



# Burning Issues

Summer 2015

## SECRETARIES OUTLINE 2015 DIRECTION TO FIRE MANAGERS

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack jointly presented their **2015 Direction to Wildland Fire Leadership** Thursday, June 4.

In a memo to the DOI agency Fire Directors and the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, the Secretaries noted that ongoing and potential drought conditions in some areas of the West, particularly the extreme conditions in California, are likely to trigger spikes in wildfire activity. By mid-summer, eleven states are forecast to be facing above-normal wildland fire potential, including parts of the central Atlantic seaboard. Only a small region in Texas and Oklahoma is forecast to experience below-normal fire potential. By late summer, fire conditions should moderate in the Southwest, but are expected to intensify in the Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies regions.

The Secretaries' memo also referenced federal wildland fire policy and the Department of the Interior Secretarial Order 3336 in identifying four top priorities and expectations as the nation progresses through the 2015 Western fire season.

The Secretaries' chief priority is that "firefighter and public safety is a core value that governs every decision and activity." In addition, fire managers must balance priorities related to protecting communities and infrastructure, protecting other property and improvements, and protecting natural and cultural resources. Setting priorities



*A firefighter burns out a section of fireline on the Guadalupe Fire, Coronado National Forest, in Arizona. Firefighter and public safety is an unwavering core value in DOI and USDA fire management programs.*

### SO 3336 Implementation 2015 Fire Season

- ✓ Strengthen planning and preparedness
- ✓ Provide national direction and expectations
- ✓ Communication plan

*Secretarial Order 3336 provides key national direction and expectations, along with mandating ways that the federal fire agencies prepare to engage wildfires.*

in a complex and constantly changing environment will be based on human health and safety, the values to be protected, and the costs of protection.

Further, in accordance with Secretarial Order 3336, issued by Sec. Jewell in January, the protection, conservation and restoration of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem is now a critical fire management priority. That means agency administrators and fire managers will integrate this additional priority into decisions about allocating and assigning fire management resources. The Secretarial order also means firefighting resources have been augmented in the Great Basin states, and that firefighting resources will be staged in new ways this fire season.

"Our success will be defined by how well we meet our obligations and how efficiently we use our resources and tools available to us," the Secretaries said in their statement.

## Dan Buckley Named National Park Service Fire Director

BOISE – Dan Buckley has been named the Service’s fire director. In this position, he will serve as the chief of the Branch of Wildland Fire within the Division of Fire and Aviation Management. Dan will take on his new responsibilities at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho in late June.

“Dan’s extensive knowledge and experience with wildland fire management will serve the branch and the division well as we implement our strategic plan and continue to work closely with our partner agencies here at the National Interagency Fire Center,” stated Bill Kaage, Division Chief for Fire and Aviation Management.

Most recently, Dan served as the superintendent of Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve in eastern Idaho. Buckley began his career in 1976, serving as a seasonal firefighter at Sequoia National Park. He worked for 16 years there on the Arrowhead Interagency Hotshot Crew, and then later served as the prescribed fire manager at Yosemite National Park and as fire management officer for the national parks in the Bay Area of California. Before Craters of the Moon, he was the NPS Program Lead for Wildland Fire Operations.

He has served on numerous interagency coordination groups developing the Interagency Prescribed Fire Implementation Guide and the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations. He currently is a Type 1 Operations Section Chief, Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 1, and a Fire Behavior Analyst. He also is a team leader for Serious Accident Investigations and Large Fire Cost Reviews. Buckley received an associate degree in science from Cuesta Community College in 1980 and a BA in Journalism/Public Relations with minors in Biology and Anthropology from Humboldt State University in 1984.

Buckley enjoys bicycling, fly fishing, reading, distance running, cross country skiing, snowboarding, hiking, and backpacking.

“From the time I was a teenager, I knew I wanted to work outdoors, in the mountains, in the wilderness. Firefighting gave me the opportunity to realize my dream, and now I get to do my dream job. I look forward to working with the staff and cooperators at the National Interagency Fire Center and with the NPS regions and parks to create a safer working environment for our firefighters, and to help adapt our landscapes and communities to make them more resilient to the inevitability of wildland fire.”



