

# HOTSHOT CREW HISTORY IN AMERICA



PRODUCED BY THE NATIONAL INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREW STEERING COMMITTEE

November 2013

# Alaska





## BLM/ALASKA FIRE SERVICE HOTSHOTS

In 1974 the BLM established the first Alaska Hotshot crew, stationed at Kenai, in South Central Alaska. In 1976, a second Hotshot crew was formed in Kenai. The crew size was set at 16 to meet the carrying capacity of the Twin Otter. These crews were also stationed at Tanacross in Eastern Interior Alaska and at McGrath in Western Interior Alaska where the airports were large enough to support larger aircraft. In 1982 the Alaska Fire Service was established and based at Ft. Wainwright, Alaska. In 1985 the two hotshot crews (Midnight Sun and Chena) increased their numbers to twenty, to meet Type I Interagency standards. These two crews have continuously been stationed at Ft. Wainwright, a military base on the outskirts of Fairbanks. The crews are housed in old Army barracks that are approximately ½ mile from the Alaska Fire Service operations building, which sits on the edge of the Ft. Wainwright airstrip.

Between 1987-2003 Chena and Midnight Sun would detail to locations primarily in Northern California and Idaho, as well as Utah and Nevada, occasionally combining crews for Lower 48 assignment. For fire seasons 1993 and 1997 the crews did not go south on Lower 48 fire assignment. In 1998 the Denali Hotshots were formed under an agreement between the Chugachmiut Native Corporation and the Alaska BLM. The Denali Hotshots would detail to various locations throughout Nevada from 1998 to 2003.

<u>MIDNIGHT SUN</u>	<u>CHENA</u>	<u>DENALI</u>
1985-David Lockwood	1985-88-Jon Larson	1998-Larry Nolan
1986-88-Jerry Soard	1989-Steve Bumgarner	1999-Pat O'Brien
1989-91-Dave Jandt	1990-93-Skip Theisen	2000-03-Lawrence Moses
1992-Jandt/Matier	1994-Mike Powell/Mike Theisen	2005-06-Ray Crowe
1993-97-David W. Matier	1995-Skip Theisen	2007-Steve Boatman
1998-Shane McDonald	1996-98-Mike Theisen	
1999-2007 Dave Matier	1999-Mike Theisen/Shane McDonald	
2008-Swisher	2000-Shane McDonald	
2009-2010-Dave Matier	2001-03-Pat O'Brien	
2010-present-Jake Livingston	2004-07-Jake Livingston	
	2008-09-Chris Marabetta	

# Eastern







## Midewin IHC History 2001-Present

The Midewin (mi-day-win) IHC was established in April of 2001 as a result of the National Fire Plan.

The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (the crew's host unit) was established in 1996 and is the first national tallgrass prairie in the country. It is administered by the U.S. Forest Service, in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and with the support of hundreds of volunteers and partner agencies, businesses, and organizations. Part of the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, Midewin remained largely closed to the public while the Army cleaned up contamination remaining from decades of TNT manufacturing and packaging. The crew is the first of its type in Region 9 of the United States Forest Service.

The first employees arrived in June of 2001 and the crew was operational by early August. The crew was temporarily based in 3 trailers at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Wilmington, IL. Due to the late start, the crew was only on two assignments in 2001, the Rex Creek Complex wildfire in Washington and the World Trade Center Relief Effort in New York City. The Midewin IHC received the Forest Service Chief's award for emergency assistance for the work performed in New York.

2002 was the crew's first full season. The crew was operational from April to the end of August. In July, the crew received its current fleet of vehicles consisting of 1 Ford extended cab pick-up and 4 Chevy crew cabs.

During the 2003-2007 seasons, the crew was operational from the beginning of March through mid September. Generally, the crew would begin its season by supporting initial attack efforts and prescribed fire east of the Mississippi river before heading out west. The crew was able to establish a reputation of being a hard working crew that spent most of its time away from the host unit.

2004 was an extremely difficult season for the Midewin IHC. On April 24<sup>th</sup> Alan Toepke was fatally injured in an off-duty traffic accident while returning from a fire assignment in Florida. The crew stood down for 2 ½ months but was able to finish the season strong with several good assignments in July through September. During the stand down the majority of the crew traveled to the Superior National Forest in Minnesota to assist with initial attack and fuels management projects. At the time of the accident the crew was pursuing its certification as a fully qualified IHC. In October of 2004 the crew moved into its new facilities.

The crew was certified as a fully qualified Interagency Hotshot Crew on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

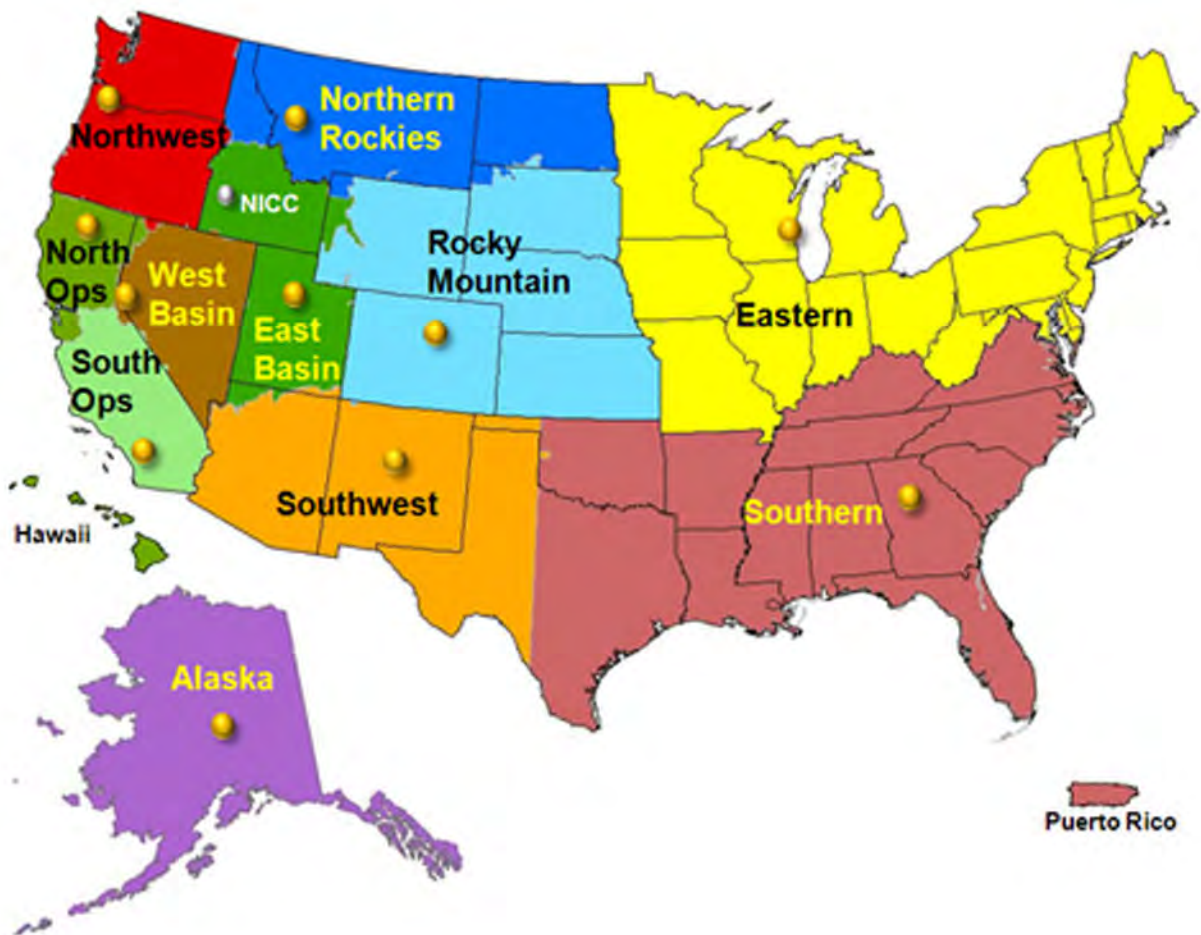
### Superintendents – Career and Detailed

Steve Little – 07/01- 09/01  
Michael Frederick – 02/02- 06/02  
Dave Martin – 07/02- 08-02, 05/05  
Lito Contreras – 08/02- 09/02, 08/03- 12/04  
Rich Stiles – 03/03- 04/03  
Russell Harris – 04/03- 05/03, 03/05- 04/05  
Gordon Admundson – 07/03- 08/03  
Bob Little – 05/05- 05/08  
Jerry Hoffman – 03/07-09/07, 05/08-04/09  
Rick Moreno – 04/09 - Present

### Assistant Superintendents – Career and Detailed

Steve Parrish – 07/01- 04/02  
Dan Philbin – 05/02- 05/03  
Dan Anereno – 07/07-08/07  
Dale Snyder – 08/08  
Jerry Hoffman – 06/03 – Present

# Eastern Great Basin





## **Lolo Interagency Hotshots Lolo National Forest Missoula, Montana**

### **Background Information**

The Lolo Hotshots have roots in the beginnings of modern-day fire suppression history. Although the crew was officially recognized as a national shared resource in 1961 as one of the original 9 Interregional crews, the crew originated from the Blister Rust control crews (BRC) who performed important forest health mitigation work in areas affected by Blister Rust infection. These crews were used for local fire suppression assistance and because of their experience, were often requested for fire assignments outside the region. In 1961, due to the nation-wide demand for the more experienced, mobile and organized suppression crews, the Forest Service created Interregional Fire Suppression Crews. Two of these crews were placed in Region 1 (Northern Rockies), one based on the Nez Perce National Forest at Slate Creek on the Salmon River (this crew no longer exists) and the other on the Lolo National Forest at Ninemile Ranger District, 30 miles west of Missoula, Montana.

From 1961-1970 the crew was based at the Ninemile Ranger District then was moved 40 miles west to the St.Regis Work Center in 1971 because the work center was not being used and could accommodate 25 people. This proved to be a logistical problem for the crew so they moved back to Ninemile where they were based through the 1981 season. In 1982 the crew's base of operations was moved to the Missoula Ranger District where it remains today.

### **Crew Composition**

Organization of the crew has changed significantly since 1961. In the early years (1961-1974) the crew was composed of 1 Foreman, 3 Squad leaders, a Cook and 20 Crewmembers. The Foreman (now Superintendent) was the only career appointed position on the crew. In 2004, the Superintendent and Assistant are permanent full-time employees, with 3 Squad Leaders, 6 Senior Firefighters and 2 Apprentices employed under 13/13 career appointments. In 2011, the Superintendent and 2 Assistant Superintendents are permanent full-time employees, with 2 Squad Leaders and 4 Senior Firefighters employed under 13/13 career appointments. The remaining 10-11 are employed as temporaries.

In 1974 the number of individuals assigned to the crew dropped from 25 to 20 due to aircraft configuration and changes in flight weight limitations.

## **Significant Events**

1980- The first woman was hired on the crew.

1989- Margaret Doherty became the first female Hotshot Crew Superintendent in the nation.

1990- ESPN documentary program "America's Wilderness" profiles crew during pre-season training and while on fire assignment. The hour-long production was broadcast worldwide on several occasions. The documentary included interviews with several crewmembers and footage of fireline operations. It gave a sense of what life on a hotshot crew is like and conveyed the diversity of both the people and the work the crew performs.

1994- Marshall Brown\* detailed as Superintendent vice Karkanen detailed to Ninemile District Fire Management Officer (6/94-2/95).

1998- CBS News 48 Hours profiles crew during Hopper Fire in Southern California and conducts follow-up interviews. Broadcast in October 1998 (received their lowest ratings ever).

2001- Holly Maloney\* detailed as Superintendent vice Karkanen detailed into Forest Deputy Fire Staff (6/00-11/00).

2011- Steve Karkanen retired in May as the longest running Lolo IHC Superintendent.

## **Crew Leadership**

1961 - Ron Stoleson

1962 - Lyle Brown

1963 – Jay Penney

1964 - 1973 – George Bissonette

1974 – Neil Ramberg

1975 – Neil Ramberg/Kevin Brown

1976 - 1981 – Mike Cyrus

1982 – Jerry Benson

1983 - 1984 Don Feser

1985 – Roger Christopher

1986 – Don Feser

1987 – Steve Betlach

1988 – Greg Power

1989 – Margaret Doherty

1990 – 2010 Steve Karkanen

2011 – Present Tim LaRoche





## Lewis & Clark Hotshots... History 2001-Present



Original Logo

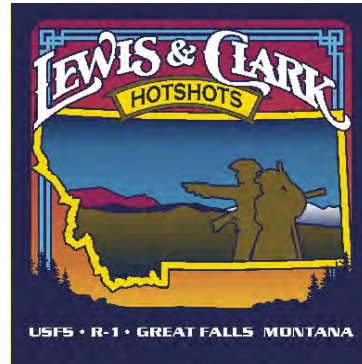
The Lewis & Clark Interagency Hotshot Crew has a rather short history; being one of several IHC's developed nationwide in 2001. After a regional decision was made to initiate an additional R1 IHC, the Lewis & Clark NF took the opportunity to host the L&C IHC. The name of the crew was acquire from the forest, seemingly fitting since central Montana provided the backdrop for pivotal events during the Lewis & Clark Corp of Discovery in the early 1800's.

The original logo seen above was a basic outline of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and Sacagawea. In the winter of '05/06 the logo was upgraded to a more colorful version, and is the current logo of the crew.

Lewis & Clark IHC is based in Great Falls, Montana which is the second largest city in the state, with a population near 60,000 people. Situated in north central Montana with the Missouri River at their doorstep, the Highwood and Little Belt mountains a short drive to the east, and the Rocky Mountain Front looming immediately to the west, puts the L&C IHC in the heart of Montana.

In the inaugural year of 2001, Lewis & Clark IHC was housed and operated out of surplus housing on Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls. In the winter of 2001 a new facility adjacent to the LCF S.O. and Great Falls Fire Center was occupied, which included IHC cache, barracks, weight room, and office space.

From its conception the L&C IHC has operated as one of the nation's four training crews. Originally for the L&C IHC this meant having a compliment of 10-12 detailers, whereas currently



Current Logo

they operate with only 4-6 detailers. The remainder of the crew configurations consist of one PFT Superintendent, one PFT Foreman (from 2001-2004 the crew had operated with the two foreman system), three 13/13 Squad Bosses (one operating as a Saw Boss), four 13/13 Senior Firefighters, and 10-12 seasonal employees.

### Superintendents Past and Present

Chris Theisen	2001 - 2004
Mike Noel	2004 – 2010
Tyler J. Anderson (Farm)	2011 (detail)
Matt Holmstrom	2012 - Present



## **IDAHO PANHANDLE INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREW HISTORY 1967-PRESENT**

Since 1962, four Type I hotshot crews have been established in northern Idaho. Today, the Idaho Panhandle Hotshot Crew, formerly the St. Joe Interagency Hotshot Crew (changed name in 2001 to better represent the whole forest), is the sole survivor. Dale Jarrell organized the crew in 1967 and served as crew boss until 1969. The crew is based at the Idaho Panhandle National Forest's Supervisor's Office in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. This forest is an administrative combination of the Kaniksu, Coeur d'Alene, and St. Joe National Forests.

For 30 years, the hotshot crew worked out of the Clarkia Work Center on the St. Joe Ranger District. In 1998, the crew moved to the Coeur d'Alene Ranger District in Coeur d'Alene. This move was in response to national agency direction to position the crew closer to high priority fuels and restoration work that was being done in the wildland/urban interface and within the Coeur d'Alene Basin.

The crew use to start critical training the first week of May. In 2002 we made the change to start the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April. This has given us many opportunities. We are now able to get our 80 hours of training out of the way and be able to help the forest with their spring burning program. We have also benefited by being able to participate in suppression efforts earlier in Region 3. Traditionally our season has ended around October 9<sup>th</sup>. But the crew is always prepared to run until the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October if there our incidents.

The Idaho Panhandle Hotshots have a rich history of safety. There has been no fatalities sense the crew existence or permanent disabilities that I have ever been made aware of. The crew currently has a streak of nine years with no lost time to personal injuries or chargeable vehicle accidents (not aware of what occurred prior to my tenure).

Memorable incidents that stick out as part of our history is the Earthquake Fire that we traveled to on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. When the rest of the world was mourning the loss of so many American lives we were chasing this

fire down on the Nez Pierce National Forest. Not even aware of the magnitude of the situation that had occurred but knowing in our hearts that we must stay focused and pull it together to accomplish our task. We got our butts kicked until about 2:00 a.m. when we finally were able to secure our line about 2 miles from where we originally anchored.

Hurricane Rita is another memorable incident that comes to mind. I still remember how eerie it was driving into St. Augustine, TX to be pre-positioned so we would be available to open emergency routes from the inside out. The night the hurricane hit I was second guessing my decision to preposition but we were able to make a huge difference and everything worked out well. There are many other stories where we have made a positive impact but that would become a book. The bottom line is that we are positively making a difference in the fire world and like I constantly remind my crew, "Everyday is a Holiday, and every meal is a banquet when you are an Idaho Panhandle Hotshot."

### History of Superintendents

Name	Years	Crew Name
Chris Smith	2009 - Present	Idaho Panhandle IHC
Terry Zufelt	2004 - 2008	Idaho Panhandle IHC
Louis Hartjes	2001 - 2003	Idaho Panhandle IHC
Rory Laws	2000 - 2000	St. Joe IHC
Lynn Bornitz	1999 - 2000	St. Joe IHC
B Hadley Hawkins	1999 - 1999	St. Joe IHC
Lynn Bornitz	1995 - 1998	St. Joe IHC
Jim O'Dell	1988 - 1994	St. Joe IHC
John Myhre	1980 - 1987	St. Joe IHC
Dean Berger	1976 - 1979	St. Joe IHC
Jim Preston	1975 - 1975	St. Joe IHC
Dennis Johnson	1972 - 1973	St. Joe IHC
Mike Cyrus	1970 - 1971	St. Joe IHC
Dale Jarrell	1967 - 1969	St. Joe IHC

The crew logos that are attached above have been on the back of our shirt for a long time. The history of the logo is uncertain. Many times during our travel we have been approached by the public sector requesting one of our shirts. After a brief explanation what it means to be an Interagency Hotshot Crew the answer is always the same: You must be a member to receive a shirt. The other logo is on the front of our shirt and has changed a few times. Until 2002 the logo included a tree with a lightening bolt hitting it. The picture above shows how it looks today.





# HELENA HOTSHOTS 1971 - 2009

## A Brief Crew History

2009 marks 38 years of existence of an organized fire suppression crew on the Helena NF.

Located on the Helena Ranger District, the Helena Hotshot crew had its beginnings in 1971, organized initially as a 10-person camp/slash crew under the supervision of Mike Collins; AD hires were used to bulk the crew numbers up to 20. By July of 1971 the crew was being dispatched as a suppression unit, with the crew arriving at the incident under the "IR" designation. This did not endear the Helena crew to the other legitimate IR crews and made for interesting chowtime conversation. Crew strength numbers fluctuated, but early crew composition included many Native Americans as well as Vietnam era veterans. Special mention needs to be made of Dale Jarrell's efforts to establish the Helena crew during these early years. The crew continued as a "quasi" Hotshot crew in 1973, responding to fires but not having regional recognition.

In 1974 the crew received a new crew boss Tom Patten, regional recognition and financing, and was the only Hotshot crew in Region 1 east of the continental divide, as well as the only Region 1 crew operating with out housing or barracks for crewmembers. Patten continued as "crew boss" through 1975, at which time Mike Peila took over the helm. During this time the crew performed notably on most major fires of the period including, Skinner Mill, Marble Cone and late season Region 9 fires.

The crew did not have "formal" recognition in 1979 due to fiscal constraints, but in 1980 the crew returned under the supervision of new crew foreman Larry Cole, who had been recruited from the NezPerce IR crew which was being shut-down due to restructuring of the region's IR crews. During Cole's tenure - 1980 through 1982 - the crew continued to respond to a number of fires within and out of region.

In 1983 Dave Larsen, who had previously worked on the hotshot crew with Larry Cole and Mike Peila, took over "Foreman" responsibilities. During Larsen's reign, 1983 through 1988, two significant personnel actions occurred. The first being the establishment of the GS-6 assistant foreman position in 1986, the first in the Region to do so, and secondly, in 1987, the reinstatement of WAE Status for the crew foreman. Gary Sullivan performed as acting Superintendent during the bulk of the 1988 season.

In 1989 Larry Edwards assumed the superintendent position. Under Edwards the crew changed with the

time transforming from an Inter-regional (IR) crew to an Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC). Larry brought a Region 5 influence to the organization, but opted for a three module configuration. His crews were always known for their hard work and their ability to get the job done. Larry dedicated 13 years to the program with his tenure ending after the 2001 fire season.

Additionally Kenny Spint dedicated 8 seasons to the crew from 1995-2002 as a squad boss and eventual Assistant Superintendent

Rocky Gilbert took over as the Superintendent in 2002. The Helena crew continues with an Assistant Superintendent and three modules with Ford F-550 mini-buggies having finally converted from Suburbans.

Although crew strength has fluctuated from between 10 and 22 members due to fiscal considerations diversity has been a mainstay of the crew since its inception. Early affiliations with local tribal organizations continue today, in addition women crewmembers have been a part of the Helena Hotshots since the mid 1970's and remain an important part of crew composition. The Helena still has no crew quarters and centers its operations out the "Shot House" a 1950's era Forest Service house and garage which serves as office, cache, and locker room space.

The "Helena" performs project work for all Helena N. F. Ranger Districts, the BLM, and adjoining forests. In addition to having responded to fires in all FS regions, the crew has provided its skills and expertise in emergency medical situations, search and rescue operations, law enforcement assistance, fire training, Hurricanes Hugo, Andrew and Georges, wilderness fire management and prescribed burning.

## CREW BOSS/SUPERINTENDENT

1971 - 1973	Mike Collins
1974 - 1975	Tom Patten
1976 - 1979	Mike Pelia
1980 - 1982	Larry Cole
1983 - 1988	Dave Larsen
1988	Gary Sullivan (acting)
1989-2001	Larry Edwards
2002-2005	Rocky Gilbert
2006-	Kenny Spint (detail)
2007- present	Fred Thompson



**OPERA NON VERBA**



## Flathead Interagency Hotshot Crew

The Flathead Hotshots share their history with the old Nez Perce Hotshot Crew. In early 1962, Region One fire control staff decided another Inter-regional crew would be an asset to the region in addition to the Nine Mile Hotshot Crew on the Lolo. In May of 1962, the second crew was assigned to the Nez Perce National Forest and would be located at the old Adams Ranger Station on the Slate Creek Ranger District. This crew existed 4 years, but support from the forest became weak and the crew was moved by the regional fire staff from the Nez Perce to the Flathead for the 1966 season

When the crew came to the Flathead Forest in 1966 they were called the Flathead Inter-regional Fire Suppression Crew (as Region One designated the crews prior to 1981), the Glacier View Ranger District hosted the crew at what was then known as the Big Creek Ranger Station, 35 miles north of Kalispell. The Ranger Station was right on the North Fork of the Flathead River on a narrow gravel road, within a stones' throw of Glacier National Park, which was on the east side of the river. In 1982 the crew's duty station was changed to the district office in Columbia Falls, in 1994 the crew moved to the Hungry Horse Ranger District to become part of the Three Forks Zone where is today. This move allowed the crew to have a much larger cache facility with plenty of room for equipment, offices, and vehicle parking. Some government housing is available on a first-come first-serve basis.

### Flathead Hotshot Superintendents

Tyler J. Anderson (Farm)	2012-Present
Harvey Carr	2002-2011
Don Rees	1999-2001
Paul Linse	1994-1998
Hardy Bloemeke (detail)	1993
Paul Linse	1987-1992
Bruce McAtee	1977-87
Al Squires	1969-1976
Byron Sagunsky	1968
Fred Andres	1967
Bruce Pyles	1965-1966





## CHIEF MOUNTAIN HOTSHOTS

AGENCY: BLACKFEET TRIBE  
BRANCH OF FORESTRY

HOME UNIT: BROWNING, MONTANA

ESTABLISHED: 1988  
CERTIFIED: 1990

The Chief Mountain Interagency Hotshot crew is based out of Browning, MT on the Blackfeet Reservation. The Chief Mountain crew name was acquired by Glen Still Smoking a former Superintendent. Glen came through the name (Chief Mountain) by a mountain located on the Blackfeet Reservation. Chief Mountain is sacred place for vision and spiritual healing. The Hotshot crew got its Logo from a Blackfeet artist Bob Tail feathers. Bob painted the mountain from the east side and gave it to the program this is how the name and Logo was established. The Blackfeet Tribe along with the Bureau of Indian Affairs sponsored the Chief Mountain Hotshot crew in 1989. The program started in 1986 on the Anderson Creek Complex in Idaho a Type II crew dispatched from the Blackfeet agency was working along with several Interagency Hotshot crews and were recognized for their hard work by Bob Wagonfer a Type 1 Incident Commander at the time. Mr. Wagonfer commended the crew on their performance and mentioned their might be an opening in Region 1 for a Hotshot crew. The Blackfeet Tribe approached the Agency about sponsoring a hotshot crew, so after having good performance ratings on several fires as a Type II Initial Attack crew. The Blackfeet agency took the necessary steps to get the crew recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Hotshot program and the Region 1 IHC program. Then in 1990 the crew was certified as a Region 1 Hotshot program. The program was supported by the Blackfeet Tribe and went through years of performing well, but did not receive any funding. Then in 1996 the crew received its first funding by the Department of Interior and the program was able to support it self more openly. The performance and demand for Chief Mountain skyrocketed to where the program was recognized by name. The Chief Mountain Hotshot program received an award for outstanding safety performance during the 1999 fire season for zero lost accidents and zero

reportable vehicle accidents by the US Forest Service and Northern Rockies Coordinating Group. The Chief Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew has been recognized by several film production companies and currently has 2 documentary films completed.

Past & Present Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents and Squad leaders

### Superintendents:

Bruce McDonald	1988 -1990
Glen Still Smoking	1991 – 1992
John Murray	1993 – 1994
Tom Evans	1995 – 1996
Steve Murray	1997
Lyle St. Goddard	1998 – Present

### Assistant Superintendents:

Glen Still Smoking	1988-1990
Steve Murray	1991 – 1995
Lyle St. Goddard	1996 – 1997
Carl Crawford	1998 – 2000
Eli Still Smoking	2001 - Present

### Squad Bosses

Steve Murray	1988 - 1990
Gerald Trombley	1988 - 1994
Earl Old Chief	1991-1994/2001-2005
Matt Webber	1988 - 1992
Alan Vielle	1993 - Present
Lyle St. Goddard	1994 – 1996
Eli Still Smoking	1995 - 2000
Steve Bullshoe	1995 – 2000
Herman Burke	2001 – 2003
Clinton Dusty Bull	2004 – Present
John Grand Champ	2006
Jovon Fisher	2007

***“PRESERVING THE PAST WHILE BUILDING THE FUTURE”***

**Chippewa – Cree Tribe  
Natural Resources / Forestry**



**Bear Paw Fire Crew**

**Agency: United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Chippewa-Cree Tribe**

**Home Unit: Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation**

**Established 2000**

***Crew History***

**About the Bear Paw Fire Crew:**

In 2000, the Chippewa-Cree Tribal Business Committee and Natural Resources Department drafted up a proposal for an Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew to be based out of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation. A formal written request was submitted to Mr. Tom Corbin, Regional Fire Management Officer, Bureau of Indian Affairs in Billings, Montana stating the intentions of the Chippewa-Cree Tribe to establish a Type 1 Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew here in Rocky Boy, Montana. The BIA-Billings Area Office expressed their support in starting a Hotshot program and helped give some direction on the next steps the Chippewa-Cree tribe needed to follow to accomplish the goal of establishing an Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew. The final action taken was to submit a formal request letter to Mr. Jim Stires, Director of the National Inter-Agency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, stating the intentions of the Chippewa-Cree Tribe of establishing a Type 1 Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew based out of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation.

The name of "Bear Paw" was chosen after the Bear Paw Mountains, in which the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation is located. Initially, the crew was dispatched as an elite Type II Initial Attack crew, and received their entire funding from the Chippewa-Cree Tribal Business Committee to keep the crew working together as required in the National Interagency Hotshot Standards Guide and to prove themselves capable of Type 1 status considerations from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Bear Paw personnel and the Chippewa-Cree tribe natural Resources department worked hard over the next several years to meet all the requirements of a Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew. In the spring of 2005, the hard work of all personnel involved was rewarded when the Bear Paw Fire Crew attained full certification as a Type 1 Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew and full funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.



The next two seasons, 2005 and 2006, the Bear Paw Hotshots experienced losses of key position personnel and a high turn over of crew members. Losses of overhead and experienced crew members drew concerns from the Regional Fire Management Office about the program's integrity as an IHC, and placed under review for the 2007 fire season. The Bear Paw Hotshots were required to successfully complete a re-certification review prior to being available as Type 1 IHC, and to determine the future program's status.

***Crew Supervision:***

The first Superintendent for the Bear Paw IHC was Mike Lamere. He held the position from the initiation of the crew in 2000 until the Spring of 2006. John Gardipee was chosen as the Assistant Superintendent.

2006 Earl Old Chief took over as Superintendent in the late spring of, and held the position until November 2006. John Gardipee worked as the Assistant

Superintendent. A two Captain system was implemented for the remainder of the 2006 season. John Gardipee and Lyman Wolf Chief, Jr. were the Captains; John "Sonny" Roasting Stick and Lenno Henderson, Sr. were the two Squad Leaders.

Wilbur Nagel became the Superintendent of the Bear Paw IHC in late December 2006 and is currently holding the position. The crew structure has reverted back to the traditional three squad configuration. Juan Gamble was selected as the new Assistant Superintendent in December of 2006.

***"The strength of the crew is in the individual, and the strength of the individual is in the crew"***

***-Bear Paw IHC Mission Statement***



## History of the Crew: Boise Hotshots, Boise IR, Payette IR, Payette Hotshots.

The crew was started on the Payette National Forest, Thorn Creek Ranger District in 1961 (one of the first Hotshot crews in the forest service). The crew started with 30 men and were called the Payette Hotshots. In 1971 the name changed from Hotshots to "IR crew" (Interregional). In 1980 the crew was moved off the Payette to BIFC (NIFC) in Boise to meet the National standards of all IR crews being within a two hour call of a jet airport. The new name of the crew was Boise IR. When ICS made it to Region 4 the initials IR took on a new meaning of infrared, so the crew name was changed to the present name of "Boise Hotshots". In 1987 the crew followed suit of other Type I crews and declared the colors of jade, red and black for their uniforms. The final move for the crew came in 1990 when it moved to Garden Valley on the Emmett Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. The crew finally feels at home in Garden Valley and has found great support on the district and lots of quality project work to fill in the slow days (which have been few and far between).

Now the crew is made up of 20 men and women, working hard and having fun.

### Past Superintendents: Years:

Gary N. White – 1961	1
Carl Rossell – 1962 to 1968	7
Ron Dean – 1969	1
Dave Kellogg – 1970 to 1973	4
Merrill Saleen – 1974 to 1978	5
Terry Leatherman – 1979 to 1986	8
Kole Berriochoa – 1987 to 1992	6
Chris Simonson – 1993	1
Kole Berriochoa – 1994 to 1996	2.5
Jim Cook – 1996 to 1998	2.5
Randy Skelton – 1999 to 2001	2.5
Matthew Ziegler – 2001 to 2011	11.0

Deon Berner – 2011 to present

### Past Crew Logo's:



1989 to 1992



1993 to 1996



1997 to 2001

## Bonneville Hotshots History 2001- Present



The Bonneville IHC was established in 2001 to help fulfill BLM's commitment to provide national fire suppression resources. The crew is based in Salt Lake City Utah, Salt Lake BLM Field Office. In 2001 the crew ran as a IHC(T) and received its certification in the Spring of 2002.

### **Superintendents Past and Present**

Nathan Lancaster 2001 – 2008

Chris Kirby 2008 – 2012

Pila Malolo 2012 - Present



*As Professional Wildland Firefighters we are dedicated to serving the U.S. Forest Service, our Cooperators and the Public while maintaining the values of Leadership, Integrity and Teamwork.*

The Cedar City Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) is located in southwest Utah in the town of Cedar City. Cedar City is approximately 250 miles south of Salt Lake City, Utah and approximately 175 miles north of Las Vegas, Nevada. This town is surrounded by the Dixie National Forest, Cedar City Bureau of Land Management and various National Parks.

In 2001, under the direction and in accordance with the National Fire Plan, the Dixie National Forest became host to the Dixie Interagency Hotshot Crew based in Cedar City, Utah. The Dixie IHC would be the first Type I or Type II crew to be hosted by the Dixie National Forest. From 2001 to the spring of 2003, the crew was stationed in a hangar at the Cedar City Municipal Airport. In 2003, the Dixie N.F. in conjunction with Cedar City BLM, Zion National Park and Utah State Fire and Forestry, the Color Country Interagency Fire Center opened in Cedar City. The crew relocated to the new Fire Center in the spring of 2003 where they reside to this day.

