



Burning Issues

May 2008

World Trade Center Manager Presents NIFC with American Flag

Michael Hurley, manager of the World Trade Center, has worked for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for 28 years and was at the World Trade Center during both the 1993 bombing and the 2001 terrorist attacks as the fire director. In 2007, he visited the National Interagency Fire Center for the first time and was impressed by the operations. He had an opportunity to return to Boise at the end of March this year for the Aviation Centered Education (ACE) training as the keynote speaker.

Understanding the unique role of the center, Mike brought with him an American flag that was flown over the World Trade Center site to present to the NIFC. "The mission of the fire center is one of great importance and is an excellent example of how individual agencies join together to achieve a common goal," he said. US Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Director Brian McManus and



World Trade Center Manager, Michael Hurley, presents an American flag to NIFC representatives, Tom Nichols (NPS) and Brian McManus (FWS).

Deputy NPS Fire Director Tom Nichols were honored to accept the flag on behalf of NIFC.

The flag will be framed and placed in the lobby of the Jack Wilson Building near the multi-purpose room.

Park Celebrates A Half Century Of Prescribed Fire

Fifty years ago, on April 21, 1958, six wildland firefighters at Everglades National Park successfully completed the park's first prescribed fire.

Although other national parks such as Sequoia Kings Canyon were also experimenting with using fire for resource benefits at the time, the 1958 Everglades burn marked a radical departure from a nationwide wildland fire strategy of total suppression. The Everglades fire of April 1958,

was conducted under the first comprehensive burn plan in the National Park Service (NPS). Research was already beginning to show that fire was critical to maintaining the Everglades pinelands; without it, the pines would be replaced by tropical hardwoods. Like many of today's prescribed fires, the 1958 burn had both resource restoration and fuel reduction objectives.

prescribed fire in the park. Engine operator Jenn D'Emilio made a presentation that she shared with the other members of the committee, fire effects monitor Katie Budzinski and lead helitack Henry del Valle.

Over the last half century, the NPS has invited a wide variety of partners to cooperate in prescribed fire in the Everglades. During the Miccosukee prescribed burn held on April 16th, for example, NPS firefighters from both Everglades and Big Cypress were joined by personnel from US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Seminole Tribe and the Florida Department of Forestry. The burn, planned in cooperation with the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, successfully reduced hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface between the park and the Miccosukee Reserved Area.



A Florida Department of Forestry ROLLIGON conducts ignition operations in the burn area during a Miccosukee prescribed burn held on April 16, 2008.

On Wednesday, April 23rd, the Everglades National Park wildland fire communications committee celebrated this historic anniversary at the Krome Center in Homestead, Florida, with a presentation on the history of



Message from Tom Harbour U.S. Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management



On April 29, 2008, the case USA v. Ellreese N. Daniels was legally settled with a plea agreement. Now we must personally resolve our own questions and issues related to the last seven years and the developments surrounding the Thirtymile Fire.

On July 10, 2001, four Forest Service wildland firefighters, Tom Craven, Karen FitzPatrick, Jessica Johnson and Devin Weaver died in the line of duty. To remember them always, we offer the highest form of respect that the Forest Service can pay to our fallen firefighters by embracing the painful lessons we learned from this tragedy and incorporating this learning into our every decision. By using the knowledge we gained, we better manage the risks and protect each other in the inherently dangerous world of wildland firefighting.

In 2006, the Chief of the Forest Service affirmed the foundational principles that are to guide all fire suppression efforts. The first principle describes our operational environment: “The Forest Service believes that no resource or facility is worth the loss of human life. We acknowledge that the wildland firefighting environment is dangerous because its complexity may make events and circumstances difficult or impossible to foresee. We will aggressively and continuously manage risks toward a goal of zero serious injuries or fatalities.”

All firefighters, especially leaders of firefighters, must be lifelong students of fire behavior and human behavior. In our dynamic, complex and hazardous environment, understanding both is critical to meeting our operational objectives safely. The Forest Service relies on the judgment

of firefighters on-scene and we always will. Therefore, our focus must be on the training and development of our fireline leadership and continuous monitoring and critique of our actions. We recognize the weakness of “group think” and encourage each other to use our individual reasoning along with our collective courage in every decision every day. We understand that true safety lies in embracing the lessons learned from our tragedies, near misses and success stories.

I want us, as unique individuals that comprise the whole firefighting community, to be personally resolved to offer the highest tribute we can pay to our fallen colleagues and friends by reading, learning, participating in, and teaching the lessons we have learned from our past.