*Dan Buckley, NPS Fire Director*

## LANDSCAPE GETS TLC

If you've parked or walked near the north side of the Jack Wilson building lately, you may have noticed that one corner of the landscaped area has been getting some TLC. This is thanks to the efforts of Forest Service employees Stephanie Becker, Dani Bohn, Lori Streeter, Tyra Lewis-McClish, Cindy Knickerbocker, and Toni McClure as well as National Park Service employee Kathy Komatz. After Forest Service "Safety Journey" sessions that focused on resiliency, this group of green thumbs decided that it would help to have a place on campus to garden together. The Bureau of Land Management scraped the site and the group members donated firewise plants, such as salvia, echinacea, and goldenrod. Their future plans for the site include adding pavers, benches, rocks, and mulch. If you haven't seen this yet, be sure and stop by next time you're near the Jack Wilson building!



*(l-r) Kathy Komatz, Lori Streeter, Cindy Knickerbocker, Dani Bohn, Stephanie Becker, Toni McClure (kneeling)*



*Stephanie Becker (left) and Dani Bohn (center) prepare the site with a little help from Conner Bohn (right).*

## FROM THE MILITARY TO THE BIA



BIA welcomes Judy Harkins, Information Technology (IT) Specialist, to the Branch of Wildland Fire Management at NIFC.

Originally from Homedale, Idaho, Judy spent 21 years with the U.S. Army specializing in Desktop IT user support. During her service,

Judy was stationed in Germany, Saudi Arabia, England, Arizona, Alabama, Mississippi, and Virginia, among other places. She retired in 2011 as a Sergeant First Class.

After serving in the Army, Judy moved to Las Vegas where she worked for the U.S. Air Force to provide IT support for the National Test and Training Range (NTTR) at Nellis

Air Force Base. Despite the challenges computers and technology can bring, Judy says she most enjoys being able to provide good customer service and helping people.

Judy has a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology and is in her third year at Capella University where she is earning a Master's degree in Counseling. Her goal is to become an elementary school counselor after she retires.

Judy has two teenage daughters. Her oldest (18) graduated high school in May and her youngest (14) will be a freshman in high school in the fall. In her "free" time, she enjoys riding her two quarter horses with her daughters.

Judy can soon be reached at [Judy.Harkins@bia.gov](mailto:Judy.Harkins@bia.gov) or at 387-5237.



## NIFC BASE TOURS

Did you know that the External Affairs office gets more than 200 tour requests annually? As a service organization, we do our best to accommodate as many of these tour requests as possible. After all, we want to share NIFC's story. NIFC is a unique place, and folks from all over the world come for a multitude of reasons to see our center. Most of our tour requests come from locals, tourists, agency folks, international wildfire organizations, cooperators and partners.

The typical tour includes stops at the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), National Interagency Incident Communications Division (Radio Cache), Great Basin Warehouse (GBK) and the Boise BLM Smokejumpers. We try to honor special requests to see the Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS), the Returns Warehouse and the National Weather Service (NWS) program areas as well. Most tour guides point out the other program areas and explain their functions in between program stops. So even though you might not physically see us, be assured that tour groups are still learning about your program area as they walk around the base.

We regularly host foreign visitors, including Norwegians, Australians, and Canadians. NIFC has hosted visitors from Israel, China, Taiwan, Russia, Greece, Portugal, and Sri Lanka as well. International visitors are interested in our highly efficient operations. They come to study and learn from us. They meet with Fire Directors, NMAC and agency representatives to ask questions, pick brains, and understand policy and procedures related to wildland fire operations and support.

Taking tour groups around the base sometimes get complicated. Some weeks, we can host up to 100+ people on 5-6 separate tours. This can impact program areas and subject matter experts—not to mention the tour guides—especially during the busy summer months. As each tour is booked, we carefully consider how much time to spend at each program area. Our hats are off to subject matter experts in the various program areas; every one of them takes time out of busy schedules to explain their program area.

External Affairs has high expectations for our tour guides. Tour guides get groups from one stop to the next as efficiently as possible. Guides try

to keep tours on schedule and create as little impact as possible with their groups. Unless a tour guide is filling in for a subject matter expert, they should not speak for the program areas; that's why the subject matter experts make time available. If a tour gets behind schedule, guides should call ahead to notify the future stops of schedule changes, how late the tour is running and any cancellations.

Tour guides generally work in External Affairs or Communication roles and can't always take time out to lead tours. Occasionally, we have to turn down a tour request, due to unavailability of tour guides.

Most tourees are genuinely appreciative of how much they learn after a NIFC tour. "Wow, I had NO idea that all this went on up here!" is the most popular comment tour guide Jenn Smith gets after she takes groups around. They are impressed at the high level of effectiveness, how all the agencies pull together for a common mission, and the variety and complexity of what goes on at NIFC. As the summer heats up, you'll likely see more and more tour groups around the base. Locally, when there's smoke in the air, folks come out of the woodwork to see what NIFC is all about.

