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Tecumseh Project

~ Steve Smith, Inter-Regional Fuels Specialist, BIA-NIFC
~ Joshua Williams, Fuels Specialist Southern Plains Region, BIA



Prescribed fire used to consume strategically placed and piled fuels.

During Fiscal Year 2012, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Southern Plains Region identified an area of Tribal Trust lands within the city limits of the community of Tecumseh, Oklahoma as a high priority location to conduct hazardous fuels treatments. The purpose of the project was to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire while protecting and enhancing both values associated with the community of Tecumseh and Citizen Potawatomi Nation. As a result the Southern Plains



Tecumseh hazardous fuels project pre-treatment area aerial view.

Region developed the Tecumseh Hazardous Fuels Project which included the treatment of hazardous fuels utilizing both mechanized equipment and prescribed fire.

The high priority status of the project was determined by the results of the Regional Risk Assessment prepared in October of 2009 and from the 2011 Pawnee Agency/Shawnee Field Office Wildland Fire Prevention Plan (WFPP) Revision. The project included 55 acres of land held in Tribal Trust located inside the city limits of Tecumseh, Oklahoma.

A major electrical power transmission line, which supplies power to the communities of Tecumseh and Shawnee, and services approximately 25,000 customers, crosses the project area. Power is supplied to homes, businesses and Tribal infrastructures. Located immediately adjacent to the Southwest corner of the project, is a major power sub-station which corresponds with the transmission lines supplying power to those communities.

The entire northern boundary of the project is bordered by neighborhoods where there are



Eastern Red Cedar density.

approximately 25 homes and numerous other structures. The eastern boundary of the project adjoins the four lane Oklahoma State Highway 177 that serves as a major transportation route. Tecumseh High School is one half mile to the west/southwest of the project and immediately south is the community of Tecumseh with a population of 6,537 people.

The project area had gone almost unmanaged for 10+ years and had fallen victim to a prolific invasion of Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) trees which are an exceptionally volatile fuel that

exhibits extreme fire behavior and has been the primary contributor to large fires across Oklahoma over the past 20+ years. These fires have destroyed numerous homes and businesses and have caused extreme economic hardship to many small communities. The proximity of the project area to the community and the associated values (with recognition of the high probability of unwanted fire ignitions), and the extremely volatile fuels present, elevated this project to become the highest priority in the Region.

Potential consequences that could have arisen from failing to treat the project area may have included large, devastating wildfires to occur that would have had potential to destroy numerous homes and business, disrupt transportation routes, place the public and fire suppression resources in extreme danger and create a significant disruption to power delivery thus affecting many businesses, homes, schools, medical facilities, Tribal businesses, and services. The physical, social and economic impacts that could have occurred had a wildfire originated or entered into the area would have been catastrophic and not only would have had immediate impacts to the community of Tecumseh but throughout the county and other parts of the State as power and transportation routes would likely become severely disrupted.

If left untreated, the site would continue to degrade the water quality and the area would experience loss of the ground water supply. The site had essentially already become a mono-culture and had drastically degraded the quality of wildlife habitat and forage productivity.

Goals for the project included fuels reduction to provide for



Strategically placed and piled fuels

the protection of the community and associated values, increased firefighter and public safety by decreasing the risk of high intensity and costly wildfires.

Additionally, the removal of the Eastern Red Cedar would allow the native range vegetation species to reclaim the site resulting in enhanced wildlife habitat, better water quality and supply, and the potential for economic benefit to the Tribe from restoring the site to historical prairie conditions that would allow for leasing the site for livestock grazing.



Mechanical removal of the Eastern Red Cedar using two regionally owned and operated Bobcat track loaders with Marshall Tree Saw implements.



Mechanical treatment objectives consisted of the removal of 70% to 100% of the live Eastern Red Cedar trees on the upland sites within the project area. Prescribed fire objectives included promotion of Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) II and III to FRCC I and to stimulate and enhance the production of native warm season grasses between 5% and 75% in addition to the current capacities.

Actions implemented to achieve the project goals included mechanical removal of the Eastern Red Cedar utilizing two regionally owned and

operated Bobcat track loaders with Marshall Tree Saw implements.