Stay vigilant, watch over each other and be safe.

Mike Wallace, Chief of NPS Division of Fire and Aviation, Retires

Mike Wallace retired from his position as National Park Service Chief of the Division of Fire and Aviation Management on April 30, 2008. As his retirement date approached he noticed some things happening that he thought were appropriate to put into a list that he called:

The Top Ten Indicators That Your Retirement Date Final Day Is Very Near

- #10: Your phone stops ringing.
- #9: Your desk has no papers on it.
- #8: Your e-mail box is not full.
- #7: Passers by in the hall the Monday before your last day say that they thought you were gone.
- #6: Your Blackberry stops getting e-mail.

- #5: You’re offered an opportunity to move into a non-covered position in the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination (OWFC).
- #4: Your office is being scheduled as a conference room.
- #3: You’re required to take a random drug test two days prior to your last day on the job.
- #2: Your phone starts crackling and buzzing and no one on the other end can understand anything you’re saying
- #1: Your computer displays a message that its battery is approaching the end of its useful life.

Mike plans to take some time off, but he’s not planning on riding off into the sunset entirely. He’s looking

forward to continuing to work in fire management on selected activities. With his family, friends and his favorite recreational pursuits in Idaho and the Northwest, Mike plans to stay in Boise.

“I’ve had the best of all worlds in my career. The interagency fire arena is a unique and rewarding partnership. The NPS has an outstanding fire management organization and the resources we protect are truly national treasures. The experience has been exceptional. There are significant challenges ahead for all of us and we need to continue to work together to stay healthy and energized in order to protect our resources for the future. I hope to be a part of it!”

Mike can now be reached at his home e-mail address: Wallace_4017@msn.com.



New Interactive Flash Features Familiar Faces from NIFC

“Living with Fire and Smoke,” a nine minute interactive Flash presentation, is a new feature on the NPS Fire & Aviation website - www.nps.gov/fire. This presentation examines smoke issues and challenges from the perspective of a single national park and its gateway community, including:

- 1) the social, economic and health effects of smoke exposure and how to minimize that smoke exposure;
- 2) fire’s role in the environment and how fire suppression affects that role;

3) the challenges of construction in the wildland-urban interface; and

4) how homeowners can minimize their risk of fire damage through the use of FIREWISE practices.

The presentation also links to a library of resources about smoke, wildland fire, air quality, and Firewise to learn more. The presentation is populated with many recognizable NIFC “characters.” Come see how many you recognize! For more information, visit http://www.nps.gov/fire/utility/media/uti_caseStudy_smoke.cfm.

A few of the familiar faces in the NPS’ newest Flash presentation: Rick Barr played by Dick Bahr; Mark Shulz, played by Ken Frederick; Buck Ross, played by Dan Buckley; Vanessa Granger, played by Venetia Gempler; Paige Albright, played by Roberta D’Amico; and Mike Vanacker, played by Mike Van Hemelryck. NPS would like to thank the players and the NIFC Audio/ Visual staff for all their help with this project. See all the characters and more at the NPS website, located at: www.nps.gov/fire.



Leadership at its Finest

Four individuals from the wildland fire community were chosen to receive the fifth national Paul Gleason Lead by Example Award. The award is sponsored by the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Committee under the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. The recipients were selected for demonstrating valued leadership traits during, or in support of, wildland fire operations.

The annual award was created to honor Paul Gleason, a wildland firefighter who throughout his career led and mentored firefighters, studied and taught wildland fire, and worked to improve firefighter safety. Gleason is best known for developing the LCES (Lookout, Communication, Escape Routes, Safety Zones)

concept that became the foundation of wildland firefighter safety. The award highlights Gleason’s influence on, and contribution to, wildland fire management, while honoring those who demonstrate the spirit of leadership for which he was known. NIFC’s own Larry Sutton, a recipient of the 2007 Paul Gleason Lead by Example Awards, provided initiative that was influential in the creation of the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program. Sutton operated as the co-chairperson of the NWCG Leadership Committee and began the process of implementing this program. His commitment to providing a program that would promote leadership development training and exposure to meet the needs of firefighters at all levels of their career is demonstrated by the



continued growth and success of the program nearly seven years later.

Other recipients of the 2007 Paul Gleason Lead by Example Award include George Weldon, US Forest Service Deputy Director Fire Aviation and Air from Missoula; Jerome Macdonald, US Forest Service Regional Wildland Fire Training Ground Safety Specialist from Albuquerque; and Brad Mayhew, US Forest Service training on the Los Padres National Forest.

