadre stresses firefighter safety throughout the week.

Students enjoy Round Robin instruction best, but liked compass work, tinkering with engines, and

other hands-on outdoor training. Round Robin instruction encourages student participation with professional wildland firefighters who have a wide range of experiences. Instructor's specialties vary from: fuels, helitak, engines, hand crews, incident command, strike teams, and leadership. Even though indoor instruction was not preferred by some students, they understood its importance. Agency participation ranged from four to 33 people per reservation. Firefighters are encouraged to get in shape between their structured classes. The firefighters complete a two mile night hike. Students are kept busy from dawn to dusk, spending their evenings in cabins. Time will tell which members of the rookie class of 2011 will become future tribal leaders.



Instructors take a break

~ Photo by Tamara Randall



Classroom Instruction

~ Photo by Tamara Randall

Administration

Tanzania Wildlife Management Area Program

~ Bryan Rice, Assistant Director - Resource Protection BIA Division of Forestry & Wildland Fire Management, Washington, D.C.

The Wildlife Management Area program in Tanzania, eastern Africa highlights a collaborative process between Tribal and Village Areas with the Tanzanian Government and International Non-Governmental Organizations in managing land and resources for multiple uses. The Department of Interior, Office of International Affairs, International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) has supported these efforts for nearly the last decade by deploying DOI staff on short term assignments in a wide variety of roles. Law enforcement, national park management, wildlife biology and videography are a few of the assignment areas which have been supported to promote and foster technical, cultural and diplomatic relations with Tanzania.

On September 10, 2010 a cadre of 10 resource monitoring experts from FWS, NPS, BLM and BIA were deployed for a 3-week assignment to the different WMA regions of TZ to support the Village Game Scouts and WMA management in the areas of program administration, data collection, maps, gps and overall operations. Bryan Rice, BIA – DFWFM, Central Office was selected from over 70 applicants to head the efforts in the Ipole WMA near the Tabora region of the country. Bryan partnered with Dan Taylor, retired NPS Cultural Resources Director, Hawaii Volcanoes N.P., to work directly with 20 participants from the villages of Ipole and Sikonge.

During 11 formal training days the group covered in depth use of hand held gps units, map reading, use and navigation, and the development of skills with other common field instruments. The group was eager and motivated to learn



Dan Taylor with the village game scouts displaying their certificates after completing 11 days of formal training.

many of these new talents. Participants developed and honed new skills on the equipment which was provided via DOI by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development. Incredible success was achieved and a high level of skill was attained through dedication and hard work by the participants, Kiswahili translators and the trainers. During long days on patrol and in the bush the WMA game scouts and other participants completed series of practical skill sessions which were put to use in several scenarios which turned out to be real. An illegal timber harvest operation was encountered with resulting apprehension of 6 suspects as well as the documentation of numerous wildlife and timber poaching sites. The skills and knowledge imparted through this experience will be foundational in the future success of the WMA program.

The DOI ITAP program is eager to further develop the relationship with



Bryan Rice and Dan Taylor accompany village game scouts to a local fishing village for public relations in the Ipole Wildlife Management Area.

the Bureau of Indian Affairs as well as the large cadre of resource professionals presently working within the tribal programs. The consistent cross-cultural experience matched with active resource management skills presents a valuable combination to support DOI activities internationally. Announcements for upcoming assignments are found at www.doi.gov under the Office of International Affairs

sub-page, as they become available. Interested candidates are encouraged to apply as the competition for many of the assignments is high. Typically the sending unit is responsible for salary and the DOI ITAP program will pay for all travel associated costs including per diem. Occasionally assignments support all expenses including salary. Due to the high profile and importance placed on the TZ WMA program from U.S. DOS and U.S. A.I.D., all expenses including salary were provided by DOI on this assignment.

The benefit and value added through the DOI ITAP program is realized at many levels. DOI houses some of the most diverse land managers in the country as found across Indian Country, in the National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, and the other areas serviced by the Bureaus. This technical service is provided to developing countries ensuring that sound and sustainable management practices are employed worldwide. During this process the participants and trainers

gain an important experience of cross-cultural information exchange that has a rippling effect through each individuals own network of colleagues, friends and even family. Through BIA DFWFM involvement in the TZ WMA program the door has been opened for more involvement and professional development in Indian Country through the DOI Office of International Affairs ITAP.

Fuels

Southern California Fuels Monitoring Trip 8/2-6/2010

~ Josh Simmons, Regional Fuels Management Specialist, Pacific Region
~ Richard Johnson, Fire/Fuels Ecologist, Pacific and Western Regions

In September 2009, the BIA hired Richard Johnson as the Fire Ecologist for the Pacific and Western Regions. Richard is stationed at the Western Regional Office in Phoenix, Arizona, however he serves both the Pacific and Western Regions by providing planning and implementation of a Fire/Fuels monitoring program.

From August 2-6, 2010, Richard, Josh Simmons, Regional Fuels Management Specialist, BIA-Pacific Regional Office, and Maja Pepion, Fire and Fuels NEPA Coordinator, BIA-Southern California Agency, toured southern California to introduce Richard to the Tribes, their key fire/fuels staff and fuels conditions that exist in Southern California. Also, the trip provided Richard with an understanding of fire conditions, fire return intervals, and vegetative re-growth that occurs in Southern California. The tour consisted of stops at the Southern California Agency Office in Riverside to meet BIA staff, and Viejas, Campo, Santa Ysabel, Mesa Grande, Rincon, Pauma, and Pechanga Reservations. Since there are numerous Tribes located within the jurisdiction of the Southern California Agency, only a few were selected to be visited.