The cut trees were then arranged in piles utilizing a grapple implement on the track loaders. Piled fuels were strategically placed in locations to ensure that prescribed fire treatment objectives could be met safely and without causing damage to power lines, adjacent residences or other infrastructure. Mechanical treatment of the projected commenced in November



Prescribed fire used to consume the strategically placed and piled fuels

2011 and was concluded in July 2012.

Prescribed fire was later utilized to consume the piled fuels and treat the entire project area in November 2012.

Significant collaboration and cooperation between the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Oklahoma Gas & Electric and the City of Tecumseh took place to ensure successful planning and implementation of the project. The Bureau of Indian Affairs worked directly with the Tribe to ensure that their goals were incorporated into the planning of the project. Coordination with the City of Tecumseh was paramount



Photos of Eastern Red Cedar densities (Pre-Treatment)





Above, pre-treatment aerial view of the project area

Below, post treatment aerial view of the project area

Before prescribed fire, note piles in the image



during the prescribed fire implementation as support was contributed from the city's fire department, street department and law enforcement resources to ensure public safety and notification. Internally, the Southern Plains Region coordinated between the fire staff and the natural resources staff to provide personnel to operate machinery and assist in prescribed fire operations. In addition, the Southern Plains Region was able to utilize contributed labor from two individuals participating in the Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) facilitated by the Haskell Indian Nations University. These individuals provided the majority of the work performed on the mechanical treatments serving as equipment operators.

Funding, in addition to the contributed labor from various sources to support the successful project implementation was provided from the Department of the Interior through the Bureau of Indian Affairs' hazardous fuels funding allocations. A portion of the funding supported the employment of youth by paying



Post treatment photos



Before

the salary employees that were between the ages of 18 and 24. Direct costs associated for the mechanical portion of the project implementation was \$11,825 equating to an average of \$107.50/acre. The direct costs associated with the prescribed fire portion of the project amounted to \$3,300 which equates to \$60/acre. The combined total project direct costs were \$15,125 which was on average overall for the project \$92/acre.

Successful results observed since the completion of the treatment include the reduction of approximately 98% of the live Eastern Red Cedar trees on the upland sites within the project area. Post-treatment Fire Regime Condition Class results are estimated that 49.5 acres of the 55 total acres were moved to a better condition class. At the time of this report, the growing season was just getting underway however, initial observations indicate that warm season grasses are beginning to quickly recover across the project area and will likely flourish and hold high potential to meet the objective of stimulating and enhancing the production of native



After - Both photos are in the same location but looking in a slightly different direction in each photo.

warm season grasses between 5% and 75% in addition to the pre-treatment capacities. Should this presumption hold

true, the site area will now be host to predominately a grass fuel type which will not produce the same extreme fire behavior that the previous fuel type held potential. This will in turn reduce the risk of large and costly catastrophic wildfires from occurring and provide for significantly enhanced public and firefighter safety. Additionally, it appears that the potential will now exist for the Tribe to further manage the site by leasing the area for livestock grazing which will have a two-fold benefit. These benefits will be the economic benefit to the Tribe by obtaining a financial advantage from the lease of the area and secondly, the effect of grazing livestock will aid in maintaining future fuel conditions so that a wildfire could be easily suppressed. One other indirect benefit as a result of the project implementation was once the site was cleared, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's environmental department was able to remove a substantial accumulation of solid waste and hazardous materials that had been deposited inside the project area that had become inaccessible due to the extremely dense vegetation.

In summary, the Tecumseh hazardous fuels project was a high priority project that mitigated hazards to the Community of Tecumseh, Oklahoma, as well as, values associated with the community and the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. The project eliminated substantial buildups of hazardous fuels and restored historical ecological conditions while reducing the potential for large damaging wildfires to occur. The project was a success as the result of collaboration and cooperation of federal, Tribal, municipal, county and private partners. Local residents and the community of Tecumseh have a new sense of security and appreciation for the efforts of the Bureau of Indian Affairs hazardous fuels reduction program. The potential for wide-spread disruptions, negative economic impacts, jeopardized public and firefighter safety resulting from a large high intensity fire have now been mitigated and the benefits are experienced by not only the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Tribe but to the residents and business owners in the community of Tecumseh and those throughout Pottawatomie County who depend on the electrical power provided through the transmission lines present across the project area that were potentially at risk.