Jon Lee came from the Plumas Hotshots in northern California in 2001 to become the first Superintendent of the Dixie IHC. For the first two years of their inception, the crew was mobilized as an IHC Trainee crew. In the spring of 2003, Jon left the crew after accepting a Fire Management position with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Arizona. Robert Barrett, the Assistant Superintendent from the Logan Hotshots in northern Utah was hired as the new Superintendent in the early summer. Robert changed the crew's name to the Cedar City Interagency Hotshot Crew to represent the District and the town of Cedar City. In that same year the Cedar City IHC officially earned the status as a Type I IHC. In the winter of 2005, Robert accepted a Battalion Chief position on the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in Idaho and this opened the position of Superintendent. In 2006, Ken Henson from the Los Padres Hotshots in southern California became the Superintendent of the Cedar City IHC. In 2007, a second GS-8 Captain position was added to the crew. In the fall of 2009, Ken Henson accepted a Division Chief position on the Pine Valley Ranger District of the Dixie National Forest. Brian Burbridge, a Captain on the crew since 2005, accepted the Superintendent position in the spring of 2010.

The crew traditionally has a start date the beginning of May which brings them available for assignment in mid May. They will work until the end of October or longer depending on the severity of fire season, funding or Forest and national needs. As well as fire suppression the crew has assisted with; medical aids, mechanical fuel treatments, prescribed fire locally and nationally, shuttle recovery, hurricane relief and various other assignments as needed.

Although the Cedar City IHC is relatively new in terms of Hotshot longevity, the program continues to strive to become an integral part of the National Interagency Hotshot program. From its inception, Cedar City IHC crewmembers have been educated in the fundamental Hotshot characteristics of Duty, Respect and Integrity. A strong work ethic, commitment to the operation and respect for Hotshot history and tradition are the pillars upon which this crew stands.

#### **SUPERINTENDENTS**

**Jon Lee 2001 – 2002**

**Robert Barrett 2003 – 2005**

**Ken Henson 2006 – 2009**

**Brian Burbridge 2010 – Present**

#### **CAPTAINS**




**Todd Wood 2001 – 2003**

**Brian Burbridge 2005 – 2010**

**Joe Harris 2007 – 2008** (Added 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain in 2007)

**Tom Allbright 2009 - Present**

## PAST & PRESENT CREW LOGOS

 The logo features a desert landscape with a large orange sun setting behind a range of purple mountains. In the foreground, there are several brown rock formations. The word "DIXIE" is written in bold black letters at the top, and "HOT SHOTS" is written in bold black letters at the bottom.	<p><b>2001-2002</b> Developed by Jon Lee.</p>
 The logo is set against a dark blue background. It features a large, detailed tree in the center, with a yellow sun or moon behind it. The words "CEDAR CITY" are written in a yellow, arched font above the tree, and "HOTSHOTS" is written in a red, arched font below the tree.	<p><b>2003-2006</b> Developed by Robert Barrett.</p>
 The logo is a shield-shaped emblem with a blue border. At the top, "CEDAR CITY" is written in blue. In the center, there is a stylized red flame with a green tree silhouette inside it. The letters "R" and "4" are positioned on either side of the flame. At the bottom, "HOTSHOTS" is written in blue.	<p><b>2007-PRESENT</b> Developed in 2007 by Cedar City IHC overhead.</p>





*The Idaho City Hotshots will uphold the mission of the Forest Service by “Protecting the land and serving the people”. Our vision is to continue to integrate into the current Interagency Hotshot Organization smoothly and professionally earning respect by hard work, letting our professionalism and actions speak for us and achieving, or exceeding performance standards.*

The Idaho City Hotshots are located in Idaho City, Idaho on the South Zone of the Boise National Forest on the Idaho City Ranger District. The crew was formed as an expansion crew with the 2001 National Fire Plan with Russ Long accepting the first role as Superintendent.

The inaugural season of 2001 consisted of 95 days on fire assignments throughout the west gaining experience and credibility. By October the Idaho City Hotshots became certified as a Type I Interagency Hotshot Crew. In 2002 the crew organization was changed and an additional assistant was added splitting the crew into two modules with captains. The two captain organization structure is used to this day creating a more versatile work force. The fire season of 2002 was highlighted by extreme activity on the Big Wash and Rattle fires. By the springs of 2003 the crew office and barrack were completed at the Forest Service Compound in the center of Idaho City. Our crew facilities include ample office space, training room, ready room, workout facility and men’s and women’s dormitory with private rooms. In 2005 Brian Cardoza became Superintendent with Russ Long moving on to become the Idaho City Ranger District AFMO. During the 2005 fire season, St. George Utah became our second home thanks to the bumper crop of cheat grass. The cheat grass combined with years of drought made for a very dynamic season. The 2006 and 2007 were record setting seasons for the crew which included tours from California to Florida. In 2007 Brian Cardoza along with leadership from the crew went to Australia with the Great Basin Hotshots. Brian acted as the superintendent.

The mission of the Idaho City Hotshots is to provide a highly skilled firefighting crew that operates safely, is versatile, and operates with integrity and mutual respect. The crew strives to improve itself and others by training and teaching. Fitness is held in high regard and is founded on the principles of hard work.

Idaho City Hotshots receive nothing but exceptional support from District, Forest, Regional and National levels.

**Superintendents**

**Russ Long 2001 – 2004**

**Brian Cardoza 2005 – Present**

**Captains**

**J. P. Zavalla 2001**

**Pete Mason 2002**

**Brian Cardoza 2002 - 2004**

**Albert Linch 2003 – 2005**

**Allyn Spanfellner 2005 – 2007**

**Steve Ramaekers 2006 – 2009**

**Anthony (TJ) Gholson 2010 - Present**

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## **LOGAN INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREW WASATCH-CACHE NATIONAL FOREST, REGION FOUR**



Since the creation of the Logan Forest Reserve in 1903, fire prevention and suppression has been an important emphasis on the Cache National Forest. Overgrazing and large, unchecked forest fires in the critical watersheds of the Wasatch and Bear River Mountains of Northern Utah led President Theodore Roosevelt to set aside the Logan Canyon area as one of the first Forest Reserves in the nation. One of the first directives given to the Reserves first Supervisor, John Squires, was to organize an effective fire fighting force to control forest fires within the reserve. In 1910 Squires' hard work enabled Logan's Deputy Forest Supervisor, John Riis, to lead a crew of 300 firefighters from Cache Valley to fight the large fires raging in Idaho and Montana. Though the crew was made up mostly of college students, local farm boys, hoboes and convicts taken from the local jail it demonstrated the Forests' ability to raise a large firefighting force in an emergency.

The tradition of an organized, standing fire crew on the Logan Ranger District was not realized until the late 1920's when the Forest Service sent future chief Lyle Watts to Cache Valley. Watts was given the task of establishing a Forestry Department at Utah Agricultural College in Logan (now Utah State University). This was one of the first forestry schools in the western United States. As part of the Forestry curriculum students were required to attend a six week summer forestry camp in the near by Cache National Forest. As the forestry summer camp students would miss the opportunity for seasonal jobs with the Forest Service, Watts convinced the Cache Forest Supervisor to sponsor a forestry student fire crew on the Logan District. The Logan IHC can be traced back to this early beginning.

As Chief of the Forest Service, Edward Cliff (Chief from 1962 to 1972) is credited with developing the concept of organized hotshot crews. Under his leadership the first Hotshot crews (known as Inter Regional Crews) were established on several National Forests in the early 1960s. It is interesting to note that Chief Cliff attended Utah State College in Logan from 1928 to 1931. As part of the forestry student employment agreement, he worked as a summer seasonal fire and recreation guard on the Logan District while attending Forestry School.

In the 1930's the Forestry Student fire crew tended to combine with two Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) camp crews hosted on the District. During this period the CCC camp at Tony Grove was used to train and dispatch local fire crews. In the 1940's the CCC Camp was disbanded with Utah State University taking over the CCC work center. From the early 1940's to 2002 the Tony Grove CCC camp was used to host the U.S.U. Forestry Summer Camp program. It was this summer Forestry Camp program that provided the recruitment source for the Logan Fire crew for the next 40 years, (approximately 1940 to 1978).

In 1973 the Cache National Forest merged with the Wasatch to become the Wasatch-Cache National Forest with the Supervisors Office in Salt lake City, Utah. With the merger with a large urban Forest, fire suppression and watershed protection became a major priority. Under the leadership of District F.M.O., Neff Hardman, the crew would eventually gain "Inter Regional" status. The size of the crews would vary from 10 to 20 people. Dee Sessions became the first Logan Fire Crew boss in 1973. That year the crew included Jack Ford, whose father Gerald Ford would soon become President of the United States.

In 1974 Dee Sessions returned as Crew Boss for the Logan Fire Crew. That year, Suzanne Morgan became the first woman member of the crew.

In 1975 Robert Clancy replaced Dee Sessions as crew boss and the crew was expanded to a 20 person crew. In 1976 the crew was given I.R. status as a type II crew receiving several out-of-Region assignments. In 1977, Mike Jenkins replaced Clancy as crew boss. According to Jenkins most of the 1977 season was spent fighting fire in Northern California, which included a 28 day assignment on the Hog Fire. In 1978 the crew was cut back to ten crewmembers due to a lack of funding and discontinued the following year. The USU Logan I.R. Crew's last crew boss was Dan Fritz.

In 1980 the Wasatch-Cache decided to develop a Type I Hotshot crew. The Kamas Ranger District was chosen to host the new crew and the crew became the Wasatch Hotshots. J.D. Killick, with Hotshot experience in Region 5 served as Superintendent from 1980 to 1984. In 1985 the Wasatch Hotshot Crew was disbanded due to federal budget cutbacks.

In 1987 Forest Supervisor, Dale Bosworth (former Chief of the Forest Service), requested funding to re-establish a type I hotshot crew on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. This request was approved and funding made available but on condition that a type I status would only be given if and when the crew was able to meet national IHC operational and performance standards.

Thus, the crew was funded for two years on a trial bases. After much debate it was decided to return the program to Logan to take advantage of the Ranger District's existing crew infrastructure and the ability to readily recruit crewmembers from the Forestry Department at Utah State University as established since the 1930's.

The new Logan Fire Crew came on line in 1988 with Scott Bushman as the crew Superintendent. The crew's first season is remembered as one of controlled chaos and learning. During the first year the crew's name was changed three times, from USU Logan to Wasatch-Logan to Logan I.R. Final funding for the crew was not finalized until late spring making recruitment and ordering supplies a last minute scramble. This coupled with the worst fire season since 1910 made for an interesting first season. In 1989 the crew worked on eight campaign fires in Utah, Colorado and Idaho. At the end of the 1989 fire season the crew's performance was evaluated by Region Four fire staff. It was felt that the crew had met all performance and organizational requirements for Type I qualifications and the crew became the Logan Hotshots.

1990 was a pivotal year for the Logan Hotshots. Once again funding became a critical factor with no National or Regional funding available to support the crew. If not for the efforts and support of Regional and Forest fire staff and the constant effort of District Ranger Dave Baumgartner the crew would have ceased to exist. Somehow, with a combination of regional severity funds, Forest fire funds and District project funds, enough money was scraped together to field the crew for one more year with a commitment from the Region that after 1990 the crew would be fully funded. That year the crew worked on nine project fires in six western states, logged over 10,000 driving miles as well as several thousand air miles.

The Logan IHC still maintains a positive working relationship with Utah State University established by Forest Service in the 1920s. Though the crew no longer actively recruits from the Forestry Department it does support and mentor several Forestry and Natural Resource students as well as sponsoring two Joint Apprentice Program positions. The crew also participates in the National Student Initiative Program with the Department of Forestry at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. Since 1999, the crew has hosted 5 Haskell students as well as provided instructors to teach basic fire school to students at Haskell University during the off season.

In 1996 the Logan Hotshots began participating in an International Firefighter Exchange Program between the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and The Federal Fire Protection Agency of Russia. Between 1996 and 2003 the Logan Hotshots have hosted ten Russian detailers on the crew. In 2001 the crew hosted two firefighters from Brazil. The crew Superintendent was also detailed to Russian in 1999 and 2002 as a Russian Hotshot Crew trainer and advisor.

Today the Logan Interagency Hotshot Crew enjoys a strong reputation as a professional and progressive crew. The crew continues to emphasize performance, safety and professionalism as its core values. It is proud of its traditions and of its close working relationships with fellow Hotshot crews, overhead teams and fire managers.

## **Logan Crew Superintendents**

### **Logan USU Forestry Crew**

1973 to 1974	Dee Sessions
1975	Bob Clancy

### **Logan I.R. Crew**

1976	Bob Clancy
1977	Mike Jenkins
1978	Dan Fritz

### **Wasatch Hotshots (Kamas Ranger District)**

1980 to 1984	J.D. Killick
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### **Logan Interagency Hotshot Crew (Training Crew - Type II)**

1988 to 1989	Scott Bushman
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### **Logan Interagency Hotshot Crew**

1990 to 1998	Scott Bushman
1999	Nathan Lancaster (Detailed)
2000 to 2001	Scott Bushman
2002	Robert Barrett (Detailed)
2003 to 2006	Scott Bushman
2007 to 2009	Kendal Wilson
2010	Roy Fetzer (Detailed)
2011	John Platt (Detailed)
2012 to Present	Roy Fetzer





## **The Lone Peak Hotshots:**

The Lone Peak Hotshots are a nationally recognized Type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC), based out of the Lone Peak Conservation Center, in Draper, Utah. The Lone Peak Hotshot Crew was first established in 2001 under cooperative partnership between the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Utah Division of Forestry (FFSL), in Region 4. Under the cooperative agreement, the crew must be available nationally for dispatch 180 days each year. The crew starts training in mid April and will stay available for assignments till the end of October. Lone Peak Hotshot crew was established on the solid foundation that was once called the “Flame-In-Go Hotshots”.

In 1991, within the existing Flame-In-Go program, the concept of an inmate hotshot crew was brewing. After gaining the support from regional hotshot crews and the national fire management governing bodies, the Flame-In-Go Hotshots were born. The crew was made up of 17 inmates from the Utah State Prison, 2 Correctional Officers’ and 2 Utah Forestry, Fire and State Land’s Supervisors. The Flame-In-Go Hotshots operated from 1991 through 1998 as a Regional Hotshot Crew (RHC) dedicated to fire suppression in the Eastern Great Basin Area. In 1998, the Flame-In-Go Hotshots gained National IHC status and began strengthening their reputation as a nationally recognized resource. From 1998 to 2000, the Flame-In-Go Hotshots fought fires all over the nation with the most notable location being the Boundary Waters of Minnesota. The crew met all qualifying requirements and accomplished tasks with only minor differences from that of federal hotshot crews. In 2001, after the national shift to strengthen crew qualifications and crew standards, the Flame-In-Go Hotshots were unable to keep up with the new standards and maintain hotshot status with inmate crew members. At that point in time, it was decided to make the difficult decision to transform the Flame-In-Go Hotshots into the Lone Peak Hotshots an all civilian crew.

Since the inception of the Lone Peak Hotshots in 2001, the crew has traveled extensively through out the nation fighting wildland fires. Lone Peak has developed into a professional and respected resource in the fire community. While not on fires, the crew participates in fuels reduction and natural resources based projects. The crew has five career staff positions and

typically employs fifteen to seventeen seasonal crew members each fire season. The crew normally has a low turn over rate and openings are incredibly competitive for new crew members. The crew still resides at the Lone Peak Conservation Center in Draper, using the same facilities as the Flame-In-Go's did with many new upgrades. Some of the original Flame-In-Go fire staff still remain and the grassroots fundamental are still paramount. Be a part of something great!

Superintendents of Flame-in-go Hotshots:

Tracy Dunford: 1991-1994

Gary Peck: 1995 - 1999

Scott Bovey: 2000 - 2001

Superintendents of the Lone Peak Hotshots:

Scott Bovey: 2001-2004

Joel Butcher: 2005

Mathew Armantrout: 2006 to 2009

Donny Bennett: 2010

Kris Bruington: 2011 to present



## **SAWTOOTH INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREW SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST, REGION FOUR HISTORY OF THE SAWTOOTH HOTSHOTS**

In 1966 the Sawtooth National Forest established a 10 person fire crew that was stationed at the Featherville Brush Camp (an old CCC camp) on the Shake Creek Ranger District (now the Fairfield R.D.). Ray Neiwert was the foreman of that crew and

Jim Prunty was assistant foreman.

The following year, in the spring of 1967, a 25-30 person ZECTRAN spruce budworm control crew was formed and stationed at the old ranger station in Ketchum, Idaho. Bob Berg was the foreman and Clayton Edmonds was assistant foreman of that crew. After the spruce budworm spray project was finished the crew was stationed near where the Big Smoky Guard Station was to be established. The nucleus of that spray crew replaced the Shake Creek fire crew and formed the nationally recognized Sawtooth (IR) Interregional Hotshot Crew.

All indications are that the Sawtooth IR Crew was established as a result of a national study identifying the need for additional national hotshot crews after the 1966 fire season. The strong campaigning of the then Forest FMO, Reid Christensen and the following Forest FMO, Phil Cloward led the Sawtooth N.F. to host one.

During that first season the fire crew members spent duty-time at the camp training for fire suppression, physical conditioning, and camp maintenance. Project work consisted of fire line building around clear cuts and brushwork on the Fairfield Ranger District. Army Quonset huts were set up in the spring and disassembled in the fall. A tent cookhouse was also erected.

After the 1967 fire season had begun the crew never returned to Big Smoky Guard Station due to the time it took to drive to the Twin Falls Airport. The crew then spent time repairing telephone line to Rock Creek Guard Station. The line was abandoned before repairs were completed. Most of the first year's crewmembers were students who returned to school after fire season.

In the spring of 1969, the bunkhouse and kitchen at the Brush Camp in Featherville were cut into seven piece sections by Forest Carpenter Ray Nelson. The sections were loaded onto trucks and reassembled to form the Big Smoky kitchen and dining room. These replaced the Quonset huts, one old trailer used for an office, and another trailer used as a mess hall. It was a three-week job to move these buildings. The prime movers behind the project were Lorin Bartlome, Joe Mallea, and Beryl Bevercombe.

Tent cabin frames and two of the barrack buildings were also built in 1969, with the help of Ray Nelson, Bill Williams, Gordon Welch, Darrell Smith and the IR crew. The engineering cabin was constructed in 1971 under the supervision of Vern Barnes. The IR crew later followed by building another barracks, an office, and doubled the size of an existing shower house. The forest fire budget paid for building all the "portable" buildings at the camp (it was illegal to construct permanent structures with fire funds).

Physical training during those early years was rigorous. They did about 40 minutes of calisthenics that finished with a run (in boots) for about ¾ of a mile culminating in a hill climb where crewmembers frequently experienced “type 3” nausea. Under Superintendent Bill Williams (1968-1973) a solid foundation was laid for recognition of the Sawtooth Hotshots as a top-grade crew.

Throughout the early years, the entire crew lived at the Big Smoky facility Monday through Friday. Daily project work included standard military barracks-type cleanings and equipment inspection in addition to District project work. From 1967 until about 1975, the crew traveled to and from Twin Falls for non-fire weekends-off in the crew bus (non-pay status travel). The crewmembers who didn’t have Twin Falls housing lived in the Twin Falls warehouse on weekends.

The crew remained at Big Smoky during the 70’s with more and more time being spent in Twin Falls during the fire season (after initial training). The crew was finally relocated permanently to Twin Falls after 1980. The move was made after it was determined that fire response time wasn’t adequate due to the distance from the Twin Falls Jetport. Other reasons included, an aging electrical generation system, substandard wiring and water supply systems, reduced project work requirements on the Fairfield District due to a diminished timber harvest and it was believed that subsistence costs could be substantially reduced.

In 1981, the crew moved into a new Dispatch/Hotshot facility at the current S.O. location on Kimberly Rd. Two years later, the Twin Falls District gave up on their building lease due partially to limited access and moved into the building, bumping the Hotshots out into the warehouse. Shortly thereafter the S.O. relocated to the same area adding on to the building. In 1983, the crew went from being supervised by the Forest FMO to the South Zone FMO.

From the start of the crew in 1967 until 1976 the “fire going” crew size was 25 people with a five person “stay home squad and squad boss” remaining behind when the crew went off-forest. In 1977, hiring was reduced to 25 people with 25 still going to fires. Then in 1978, they followed the national standard reducing fire crew size and hiring to 20 people to accommodate the various aircraft sizes at the time. Until 1981 no side burns, long hair or facial hair was allowed. The Sawtooth Hotshots maintained a close parallel to military discipline. 1979 brought women to work on the crew for the first time. The crew used a bus until the mid-80’s at which time they went to vans. A change to the standard, widely used, crew carriers came in 1988. The crew Foreman title was changed in 1987 to Superintendent along with the Interregional Hotshot Crew (IR) designation changing to Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC).

The crew logo was developed in 1979 by Doug Borah who used the mountain symbol from the “Scenic Sawtooth” signs. The crew color was heather blue until 1990 when it was changed to navy blue. The crew logo was redesigned in 1991 using the mountain scene from the 1979 logo, the navy blue border was used from the crew’s color and the inner orange circle is representative of a smoke filled sun-scape.

In 1996, three permanent squad leader positions were established bringing the number of appointed positions within the crew to five, providing the operational and administrative consistency that characterizes “professional” organizations. Beginning in 1991, the crew

began to emphasize physical fitness with new vigor. Fitness testing and daily P.T. that included running, hiking, calisthenics and weight training became the standard.

According to testing records, each following season was met with a better conditioned crew. In 1996 the crew began advertising rigid fitness expectations, and for the 1997 season instituted rigorous first day fitness assessments that demanded a high level of conditioning prior to crew employment. Gone were the days of running in boots, but the same drive for conditioning and fitness that was part of the crew's early history returned with zeal. The crew returned to Big Smoky in 1999. Eight consecutive days of pre-season preparedness training took place at the old base. Without distractions, interruptions or concern for time constraints, this fresh approach to readiness training helped develop a focused and disciplined team, better prepared for assignment earlier in the field season than in previous years.

1999 also marked the first year since the three permanent squad leader positions were established in 1996 that all five supervisory positions were staffed with career appointed employees hired for those specific jobs. The consistency and integrity of the command structure was apparent.

Partially due to the busy 2000 fire season, the National Fire Plan provided increased opportunities to create professions out of being a Sawtooth Hotshot. From 2000-2012, The permanent overhead structure developed into three Senior Firefighter GS 4/5 and three Squadleader GS 6/7, both PSE 13/13's, one PFT GS 7/8 Assistant Superintendent and the Superintendent GS 9. Other changes to the organization were the acquisition through rental of a separate warehouse (aka "The Pain Cave") in 2002, to provide needed space for the crew to work out of. A new vehicle configuration arrived in 2004 that consisted of three squad carrier vehicles allowing self-containment of all personal and gear for the Squad. These vehicles were practical in design but proved flawed in construction and were plagued with breakdowns. Many minivans, Quad Cab pickups, and Suburban rentals later, a new nationally standardized 10-person Crew Carrier vehicle arrived in 2012.

### **Crew Supervision:**

Bob Berg: 1967

Bill Williams: 1968-1973

Randy Doman: 1974-1977

Joe Bongiovi: 1978 (1/2 year)

Randy Doman: 1978 (1/2 year) - 1980

Cole Johnson: 1981-1989

Mark Barbo: 1990 (detail)

Andy Lang: 1991-1995

Dennis Pratt: 1996-2000

Tom Bates: 2001- 2006

Heath Cota: 2007- 2011

Mike Krupski: 2012-Present



## **SNAKE RIVER IHC CREW HISTORY Established 2001**

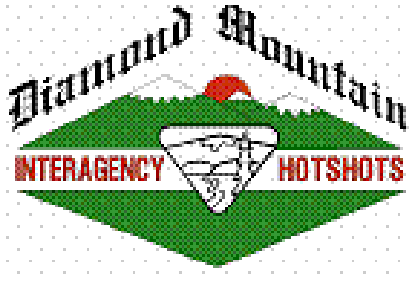
In 2000 the BLM made the decision to add four hotshot crews. The Upper Snake River District (now Idaho Falls District) was chosen to host one of these crews in Pocatello, Idaho. Randy Anderson was hired in March 2001 as the superintendent and in approximately 2 months the crew was hired, equipment purchased, vehicles scrounged and we were up and running. The crew maintained trainee status for the entire 2001 season and received hotshot certification in 2002. The crew has a great mutual relationship with the BLM of Idaho and the Idaho Falls District in regards to fuels projects and providing experienced personnel in leadership roles. Kenney Bochniak, an original crewmember from 2001, is the crew foreman. Logan Blankenship, Paul Davis and Adam Benkula are the current squad leaders. We are expecting to be in a permanent operations building at the start of the 2014 fire season.

Superintendent:  
Randy Anderson 2001-Present



# North Ops





## Diamond Mountain Hotshots

Agency: USDI Bureau of Land Mgmt  
Home Unit: Susanville, California

### Contact Information:

Superintendent: Dan Varney  
Diamond Mountain Hotshots  
2950 Riverside Drive  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 257-7601

**Established 1992**

## *Crew History*

The Diamond Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew were born in the spring 1992 under the guise of increasing the Bureau of Land Management's commitment to contribute resources to the national fire suppression. The crew was the second BLM hotshot crew in California and the fifth crew in the nation. The Diamond Mountain Range west of Susanville, CA lends to its name to the crew as its rocky crest provide a constant visual reminder and keeps a watchful eye upon the high desert.

The original 1992 crew spawned from Crew 3221, the Initial Attack Dawgs, a 10-person initial attack crew that worked in and around Susanville in 1990 and 1991. Mike Minton was offered a JATC position in the spring of 1992 and became the first official of the "soon to be" hotshot crew. Minton was joined by an unlikely cast of characters for the 1992 season including Mike Bowles, who was hired as the first superintendent, and Kevin Chambers who was selected as the foreman. The 1992 crew was supervised by the Northern California Regional Fire Staff in Susanville. The 1992 crew season saw many growing pains as the aspired to become a well respected crew in a region well-known for its hotshot crews. The crew responded to twenty incidents in a busy '92 fire season including the 68,000 acre Fountain Fire in Shasta County. Extra curricular events during the Cleveland Fire in late September led to a change in supervision for the crew for the 1993 season

Kurt LaRue was hired as new Superintendent in the fall of 1992 and reported soon thereafter, with supervision of the crew being shifted to the present-day Eagle Lake Field Office in Susanville. Kurt brought many years of experience to his new crew after a long stint on the Stanislaus Hotshots and others. Kurt retained Chambers as foremen and added Ken Henson as a second. A new image was forged along with many new faces for the 1993 season, many of whom became mainstays within the crew and contributed much to the present day success and reputation of the crew including Keith Barker, Robert Holt, and Edward Merrill. 1993 also saw rise to 'MO', the PT hill still utilized by the crew to this day. The crew completed a successful 1993 fire season and built a formable foundation by which to continue into the future. Twenty years later, the crew continues to deliver a quality product and achieve success following the ideals and beliefs of our earlier years.

The first crew logo was designed by Minton, and like much of the 1992 crew only lasted one season. A new logo and a new crew color were ready for the 1993 season, but failed to meet the approval of the new superintendent. 1994 finally saw a logo very much similar to the logo of today. Minton was again responsible for this logo and it was printed upon dark charcoal shirts

which also remain in 2007. The logo was modified in 1995 with the adding of the “old English” script. The last modification to the Diamond Mountain logo was made in 1999 by adding “Malum Necessarium”.

The original crew utilized a make shift station in the BLM yard until they finally found a home in 1995 and moved into the old Caltrans building on Main Street in Susanville. It was a suitable facility and the crew called it home until 2003 when Caltrans decided to put the building up for sale , thus ending one of the greatest lease deals in history at \$200.00 a month. After a tiresome search, Superintendent Merrill finally secured a new home south of Susanville near the airport in the Turner Complex. The new facility offered a few upgrades with indoor plumbing and heating and actual office space. 2004 again saw the crew move supervision, moving back to working under the fire staff of NORCAL BLM. The crew moved to their new and current home, the Hidden Valley Fire Facility, lying within the shadow of ‘MO’, in August 2009.

Crew transportation was originally compromised of a mismatched fleet of GSA vehicles that finally left for good in 1995 season. Borrowed, green, Forest Service crew hauls found their way to Susanville from the Tahoe and Stanislaus for the 1994 season. The crew quietly converted them to BLM vehicles by applying our trademark, magnetic logo to the doors. The crew took delivery of their new yellow crew hauls in 1996 and continually modified them until they were replaced in 2003 by shiny new buggies. The old buggies were unique with their ergonomically designed windows, rear suicide door, and cleverly mounted exhaust. The exhaust won acclaim from the ground support personnel across the west as the crew attempted to demob incidents.

### **Crew Superintendents**

**1992: Mike Bowles**

**1993 - 2001: Kurt LaRue**

**2001 - 2005: Ed Merrill**

**2006 – 2008: Steve Shaw**

**2009 – Present: Dan Varney**



## **Eldorado Hotshots**

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service

**Home Unit:** Eldorado National Forest  
Placerville Ranger District

### **Contact Information:**

**Superintendent: Will Harris**

**Eldorado Hotshots**

**4260 Eight Mile Road**

**Camino, CA 95709**

**530-644-3588**

**Established 1981**

## *Crew History*

On May 19, 1981, Lynn Biddison, director of Aviation and Fire Management initiated the Eldorado Hotshots. Up until 1976, all four districts on the Eldorado National Forest maintained a ten-person fire suppression crew. In 1977 the Amador District gave up their crew, which in turn was absorbed by the Placerville District. The two hand crews were combined to form a single 20-person crew. They shared common transportation and days off. The crew was known as the Sly Park Fire Suppression Crew. During the winter of 1980, the Eldorado National Forest proposed to Region Five to change this crew into a Type 1-fire crew; on May 19, 1981, the crew became the Eldorado Hotshot Crew, to be stationed at Sly Park on the Placerville Ranger District. The Hotshots designed and constructed their own facility, including men's and women's barracks, laundry facility, office and workshop.

The first Superintendent was Milt Clark. He was detailed into the position during this first fire season. During the fall of 1981, the Palomar Hotshots became victim to a reduction in the workforce. Their displaced Superintendent, Barry Callenberger, found a home on the Eldorado Hotshots for the 1982 fire season and stayed with the crew until 1988.

In the winter of 1989, Greg Keller, who had been the foreman from 1981 to 1988, became the next Superintendent. He held the position until 1995, when he decided to move on to greener pastures in Idaho as a Battalion Chief.

The winter of 1995 brought on a change of leadership as Mike Beckett became Superintendent. After details in the 2009 and 2010 fire season as Division Chief, Mike officially became the South Division Chief of the Eldorado National Forest in July 2010.

In the winter of 2010, Will Harris, who had been Captain from 2004 to 2010, accepted the Superintendent job in November. Will had previously detailed into the Superintendent position during the 2009 and 2010 fire seasons.

### **Crew Superintendents:**

Milt Clark, 1981

Barry Callenberger, 1982 -1988

Greg Keller, 1989 -1995

Mike Beckett, 1996 – 2010

Will Harris, 2010 – Present

### **Crew Captains:**

Milt Clark, 1982

Greg Keller, 1981 – 1988

Paul Musser, 1983 – 1989

Berni Bahro, 1989 – 1983

Lisa Fisher, 1991 – 1996

Jeff Robison, 1996

John Colby, 1996 – 1999

Mike Cherry, 1996 – 2001

Mike Sandoval, 2001 – 2006

Will Harris, 2004 – 2010

Aaron Humphrey, 2007 – Present

Nick Matheson, 2010 – Present

# Feather River Hotshots History

## 2003-Present



The Feather River hotshots were established April, 2003. In 2001 the Plumas National Forest got the funding for two additional twenty person Type 1 Crews, and seeing the need for a Type 1 crew on the west side of the forest the decision was made to place one of these crews on the Feather River Ranger District. The year prior the funding was for a 10 person fire crew this crew was called Crew 3 and was put into service May of 2001 but due to overhead turnover this crew was disbanded.

The Feather River Hotshots operated as a Type 2 Handcrew for the first two years until August, 2005 when they officially got there Hotshot status. The Hotshot Certification team consisted of: Deputy Fire Chief and Team leader-Don Will from the Tahoe National Forest, Division Chief Scott Brockman from the Mendocino National forest, and Division Chief Mike Cherry from the Tahoe National Forest. Upon Completion of the Certification Don Will presented the crew with a railroad spike he removed from a tree during the field portion of the certification. He presented this spike to the crew to represent the old saying "Driving the Spike". After this we implemented the Spike in our crew emblem to remind us to "always drive the Spike". Our Crew Emblem also represents the Feather River which our district is named after.

