



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER
3833 SOUTH DEVELOPMENT AVENUE
BOISE, IDAHO 83705-5354

October 5, 2005

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors, All Regions
Attention: Forestry/Fire Management

From: **ACTING**
Chief, Branch of Fire Management

Subject: Fire Ecologist Positions

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Interagency Fire Center (BIA-NIFC) has been authorized to fill four Fire Ecologist positions that will provide technical assistance and oversight to the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Monitoring program at the field level.

Given that BIA-NIFC, as a national resource, has received this authorization, each position will be responsible for providing services to more than one Region. The location of the positions and the regions they will cover are listed below:

Position Location	Regions to be Covered
Eastern Regional Office Nashville, Tennessee	Eastern, Eastern Oklahoma, and Southern Plains
Southwest Regional Office Albuquerque, New Mexico	Southwest, Navajo, and Western Regions and the Southern California Agency of the Pacific Region
Northwest Regional Office Portland, Oregon	Rocky Mountain, and Northwest Regions and the Northern California Agency of the Pacific Region
Midwest Regional Office Minneapolis, Minnesota	Midwest and Great Plains Regions

Please find the position description for the positions attached. In addition, an Interregional Memorandum of Agreement will need to be prepared for each of the positions to be signed by representatives of the Regions covered. A model Memorandum of Agreement is also attached for your use.

The Eastern Regional Office, Southwest Regional Office, Northwest Regional Office, and Midwest Regional Office will be take the lead for the coordination and completion of all

administrative tasks related to filling their respective position. Funding will be provided for salaries and any associated costs when required by the personnel office to fill the position.

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Beverly Schwab, BIA-NIFC Fire Specialist at 208/387-5042.

POSITION DESCRIPTION FIRE ECOLOGIST GS-408-12

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' mission is to enhance the quality of life, to promote economic opportunity, and to carry out the responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives. We will accomplish this through the delivery of quality services, maintaining government to government relationships within the spirit of Indian self-determination.

The mission of the Branch of Fire Management is:

1. To provide for safe and effective wildland fire protection on privately owned Indian forest and range lands held in trust by the United States of America through the use modern and efficient Interagency fire management practices including appropriate fire suppression; a responsive and cost effective presuppression program based upon a cooperative approach to a common problem with other wildland fire protection agencies; a creative fire prevention program focusing on hazard abatement through the application of prescribed fire; and the implementation of tribal control of the program under Indian Self Determination as requested by tribal government.
2. To provide safe and cost effective use of aviation resources on an interagency basis throughout all Bureau operations that comply with existing statutes, regulations and policies governing their use; implementation of modern technology in the Bureau's use of aviation assets; and to provide technical assistance to tribal governments, as requested, in the safe and effective use of tribal managed aviation resources and facilities.

This position is located at the XXX with responsibilities for providing services to Agencies and Tribes within the XXX, XXX, and XXX Regions. Direct supervision for the position will be provided by the XXX Regional Forester. General Program direction will be provided by the Fire Effects Specialist, NIFC, Branch of Fire Management.

The incumbent serves as the subject matter expert for the BIA Fire Monitoring Program at both the planning and operational levels. Duties involve interaction with, and guidance of, BIA/Tribal staff in the XXX, XXX , and XXX Regions. This includes staff located at approximately 80 tribes/Agencies. The incumbent provides guidance in the implementation of BIA Fire Monitoring requirements, as well as in the analysis of fire effects.

During emergency fire situations the incumbent may be required to participate in wildland fire management (suppression or support) activities. This will require the incumbent to use various fire suppression techniques, methods and tools and on occasions to participate in low-level flights over mountainous terrain. Due to the hazardous nature of firefighting, the incumbent will be required to attend classroom and on-the-job training in the use of personal protective measures; use of specialized firefighting equipment and practices; aircraft and fireline safety; fire behavior; and first aid.

