



Bryce Canyon National Park Fire Management

Fire Information and Education Seasonal Position

The role of fire management in our national parks is one that is not understood or misunderstood by a large number of visitors and park neighbors. The education of these people in fire-related issues can go a long way towards public acceptance of our resource management policies. Bryce Canyon National Park has an active prescribed fire program, but its success has been limited due to negative perceptions of fire held by local citizens and visitors.

With this in mind, Bryce Canyon requested and received FY 2003 funding (\$13,300) for a GS-5 Fire Information and Education Seasonal position through a Community Assistance/Wildland Urban Interface grant. The need for this position was to educate visitors and local residents to the importance of fire management, both from an ecological and safety point of view.

The position was accepted by Doug Vogel in the spring of 2003, with his appointment running May-September. He was supervised by the Bryce Canyon Interpretive Division with input from their Fire and Resource Management Divisions. The position was also closely monitored and overseen by the National Park Service (NPS) Utah Parks Cluster Fire Information and Education Specialist, based out of Zion National Park.

Position Accomplishments 2003

- Development and presentation of a series of school/community outreach programs to grade school and middle school students in the local area, utilizing power point presentations and hands-on activities.
Outreach Programs: **5 programs; 97 contacts.**
- Assisted with the development of a prescribed fire information packet for visitors and local communities to be utilized when the park is conducting burns.
- Instituted a program to further community outreach in the local area by establishing dialogue, contacting key individuals, developing a mailing list of residents and presenting programs at community meetings.
- Creation of numerous draft fire-related publications and brochures for Bryce Canyon. Some of these were utilized during the summer of 2003. Others will be modified and utilized in seasons to come.

- Development and presentation of numerous fire-related community and visitor programs including an evening campfire presentation (power point), a children's program and a hike.
 Children's Program: **2 programs; 32 contacts**
 Evening Program: **12 programs; 748 contacts**
 Fire Hike: **11 hikes: 335 contacts**
- Made 1,400+ fire-related contacts (other than formal programs) at the visitor center, roving and other associated community and visitor contact opportunities.
- Performed duties as an Information Officer during Zion's Timber Top Fire Use Complex and the Riggs Spring Wildland Fire in Bryce Canyon. Initiated IOF III Taskbook.
- Completed the basic 40-hour Fire School (S-130, S-190 and I-100).
- Assigned for a two-week period as a member of a local 20-person Type II Fire Crew that responded to numerous wildland fires in the Southern Utah area.

Changing public perception about land management policies, especially the issue of fire, cannot be done overnight. It takes time to develop local relationships and gain the trust and understanding needed for such a task. The Bryce Canyon Fire Information and Education Seasonal position though, was a good example of how a dedicated staff person, dealing with this issue, can make a positive difference in a short period of time. Groundwork has now been completed for a fire information/education program at Bryce Canyon. Hopefully, the value of this position is one that can be recognized by both the park and the local residents and can be continued into the future.