The first 3 years the Crew transportation consisted of 3 six pack pick-up trucks and one holdover ½ ton pick-up truck as a supt. Rig. During this period there was sufficient funding for supplies but new buggies and superintendent rig were ordered late so these were still a year or two out. Management on the district played a critical role in keeping the crew when there was talk about two 10-persen crews on the forest in lieu of.

### **Crew Superintendents:**

Robert Daniels 2003-Present

### **Crew Captains:**

Mark Davis 2003-Present

Ray Torres 2005-2008

James Maynard 2009-Present



The Klamath Hotshots were established in 2001 as part of the National Fire Plan in response to the devastating fires of 2000. The maximum efficiency level for the Klamath National Forest called for the addition of an Interagency Hotshot Crew and the Oak Knoll Work Center was selected as the host site.

Johnny Clem was selected as the superintendent of the Klamath IHC, and was able to gain certification as an IHC in August of the crew's first year.

Transportation for the crew was originally "six packs" provided by the forest. Mid-way through the first year the crew took delivery of two new International crew hauls. Those buggies turned over 100,000 miles while travelling on I-5 over the Grapevine while returning from the Harris and Poomacha fires in the fall of 2007. 2010 saw delivery of two new crew hauls, as well as a new superintendent vehicle.

In 2003 the crew was able to complete the construction of two new bunkhouses with rooms for up to 18 personnel. In 2009 the overhead moved out of the barn, which had served as the crew's office since its inception and into a modular office space with room for training. Until this time all classes facilitated by the crew were held in the local Klamath River Community Hall.

For physical training the crew can often be found hiking its PT hill behind the Oak Knoll Work Center. Red Line, the Repeater and The Wall are a few of the more memorable spots that can be found along the way. A few new hikes have been added since the crew's first year, but the original route up the hill is still in use to this day. A rustic weight lifting facility, pull-up bars and volleyball court are available to the crew for additional physical training.



Superintendent: Johnny Clem 2001- Present

Captains: Aaron Schuh 2009- Present

Devin Parks 2009- Present

Terry Lim 2010 (Detailed)

Victor Guitierrez 2008 (Detailed)

Brett Loomis 2007-2009

Devin Parks 2007 (Detailed)

Aaron Schuh 2005-2007

Scott English 2001-2004

Asad Rahman 2001-2008



## Lassen Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service

**Home Unit:** Lassen National Forest, Eagle Lake RD

### Contact Information:

**Superintendent: Fred Bruster**

**Lassen Hotshots**

**477-050 Eagle Lake Rd.**

**Susanville, CA 96130**

**530.257.4188**

## *Crew History*

### **Established 1974**

The Lassen Hotshots were formed in the summer of 1974. The crew was placed at Bogard Work Center on the Eagle Lake Ranger District of the Lassen National Forest. Don Wallace was named the first superintendent of the Lassen Hotshots. Don ran the crew until 1977, at which time Joe Carvello took over. Due to a budget crisis in 1978, the crew, along with numerous others, was shut down. This was known as "Black Friday" in the hotshot world. Due to a very active fire season in 1979, and the lack of appropriate resources to deal with the many fires, the decision was made to bring back several of the disbanded crews.

So in April of 1980, the Lassen Hotshots came back to life under the leadership of Jim "Jaime" Jimenez. Lassen was one of the first crews to travel to Alaska in the 1980's, and along with the El Dorado Hotshots, the first to fight fire internationally in Canada. Also, Lassen has hosted numerous international firefighters from Chile, India and Australia.

For twenty-two years Jaime served as the Lassen Hotshot Superintendent, training captains, squad leaders, and countless crewmembers. Many of these hotshots returned to honor Jaime in the spring of 2003, along with friends, family and several other hotshot superintendents for his retirement party. Throughout his long and prolific career Jaime exemplified the hotshot work ethic of never quitting, always challenging himself and those around him, and by putting honesty, duty and integrity above all else.

In that tradition, John Bristow was chosen as the next superintendent prior to the 2003 fire season.

The Lassen Hotshots are proud to be a part of the California Hotshot community. We continually strive for excellence and to uphold our interagency hotshot crew values.

This year we will be celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lassen Hotshots.

### **Superintendents**

**Don Wallace –1974 to 1977**

**Joe Carvello – 1977 to 1978**

**Jim Jimenez – 1980 to 2002 (retired in place)**

**Stan Kubota – 1997 (detailed)**

**John Bristow – 2003 to 2006**

**Mike Sherman – 2007 (detailed)**

**Allan Schultze – 2008 (acting)**

**Fred Bruster – 2009 to Present**

### **Captains**

**Former crew captains include: Joe Carvello, Scott Vail, Rick Addy, Rod Vineyard, Tommy Tucker, Dave Sandbrook, Bob Edwards, George Schwerian, Rocky Tow, Larry Vogan, Dave Ramirez, Kelley Jones, Bob Richardson, Paul Johnson and John Bristow, Rob Moreno, Mike Sherman, Allan Schultze, Mike Klimek.**

## Mendocino Hotshots



**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Grindstone Ranger District

### **Contact Information:**

**Mendocino Hotshots**  
**PO Box 160**  
**Stonyford CA 95979**  
**Superintendent: Jon Tishner**  
**Foremen: Jeremy Kroeker**  
**Squad Bosses: Ernie Ceccon & Nick Bunch**  
**530-963-1316**

## *Crew History*

### **Established 1974**

Like several other IHC's the Mendocino Hotshots were established in 1974 under the direction of Superintendent Bob Moore. During the first year the crew was split into two locations on the same district. Ten people were located in Alder Springs and ten were located approximately forty miles away, in Stonyford, due to facility constraints. In 1975 all members were brought together and placed in Alder Springs, where they remained through the 1986 season.

During the twelve years at Alder Springs the crew had two other men lead them. In 1978 Rusty Witwer took over as Superintendent for the 1978-79 seasons until he left to become the Hobart Hotshot Superintendent. During the remaining six seasons of the Alder Springs era the crew was led by Superintendent Jerry Barney (1980-1986).

In 1987 the crew was moved back to the base of the Coast Range in Stonyford, California. With the change in locations came a change in Superintendents. Larry Edwards was hired as Superintendent and remained in that position for the 1987 and part of the 1988 season.

Don Will took over as Superintendent during the 1988 season. Don took the crew through the remainder of its first 20 years. Don was the Superintendent for a total of six seasons and left the crew after the 1994 season.

Bill Pierce was hired as the Superintendent in 1995. With this change in Superintendents came changes in the crew logo and crew colors. The Mendocino color went from blue to black in 1996. Bill remained superintendent thru the 2000 fire season.

In 2001, due to lack of qualified supervision, the hotshot crew status was temporarily removed. Rich Rushforth was then detailed into the Superintendent position to keep the crew on and fighting fire. The traditional Mendocino Hotshot logo and colors of Navy blue were then brought back and it remains that way today.

Daren Dalrymple was hired as the Superintendent in October of 2001. Additional qualified, permanent overhead was hired before the 2002 season and the Interagency Hotshot crew status was regained with a lot of hard work and pride during the 2002 fire season.

## **CREW SUPERINTENDENTS**

**Bob Moore 1974-1977**

**Rusty Witwer 1978-1978**

**Jerry Barney 1980-1986**

**Larry Edwards 1987-1988**

**Don Will 1988-1994**

**Bill Pierce 1995-2000**

**Daren Dalrymple 2001-2006**

**Jon Tishner 2007- Present**



## Modoc Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Modoc NF, Devil's Garden RD

### Contact Information:

**Superintendent: Willie Almand**  
**Modoc Hotshots**  
**Canby Work Center**  
**22529 Hwy 299**  
**Canby, CA 96015**  
**530-233-7954 (Office)**  
**530-233-2844 (FAX)**  
**Captain: Jesse Plummer -- 530-233-7952**  
**Captain Josh Osteen -- 530-233-7951**

## *Crew History*

### **Established 2001**

The Modoc Interagency Hotshot Crew came into existence after the conclusion of the 2000 fire season. At that time, it was decided by wildland fire managers and the United States Congress to fund national suppression efforts at the "Most Efficient Level" or MEL.

In 2001 the Modoc Interagency Hotshot Crew started operations on the Modoc National Forest, working out of the old Canby Ranger Station. The old Canby Ranger District has now been absorbed into the Devils Garden Ranger District. The crew has taken over the entire compound with adequate space for office facilities, barracks, warehouse, workshop, storage, training and a physical fitness workout room.

The crew works directly for the forest fire staff. Direct supervision comes from Forest Fire Management Officer, and second level supervision comes from Kimberly Anderson, Forest Supervisor.

The original crew structure consisted of John Ryan, Superintendent, Bob Beebe and Joe Johnston, Foreman. The crew was outfitted with the minimum compliment of tools, vehicles and equipment. The crew was assigned as a Type I (T) crew for the season, pending crew certification.

In 2002, Greg Keller was brought in as Superintendent to run the crew. The crew Foreman continued with Bob Beebe and Joe Johnston. The crew had a productive fire season and accomplished filling out the remaining task books required for certification. The one remaining item to be covered was individual training experience. The crew members were afforded priority status for training slots for the winter training session held at the Northern California Service Center in Redding, Ca.

All training and task book qualifications were complete and a certification review was requested for May of 2003. The crew certification took place on May 28 and 29. The certification team was

headed up by Safety First Officer, Joe Millar and consisted of Mike Beckett, Superintendent Eldorado Hotshots, and Dave Bostic, Division Chief Modoc N.F.

The crew was recognized as the Modoc Interagency Hotshot Crew on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2003.

The season of 2006 was the last year Greg Keller was the Superintendent of the crew, retiring from the Forest Service. In 2007 Bob Beebe was hired as the Superintendent for the crew. For the season of 2010 Terry Walters was placed in the position of Superintendent. The crew was unstaffed for the season of 2011. The crew was again staffed for the 2012 season with Willie Almand being hired as the Superintendent.

The crew logo, flying goose, is derived from the area's world famous water fowl hunting and nesting habitat.

The crew "phrase", *Pervado Tolerantia nos Benfacta* was derived from the south polar explorer, Sir Ernest Shackelton. His family coat of arms, declared "Through Endurance we Conquer". For our purposes, we changed it to "Through Endurance we Succeed or Benefit". The small world part of this business became apparent with this crew logo. While working on the Aspen Fire on the Coronado N.F. in Arizona, a safety officer asked what the phrase meant. After explaining the Sir Ernest Shackelton part, he stated that he had in fact heard of Shackelton, and that his son was dating Shackelton's great granddaughter.

The crew consists of 9 full time positions, one Superintendent, two Foreman, two squad leaders and four senior firefighters.



# PLUMAS INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREW

## HISTORY

### PLUMAS NATIONAL FOREST, REGION FIVE



The Plumas Hotshot Crew was formed in July of 1974. As the name implies the Plumas Hotshots are stationed on the Plumas National Forest in Region 5.

During the seasons of 1974 and 1975, the crew was split on two separate districts and pulled together as one unit upon request. These hosting districts were the Greenville and Quincy Districts.

Jim Hogg supervised the Quincy half of the crew with J.D. Killick as his assistant and Charlie Earhart (Acting Superintendent) supervised the Greenville half.

Near the end of that first 1974 season, Dan Swearingen was named the Hotshot Superintendent. Upon Dan's arrival Earhart stepped down and Swearingen was stationed at Greenville. Dan remained in the Superintendent position through the 1975 season.

In 1976, Jim Hogg was named the Superintendent with the entire crew bonding together at the Quincy work center location. Jim remained in this position for the 1976-1978 seasons. The 1978 season came to a quick end in late August as the Plumas Hotshots along with several other Hotshot crews lost their funding. The crew remained together for the remainder of the 1978 season but worked out of other function dollars. Jim is still active in the fire world as a Logistics Section Chief with a California Type 1 IMT.

In 1979 the Plumas Hotshots were non-existent, as the previous years peril of lack of dollars did not allow for the funding.

In 1980, Tom Hatcher was named Superintendent, with David Ross and Larry Vogan as his foremen, Tom held this position through 1987. In March of 1988 Tom was offered a promotion to a Fuels ADFMO position and left the crew. David Ross was detailed as Superintendent at this time until July of 1988. Tom is now an Assistant Director of Region 5 Fire and Aviation for Northern California.

In 1988 Kent Swartzlander was named Superintendent with David Ross as foreman and the other foreman was vacant. In 1989, Jonathan Lee filled the other vacant foreman position.

Kent was offered a Fuels position and left the Hotshots after the 1999 season. In 2000, Jack Sevelson was named Superintendent.

2001 saw more changes. Jon Lee moved to Cedar City, Utah as Superintendent of the new Dixie Hotshot Crew. Pete Duncan became a Captain in Jon's place. The permanent organization was further increased to include 2 GS-5 Senior Firefighters. Mike Sherman and Fred Brewster became the GS-6 Squad Leaders with Ryan Bauer serving as Senior Firefighter.

Organizational changes again occurred in 2002. Mike Sherman and Fred Brewster moved on to promotions on other modules. Ryan Bauer promoted to Squad Leader. Walt Eggers, a veteran of both the Klamath and Diamond Mountain Hotshots, filled the other Squad position. Donald DeVriendt joined the crew as a Senior Firefighter.

2003 began with more organizational changes as Dave Ross announced his retirement after 22-years as a Plumas Hotshot in a career started in 1972. Fred Brewster returned to the crew as the new Captain 13B. Pete Duncan promoted to a Fuels Battalion detail after many years with the crew and Mike Sherman detailed as Captain 13A. Walt Eggers returned to the Diamond Mountain Hotshots and was replaced by Brandon Hostetter as Squad Leader.

During 2004 Pete Duncan, who had returned for part of the season, was selected to permanently fill the District Fuels Battalion position. His many seasons of service to the crew drew to a close while on fire assignment in R-1 during August, his send off being when the Plumas and Tahoe IHCs had an impromptu spike out "Hotshot Olympics" (the cracker challenge, rapid mre, and 4-4-40). Following in Pete's footsteps for the remainder of the season was Ryan Bauer. FFT1 Don DeVriendt moved to the Monterey RD of the Los Padres to begin a handcrew Squadleader position.

The current organization of the Plumas Hotshots is:

- 1 – GS-9, PFT, Superintendent
- 2 – GS-8, PFT, Captains
- 2 – GS-6, 18/8, Squad Leaders
- 2 – GS-5, 13/13 Senior Firefighters
- 11 –Crewmembers

### **Hotshot Crew Superintendents**

Jim Hogg – Charlie Earhart 1974/1975

Dan Swearingen – 1974/1975

Jim Hogg – 1976 to 1978

Tom Hatcher – 1980 to 1987

David Ross – 1988, 1996

Kent Swartzlander – 1988 to 1999

Jack Sevelson – 2000 to Present

## **Captains**

J.D. Killick – 1976 to 1978

David Ross – 1980 to 2003

Larry Vogan – 1980 to 1986

Jon Lee – 1989 to 2001

Pete Duncan – 2001 to 2004

Fred Brewster – 2003 to present

## **Captain Detailers**

Steve Raymer – 1988

Steve Millert – 1988

Jack Sevelson – 1996

Mike Sherman – 2003

Ryan Bauer - 2004



**Redding Interagency Hotshot Crew  
Leadership Development Program**

6101 Airport Road  
Redding, CA 96002

Phone: (530) 226-2721 Fax: (530) 222-5460

[www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/hotshots/reddingshots/](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/hotshots/reddingshots/)

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## **Historical Information 1967-present**

The Redding Interagency Hotshot Crew was the first hotshot crew in the nation to offer a concentrated fire management training detail opportunity. By detailing potential fire management personnel to a crew of this nature at an early stage in their careers, they were able to gain a mass of experience and training that might take years to receive at their home unit.

The program was initially developed in 1967, and functioned as one of the Pacific Southwest Region's three Interregional Suppression Crews. It remained an interregional crew until 1980, when at that time the interregional concept was abolished nationwide and all category one crews were reclassified as "Interagency Hotshot Crews" (IHC). The crew's training and career development concept was much the same in 1967 as it is today, but through the years it was modified to its current concept and mission.

Throughout the four-year period from 1967-1971, the crew functioned as a detail training opportunity. The crew organization consisted of one permanent full-time GS 462-7 and 19 detailers, two being recruited primarily to function in the hotshot captain positions.

The primary target audiences at that time were Foresters in need of crew and large fire experience. The formalized training curriculum during that period offered the detailer a variety of fire suppression and fire management subjects geared towards preparing the individual at the Sector Boss level.

By 1971, the pool of available Foresters fell short of the desired level to justify the continuance of the program under its original concept. In 1972, the crew converted to the conventional hotshot crew concept. From 1972 to 1973, seasonal crewmembers were hired. Training was accomplished only to the extent to meet agency requirements for Category 1 Hotshot Crews. The crew performed conventional project work on the Shasta Trinity N.F. during the periods when not assigned fire duties.

Following the 1973 fire season, the detail concept was re-implemented in 1974. The original emphasis on Foresters as the primary target audience was relaxed and the Forestry Technician began to fill a large majority of the 17 allocated positions. During this new era the overhead structure consisted of a GS-462-7 Superintendent and 2 GS-462-6 Captains. Classroom and field training continued to emphasize a fire suppression curriculum but also included supervision subjects as well.



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During the winter of 1977, the Superintendent and one Captain position were reclassified as "Fire and Training Specialists". The reclassification increased the grade structure of the crew superintendent to a GS-462-9, and one Captain to a GS-462-7. The second Captain remained a GS-462-6.

Throughout the period from 1981 through 1986, foresters filled a small percentage of the crew positions. Local North Zone Fire Management Officers expressed the need to re-emphasize the participation of foresters who were interested in a career in fire management and who had demonstrated a potential to become future large fire managers.

Early in 1985, a steering committee was formed to assist the Redding Hotshot unit with modifying the program to include training in Timber Sale Planning, Prescribed Fire Management and Fire Prevention. In 1991, the curriculum was updated again to better meet the needs of fire managers and the incoming crewmembers. The adjustment in the academic curriculum deleted the training in Fire Prevention and Principles of Prescribed Fire Management. In their place Fuels Management and Ecosystem Planning, S-230 Crew Boss, S-234 Firing Boss and S-260 Fire Business Management were added.

In 1992, resulting from budget restrictions, the Redding crew was abolished. The crew returned in 1993, but without the training function. As in 1972-73, the crew functioned as a conventional hotshot crew for the Shasta Trinity National Forest, hiring a mix of career-conditional and temporary employees. In 1994, at the request of fire management in the region, the training program was reestablished, concentrating on Forestry Technicians in need of large crew and large fire experience.

In 1995, the overhead structure changed again to consists of one GS-462-9 Superintendent with two GS-462-7 Captains. In 1997, a national reclassification changed the grade structure of the crew Captains to GS-462-8. After the re-classification the overhead structure consisted of one GS-462-9 Superintendent, two GS-462-8 Captains, and two GS-462-6 Squad Leaders.

In 2003, the Region 5 (R5) Board of Directors (BOD) approved changing the Redding IHC training focus from Fire Program Management to Small-Unit Leadership Development. The program was developed by Robert Holt (former Redding IHC Superintendent), Patrick Lookabaugh (former Redding IHC Captain), Greg Power (former R5 Regional Training Officer), and Jim Cook (former National Training Projects



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Coordinator), and is based on successful military, corporate, and fire service leadership development models.

In 2006 the “detail” was dropped and the program became a “training opportunity”. Realizing that full time squad leaders were no longer essential during the fireline aspect of the training opportunity; the permanent squad leader positions were abolished. The overhead decided that the crewmembers would benefit more by working directly for the captains. The overhead structure now consists of one GS-462-9 Superintendent, two GS-462-8 Captains.

**Crew Superintendents**

Charlie Caldwell	1967-1986
Craig Lechleiter	1986-2002
Robert Holt	2002-2010
Dan Mallia	2010-present



## Tahoe Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Tahoe National Forest-  
Downieville Ranger District

**Contact Information:**

**Tahoe Hotshots**  
**15924 Hwy. 49**  
**Camptonville, CA. 95922**

**530-478-6253**  
**Superintendent: Eric Rice**

### *Crew History*

#### **Established 1961**

The Hobart Work Center, located outside of Truckee CA., was created in the 1930's as part of the CCC effort after the Great Depression. In 1961 the Hobart Mills inmate crew, CC-51, was established. Volunteers from the State Penal system took on wildland suppression duties under the supervision of US Forest Service firefighters.

After the inmate camp was disbanded in 1970, the project of organizing and assembling a fire crew to work out of Hobart Mills was tasked to Foreman Bob Riley in 1971. With cooperation from the BIA and the Truckee Ranger District of the Tahoe NF, a 32 man crew was assembled. The ranks were mostly comprised of Indian students from the Stewart Indian School in Stewart, NV. Alternately known as the Hobart Southwest Indian Conservation Camp, the Truckee Fire Crew, and the Hobart Crew, TNF engine foremen and Tank truck operators provided supervision and leadership during this time period.

The crew makeup of the early 1970's included over ten different Native American Tribes. Beyond adjusting to Forest Service policy and "white society", crewmen faced challenges presented by cultural differences and language barriers. From the beginning, the Hobart crews from the 1970's demonstrated their intentions with accomplishments and successes in the woods and on the fireline.

The crew acquired Hotshot status in 1973, becoming the second such recognized crew in North Zone. The Hobart Braves crew emblem was transformed to reflect the achievement. Designed by the Indian crews of the past, the Hobart shield remains unchanged to this day.

In 1981 Celia Howe broke the gender barrier, becoming Hobart's first female hotshot.

In the mid-1980's the logging industry was booming, creating an abundance of project work on the west side of the Forest. Tree planting, Slashing, and Burning funded the crew in between fire assignments. So after a couple years of travelling across the crest, Hobart pulled up stakes and moved camp and duty station to the Bullards' Bar Work Center on the Downieville Ranger District. This move occurred in 1984, but the crew was not renamed the Tahoe Hotshots until 1986.



Following the busy season of 1994, Superintendent Rusty Witwer traveled to Washington D.C. to receive the Group Honor Award for Excellence from Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, for outstanding heroic action and maintenance of safety standards.



The Tahoe Hotshots, wearing the crest and colors of our past, continue to bring a safe, skilled, and productive resource to the fireline or the project.

Crew foremen include: John King, 1971; Rusty Witwer, 1971, 1976-77; Bob Moore, 1972; Bob Jennings, 1973-75; Bruce Edmonson, 1973-75; Mike Abe, 1976-77; Steve Raymer, 1978-79; Vic Richards, 1978; Craig Workman, 1979-83; Don Will, 1980-84; Mike Campbell, 1984-93; Jim Wills, 1985-86; Rick Cowell, 1987-95; Pete Koerber, 1994-2000; Robert Bertolina, 1996-97; Richard Gonzalez, 1998; Todd White, 1999-2011; Bobby Hubby, 2001; Luis Gomez, 2002-Present, Brad Moschetti, 2011; Eric Rice, 2006-2012; Ernie Ceccon, 2013-present.

## **Crew Superintendents**

### **Hobart Inmate Crew**

Les Bagby, Lynn Orr, Chuck Welch, Orv Houghan 1961-1970

### **Hobart Crew**

Bob Riley 1971

Don Huber 1972

### **Hobart Hotshots**

John King 1973-1975

Kris Kristofers 1975-1976

Dave Fields 1977-1978

Rusty Witwer 1979-1985

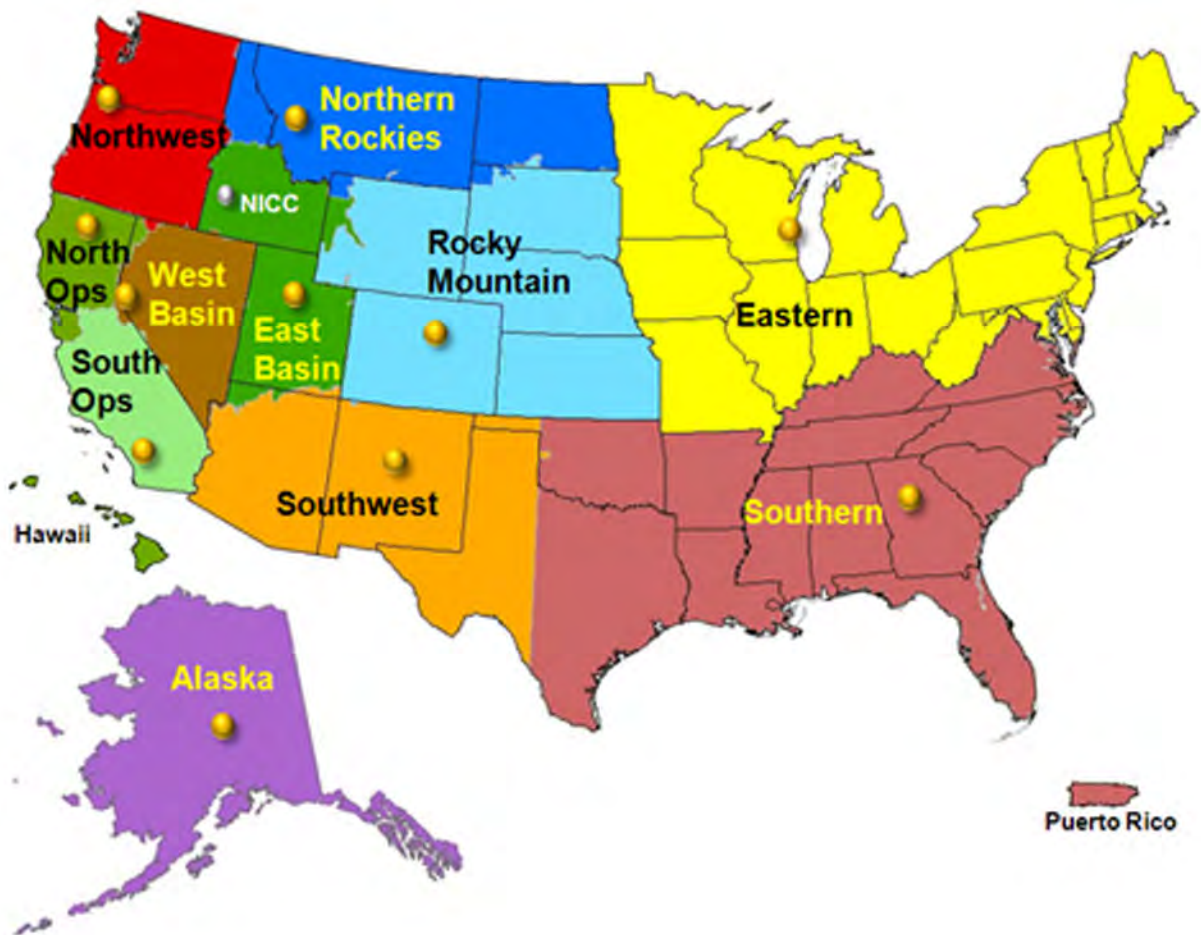
### **Tahoe Hotshots**

Rusty Witwer 1986-1995

Rick Cowell 1996 - December 28, 2012

Eric Rice 2013 - present

# Northern Rockies



## Chippewa - Cree Tribe Natural Resources / Forestry



### Bear Paw Fire Crew

Agency: United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Chippewa-Cree Tribe  
Home Unit: Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation

Established 2000  
[Crew History](#)

#### About the Bear Paw Fire Crew:

In 2000, the Chippewa-Cree Tribal Business Committee and Natural Resources Department drafted up a proposal for an Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew to be based out of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation. A formal written request was submitted to Mr. Tom Corbin, Regional Fire Management Officer, Bureau of Indian Affairs in Billings, Montana stating the intentions of the Chippewa-Cree Tribe to establish a Type 1 Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew here in Rocky Boy, Montana. The BIA-Billings Area Office expressed their support in starting a Hotshot program and helped give some direction on the next steps the Chippewa-Cree tribe needed to follow to accomplish the goal of establishing an Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew. The final action taken was to submit a formal request letter to Mr. Jim Stires, Director of the National Inter-Agency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, stating the intentions of the Chippewa-Cree Tribe of establishing a Type 1 Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew based out of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation.

The name of "Bear Paw" was chosen after the Bear Paw Mountains, in which the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation is located. Initially, the crew was dispatched as an elite Type II Initial Attack crew, and received their entire funding from the Chippewa-Cree Tribal Business Committee to keep the crew working together as required in the National Interagency Hotshot Standards Guide and to prove themselves capable of Type 1 status considerations from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Bear Paw personnel and the Chippewa-Cree tribe natural Resources department worked hard over the next several years to meet all the requirements of a Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew. In the spring of 2005, the hard work of all personnel involved was rewarded when the Bear Paw Fire Crew attained full certification as a Type 1 Inter-Agency Hotshot Crew and full funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The next two seasons, 2005 and 2006, the Bear Paw Hotshots experienced losses of key position personnel and a high turn-over of crew members. Losses of overhead and experienced crew members drew concerns from the Regional Fire Management Office about the program's integrity as an IHC, and placed under review for the 2007 fire season. The Bear Paw Hotshots were required to successfully complete a re-certification review prior to being available a Type 1 IHC, and to determine the future program's status.

### ***Crew Supervision:***

The first Superintendent for the Bear Paw IHC was Mike Lamere. He held the position from the initiation of the crew in 2000 until the Spring of 2006. John Gardipee was chosen as the Assistant Superintendent.

2006 Earl Old Chief took over as Superintendent in the late spring of, and held the position until November 2006. John Gardipee worked as the Assistant Superintendent. A two Captain system was implemented for the remainder of the 2006 season. John Gardipee and Lyman Wolf Chief, Jr. were the Captains; John "Sonny" Roasting Stick and Lenno Henderson, Sr. were the two Squad Leaders.

Wilbur Nagel became the Superintendent of the Bear Paw IHC in late December 2006 and is currently holding the position. The crew structure has reverted back to the traditional three squad configuration. Juan Gamble was selected as the new Assistant Superintendent in December of 2006.

*"The strength of the crew is in the individual, and the strength of the individual is in the crew"*

**-Bear Paw IHC Mission Statement**



*CHIEF MOUNTAIN HOTSHOTS*

AGENCY: BLACKFEET TRIBE  
BRANCH OF FORESTRY

HOME UNIT: BROWNING, MONTANA

ESTABLISHED: 1988  
CERTIFIED: 1990

The Chief Mountain Interagency Hotshot crew is based out of Browning, MT on the Blackfeet Reservation. The Chief Mountain crew name was acquired by Glen Still Smoking a former Superintendent. Glen came through the name (Chief Mountain) by a mountain located on the Blackfeet Reservation. Chief Mountain is sacred place for vision and spiritual healing. The Hotshot crew got its Logo from a Blackfeet artist Bob Tail feathers. Bob painted the mountain from the east side and gave it to the program this is how the name and Logo was established. The Blackfeet Tribe along with the Bureau of Indian Affairs sponsored the Chief Mountain Hotshot crew in 1989. The program started in 1986 on the Anderson Creek Complex in Idaho a Type II crew dispatched from the Blackfeet agency was working along with several Interagency Hotshot crews and were recognized for their hard work by Bob Wagonfer a Type 1 Incident Commander at the time. Mr. Wagonfer commended the crew on their performance and mentioned their might be an opening in Region 1 for a Hotshot crew. The Blackfeet Tribe approached the Agency about sponsoring a hotshot crew, so after having good performance ratings on several fires as a Type II Initial Attack crew. The Blackfeet agency took the necessary steps to get the crew recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Hotshot program and the Region 1 IHC program. Then in 1990 the crew was certified as a Region 1 Hotshot program. The program was supported by the Blackfeet Tribe and went through years of performing well, but did not receive any funding. Then in 1996 the crew received its first funding by the Department of Interior and the program was able to support it self more openly. The performance and demand for Chief Mountain skyrocketed to where the program was recognized by name. The Chief Mountain Hotshot program received an award for outstanding safety performance during the 1999 fire season for zero lost accidents and zero

reportable vehicle accidents by the US Forest Service and Northern Rockies Coordinating Group. The Chief Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew has been recognized by several film production companies and currently has 2 documentary films completed.