The intent of the tour was to introduce Richard to various staff members at some of the Tribe's locations to establish points of contact. Also, the tour provided Richard with a visual



Discussing fuels reduction projects on Palomar Mountain (from left) are: Shea O'Keefe, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Wildlife Biologist; Jeremy Zagarella, Pauma Band; Jonathan Snapp-Cook, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish and Wildlife; Clifford Devers, Pauma Band Forest Technician; Pedro Torrez, Native American liaison, Pauma Band; USDA Forest Service Wildlife Biologist Jeff Wells (behind truck).

~ Photo by Richard R. Johnson

introduction to the various types of fuels management projects utilized by Southern California Tribes. During his time at the various tribal locations, Richard was able to learn the unique relationship the BIA has with the Tribes located in the Pacific Region, wherein most of the fuels management program is 638 Contracted or managed through Self Governance. Therefore, the BIA provides these Tribes with technical assistance and contract oversight. The BIA also has the ability to assist with planning needs.

Richard, Josh, and Maja have been working on a draft Fuels Monitoring Plan for the Southern California Agency to cover all Tribal lands within its jurisdiction, pending approval by the individual tribes. It was important to have Richard on the ground to meet the tribal staff and get an idea of fuels conditions and fuels management in Southern California so that an effective plan can be developed to address fuels monitoring. A brief presentation was given to each tribal location visited to introduce the concepts of fuels monitoring, its importance, and how the fuels monitoring plan will impact the Tribes. Once this plan is completed, Richard and Josh will develop fuels monitoring plans for the remainder of the Pacific Region, which

of course will require additional site visits.

The group was shown ongoing fuels management projects at Campo, Santa Ysabel, and Pechanga Reservations, and at Mesa Grande Reservation, saw where an entire subdivision of homes was saved from the destructive Witch fire in 2007 through the efforts of local residents.

Another of the projects the group looked at included work with interagency partners on the Palomar Divide Truck Trail, part of an extensive firebreak through the Pauma Reservation that connects with U.S. Forest Service roads.

"We must protect the forests for our children, grandchildren and children yet to be born. We must protect the forests for those who can't speak for themselves such as the birds, animals, fish and trees."

~ Qwatsinas (Hereditary Chief Edward Moody), Nuxalk Nation

~ Submitted by Paley Coonsis

Prescribed Fire at Standing Rock Agency

~ Steven Ipswitch, Fire Management Officer, Standing Rock Agency

On November 5th and 6th, 2010, the Branch of Fire Management at Standing Rock Agency conducted a sixty acre prescribed fire in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) around Fort Yates, North Dakota. The objectives of the prescribed fire were to reduce hazardous fuels in the WUI.

The Standing Rock Indian Reservation includes all of Sioux County, North Dakota, and Corson County, South Dakota, comprising over 2.2 million acres of land. That land is a mixture of Tribal trust, federal, state, and private land. The Agency has primary wildland fire management responsibilities for 939,000 acres of that land, and has Fire Protection Agreements with 12 volunteer fire departments.

James Condon, Prescribed Fire & Fuels Specialist at Standing Rock Agency, wrote the burn plan, which was approved on April 28, 2005. The plan addressed fuel buildup in the drought-induced dry lakebed of Lake Oahe, which surrounds the community of Fort Yates. The prescribed fire was first implemented on May 5, 2005. After several years of drought, normal rain and snowmelt filled the lake again, but left hazardous fuels on the lakeshore next to the community. Those fuels were the target of this prescribed fire.

A common issue with prescribed fires, especially in the Great Plains area, is that wildland fires can, and often do, occur during prescribed fire implementation. The conditions that are conducive to prescribed fires are also conducive to wildfire. Thus, suppression resources were coordinated and made available to respond to a wildfire without having to cease prescribed fire operations. A second wildland fire at the same time would have depleted the available resources, and caused the prescribed



Standing Rock Agency engine holding the mow line, and Jace Harrison firing with a drip torch.

fire to be halted, as according to the incident action plan. The two wildland fires that occurred during the implementation did not occur simultaneously, allowing the project to go on as planned.

Terry Hodgkiss, Wildland Fire Operations Specialist at Standing Rock, directed the holding operations. Terry Holy Elk Face, Palani Luger, and Dave Luger served as engine bosses, while Chris Yellow, Sean White Mountain, Jace Harrison, Joe Walking Elk, Brandon Abrahamson, and Malachi Silk served in holding and lighting. James Condon monitored the weather conditions and smoke dispersal, and Steve Ipswitch served as burn boss. The perimeter of the prescribed fire was often right at the fence line or the back yards of homes. Residents were contacted prior to ignition, and most of them were very supportive of the prescribed fire.

Sidney Bailey, Jr., the fire prevention specialist, staffed a Type 6 engine with two other firefighters on standby for initial attack. As prepared for, a smoke was reported to suppression resources by dispatch, and Sid used his operations qualifications and experience in the response. Although the fire was not on Trust land, the engine staffed the fire until released by the local VFD and property owners. By remaining available for wildfires, the engine ensured the continued implementation of the prescribed fire.

In summary, the operations, fuels, and prevention personnel of the fire management program worked together seamlessly to successfully execute the prescribed fire.

Contact information: Steven Ipswitch at (701) 854-7537 or Steven.Ipswitch@bia.gov.