New Fire Prevention & Mitigation Specialist at Standing Rock

~ by Steven Ipswitch, Fire Management Officer, Standing Rock



Sean White Mountain started as the new Fire Prevention and Mitigation Specialist at Standing Rock Agency on Monday, March 25, 2013.

Sean earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science at Sitting Bull College in Fort Yates, North Dakota, in 2012. He also earned an Associate of Science degree in Environmental Science at United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, North Dakota, in 2009.

Since 2003 he has worked as an AD firefighter at Standing Rock Agency, progressing from a firefighter type 2 on hand crews and engines to a Faller B, Engine Boss, and Crew Boss. This experience includes both wildland fire and prescribed fire assignments

in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico.

Sean attended the FI-210 Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Determination course at Crow Agency, Montana, in April.

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Celebrating Ten Years of Success

~ Soledad Holguin, BIA Pacific Region Fire Prevention Specialist

Owens Valley Indian Water Commission

The Owens Valley Indian Water Commission celebrates 10 years of incorporating educational presentations about wildland fire prevention and conservation for youth. Participants included the Bishop Paiute Tribe, Bridgeport Indian Colony, Big Pine Paiute Tribe, Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe, volunteers, local businesses and federal agencies.

Ten years ago, Janice McRoberts, Environmental Department General Assistance Program Coordinator of the Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe contacted the Pacific Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) requested our attendance at their first camp out. This last summer's youth program was made available to all children. Many hours of volunteer work went into personal safety, hands-on activities, and educational presentations which highlight the environment and ecology. The Environmental Youth Camp has now gone full circle. The first camp was held at June Lake in 2002 and last year the camp out was held at the same location.

Youth camp objectives are to excite students about the environment and introduce them to the concepts of environmental science and ecology. This program helps students understand their role in the Earth's ecology and provides them an opportunity to experience different environments. Further, students have an opportunity to interact with



Chumash presenters: Nakia Zavalla and Thomas Lopez
 ~ Photo by Soledad Holguin, Pacific Region Bia Fire Prevention Specialist

of duck decoys and egg baskets. Jim Nanamkin (BIA), Soledad Holguin, (BIA), and Janice McRoberts did a presentation on cultural fire use, and did a skit demonstrating how an unsafe fire affects the community. Many more educational programs were showcased during the week.

Many of the speakers shared traditional stories. Janice shared an account of what occurred one evening at the campground. “As we were sitting there, our presenter was speaking of the ability Native Americans had to communicate with the animals. As he was speaking, several deer appeared on a slope above the campground and made their way towards the campsite. It was such an emotional moment for all of us.”

Later that evening as I was listening to Chumash presenters, Nakia and Thomas, I noticed that the children were focused on the songs and

nature in a responsible manner and gain a lifelong appreciation for the environment. The group sessions provides a learning experience for possible future careers.

The year’s special guests included the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians who shared their history, culture and traditions through storytelling, dance and music (Nakia Zavalla and Thomas Lopez). The Paiute War Dance was demonstrated in traditional regalia by Jobe-In-the-Woods of the



Jim Nanamkin, BIA Pacific Region Fire Prevention Officer talking about the importance of talking of Indian Country
 ~ Photo by Soledad Holguin, Pacific Region Bia Fire Prevention Specialist

Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley. Native plants were discussed by Ross Stone, of the Big Pine Paiute Tribe. A threatened and endangered species presentation was given by Joy Fatooh, Fish and Wildlife Service (FW&S). There was wildflower exploration during a horseback ride at Silver Lake. Mike Williams, Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe taught youth weaving of Tule reeds for the canvasback replica boat, and creation

historical account of their traditions. A photo was taken of the children and later as Janice and I looked at the picture we saw what appeared to be a full moon in the photo. But that evening as the sun was setting there was no full moon. It was then that Janice talked about the orb that appeared in the photo. “Maybe our ancestral elders were watching over all of us!” It was an amazing evening.



~ Photo by Soledad Holguin, Pacific Region Bia Fire Prevention Specialist



BIA Type 1 Incident Management Team Trainees Pass S-520 in 2013



Yvonne Jones (center holding team sign) along with her 2013 S-520 team
 ~ Photo by NAFRI Staff



John Szulc (far right) with the rest of his 2013 S-520 team
 ~ Photo by NAFRI Staff

S-520, Advanced Incident Management offered by the National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute (NAFRI) in Tucson, Arizona, was held March 10-16, 2013.

