



Burning Issues



SECRETARY JEWELL AND WESTERN CONGRESSIONALS VISIT NIFC

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, along with several members of Congress, visited NIFC on March 17, to highlight a proposal that could change how the government funds suppression efforts for the most costly wildfires.

With fire seasons becoming longer and more intense, the President's budget proposal for fiscal year 2015 provides stable funding for the Forest Service and Department of the Interior agencies for fire suppression efforts.

If approved by Congress, the proposal would permit the government to pay for the nation's most severe fires with money from a catastrophic fund that is already used for other natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes and tornados. The fund would cover costs for the worst one percent of wildfires each year which represents 30 percent of fire suppression costs year in and year out.

In past years, when wildfire suppression costs have exceeded the amount allotted by the Forest Service and DOI agencies, they must cover the costs by moving money from other programs. Secretary Jewell said that has hurt fire prevention efforts and actually makes wildfires worse.

"When we can't remove hazardous materials and we can't do prescribed burns to help prepare these ecosystems for a more natural cycle of fire," Jewell said, "we end up with a worse suppression situation. And it spirals down and we have to borrow more money."

Idaho senators Crapo and Risch, and Oregon senators Wyden and Merkeley, believe that the proposal would have a neutral effect on the federal budget.

"The reason this is so important is that the fires now are often bigger, they're often hotter and they often last longer," Wyden said. "And we now feel on a bipartisan basis that it's time for a fresh approach with respect to fighting wildfire."

Secretary Jewell says she's optimistic it will gain enough support in the House and Senate to pass.

Jewell's briefing and news conference were also attended by Idaho governor Butch Otter and Idaho representative Raul Labrador.



Sec. Sally Jewell addressed the media with Sen. Ron Wyden, Sen. Mike Crapo, Gov. Butch Otter, Sen. Jim Risch, Sen. Jeff Merkley, and Rep. Raul Labrador.

LEAD TIME WITH SAN DIEGO FIRE-RESCUE

“Mayday! Mayday!” squawked from a Coast Guard radio. An accident including two vessels occurred in the Pacific Ocean outside the entrance to the Mission Bay Channel near San Diego. Thirty-five people onboard the vessels were thrown into the ocean. An incident-within-an-incident began when two survivors swam to a jetty which required a rescue helicopter. Lifeguards recovered survivors and transported them to a triage where medical personnel evaluated and treated the injured.

Destruction, injuries and fatalities elevated a mass rescue operation including fire and police departments, US Coast Guard, lifeguard agencies, local hospitals and the American Red Cross.

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, Lifeguard Division hosted the 2014 Maritime Mass Rescue Operation drill which included this scenario. The NWCG Leadership Committee was invited to observe the drill during their spring leadership meeting. The drill provided coordination and integration of various regional emergency response assets during a realistic maritime emergency.

The NWCG Leadership Committee includes representatives from federal agencies, states and city/county departments. One of the representatives, Brian Fennessy, is San Diego Fire-Rescue Department’s Assistant Fire Chief.

The mission of the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program is to promote cultural change in the work force and to emphasize the vital importance of leadership concepts in the wildland fire service by providing educational and leadership development opportunities. These educational and leadership development opportunities include leadership courses and self-development opportunities related to wildland fire and all hazard incidents.

For more information, visit the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website at <http://www.fireleadership.gov/>.



TWO WILDLAND FIRE EMPLOYEES RECEIVE PAUL GLEASON LEAD BY EXAMPLE AWARD

Two staff members from the National Park Service Branch of Wildland Fire were recently awarded the prestigious Paul Gleason Lead by Example Award for 2013. The intent of this award is to recognize individuals or groups who exhibit Gleason's professional spirit and who exemplify the wildland fire leadership values of duty, respect, and integrity.

Chad Fisher, Wildland Fire Safety Program Manager, and Jim Shultz, Wildland Fire Training Program Manager, each received the award. Only three individuals and one group from across the wildland fire service were chosen to receive this national award for 2013.

Acting National Park Service Wildland Fire Branch Chief, Mark Koontz, stated, "To have not just one, but two employees, honored with this interagency award, really highlights the caliber of work and leadership by NPS Wildland Fire Management staff. Chad and Jim are outstanding representatives in their respective fields."