Left to right, Palani Luger (with drip torch), Chris Yellow, and Terry Hodgkiss

East River Zone Prescribed Fire

~ Heath Estey, East River Zone FMO, Great Plains Regional Office, BIA

The prescribed fire season kicked off this spring in the BIA Great Plains Region's East River Zone. The Zone stretches from Northern North Dakota to Eastern Nebraska; there are 5 agencies including 9 reservations that encompass the East River Zone. Ft. Totten Agency (Spirit Lake), Sisseton Agency (Lake Traverse), Crow Creek Agency (Crow Creek), Yankton Agency (Yankton and Ponca), Winnebago Agency (Winnebago, Omaha, and Santee) and Flandreau. Spring burn season in the East River Zone runs from March-June on an average year depending on weather conditions. Approximately 4,000 acres of prescribed fire treatments were completed in the zone for FY2011 thus far. This vast area that lies east of the Missouri River is one of the largest tall-grass / short-grass and mixed-prairie landscapes in the U.S. A variety of vegetation changes occur in this area starting from the hardwood timber areas of central North Dakota down to the glacial lake areas of northern South Dakota and to the rolling cedar breaks of southern South Dakota and eastern Nebraska.

Ft. Totten Agency

The Little Hoop and 4-Winds prescribed burns were conducted in Mid-April on the Spirit Lake Reservation. The Little Hoop RX project was completed for 45 acres near Ft. Totten, ND, this project is



Holding the line.

~Photo taken by Ft. Totten Firefighter



Kile Golus, Yankton Firefighter on the Ponca Slash Burn

~Photo by Dave LaCompte

a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) treatment that was scheduled for FY11. The Ft. Totten Fire program has been using prescribed fire as a tool for resource management and community protection. From 2002-2005, the agency experienced over 400 initial attack fires per year so the fire program took an aggressive approach to mitigate human-caused fires by utilizing a combination of prescribed fire, mechanical methods (Thinning, Mowing, and Spraying), and prevention.

Sisseton Agency

The Sisseton Agency began their prescribed fire season by conducting the Old Agency burn during the first week of April. This was the first written and approved WUI plan completed under the prescribed fire and fuels program for the agency and was completed for 30 acres. The burn was conducted within the city limits of Agency Village, SD. Therefore, coordination and smoke management was very important during this ignition. The Jorgenson Creek North prescribed burn was completed for 80 acres just south of Peever, SD. This burn was a WUI project that was scheduled to be

completed in-conjunction with the Sisseton-Wahpeton-Oyate Natural Resources Program to not only reduce hazardous fuels but to enhance wildlife habitat for upland birds, big game, and waterfowl. The Kosciusko prescribed burn was conducted just outside of Grenville, SD; the burn was 300 acres in size and was scheduled to be completed as a WUI project. This particular burn was challenging because of the excess thatch layers in the fuel bed and numerous water



Burn Boss observation (Sisseton)

~ Photo by Terry Snetsinger

bodies in the unit making holding and firing difficult at times. The objectives of this burn were to: 1.) Reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface; 2.) Reduce Smooth Brome grass, Kentucky bluegrass, and Thistle species by 60%. The fire program is hoping to measure this by the results of their monitoring program; this is critical for the program in order to see the advantages vs. disadvantages of fire (Time of year for ignitions, firing techniques (Flanking vs. Backing fire), and what species to mimic in that particular unit (Preferred species- Big Bluestem or Goldenrod) and not “Burning to burn” or “making it black.” Since 2008, the Sisseton Fire and Fuels Program has taken off in a big way; Valentino Thompson, Lead Range Technician / AFMO for Sisseton Agency, has taken the lead in establishing numerous mechanical fuels treatments and prescribed fire projects on the Lake Traverse Reservation. Valentino commented, “Our program has gone from non-existent to completing 500 acres of fuels treatments and our community members have taken notice to the work that’s being accomplished; it’s a good start.” The Sisseton Agency would like to thank Yankton Agency, Great Plains Regional Office, White Earth Forestry (MN Agency), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Mid Dakota Fire District for their assistance during the season.

Yankton Agency

The Yankton Agency Fire Program started their fire season with slash pile burning on the Yankton Reservation and Ponca Service Area (Nebraska). The Ponca Buffalo Pasture located in Niobrara, NE was home to numerous



Burn Crew behind Tiospa Zina Tribal School (Sisseton) ~ Photo by Lisa Taylor

pile burn projects. Since 2008, the Yankton Fire Program has taken an aggressive approach of removing eastern red cedar and salt cedar tree species from the area by using mechanical landscape. The 7 Mile Refuge prescribed burn was conducted in May and was coordinated between the Yankton Agency Fire Program and Yankton Sioux Game and Fish Department. The project was 400 acres in size and was challenging at times because of the terrain and weather influence from the Missouri River. Objectives for this project were to: 1.) Re-introduce fire for ecosystem restoration; 2.) Reduce Sumac and Snowberry species by 50%. The Yankton Fire Program decided to monitor their results through photo-points, transects, fuel bed calculations, and plant identification to measure results in the future. There are other several large-scale projects such as the Red Cedar project, south of Marty, SD in which the Yankton Fire Program has conducted mechanical treatments and pile burning including a proposed Aerial Ignition project scheduled for 2012.

Crow Creek Agency

The Crow Creek Fire Program conducted the Red Bull RX Burn in



Yankton: 7 Mile Refuge RX2- Flank strip along the hilltop, 7 Mile Refuge.

~ Taken by Dave LaCompte

April along the Missouri River breaks on the Crow Creek Reservation. The project was completed for 37 acres and was written as a WUI project. Implementation of the Red Bull project was completed by personnel from Crow Creek Agency,, Lower Brule Agency, Cheyenne River Agency, and Pine Ridge Agency.