Prior on-the-line firefighter experience as a wildland firefighter is a MANDATORY prerequisite of this position.

MAJOR DUTIES

The incumbent coordinates implementation of the Fire Monitoring program between the National Fire Staff in Boise and agencies/Tribes within the XXX, XXX, and XXX Regions. He/she assures standardization and quality assurance/quality control, and documents progress at the field directorate level. Provides or arranges for technical assistance to the field; coordinates the acquisition and transfer of fire effects information management; serves as Liaison with other Federal and State agencies for fire monitoring programs and also with state, federal, and other research personnel to adapt and adjust monitoring protocols to meet the specific goals and objectives of the Regions, Agencies, and tribes for which the incumbent is responsible.

Assists fire management and natural and cultural resource management staff in planning, evaluating and advising with regard to prescribed fire monitoring programs.

The incumbent provides professional and technical guidance in the implementation of BIA Fire Monitoring requirements. Performs complex analyses, chooses and evaluates sampling methods, and makes management action decisions affecting program implementation. The incumbent works with Regional Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialists to ensure compliance with agency and departmental fire monitoring policy and procedures.

Coordinates and oversees program direction with resource management and fire management staff in fire monitoring activities. Evaluates deviations from BIA Fuels Monitoring requirements that are proposed by agency/Tribal staff, and recommends to Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialist that the proposed changes be allowed or disallowed.

The incumbent deals with a variety of complex professional and technical problems relating to scientifically acceptable data collection and analysis methods. Identifies problems, researches alternatives, and develops techniques or program policy needed to solve problems.

Plans and directs long and short range fire ecology programs including vegetation monitoring, vegetation succession analysis, and basic and applied research activities. Maintains awareness of technological developments in wildland fire science and related disciplines. Coordinates program activities with various neighboring non-government agencies, and federal, state, and local government agencies.

Serves as an instructor for nationally and locally sponsored courses in fire monitoring.

Incumbent personally or through delegation of responsibility, provides Agency/Tribal staff with timely comments on planning and other documents, reports or similar matters submitted to the employee for review.

Attends annual meetings with national and regional fire managers. Presents issues and discusses problems, overall agency policies, procedures, and guidelines in relation to the National Fire Monitoring Program.

Maintains professional contacts so that latest and best techniques or procedures in resources monitoring can be used.

Participates through attendance at professional/technical conference workshops and scientific meetings and/or training workshops dealing with responsibilities of incumbent.

Performs other incidental duties as assigned.

FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

In depth knowledge of the BIA Fire Monitoring Program requirements, including theory, program history and development, program implementation, and the nationwide results of program.

Professional knowledge of wildland fire sciences, including statistical methods for analysis and presentation of data.

In-depth knowledge of professional resource management, forestry management, and land management principles, practices, and concepts applicable to the goals and objectives of wildland fire management.

Knowledge of the natural and cultural resources, as well as related social, political, and economic values found in the XXX, XXX, and XXX Regions with emphasis on those elements affected by application of prescribed fire, fire suppression, and fire use (prescribed natural fire).

Knowledge of agency and departmental policies covering the entire spectrum of vegetation management with a particular emphasis on wildland fire ecology.

Knowledge of BIA policies and planning practices as they relate to fire management.

Knowledge of the requirements imposed by legislation and regulations such as NEPA, the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act, etc.

Ability to supervise or guide personnel in performing technical monitoring work in a tactful manner.

Ability to research resources management issues and effectively communicates information verbally and in writing. Capable of developing supporting graphic materials using appropriate media.

Knowledge of major plant community types found in the XXX, XXX, and XXX Regions.

Knowledge of common fire ecology and vegetation sampling procedures.

Knowledge of collecting and recording procedures for processing fire behavior, effects, and weather data. Basic knowledge of fire behavior prediction systems and fire weather monitoring procedures. Knowledge of collection and recording procedures for processing fire behavior, effects, and weather data.

Possesses at least an introductory level knowledge of statistics.

