



National Park Service
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Grand Teton National Park

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Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Young Women in Science*



Grand Teton National Park's Fire Management Office participated in the Teton Science School's "Young Women and Science" program last month, leading an afternoon session in the week-long course. The program, targeting ninth-grade female students from around the country, drew participants from Wyoming, Nebraska, Utah, Montana, and Vermont. The class gave them an opportunity to study the ecology and natural history of the area while establishing friendships with other like-minded young women.

The unique program, now in its thirteenth year, consisted of a combination of hands-on field explorations, research projects, and investigations of local ecological issues. The students had opportunities to interact with women working in a variety of local agency positions and receive an overview of careers available to them in the fields of science, resource management, policy, and education.



As part of the course curriculum, the students were divided into four field groups to explore various park topics. One of the teams studied fire's role in the ecosystem, beginning with fieldwork in three park locations. Their investigation centered on sage regeneration after a fire, exploring the relationship between the number of growing seasons and the percent cover of sage. The group then met with Fire Management staff to discuss current issues and policies in the wildland fire program. Through discussions of public perception of fire and fire management practices, the students gained an understanding of the complexity of the program. They incorporated the information into a skit that they presented later that evening to the other field groups.

Each participant received a packet of information on wildland fire in the national parks to take back to their respective schools and share with classmates. The opportunity to learn about the Fire Management program exposed the students to another aspect of resource management and encouraged them to become involved with issues affecting their own communities.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.