Interview with a WUI House

More and more, Americans are building homes in the wildland-urban interface—the zone where homes are intermixed with wildland vegetation. One study estimates that 44 million homes in the Lower 48 states are located in areas that meet or intermingle with wildland vegetation. In the 1990s, 1.7 million new homes were built in the wildland-urban interface in California, Oregon and Washington alone, bringing the total of homes contained in the WUI in these three states to nearly 7 million. The story is similar in the Rocky Mountain States of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado. In these four states during the same decade, the rate at which homes were being built in the WUI accelerated almost 23 percent.

Given these trends, it makes sense for homeowners in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) to look at their homes through “fire eyes.” How well could a WUI house withstand a fire? To explore this topic, we interviewed an average WUI home.

NIFC: Good morning. This is the first time we’ve interviewed a home. How are you doing today?

WUI Home Pretty good. It’s really nice out here in the country. Summer’s here, and I’m enjoying the shade from my pals, the trees.

NIFC: So tell me, how well prepared are you to deal with a wildfire in this area?

WUI Home I think I’m fairly well prepared. My owner keeps nearby brush knocked down. He keeps my gutters and roof valleys free of leaves and needles. Last year, we finally got the firewood moved away from the side of the garage. That wood was giving me ants. I couldn’t stand it.

NIFC: But the cedar shake roofing and the wooden deck with old wooden lawn furniture....

WUI Home Everyone knows you can set up a sprinkler on top of the house and wet down a shake roof. Give me a break! Just about all the other houses in this subdivision have shake roofs. None of the others have burned, so I’m not really worried. Same goes for the deck. Just wet it down and I’m good to go.

NIFC: What if no one has time to set up sprinkler on your roof and deck? Or what happens if your water system loses pressure?

WUI Home <pause> Can we move on to the next question?

NIFC: Sure. We noticed you live in the middle of a steep slope, and there’s a ton of fuel on the slope below you. Does that concern you?

WUI Home No, not really. If a fire ever gets going around here, I just assume that firefighters will burn off that slope. And even if they don’t, it’s pretty much just grass and brush on that slope. How hot could that burn?

NIFC: Hotter than you think. Anyway, you mentioned your friends, the shade trees. We couldn’t help but notice that most of your trees and shrubs are volatile species, like that ornamental pine. Do you sometimes wish these trees were farther away from you?

WUI Home Volatile, huh? I never looked at them that way before. All I know is their shade cuts down on my air conditioning bills in the summer. But come to think of it, we keep things pretty green around the yard most of the time. I doubt any of them could really catch fire... except the few trees near the edge of the steep slope.



NIFC: You might want to think about those shrubs right up against your siding too. Junipers are notoriously hot-burning shrubs.

WUI Home Hey, you’re making me nervous.

NIFC: Sorry about that. Let’s move on to another subject. Has your owner developed a home escape plan? Does your family know what to do if a wildfire is threatening this subdivision?

WUI Home I’ve heard them talk about that. We’ve been here for almost ten years now, and a few fires have burned in the hills around here. I guess my folks would grab whatever is important to them and leave. I think I’d be alright, though. We have really good firefighters in this area.

NIFC: We noticed you’re a little hard to see from the street—with all the trees. Are you going to do anything about that?

WUI Home Look, you’ll have to talk to the owner about that. All I can say is we like our privacy. Our neighbors are nice, but we don’t want them looking into our yard.



Interview with a WUI House (continued)

NIFC: Well, you mentioned firefighters, so I thought the question was relevant. In order to assess a home's defensibility, keep track of it in the event of an evacuation, get engines into the property, and other similar reasons, firefighters need to be able to see the home. Care to change your answer?

WUI Home Well... since you put it that way, maybe the owner does need to do some trimming.

NIFC: That brings up another thing. I noticed that the brush comes right up against the driveway leading into you, and that some tree branches are actually hanging right over your driveway. Do you know how firefighters feel about those factors—from an ingress and egress point of view?

WUI Home Look, firefighters are highly paid professionals who are compensated for taking risks. Besides, my owner thinks the branches draped over the driveway are cool. Next question!

NIFC: <sighing> I see. Aside from your roofing, I think you have a few other issues related to what experts call structural ignitability. Have you considered asking a structure protection specialist to evaluate you?

WUI Home Issues? Like what?