Ability to operate and make simple repairs to technical equipment used in fire and vegetation monitoring.

Ability to accurately navigate with a map and compass, consistently able to locate (within 20 m) on the ground a predetermined point on a 7.5 minute topographic map. Able to draw and correct maps based on field or aerial reconnaissance.

Ability to use current GIS, or other appropriate methodologies for mapping fuels plant communities, fire effects and monitoring results.

Knowledge, ability, and willingness to use word processing, graphics, desktop publishing, presentation, and database management computer programs.

2. Supervisory Controls

An annual work plan will be prepared cooperatively by the XXX, XXX, and XXX Regional Foresters.

This position is supervised by the XXX Regional Forester, who, based on this work plan, makes work assignments, provides training, and reviews data and reports submitted for accuracy and completeness. Assignments are conducted independently and as a team effort.

The supervisor provides broad direction of a non-technical nature. The incumbent independently conducts operations without detailed review by the supervisor.

Considerable latitude is given for the exercise of judgment in determining solutions and resolving technical problems. Major interagency or publicly sensitive policy questions are resolved by consultation with the supervisor.

Completed work is reviewed by the supervisor, and may be reviewed by the NIFC Fire Effects Specialist for conformance to agency policy and priorities and overall program objectives and results.

Local fire and resource management personnel also provide technical guidance, and indicate general fire program objectives and the nature of expected results. The Prescribed Fire/Fuels Specialist is available for consultation and reviews sensitive correspondence, reports, and data for accuracy and adherence to procedural requirements. Supervisor assists in the solution of unfamiliar problems, but the incumbent is expected to use original thought and suggest solutions, and to work independently.

3. Guidelines

References include BIA National Fuel Management Handbook, Chapter 7, Monitoring, and other guidelines consisting of agency-wide and directorate-wide directives such as technical manuals, standards and guidelines. Scientific reference materials are used in developing programs and in reviewing/updating methods, practices and procedures.

Resourcefulness and experienced professional judgment is used in devising new technologies, in developing methods, or in initiating new practices as required by local conditions.

4. Complexity

Assignments involve an analysis of the role of fire within ecosystems based upon state-of-the-art scientific principles. The complexity of the fire effects program is high, involving a combination of system-wide and local program implementation, data collection, and data analysis.

Performs and supervises field and laboratory work involving the monitoring, recording, and analyses of fire behavior, weather, and effects.

Performs a variety of oversight and technical assistance responsibilities including training and evaluating the performance of Agency/Tribal monitoring personnel.

5. Scope and Effect

The purpose of this work is to provide scientifically based sound professional analysis of the short and long term effects of fire on Indian lands.

The technical expertise and program management provided by the incumbent will have a lasting environmental impact. The existence of the nation's forests and rangelands and their fundamental ecosystem processes is dependent upon making sound management decisions based upon sound technical advice.

6. Personal Contacts

Contacts are with local, regional, and national BIA fire management and resource management personnel, personnel of other divisions or work units in the BIA, various tribal officials and tribal forestry and natural resource department employees, other federal, state, and local land management agencies, various non-governmental agencies, university or college research scientists, and individuals in private industry involved with land management issues.

7. Purpose of Contacts

The contacts are to share in state-of-the-art program knowledge, management principles, methods, and techniques; to coordinate program activities and management plans; to coordinate related program training and to coordinate and integrate program management activities with other agency/Tribal resource management staff.

Contacts involve arranging logistical support, communicating with local staff and their supervisors, and providing information exchange. Contacts involve dissemination and exchange of fire and vegetation management information.

8. Physical Demands

The work is partly sedentary but does require frequent physical exertion. Work involves walking over rough terrain, sometimes for extended periods, and working under occasionally inclement (cold, hot, snow, wind) weather conditions during field operations.

Incumbent must be in good physical condition in order to safely perform field conditions.

Since this is a shared position between XXX, XXX, and XXX Regions, the incumbent will be required to be in travel status much of the time.

