



Bureau of Indian Affairs–National Interagency Fire Center
Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management
BIA Wildland Fire Management National Themes



- **BIA Fire Management is dedicated to Indian Self-Determination and developing tribal fire management programs.**
 - In collaboration with tribal governments, the BIA strives to restore and protect the natural and cultural resources contained within tribal trust lands.
 - BIA and Tribal employees work together in Indian Country to protect and manage the federal land held in trust for our federally recognized tribes.

- **When a wildfire occurs on tribal lands, it often threatens communities of people who depend on the natural resources for their livelihood.**
 - Providing a safe, effective and well-trained initial attack fire suppression force to protect economic, cultural and natural resources is essential for BIA Fire Management.
 - BIA and tribes jointly manage aviation resources to aid in the safe and timely response to unwanted wildfires.
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- **The BIA and Tribal Wildfire Prevention programs across the country provide leadership, training and guidance to develop strategies for reducing the number of human caused fires on Indian Reservations.**
 - Arson is the main source of wildfires in Indian Country. The BIA and the tribes are especially concerned with how to deal with human-caused wildfires because all citizens deserve to have a safe, wildfire-free community.
 - The BIA teamed up with WeTip, a national non-profit organization that offers a 24/7 telephone tip hotline **(1-800-472-7766)** for people to report information anonymously.
 - Remember – the life, property and resources you save, may be your own.

- **Fire is essential to maintaining healthy and productive ecosystems, which sustains and restores natural and cultural resources.**
 - Indian Country has long recognized the wise and cultural use of fire as a significant process responsible for shaping habitat, structure and functions to meet indigenous people’s daily needs.
 - The majority of trust lands have evolved with fire and no other land management tool can fully duplicate or mimic its ecological benefits.
 - The BIA strives to use the best science available to create diverse ecological and cultural landscapes.
 - Controlling the spread of many invasive plants is a key to reducing fire risk and maintaining the health of native ecosystems.

- **Fire is a cost-effective tool for managing natural and cultural resources.**
 - Indigenous cultures have an intrinsic tie to their land and resources and therefore understand the social, economic and ecological benefits of fire.
 - BIA Fire Management invests in reducing hazardous conditions because in the long run, fuels reduction lowers suppression and emergency rehabilitation costs, and ultimately, protects the resources the tribes most value.
 - The use of prescribed fire and suppression strategies that allow fire to play a more natural role in Indian Country helps meet Bureau and tribal goals by creating safer communities for people.

Tips for Use:

Each of the core messages listed can be used by BIA Fire Management communicators in a variety of settings and with a variety of audiences. These messages are designed to be used as a guide-- not a script. They should be fluid, depending on the situation. Consider the following tips when communicating with your audience:

- **Provide additional, local detail to ensure the messages touch audiences in a relevant, credible way.** *Example: Crow Reservation provides a safe, effective and well-trained initial attack fire suppression force to protect game, recreation and tourism industry the Crow citizens depend on for their economical, cultural and natural resources.*
- **Messages should motivate the audience to act on what they have learned.** *Example: Every year, wildfires on the Colville Nation threaten lives, burn homes, damage sacred places and destroy timber resources. Before starting a fire, contact Colville Fire Management at -- to determine your community's fire conditions and learn tips to reduce your fire vulnerability.*
- **Categorizing the messages by what, why and how will help you recall the messages.** You may also consider adding “who,” when” and “where” in relation to specific initiatives. *Example: (What) Today's mastication project will remove excess vegetation in the Little Dear Campground. (Why) Dense build-up of vegetation can lead to fires that burn hotter, last longer and spread faster. As a result, these fires become difficult to manage and can threaten areas where people live. (How) We are working with the Mescalero tribal government and local property owners to make their land and property more defensible against wildfire.*