NIFC: Single pane windows, for example. Double pane windows are more resistant to radiant heat, and they will keep your interior cooler. Another example is the wooden fence in your backyard. It is directly attached to you, meaning fire would have a path

to burn right up against you. Also, I didn't look that closely, but it appears that your attic vents are not properly screened, which creates a handy path for embers to enter your attic. In addition—

WUI Home OKAY, okay! You made your point. I'll speak to the owner.

NIFC: Well, that's about all the time I have for this interview. Thank you for your candid answers, and I hope you will speak to your owner. It's already fire season, you know.

WUI Home: Actually, I should thank you. I can see now we... well, we have a lot of work to do.

For more information, visit <http://www.firewise.org>.

Forest Service Doctrine

Lately many firefighters, program managers and line officers have been asking, "What's the status on Doctrine?" The Interim Directive (ID) has been in final edit and updating in our section since January; however the biggest delays are from trying to catch all the current changes that are happening nationally. Presently, the rewritten FSM 5100 – (Fire Management), including 5120 and 5130, is now officially in the agency's Directives System Office. The required edit, format, and review processes are expected to take at least 60 days. We hope to confirm the dates of field review soon in our next issue, especially as the agency progresses with key budget and transformation issues.

Although the FSM ID is delayed, doctrine related activities — especially discussions and dialogues, have increased significantly among fire managers and line officers. The concepts and principles surrounding doctrinal intent are becoming clearer and better understood. Overall, the collective awareness of doctrine and its intent, capabilities, and the changes it will bring forward are increasing. The most effective activities today are the surrounding dialogues, discussions and the questions now being addressed.

- Doctrine implementation will influence policy, rules, and guidelines, which will all be addressed at appropriate levels. The strength of Doctrine lies in the ability to use judgment and common sense to apply to situations rather than straight rules or checklists.
- Doctrinal principles can and will be applied on both large and small fire operations, with doctrinal leadership, commanders intent, key to decision-making.
- All wildland fire practitioners and Line Officers should be well versed in doctrinal "intent" – especially understanding its emphasis for situational awareness, accident prevention and empowered decision making.
- During summer 2007, multiple exchanges in doctrinal based processes were seen. These changes reflected: doctrinal intent, organization change, flexibility with learning tools and "lessons learned" analyses, as well as more vigilant firefighter leadership and increased situational awareness.

Remember, Doctrine is but one part of our evolving organizational culture. The process may move slowly but we are implementing as the culture learns and grows.



Drambuie Pursuit - Keeping the Spirit Alive

The third annual Drambuie Pursuit is a 100 mile race across the Scottish Highlands. The race starts at the Isle of Skye and ends at Iverness. 2008 was the first year that Americans were allowed to compete. The victorious team included Boise BLM smokejumpers' Steve Stroud, Brian Cresto, Alex Abols, and their Scottish team captain, Scott Logan from Current TV.

This extreme adventure consists of ten teams of four competing in different stages that make up this grueling race, while lugging a precious box of Drambuie's secret elixir. These stages include archery, a foot race from the harbor to Castle Moil and back, speed boating, mountain biking, rock climbing, rappelling, white water rafting, cross-country biking, dirt buggy racing, paddling canoes, and running to the finish line in the grounds of the Iverness Castle.

The Drambuie Pursuit was created in memory of Bonnie Prince Charlie. In 1745, Bonnie Prince Charlie fled across the Scottish Highlands to evade pursuing troops and avoid capture after his defeated attempt to reclaim the British throne. He escaped with the help from the Highland clans. In return, the prince's gift to the clans was Drambuie, a blend of spiced honey and aged Scottish whiskies in a formula kept secret by the MacKinnon family since 1745.

Congratulations go out to our modern-day rebel smokejumpers, Steve Stroud, Brian Cresto, and Alex Abols! Way to go, fellas!





Leadership and Fire – An Interview with Tim Murphy

By Charles Kazimir

The following questions and answers are excerpts from an interview Charles Kazimir conducted with Tim Murphy, Deputy Assistant Director, BLM Fire and Aviation, for the Emerging Leaders course.

Kazimir: If you were to pick the three most important character traits for an effective leader, what would those be?

Murphy: First is to be open to, listen to, and absorb alternative ideas and perspectives, no matter how different they are from your own. Second would be the ability to select and clearly articulate objectives and intent. And third, to have the ability to build, nurture, and support an effective, top-notch work force.

Kazimir: What does it mean “to lead?”