Past & Present Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents and Squad leaders

Superintendents:

Bruce McDonald	1988 -1990
Glen Still Smoking	1991 – 1992
John Murray	1993 – 1994
Tom Evans	1995 – 1996
Steve Murray	1997
Lyle St. Goddard	1998 – Present

Assistant Superintendents:

Glen Still Smoking	1988-1990
Steve Murray	1991 – 1995
Lyle St. Goddard	1996 – 1997
Carl Crawford	1998 – 2000
Eli Still Smoking	2001 - Present

Squad Bosses

Steve Murray	1988 - 1990
Gerald Trombley	1988 - 1994
Earl Old Chief	1991-1994/2001-2005
Matt Webber	1988 - 1992
Alan Vielle	1993 - Present
Lyle St. Goddard	1994 – 1996
Eli Still Smoking	1995 - 2000
Steve Bullshoe	1995 – 2000
Herman Burke	2001 – 2003
Clinton Dusty Bull	2004 – Present
John Grand Champ	2006
Jovon Fisher	2007

***“PRESERVING THE PAST WHILE BUILDING THE FUTURE”***



## Flathead Interagency Hotshot Crew

The Flathead Hotshots share their history with the old Nez Perce Hotshot Crew. In early 1962, Region One fire control staff decided another Inter-regional crew would be an asset to the region in addition to the Nine Mile Hotshot Crew on the Lolo. In May of 1962, the second crew was assigned to the Nez Perce National Forest and would be located at the old Adams Ranger Station on the Slate Creek Ranger District. This crew existed 4 years, but support from the forest became weak and the crew was moved by the regional fire staff from the Nez Perce to the Flathead for the 1966 season

When the crew came to the Flathead Forest in 1966 they were called the Flathead Inter-regional Fire Suppression Crew (as Region One designated the crews prior to 1981), the Glacier View Ranger District hosted the crew at what was then known as the Big Creek Ranger Station, 35 miles north of Kalispell. The Ranger Station was right on the North Fork of the Flathead River on a narrow gravel road, within a stones' throw of Glacier National Park, which was on the east side of the river. In 1982 the crew's duty station was changed to the district office in Columbia Falls, in 1994 the crew moved to the Hungry Horse Ranger District to become part of the Three Forks Zone where is today. This move allowed the crew to have a much larger cache facility with plenty of room for equipment, offices, and vehicle parking. Some government housing is available on a first-come first-serve basis.

### Flathead Hotshot Superintendents

Tyler J. Anderson (Farm)	2012-Present
Harvey Carr	2002-2011
Don Rees	1999-2001
Paul Linse	1994-1998
Hardy Bloemeke (detail)	1993
Paul Linse	1987-1992
Bruce McAtee	1977-87
Al Squires	1969-1976
Byron Sagunsky	1968
Fred Andres	1967
Bruce Pyles	1965-1966



# HELENA HOTSHOTS 1971 - 2009

## A Brief Crew History

2009 marks 38 years of existence of an organized fire suppression crew on the Helena NF.

Located on the Helena Ranger District, the Helena Hotshot crew had its beginnings in 1971, organized initially as a 10-person camp/slash crew under the supervision of Mike Collins; AD hires were used to bulk the crew numbers up to 20. By July of 1971 the crew was being dispatched as a suppression unit, with the crew arriving at the incident under the "IR" designation. This did not endear the Helena crew to the other legitimate IR crews and made for interesting chowtime conversation. Crew strength numbers fluctuated, but early crew composition included many Native Americans as well as Vietnam era veterans. Special mention needs to be made of Dale Jarrell's efforts to establish the Helena crew during these early years. The crew continued as a "quasi" Hotshot crew in 1973, responding to fires but not having regional recognition.

In 1974 the crew received a new crew boss Tom Patten, regional recognition and financing, and was the only Hotshot crew in Region 1 east of the continental divide, as well as the only Region 1 crew operating with out housing or barracks for crewmembers. Patten continued as "crew boss" through 1975, at which time Mike Peila took over the helm. During this time the crew performed notably on most major fires of the period including, Skinner Mill, Marble Cone and late season Region 9 fires.

The crew did not have "formal" recognition in 1979 due to fiscal constraints, but in 1980 the crew returned under the supervision of new crew foreman Larry Cole, who had been recruited from the NezPerce IR crew which was being shut-down due to restructuring of the region's IR crews. During Cole's tenure - 1980 through 1982 - the crew continued to respond to a number of fires within and out of region.

In 1983 Dave Larsen, who had previously worked on the hotshot crew with Larry Cole and Mike Peila, took over "Foreman" responsibilities. During Larsen's reign, 1983 through 1988, two significant personnel actions occurred. The first being the establishment of the GS-6 assistant foreman position in 1986, the first in the Region to do so, and secondly, in 1987, the reinstatement of WAE Status for the crew foreman. Gary Sullivan performed as acting Superintendent during the bulk of the 1988 season.

In 1989 Larry Edwards assumed the superintendent position. Under Edwards the crew changed with the

time transforming from an Inter-regional (IR) crew to an Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC). Larry brought a Region 5 influence to the organization, but opted for a three module configuration. His crews were always known for their hard work and their ability to get the job done. Larry dedicated 13 years to the program with his tenure ending after the 2001 fire season.

Additionally Kenny Spint dedicated 8 seasons to the crew from 1995-2002 as a squad boss and eventual Assistant Superintendent

Rocky Gilbert took over as the Superintendent in 2002. The Helena crew continues with an Assistant Superintendent and three modules with Ford F-550 mini-buggies having finally converted from Suburbans.

Although crew strength has fluctuated from between 10 and 22 members due to fiscal considerations diversity has been a mainstay of the crew since its inception. Early affiliations with local tribal organizations continue today, in addition women crewmembers have been a part of the Helena Hotshots since the mid 1970's and remain an important part of crew composition. The Helena still has no crew quarters and centers its operations out the "Shot House" a 1950's era Forest Service house and garage which serves as office, cache, and locker room space.

The "Helena" performs project work for all Helena N. F. Ranger Districts, the BLM, and adjoining forests. In addition to having responded to fires in all FS regions, the crew has provided its skills and expertise in emergency medical situations, search and rescue operations, law enforcement assistance, fire training, Hurricanes Hugo, Andrew and Georges, wilderness fire management and prescribed burning.

## CREW BOSS/SUPERINTENDENT

1971 - 1973	Mike Collins
1974 - 1975	Tom Patten
1976 - 1979	Mike Pelia
1980 - 1982	Larry Cole
1983 - 1988	Dave Larsen
1988	Gary Sullivan (acting)
1989-2001	Larry Edwards
2002-2005	Rocky Gilbert
2006-	Kenny Spint (detail)
2007- present	Fred Thompson



**OPERA NON VERBA**





## **IDAHO PANHANDLE INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREW HISTORY 1967-PRESENT**

Since 1962, four Type I hotshot crews have been established in northern Idaho. Today, the Idaho Panhandle Hotshot Crew, formerly the St. Joe Interagency Hotshot Crew (changed name in 2001 to better represent the whole forest), is the sole survivor. Dale Jarrell organized the crew in 1967 and served as crew boss until 1969. The crew is based at the Idaho Panhandle National Forest's Supervisor's Office in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. This forest is an administrative combination of the Kaniksu, Coeur d'Alene, and St. Joe National Forests.

For 30 years, the hotshot crew worked out of the Clarkia Work Center on the St. Joe Ranger District. In 1998, the crew moved to the Coeur d'Alene Ranger District in Coeur d'Alene. This move was in response to national agency direction to position the crew closer to high priority fuels and restoration work that was being done in the wildland/urban interface and within the Coeur d'Alene Basin.

The crew use to start critical training the first week of May. In 2002 we made the change to start the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April. This has given us many opportunities. We are now able to get our 80 hours of training out of the way and be able to help the forest with their spring burning program. We have also benefited by being able to participate in suppression efforts earlier in Region 3. Traditionally our season has ended around October 9<sup>th</sup>. But the crew is always prepared to run until the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October if there our incidents.

The Idaho Panhandle Hotshots have a rich history of safety. There has been no fatalities sense the crew existence or permanent disabilities that I have ever been made aware of. The crew currently has a streak of nine years with no lost time to personal injuries or chargeable vehicle accidents (not aware of what occurred prior to my tenure).

Memorable incidents that stick out as part of our history is the Earthquake Fire that we traveled to on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. When the rest of the world was mourning the loss of so many American lives we were chasing this

fire down on the Nez Pierce National Forest. Not even aware of the magnitude of the situation that had occurred but knowing in our hearts that we must stay focused and pull it together to accomplish our task. We got our butts kicked until about 2:00 a.m. when we finally were able to secure our line about 2 miles from where we originally anchored.

Hurricane Rita is another memorable incident that comes to mind. I still remember how eerie it was driving into St. Augustine, TX to be pre-positioned so we would be available to open emergency routes from the inside out. The night the hurricane hit I was second guessing my decision to preposition but we were able to make a huge difference and everything worked out well. There are many other stories where we have made a positive impact but that would become a book. The bottom line is that we are positively making a difference in the fire world and like I constantly remind my crew, "Everyday is a Holiday, and every meal is a banquet when you are an Idaho Panhandle Hotshot."

### History of Superintendents

Name	Years	Crew Name
Chris Smith	2009 - Present	Idaho Panhandle IHC
Terry Zufelt	2004 - 2008	Idaho Panhandle IHC
Louis Hartjes	2001 - 2003	Idaho Panhandle IHC
Rory Laws	2000 - 2000	St. Joe IHC
Lynn Bornitz	1999 - 2000	St. Joe IHC
B Hadley Hawkins	1999 - 1999	St. Joe IHC
Lynn Bornitz	1995 - 1998	St. Joe IHC
Jim O'Dell	1988 - 1994	St. Joe IHC
John Myhre	1980 - 1987	St. Joe IHC
Dean Berger	1976 - 1979	St. Joe IHC
Jim Preston	1975 - 1975	St. Joe IHC
Dennis Johnson	1972 - 1973	St. Joe IHC
Mike Cyrus	1970 - 1971	St. Joe IHC
Dale Jarrell	1967 - 1969	St. Joe IHC

The crew logos that are attached above have been on the back of our shirt for a long time. The history of the logo is uncertain. Many times during our travel we have been approached by the public sector requesting one of our shirts. After a brief explanation what it means to be an Interagency Hotshot Crew the answer is always the same: You must be a member to receive a shirt. The other logo is on the front of our shirt and has changed a few times. Until 2002 the logo included a tree with a lightning bolt hitting it. The picture above shows how it looks today.

## Lewis & Clark Hotshots... History 2001-Present



Original Logo

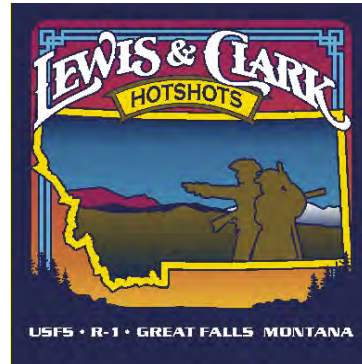
The Lewis & Clark Interagency Hotshot Crew has a rather short history; being one of several IHC's developed nationwide in 2001. After a regional decision was made to initiate an additional R1 IHC, the Lewis & Clark NF took the opportunity to host the L&C IHC. The name of the crew was acquire from the forest, seemingly fitting since central Montana provided the backdrop for pivotal events during the Lewis & Clark Corp of Discovery in the early 1800's.

The original logo seen above was a basic outline of Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and Sacagawea. In the winter of '05/06 the logo was upgraded to a more colorful version, and is the current logo of the crew.

Lewis & Clark IHC is based in Great Falls, Montana which is the second largest city in the state, with a population near 60,000 people. Situated in north central Montana with the Missouri River at their doorstep, the Highwood and Little Belt mountains a short drive to the east, and the Rocky Mountain Front looming immediately to the west, puts the L&C IHC in the heart of Montana.

In the inaugural year of 2001, Lewis & Clark IHC was housed and operated out of surplus housing on Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls. In the winter of 2001 a new facility adjacent to the LCF S.O. and Great Falls Fire Center was occupied, which included IHC cache, barracks, weight room, and office space.

From its conception the L&C IHC has operated as one of the nation's four training crews. Originally for the L&C IHC this meant having a compliment of 10-12 detailers, whereas currently



Current Logo

they operate with only 4-6 detailers. The remainder of the crew configurations consist of one PFT Superintendent, one PFT Foreman (from 2001-2004 the crew had operated with the two foreman system), three 13/13 Squad Bosses (one operating as a Saw Boss), four 13/13 Senior Firefighters, and 10-12 seasonal employees.

### Superintendents Past and Present

Chris Theisen	2001 - 2004
Mike Noel	2004 - 2010
Tyler J. Anderson (Farm)	2011 (detail)
Matt Holmstrom	2012 - Present



## **Lolo Interagency Hotshots Lolo National Forest Missoula, Montana**

### **Background Information**

The Lolo Hotshots have roots in the beginnings of modern-day fire suppression history. Although the crew was officially recognized as a national shared resource in 1961 as one of the original 9 Interregional crews, the crew originated from the Blister Rust control crews (BRC) who performed important forest health mitigation work in areas affected by Blister Rust infection. These crews were used for local fire suppression assistance and because of their experience, were often requested for fire assignments outside the region. In 1961, due to the nation-wide demand for the more experienced, mobile and organized suppression crews, the Forest Service created Interregional Fire Suppression Crews. Two of these crews were placed in Region 1 (Northern Rockies), one based on the Nez Perce National Forest at Slate Creek on the Salmon River (this crew no longer exists) and the other on the Lolo National Forest at Ninemile Ranger District, 30 miles west of Missoula, Montana.

From 1961-1970 the crew was based at the Ninemile Ranger District then was moved 40 miles west to the St.Regis Work Center in 1971 because the work center was not being used and could accommodate 25 people. This proved to be a logistical problem for the crew so they moved back to Ninemile where they were based through the 1981 season. In 1982 the crew's base of operations was moved to the Missoula Ranger District where it remains today.

### **Crew Composition**

Organization of the crew has changed significantly since 1961. In the early years (1961-1974) the crew was composed of 1 Foreman, 3 Squad leaders, a Cook and 20 Crewmembers. The Foreman (now Superintendent) was the only career appointed position on the crew. In 2004, the Superintendent and Assistant are permanent full-time employees, with 3 Squad Leaders, 6 Senior Firefighters and 2 Apprentices employed under 13/13 career appointments. In 2011, the Superintendent and 2 Assistant Superintendents are permanent full-time employees, with 2 Squad Leaders and 4 Senior Firefighters employed under 13/13 career appointments. The remaining 10-11 are employed as temporaries.

In 1974 the number of individuals assigned to the crew dropped from 25 to 20 due to aircraft configuration and changes in flight weight limitations.

## **Significant Events**

1980- The first woman was hired on the crew.

1989- Margaret Doherty became the first female Hotshot Crew Superintendent in the nation.

1990- ESPN documentary program "America's Wilderness" profiles crew during pre-season training and while on fire assignment. The hour-long production was broadcast worldwide on several occasions. The documentary included interviews with several crewmembers and footage of fireline operations. It gave a sense of what life on a hotshot crew is like and conveyed the diversity of both the people and the work the crew performs.

1994- Marshall Brown\* detailed as Superintendent vice Karkanen detailed to Ninemile District Fire Management Officer (6/94-2/95).

1998- CBS News 48 Hours profiles crew during Hopper Fire in Southern California and conducts follow-up interviews. Broadcast in October 1998 (received their lowest ratings ever).

2001- Holly Maloney\* detailed as Superintendent vice Karkanen detailed into Forest Deputy Fire Staff (6/00-11/00).

2011- Steve Karkanen retired in May as the longest running Lolo IHC Superintendent.

## **Crew Leadership**

1961 - Ron Stoleson

1962 - Lyle Brown

1963 – Jay Penney

1964 - 1973 – George Bissonette

1974 – Neil Ramberg

1975 – Neil Ramberg/Kevin Brown

1976 - 1981 – Mike Cyrus

1982 – Jerry Benson

1983 - 1984 Don Feser

1985 – Roger Christopher

1986 – Don Feser

1987 – Steve Betlach

1988 – Greg Power

1989 – Margaret Doherty

1990 – 2010 Steve Karkanen

2011 – Present Tim LaRoche

# Northwest





Baker River Interagency Hotshot Crew



# Entiat Interagency Hotshot Crew History



## Crew History

The Entiat IHC began in the 1963 as a local fire suppression crew consisting of 25

members who called themselves the Bushmen. In 1966, the Bushmen became one of the first inter-regional crews (IR) in Region 6. Over the years, the Bushmen became famous amongst the fire community for being tough, hard working firefighters whose specialties were line construction and vulgarity. Even today, the old fire dogs tell tales of the Bushmen.

With the taming of the Forest Service came the change in the Bushmen name to the Entiat IHC in 1983. Since that time, the Entiat IHC has been building a reputation of safe, aggressive firefighting. That reputation is constructed on a foundation of hard working, clear thinking crewmembers led by dedicated, experienced supervisors. The Entiat IHC consistently receives outstanding performance evaluations and enjoys a high level of respect in any fire organization.

The headquarters of the Bushmen and the Entiat IHC were originally located at a former fruit packing warehouse in the Entiat Valley. In 1983, the crew was relocated to the Steliko Workcenter on Forest Service property. Finally, in 2001, the crew move its headquarters to a new facility in Entiat near the Entiat Ranger Station.

Before reaching IR status, the first crew foreman in 1963 was Doug Bowie. His crew of 15 men was a local fire suppression resource located in the Entiat Valley. They spent most of their time fighting fire and working on projects on the district. Doug eventually became dispatch center manager for the Wenatchee dispatch.

When the crew reached IR status in 1966, Chuck Wolf was the foreman that led them there. Chuck's strong leadership style served the crew well in the first few years as they began to build their reputation throughout the west. Later, Chuck became the FMO of the Entiat Ranger District and was able to keep a watchful eye on the crew he had helped to build.



## Historical Background

### Crew Superintendents

Name	Years
Charles Wolf	1966-1967
Ed Harlan	1968
Joe Marchbanks	1969
Vern Gray	1970-1971
Lester Domingos	1972-1973
Dave Spies	1974
Mike Cammack	1975
George Marcott	1976-1979
Lonnie Williams	1980-1985
Tar Lesmeister	1986
Matt Dahlgreen	1987
Tom Fogata	1988-1991
Gabe Jasso	1992-1993
Russ Truman	1994
Gabe Jasso	1995-1997
Marshall Brown	1998-2006
Kyle Cannon	2007
Jeff Dimke	2008- Present

In 1976, a former smokejumper named George Marcott took over as superintendent of the Bushmen. With George at the helm, the crew could be often seen doing hard physical training in preparation for fire assignments. Numerous stories are still told about the tough assignments tackled by the Bushmen. George went on to become an FMO on the Wenatchee National Forest.

In 1980, Lonnie Williams became super intendent of the Bushmen. Lonnie's extensive fire knowledge and unique style of vulgarity became well known in the fire world. Lonnie took over as superintendent of the Winema Hotshots after leaving the crew and eventually became an FMO on the Malheur National Forest.

In 1988, a Region 5 firefighter named Tom Fogata assumed command of the Entiat IHC. Tom was a strong leader with a equally strong sense of fun. Under Tom's direction, the crew continued with a strong tradition of working hard as well as playing hard. Tom went on to become and AFMO on the Stanislaus National Forest.



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In 1991, after working on the Prineville IHC, Gabe Jasso took over as superintendent. Gabe's tenure as superintendent marked the increase in the utilization of IHCS including increasing length of the fire seasons as well as increase in the number of days on assignments.

In 1998, Marshall Brown became superintendent of the Entiat IHC. As the longest running superintendent in Entiat IHC history, Marshall increased the number of days the crew was assembled which resulted in longer fire seasons, even more days on fires, as well as more overtime. Marshall also was crucial in facilities and equipment improvements that were much needed for the crew. Marshall was active in the National Steering Committee and assisted in furthering the cause of the IHCs on a national level.

Many former superintendents and crewmembers have gone on to become leaders in the fire suppression, aviation, and fuels community. Many of them attribute part of their career successes to their time on the Bushmen and the Entiat IHC.

## **Additional Information**

For additional information contact the Entiat Hotshot Superintendent at the address below:

Entiat Hotshots  
Attn: Superintendent  
Entiat Ranger Station  
PO Box 476  
Entiat, WA 98822  
or phone  
(509) 784-1016

# La Grande Interagency Hotshot Crew

At a small guard station, in 1967, the start of a great crew was witnessed. The Wallowa-Whitman Inter Regional Crew was developed. It was a fairly new idea to put 25 men together for a complete summer and ship them around the country as a highly organized crew. From this humble beginning the La Grande Interagency Hotshot Crew will be born.

The first superintendent to lead these men into battle was Rayford Gillory. Mr Gillory led the crew for the first six years. The very first fire the crew was engaged in was in a very unusual spot. This spot was in the wettest place in the lower 48, Olympic National Park. The fire there was called the North Sam Fire.

In 1973 the crew was moved to La Grande Air Center. Mr. Tom Turner took over as Superintendent for the next four years. During the seventies there was a lot of mixing with the smokejumpers, from the La Grande Smokejumper Base (now defunct). Since the IR crew and the smokejumpers shared the same base there was a lot of movement between them.

When John Pino took over in 1977, he did something unusual. He hired the first women on the IR crew. Since that time La Grande Hotshots have had a long history of women on the crew. Some of the years the crew has had up to six females.

The inter-regional crew was divided up in 1980 to form La Grande IHC and Union IHC. Overhead off the IR crew was divided up with John Allendorf leading the La Grande Hotshots.

With the base firmly located at the La Grande Tanker Base, Steve Morefield led the crew for the majority of the eighties and Jay Rasmussen took the crew in the early nineties till 1999.

Since 1999 the fire seasons have become more intense with the crew seeing on a average 100 days out. John Gale (2000-2002) and Willy Crippen (2003- present) have led the crew safely and maintained the hardworking ethic the crew has been known for since 1967.

---

Written by: Brian Bush, Foreman, 2003-present

**Superintendents**

1967-1972 Rayford Gillory

1973-1976 Thomas Turner

1977-1978 John Pino

1979-1980 John Allendorf

1981 Randy Knight

1983-1989 Steve Morefield

1990 Steve Dickinson

1991- 1999 Jay Rasmussen

2000-2002 John Gale

2003-2008 Willy Crippen

2008-Present Brian Bush

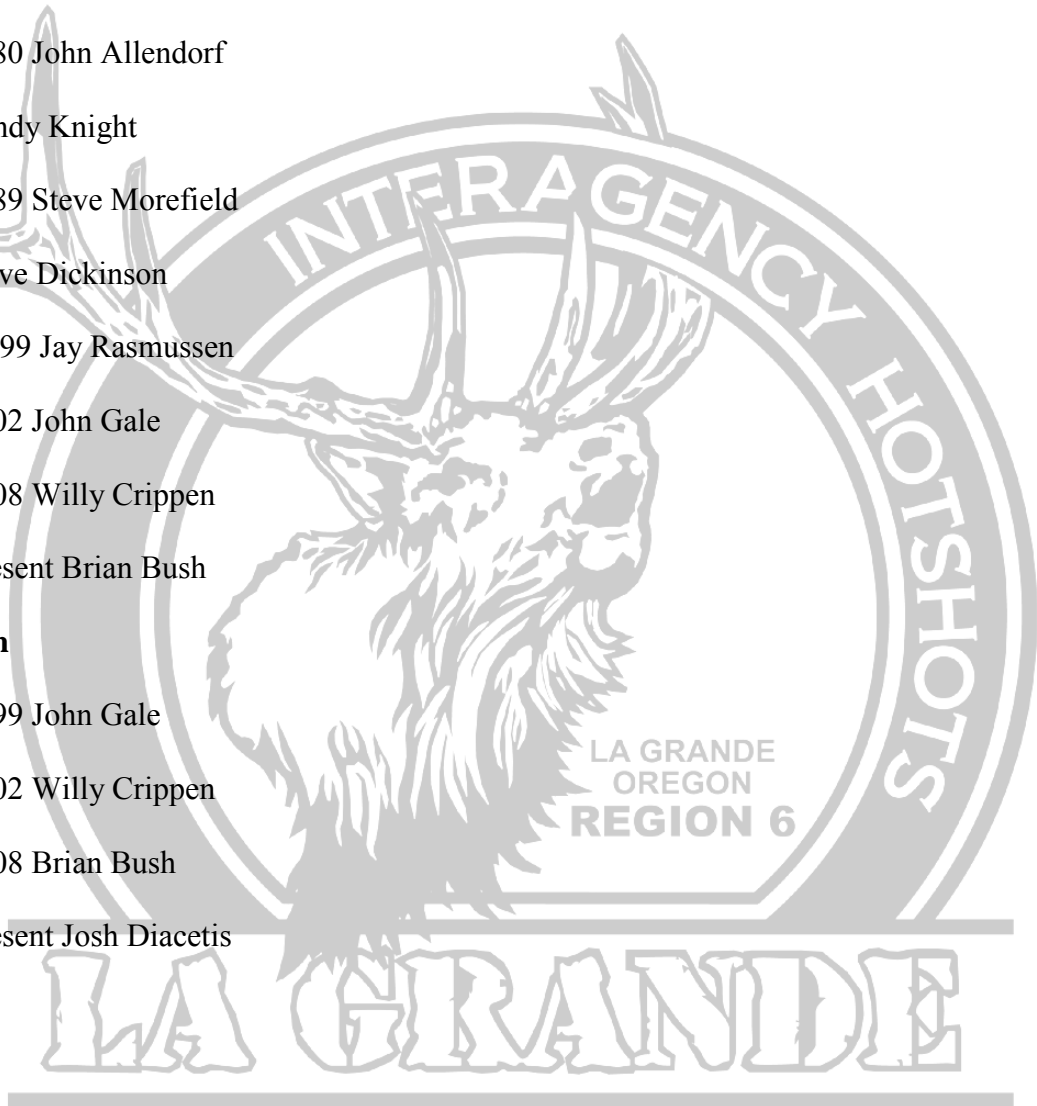
**Foreman**

1995-1999 John Gale

2000-2002 Willy Crippen

2003-2008 Brian Bush

2009-Present Josh Diacetis



## PRINEVILLE HOTSHOT HISTORY 1980 TO PRESENT



The brain child of John Maupin, Fire Staff on the Ochoco Nation Forest, the "Prineville Interagency Hotshot" crew name came into existence in 1980. Under the leadership of Wade Burlison, the crew developed into a top-notch fire fighting unit. A crew logo, was designed in the early eighties and meshed well with its sister crew, the Redmond Roadrunners. The crew has had six superintendents during its thirty years of existence. The present make-up is ten permanent seasonal employees and ten temporary employees. Some crew statistics included an average of 17 fires per season; about 90-110 days out on fires, with the average fire size about 8,000 acres.

The Prineville Hotshots are based in the city of Prineville in what is now called the Lamonta Compound, where the original Ochoco Ranger Station Office was located, about 2.5 miles from the Ochoco National Forest Supervisor's Office. There are two monuments in memory of the nine Prineville Hotshots who perished on the South Canyon Fire near Glenwood Springs, CO in 1994, one at the Prineville Hotshot base

and one at Ochoco Park in Prineville. Crew offices were originally in two "older" wooden structures that were torn down in the late 80's and a doublewide trailer was brought in from the Umpqua National Forest, and still serves as the crew offices today.

In 1980, the crew transportation was a school bus. Crew carriers were introduced in 1989. Those were gasoline fueled and were underpowered for what they were required to do. Diesel cabs replaced those in 1993, but the original crew carriers boxes were transferred to the diesel cabs. Prineville IHC traveled in those carriers until 2006. They were likely the oldest crew carriers still in service until one of them just became completely unusable on the way to a fire in 2006, and was left in Sacramento, CA. A crew superintendent vehicle was added in 1992.

Flights of Region 6 hotshot crews in the 80's were on Sierra Pacific Convair 580s and later 737s. Prineville flew mostly out of the Redmond Airport and boarded in front of the Redmond Smoke Jumper Base, though the crew sometimes flew out of Klamath Falls, Wenatchee or Moses Lake Airport.

Original line gear was army surplus web gear and canteens, cruisers vests and a Forest Service Red bag for personal gear. The crew ran Stihl 045s for the first few years. The crew was issued 4 3 watt Motorola radios that had 5 channel capabilities. Everyone was issued a fire shirt and a couple pair of nomex pants, a crew hard hat, canvas brush jacket and a pair of gloves. Each crew member had to purchase their own crew T-shirts and ball caps. A tent was not even a conscious thought. Today each crew member gets a full complement of the best line gear we can find, canteens and hydration systems, an oversize duffel bags for off forest dispatches, another oversize bag for line gear for airplane flights, a high quality tent, high quality sleeping bags, a thermarest sleeping pad, several different styles of safety eye wear, and gloves. Crew members still buy their own crew shirts; have the option to buy crew shorts, baseball caps, crew beanies, wind/water resistant crew jackets and hooded sweatshirts. Presently we also carry 12 radios, with 4 replacements in the vehicles, and more in reserve to account for ones needing repair. Each crew member is issued their own saw for project work.

Project work during the early years was line construction around logging units that were to be burned, trail maintenance, and some thinning and piling projects. The crew was utilized a little for prescribed fire support. In the late 80's the crew started to work on

juniper eradication projects, and some of that continues into the present. Today we still do a little line construction, and provide a good deal of support and supervision on prescribed fire projects on two forests, and the BLM.

For physical training in the first years, the crew was bussed down to the local high school football field. There would warm up, stretch for 15 minutes, then run on various paths around the city of Prineville for 3-5 miles and end up back at the football field. At several times during the run, the first person would turn around and "pick up" the last person, then continue with the run. The run would be followed by 20-30 minutes of calisthenics such push-ups, stretches and reportedly "thousands" of crunches. In 1983 a professional trainer was hired for 3 days to provide weight training instruction and advice. Currently the crew runs between 3-6 miles at various venues, often out in the field, especially where there are hills. Weight training is also performed at various venues from the compound to a local gym, to nearby parks and in the field. The exercises range from core work outs, to strictly weight training, to calisthenics and cross-fit type workouts. If not on a fire assignment, the crew is required to take part in the Prineville Hotshot Memorial Run, in honor former crew members from the South Canyon Fire.

In 1980, the crew superintendent and foreman were the only permanent staff members. There were two temporary squad leaders. Today, we still have a superintendent, assistant superintendent, three squad leaders and five senior fire fighters, all permanent members of the crew.

**Crew Superintendents:**

Wade Burleson	1980-1987
Tom Shepard	1988-1995
Andy Lang	1996-1997
Lance Honda	1997-2009
James Osborne	2009- Present

## REDMOND IHC HISTORY



The Redmond Hotshot Crew, located in Redmond Oregon, is housed at the Redmond Air Center and supported by the Regional Training Center. They were the first interregional fire suppression crew. Established by the Forest Service Washington Office in August 1960, this crew functioned as a regular Type I hotshot crew with temporary members from 1960 through 1980. In 1981 the crew was converted to a developmental training detail crew. California's Redding Hotshot Crew was the first to use developmental detail training for permanent employees assigned to an IHC - it was established in 1967. The number of applicants, though, far exceeded the slots. The program's popularity - along with a 1977 fire fatality of an AFMO in the state of Washington - supported the establishment of a detail crew in the Pacific Northwest.

The Redmond Interagency Hotshot Crew is permanently staffed with four positions. The Superintendent coordinates training classes, instructors, instructing and training assignments on both fuels and wildland fire assignments, and overall management of the detail training program. The Assistant Superintendent is responsible for supervision of the crew on fire and fuels assignments, and assists in

instructing courses and coordinating classes. The two Squad Leaders mentor squad leader trainees and assist in instructing courses and coordinating classes.

The remainder of the crew is comprised of 16 detailers of which are Forest Service, BLM, USFWS, NPS, BIA and State Land Management Agencies. Redmond IHC has a strong desire to continue interagency training and collaboration into the future.

Fire assignments have taken the Redmond crew to several geographical areas and diverse fuel types in recent years. These include: Florida, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Alaska.

### Superintendents Past and Present

Tim Sexton	1981-1986
Andy Parker	1987-1993
Steve Dickenson	1994
Andy Parker	1995-1996
Lance Honda	1996
John Holcomb	1997-1999
Doug Johnson	2000-2002
Deb Blais	2003-2005
Mike Muehlbauer	2006-2011
Chris Buhrig(detail)	2012
Neil Austin	2012(fall)-Present





## **Union Interagency Hotshot Crew Wallowa–Whitman National Forest, Region 6**

Union Interagency Hotshot Crew was established in 1980 when the Wallowa-Whitman Inter-Regional Hotshot Crew (est.1967) was divided into two crews.

The original IR crew was located at Sled Springs on the northern end of the forest. In 1973 the IR crew moved to Union County Airport located in La Grande.

Original IR crew logo



Located in the city of La Grande, Oregon; the Union Hotshots and our sister crew the La Grande Hotshots are the only crews in the lower 48 states that share a common base.

In 2005 Union moved into a new facility next to the Air Tanker Base at the Union County Airport. The new facility replaces an old doublewide trailer that had housed the crew for almost three decades.

The crew's first fire assignment was the Emerald Lake Fire on the Nez Perce National Forest in Idaho.

The original crew overhead structure consisted of a Permanent Full Time (PFT) GS-7 Superintendent and one Seasonal GS-6 Assistant Superintendent. In 1987 the Assistant Superintendent was converted from a seasonal position to an 18-8 Permanent Seasonal Employee position (PSE).

The crew presently is structured with a PFT GS-9 Superintendent, a PFT GS-8 Assistant Superintendent, three PSE 14-12 GS-7 Squad Leaders, and four PSE



13-13 GS-5 Senior Firefighters.