Yvonne Jones, Assistant Regional Fire Management Officer, (Pacific Region) participated as a Fire Information Officer, and John Szulc, Forester, (Northwest Regional Office)

participated as an Operations Section Chief. Both BIA employees passed this very challenging course.

Laurel Simos, BIA-NIFC Visual Information Specialist and Editor of the Smoke Signals Newsletter (Great Basin Type 1 Incident Management Team) participated in the course in 2013 as a coach (having passed in 2010). Yvonne and John are two of approximately only 12 BIA employees to have successfully completed 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 IMT’s. 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 students must meet established criteria for successful completion of the course.

Congratulations Yvonne and John, great job!



Multi-agency Refresher Training in Wisconsin

~ Michael Fitzgibbon, GIA Forester, Great Lakes Agency, Ashland, Wisconsin



BIA Squad Boss Gary Krueger (left) and Forest Service Engine Foreman Dave Sloan teach the pumps refresher module, using portable and engine-mounted pumps at the Great Lakes Agency.

Ashland, Wis. – A long Midwestern winter ending with cool, wet weather helped alleviate the spring fire season here, but wildland firefighters from northern Wisconsin prepared for the worst anyway, in a unique inter-agency and inter-Tribal refresher training tradition.

The Incident Commander (IC) for the training, Dave Pergolski, said, “We are running this as a mock incident to refresh the experienced and teach the newcomers to wildfire, and show the Incident Command System at work from check-in to de-mob.

“Firefighters were broke-out into five crews for the five different hands-on stations that were called divisions,” said Pergolski, who is the

Fire Manager at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Great Lakes Agency, where the training was held. “At check-in, the first Firefighter Type 1 (FFT1) qualified person would get assigned the lead of a crew, and then the Status Check-in Recorder (SCKN) would try to diversify the crews by agency and qualifications to get people working with others they may not have worked with prior, and build the interagency cooperation.”

Along with the BIA, firefighters from the Forest Service, Park Service, National Weather Service, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources participated. Among them were Tribal firefighters from five Ojibwe reservations, including Lac

Du Flambeau, St. Croix, Red Cliff, Lac Courte Oreilles, and White Earth. Northland College in Ashland was also represented.

“We’re just trying to get everybody involved and working together a little more closely,” said Chris Geidel, a Chequamegon National Forest firefighter and one of the instructors.

Geidel taught the two-way radio “station/division” training, one of five such modules. Others included a pumps refresher, a case study in tactics from an actual fire, a practice fire shelter deployment, and a checkers-like game using the firefighters, themselves, as game pieces in the Crew Cohesion station/division.

The team-building of the Crew Cohesion exercise is sometimes used in training by the National Park Service. It was led by Damon Panek, an engine boss from the Park Service’s nearby Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

Panek described the game as “a social sand table with firefighters interacting and making decisions with potential for input from everyone.”

That cohesion was reflected in the organization of the refresher as a whole, Panek said. “It’s one more example of how interagency cooperation works in Wisconsin. It’s the whole partnership idea, for me anyway, this idea of community to get things done.

“I think, in some ways, that the whole refresher, developed by Dave and other folks, was really well thought-

out. It was a grassroots, cooperative effort, really operations-focused.”

A member of the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe, Panak added, “The approach parallels how projects get realized in Tribal communities, as well.”

Cohesion between agencies was a theme of the training for Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2) Amanda Graning, who presented local and national weather outlooks for the upcoming fire season during the training incident’s initial briefing. Graning, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Duluth, wants to become a fire meteorologist after she gets more fireline experience.

She said the refresher will help with her “day job”: “NWS provides forecasts and weather information to a wide variety of users, so this training

was very unique and beneficial; to meet people from different agencies and interact face-to-face. I came away from this course with several new friends and professional contacts.”

One of Graning’s predictions, a colder spring with more precipitation, was spot-on, too. April and May in the Northern Great Lakes saw some of the heaviest snowfall of the winter.

Nevertheless, on May 14, not even two weeks after 16 inches of snow fell on much of Northwest Wisconsin, the Germann Road Fire (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestFire/GermannRoadFire.html>) burned over 8,000 acres, 17 houses and 35 structures, between the Lac Courte Oreille and St. Croix reservations. Many of the firefighters attending this refresher helped to control that fire.