In addition to his mission, vision, and dedication to ensuring that firefighter safety is always the number one objective on all assignments and every fire, regardless of size or complexity, Chad Fisher was recognized for his work with the Dutch Creek mitigations. Chad's actions to reach across agency boundaries have contributed to a shift in culture regarding incident-within-an-incident planning. His dedicated effort to ensure that staff understand, weigh, and communicate the consequences of placing firefighters in harm's way to decision-makers, along with ensuring that there is a mechanism to evacuate injured firefighters, sets the example for all to follow. Additionally, he was commended for his work with firefighter nutrition, the Incident Response Pocket Guide revision, leadership

development activities, facilitated learning analyses, and serious accident investigation teams. Chad's leadership exemplifies the values of duty, respect, and integrity.



Chad Fisher (left) and Jim Shultz (right), display their Paul Gleason Lead by Example awards next to the monument stone for Paul Gleason at the Wildland Firefighters Monument in Boise, Idaho.

Jim Shultz was recognized for his ability to develop subordinates across agency boundaries through programs like the Fire and Aviation Mentoring program and the National Interagency Joint Apprentice Committee. As Memorial Group Supervisor for the Honor Guards and Pipes and Drums, Jim's calm demeanor and leadership skills helped ensure all honor guards worked together to make the Granite Mountain Hotshot Memorial Service as seamless as possible. As an advocate for leadership development, Jim seeks improvement and develops others for the betterment of the individual as well as the team and organization. This has been shown through field assignments and pioneering the Wildland Fire Leadership and Career Development video series to help young firefighters answer questions regarding the right steps to take toward a permanent career as a wildland firefighter. Jim exemplifies the values of duty, respect and integrity.

The award was created by the NWCG Leadership Subcommittee to remember Paul Gleason's contributions to the wildland fire service. During a career spanning five decades, Paul was a dedicated student of fire, a teacher of fire, and a leader of firefighters. The intent of this award is to recognize individuals or groups who exhibit this same spirit and who exemplify the wildland fire leadership values of duty, respect and integrity.

Congratulations to Chad and Jim on their achievements.

PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPHS

A new section has been added to the National Park Service Fire and Aviation website that promises to interest a broad audience including national park and history enthusiasts and the tech savvy. Exploring a little-known National Park Service story, the new section is titled Panoramic Photographs from National Park Service Lookouts and focuses on a story that began more than 75 years ago.

Panoramic Photographs tells the story of a photographic project that took place in the 1930s from lookouts and lookout points at 200 locations in national parks across the country for the purpose of map-making for wildfire detection. Many of the 1930s photographs taken by Junior Forester Lester Moe still exist today, though some are still hidden away in national park museums, libraries, and archives. They are immediately recognizable due to their unique format.

National parks are recognizing the significance of the photographs in that they can be compared with present-

day photographs to understand change over time. Both Yellowstone and Glacier national parks were very important to the project, as they have pursued repeat photography in the same locations as the 1930s project. Some of the Yellowstone images have been uploaded to Gigapan®, a website that allows interactive viewing of the image. When present-day repeat photography images are viewed side by side with the 1930s images, viewers obtain a clearer picture of changes related to land cover, topography, and human infrastructure in the parks.

The website compiles stories, history, and imagery and tells the story through the use of interactive elements. In addition, it encourages action by the public to participate as citizen scientists in repeat photography projects, or other related projects such as invasive species monitoring.

The work on the website was completed as a Master's Capstone for the Quinnipiac University Interactive Media Program and can be viewed on the NPS Fire and Aviation website at <http://www.nps.gov/fire/wildland-fire/learning-center/panoramic-lookout-photographs.cfm>.



OUTSTANDING WILDFIRE EMS

Alex Abols, Lead Emergency Coordinator for the Boise BLM Smokejumper program, has reached new heights. Adding to his lengthy list of positive attributes and achievements as a career smokejumper and firefighter, Alex has recently won the 2013 Outstanding Wildfire EMS Individual of the Year Award. A modest man by nature, he meekly accepted this notable award for his extra efforts.

Jan Peterson, Chair of the Incident Emergency Medical Subcommittee, recently presented Alex with this award at the Bureau of Land Management All Employee Meeting. Nominees included only those involved with medical services and wildfire, who had demonstrated initiative in the areas of patient care, medical control, disaster preparedness, public education and training and demonstrated support, involvement and dedication to their wildland fire EMS Community.