Over the last ten years the crew has averaged 16 fires a year with 95 days spent on assignments. Over the last few years the days spent on assignment has increased to an average of 109.

The original logo was a triangle with fire in the center and Union Interagency Hotshots written on the outside of the triangle legs. The crew logo was changed in 1988 to feature the head of a Goshawk (an aggressive forest bird of prey) in a circle with the crew name printed around the outside.

Crew Superintendents:

Greg Vergari (1980-1987)

Tom Wordell (1988-1995)

Dan Fiorito (1996-2006)

Jody Prummer (2007-Present)



## **VALE BLM DISTRICT, REGION SIX**

In 1997 the BLM established the Vale Hotshots. The Vale District is located in Eastern Oregon and was chosen to host the Vale IHC because of its capability to operate and maintain a National Resource; and is geographically located within 2 hours of the Boise Jet port, and with the availability of recruiting from the National SRV Program for diversity and trained firefighters. Rick Roach was the first Superintendent. Rick hired and trained the Hotshot Crew the first season and the crew was available for its first fire assignment June 14<sup>th</sup> 1997.

Rick supervised the crew from 1997 to 2002 and in 2003 Bart Yeager was hired as the Superintendent. The crew was in a training status for the first season and has been on and off training status since, due to the difficulty maintaining overhead positions and personnel qualified for key positions. In 2002 the crew started to operate with 23 people and an additional Type 6 Engine was added to the fleet in order to strengthen suppression actions, and mitigate training needs for the crew. The additional crewmembers and engine proved to be a valuable asset to the crew's production and training needs. The crew stayed in this configuration until 2003. In 2004 budget constraints reduced the crew size to the original 20 people.

The crew starts Critical Training the first or second week of May and the crew ends around the first or second week of October. Since 1997 the District has used the PFT's and PSE's for early and late season project work when funding and projects become available.

Since 1997 the Vale IHC has been dispatched to 119 Wildfires and 17 prescribed fires. The crew has been dispatched to the following States for Fire Suppression.(Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, South Dakota, Florida, and Canada.)

### **Crew Superintendents**

Rick Roach – 1997-2002

Bart Yeager – 2003-Present

### **Crew Coordinators**

Mike Hartwell-FMO/ Randy Hyde-Emergency Operations Specialist



**THE WARM SPRINGS INTER-AGENCY HOT SHOT CREW WAS INITIALLY DEVELOPED AS AN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM THROUGH FORESTRY ON THE WARM SPRINGS INDIAN RESERVATION IN 1984. RESEARCH HAD SHOWN A NEED FOR A FOREST IMPROVEMENT CREW WHICH MAY ALSO DEVELOP INTO A FIREFIGHTING UNIT. THIS PROTOTYPE BECAME THE FOREST CREW.**

**IT WAS RECOGNIZED BY WARM SPRINGS FIRE MANAGEMENT THAT AN OPPORTUNITY EXISTED TO DEVELOP THIS CREW FOR FIREFIGHTING ASSIGNMENTS. NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA COORDINATION CENTER AND WARM SPRINGS FIRE MANAGEMENT TO MAKE THIS CREW AVAILABLE FOR NATIONAL WILD LAND FIRE SUPPRESSION. THE WARM SPRINGS FOREST CREW BECAME AVAILABLE AS A TYPE 2 WILD LAND FIREFIGHTING**

**ORGANIZATION DURING THEIR INITIAL SEASON OF OPERATION.**

**LOCATED IN WARM SPRINGS OR, THE WARM SPRINGS IHC CREW BEGAN AS A 20 PERSON FOREST CREW. THIS FOREST CREW WAS INITIALLY FUNDED THRU CONTRACTS WITH CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF WARM SPRINGS AND NEIGHBORING AGENCIES WITH AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THE CREW WILL BECOME SELF SUFFICIENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE BY WORKING ON MISCELLANEOUS CONTRACT WORK THROUGHOUT THE REGION. THIS SYSTEM WAS SUCCESSFUL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WARM SPRINGS IHC.**

**AFTER TWO SUCCESSFUL FIRE SEASONS AS A TYPE 2 CREW, AND WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF**

**WARM SPRINGS, THE ORGANIZATION ELECTED TO PURSUE TYPE 1 IHC STATUS. FROM 1986 TO 1987 THE WARM SPRINGS FOREST CREW OPERATED ON A TWO YEAR PROBATIONARY PERIOD IN REGION 6. IN MARCH OF 1988 THE WARM**

**SPRINGS AGENCY FOREST CREW WAS RECOGNIZED THRU NIFC AS A TYPE 1 INTER-AGENCY HOTSHOT CREW, THE SECOND BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS HOTSHOT CREW IN THE NATION.**

**THE WARM SPRINGS HOTSHOTS HISTORICALLY AND CURRENTLY ARE PREDOMINANTLY MEMBERS OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES BUT ALSO CONSIST OF MARRIED INTO THE TRIBE, OTHER NATIVES AND NON-NATIVES.**

**ONCE FIRE SEASON IS COMPLETE FOR THE YEAR, THE CREW IS UTILIZED THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY OF WARM SPRINGS FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF**

**PROJECTS SUCH AS TREE THINNING, SLASHING/LOPPING, HAZARD FUEL REDUCTION, PRESCRIBED FIRE, OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS CONSIST OF CUTTING AND DISTRIBUTING FIREWOOD FOR THE SENIOR CITIZENS OF WARM SPRINGS, DELIVER HOLIDAY FOOD BASKETS AND ASSIST WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT FUNCTIONS.**

**CREW SUPERINTENDENT PAST AND PRESENT:**

- **GARY SAMPSON JR.  
2009- PRESENT**
  
- TONY HOLLIDAY SR.  
2004 – 2008**
  
- **LUTHER CLEMENTS  
1988 – 2003**
  
- **MICHAEL GOMEZ  
1984 – 1987**

**ASSISTANTS SUPERINTENDENTS**

*RENZO RODRIGUEZ*  
*2010-PRESENT*

*WILLIAM WILSON*  
*2009*

*GARY SAMPSON*  
*2007-2008*

*JABBAR DAVIS*  
*2006*

*EDMUND FRANCIS*  
*2004-2005*

*TONY HOLLIDAY*  
*1998-2003*

*ERIC POWERS*  
*1995-1997*

*TREY LEONARD*  
*1991-1994*

*VERNON TIAS*  
*1988-1990*

*LUTHER CLEMENTS*  
*1984-1987*



### **Winema Interagency Hotshot Crew Region 6, Winema National Forest, Klamath Falls, Oregon**

The Winema Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) is stationed in south central Oregon on the Winema National Forest. The crew is based at the Klamath Ranger District in Klamath Falls, which is located on the east slope of the Cascade Mountains.

The Winema IHC traces its roots back to 1962 when the Star Inter-Regional Fire Suppression Crew was formed at the Star Ranger Station on the Applegate Ranger District of the Rogue River National Forest.

In 1970, the crew was moved to the Union Creek Guard Station on the Prospect Ranger District. They remained at this location for ten years.

After the relocation, the crew name was changed to the Rogue River Interregional Fire Suppression Crew or the "Rogue River Roughriders," as they were more commonly called.

Their logo at this time was a cowboy on a bucking horse.

In the summer of 1979, the crew traveled with 21 people. One of the crew members was a photojournalist from the National Geographic Society. His photographs later appeared in a September 1982 issue of the magazine accompanying an article on wildfire. The Roughriders also earned a Region 6 cash award for fireline performance in 1979.

The crew was renamed the Prospect Interagency Hotshot Crew in 1980, as a result of the U.S. Forest Service standardizing all hotshot crew names. The crew base was moved to the Prospect Ranger Station.

In 1982, the crew moved to its current location and was renamed the "Winema Interagency Hotshot Crew." The Tasmanian Devil now makes up the Winema IHC logo.

<b>Years</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
1962-1969	Star I.R. Suppression Crew	Applegate RD Rogue River NF
1970-1979	R.R. I.R. Suppression Crew	Prospect RD Rogue River NF
1980-1981	Prospect IHC	Prospect RD Rogue River NF
1982-present	Winema IHC	Klamath RD Winema NF

### **Crew Logo's and shirt designs**

- 1970-1979 Blue shirt with "Rogue River Roughriders" logo, patch was of a bucking horse and rider.
- 1980-1981 Same logo as years before, but "Prospect IHC" instead of RR Roughriders.
- 1982 Pelican on green shirt.
- 1983-1984 "Winema Hotshots" on front of green shirt.
- 1986-1988 Silver Tazmanian Devil on blue shirt.
- 1989-1991 Taz with legs on blue shirt.
- 1991-2000 Taz with "tornado" legs on blue shirt.
- 2001 shirts changed to integrate all previous logos to comemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- 2006 shirts changed to written logo stating "Winema Hotshots R-6".

### **Winema Interagency Hotshot Crew Crew Supervision History**

Pete Gregory	1962-65	John (Woody) Haas	1979
Edward Graham	1966	Gene Rodgers	1980-83
Darrel Hawkins	1967-68	Andy Gay (Parker)	1984-85
Bob Foster	1969	Lonnie Williams	1986
Roy Skelton	1970-71	Larry Decker	1987
Richard Bonney	1972	Dale Cuyler	1988-91
Dale Alter	1973-74	Randy Lehman	1992-2000
Don Bailey	1975	James Hampton	2001-2002
Mike Monahan	1976	Neil Austin	2003
John Funderberg	1977-78	James Hampton	2004-2006
		Neil Austin	2007- 2012
		David G. Lilly	2013



## Wolf Creek Interagency Hotshot Crew

The Wolf Creek Interagency Hotshot Crew was born out of the Wolf Creek Job Corps Center South of Glide Oregon in 1976. Job Corps was designed to assist young people who both need and can benefit from the wide range of services provided in the residential setting of a Job Corps Center. These services include basic education, vocational skills training, work experience, counseling, health care and related support services. There are a number of Job Corps Centers located around the country operated by the Department of Agriculture and Interior. Most of these centers have provided AD firefighters and fire camp crews. In 1976, Wolf Creek started organizing a regular Forest Service Fire Crew with the intentions of developing an Interagency Hotshot Crew.

Serious skepticism greeted Wolf Creeks attempt to make fire fighters out of young, inexperienced Job Corps trainees. Wolf Creek officials had a field of 240 prospects and months of time to whip the best of them into Hotshot



shape. Richard Aguilar, the first Superintendent started a program called Hell Week to separate the Hotshots from the rest. There were traditionally two Hell Weeks, the first in mid April and the second in mid June. The second one was for students that didn't make the first one to challenge for a spot on the crew.

The students first day consisted of a 1.5 mile run before lunch and a 10.5 mile run after lunch. They must run the 1.5 mile run in less than eleven minutes and the 10.5 mile run in less than one hour and thirty minutes. Day two started with stretches and calisthenics followed by a fifteen mile forced up the scenic Thunder Mountain Road and ended back at the Center. Days three and four consisted of lots of digging fire line around control burn units with little rest and little food simulating conditions on a fire. The last day students are required to do calisthenics for the day, pushups, pull ups, sit ups and the step test. Only the best performers of Hell Week are selected to be members of the crew.

In 1985 Wolf Creek obtained Type 1 status and became an Interagency Hotshot Crew. Since the crew remains available year-round, they were able to extend their availability service wide, beyond the normal fire season.

Richard Aguilar was the Superintendent from the program's inception in 1976 up until 1996. Chris Theisen became the Superintendent next and was the Supt up until 2001 when he left to start up Lewis and Clark IHC in Region 1 under the National Fire Plan. In 2002 the program

struggled and lost their IHC status, student numbers were dropping and it was hard to find quality people. Chris Chiverton was the acting Supt in 2002. In 2003 Clyde Johnson took over the program. The program was struggling for several reasons, lack of students, and changes in direction with the National Interagency Hotshot Guide which required permanent overhead, fewer rookies, and higher qualifications. In 2005 the crew looked outside the Job Corps and started hiring regular 1039 Forestry Technicians to balance out the crew and regained their Type 1 status. At this time management and oversight of the crew was transferred to the Umpqua National Forest and the North Umpqua Ranger District and was supervised by the District Fire Management Officer. Adam Veale was the Assistant Superintendent from 2003-2005 and became the Superintendent in 2006, leaving in 2007 to become the Assistant Fire Management Officer on the North Umpqua Ranger District. Eric Miller was hired as the Superintendent in 2008 and currently holds the position.

Over the years the Wolf Creek IHC has gone through many changes, some big and some small. The original crew logo of a wolf running towards burning trees with tools in hand on a bright orange shirt has been changed. The logo shows a wolf howling on a rock under the full moon. The crew colors were bright orange from 1976 until 2005 then changed to black briefly. In 2008 the crew adopted the burnt orange as their color with the newer logo. The crew itself is still based out of the Wolf Creek Job Corps. We still maintain a tight relationship with the Job Corps putting on guard school for the forestry trade students every year.

After guard school is complete we hold Hell Week for the students and at the end of that we pick one or two students to be a part of the Wolf Creek Hotshots. The crew is made up of nine permanent overhead and ten to twelve seasonal employees and several Job Corps students. The crew generally starts in mid April and runs into the first part of October.

### **Superintendents**

**1976-1996 Richard Aguilar**

**1997-2001 Chris Theison**

**2002 Chris Chiverton (acting)**

**2003 Allan Andrews (Detail)**

**2004-2005 Clyde Johnson**

**2006-2006 Adam Veale**

**2007-Ken Gregor (Detail)**

**2008-Present Eric Miller**



# Zigzag Hotshots History and Heritage

## From the Early 1960s to Today

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The roots of the Zigzag Interagency Hotshot Crew stretch back to the early 1960s when the Mt. Hood National Forest’s Zigzag Ranger District hosted the 12-person “Zigzag Fire Suppression Crew.” This was a “multi-purpose” line-digging team that responded to fires, but also helped build and maintain forest trails and recreation sites. Don Vandenberg, who would become the Zigzag District’s AFMO in the 1970s, ran this crew. It was based out of the Summit “Bunkhouse” in Government Camp.

In 1975, the Zigzag District started a 20-person “Regional Reinforcement” fire crew, known as “The Mt. Hood RR Crew.” Supervised by Lee Englesby, the crew was based out of Snow Bunny Lodge, just east of Government Camp. In 1976, the crew moved farther east—still in the Zigzag Ranger District—to the Boy Scout’s White River Lodge. Bill Erickson was supervisor. A pioneering woman firefighter, Kimberly Brandel, was a member of this crew—its very first and only female.

Then, in 1977 and 1978, under Roddy Baumann’s leadership, the crew transitioned into a 20-person “Inter-Regional” fire team, called “The Mt. Hood IR Crew.”

In 1979, the crew became the Zigzag Interagency Hotshot Crew—which it remains today. The Zigzag Hotshots’ Kimberly Brandel became the first woman in the nation to be a member of an interagency hotshot crew.

That same year, Paul Gleason—who would become the originator of the national LCES safety program that he started at Zigzag—came onboard as the IHC’s second superintendent. While cancer claimed Gleason’s life in 2003, his national wildland fire legacy continues to burn bright.

Gleason started his wildland fire career with southern California’s Dalton Hotshot Crew on the

Angeles National Forest. Dalton’s crew colors were—and still are—red and black. Paul continued that color scheme at Zigzag. The crew’s official—and proud—colors are still red and black today.

Gleason experienced the potential risks of the wildland fire environment firsthand. He was with the Dalton Hotshots on the fatality Loop Fire in 1966, and he saved a life on the Dude Fire tragedy of 1990. At the end of the 1990 season—after 11 years as Zigzag IHC’s superintendent—Paul left the crew to continue his wildland fire career in Colorado.

In 1991, when Gina Papke then took over the Zigzag Hotshot leadership reins, she became the first female IHC superintendent in the nation.

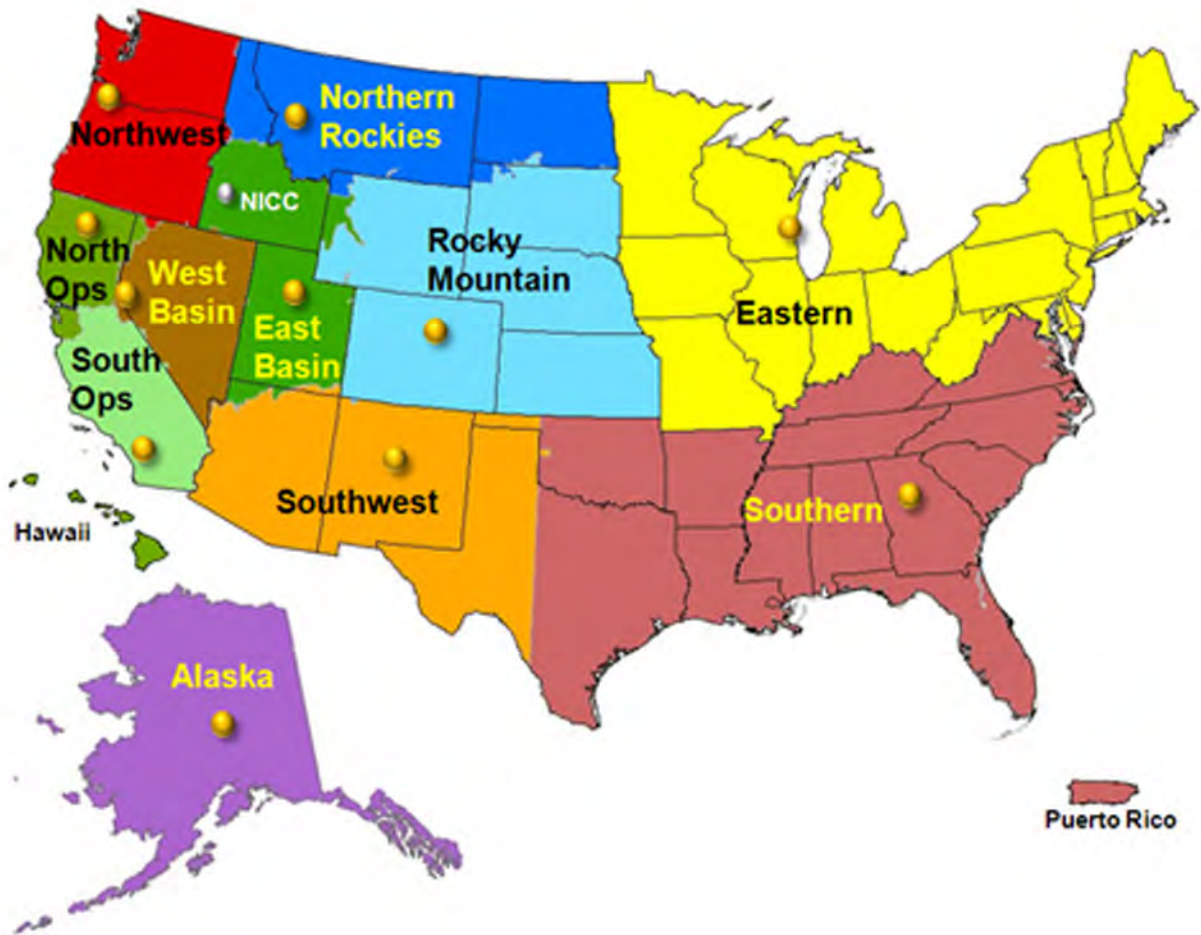
Papke served as superintendent through the 2000 fire season, when Diego Mendiola—from the Mendocino IHC in California—replaced her. Today, in 2008, Mendiola continues to serve as superintendent. His crew is housed in the same—refurbished—Summit “Bunkhouse” that held the special Zigzag firefighting team five decades ago.

While the world might change, the Zigzag Interagency Hotshot Crew remains constant: Same location, Same traditions, and Always tough!

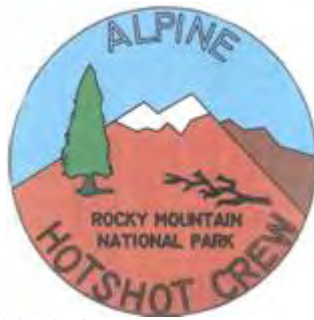


<b>Zigzag Superintendents Past and Present</b>	
Don Vandenberg	Early 1960s
Lee Englesby	1975
Bill Erickson	1976
Roddy Baumann	1977-78
Paul Gleason	1979-1990
Gina Papke	1991-2000
Diego Mendiola	2001-Present

# Rocky Mountain



## Alpine Hotshots History 1981- Present



The National Park Service established its Interagency Hotshot Crew program in May, 1981. The Alpine Hotshots being one of the three crews formed at that time. These crews were the first Hotshot crews to be funded by any Department of the Interior agency. The three crews were known as Arrowhead 1, 2, and 3. In 1982, the names of the crews were changed to Alpine IHC, Arrowhead IHC, and Bison IHC. These names were derived from the National Park Service emblem. In 1985 budget constraints eliminated Bison IHC from the program.

From 1981 until 1988, Alpine IHC was administered from the NPS office at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). The crew was assigned to several different duty stations during this time period, including Cumberland Island, Malibu (Camp 8), Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Crater Lake, and Mount Rainier National Parks only to name a few. The crew would move during the season from one location to the next sometimes to two or more locations during a season. While at Crater Lake the crew was based out of the old Rogue River Hotshot base.

From 1988 to 1991 the crew was stationed at Zion National Park, Utah, although they never lived there. Their base of operations during 1988 was Brianhead Ski area and a small motel in Parowan, UT from 1989 - 1991. The crew saw plenty of action while stationed there including being the first crew ordered for the Yellowstone fires in 1988. The crew spent a week on the Falls Fire west of the south entrance of Yellowstone prior to the "world" being mobilized. The entire crew as well as three individuals (Jim Mattingly – Supt., David Niemi - Squad Boss, Bill Moe – EMT) received national commendations for life saving actions performed on the Dude Fire in 1990.

Because Zion could not provide permanent housing for the crew a decision was made to move the crew to Wind Cave National Park, near Rapid City, South Dakota for the 1992 season. The actual base of operations while there, was an old coal gasification plant on the southeast side of Rapid City. The highlights of that season included a trip to Voyageurs NP in Minnesota

and extensive time spent in the Salmon River Breaks country of Idaho.

After the '92 season and a number of bids from various parks to host the crew, a decision was made by the NPS National Office at NIFC to permanently place the Alpine crew at Rocky Mountain NP. This was based on a number of considerations, but of high significance was the park's offer to construct new dormitory facilities for a permanent base of operations.

The crew spent its first season living and working out of the historic "Blister Rust" dorm at Rocky Mountain National Park. Interestingly enough in the past while the crew was stationed at Yellowstone NP, its base of operations was that park's version of the "Blister Rust" dorm.

Construction was completed on the new dorm/work center facility in the spring of 1994 and the crew has called it home ever since. The majority of our fire assignments have been away from the vicinity of Rocky Mountain NP except during the summer of 2002 Colorado experienced a record fire year.

### Superintendents Past and Present

Jon Larson:	1981 – 1984
John Comery:	1984 – 1987
Paul Borcharding:	1987
Jim "JP" Mattingly:	1988 – 1997
David Niemi:	1997 – 2006
Chris Kirby:	2006 - 2007
Paul Cerda	2008 - Present





## *Craig Interagency Hotshot Crew History 2001-Present*

The Craig Interagency Hotshot Crew is based in Craig, CO on the Northwest Colorado Fire Management Unit. The crew was founded in the spring of 2001, along with several other new hotshot crews as a result of the National Fire Plan.

Through most of 2001 and 2002, the crew spent most of its time suppressing fires around Colorado, due to the effects of a prolonged drought. Throughout the 2000's, the crew has contributed their diverse expertise to fires in states across the western states as well as traveling to the southeast to assist in all-risk incidents such as Hurricane Katrina relief. In addition to national assignments, the crew often spends several weeks a season assisting the local district in handling the significant initial attack load experienced within the dispatch area.

When not on assignment, the crew participates in varied project work, including beetle kill mitigation, prescribed fire unit preparation, and riparian restoration. To facilitate supporting these operations, in 2009 the crew acquired and outfitted a fully-stocked logistics trailer, which has also been used to successfully support upwards of 80 people on Type 3 incidents.

Through most of its operational years, the crew has been headquartered in the old BLM engine station on the west end of Craig; at the start of the 2012 season, the crew was able to move into its new station across from the main Little Snake Field Office, complete with state-of-the-art training and workout facilities, welding shop, three large vehicle bays, and separate saw shop.

The Craig leadership structure has been run consistently under the 1-2-2 system, with a few exceptions over the last decade. The first superintendent was Stuart Gore, who ran the crew until 2003. The two foremen at the time, Shawn Telford and Miles Ellis, split the superintendent detail in 2004, carrying the crew through the fire season. Telford formally took the position in early 2005; he remains the superintendent as of 2013.





## Pike Interagency Hotshot Crew

The Pike Interagency Hotshot Crew began in 1962 as the Roosevelt Inter-Regional Fire Suppression Crew (IR Crew). Affectionately known as “Scotty’s Raider’s” for first Superintendent Glenn Scott, they traveled to 5 fires for a total of 27 days on assignment.

1971 - the crew was moved to the Pike National Forest Supervisor’s Office, and was renamed the Pike IR Crew.

1973 - the crew again moved, this time to the Pikes Peak Ranger District and was stationed in Woodland Park, CO.

1979 - the Monument Nursery (now the Monument Fire Center- MFC) became the duty station for the Pike IR Crew. The Pike IHC is based at MFC to this day.

1980 - brought a name change, to the Pike Interagency Hotshot Crew in order to comply with the national name transition.

Today, it is not uncommon for the crew to spend over 100 days on assignment every season, traveling nationwide.

The Pike Interagency Hotshot crew has a long and successful history that we are proud of. To honor those who have gone before us, every year we strive to earn again the respect that was built for us through time. Our mission is to provide a safe, professional, organized, highly motivated, highly skilled, and cost effective resource for wildland fire, natural resource management, and all-risk incidents. We take pride in what we do.



*Scotty’s Raider’s, circa 1960’s*

### **Superintendents, Past and Present:**

1962 - 73 Glenn Scott	1982 Brett Acres	1993 - 97 Tim Foley
1974 - 77 Chris Brandy	1983 - 84 Dan Robinson	1998 - 05 Shane Greer
1978 - Bruce Haflich	1985 - Gasper Blea	2006 Shane Greer/Alissa Roeder
1979 - Bill Frede	1986 - 91 Tim Foley	2007-11 Alissa Roeder
1980 - 81 Chris Brandy	1992 - Paul Gleason/Matt Valdez	2011- Present Kevin Neiman

## Roosevelt Hotshots History 2001 to Present



The Roosevelt Interagency Hotshot Crew is based in Fort Collins, Colorado on the Canyon Lakes Ranger District of the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest. The Crew was established in 2001 as part of what seemed at the time to be an exceedingly vast expansion of the IHC program following the high-profile 2000 fire season.

Lacking facilities, crew carriers and many of the other standard Hotshot accoutrements, the crew spent its first season based out of the Poudre Fire Authority's training warehouse and drove to incidents in a small convoy of pickups and SUV's.

The crew spent 2001 as a training crew and in 2002 was certified as an Interagency Hotshot Crew.

Also in 2002, crew carriers were acquired and the crew moved into its current home at the Forest Service Administrative site in north Fort Collins. The facility, with offices, barracks, weight room, cache, engine bays and a training room also houses the Canyon Lakes Ranger District's fire and fuels personnel which helps emphasize the crew's affiliation with its home district.

While the crew spends much of the summer away on assignment, when at home the Hotshots help meet the district's needs by doing a variety of project work and assisting with prescribed fire.

### **Superintendents:**

Kelly Jones (Mellot) 2001-2002

Todd Millen 2003

Dave Hamrick 2003-2006

Larry Money 2007-Present



## San Juan IHC Crew History 2002-Present

The planning for a new IHC crew in southern Colorado began late in 1997. At the time the Rio Grande and San Juan National Forests were being considered as likely locations. The decision was made to base the crew in Durango and name the crew after the host forest.

The crew was first organized in May 2002 to begin training at the Engineer Guard Station located near Durango Mountain Resort. The first six weeks the crew trained while the Missionary Ridge fire was burning within view. The Engineer Guard Station was home to the crew during the 2002 and 2003 seasons. The move to the old Ft. Lewis college campus south of Hesperus occurred in the spring of 2004, and the crew remained there until 2007. The final move from Hesperus to the Public Lands Center/ San Juan NF Supervisors Office occurred late fall of 2007. This is where the crew is currently located.

Transportation for the crew the first two seasons was Ford Excursions which were hand-me-downs from Roosevelt IHC. New International crew carriers arrived for the 2004 season and are expected to be replaced before the 2014 season. Additionally the crew travels with a Superintendents truck, a chase vehicle, and an ATV/UTV.

San Juan IHC is organized using the 1-1-3 system for Hotshot crews. This means 1 Superintendent, 1 Assistant Superintendent, and 3 squad bosses. Additionally four positions are slotted for permanent seasonal senior firefighters. The remainder of the crew is composed of seasonal employees.

Project work for the crew has varied throughout the years. We have taken on the normal fuels reduction work as well as unique assignments working for the engineering programs rebuilding/ removing bridges, mine reclamation, range projects that have included fence building/removal, and weed inventory.

Superintendent List  
Shawna Legarza 2002-2007  
Jim Cornelius 2008-2010  
Jay Godson 2011-Present



**Tatanka Hotshot Crew History**

The Tatanka Hotshot Crew was formed in 1999 on the Black Hills National Forest in Custer, SD. After working the 1999 fire season as essentially a Type 2 IA crew, Type 1 certification was gained in the spring of 2000. The crew was originally housed in a trustee unit on the grounds of an old Tuberculosis sanitarium that was converted into a juvenile offender facility. The crew moved into it's current facilities in April of 2002.

Tatanka Hotshots  
 1019 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Custer, SD 57730  
 605-673-5965

**Supervision History**

<b>Superintendent (years)</b>	<b>Foreman (years)</b>	<b>Squad Leader (years)</b>
Geoff Bell (1999-2001)	John Carothers (1999)	Donald Henry (2000-2001)
Pat Laeng (2001-2008)	Dave Crouser (1999-2000)	Todd Millen (2000)
Brandon Hess (2008-Present)	Pat Laeng (2000-01)	Grant Gifford (2002-2005)
	Donald Henry (2001-06)	Brandon Hess (2002-2004)
	Jason Virtue (2001-2004)	David Zortman (2004-2009)
	Brandon Hess (2004-2008)	Bryan Hellett (2007-2007)
	Grant Gifford (2007-2008)	Dan Bagley (2007-2011)
	Brian Faith (2009-2011)	Joshua Ball (2009-2011)
	David Zortman (2009-Present)	Tim Troxel (2012-Present)
	Joshua Ball (2011-Present)	Kurt Bassett (2012-Present)

**Crew Structure**  
(Permanent Positions)

GS-9 Superintendent (PFT)

GS-8 Foreman (PFT)

GS-8 Foreman (PFT)

GS-6 Squad Leader (13/13)

GS-6 Squad Leader (13/13)

GS-5 Lead Crewmember (13/13)

GS-5 Lead Crewmember (13/13)

GS-5 Lead Crewmember (13/13)

GS-5 Lead Crewmember (13/13)



### Bighorn IR & Wyoming Hotshot History 1967-Present

In 1967, Region 2 of the Forest Service was allocated a second Inter-Regional (IR) Crew. The region conducted an inventory of work projects and identified potential work stations within an hour of a major airport that could host the new crew. The end result was the selection of the Bighorn National Forest's Paintrock Ranger District in Greybull, WY as the home of the Bighorn IR Crew. Some 40 years later, the crew still resides in the same buildings and remains the only hotshot crew in Wyoming.

During the late sixties, the standard size of an Inter-Regional Crew was 32 members with a Crew Foreman, four Squad Leaders and seven or eight firefighters on each squad. By 1970, the crew size was down to 27 members in order to reduce the number of people that had to remain behind, as most travel was done by DC-3 or C-46 which had a maximum capacity of 24. The current crew size of 20 was established in 1975.

Hair length could not exceed two inches and facial hair was prohibited in the late sixties and early seventies. Sleeping quarters were fashioned out of the carpenter shop which consisted of a garage with a large metal building attached. Inside were excess metal military bunks, metal military lockers that acted as screens between some of the bunks and limited bathroom facilities.

The early 1980's brought significant change as the first woman joined the crew in 1981 and in 1982 the Bighorn IR crew became the Wyoming Hotshots. During the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, the Wyoming Hotshots were one of several hotshot crews on detail to Southern California. Olympic and city officials requested additional crews in an effort to prevent large wildfires that could worsen air quality.

A primitive kitchen and one unisex bathroom were tolerated throughout the 1970's and 1980's. Handcrafted "rooms" multiplied until in 1996 a major remodel brought individual rooms and separate men's and women's bathrooms. Then and now, the barracks sits right next to the railroad switching yard which provides nightly enjoyment. The locomotives rev up their engines and build up speed and then stop to release some of the cars. The stopping of the locomotive creates a chain of bangs as each car smashed into the next one.