Winnebago Fire Crew

~Photo by DuWayne Traversie

Winnebago Agency

The Winnebago Fire Crew had a great year this spring, 10 burn projects were completed for over 2,700 acres on the Santee, Winnebago, and Omaha Reservations. One project in particular, the Joe George prescribed burn was completed in April; 450 acres were completed on this unit from a strong and experienced crew from Winnebago Agency. Andy Baker, Natural Resources Officer and DuWayne Traversie, Fuels Specialist have taken an aggressive approach using both mechanical methods (Seeding, Thinning, Mowing, and Spraying) and prescribed fire for restoring native grasses and forbs for the agency. In the last few years, the Winnebago Fire Program has treated over 2,000 acres of eastern red cedar which includes mechanical treatment efforts and broadcast burning. Several projects have been placed on a burn rotation by Winnebago Agency. The 2011 wildfire season also appeared to be very busy for the agency as they experienced 34 fires for over 1,100 acres thus far. Various agencies within the Great Plains Region provided the agency assistance during the spring fire season: Turtle Mountain Plains Regional Office and Midwest Regional Office for their contribution.



Crow Creek Agency: holding the line on the Red Bull RX.
~Photo by Treon Fleury



Winnebago Agency : uphill view of Joe George RX
~Photo by Andy Baker



Prevention

Interagency Partnering for 'Wildfire Awareness Week'

~ Val Christianson, BIA~NIFC SW Regional Prevention Specialist

Staff with the El Malpais National Monument Information Center (ELMA-IC, National Park Service) hosted an open house on Sunday, March 27, to kick off 'Wildfire Awareness Week' throughout the Southwest Area. ELMA-IC is in west central New Mexico just east of Zuni Pueblo and the Ramah-Navajo Reservation, and south of the Cibola National Forest. It is dominated by the pinyon, juniper, Gambel oak and Ponderosa pine woodlands.

The Staff at ELMA were joined by the initial attack fire management crew from the Ramah-Navajo BIA Agency (RNA), headquartered out of Mountain View, New Mexico. Three of the crew brought their Type VI engine to the Information Center and set out all of their suppression equipment in the parking lot.



Bennie White, Ervin Pino, Vance Yazzie, Mary Anna Ireland
~Photo by Val Christianson

Visitors from across the nation (especially during spring break) stop by the IC for information about the Malpais (Spanish for Badlands) country that is typical of much of western New Mexico. Many questions as to the fire hazards and history of lightning strikes were addressed by both the NPS and BIA staff. These two Interior agencies have long cooperated and collaborated with each other, sharing resources with a phone call. Most of the wildfires within this portion of the Zuni Mountains, Mt. Taylor Ranger District-Cibola NF, are from lightning in the vast stands of Ponderosa pine.

An ever increasing Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) population is demanding more initial attack resources and more information on how to protect the dwellings that are being built throughout the Zuni Mountains. The ELMA and RNA staff shared National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and 'Firewise Communities' handouts describing defensible space and home ignition zone practices that any lay person

can perform to be proactive in protecting their values-at-risk. Interagency partnering and empowering property owners in the WUI are the mainstay of the prevention-education endeavors of the national BIA wildland fire prevention

planning (WFPP) process as well as the mainstay of the national community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) endeavor.

Both ELMA and RNA staff stressed that the display for the day was an Interior interagency effort and that they both work together to serve both Indian Country and the public lands of western New Mexico. It was a very successful day in teaming up between the NPA and BIA as Spring 2011 is seeing the start of a very active wildfire season throughout the Southwest Area.



Firewise MAI with Vance, Bennie, and Ervin at ELMA-IC.
~Photo by Val Christianson

United Tribes Powwow Education Outreach

~ Sid Bailey, Standing Rock Agency,
Fire Prevention Officer
~ David Peters, NIFC Interface/
Prevention Specialist

Standing Rock fire staff provided education material and the Fire Prevention Officer acted as a contact at the 41st annual United Tribes International Powwow September 9-12, 2010. The international Native American sponsored event draws about fifty to sixty thousand people each year. All the hotel rooms in Bismarck, North Dakota, were booked for this outstanding celebration of colorful outfits, dance, music and



Fire Prevention Officer (middle) and fire staff talk with Powwow dancer.
~ Photo by David Peters



Native flute player hangs with Smokey.
~ Photo by David Peters



Evening flag ceremony at international Powwow.

~ Photo by David Peters

American culture. People from all over the world gather at this social event, even as far as Sweden and Africa.

Five hundred people stopped by the North/South Dakota fire education trailer each day to pick up literature, Smokey materials, plus to talk to fire management staff. Many new contacts are made with people at these events, which develops further networking opportunities for fire education program. Fire prevention staff had three of their agency fire trucks in the Powwow parade with Smokey. The education trailer was situated right next to the Special Trustee for American Indians booth. Fire staff did not have to pay the five hundred dollar exhibit fee, since they allowed their sister Interior agency to store supplies in the trailer. Numerous people of stature visited fire prevention staff, such as: tribal chairmen from Fort Berthold and Standing Rock, Tex Hall, Gary Farmer from Powwow Highway, Ron His Horse Is Thunder (previous Standing Rock chair). Ron annually does a two week horseback ride with many other

people, which culminates at the 1889 Wounded Knee enactment.

