



March 14, 2008

Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Grand Teton National Park

Department of Agriculture
U.S. Forest Service
Bridger-Teton National Forest

Teton Interagency Fire Management

Symposium offers opportunity to share results across program, agency lines

More than 60 people from four states braved blizzard conditions to attend the sixth Teton Interagency Fire Effects Symposium Feb. 7 in Jackson, Wyo. The annual symposium provides an opportunity for fire managers, researchers and resource managers from different agencies to examine monitoring results from past projects in a peer-reviewed forum.

This year representatives from the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and the U.S. Geological Service, as well as members of local conservation organizations attended morning and afternoon sessions.

The day kicked off with reports from the field followed by a poster session. The afternoon session highlighted several “hot topics” addressing current and future challenges for managing a natural landscape.

“This symposium allows us to share results from local and regional vegetation and fire effects monitoring to capitalize on what we learned and to improve fire management in the future,” said Diane Abendroth, Grand Teton National Park fire effects monitor and one of the symposiums organizers. “Forums like this help keep us educated on hot topics as well as potential challenges and issues that we have faced over the last few years. By keeping informed, we can adapt fire management as necessary, which will keep us from becoming outmoded.”

While attendees gave high marks to all topics presented, the whitebark pine research, snowshoe hare habitat, sage grouse study, and recent burn project discussions drew the most attention.

“These are all timely issues we face,” Abendroth said. “For instance, we learned that ideal snowshoe hare habitat means significant ladder fuels. In order to provide a prey base for lynx, we need to be careful where our fuels treatments are conducted. We heard findings from a sage grouse habitat study that indicates we should collect monitoring data on sagebrush height.”

According to Interagency Fuels Specialist Mack McFarland, the symposium provided an avenue for federal agencies to step back from implementing fire management, take a broad look at the landscape and analyze some results from past projects.

“The Fire Effects Symposium brings fire managers and resource managers together to present their project results, which creates a greater understanding of what each group is doing and hopefully encourages a more unified approach to dealing with some of these important issues,” McFarland said.

As the symposium continues to grow, organizers hope it will draw a broader audience of both agency and non-agency presenters and attendees.

“We owe a big thanks to our speakers and poster session participants,” Abendroth said. “What makes this symposium so successful is high-quality, timely presentations.”



NPS Ecologist Kelly McCloskey reports whitebark pine beetle findings at the Teton Interagency Fire Effects Symposium.