The only fire shelter deployment in crew history occurred in June of 1988 on the Brewer Fire, Custer National Forest, Montana. Severe drought, record low fuel moistures, erratic and strong winds, extreme temperatures and very low humidities led to extreme fire behavior conditions. The fire went from a surface fire to a running crown fire while the crew was flanking the fire by building fireline. The crew ultimately deployed shelters in a nearby meadow and four firefighters ultimately sustained burn injuries.

The 1990's experienced the major barracks remodel, a wealth of time on assignment in Craig, Colorado and the second half of Mark Rogers' tenure as Superintendent. Rogers was by far the longest serving Superintendent in crew history at 13 years.

The modern era is marked by a gradual increase in permanent staff in order to keep pace with national standards, longer fire seasons and an increased involvement in all-risk assignments. Like all other crews, the Wyoming Hotshots have experienced busier and busier fire seasons. The number of days on assignment has more than tripled from the 25 to 30 days spent on fires in 1967 and 1968. Other memorable recent events include the only trip to Alaska in crew history (2004) and back to back hurricane relief assignments in 2005 and 2006.

<b>Superintendents Past and Present</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>
Sig Palm	1967-1969
Jim Shell	1970-1972
Carl "Tut" Anderson	1973
Dennis Eckardt	1974
Terry Wood	1975
Tom Able	1976
Steve Nichols	1977-1979
Jeff Johnson	1980-1983
Mark Rogers	1984-1996
Chris Church (detail)	1997
Kevin Pfister	1998-2000
Jay Kurth	2001-2004
Scott Schuster	2005-2007
Matthew Prentiss	2008-Present



# Southern







## **ASHEVILLE INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREW**

### **HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

The Asheville Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) is one of three IHC programs in the nation to offer a concentrated training curriculum and the combined field experience of a full fire season. The program is designed to help develop future fireline supervisors and fire managers. Asheville selects 17 candidates with career status as detailers to the program for one season. The designated classroom training provides individuals with basic requirements towards the single resource Crew Boss qualifications. On fire assignments through out the detail, each candidate is provided the opportunity to perform in fire leadership positions.

From initiation in 1989 to 2001, Asheville IHC was typically the only Type I IHC available during the Southern Region spring fire season. In 2001, two additional Forest Service IHC programs were initiated in the Southern Area. With the limited numbers of such resources during this period, the Asheville crew is continually requested for wildfire and prescribed fire assignments. These assignments ensure practical experience and knowledge gained from performing on the fireline.

The National Forests in North Carolina are the host administrative unit for the Asheville IHC. The hotshot's base of operation was first located in Hendersonville, NC at the Kanuga Camp and Conference Center, from 1989 to 1995. The program moved to the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC in 1996 and continues to use this facility. Both locations have provided excellent training, barracks and dining facilities conducive to the intense classroom and physical training schedule maintained by the crew.

The Asheville Hotshot crew has provided its leadership training opportunity for seventeen years. A total of 322 individuals have successfully completed the Asheville IHC program. The majority of these people continue to serve in fire supervision positions across the country. Many are working as fire program managers at the forest level and higher.

Initially the only fulltime position with the program was the Superintendent. From 1989 to 1995, two Foreman positions were filled with detailers each season. In 1996, an Assistant Superintendent, 13/13 permanent seasonal position was added to help with increasing operational needs and responsibilities. The Assistant Superintendent position became permanent fulltime in November of 1999. In September of 2003, a permanent fulltime Forman position was added to complete the programs supervision organization.

The following chart shows all individuals that have performed in the overhead positions for the Asheville Interagency Hotshot Crew from 1989 to the present.

## **ASHEVILLE INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREW**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY**

#### **SUPERINTENDENT**

**2003 - Present:** Steve Little

**1989 - 2002:** Dick Kastler

#### **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**

**2003 - Present:** Mike Honeycutt

**2000 - 2002:** Steve Little

**1996 - 1999:** Rich Dolphin

#### **CREW FOREMAN**

**2004-2005:** Kim Ernstrom

#### **CREW FOREMAN DETAILERS**

<b>1989</b>	<b>1990</b> Gary Jarvis Pete Myers Charley Salazar	<b>1991</b> Gary Jarvis	<b>1992</b> Gary Jarvis Ann Pehling
<b>1993</b> Rich Dolphin	<b>1994</b> Rich Dolphin Isabel Campos	<b>1995</b> Dragobert Sharp Dave Bostic	<b>1996</b> Steve Little
<b>1997</b> Brian Southard	<b>1998</b> Dave Bostic Kyle Smith Mike Buchanan	<b>1999</b> Darien Fisher Andy Mandell Steve Parrish	<b>2000</b> Mike Honeycutt
<b>2001</b> Ed Weiringa	<b>2002</b> Mike Honeycutt	<b>2003</b> Tim Beck	<b>2006</b> David Smallman
<b>2007</b> Mike Bildeaux Chris Witkus	<b>2008</b> Loren Eaton Kristy Schaufler		



**AUGUSTA INTERAGENCY HOTSHOT CREW  
GEORGE WASHINGTON & JEFFERSON NATIONAL FORESTS  
REGION 8**

In June of 2001, the Augusta Hotshots were established on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The crew is stationed at Augusta Springs, Virginia, located on the Deerfield Ranger District. Augusta was one of two new Forest Service Hotshot Crews to be established in the east under the National Fire Plan completed in 2000. The crew's season is structured around the eastern fire season. They, also, assist in prescribed burning, and are available for support of the western fire season, and other emergencies. Augusta received their type one status the summer of 2002. The crew has been involved with numerous wildfires and prescribed fires in 11 states, and in every fuel type. In addition, the crew spent two weeks in support of FEMA in New York City during the World Trade Center Disaster and in Williamsburg, VA, to assist with cleanup after Hurricane Isabel.

The Augusta Hotshot's season is structured around the Eastern fire season; therefore, they work a different schedule than most other crews. Currently the crew begins work the last week of January, and works till the end of May. The crew then takes June and July off and starts back up the first of August. The second half of the season then ends around the first of December. Basically the crew works four months and is off for two, on for four and off for two. The crew is equipped with fire six-pack trucks, which allows them to break into small modules for support of eastern fuel types.

The crew's base, located in Augusta Springs, is adjacent to a Forest Youth Camp. Construction of crew facilities has been under way at the same location since the spring of 2002. Currently there are two modern barracks with all amenities, housing six persons each. Completion of the crew headquarters is planned for spring of 2004. The base sets below Great North Mountain, which is part of The Allegheny Mountains that stretch from Virginia into West Virginia. Just east of the base lies Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Most of the area is covered in a mixture hardwood forests and farmland. The area is equally beautiful as it is historic.

In summary the Augusta Hotshots have a very unique program, and work in a very unique area! The crew is always looking for new members, and new opportunities to serve the citizens of these United States.

For more information contact:

Oscar Montijo, Superintendent  
(540) 290-0462

## **Cherokee IHC History 2001-Present**



In June 2001, in accordance with the National Fire Plan, the Cherokee Hotshots came to be. The crew is based in Unicoi, TN since the beginning. The crew was named after the host National Forest (Cherokee). The crew logo as seen above has been with the crew since the start. It outlines the Volunteer State of Tennessee (in gold) and the host National Forest (Cherokee) in green with the gold star indicating the location of the crew on the north end of the Cherokee National Forest. There has never been a crew name change or change in the IHC base location. Tim Wharton was hired as the first Superintendent. To date (2009) there is one individual that has been a member of the crew from day one.

The crew was considered to be in a trainee status for the first five fire seasons. In July 2006 the crew was able to obtain national certification as an Interagency Hotshot Crew.

The program has a new administrative site that was completed in 2007 and has had crew quarters for 18 personnel since 2002.

The crew maintains the original staffing of 22 members with 18 of these being career/seasonal appointments to meet continuous staffing requirements for working a split season.

### **Superintendents Past and Present**

Tim Wharton – 2001 – 2003

Dennis Trentham – 2004 – Present

### **Assistant Superintendents Past and Present**

Dennis Trentham – 2002-2004

Candace Kutrosky- 2002-2003

Mitch Ketron – 2004 – 2008

Matthew Gilbert – 2008 - Present

### **Current Crew Staffing**

Superintendent – 1

Assistant Superintendent/Captain – 1

Squad Leaders – 3

Lead Firefighters – 3

Senior Firefighters – 3

Crewmembers - 11



## History of the Jackson Hotshots

During the summer of 1996 the Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt visited several wildland fires in the western U.S. During these visits the Secretary noted that there was a low percentage of minorities represented on the overhead teams and fire crews involved in suppression efforts. To increase opportunities the city of Jackson, Ms was selected as a site for a Hotshot crew. Jackson, Mississippi was selected as the site to base a new IHC because of its proximity to Historically Black Colleges and Universities from which to recruit individuals who may be interested in pursuing a career in fire management.

In early 1997 the Bureau of Land Management announced the establishment of a new Type I "Hotshot" wildland fire fighting crew in Jackson, Mississippi. While fire suppression was the primary function for the Hotshot crew, it was also envisioned that its members would be able to gain experience in prescribed fire in the southern states and bring that expertise to western projects. The formation of the Jackson IHC was supported by the Historically Black Colleges and Universities as well as the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters Foundation (IABPFF). The IABPFF entered into an agreement with the BLM in 1996 to expand opportunities in the wildland fire fighting organization for African-Americans and minorities. The (IABPFF) were also a part of the first crew assignment on the Snow Creek Fire in Nevada.

. Since its inception in 1997, approximately fifty percent of the IHC has been made up of minorities. The Jackson IHC are the only BLM crew based east of the Mississippi River and their main goal is to protect life, property and resources threatened by wildland fires. In their history, the Jackson IHC has battled blazes totaling millions of acres in the lower 48 states including Alaska. The crew also participates yearly with cooperators in the Southeast with their prescribed fire burns. This burn period start Mid December and continues until Mid April. As a National resource they have been called upon to assist at ground zero following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, with wreckage recovery of the space shuttle Columbia and with cleanup after numerous hurricanes, including Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita and Hurricane Gustav.

\_When the crew was first established their home base was only an 18 x12 mobile unit. The crew ran successfully from 1997 to 2003 out of this mobile unit. The crew was in training status until 1999 before receiving Type 1 status in 2000. In 2004 while partnering with U.S. Forest Service the Jackson Hotshots established a Memorandum of Understanding agreement. This agreement was to develop the Southern Regional Fire Center in Pearl, MS. This Training facility is now home to Jackson IHC and is used by Federal and State agencies in the Southeastern United States to train wildland firefighters. The Jackson IHC first crew carriers were surplus Forest Service crew carriers that were already 10 years old but serve the crew well. In the upcoming years the crew would inherit another set Forestry service carriers up until the recent International models. Jackson IHC is a valuable national resource that travels from the Atlantic to Pacific Ocean in

areas of fire suppression and emergency/disaster relief.

Formation of the Jackson IHC and its expanding role in the southeast region has provided an opportunity for minorities, primarily African Americans to gain experience in wildland fire suppression as well prescribed burns, thus providing a pool of culturally diverse individuals with the necessary skills and abilities to apply for fire management positions nationwide.

The Jackson IHC consists of 20-22 personnel. Superintendent, Asst Supt., Three Squad Bosses, Eight Career Firefighters (Senior) and Ten Crewmembers

Superintendents Past and Present

Jerry Soard 1997-98  
Lamar Liddell 1999- Present

Asst Supt Past and Present

Lamar Liddell 1997-98  
Fred Ashford 2000-Present

# South Ops





## Arrowhead Hotshots

**Agency:** USDI National Park Service  
**Home Unit:** Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

### Contact Information:

**Arrowhead Hotshots**  
**PO Box 925**  
**KCNP, CA 93633**  
**559-565-4342**  
**Superintendent: Joe Suarez**  
**Web Site: [www.arrowheadhotshots.org](http://www.arrowheadhotshots.org)**

### Established 1981

The National Park Service established its Interagency Hotshot Crew program in May of 1981, the Arrowhead Hotshot crew being one of the three crews formed at that time. These three crews were the first non Forest Service Hotshot crews established. They were also the first Hotshot Crews to be funded by the Department of the Interior. In 1981 the crews were known as Arrowhead 1, Arrowhead 2, and Arrowhead 3. Our crew was known as Arrowhead 2 that first year. As you can imagine, having three Hotshot Crews running around with basically the same name caused quite a bit of confusion. In 1981 the three crews were located in the following parks:

Crew Name	Location	Superintendent
Arrowhead 1	Grand Canyon	Jon Larson
Arrowhead 2	Sequoia-Kings Canyon	Jim Cook
Arrowhead 3	Yellowstone	J. W. Allendorf

In 1982, the names of the three crews were changed. The new crew names were derived from the National Park Service emblem:

1981 Name	1982 Name	Superintendent
Arrowhead 1	Alpine IHC	Jon Larson
Arrowhead 2	Arrowhead IHC	Jim Cook
Arrowhead 3	Bison IHC (Disbanded 1984)	Ken Eckstien



Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks has been the home unit for the Arrowhead Hotshots since the crew's inception. The crew's work center is located in the Grant Grove District of Kings Canyon National Park. In 1981 the crew was located at the abandoned Swale Campground site which was built in the 1930's. That first year the crew lived in two-man tents and had rock fire pits for heat. Since that first year the crew has developed the old campground into what is known today as the Swale Work Center.

On October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004 Arrowhead Hotshot Daniel "[Homeboy](#)" Holmes lost his life when he was struck by the top of a burning snag. This line of duty death is a brutal reminder of the hazardous work environment that wildland firefighters are exposed to every time they step onto the fireline. We will never forget.

**CREW SUPERINTENDENTS:**

Jim Cook	1981 - 1990
Dan Buckley	1991
Jim Cook	1992 - 1995
Dan Buckley	1996
Brit Rosso	1997 - 2006
Pat Morgan	2007
John Goss	2008 - 2012
Joe Suarez	2013

***PRIDE – SAFETY - TEAMWORK***

**“Fortitudine Vincimus”**

Translation: "By Endurance we Conquer"



## **Bear Divide Hotshots**

**Agency: USDA Forest Service**

**Home Unit: Angeles National Forest**

### **Contact Information:**

**Bear Divide Hotshots**

**21501 N Sand Canyon Road**

**Santa Clarita, California 91387**

**661-252-7673**

**Superintendent: Brian Anderson**

## *Crew History*

### **Established 1974**

The Crew started in the build up years of the early 1970's. It was started in 1974 as a 10 person flight crew in conjunction with a 10 person flight crew on the Valyermo district. In 1975 it was made a 20 person crew and the first superintendent was Mike Dougherty.

Bear Divide was one of 6 hotshot crews on the Angeles National Forest.

Mike's tenure as superintendent was 1975-1979.

The Bear Divide Station was built in the late 1960's and was constructed with a 12 person barracks, kitchen and 4 bay garages. In 1975 the barracks was added on to house a total of 25 personnel. During the early 1970's the station also was home to two, seven person engine modules. One engine module was cut in 1976.

In 1980 Bear Divide got a new superintendent, Richard McCombs, who stayed in the job until 1982.

In 1982 David Conklin became superintendent and stayed in the job until 1999.

In the mid 1980's the Station was added on to again to make a large weight room/training room, storage room and to add additional restrooms/showers.

Mike Alarid was promoted into the superintendent's job in 2000-2013 and has since been promoted to a Division Chief on the Angeles NF. Effective May 2013, Brian Anderson is the new Bear Divide superintendent.

The station is located on the now called Los Angeles River Ranger District on the Angeles National Forest or what used to be the Tujunga District. Bear Divide is nestled on the Santa Clara Divide separating Santa Clarita and the LA Basin. It's location is prime for initial attack throughout the fire season.

# Boundary Peak Hotshots 2001-Present



The Boundary Peak Hotshots, based in Bishop, was started in 2001 as a 10 person fuels crew with the primary goal of completing fuels reduction projects throughout the Inyo National Forest and Bishop BLM field office. The crew was assigned three vehicles, two pickups with utility beds (one single cab and one crew cab) and a Chevy blazer. The office was a modular unit similar to temporary construction site offices and a cargo container for the cache, located at the White Mt. Ranger Station. That first year the crew would marry up with its sister crew from the Mammoth Ranger District to form a 20 person Type II crew for off forest fire assignments.

When funding increased for fire suppression resources in 2002, the White Mt. Fire Management Staff (Jeff Iler and Terry Molzhan) turned down the offer of a third Type III engine for the district in exchange for funding of ten more positions for the fuels crew with the intent of becoming a Hotshot Crew.

The first year with 20 people proved to be a productive one with the crew completing remodel of the Forest Fire Cache into the crews' new offices, project work (thinning, brushing roads, fuel breaks and Rx burning) that resulted in approximately 5,000 acres treated and a few fires for about 700 hours of overtime. The crew still had the original three vehicles with the addition of another crew cab truck and a 10 passenger van (some were white and some were green). The crew received the Supt. truck and CCV's that are currently in use in 2003. In 2005 the crew moved its offices once again into the old Forest Radio shop, which offered more room for offices, ready room, training room and cache.

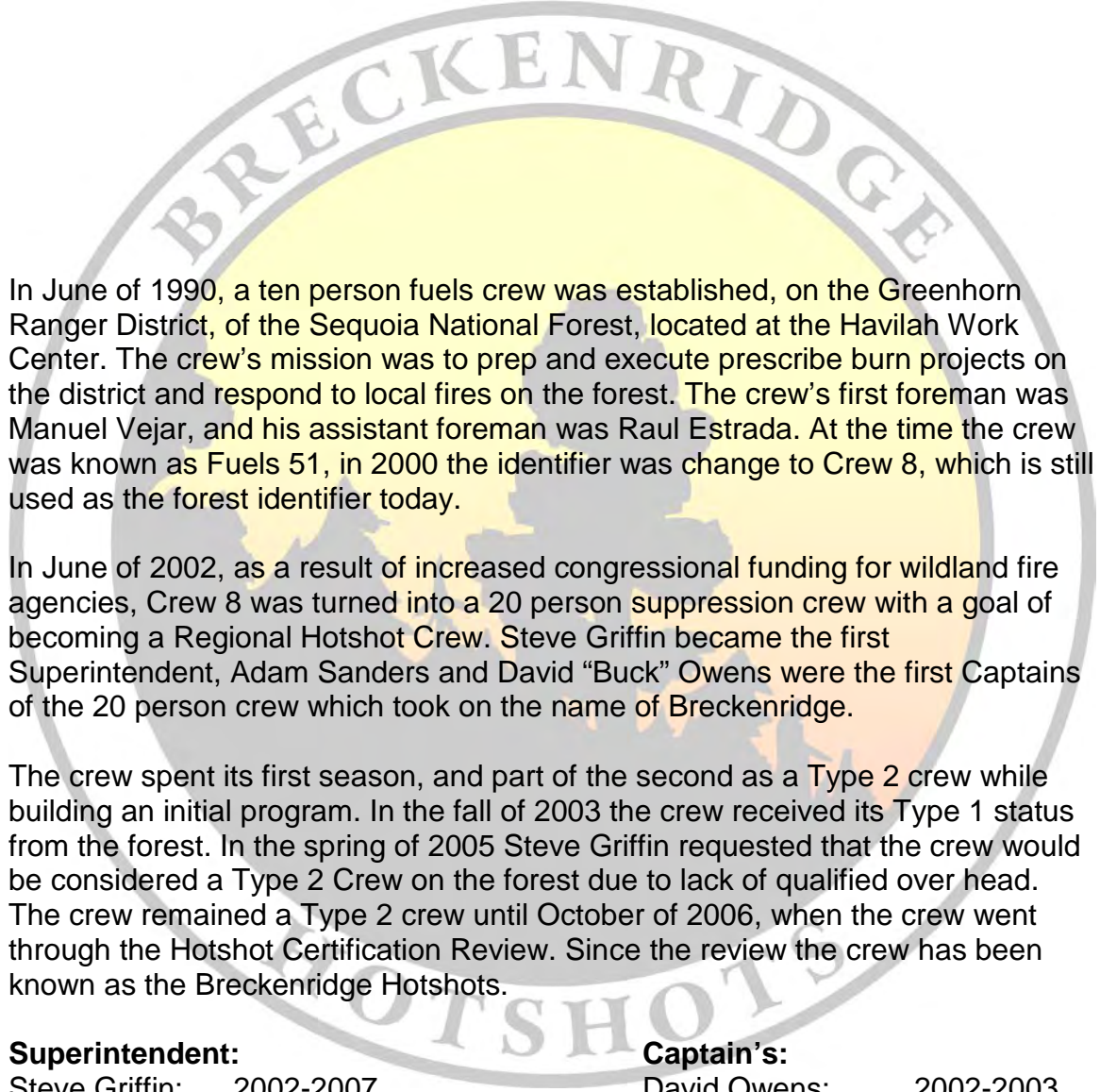
By 2008 the crew was finally able to hire all the required permanent positions with the required qualifications. After seven years of growth, improvement and hard work the crew succeeded in becoming an officially recognized Hotshot Crew on August 11, 2008.

Crew Supervisors:	2001-2004	Tim Keller
	2004-2005	Jeff Lucas (Detail)
	2005-Present	Ron Riise

# Breckenridge Hotshots

## Crew History

Established 2002



In June of 1990, a ten person fuels crew was established, on the Greenhorn Ranger District, of the Sequoia National Forest, located at the Havilah Work Center. The crew's mission was to prep and execute prescribe burn projects on the district and respond to local fires on the forest. The crew's first foreman was Manuel Vejar, and his assistant foreman was Raul Estrada. At the time the crew was known as Fuels 51, in 2000 the identifier was change to Crew 8, which is still used as the forest identifier today.

In June of 2002, as a result of increased congressional funding for wildland fire agencies, Crew 8 was turned into a 20 person suppression crew with a goal of becoming a Regional Hotshot Crew. Steve Griffin became the first Superintendent, Adam Sanders and David "Buck" Owens were the first Captains of the 20 person crew which took on the name of Breckenridge.

The crew spent its first season, and part of the second as a Type 2 crew while building an initial program. In the fall of 2003 the crew received its Type 1 status from the forest. In the spring of 2005 Steve Griffin requested that the crew would be considered a Type 2 Crew on the forest due to lack of qualified over head. The crew remained a Type 2 crew until October of 2006, when the crew went through the Hotshot Certification Review. Since the review the crew has been known as the Breckenridge Hotshots.

### **Superintendent:**

Steve Griffin: 2002-2007  
Adam Sanders: 2007-present

### **Captain's:**

David Owens: 2002-2003  
Adam Sanders: 2002-2007  
Jason Smith: 2004  
Jeremy Bush: 2005-present  
Justin Gagnon: 2008-present



## Chilao Hotshots

Agency: USDA Forest Service  
Home Unit: Angeles National Forest



**Established 1949**

**Disbanded 1984**

### *Crew History*

1949 – first year of the Hotshot crew. Superintendent was Don Biedebach with a brand new crew camp at Chilao.

1950 – crew Superintendent was Ray Bond. The crew foremen were: Lynn R. Biddison, Lynn Newcomb, and Jim Dolan. Ralph Jehl was the Foremen on the engine. This was a 30-man crew with George Mc Nellis as the camp cook. 10 or 12 of the crew members were Navajo or Hopi Indians from the Sherman Institute in Riverside. The balance of the crew were regular hires.

At this time there were only 5 Hotshot Crews in the nation. Those crews were:

- Chilao
- Del Rosa
- Laguna
- Oak Grove
- Los Prietos

Both Chilao and Del Rosa were financed by special Los Angeles River funds. The funds were earmarked by Congress for use in the L.A. river drainage. As a result, Chilao and Oak Grove could not be off forest at the same time. This resulted in the rotation of off forest assignments.

1951 – crew Superintendent at the start of the year was Ray Bond. Early in the season Ray left and Lynn Biddison became the Supt. The crew consisted primarily of Indians from Taos, New Mexico. Pete Trujillo was part of this group. The crew foremen were: Jim Murphy, Ralph Jehl, and Tommy Brumfield.

1952 – this year was the beginning of a yearlong Hotshot crew at Chilao using San Quentin prisoners from the prison at Chino. The Forest Service paid the State of California prison authority \$1.00 per day for each prisoner. The crew was a total of 30 inmates. In addition, there was an inmate kitchen crew at Chilao. The Forest Service had the responsibility of the inmates when we were out of camp working on fire breaks, trails, etc. In camp the state Corrections Officers were responsible for the inmates. On fires the Forest Service foremen were responsible for inmate security when we were on the line. In fire camp the Corrections Officers were responsible for inmate security. The Forest Service was supposed to count the inmates periodically when we were responsible for their security. We seldom did this and we never had an inmate escape.

The inmates became a very good Hotshot crew. They competed very well against Oak Grove, Del Rosa, Laguna, and Los Prietos. Del Rosa was the toughest competition as a good part of their crew came from the Chaffee College football team.

1953 – the yearlong inmate Hotshot crew continued. Lynn Biddison was Superintendent until September when he became Assistant Ranger / FCO (Fire Control Officer) on the Arroyo Seco District. Jim Murphy became the new crew Superintendent. The crew foremen were: Jerry Hayes, Ray Trygar, and Ted Gregg.

*NOTE – It was about this time that the Hotshot crew size was standardized at 20 people (crew members) plus overhead. The 30-person crew size was a holdover from the C.C.C. days when their stake side trucks had bench seats that ran across the bed of the truck. The Hotshot crews had changed this to padded tool box seats along each side of the bed of the stake side truck and across the front. This new set up did not provide seating for more than 12-14 people per truck. The main reason though for reducing crew size to 20 people was to be able to put the crew and their gear on a Forest Service DC-3 or C-54. In those days the crews seldom flew to a fire, but it was starting to happen and the crew and their gear had to fit on the airplane.*

1954 – this was the last year of the use of inmates for the Chilao Hotshot crew. The Superintendent was Bill Myrick. The crew foremen were: Jerry Hayes, Ray Trygar, and Jim Ruppelt.

*NOTE – Ralph Johnston and Jim Murphy did much of the early pioneering with the use of helicopters on fires at Chilao. Features such as Heli-jumping were pioneered at Chilao. The use of helicopters to lay hose from a tray attached to the ship was also pioneered at Chilao.*

(The 1955 through 1984 Chilao crew history is still being gathered)

## **CREW SUPERINTENDENTS**

1949 - Don Biedebach

1950 - Ray Bond

1951 - Ray Bond / Lynn Biddison

1952 - Lynn Biddison

1953 - Lynn Biddison / Jim Murphy

1954 - Bill Myrick

1955 - Bill Thompson

1956 - Bill Longacre

1957 - 1958 Woody Hite

1959 - Jack Lane

1960 - 1961 Ralph Johnston

1962 - 1968 Pete Trujillo

1969 - 1974 Dick O' Conner

1975 - 1980 Gary Raybould

1981 - 1984 Jim Ogilve (crew was cut at the end of the 1984 fire season)

(Many thanks go to Lynn R. Biddison who provided the bulk of the Chilao crew history)





## **Dalton Hotshots**

**Agency: USDA National Forest Service**  
**Home Unit: Angeles National Forest**

**Established 1953**

### *Crew History*

Dalton Canyon, named after Henry Dalton who was born in England in 1803 and later came to southern California in 1843. Mr. Dalton, at the time, was an ambitious rancher and landowner. The station now sits at the junction of Little and Big Dalton Canyons. The crews' emblem depicts a Nelson Desert Bighorn. The Bighorn roams freely in the Sheep Mountain Wilderness on the Angeles National Forest.

The Dalton Hot Shot Crew was organized in September of 1953. The crew organization consisted of a Foreman, Charles (Chuck) Culver, 11 Jemez and 11 Zia Indians. Harry Grace of the Angeles Forest Supervisors Office recruited the crew out of Northern New Mexico.

From 1954 to 1958 the crew was stationed at the old Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) camp, on the eastside of Glendora Mountain Road and south of Big Dalton Canyon Road, in Glendora, CA. The main CCC building served as the office, kitchen, and dining area. It also served as sleeping quarters for the foreman and squad bosses. The crew barracks were surplus temporary barracks, which consisted of plywood. There was also a separate building for washing and showering. There was another building with pit toilets.

In 1959 the crew was stationed at Tanbark Flats, at the San Dimas Experimental Forest. The CCC and Conscientious Objectors constructed the buildings at Tanbark Flats. The facility consisted of a large barrack with showers, toilet facilities, and large kitchen and dining area were in another building, and yet even another building, with quarters for the superintendent and foreman. From this location, the Dalton Hotshots have easy access to freeway systems, major airports and two nearby National Forests.

In 1960 to 1964 the crew was moved back to the CCC camp at Dalton Canyon. It was thought that the travel time from Tanbark to fires was excessive. Then later in 1965 to 1969 the crew again returned to Tanbark Flats. The facilities at Dalton CCC camp were deteriorated and in an unsuitable condition to house the crew. The contract for the Dalton Barracks was awarded March 13, 1969 at a cost of \$182,000, with a 7,000 square foot size, this could comfortably accommodate up to twenty people. It contained a crew lounge, training facility, hotshot office and an engine office. Our facility also affords crewmembers an opportunity to enhance their physical conditioning through the use of our volleyball and basketball courts, along with an extensive weight training room. Finally in 1970 the Dalton Hot Shots moved into this new facility on the westside of Glendora Mountain Road and south of Big Dalton Canyon Road intersection.



In 1954 to 1956 the crew vehicle was a Chevrolet Stake-side Forest Service #1418. The crew made modifications, i.e. wooden boxes for tool storage and combination bench seat for the crew. The seat was hinged and the tools were stored underneath the seat. There was also room for each crewman to stow a knapsack with personal gear. Later in 1957 thru 1965 the crew vehicle was a 1957 Ford stake side Forest Service #4513. The crew again made modifications for tools, personal gear storage, and bench seats. The cushion for the bench seat consisted of a canvas cover stuffed with blankets.

In 1966 thru 1975 the crew vehicle was an International cab-over, Forest Service #2243. The body was a custom-made open metal body. Similar to the wooden construction with a major difference, the tool and bag storage access was on the exterior of the vehicle.

In 1976 thru 1980 the crew had 2 vehicles. They were a 1974 Chevrolet Forest Service #3520 and #3521. These were custom metal enclosed crew bodies that had chair type seats, with tool compartments that could be accessed from the outside and personal gear storage on the roof of the crew compartment. The crew Superintendent had a pick-up truck Forest Service #3748.

Throughout Dalton's rich history of pride and tradition, there is a positive value that has been passed on from crew to crew. Passed on is a great tradition of self worth, integrity and the endeavor for excellence. It is this reward that is Dalton's most valued piece of history and it is those individuals who have had the responsibility to lead, that have carried on this valuable tradition.

### **Superintendents**

1954 Charles Culver

1954-57	Jay Shoemaker	1974-82	John Chackerian
1958-60	Robert Caffey	1983-90	Lewis Yazze
1961	Jim Clark	1990-99	Bob Serrato
1962	Harold Allum	2001-06	Randy Unkovich
1962	Charles Hartley	2007	Luis Ocampo

2007-Present-Steve Robles



## Del Rosa Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** San Bernardino NF, Cajon RD

### Contact Information:

**Superintendent: Neil Gamboa**  
**Del Rosa Hotshots**  
**Front Country Ranger District**  
**4121 Quail Canyon**  
**San Bernardino, CA 92404**  
**909-383-5567**

**Established 1946**

## *Crew History*

In 1945 the C.C.C. Civilian Conservation Corps were stationed at the Del Rosa work center, at this camp were many crews working at various projects through out the greater San Bernardino area, one of the many tasks assigned to the camp was fire suppression duties, in 1946 the fire suppression crew was renamed the Del Rosa Hot Shots and was administered by the forest, the crew has been in the same location since it was formed.

The Spanish name Del Rosa translated in English means (**THE ROSE**).

Originally the crew was made up of two separate crews consisting of 15 people each, one Superintendent, one Assistant Superintendent and two Crew Forman for a total of thirty-two personnel, and several support personnel, i.e. Cooks and camp help.

The crew adopted its name form the small community that lies below the work center and Del Rosa Boulevard that leads to the Hot Shot camp from Hwy 30 to the west, the work center is now considered to be in the city limits of San Bernardino.

In the mid 1960's the Del Rosa Hotshots became one of three Interregional Hotshot crews in R-5, this status allowed them to travel to other regions with in the U.S., for fire assignments.

At one time the crew had assigned to them their own airplane that was used for transportation to out of region assignments, as well as a 250 gal. pumper that they staffed out of the Del Rosa work center for initial attack on forest.

The following are those that have severed as Superintendents of the Del Rosa Hotshots since it's beginning in 1946.