Smokey made about six rounds around the Powwow grounds each day, to be as visible as he could for thousands of visitors. The trailer was also recently brought to a youth wellness fair and for four days at the Cheyenne River tribal fair on Labor Day weekend. Cheyenne River fire fighters assisted where possible to help support the prevention staff. Hundreds of people traveled through the education trailer at these events. Smokey was seen “getting his groove on” by dancing with the kids, to show them even an old bear can stay in shape. At the Cheyenne River event there were 25 booths available to people from numerous tribal and agency partners, such as health and social services, dental, police and land operations.



National Interagency Wildland Fire Prevention Academy

~ Soledad Holguin, Wildland Fire Prevention Specialist, Pacific Region

The two week training course, starting March 28 through April 8, 2011 was hosted by the Danny Rhynes Interagency Training center located in Anaheim, California. The course met the requirements for Juvenile Fire Setter (State Fire Marshall certified course), Introduction to Fire Prevention (P-101); Introduction to Fire Investigation (FI-110) and Inspection Fire-Prone Property, and Basic and Intermediate Fire Prevention training. The cadre consisted of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Anaheim Fire Department, CAL Fire, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

There were participants from all agencies, several states, and other



Top left to right: Erick Prichard, Concho Agency OK; Ed Artero, Guam Forestry; Daniel Moore, Round Valley Indian Reservation; Walter Feather Jr., Round Valley Indian Reservation; Grant Denison, Spokane Tribe, Washington
Bottom left to right: Malsol Nobuo, Palau Fire Department; Joe Mafnas, Guam Forestry; Kazuma Takaba, Palau Fire Department.

countries. Many of the folks were meeting each other for the first time and now have formed good networking strategies. Good communication and public presentation skills can be challenging, especially when students become aware that an outstanding fire prevention program begins with community outreach.

Jim Nanamkin, BIA Fire Prevention Officer, presented the FI-110 an introduction to fire

investigation, and also spoke of the importance of cultural fire use. "Many times we believe that all fire is unsafe, however by having effective communications those situations can be mitigated. Understanding the values within each community is important to begin forming a fire prevention program that will encompass the traditions and dynamics of communities and respect their individuality."

It takes many people working together to create a strong training opportunity and the interagency efforts were visible here. The students who completed this course now have the skills and knowledge to launch an effective fire prevention program.

Rosebud Hires Fire Prevention Officer

~ David Peters, WUI/Prevention Specialist, NIFC; Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Regions

The Rosebud Agency in South Dakota recently hired Bert Shields to be their Fire Prevention Officer. Mr. Shields was raised in Rosebud and graduated from Winner High School in 1991. He joined the Navy for two years and was in Operation Desert Shield. In April 1999 he was hired by the BIA – Fire Management in Rosebud as a Forestry Technician Fire Fighter on an engine. Later he became an Engine Foreman, and his most recent job was as an Operations Supervisory Forestry Technician. In 2009 he wrote the Wildfire Prevention Plan for the agency,



Bert, a burn boss, takes a brief water break during an Rx burn at Rosebud.

~Photo by David Peters

which set up this new position in their fire management organization. He has a career goal of becoming a Fire Management Officer, when he has met the IFPM qualifications and has the opportunity.

Bert, like many fire management staff, enjoys hunting and fishing. He also enjoys golf and darts. He has been married for 10 years and has one daughter, who is a freshman in Rosebud.

Buena Vista Rancheria of Mewuk Indians Celebrates Earth Day!

~ Dr. Roselynn Lwenya, Environmental Resources Director, Buena Vista Rancheria



~Photo by Leon Rofé

Theme: Past, Present and Future Environmental Resource Use and Conservation

The official date of celebrating Earth Day is April 22nd every year. However, Buena Vista Rancheria does not wait for that day to celebrate; instead Earth Day is celebrated every day through different activities. This year marked the 41st anniversary of Earth Day. Buena Vista Rancheria joined other organizations globally to mark the day with style and pomp. The Tribe marked the celebration on April 9 -10, 2011. The celebration took place at the Tribal lands at 4650 Coalmine Road, Ione. At the initial planning stage, the Earth Day 2011 event, like the preceding years promised to be a challenging and exciting Tribal forum for preserving and protecting our most precious resource: our Earth.

The target group for this year was children and the youth between 4-18 years of age and their parents. Although we had invited 40 participants, we had well over 100 people in attendance. Adults and children alike came to honor mother Earth by learning what they can do to protect and clean up the environment, raise awareness about environmental health issues, and gather other relevant information for positive change. They were interested in gaining insight into new ways to go green, save the environment and make the community more eco-friendly, all while having fun.

In addition to the theme, we borrowed the following Native American saying; *"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."* The overriding principle was for all participants to practice the three "R's" whenever possible: **Reduce, Recycle, and Reuse.**

Key note speakers from BIA, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Region IX EPA Toxics office were unable to attend due to the anticipated government shut down that weekend, however, those people were able to provide literature and other materials to be used for the event. We also received donations of raffle gifts, simple working tools and items made from recycled materials. These were put to good use and the event was an astounding success story. The planning committee was comprised of Buena Vista Rancheria Staff and Circle of Nations. Invited Native American guest speakers engaged the participants in various talk sessions in groups separated by gender and age. The youth were involved in hands on environmental resource activities including a field trip to the dumpsite/transfer station.

