



January 2004

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

Teton Interagency Fire Management Lends Support to Snowshoe Walks



Just as the Jackson Mountain Resort Nordic Center was gearing up for their ski season in mid- December, the Bridger- Teton National Forest was busy preparing a pool of naturalist volunteers for another season of interpretive snowshoe walks. Now in its third season, the free snowshoe tours originate from the Nordic Center and take participants into the forest surrounding the resort. The activity offers another alternative for visitors and locals alike to enhance their experiences in the valley.

Naturalists from a variety of agencies participate in leading the hikes, offered three days a week and geared toward all ability levels. The guides bring a range of experience with backgrounds in conservation, wildlife, recreation, fire, and education. A pre- season orientation day brings interagency talents together to hike the trail and share possible topics of discussion at various vantage points. The snowshoe trail winds through wooded areas, aspen stands, and sloping hillsides, circling back through an open meadow before returning to the base of the mountain. The diverse landscape lends itself to lessons on a variety of ecology and natural history topics. With the experience and training of the volunteers, the programs can be tailored to meet the interests and expectations of the groups.

A portion of the trail passes through a previously burned area, presenting an opportunity for guides to lead discussions on fire ecology along with the adaptations of plants and animals in this fire- dependent ecosystem. Two Teton Interagency Fire personnel attended the training this year, aiding in incorporating fire education into the range of topics. Examples of successional stages, serotinous cones, and fire- scarred trees dot the landscape along the scenic route.



This program has proven to be a successful cooperative venture. Tours will continued to be offered through March.