Jerry Walhovd (left), Deputy Superintendent for the Great Lakes Agency and White Earth Nation member, welcomes 70 Wisconsin firefighters to their 2013 refresher. Dave Pergolski, GLA fire manager, was IC for the training, which was organized as a multi-agency fire incident.



Around 70 wildland firefighters attended the March refresher incident/training at the Great Lakes Agency in Ashland, Wis. Dave Pergolski (at podium), Incident Commander (IC) for the mock incident, conducts an “after action review” (AAR) at the end of the day.



Firefighter “checkers” work their way across a grid in teams in a game to develop cohesion. Park Service engine boss and White Earth Nation member Damon Panek (far right) leads the training.

articles to fill these 16 pages, so if you are wondering what takes so long to get one out and into the hands of the people in Indian Country, that’s why!

Please consider submitting articles of your activities this summer. As I write this, many of you are assigned to fires in several states. Our readers would love to hear of your experiences while assigned to wildland fires as well as while participating in other related activities.

Don’t worry if you’re not a great writer, just tell your story and we’ll take care of the rest!

Send your story, jpeg photos, author’s name, job title and a phone number and/or email address and we’ll contact you if we have any questions.

Laurel Simos, Smoke Signals Editor

THANK YOU!

I would like to give a big thank you to all of you who submitted articles to be published in Smoke Signals.

Without your dedication to this newsletter, your willingness to tell your stories and to take photographs, it couldn’t exist.

We are unable to produce Smoke Signals without enough



M-410 Facilitative Instructor graduating class of 2013

~ Photo by Laurel Simos, BIA~NIFC

Becoming an Effective Facilitative Instructor

~ Steve Jackson, Fire Operations Technician, Training Specialist, Salt Lake BLM

The BIA sponsored its 11th annual NWCG M-410, Facilitative Instructor training January 7-11, 2013 in San Diego, California at the Catamaran Resort.

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

- The quality of instruction at the local, geographic, and national level;

- Interaction with other teachers and course coordinators in a cadre environment;
- Skills for conducting meetings, briefings, After Action Reviews; and
- Any communication scenario where information sharing within a dynamic groups is the key.

This year’s course continued the tradition of combining individuals from a variety of fire positions and locations from the wildfire community in an arena where they are encouraged to try techniques

and methods that reach beyond fire topics. Furthermore, Tribal and Bureau employees not working in Fire Management are also encouraged to participate.

This year’s graduates include Audrey Sessions, Chris VanAllen, Eric Prichard, Erin Heier, Gilbert Romero, Jeri Hays, Juliette Nabahe, Mike Kobliska, Richard Johnson, Maja Pepion, Brian Torres, Chester Gladstone, Matt Pecos and Gerry Padilla. Congratulations!

Lead Instructor Steve Jackson, Instructors Leon Ben Jr., Andrea Gilham and Laurel Simos.



I would like to share with you an event of great significance to me, since it has been a lifelong goal. The Jump Dance ceremony on the Pacific North coast, at Cha-pek-w (Stone Lagoon, California), was celebrated July 20-29, 2012, the first time since the late 1800's when the United States outlawed the ceremony as part of a European effort to forcibly colonize the remaining Indian Territory in the northwest. The ceremony is called the Jump Dance, a term first coined by anthropologists. The actual name is Wo-neek we ley-goo, which loosely translates to "raising it up."

Segments of the Cha-pek-w dance occur within the Yurok Tribe's ancestral territory on what is now State and Federal lands, which are governed by different sets of regulations and enforced by separate groups of people such as the State Park Service, National Park Service, California Coastal Commission and the private sector. "It is our understanding that the mission of the Park Service is to preserve the environment and provide recreational activities for its visitors," Dr. Kishan Cooper explained, "and to continue developing a guiding principle, one that makes a safe space for tribe's to practice their cultural heritage of their origin," Dr. Cooper continues, "We believe this cooperative effort formed with the State and National Park Service proved to be 'a good first step.'"