The event featured environmental friendly groups including BIA's Fire Prevention department; USF&WS, US EPA and Circle of Nations, among others. Some highlights of the day included: The Smokey Bear story;

hiking/nature walk to the Buena Vista peaks; interactive displays; environmental demonstrations and gardening for the little kids; arts and crafts; basket weaving; games; food; and live entertainment including dance workshops and hand games. The participants were taken on a guided tour to the dumpsite; where they saw mounds of all types of waste! They received firsthand experience of dumping in action and witnessed the process of refuse separation and sorting.

The Buena Vista Rancheria distributed binders and bags with relevant education and community outreach materials. Educational materials promoted environmental facts. We had a lot of giveaways and raffle gifts made from recyclable materials. The event encouraged informing participants about the three "R's" and they in turn practiced separating items and placing them in the relevant recycling bins (bottles, paper, compost, etc.. The Buena Vista Rancheria promoted reuse of cutlery.

The event was graced by the presence of among others, Honorable Rhonda Pope, Buena Vista Rancheria Tribal Chairwoman; all Buena Vista Rancheria Tribal and Child Development Center staff and tribal elders among others. The great attendance at the event went a long way to show that since the first earth day celebration marked forty one years ago, there is definitely a wider awareness of environmental issues.

Attendees: Buena Vista Staff, Circle of Nations, Buena Vista Child Development Center students, Sheep Ranch Rancheria Dance Group, Aztec Dancers, Miwok Dancers, local Indian community members, and local community members



~Photo by Leon Rofé



SAFENET Field Card

~ Tony Beitia, VIA Wildland Fire Safety Specialist, NIFC



In an effort to meet the needs of the wildland fire community, the Risk Management Committee (RMC) has created the **SAFENET FIELD CARD** which is designed to be used by personnel assigned to wildland fire incidents with Incident Management Teams (IMTs), local unit employees, and personnel on detail assignments without access to computers.

The Field Card is to be used for prompt reporting and timely resolution of safety and health concerns encountered on wildland fire assignments, all hazard operations, or other related work environments. This process augments but does not replace the existing SAFENET system.

Often small failures or “weak signals” can lead to larger problems that can be addressed at the lowest level of the organization. Leadership should defer to the expertise of personnel at the lowest operational level, which allows firefighters to create a remedy to minimize the risk or remove personnel from unsafe situations.

A completed SAFENET FIELD CARD can be submitted at the local unit level to a first level supervisor, a designated Safety and Health representative, Fire Management Officer, or Agency Superintendent. Recipients of the Field Cards are encouraged to address situations immediately if “**Reporting Individuals**” actions do not correct or mitigate the unsafe action or event. “**Corrective Actions**” taken by leadership personnel also need to be documented to limit repeat events or establish protocol to limit the exposure

of employees on future incidents. All corrective actions need to be shared with the affected individual(s) and personnel assigned to the task or project.

If the situation cannot be resolved at the local unit level with the FIELD CARD, the reporting individual is encouraged to follow the formal SAFENET process, and complete an electronic version to be addressed at the national level.

Personnel who submit a Field Card are encouraged, but not required, to put their name on the card. The Field Card can be completed anonymously, and there is no punishment or penalty for submitting a SAFENET FIELD CARD. **Remember, the goal of the SAFENET FIELD CARD is accident prevention.**

Local units are encouraged to make available blank SAFENET FIELD CARDS in high use areas such as warehouses, break rooms, and in briefing areas. “Safety Suggestion” boxes or other methods to collect the cards need to be created and checked on a daily basis to address the concerns from the field. Leadership should address the Field Cards daily during daily briefings, or sooner as the situation dictates.

During the summer season trial period, the SAFENET FIELD CARD will not be available through the SAFENET system and is to be used in the field environment. The SAFENET FIELD CARD should be printed on both sides of a single page to allow for mailing, or the address can be handwritten when the Field Card is folded in half. The mailing address is listed at the bottom of the Card. The Field Card is located on the SAFENET website at, <http://safenet.nifc.gov>.

The information provided on the SAFENET FIELD

CARD will be collected to provide important, safety-related data to assist the RMC in long-term trends and problem-area analysis.

After the situation that warranted submission of the SAFENET FIELD CARD has been resolved at the local level, Supervisors, Safety Officers, and leadership personnel are encouraged to submit completed cards after the situation has been resolved at the local level, by one of the following means:

Mail: SAFENET
P.O. Box 16645
Boise, ID 83715-9750

Fax: Attn: Safety
(208)387-5581

Scan and Email:
SAFENET_Administrator@blm.gov

The RMC encourages comments and suggestions for improvement of the new SAFENET FIELD CARD reporting program. Please submit your ideas or comments to Tony Beitia, NIFC Wildland Fire Safety Specialist at: Juan.Beitia@bia.gov, or feel free to contact him @ 208-387-5177 for more information on how to use the SAFENET FIELD CARD on your unit.

SAFENET FIELD CARD
Wildland Fire Safety & Health Reporting Network
Report unsafe situations in all wildland fire operations.

The purpose of the SAFENET FIELD CARD is to provide real time reporting for unsafe situations or close calls for long-term data analysis that will result in identifying trends. Individuals submitting SAFENETs should do so based on firsthand observation or participation in the identified event(s).