9. Work Environment

Work is performed outdoors, often in rugged settings, at any time of day or night (55~), and in an office/laboratory setting (45~). Outdoor hazards may include exposure to biting and stinging insects, high pollen levels, steep terrain, dermatitis-causing plants, and poisonous snakes.

The incumbent will be provided an office that has adequate light, heat, cooling, and ventilation.

10. Other

The incumbent will be required to operate a government-owned or leased vehicle in the performance of his/her duties. The incumbent must possess a valid state driver's license and meet the requirements of the BIA Drivers' Policy.

Memorandum of Understanding

Between the
XX Regional Office
And
XX Regional Office
For
XX/XX Regional Fire Ecologist

I. Introduction

NIFC staff has identified the need for consistent, accurate and valid application of fire ecology and treatment, inventory, and monitoring techniques on Indian land nationally. This has resulted in the creation of four positions nationally. The necessary sharing of these positions has in turn resulted in this agreement. Under this agreement fire ecology work in the two regions will be a 50/50 split to the best of our ability.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to assure the presence of fire ecology, monitoring, inventory and planning technical expertise and assistance with continuous availability to XX and XX tribes and agencies when necessary and requested.

III. Scope and Authority

The agreement is intended to formalize an enhanced operational relationship between the XX Region and the XX Region for the explicit benefit of Indian forestry/fire programs under the jurisdiction of the XX / XX Regions Offices so as to insure timely services to tribal and agency staff relative to fire ecology, monitoring and planning functions.

IV. Terms

This agreement will remain in effect until such time as either party terminates the agreement by written notice for any reason including the lack of funding, a reduction of workload, etc.

V. The XX Region Agrees to:

1. Participate with the XX Region in an annual planning and assessment meeting and through direct discussions determine project priorities for the Fire Ecologist. Project priorities will be documented in writing and used in the development of the employee work plan and performance evaluation.
2. Provide one member of the three member selection committee to recommend the best qualified candidate for the Fire Ecologist. The others will be from XX and NIFC.
3. Provide periodic as well as an annual assessment of the quality of services provided in a form suitable to be directly linked to the Fire Ecologist's performance evaluation.
4. Provide input of the re-assignment of the Fire Ecologist to projects not related to the XX and XX Regions, should such be determined to be beneficial to the national program and thus requested by NIFC.
5. The XX Region agrees to develop and monitor one or two critical elements of the performance rating for this position for the XX Region prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.

VI. The XX Region Agrees to:

1. Establish a Fire Ecologist position, recruit and fill the position, and directly supervise the incumbent including the responsibility for; time and attendance, approval of leave, evaluation of performance, etc.
2. Provide one member of a three person selection committee for the purpose of ranking applicants and recommending to the selecting official the best qualified candidate capable of providing fire ecology, monitoring and planning services to the XX and XX Region's tribes and agencies.
3. Train, furnish equipment and office space and provide administrative services for the position. Administrative services will include: time keeping, travel arrangements and travel vouchers.
4. Request funding from the BIA-NIFC office for the position, including support costs.
5. The XX Region agrees to develop and monitor one or two critical elements of the performance rating for this position for the XX Region prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.

Other points of Note: The third party in the selection of the candidate will be a Bureau Fuels Program representative, when ever possible.

Conflict Resolution:

Conflict resolution on the management of the position will be retained by the Regional Directors of the XX and the XX Regions. Should the party's reach an impasse, the next level of conflict resolution is the BIA National Office Fire Director in Boise, Idaho.

Reviewed:

Reviewed:

_____	_____	_____	_____
Regional Contracting Officer	Date	Regional Forester XX	Date

_____	_____	_____	_____
Regional Forester XX	Date	NIFC Fire Ecologist	Date

Approved:

Approved:

_____	_____	_____	_____
Regional Director XX	Date	Regional Director XX	Date

Concur

NIFC Fire Director Date