Many Cha-pek-w and Cha-kwee descendants, villages of Stone and Dry Lagoon located along the Pacific Northwest of California, such as Suzie Long, the first elected Yurok Tribal Chairperson, and her children and grandchildren, knowing their whole lives about the Cha-pek-w Jump dance took on the immeasurable challenge in the participation of restoring



The late Blanch Blankenship, Yurok elder and descendant of Cha-pek-w.

the ceremony. For many months descendants worked together resurrecting the ancient ceremonial trails that have been out of use for more than a century, met the demands of bureaucracy, and embraced the ties that hold a community together.

The 10-day, ceremony began at Cha-pek-w with a Boat Dance in traditional redwood canoes across Stone Lagoon. With the assistance of the Yurok Tribal Police Force and State Park Officers, the Dance moved to Hee-won ke-tah, above the lagoon. The four hundred or so attendants crossed the 101

Highway quickly and safely. After traveling to Hee-won Ke-tuehL (above the lake) and crossing two ridges, the Dance culminated at Sey-pue-loh (Gann's Prairie) on the tenth day.

The function of this Dance is a prayer for the continuance of humankind. There is a specific intention and deeper purpose associated with every step in the ceremony, from the day to day tasks, to the ceremonial regalia. Each prayer item used tells a story, a lesson, a purpose. For example the woodpecker scalps in our head dresses represent family. The woodpecker, both male and female feed and look after their young. They are spiritual beings that mate for life. We learn and respect the ways of those things around us. That is what this ceremony is all about, the health, education and welfare of our families. Raising children to be in balance with the world. This dance gives our children an opportunity to thrive in this culture. That's the most important thing to me.

"We are world renewal people," Chris Peters added. "We are here to heal and renew the earth for everyone, not just Yurok people. That is our obligation. Those in attendance are expected to settle all personal grievances before the first day, stay in a positive mind set throughout the duration and help out in a culturally appropriate way. The collective positive emotion is what moves things forward," described Peters. "Everything

we do during those ten days is like a wish for the next two years or until this dance comes around again,” explained Dr. Kishan Cooper, who has played an intricate part in the ceremony and the revitalization of this dance. “Bringing the ceremony back to life was a deeply demanding task. Historically, the ceremony took place at Cha-pek-w, where villagers from Cha-pek-w and Cha kwee were joined at Hee-won Ke-tuehL, on the fifth day, by other dancers from the villages of Big Lagoon, Pin-pay, and as far down the coast as Sumeg. “It is my Dad’s hope to one day have these villagers join us again,” says Dr. Cooper, “I remember the elders discussing the plans for this dance with my father when I was a little girl and it has taken years of developing the experience in ceremony, building significant relationships, and research,” explained Dr. Cooper. “We are working to strengthen this cooperative effort with the National and State Parks for the continuance of ageless ceremonies that pray for the future of humankind. These ceremonies out date European arrival by an indescribable amount of time.”

Working in partnership with the State and National Parks there were things to be taught and learned. After years of testimony, legislation and educating the powers that be, we, Indian people, had the support of many. “I have faith in our District and Assemblyman Representatives knowledge of our rights and sincerity to revitalize a ceremony practice by our

grandparents,” says Long, “I also believe after many years, it took the right group of people coming together, from our village descendants, the government agencies and elected officials to make this happen. And I am so grateful.”

My grandmother, grandparents, uncles and aunts of the descendants shared their knowledge and personal experiences with our families.

This dance is a culmination of their testimonies. A dance that was in their memory but became our reality. It is the revitalization of a missing link of Yurok Jump dances from the Ner-ner of the coast to the Klamath River inland. Although two generations have passed without this dance, it was my goal that it would not be lost in my lifetime.

For Yurok elder and descendant of Cha-pkew, Blanch Blankenship, the ceremony was one the most positive pinnacles of her entire life. She described being “swept away by something so spiritual, that a person is extremely fortunate to experience it once in a lifetime.”



Walt “BlackSnake” Lara, Yurok Forestry

The nearly centenarian has traveled the world over visiting places of spiritual significance, such as Machu Picchu in Peru, and Ayers Rock in Australia.

“I am so blessed to be a part of this dance. This might be what I lived 95 years for,” the gracious Blankenship concluded. My Aunt, Blanche, passed away in the fall of 2012. She had heard about the Cha-pek-w dance all her life from her mother, therefore attended every day during the ceremony. Blanche was the Granddaughter of the late, Indian Doctor, Fanny Flounder.



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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Article Submission Checklist

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

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

- Contact name, number, and email address