General
Name/Crew (Optional): _____ Date Reported: _____
Agency/Organization: _____ Phone (Optional): _____
Email (Optional): _____

Event
Position Title: _____ Event Date: _____
Task: _____ Incident Name: _____
Management Level: (circle) Type 5; Type 4; Type 3; Type 2; Type 1 _____ State: _____
Resources Involved: _____ Jurisdiction: _____
Local Unit: _____

Contributing Factors
 Fire Behavior Equipment Decision Making Performance
 Environmental Human Factors Fatigue Risk Management
 Communications Other Situational Awareness Leadership

Incident Type
 Wildland Prescribed Line Initial Attack
 All Hazard Support Extended Attack
 Training Transport/tow/roam Transfer of Command
 Fuel Treatment Readiness/Preparedness Map up
 Work Capacity Test Other Demob
 Non-Incident

Narrative
Description: Describe in detail what happened including the concern or potential issue, the environment (weather, terrain, fire behavior, etc. and the resulting safety/health issue.
Reporting Individual: Please describe actions you took to correct or mitigate the unsafe/unhealthy event:
Corrective Action: Indicate corrective action(s) taken by leadership:

SAFENET, P.O. Box 16645, Boise, Idaho, 83715-9750

SAFENET FIELD CARD front side. Back side, not shown, has the SAFENET mailing address printed on it.



Training

BIA Firefighter Fitness Challenge

~ Dave Koch, BIA-NIFC Assistant Director, Training

The BIA Branch of Wildland Fire Management has initiated a Firefighter Fitness Challenge - a voluntary fitness test that measures strength, flexibility and endurance of firefighters and other personnel. This test does not replace the Work Capacity Test, an annual requirement for most firefighters who visit the fireline.

The test involves four exercises: pull-ups, push-ups, sit-ups, and a 1 ½ or 3 mile run. For the pull-ups, push-ups, and sit-ups, participants are given three minutes to complete as many reps as possible. A seven minute break is allowed between each exercise. Participants can do the exercises, including the run, in any order they choose. Test instructions and a score chart can be downloaded at: <http://www.bia.gov/nifc/training/fitness/index.htm>.

Tests will be administered at the unit level. As with any agency sponsored fitness program, a process should be in place to handle medical emergencies.

Test results should be compiled by the unit fire program manager and a summary sheet with participant names and scores should be sent to the Regional Fire Management Officer. The participant receiving the highest score within the region will be recognized at a regional meeting. Regional offices will forward the score of their top regional employee to BIA-NIFC no later than June 30 each year for the selection of the highest score



Mescalero Apache Firefighters

nationally. The employee with the highest score nationally will be recognized during a national level meeting.

There are four levels of achievement: bronze (100 pts), silver (200 pts), gold (300 pts), and platinum (400 pts). Participants qualifying at any of these levels will receive a patch indicating the corresponding level. The highest performer in the nation will have their name inscribed on a plaque, noting the year of the achievement.

Whether you are on the front lines managing fires or sitting behind a desk, good physical fitness is important. All employees are encouraged to keep physically fit throughout the year and there are many fitness programs to choose from. An example endorsed by NWCG is the Fire Fit program created specifically for firefighters with the goal of improving productivity, health, and safety. Learn more about Fire Fit at <http://www.nifc.gov/FireFit/index.htm>.

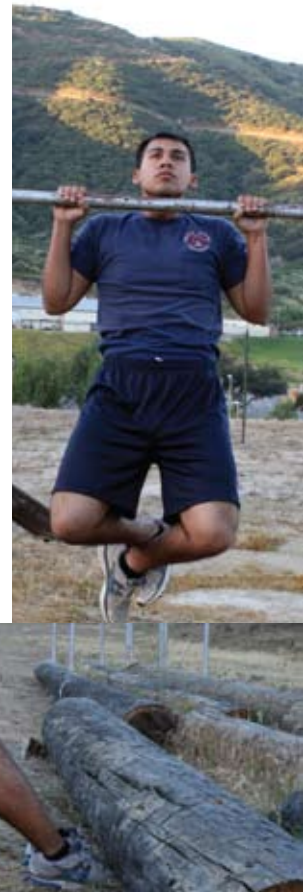


Mescalero Apache Firefighter

The Fitness Challenge was developed by our friends in the Bureau of Land Management. If you need information about the BIA Firefighter Fitness Challenge contact Dave Koch at David.Koch@bia.gov.



Michael Flores, Golden Eagles Hotshots



In the April 2011, Volume 21 issue of Smoke Signals, I had the opportunity to share with you my memories and experiences of the Northwestern Indian Cemetery Protection Association (NICPA 1970-1986), our struggle for cultural survival and autonomy, preservation of our ceremonial sites and burial sites, and the repatriation of the bones and artifacts of our ancestors. The article shared NICPA's impact on archaeological diggings, public attitudes about the desecration of native graves, and environmental and logging practices. In this article, I would like to share the implications of NICPA to the field of fire management. These are my experiences, understandings, and opinions.

During the 1980's the United States Forest Service attempted building a paved road and considered timber harvesting through the Chimney Rock area of the Six River National Forest. These sites had historically been used by Native Americans to

constitute an attempt to coerce Native Americans to act in violation of their beliefs." The Court reasoned that the Government could not operate if it were required to satisfy every citizen's religious needs and desires (Alderman & Kennedy, 1991).

It is acknowledged that the first amendment does not authorize a single person, or a group of people, carte blanche veto power over public programs. However, when public programs actually prohibit the free exercise of religion, then the law is clear. The case ultimately set a legal precedent for other Indian tribes. We didn't want to set a precedent; we just wanted to deal with this at the local level, based on our own Freedom of Religion.

Fortunately, Congressmen Doug Bosco was later able to attach the preservation of the Chimney Rock area to the Siskiyou Wilderness Bill, which protected it from certain land management activities.