### **CREW SUPERINTENDENTS**

Toby Ortega 1946-1949  
George McCarty 1949-1950  
Gordon Bosteder 1950-1954  
Mike Roberts 1954-1957  
Ernie Lemelin 1957-1960

Don Mc Cormack 1960-1962  
Gerry Ewart 1962-1965  
Bob Robbins  
Eldon Henry  
Kenny TorteZ 1966-1976  
Gary Lange 1976-1977  
Ron Regan 1978-1997 (retired in place)  
Scott Wagner 1997-1998 (detailed in 97-became the Supt in 1998)  
Jeff Koenig 1999- 2005 (detailed in 99-became the Supt in 2000)  
Jim Tomaselli 2005 - 2013  
Neil Gamboa 2013 - Present

***Additional information sent to us from Jerry Horine:***

Toby Ortega was also supt. Between Gerry Ewart and Bob Robbins in the 60s, as I was a crew foreman under all of them. Joe Cruz was my squad boss during that time. Also the movie Crew Boss was made during that time using the Del Rosa crew as the subject of the movie. A professional actor was used as the crew boss.

I have many old pictures of the crew during the 60s if anyone is interested. 928-718-1826

**Jerry Horine**, Retired

***Duty Respect Integrity***



## El Cariso Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Cleveland National Forest  
Trabuco Ranger District

**Established 1958**

### *Crew History*

The Cleveland National Forest had its first Hotshot Crew in the late 1950's. This crew was mobile and represented the entire forest. In 1958 the crew was permanently located in the El Cariso area of the Trabuco Ranger District. This would be the first year of the El Cariso Hotshots, as they are known today.

The crew continued to work the entire forest, sometimes spending days in the Mt. Laguna area on project work. Their primary responsibility was still wildland fire suppression. The first superintendent of the crew was Danny Street. He was the superintendent in 1958 and 1959. On August 8, 1959 the crew experienced the first of two fire tragedies El Cariso would be involved in. The fire was the Decker Fire located in the foothills above Lake Elsinore. Seven people were overrun by fire and lost their lives. Three were members of the El Cariso Hotshot Crew.

In 1960, Glen Kay took over as interim Hotshot Superintendent. In 1961 Doug Campbell became Superintendent and remained through the 1962 fire season. In 1961 El Cariso became the first, and one of only two Interregional Hotshot Crews. The other crew was Del Rosa on the San Bernardino National Forest. A C-46 airplane was kept on call at Ontario Airport to transport the two crews upstate or out of region. Campbell's successor was Marv Stout and Gordon King followed him.

Gordon King was Superintendent at the time of the tragic Loop Fire in which 12 members of the El Cariso Hotshots perished. This fire occurred on November 1, 1966. The post Loop Fire era for the El Cariso Crew included many fires with no significant events. The crew Superintendents following Gordon included Steve Gallegos, Ron Campbell, Richard Aguillar, Greg Davis, Mike Smith, Hal Mortier, Ralph Chavez, Allen Johnson, Don Feser, and the current Superintendent Jay Bertek.

Crew size has varied over the years. In the early years through about 1970, the crew consisted of two fifteen-person squads, two foremen, an Assistant Superintendent, and the Superintendent. Today's crew make-up is seventeen firefighters, two Captains (Foremen), and the Superintendent.

The El Cariso Hot Shots were originally housed across the road from the El Cariso Engine Station on the Ortega Highway. Buildings included Quonset Huts, pit toilets, and a combination crew kitchen/training hall. In the early 1970's the crew was relocated to the Los Pinos Forestry Camp,

Approximately 3 miles north and west of the original site. Here the crew shared the facility with Orange County youth offenders. A final move has put the crew in their current location. The El Cariso Hotshot camp is adjacent to the Forestry Camp on Cleveland National Forest land and they no longer coexist with the youth offenders.

When the crew was first formed, they used a cartoon version of a ruptured duck as their logo. A firefighter had to participate in hotline fire line construction as an El Cariso Hotshot to earn the right to wear the ruptured duck. Ruptured ducks are found today on tee shirts, hats, belt buckles, decals, and even body extremities in the form of tattoos.

The El Cariso Interregional Hotshot Crew is one of about (65) elite firefighting crews in the nation. Throughout the crew's almost 40 years, El Cariso has established quite a fire history. They have fought fires in every western state multiple times and have also traveled to the Southeast. They have participated in the suppression of approximately 500 different fires and have put in countless hours in the process. El Cariso has been involved in every large fire siege since their inception and most firefighters with any fire savvy at all have heard of this crew. Their reputation and performance has created a great tradition that is sure to continue. It is unknown how many current and ex-El Cariso Hotshots there are. Chances are conversation with any of them would reveal their time with El Cariso as some of the most memorable times of their life.



#### Contact Information

**Fulton Hotshots**  
**PO Box 343**  
**Glennville, CA 93226**

**Office: 661-536-8311**  
**FAX: 661-536-8532**

#### Fulton Hotshots

**Agency: US Forest Service**  
**Home Unit: Sequoia National Forest**

**Established 1969**

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### *Crew History*

The Fulton Hotshot Crew was started on the Greenhorn R.D on the Sequoia N.F as a 6-person fuels crew that worked out of the Fulton Work center throughout the 1960's. There were two other 6 person fuels crews that worked out of Davis Camp and Richbar Camp on the Greenhorn R.D of the Sequoia N.F. When a fire assignment was filled, the district combined the three crews for a total of 18 personnel and sent them to the assignment.

In 1970 Bill Sandborg became the crew Foreman in or around the month of August. The district combined the three stations for a total of 15-20 personnel at Fulton. When a fire dispatch order came to the district, the district sent the fuels crew from Fulton. At this time, Bill Sandborg called them the Fulton Hotshots while on fire assignments and was severely reprimanded by Dick Montague from the Regional Office.

Although Bill put up an outstanding fight on why they should be called the Fulton Hotshots, he never convinced Dick Montague until 1973 when the crew was assigned to the Pillikan Fire on the Eldorado N.F.

Well the story goes as follows: apparently the crew had pulled five straight 24 hour shifts and picked up a large portion of the fire which was considered the highest priority on the incident. The Regional Fire Staff was visiting the incident due to its publicity. Upon the completion of Fulton's assignment, Dick Montague visited the area of concern on the fire. At that time the Fulton crew was returning from their shift and ran into Dick Montague while walking off the line after their 5 continuous shifts. Dick Montague was so impressed that at that time he announced, congratulated and awarded Bill Sandborg and the Fulton crew as now being identified as the Fulton Hotshots Nationally.

Although all the Hotshot Crews were being established around that time frame, Fulton was a little ahead of its time in 1973.

## **CREW SUPERINTENDENTS**

**William A. Sandborg, Jr. 1970-1982**

**David R. Provencio, Jr. 1982 -1983 (one season detail)**

**James Smith 1983-1988**

**Dan Kleinman 1989-1997**

**Ron Bollier 1998-Present**





## Golden Eagles Hotshots

Agency: USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Pacific Region

Home Unit: Sycuan Fire Department  
Sycuan Indian Reservation

Established 2000



## *Crew History*

### ***ABOUT THE GOLDEN EAGLES HOTSHOTS:***

The Sycuan Fire Department / BIA ***GOLDEN EAGLES HOTSHOTS*** is one of seven BIA NIFC funded crews in the United States. The crew is the only BIA crew in the state of California assigned to the Pacific Regional Office out of Sacramento, Ca. and stationed in the Sycuan Indian Reservation. The crew is dispatched by the Cleveland National Forest and is on rotation with the other three Forest Service Hotshot crews on the Forest.

The ***GOLDEN EAGLES HOTSHOTS*** started as a request from the USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs Pacific Region. The region had sent out a letter to all reservation tribes expressing an interest in starting three Native American crews in the state of California. These crews were to be located regionally in California, one in the south, one central and one in the north.

The Sycuan Fire Department of the Kumeyaay Nation took this challenge and opportunity to bring together a diverse group of people, from many nations and many walks of life and proceeded to develop, shape and mold these individuals into an elite team of wildland firefighters. These courageous young men and women are destined to become our future leaders, role models and heroes in Indian Country and our communities across our great nation.

The Sycuan Fire Department / BIA ***GOLDEN EAGLES HOTSHOTS*** organization was established in June 15, 2000, under the Golden Eagles Handcrew name. The crew was to be a Type II organized crew working towards IHC certification. The crew was funded through a cooperative effort between The Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation and USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs, Southern California Agency. During this initial period the crew was assigned and dispatch by the San Bernardino National Forest.

In August 2001, the ***GOLDEN EAGLES HANDCREW*** received recognition and status as a Type II “IA” Initial Attack Crew by the San Bernardino National Forest. This certification allowed the crew the opportunity to take on Type I assignments, these assignments helped in the shaping, molding and preparation of the crew for Type I certification.

In January of 2003 the crew was recognized by BIA NIFC as a Type I IHC crew in training status, this status also provided the crew with partial funding from BIA NIFC hotshot program for fiscal year 2003. The BIA and the Sycuan Tribe meet in February 2003 to discuss how the program would be operated. The main discussion point was whether the crew would be directly supervised by the BIA or the Sycuan Tribe would contract the BIA’s program under Public Law 93-638 contract guidelines. Based on this meeting, the Tribe elected to have the crew hired by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Crew carriers were ordered utilizing additional funding provided by the national office. After many months of work within the federal hiring process, selections were made for the ***GOLDEN EAGLES HOTSHOTS “T”*** in August and September.

In February 2004, the Sycuan Tribe and the BIA meet to review the progress of the crew. Some discussion was on advantages and disadvantages of the crew being operated by the BIA or contracted by the Tribe. At that time, the Sycuan Tribe decided that the benefits of being able to hire and fire employees utilizing the Tribal personnel system in a short time period was critical to the ***GOLDEN EAGLES IHC “T”***, especially during the fire season. The BIA initiated the 638 contracting process and the BIA funds were transferred to the Tribe to manage the federal fire program. Within a month, the Tribe was able to hire the crew. The Crew is funded utilizing BIA federal funds, and is required to meet all federal IHC requirements to be considered a Federal Fire Crew.

The 2004 fire season resulted in a few dispatches, however, the crew worked diligently on meeting all of the required training and qualification standards established for Interagency Hotshot Crews.

In June 2005, an Interregional review team traveled to the Sycuan Reservation and spent several days observing the crew, reviewing all of their training and experience listed under the Incident Qualifications and Certification System. Overall the Crew received a very favorable review. However, a few of the required factors for certification as an Interagency Hotshot Crew needed to be strengthened and documented. The Crew was dispatched to numerous fires in California and out of Region during the fire season. In September 2005, a follow up review was made to determine if the crew had been successful in completing the last few items that had been identified in the earlier review. The review team found that all requirements had been met by the ***GOLDEN EAGLES IHC “T”*** to be certified. In October 2005, the BIA Pacific Regional Office certified the ***GOLDEN EAGLES*** as a fully qualified Interagency Hotshot Crew. The BIA, National Interagency Fire Center concurred with the certification that same month.

***CREW SUPERVISION:***

**Superintendent 63** – Byron Alcantara, 2012 to present

Juan “Hugh” Mendez, 2008 to 2012

Ray Ruiz Sr. 2000 to 2008

**Captains** – Rick “Mad” Madrigal 2000 to present.

Robert Villegas, Jr. 2012 to present

Juan “Hugh” Mendez, 2000 to 2007

Byron Alcantara, 2008 to 2012

Squad Bosses – Rey Castro and George Violante, June 2000

Marco “Mini-Me” Garcia and James “P” Denver, June 2001

Brian “Kiki” Laughter and Robert Serrato, June 2002

Brian “Kiki” Laughter and Fred “Sawboss” Sabas, June 2003

Fred “Sawboss” Sabas and Jose “Dsaw” Deza, June 2004 – 2005

Jose “Dsaw” Deza and Charles “Kep” Keplinger, January 2006

Byron Alcantara and Steven Kitchen, March 2007

Steven Kitchen and Robert “Weeze” Goodwin, April 2008-2009

Steven Kitchen and Robert Villegas Jr., April 2010-2011

Steven Kitchen and Cody Ridley, May 2012-present

***“PRESERVING THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE”***

# *Horseshoe Meadow Interagency Hotshots Crew History*



## **Horseshoe Meadow Hotshots**

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Sequoia NF, Hume Lake District

### **Contact Information:**

**Superintendent: Joe Gonzales**  
**Horseshoe Meadow Hotshots**  
**Pinehurst Work Center**  
**53921 Hwy 245**  
**Miramonte, CA 93641**  
**559-336-2651**  
**Tim Murphy– Captain**  
**Jeremy Loyd -- Captain**

### *Established 1974*

*The “Horseshoe Meadow Crew” has been proudly serving the U.S. Forest Service since it was established in 1974 on the Hume Lake Ranger District of the Sequoia National Forest.*

*Ben Charley was the first Superintendent of the crew. The crew was stationed at Horseshoe Meadow KV (Knudsen-Vanderbilt) camp. Originally there were 25 crewmembers, this allowed for seven day a week staffing. In the late 70’s due to budget short falls, manpower programs such as California Indian Manpower Consortium and Young Adult Conservation Crops were used through Native American programs to hire crewmembers. The philosophy behind this was to create diversity and develop a young, strong, workforce. It also provided the District and Forest with a multiple-use resource.*

*In 1980, the crew earned Hotshot status through a reputation of hard work and safe firefighting becoming the Horseshoe Meadow Interagency Hotshots. Ben Charley retired in 1989, but his famous line of “only two more chains, we’re almost tied in!” Is still spoken as a motivation tool on Horseshoe to this day. Robert Bennett took over leading Horseshoe as Supt. in August of 1989 and lead the crew until he retired in October of 2006. “Horseshoe Bob” continued the tradition that Ben started in the early 70’s and provided the Forest Service with a highly respected and hard working Interagency Hotshot crew.*

*In May of 2007 Joe Gonzales was hired to lead Horseshoe as Superintendent.*



## Inyo Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Inyo National Forest

### *Crew History*

**Established 1974**

**Disbanded 1978**

The Inyo Hotshot Crew was founded in the spring of 1974 and was based at the Mammoth Ranger District, Inyo National Forest. Originally, the crew was named "Mammoth Hotshots," but this was quickly changed to "Inyo" in order to encompass a total forest concept of support and participation. The word "Inyo" is Paiute, and means "dwelling place of a Great Spirit." The crew logo was a drawing of a mountain man crossing a stream in the Sierras.

Starting a crew from scratch was a tremendous challenge, and coming in contact with well established crews, such as Mark Linane's Los Prietos Hotshots, and Charlie Caldwell's Redding Hotshots, was initially intimidating, but we learned a lot from these folks and just as importantly, we earned the respect of the other Hotshot Crews by the end of the 1975 season.

In 1976 we acquired an Air Force surplus 1967 International 29-passenger bus. Hard to believe, but that bus became the envy (only a slight exaggeration) of the Region. Due to donated time and labor by the crew, the bus was installed with reclining aircraft seats, refrigerator, sound system, tool bin, painted and lettered for the start of the '76 season.

Each season saw improvements and by the '76 season we had obtained IR status, which is something we were quite proud of...

While fighting fire on the Cleveland at the end of August 1978 we were informed that our crew and several others were being disbanded due to budget. After a near riot of angry crews in camp the last night, we left the next morning saying our good-byes to our comrades as we rode out in that ol' bus blazing the "Star Wars" theme on our speakers.

The Foremen were Lance Heister (1974-1978), Rick McCool (1974), and Dan Whitmore (1975-1978). Tim McMullen was the Superintendent (1974-1978).

I'm quite proud of what we accomplished in such a short period of time, and the respect we received from our peers speaks for itself. In preparing this short bio, I looked back on crew records, and I was reminded of why I originally chose to do what I do – and I hope to carry that spirit until retirement and not get bogged down in superficial or meaningless work programs and politics we are sometimes faced with...

**Tim McMullen**

**Superintendent – Inyo Hotshots**



## Kern Valley Hotshots

**Agency:** USDI Bureau of Land Management  
**Home Unit:** Bakersfield District

**Contact Information:**

**Leif Mathiesen, Superintendent**

**Phone:** 661.391.6055

**Email:** [lmathiesen@blm.gov](mailto:lmathiesen@blm.gov)

**Eric Hagemeier, Assistant Superintendent**

**Phone:** 661.391.6054

**Email:** [ehagemeier@blm.gov](mailto:ehagemeier@blm.gov)

**Kern Valley IHC**  
**3801 Pegasus Dr.**  
**Bakersfield, CA 93308**

### *Crew History*

#### **Established 1983**

The Kern Valley Hotshot Crew was established by the Bakersfield District, Bureau of Land Management, as part of its fire program build up, in 1983. Anthony Escobar was detailed from the US Forest Service to start the crew as Superintendent. The first crew was comprised of local BLM, Forest Service firefighters and Alaskan Fire Service personnel. Known as *Crew 6* the crew was stationed at Black Rock Fire Station on the Sequoia National Forest from 1983 to 1984. The general location for the crew was near the Kern Plateau at the eastern end of the collective communities gathered along highway 178 and Lake Isabella generally known as the Kern Valley. The name Kern Valley Hotshots was chosen over such stately names as *the Golden State Hotshots*. The Crew was the first BLM Hotshot crew established in California.

Anthony Escobar eventually became the permanent Superintendent and in 1985 the crew moved to Chimney Peak Fire Station, manned with all BLM personnel and designated as *Crew 1*. The crew was largely made up of personnel from the surrounding communities in and around Lake Isabella. In the same year the crew was amongst the first to carry water as a tactical function of the Supt. Truck. Four-wheel drive crew carriers on a regular truck chassis were also used by the crew at this time and for several years after. It is generally agreed that in 1985 the crew became recognized by its peers as a Hotshot crew while several large fires including the Wheeler Ridge Fire on the Las Padres National Forest.

In 1988 the Crew made a substantial move out of Kern Valley and into Bakersfield City in order to be closer to a jetport. In Bakersfield the crew was first stationed at the old Butte Street Fire

Warehouse located in *the hood* behind the cement factory. The move to Bakersfield started a fundamental shift in the crew's personnel from *small town* to *urban*. In 1989 the crew was re-located into the abandon Kern County Fire Station #42, on Niles Street in the heart of East Bakersfield. The crew members and station contributed greatly to the Niles street community by providing a variety of services ranging from changing tires to providing a temporary homeless shelter on the station's front porch. Bakersfield's large oil production work services and products allowed the crew to begin utilizing metal processes for manufacturing and fire tool making.

Finally in 1993 the crew made its final move to the Bakersfield Field Office in Northwest Bakersfield. The office environment enabled the crew to start working with computer software as an adjunct to firefighter training. In 1997 the Kern Valley Hotshots began teaching the Bakersfield College Fire Technology course, *B71a, Basic Firefighter*. In 2001 Anthony Escobar became the Central California BLM Assistant Fire Management Officer. Ron Napoles assumed responsibility for the crew as its second Superintendent.

### **Crew Foremen have included:**

Brian "Buster" Fennessy

Mike Bowles

Jesus Robles

Ron Napoles

Robert White





**CREW LOGO**



**BELT BUCKLE**

## **KINGS RIVER HOTSHOTS**

**Agency: USDA, U.S. Forest Service**

**Home Unit: Sierra National Forest**

**District: High Sierra Ranger District**

## **CREW HISTORY**

### **2001 TO PRESENT**

The Kings River Hotshots was organized on the Sierra National Forest in 2001, but was first recognized as SNF Crew 2, a type 2 crew prior to the name given by the original crew members at the end of the fire season 2001.

The crew name "Kings River" was chosen after the old district name Kings River R.D. and for its geographical location. The vast changes in terrain and elevation ranging from 1,300ft at the lowest point at our current location at Trimmer Work Center, to 12,400ft following the north fork of the Kings River Drainage shared with the Kings Canyon Nation Park. The animal chosen for the logo was the mountain lion for its agility, strength, and demeanor.

On March, 2001 the crew started with three permanent employees and a warehouse filled with district fire tools and miscellaneous fire supplies, including one ¾ ton pick-up and two hold-over crew hauls re-outfitted for crew use. Most of the crew overhead had worked, or came directly from surrounding area Hotshot crews, fuels crews, engines and had worked together on many of the same fires before choosing to work on the Kings River crew in 2001.

Building the Crew in 2001 was a work in progress, filling the temporary positions with mostly local personnel in and around the surrounding communities of Fresno, Clovis, Reedley, Auberry and other small towns in the area. Others came as far as Medford, Oregon and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Crew cohesion, teamwork and leadership was the priority along with building an identity for the crew, to accomplish forest projects, prescribe burning, initial attack response and provide a nationally recognized resource.

June of 2002 was the year Kings River Hotshots received Type I status and has strived to improve and develop into a dedicated Hotshot Crew, providing elements leading to success through strong leadership, dedication and overall commitment to the Professional Wildland Firefighting Organization.

Trimmer Work Center is still the crew's permanent location on the High Sierra Ranger District, Sierra National Forest, located east of Fresno and Clovis approximately 40 miles. The work center is shared with Sierra Helitack 520, Engine 41, Prevention units along with miscellaneous district personnel.

**Crew Superintendents:**

Ron Garcia -- 2001 - 2006

Isaac Naylor -- 2007 - Present

**Crew Captains:**

Isaac Naylor 2001 – 2006

Pedro Martinez 2001 – Present

Joaquin Marquez 2007 - Present

## Laguna Hotshots



**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Cleveland National Forest  
Descanso Ranger District

### **Contact Information:**

**Laguna Hotshots**  
**P. O. Box 418**  
**Descanso, CA 91916**  
**Superintendent: Jim Huston**  
**619.445.5032**  
[jhuston@fs.fed.us](mailto:jhuston@fs.fed.us)

## *Crew History*

### **Established 1974**

The Laguna Hotshot name was first used in the 1950's when the Descanso Ranger District financed a forest crew and based them at Camp Ole on Mount Laguna. Camp Ole was previously a CCC camp and had facilities for housing the crew and was close to areas of work. The crew was around for 4 years until funding became unavailable and the crew was disbanded. The following year the El Cariso Hotshots were founded on the Trabuco Ranger District.

In 1974, the Laguna Hotshots were once again established and based at Camp Ole. This became the second Hotshot Crew on the Cleveland National Forest. The Base at camp Ole was again used because it was the only place on the district that had housing, offices, and a space to handle a 20 person Hotshot Crew. The crew shared an office with the Laguna Engine Crew and brought in an old dilapidated travel trailer to use as a tool room. The barracks and office were all in the same building and were from the CCC days.

Kyle Rayon, wife of 1974 crewmember Howard Rayon, designed the Oak Tree emblem. The Oak Tree was used to reflect the Cleveland National Forest and specifically the Descanso Ranger District.

Due to the poor conditions of the old facilities at Camp Ole, the Laguna Hotshots moved to the Descanso Compound with the Descanso Engine Crews in the town of Descanso. In 2004, the Laguna Hotshots will celebrate their 30th Anniversary. To this day, the Laguna Hotshots still carry on the crew colors and traditions.



## *Little Tujunga Hot Shots*

**Agency: USDA Forest Service**  
**Home Unit: Angeles National Forest**

**Established 1970**  
**Disbanded 1980**  
**Re-Established 2007**

### *Crew History*

THIS IS THE HISTORY OF THE EARLY YEARS OF THE LITTLE TUJUNGA HOT SHOTS OF THE TUJUNGA RANGER DISTRICT ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

BY ROD WRENCH RETIRED DIVISION CHIEF, SAN JACINTO R.D.,  
SAN BERNARDINO N.F.

Following the devastating flood of 1934 the Flood Control Act of 1936 was enacted by the U.S. Congress to build flood control channels and structures throughout the Los Angeles basin and along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains within the L.A. River watershed of the Angeles National Forest. Then again in 1938 one of the worst floods in the history of L.A. County, killing 85 people and creating millions of dollars of damage, the funding was increased and expanded for decades to come. Hence the creation of certain Forest Service fire suppression crews to protect this valuable watershed in about 1948. The Little Tujunga Hot Shots and their facility were established in 1970 and was a L.A. River watershed funded crew.

The construction of the state of the art Hot Shot facility at the existing Little Tujunga station began in 1969 and was completed in June of 1970. Rod Wrench, a crew foreman with Del Rosa Hot Shots, SBNF, was hired as the first GS-7 Superintendent on May 3, 1970. Walt Sniegowski and Gary Glotfelty were hired on June 1, 1970 as the GS-6 and GS-5 crew foreman. 20 crew members and a cook were hired on July 1, 1970. While waiting for permanent transportation the crew was first transported in a Forest Service stake side truck with metal tool bins that also served as seating for the crew. A Forest Service 26 passenger International bus with the tool storage in a separate rear compartment was soon acquired and used that fire season. The superintendent had a half ton Chevrolet pickup. Both vehicles were equipped with red light and siren.

The crew's first fire was the Kashmere Fire on July 1<sup>st</sup>. It was a class C fire off the Soledad Road near Action in L.A. County jurisdiction. On July 5<sup>th</sup> the crew's first off forest fire assignment was the Skinner Ridge Fire, a class E, in the Little Sur of the Los Padres N. F. The crew fought 20 fires in 1970. The five forest Hot Shot crews were rotated for off forest assignments. The 1970 fire season concluded on November 13<sup>th</sup> with the 70,000 acre Santa Ana wind blown Bear Fire on the San Bernardino N.F.

On February 9, 1971 at 6:01 AM the 6.6 magnitude Sylmar earthquake occurred. Even though the epicenter was in Iron Canyon north of Bear Divide and shook the District violently

the damage was the greatest at the Little Tujunga station with minor to moderate damage occurring to the other facilities on the District. The Hot Shot facility was severely damaged, the engine crews barracks was a total loss and the building that housed the engine, office, and shop had moderate damage. Engine 54 was moved 90 degrees and sitting sideways inside the garage. Both residence were damaged enough to make them unlivable. The two mobile homes were knocked off their piers 3 to 4 feet and the superintendent's double wide mobile was split in half. All utilities were severely damage and unusable. It was a mess.

For the first part of the 1971 fire season the crew worked out of the Little Tujunga engine crew's garage and office that survived the quake well enough to allow the Hot Shot and engine crews to occupy. Later that season the crew moved up to the Big Tujunga Station where they remained until it was decided what to do with the Little Tujunga station site.

There were three alternatives considered as to what to do with the station. One was not to rebuild but to abandon the site and not have a station at all. Another was to tear everything down and relocate the station somewhere else and the third alternative was to repair and rebuild the 1 year old Hot Shot facility and move the engine and its crew there also. In September of 1972, nineteen months after the earthquake, a contract was awarded to repair the structure. Prior to the contractor taking over the site for reconstruction the Little Tujunga Hot Shots and forest engineering demolished the south end of the structure, deemed unsafe and beyond repair. This is where the day room, dining room, kitchen and cooks quarters were located. Heavy equipment, dump trucks, jack hammers, cutting torches, dynamite and strong backs were used to bring down this portion of the one year old structure. When the large concrete footings were blasted, chunks of concrete debris rained down on the station trailer park, on the other side of the ridge that separated the two locations, denting roof tops. The reconstruction plan was to have two separate buildings instead of the one originally constructed. The architectural design was changed moderately for this plan.

The Engine barracks was bulldozed down, and the Hot Shot crew tore down the old residence at the entrance to the station and also the old Lopez station in Lopez Canyon. The Fire Control Officer's residence, where Hugh Masterson had lived, would be repaired at a later date and used as an interpretative and fire prevention office. This building is now part of the District office.

The bids to rebuild came in \$121,000 over the engineers estimate due to the cost of repairing the water and sewer system. Engineering and the District felt Forest Service personnel could do this for \$85,000. Rod Wrench was placed in charge of repairing the utility system and he and Gary Glotfelty started the job in 1972 utilizing a closed circuit television system to locate damage in the sewer system and special plumbing parts to repair the water and sewer systems. With the help of L.A. County Camp 15's crew they constructed a 50,000 gallon water storage tank above the station and plumbed it into the old system.

A well in Merek Creek was installed and plumbed to a pump house that is located in front of the district office. The work was completed eight months later in 1973. Rod and Gary both received a Special Achievement award from the Forest for saving \$50,000 and a job well done. District Fire Management Officer Cal Yarbrough was also very instrumental in the success of this project.

Due to a test trial of a district fire management re-organization in May of 1972, the Hot Shot Superintendent, Rod Wrench, was made responsible for the management and supervision of one of three geographical areas of the district. He would be the Hot Shot superintendent but in that position he would also supervise the Little Tujunga engine and FPT, the Big Tujunga engine and FPT, and the Mendenhall lookout. The Fire Prevention Officer and the Bear Divide Helitack superintendent were the other area managers. They were all responsible for the suppression, prevention, law enforcement activities, recreation site and trail maintenance in their given areas.

The Hot Shot crew returned to the newly repaired facility at Little Tujunga in August of 1973.

The Hot Shots were a multitask crew and utilized for just about anything and everything that needed to be done District and Forest wide. They were used as a road crew repairing and installing drains, a trail and recreation crew building and maintaining district trails and campgrounds, a fuels management crew constructing and maintaining fuel breaks, a hazard abatement crew clearing weeds along the roadside and around district facilities and recreation sites, a demolition crew taking down earthquake damaged structures, special use structures in Big Tujunga Canyon and old unwanted abandoned structures where ever they existed. After large fires they would go to the South Zone fire warehouse in Arcadia and clean, repair and reorganize fire hose, cots, headlamps, canteens and everything else at the fire cache. They were used on a number of District construction projects such as building concrete water tanks and installing the plumbing system, landscaping stations and the list goes on. All of this and still maintained their equipment, trained and fought fire with no fire or project related accidents.

In 1973 the district fire organization returned to the more traditional structure and Wrench became the GS-7 suppression assistant in October of that year. He continued to supervise and respond to off forest fire assignments with the Hot Shot crew until the end of the 1973 fire season.

In 1974 Walt Sniegowski became the GS-7 Little Tujunga Hot Shot superintendent. Gary Glotfelty became the GS-6 Engine foreman at Little Tujunga in 1972 and in September of 1975 Rod Wrench was promoted to the newly upgraded GS-9 Assistant District Fire Management Officer and in January 1980 left the district to be promoted to District Fire Management Officer on the San Jacinto Ranger District of the San Bernardino National Forest.

In 1980 the Little Tujunga Hot Shots were disbanded for budget reasons, the facility continued to be used as the South Zone Training Center. In 2007 they were reactivated.

## **SUPERINTENDENTS**

Rod Wrench 1970 - 1973

Walt Sniegowski 1974 - 1976

John Stevenson 1977 – 1980

Bob Garcia 2007 – 11/2012

Alexander Liao 12/2012 – Present



## Los Padres Hotshots

Agency: USDA Forest Service  
Home Unit: Los Padres National Forest

### Contact Information

**Los Padres Hotshots**  
**3505 Paradise Road**  
**Santa Barbara, California 93105**  
**805.967.3481**  
**Superintendent: Stan Stewart**

## *Crew History*

### **Established 1948**

The Los Padres Hot Shot Crew was established in 1948 as an initial attack and follow up crew for the Los Padres National Forest, which stretches from Monterey, California to Los Angeles, California. In 1948 a fire engine was assigned to the crew as well as a crew truck. The Los Padres Hotshot Crew's primary mission was to provide wild land fire protection to the Santa Ynez Watershed that provides the primary water supply for the communities of Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Montecito, Goleta and the Santa Ynez Valley.

From 1948 to 1965 the crew comprised of thirty-five crewmembers that provided seven-day coverage with twenty-four crewmembers. Crews were hired locally and staffed with forestry school student referrals as well as congressional referrals. This hiring procedure continued through 1965. When students returned to school, R-5, R-6, and R-1 Smokejumpers were hired to finish out the season.

In 1953 a three barracks complex and mess hall/office was constructed at the Los Prietos Ranger Station approximately 20 miles north of Santa Barbara.

In 1957 a Bell B-1 Helicopter was assigned to the crew for helitack and helishot assignments. The copter stayed with the crew until 1962 when it was designated as a separate unit.

In 1965 the crew name was changed to the Los Prietos Hotshots due to the addition of two other crews on the Forest (Monterey Hotshots & Ozena Hotshots both now disbanded). In 1974 the Ojai Hotshots were added to the Forest, which are now also disbanded. Due to no other hotshot crews remaining on the Forest, the crew name was changed back to the Los Padres Hotshots in 1994. In 1965 the crew strength was cut to twenty with five-day coverage to allow crews Inter-Regional mobilization by aircraft such as the DC-3 and Convair. In 1960 the chainsaw became the tool of choice and replaced the brush hook and misery whip.