Murphy: A quote from General George S. Patton comes to mind: “Tell them what to do, not how to do it, and let them surprise you with results.”

If you have articulated clear objectives and a clear vision of the organization’s mission, its reason for existence, and where you want to go and what you want to achieve, and you’ve built and supported a high-quality workforce, they will run with it and find a way to get there. Leading is based a lot on providing a clear vision and clear direction but allowing those who work for you to use their own ingenuity and abilities to carry it out. They grow and can shine in the process, and it has tremendous benefits for them as individuals and for the entire organization in achieving goals.

I try to assemble the right cadre of people to get things done. If I make all of this clear, then I can stand back and watch greatness happen.

Kazimir: Are leaders born or made and please explain?

Murphy: Both. I think leaders are born with potential but leadership abilities are forged through experience. Every individual has leadership potential. He or she then has to seize the opportunities along the path to gain the right experiences and learn and grow from them.

Kazimir: What concerns, if any, do you have for future leaders within the organization?

Murphy: It seems we are dealing with increasingly complex and challenging programs, field conditions and issues. That is a concern, and it becomes increasingly important to not lose focus, and to maintain a sense and clarity of our mission, as well as find the time to invest in people.

For instance, I try to spend time visiting each group and program area at NIFC on a regular basis. I believe it helps build cohesion with employees, helps keep us all working toward common goals, and it keeps me grounded and connected with the folks who carry out our mission.

Recently, however, I have been so focused on some national-level issues that it would be easy to get disconnected from the people at NIFC who accomplish our mission. Future leaders will face those challenges, too, and it takes discipline and determination to stay connected in the face of complex issues that draw your attention and focus elsewhere. But it’s important to do so.

Aldous Huxley, in his book *A Brave New World*, which was published in the 1930s, predicted a future world where a common person would be flooded with so much information that



the greatest challenge would be to pick what information is important from the sea of trivial information.

Although that prediction was made way back in the thirties, it appears Huxley was right. With today’s technology and complexities, it is a challenge to continually and consistently focus on what’s important. Future leaders will continue to face that challenge.

Kazimir: What “lessons learned” would you offer to a young leader today?

Murphy: Know and embrace your core values and operate from them. This is both high-level and foundational. It’s the guts. My core values of duty, respect and integrity are planted way down deep inside. They don’t move and they are not compromised, and I try to incorporate them in all I do. I would suggest to young, emerging leaders that they embrace their core values and use them as a foundation for what they do.



— May Update —

The '88 FIRES Yellowstone and Beyond



Jackson Hole, Wyoming | September 22–27, 2008

Join us in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the 1988 fires in Yellowstone and the northern Rocky Mountain area. Presented by the International Association of Wildland Fire and the National Park Service 9th Biennial Scientific Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem with the support of a consortium of partners.

For more information: www.iawfonline.org/yellowstone/

Sessions

Discussions, presentations, and special sessions will focus on the following themes:

- Fire behavior, weather and fuels, including crown fire modeling, long-range fire behavior, weather forecasting, fuels, and fuels management.
- Fire ecology, including wildlife, water, aquatic systems, landscape ecology, and fire history.
- Fire management and policy, including fire suppression, operations, safety, and planning.
- Global trends: carbon, invasive species, climate change.
- Cultural and social perceptions of fire and the human interaction.

A full schedule of events will be presented by August 10, 2008.

Speakers

Confirmed speakers include: Bob Barbee, Norm Christensen, Orville Daniels, Mike Flannigan, Steve Frye, Andy Hansen, Tom Swetnam, Monica Turner, John Varley, George Weldon, Tony Westerling, Cathy Whitlock, and Tom Zimmerman.

Accommodations/Field trips

Jackson Hole, Wyoming, is a spectacular venue for this event. Reservations and group rates at the beautiful conference site are only available by booking at www.iawfonline.org/yellowstone/ or calling Toll Free: (888) 995-3088. Post-conference field trips and workshops will be scheduled as well as family-friendly activities. So whether you were there in 1988—or not—join the “homecoming” to learn from the past, celebrate the present and venture into the future!



Sponsors

AMK Ranch/University of Wyoming National Park Service Research Center • Big Sky Institute, Montana State University • Canon U.S.A. • Grand Teton Association • Haub School & Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment & Natural Resources Dept. • Joint Fire Science Program • National Park Service, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks • University of Wyoming, NPS Research Center • University of Wyoming, Office of Research • Wildland Firefighter Foundation • Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center • Yellowstone Association • Yellowstone Park Foundation

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