Representatives and Heritage Consultants are dispatched to the fire and briefed by the Forest Service Agency Administrator on the situation. The Tribal Government Representative is in charge of the Heritage Consultants. The Tribal Government Representative reports back to the Tribal Council. The Heritage Consultants are the field representatives and work with the fire crews (generally at the Division Supervisor level); advising them on cultural, ceremonial, and other sensitive locations which may need to be avoided or treated in a specific way. The Tribal Heritage Consultants report to the Tribal Government Representative while the Division Supervisor works with the incident's Resource Specialist. The Resource Specialist and the Tribal Government Rep get together and work out a plan to be presented to the Incident Commander (IC). The Tribal Government Rep attends the morning briefing and participates in the afternoon planning meeting with the incident's Command and General Staff.

This arrangement has generally been workable, but there have been challenges. For example, on long duration fires the Incident Management Teams (IMT) rotate in and out every 14 days. In order for clear communication, the Tribal Representative and Heritage Consultants have to explain the MOU and all the events that took place in the previous 14 days to the newly arriving IMT. Constant education from the Tribe is necessary in order to insure the same message is shared.

Incident Commanders work their way up through the ranks of fire fighters. Through their careers take numerous courses, from basic fire training to advanced incident management training, and work their way up through the performance-based task book process. The most complex fires require Type-2 and Type-1 Incident Commanders. Unfortunately, Incident Commanders rarely have knowledge of Tribal MOUs for the protection of ceremonial, burial, village sites, etc.. I believe that certain training courses at the 400 or 500 level include a cultural component so that IC's would



Walt in Washington

conduct religious rituals. NICPA filed action against Secretary of Agriculture, Richard Lyng. The case went to the Supreme Court who concluded, in a 5 to 3 decision, that the Forest Service was free to harvest the lands. Though the Government's actions would have severe adverse effects on the Indians' practice of their religion, those effects were deemed "incidental" and "did not

Since that time, the Yurok tribe has been able to meet with the United States Forest Service (USFS) on new grounds working towards the preservation of our culture and way of life. The Yurok Tribe has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USFS Six Rivers National Forest (SRNF). When there is a fire on the SRNF the Yurok Tribe is notified and Tribal Government

have a basic cultural awareness when managing fire in traditional use areas. The cultural component should also be added to Basic 32 for firefighters so they have a basic understanding of cultural concerns. At this point everyone would be aware of what we are trying to protect. Tribes throughout the Nation have cultural concerns in their own areas which can be discussed at the morning briefings so everyone is on the same page. This was a goal of the Northwestern Indian Cemetery Protection Association in the early days.

Another area of concern is the use of back fires by IMTs to control wildland fires. In 2008 in Northern California, local tribes had serious concerns about the methods used around the Flint Valley area. The IMT set a backfire at the bottom of Chimney Rock and Doctor Rock mountains in order to contain the fire. For many generations tribes in this area set fire at the highest elevations close to the ridgetops and let the fire burn downhill. Indians called this “a slow cold fire.” These types of fires were natural and helped maintain a healthy forest and habitat for wildlife. This was something we learned from nature ... to protect nature. Lightning fires often strike on top of the mountain and burn down hill.

Many of the fires in Northern California in 2008 started just like this and generally made their way from the top to the bottom slowly, periodically making isolated runs from rollout. If left alone, the fires would get big but would result in a healthy mosaic comprised primarily of low to moderate intensity fire effects.

The backfire the IMT conducted at Flint Valley resulted in a high intensity burn with negative impact to timber and wildlife resources. It was frustrating to witness the animals' plight. There were some wet areas still unburned, but what was burned did not have to be burned in the first place since the fire was not endangering human



PRESIDENT GERARD R. FORD and ITCC Board Chairman WALT LARA discussed the problems of California Indians

Walt in Washington DC with President Gerald Ford

life or buildings. In my opinion, this backfire method has little concern for environmental preservation. More patience needs to be exercised by IMT's! Not every fire needs to be “buttoned up” before the IMT's 14 day tour ends. Much of the backfiring done in Northern California in 2008 was unnecessary. It is apparent that our fire management culture still clings to the 10 am policy in many instances. Often times it shouldn't be a “fire fight.” More patience should be exercised. IMT's should be much smaller and, more sensitive to utilizing fire for resource benefit in areas of the country where this can be done.

I look at it like this; the United States was all Indian Country at one time. Indian ceremonial prayer grounds, cultural sites from all tribes, including those that are not federally recognized, should have been protected. We all learn from history. Whether genocide, government policy, or any other devastation to a people, of any race, we can relate. During my time, the enemy has been archeologists, U.S. officials without training of our inherent rights, grave robbers, those who have made a living off the suffering of my ancestors, and most anthropologists that don't listen to our historical

knowledge. I've learned that over time your enemies can become allies. There was an article written many years ago about logging in Northern California. I was interviewed for a news article on the steps of the Capitol Building in Washington DC. The caption read “Indian Babbles about Environment.” It was a rude awakening of the long journey I was about to take in the protection of my inherent rights and creating public awareness of our relationship to the environment. Nonetheless, I'll close with this story...

There was this anthropologist who recently interviewed an old Indian man. She asked him about his people, culture, and how they lived. At the end she asked him if there was anything that he would like to do before he died. He thought for a minute and said, “Yes, I would like to learn to speak my language fluently.” She said, “Why learn your language if you are going to die?” He said, “Well, when I get to the heavens, I can talk to my ancestors and I can understand them.” The anthropologist responded sarcastically, “What if you go to Hell?” The old man smiled and said, “I can already speak English!”

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

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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Boise, ID 83705-5354
Attn: Smoke Signals

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