Why did Alex's name rise to the top? When asked about the reasons Alex was chosen, Jan stated "Because of his work with the emergency firefighter extraction training, playing a key role in the development of new trauma kits and coordinating countless EMS training programs for wildland



Jan Peterson presented Alex Abols with the Outstanding Wildfire EMS Individual of the Year Award at a recent BLM All Employee Meeting at NIFC.

firefighters. His passion and drive towards furthering EMS serves as a model for everyone in the wildland fire community to emulate.”

Smokejumpers have many demands, both physically and mentally. As many firefighters have it in their blood to do, Alex went above and beyond the call of duty. Congratulations to Alex and the Boise BLM Smokejumper program...another job well done!

NPS STRUCTURAL FIRE PROGRAM RECEIVES CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

The NPS Structural Fire Program was recently awarded a Citation for Outstanding Performance by Associate Director for Visitor and Resource Protection, Cam Sholly.

In awarding the citation, Sholly noted the superior leadership, teamwork and accomplishments in helping to professionalize the National Park Service Structural Fire Program.

The citation also highlights efforts toward using internal management controls process of A-123 to identify and correct serious programmatic deficiencies, promote a more effective and efficiently managed program, and strengthen its relationships with the WASO Park Facility Management Division and the Safety Leadership Council.



Associate Director for Visitor and Resource Protection, Cam Sholly (2nd from left, 1st row) presented a citation to the NPS Branch of Structural Fire recently. First row from left: Roberta Gorman, Cam Sholly, Hal Spencer, Kathy Komatz. Second row from left: Mark Gorman, Brian Johnson, Eric Anderson.

PAUL CERDA RECEIVES THE RICK GALE AWARD

Congratulations are in order for Paul Cerda, recipient of the second annual Rick Gale Award. Cerda, the Superintendent of the National Park Service's Alpine Interagency Hotshot Crew, is stationed at Rocky Mountain National Park.

The Rick Gale Award recognizes individuals associated with the wildland fire program that encourage and assist others in the accomplishment of personal and professional goals. The late Richard (Rick) T. Gale retired as the Deputy Chief Ranger for Fire, Aviation, and Emergency Services. Many former and current employees cite him as an inspirational leader and an important mentor in their own careers.

The fire management staff from Rocky Mountain National Park nominated Cerda for his leadership skills, ability to motivate both those he supervises and those higher in the chain of command, his dedication to employee development, his vision and dedication to the program and his commitment to safety. All of these factors demonstrated his merit for this outstanding award. He is recognized as a leader within the fire and forestry programs both at Rocky Mountain National Park and in the interagency fire community.

Cerda has been a visionary in bringing the Low Angle Rope Rescue program not only to the Alpine Interagency Hotshot Crew but to the other hotshot crews within the Rocky Mountain Geographic Area. This program provides another extraction option in the event a firefighter is injured on the fireline and increases the entire wildland fire community's capacity to take care of staff in the event of a medical emergency. Cerda's work on Low Angle Rope Rescue extends beyond the NPS's federal partners to local resources on Colorado's Front Range, fostering cooperation within and beyond the NPS.

His leadership in developing employees is widely recognized. The Alpine Interagency Hotshot's leadership reading program and the crew mentoring program are above and beyond what is commonly seen in the wildland fire community. His crew's Individual Development Plans and his willingness to provide

detail opportunities to Alpine crewmembers has expanded the horizons of the individual, those who fill in behind them, and the entire crew.

It was for these reasons, and many others, that Paul Cerda was recognized. The award was presented at the Intermountain Region's Fire Management conference by Colin Campbell, Intermountain Region Deputy Director, Chad Fisher, Acting Program Lead, Wildland Fire Operations, and Sarah Fisher, one of Rick's three daughters.

Reflecting on receiving the award, Cerda stated, "I have been very fortunate in my career to have been exposed to so many quality leaders that have made such a positive impact in the development of who I am today. Receiving this award in my eyes is truly a group effort, the folks who have made the most impacts are not limited to Brit Rosso or Jim Cook, both of whom I watched from afar as a young hotshot, but also to my Captains: James and Mark who support me in all my wild ideas. My crew members who drink the Alpine "Koolaid" each year and strive to be the best for the team and themselves."

May we all learn from Paul, as we learned from Rick and emulate their leadership in the future.



From left: Deputy Regional Director for Intermountain Region, Colin Campbell, Intermountain Region Fire Management Officer, Mike Davin, Paul Cerda, Sarah Fisher, Rick Gale's daughter, and Acting Program Lead for Wildland Fire Operations, Chad Fisher.