



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Bighorn Canyon NRA

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National Recreation Area Assists Lovell Volunteer Fire Department

The National Park Service, in conjunction with Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, recently provided funding through the Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) Program to the Lovell Volunteer Fire Department. The department received \$3,000 to increase firefighter safety.

Historically, the National Park Service has had no capability to help with funding for small, rural fire departments that routinely fight fire on or near Department of Interior (DOI) lands. The RFA Program is designed to assist rural fire departments that often rely heavily on volunteer firefighting resources, especially those that have a substantial cooperative role in the protection of federal lands and support interagency fire efforts. The program helps fund equipment, training and prevention needs on a cost-share basis.

The RFA Program was developed following the 2000 fire season, when Congress recognized that safe and effective protection in the wildland-urban interface requires close coordination among local, state and federal firefighting resources. Additionally, Congress acknowledged that rural and volunteer fire departments responding to wildland fires needed to improve overall firefighter safety and enhance their wildland fire protection capabilities. The Lovell Fire Department has utilized the RFA Program for the past four years. During this time, they have received \$15,000 in funding and have provided \$1,500 in matching funds. With the grant money received, they have purchased hoses, nozzles and fittings to equip their wildland fire engines and Nomex clothing, fire packs, gloves and goggles to outfit all their firefighters. Many of these purchases would not otherwise have been feasible for this department. The personal protective equipment will allow them to fight wildland fires more safely and effectively on and off National Park Service lands.

The Lovell Fire Department currently consists of 29 members and is responsible for protecting approximately 25,000 acres of wildland-urban intermix. They have three wildland fire engines and respond to an average of 3-5 fires per year on National Park Service land. Due to the size of the park and limited equipment and resources, assistance from the Lovell Volunteer Fire Department is absolutely essential to the protection of people, property and natural resources in the area.