The late sixties and early seventies (the post Vietnam years) brought in a lot of veterans to the organization. In 1976 Deanne Shulman joined the crew as the first woman hotshot in R-5. She later went on to become the first woman smokejumper. In the late sixties and early seventies the crew did the first experimental testing, in conjunction with MTDC, of fire line explosives and shot





## Mill Creek Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Front Country Ranger District  
San Bernardino NF

### Contact Information:

**Superintendent:** Pete Coy  
**Captains:** Frank Esposito & John Ellison  
**Mill Creek Hotshots**  
34701 Mill Creek Road  
Mentone, CA 92359  
Station: (909) 382-2902, 2903, 2904

## *Crew History*

**Established 1975, Disbanded 1982, Re-established in 2002**

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The Mill Creek Hotshot Crew is a 20 person, Region 5, California Hotshot Crew. The crew history dates back to 1975. At the time the crew was established at the Mill Creek Ranger Station on the San Geronimo Ranger District of the San Bernardino National Forest. The Mill Creek Hotshots appeared and disappeared several times during the next eight years with their first run from 1975 through 1978 under Superintendant Mike Goldenbee. The crew was then disbanded for several years and was re-established in 1980. George Motschall became the next superintendant, but the crew became victim of more budget cuts and disappeared at the end 1982 fire season along with several other Southern California Hotshot Crews from the Cleveland and Angeles National Forests. The Mill Creek Hotshots were resurrected in 2002 as a part of a dramatic build up of fire suppression resources in California with increases of federal fire management budget. The crew is at the Mill Creek Station on the Front Country Ranger District and still uses the same facilities as the original Mill Creek Hotshots three decades ago. The Crew received Hotshot status in 2003 and continues to serve in the tradition of the Mill Creek Hotshots of the past and the California Hotshot Community. Pete Coy is the current Mill Creek Superintendent.

The following historical statements come from the original group of Mill Creek Hotshots three decades ago:

**A BIG thank you to Terry Molzahn & Dave Dooley for the following brief histories:**

**The crew was Started in 1975 and Mike Goldenbee was the first Supt. Richard Keebaugh and Dave Dooley were the foremen. The Crew worked out of the Mill Creek Ranger Station on the Old San Gorgonio Ranger District. In 1978 Dooley left the crew and I became the foreman on 489-2. I stayed with the crew the whole season; in late fall of that year we were cut along with all the other crews assigned to the Maple Fire on the Cleveland N.F. Upon returning to the Forest, we were told that the crew would stay until the winter. Over the winter the Crew overhead, we were RIF. The Crew came back in 1980 with Mike Goldenbee, Richbaugh and Tom Walker, who replaced me. I believe in 1981 George Motschall replaced Goldenbee. The crew was cut again in the fall of 1982. This is some of what I remember about Mill Creek Hotshots. I retired from the Forest Service in Dec 04 and at my dinner, I was given a Chrome Bushhook by Dan Snow and Louie Nuno. As far as I know Louie and Scott Wanger are the last two people still working from the Crew of the 70's.**

**Terry W. Molzahn  
DFMO Mount Whitney Ranger District (RET)  
Inyo National Forest & Thompson Falls, Montana**

**Here's additional history sent by Dave Dooley:**

**I was the driver at Mormon Rocks on the Cajon R.D. in '74, having been on the Redding Smoke Jumpers in '73 and on the Del Rosa Hot Shots in '70-'72. When the San Bernardino spooled up the Mill Creek crew Mike Goldenbee was selected to the Superintendent slot, Richard Keebaugh was Foreman of crew #1 and I was Foreman of crew #2.**

**Some of the folks on the crew at start up stuck around long term and made a career of the FS, including Louie Nuno, Scott Wagner, Terry Molzahn and Mike Conrad. Ray Mendoza might also have made a career of the FS.**

**I stayed with Mill Creek through 76, then switched over to Law Enforcement a few years later and retired from the FS early in 2002.**

**Original Logo:**



10,000 feet on the Rattlesnake Fire (LPF) in 1975, which was the first use of FLE on a wildfire in R-5.

The crew has fought fire in all of the States west of the Mississippi, Alaska and throughout R-8. Some of the more notable fires were the Monrovia (1958), Bel Aire (1961), Coyote (1964), Wellman (1966), Marble Cone (1977), Canyon Creek (1988) and the Paint (1990).

The crew continues to provide a professional, multi-skilled, experienced resource to all wildland fire agencies throughout the United States.

### ***Los Padres Hotshot Crew Superintendents***

Ezra Braden – 1948 to 1951

Gordon Garrett – 1951 to 1953

Edwin Benson – 1953 to 1955

John Malmen – 1955 to 1958

H. "Porky" Moreno – 1958 to 1965

Richard Calkins – 1965 to 1968

Richard Grandalski – 1970 to 1972

Mark Linane – 1973 to 1999 (retired in place)

Stan Stewart – 2000 to 2009(early)

Steve Molacek – 2009(late) - Present



## Ojai Hotshots

Agency: USDA Forest Service

Home Unit: Los Padres National Forest

### *Crew History*

**Thanks to Doug Campbell and Craig Lechleiter for submitting the following brief history:**

**Established 1974**

**Disbanded 1984**

Initial Superintendent was Bob Bernett, with foremen Terry Raley and John Szalay.

Craig "Lanky" Lechleiter was assigned to the crew as foreman in June of 1976 replacing John Szalay. He worked along side Terry Raley, and for a short time Ish Messer, as foremen until July of 1978 when he transferred to the Redding Inter Regional Hotshot Crew as lead foreman under Charlie Caldwell, Crew Superintendent.

Ish Messer took over the Supt. duties in 1978 and remained until the crew was disbanded due to lack of funding in 1984. Bob Becker served as a crew foreman also.

We apologize for any possible misspelling of names....



## Rio Bravo Hotshots

Agency: Kern County FD  
Home Unit: Lake Isabella

### Contact Information:

Superintendent: Jimmie Rocha  
Rio Bravo Hotshots  
4500 Lake Isabella Blvd.  
Lake Isabella, CA  
760-379-2042

## *Crew History*

### **Established 1989**

Located in the mountains south of Lake Isabella California, the Rio Bravo Hotshots was started by the Kern County Fire Dept and Grant Young in 1989. Since then it has grown to be the only county federally recognized IHC.

The crew was started by the Kern County Fire Department as a ten-person initial attack crew. The county funded three IA crews around the county. The crews were made up of ten seasonal firefighters, and a extra help firefighter and a crew leader, usually a fire department engineer. These crews worked an eight day on and four day off cycle and were made up of college students needing summer employment.

Because of the climate and topography of Kern County, it is essential that we maintain a fire fighting hand crew within the Kern County Fire Department. In 1989 Black Mountain Hotshots, the original name for Rio Bravo, was formed. Headed by Grant Young and John Smith, the crew provided initial attack and extended attack for the county. Due to poor economy the crew was disbanded in 1992 through 1993.

In 1994 the budget came back and the crew was started up again. A crew in region four was currently using the name Black Mountain Hotshots so we adopted the name Rio Bravo, after the old Spanish settlers name for the Kern River. Because the overhead had previously worked on forest service hotshot crews they shaped the crew like one with seventeen seasonal firefighters and two crew Foremen and a crew Superintendent. In 1996 the crew began to travel throughout California.

In 1998 John Smith took over as superintendent and in 2000 the crew began to travel out side of California. In 2000 Rio Bravo became the first and only nationally recognized local government Interagency Hotshot Crew. In 2003 Jimmie Rocha became our Superintendent.

### **Crew Supervision**

**Grant Young - 1989-1991, 1994-1997**  
**John Smith - 1998-2002**  
**Jimmie Rocha - 2003**



## Sierra Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA National Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Sierra National Forest

### *Crew History*

**Established 1976**



The Sierra Hotshots have been an organized crew on the Sierra National Forest since 1976.

The first home of the crew was at the Blue Canyon Work Center on the Kings River Ranger District. In 1981, in order to make the crew more available for off forest assignments and air transportation, the crew was reassigned to the San Joaquin Experimental Range about 25 miles north of Fresno on Highway 41. The crew was assigned to the Bass Lake Ranger District (now the Mariposa / Minarets Ranger District).

In 1990 the Hotshots were asked to move again, this time to the Batterson Work Center, just north of the town of Oakhurst (south of Yosemite) where they are based out of today.

The Sierra Hotshots have had five Superintendents since the crew's inception.

#### **Crew Superintendents:**

Steve Raddatz -- 1976 - 1979

John Szalay -- 1980 - 1989

Mike Freed -- 1987 and 1995 (Detail)

Steve Slate -- 1990 - 1997

Ken Jordan -- 1998 - Present



## Crew History

### Superintendents:

Robert Sanders 2001-2004

Jack Medina 2004-Present

### Captains:

Manuel Vejar 2001-2004

Jack Medina 2001-2004

Bryan Duffy 2005-2007

Ernie Villa 2006-Present

Jay Enns 2008-Present

The Springville Hotshots were established in the spring of 2001 as part of the Most Efficient Level (MEL) build-up, as a Type II hand-crew. The crew, designated as Crew 9, is based out of Springville, CA on Hwy 190 about twenty miles east of Porterville, CA on the Sequoia National Forest. There had been a fuels crew based out of the Springville in the eighties, but was cut due to funding. Robert Sanders, the Superintendent who started the crew in 2001, continued with the crew until 2004 when he accepted a fuels officer position on the district. Crew 9 achieved type I status in the summer of 2002, and Hotshot Certification accomplished in October of 2003 when reviewed and certified by Safety First. Jack Medina, the current superintendent, detailed in the position directly after Robert, and officially accepted the position in August of 2005.

Although fire is our first priority, the crew has and continues to work all over the Tule River Ranger District on projects for all shops on the district, not just fire. We always extend our skills and abilities to assist where and when we can. The crew has always been engaged in Wildfire Use on the forest, and has actively participated in every one of these fires to date. The heart of the Springville Hotshots is our hard work, determination, and a continued commitment to the high standards that define R-5 Hotshot Crews.





## Stanislaus Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Stanislaus National Forest  
Mi-Wok Ranger District

### Contact Information:

**Stanislaus Hotshots**  
**19777 Greenley Road**  
**Sonora, CA 95370**  
**Phone: 209-532-3935**  
**FAX: 209-532-2932**  
**Superintendent: Shawn Baker**

**Motto: Semestris Heros**

## *Crew History*

### Established 1974

In 1974 the Stanislaus Hotshot Crew was established under the direction of Charlie Gripp. The crew was based at Long Barn Elementary School through 1978. The crew moved locations in 1979 under Superintendent, Greg Overacker, to Bald Mountain Heli-tack Base and remained there until 1981. In 1982 the crew relocated to Long Barn Engine Station, until 1984. From 1985 to 1990 the crew worked out of the Mi-Wok District Warehouse. In 1991, the crew found a more suitable facility in Sonora, where we presently reside.

The crew averages 20-25 fires per season. Employment dates are usually from May 1<sup>st</sup> through November 15<sup>th</sup>. Crew assignments are primarily throughout the Western United States with extended tours away from the duty station.

When not fighting fire the crew focuses on training and development of Firefighter 2, Firefighter 1, and Single Resource Supervisors. We also spend time maintaining our skills cutting and maintaining fuel breaks throughout the district. We are also involved in Fire Use fires on the Forest.

### Superintendents:

1974 - 1978: Charlie Gripp  
1979 - 2006: Greg Overacker  
2006-2007 Felix Berbina  
2007-Present Shawn Baker

### Captains:

Present: Brandon Hull  
Present: Tim Markin

**Physical Training:**

Hiking, various cardio exercise, Upper body strength , Stretching. Nothing replaces time on the hill.

**Crew Structure:**

1 GS-09, Superintendent, PFT  
2 GS-08, Captains, PFT  
2GS-06, Squad Leaders, 18 and 8  
6 GS-05, Senior Firefighters, 13 and 13  
7 GS-04/05, Temporary Firefighters  
1 Detailer  
1 Apprentice

**Location Description:**

The Stanislaus National Forest is located in Central California in the Foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. Elevations range from 2,000 feet to above 11,500 feet. Temperatures range from the 40's in the winter time to 100+ during the summer. There are several different fuel types: lower elevations are grass and oak woodlands and transition into chaparral, with higher elevations dominated by ponderosa pines and mixed conifers.

**Living Arrangements:**

There are no barracks available.



## Texas Canyon Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** Angeles National Forest

### Contact Information:

**Superintendent: John Armstrong**  
**Texas Canyon Hotshots**  
**31250 Bouquet Canyon Rd.**  
**Saugus, CA 91390**  
**661-296-8418**

## *Crew History*

### Established 1954

The Texas Canyon Hotshot Crew, located on the outskirts of the Santa Clarita Valley, was established in 1954 as a fire suppression and project crew. Early maps indicate that in 1926, the Texas Canyon Guard Station and three other Forest Fire Guard Stations were in service on the Saugus District of the Angeles National Forest. The Texas Canyon Guard Station and Hotshot Crew were named after Texas Canyon, a tributary to Bouquet Canyon located approximately two miles south of the station. In the late 1860's two brothers settled a homestead on a parcel of land in an unnamed canyon, where they ran cattle and did a little prospecting. The brothers, feeling homesick, named their canyon homestead Texas Canyon after their home state.

In the 1950's, the U.S. Forest Service received an Army Corps of Engineers contract for a stabilization and drainage project on a road under construction to the Nike Missile base at Los Pinetos (LA County Camp 9). Dick Dorn, who was superintendent of the Texas Canyon Hotshots at the time, was charged with obtaining additional manpower. Rather than hire locals, Dorn opted to recruit Native Americans from the Zuni Indian Reservation in New Mexico. In addition to performing this project work, the Zunis served as firefighters on the Texas Canyon Hotshots. The Zuni tribal symbol of the Knife Wing Kachina, also known as the Zuni Bird, became the official symbol of the Texas Canyon Hotshots during this time. Dick Dorn reported that one of the Zunis would sketch the symbol onto the hardhats and another would hand-paint the symbol in fine detail. Zuni Indians served as firefighters with Texas Canyon until the 1977 fire season.

Longtime superintendent Ron Smith started his career on the Texas Canyon Hotshots in 1957. He served as the superintendent from 1975 until his retirement on the Marre Fire in 1993. John Thomas served as a crewman in 1977, foreman from 1984 to 1993 and superintendent from 1993 to 2002. John Armstrong served as foreman from 1990 to 2002 and has served as superintendent since 2002.

### Crew Superintendents:

**Ed Kolchowski 1954-1956**  
**Dick Dorn 1956-1958**  
**Bob Alvord 1958-1961**  
**Leoroy Hubenak 1961-1963**  
**Bill Harper 1964-1972**  
**Ray Guardado 1972-1975**  
**Ron Smith 1975-1993**  
**John Thomas 1993-2002**  
**John Armstrong May, 2002-Present**



## Vista Grande Hotshots

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service  
**Home Unit:** San Jacinto Ranger District  
San Bernardino NF

### Contact Information:

**Superintendent:** Jesse Estrada  
**Captains:** Tony Sandrini & Manuel Villegas  
**Vista Grande Hotshots**  
**PO Box 518**  
**Idyllwild, CA 92549**  
**Station: 951.849.5750**  
**FAX: 951.922.2482**

## *Crew History*

### **Established 1974**

In 1974, Region 5 Fire Management added a second Hotshot crew on the San Bernardino National Forest. The location chosen was Vista Grande Guard Station on the San Jacinto Ranger District. Vista Grande is located near the small mountain community of Idyllwild, California.

The name (Spanish for Great View) originated in the 1930's when this location was a CCC camp. Vista Grande overlooks the Hemet Valley to the west and the Banning Pass to the north. The topography in the area ranges from the desert floors of Palm Springs up 10,000 feet to the San Jacinto Peak.

Kirby More, a veteran firefighter of 20 years, left his position as an engine Foreman at the Alandale Guard Station to become the first Superintendent of this crew in June of 1974. In 1994 Art Torrez became the Superintendent. In 2005 Jesse Estrada became the Superintendent, along with Tony Sandrini, Captain(s) in 2005, and Manuel Villegas in

The Vista Grande Hotshots have been instrumental in the development and implementation of the Prescribe Burn Program on the San Jacinto Ranger District. This program provides protection from wildland fire for the local mountain communities and enhances wildlife habitat.

The crew has also been involved in International Training Programs since 1985. These programs consist of hosting forestry and firefighter students from various South American countries including Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Venezuela, Argentina, and Nicaragua. It is rewarding to pass on important training and safety information about Prescribe Fire as well as Fire Suppression Tactics and Strategies in the changing world of Fire Suppression.

# Southwest



## **Black Mesa Interagency Hotshot Crew Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Region 3**



In the late 1960's and early 1970's, the Heber Emergency Crew was a 27-person crew located in Heber, Arizona on the Sitgreaves National Forest. Active in both fire suppression and project work, this crew was the forerunner of the Heber Hotshots. The HEC was stationed at the Heber Ranger Station and was divided into three squads. Two squads worked each day while one squad was off, providing 7-day-a-week coverage during the summer. Daily life was fairly primitive. The crew lived in one room 16'x 16' shacks with no running water and only one light bulb. Transportation was a covered 1½ ton truck with plywood tool boxes in the bed that doubled as seats for the crewmembers.

In 1972, the crew attained hotshot status and changed its name to the Sitgreaves Hotshots. Two years later, the crew was renamed the Heber Hotshots. The mid 70's brought several changes. A new duty station was assigned and the crew moved to the Job Corps compound west of Heber. Two cooks and a cook trailer provided meals to hotshots who wanted them, with the expense taken directly from their check. A bus replaced the old 1½ ton truck. However, both these changes were short lived. In 1977, the crew returned to Heber (now Black Mesa) Ranger Station, where the crew is still stationed today. Also that year, the bus was replaced by vans and the Hopi Sun God was adopted as the crew's logo. In 1979, the crew was paired down from three squads to two and the current structure, with a superintendent, foreman, and two squad bosses was adopted.

The 1980's saw an increase in the pay of both the overhead and crewmembers. Equipment and training improved and some of the outdated gear was replaced. The vans were replaced with crew carriers in 1985 and the army surplus packs the crew was using were discarded in favor of early fire packs. Memorable 30+ day assignments to California during the "Siege of 87" stand out as milestones for the Heber Hotshots of the late 1980's.

In the 1990's, the crew followed the national trend by building a better career ladder into its structure in an effort to retain key personnel. The position of saw boss was added, as well as permanent/part time appointments for the foreman and the squad bosses. In 1990,

the Dude fire struck close to home as the fire, originally on the neighboring Tonto National Forest, raced up the Mogollon Rim and onto the western part of the Apache-Sitgreaves. An assignment in Nevada's giant sage in 1999 resulted in Heber's only burn related injuries. Four members of the Heber IHC received 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns to the hands and face as they were retreating to a safety zone. The crewmembers, who had forgotten to wear their gloves and shrouds, received burns from holding on to tools and saws as they walked by the torching sage.

In 2002, the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, along with the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, played host to the Rodeo-Chediski fire. The largest wildfire in Arizona history, it burned nearly 500,000 acres in 15 days and threatened tens of thousands of homes in the White Mountains of northeastern Arizona. Far from "just another fire" for the Heber IHC, the crew faced the difficult and challenging task of defending one another's own homes and communities. Amid evacuations of personal belongings and concerned phone calls to friends and family, the crew helped with the suppression efforts south of Show Low, AZ and participated in the burnout that successfully contained the fire's high-priority eastern flank.

The Heber Hotshots changed their name to Black Mesa Hotshots in 2007.

***Superintendents:***

<b><i>1970-73</i></b>	<b><i>Dick Huard</i></b>
<b><i>1973-75</i></b>	<b><i>Pete Stewart</i></b>
<b><i>1975-76</i></b>	<b><i>Dennis Landrith</i></b>
<b><i>1976-78</i></b>	<b><i>Mark Whitney</i></b>
1978-85	Jerry Beddow
1986	Jim EtsHokin
1987-00	Chris Douros
2000-01	Jim Aylor
2002-03	Chris Wilcox
2003-05	Nathaniel Nozie
2005-08	Gary Strickland
2009-Present	Frank "Pancho" Auza





## **CREW HISTORY**

The Carson National Forest began researching and planning for a Hotshot Crew in 1970. In 1972 the National Fire Plan was introduced and the Carson National Forest did not receive the required funding they had hoped for to start an IHC. The Forest Fire Management Officer petitioned the Regional Office stating that Northern New Mexico needed a crew not only for fire suppression but to help stimulate a very weak economy. The Regional Office denied the request to start an IHC on the Carson. The FMO then submitted a funding request to Washington Office where approval was received. The Carson Interagency Hotshot Crew was established in March of 1973 to stimulate the economy of Taos and the surrounding communities.

The Carson Hotshots were originally based in El Rito, NM. Lack of support from the District Ranger, in addition to the rural setting of El Rito caused the crew's location to change shortly after its inception. The Crew was moved to Penasco, NM where the crew resided for over 20 years. In 1995, the Carson Hotshots were relocated to the Supervisor's Office in Taos NM, where the crew presently operates.

In 1973, The Crew's organization consisted of one permanent Hotshot Foreman position and two temporary Squad Boss positions, with the remaining personnel being temporary crewmembers.

In 1992, the Foreman position was reclassified to Superintendent and a permanent seasonal Assistant Superintendent position was established. In 1998, two permanent seasonal Squad Boss positions were added.

Currently, the crew has nine appointed positions: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, three Squad Leaders and four Senior Firefighters.

### **Crew Supervision:**

JJ Dominguez:	1973 - 1979
Adolfo Lopez:	1980 - 1983
Chester Romero:	1984 - 1995
Ron Bollier:	1996 - 1997
Stu Gore:	1998 - 2001
Paul Delmerico	2002 - 2012
Rich Sack	2013 to Present

# Flagstaff Interagency Hotshot Crew

## Coconino National Forest

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### Established 1972

In 1971, only one hotshot crew existed in Region 3, and they were stationed on the Gila National Forest. In 1972, Region 3 funded two more crews, one on the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest and the other on the Coconino National forest.

The Flagstaff Hotshots became that first crew on the Coconino, established on March 20, 1972 as the Coconino Hotshots and stationed at the Flagstaff Ranger District. The following year, in 1973, the crew name became the Flagstaff Hotshots.



Half of the original Coconino Hotshots were made up of a 10 person Hopi suppression crew and the others from surrounding areas. Bill Bishop became the first superintendent, with five years of prior firefighting experience. Bishop drew from the experiences of California hotshot crews and the Gila crew to organize and run the first hotshot crew on the Coconino.

The Coconino Hotshots were based at a ranch the Forest Service had recently acquired at the base of the San Francisco Peaks. First known as the “Ski & Spur Ranch” by the previous owners, after the land exchange it became the “hotshot ranch.” Today the Flagstaff Hotshots are still based at the ranch during the summer, and move to the Peaks Ranger Station located on the eastern side of Flagstaff during the off-season.

Originally, only the superintendent had a radio, the crew used two Homelite chainsaws—one with a bow bar and a straight 24 inch bar—and personal protective equipment consisted of a pair of levi jeans, long sleeve fire shirt, metal hardhat and goggles supplied by the government; firefighters supplied their own gloves and boots.

The Flagstaff Hotshots have had three different logos. The first was a Hopi insignia used in 1972. In 1973, the wife of one of the crewmembers designed the second logo, which is back in use today after a hiatus during which a third design (created by a former superintendent) was used.



### Superintendents:

Bill Kuche	2005-Present	Van Bateman	1973-1975
Paul Musser	1990-2005	Bill Bishop	1972
Walker Thornton	1986-1990		
Mark Zumwalt	1979-1985		
Ron “Biggy” Linbarger	1976-1978		

# Fort Apache Hotshot History 1982-Present



The Ft. Apache Hotshot Crew's home base is in Whiteriver, AZ. The majority of crew personnel are members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. The size of the reservation is 1.6 million acres with elevation with lower at 3,000 ft. and upper elevation of 11,000 ft. on Mt. Baldy, the White Mountain Apache Tribes Sacred Mountain. There are 15 communities throughout the reservation with approximately 15,000 enrolled Tribal members presently.

The Ft. Apache Agency Bureau of Indian Affairs established its Interagency Hotshot Crew program in March of 1982. The Ft. Apache Hotshot crew was the first all Native American Hotshot crew to be funded nationally in the country. At the time Ft. Apache Agency had 10 Type II Hand-crews, a fully staffed Engine and Helitack Department(s). The Hotshot Crew was established based on recommendations from IMT's throughout the nation due to outstanding performance displayed on the fire line by the Type II Hand-Crews.

From 1982 until 1983, Ft. Apache IHC first Superintendent was Gibson Pinal. From 1983 to 1985 Varnell Gatewood led the crew through trainee status to a certified Hotshot crew as the Superintendent. From 1985 to 1993 the crew Superintendent was Ralph Thomas. Through the leadership and guidance of Ralph Thomas the crew gained valuable positive reputation as one of the toughest and highly skilled Type I Hand-crew. Throughout the years the crew saw plenty of action throughout the country. The most memorable being the summer of 1988 during the Yellowstone fire, the crew did three 30 day assignments, all in the park. In 2002 they were given recognition for their outstanding efforts that stopped the Rodeo-Chediski fire from jumping its containment lines that would have done great damage to the communities of Show Low and Pinetop, AZ. They were co-grand Marshall's along with Rick Lupe at the Annual White Apache Tribal parade. They recently celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a hotshot crew.

From 1992 to 2002 the crew Superintendent was the late Rick Lupe. Through his leadership the crew continued the tradition of being a highly skilled and physically tough Type I crew. Mr. Lupe's career began in 1978 with the Type II Hand-crew. He was one of the Squad Bosses when the crew was formed. Unfortunately he was fatally injured in a prescribe burn incident in 2003, a year after he transferred to Fuels Management Dept. This tragic event is a constant reminder to our organization that accidents do occur, even to the most experienced firefighters.

## Superintendents Past and Present

1982-1983	Gibson Pinal
1984-1985	Varnell Gatewood
1985-1992	Ralph Thomas
1992-2001	Rick Lupe
2002-2003	Marco Minjarez (Detailed)
2003-2006	Dan Philbin
2006-2011	Trenton Prins
2012	Brian Quintero (Detailed)

## Geronimo Interagency Hotshot Crew History (1991 to Present)

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The Geronimo Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) is hosted by the San Carlos Apache Tribal Natural Resources Program. The San Carlos Apache Reservation is located in Southeastern Arizona. Geronimo IHC began to be established as a regular Type 2 Initial Attack Crew in 1987, known as the San Carlos #10. The crew was originally formed from Engine, Helitack, and Type 2 SWFF crew personnel. The late Walt Six Killer was the Fire Management Officer (FMO) at the time, and wanted to see a hotshot crew established in San Carlos, AZ. The crew worked to become an IHC crew by accepting challenging, high complexity fire assignments, which were equal to hotshot crew capabilities. And also the crew maintained a consistent number of fire assignments throughout the years.

In 1990, the crew was asked to come up with a crew name and T-shirt color by the FMO, Wilbur Belvado, and a former Globe Hotshot Superintendent. The name "Geronimo 1" was chosen. The crew decided to pick black as the color of the T-shirts, as the crew uniform.

A landmark had to be chosen to represent the hotshot crew name, so a small town located on the east boundary line on highway 70, was named the town of Geronimo. The name originated after the Chiricahua Apache warrior/medicine man, "Geronimo" also known as "Goyathlay" to his people. He roamed the Southwest following the season of prosperity, hunting, farming, and of course warfare.

Mr. Belvado encouraged and continued to pursue for the crew to receive an IHC status. In 1991, the crew received its Interagency Hotshot Crew status as the Geronimo Interagency Hotshot Crew, hosted by the BIA San Carlos Agency. From 1991-1995 the crew was unfamiliar with Hotshot responsibilities, and had difficulties functioning appropriately. At the end of the 1995 fire season, with uncertainty in budget, the San Carlos Apache Tribe was approached by the BIA to assume control of the Hotshot Program.

In 1996, the San Carlos Apache Tribal Natural Resources Program began administering the crew under a PL93-638 contract. Michael Longknife assumed the Superintendent position and hired

## Geronimo Interagency Hotshot Crew History (1991 to Present)

new crewmembers and squad bosses. Longknife, who had previously worked for the Globe and Helena Hotshots, helped advance the crew to its peak capabilities, like an IHC should perform. It was about this time that the crew logo was designed by the Tribal Forestry GIS Shop, with the input from the crew.

For many years, the crew was funded using various available dollars from Forest Management funding sources. Eventually, the National Office determined that since the crew was a national resource, it should be funded using national funds.

Members of the Geronimo Hotshots pride themselves on being in top physical and mental shape. In Native American culture, it is stressed that one should be healthy spiritually, physically, socially, and mentally. Crew leaders stress the importance of keeping pride, integrity, and bravery, within the crew. To maintain an alcohol/drug free policy, by providing random drug/alcohol testing throughout the fire season. This is to maintain a safe environment for the crew, and to show that the organization is a professional, respectful crew. The ultimate objective of the crew is safety for themselves and fellow crewmembers, and adjoining resources they are working with.

The primary mission of the Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHC) is to provide a safe, organized, mobile and highly skilled hand crew for all phases of wildland fire suppression. The arduous duties and specialized assignments required of IHC personnel require staffing, certification, training, equipment, communications, transportation, organization, and qualifications that are uniform, and adhered to by all IHC's. And ensure retention of IHC duties and responsibilities found and followed in the National Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations Guide.

### Crew Supervision/ Superintendents:

1987	Eugene Irving	2001-2002	Duane Chapman
1988	Tyrone Polk	2003-2007	Carlos Nosie Jr.
1989	Benedict Victor Sr.	2008	Leroy Brown
1990-1992	Curley Bush Jr.	2009	Julius Hostetler
1993-1995	Loren Macktima	2010-2012	David Provencio, Jr.
1996-1999	Mike Longknife	2013-Present	Julius Hostetler
2000	Randy Anderson		

## Geronimo Interagency Hotshot Crew History (1991 to Present)

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### **Crew Foreman/ Assistant Superintendents:**

1987	Tyrone Polk
1988	Benedict Victor Sr.
1989-1994	Tyrone Polk
1995-1996	Keith Goode
1997-1998	Dennis Logan
1999	Randy Anderson
2000	Duane Chapman
2001-2002	Carlos Nosie Jr.
2003-2008	Robert Johnson
2009	Stephan Patten/ Samuel Meade Jr.
2010	Julius Hostetler



The Gila Hotshots lay claim to being the first hotshot crew in region 3. It is known that the crew was originally established in 1968 as an Inter-Regional (IR) Crew. The Gila Inter-Regional Crew was a seasonal crew based at Negrito Fire Base. The base is located on the Reserve Ranger District approximately 40 miles southeast of the town of Reserve, New Mexico.

Inter-Regional crews were created with a similar mission to today's Interagency Hotshot crews (IHC). The idea was to give the Forest Service a pool of crews who could perform the "tough" assignments on large fires. During this same time period in California, Hotshot crews were beginning to make their names known in the world of fire. In the early 1970's a movement was made throughout most of the Forest Service to standardize the IR and Hotshot crews. Other agencies began to support Hotshot Crews and the crews became national resources required to meet a set of nationwide standards, to reflect this the term Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) was brought about. It was because of this event that the name was changed for the first time. In 1974, the Gila Inter-Regional crew became known as the Gila IHC.

The Negrito Fire Base has been home to the Gila Hotshots since the beginning and is a special place to everyone who has worked here. What makes Negrito special is the remoteness of its location. The base is about an hour's drive from Reserve and is located approximately 6 miles from the northern edge of the Gila Wilderness as the crow flies.

With the conversion of the crew into an IHC came more structure. Until then, the crew did not have a set roster of crewmembers or overhead. Firefighters were hired and stationed at Negrito without being attached to any particular program. They served as smokechasers, helitack or member of the IR crew, as needed.

As the 1970's drew to a close, another change came to the Hotshot program. 1977 brought another IHC program to the Forest, the Silver City IHC in Silver City, NM. Not wanting a semblance of favoritism, no crew would carry the forest name. So, in 1978 the name of the crew was changed from Gila to Negrito. The Negrito name was carried for over twenty years before the tentacles of political correctness firmly gripped the crew. The beloved "Negrito" name was changed, and the original "Gila" name was chosen in 1999.

Those who have led the crew include the following:

1968-1973 Various Foreman	1983-1990 Jerome MacDonald
1974-1975 Tom Reed	1991-1995 Robert Morales
1975-1978 Ricky Delgado	1995-1999 Doug Kastner
1979-1980 Gary Lukas	1999-Present Dewey Rebbe



## History of the Globe Hotshots



The Globe hotshots started in the mid 60's; these were known as the "Suppression Years." During that time, the Globe Ranger Station had two suppression crews, respectively A and B. These crews would fight fire and perform forestry related work. In the early 70's they became an Inter-Regional Hotshot Crew, and in 1974, the crew became an Interagency Hotshot Crew. In 1974 and 1975, there was a Crew Boss and an Assistant, with 3 Squads. The only permanent personnel were the Crew Boss and Assistant. In 1974 they were both detailed from Southern California. In 1975, the Crew Boss was detailed from S. California, with the Assistant being a local guy, Linnie Warren. In 74 and 75 the crew was split about 50/50 between college students and non-students (several guys from those years went on to become doctors and lawyers). In 74 the crew had a converted cattle truck for the crew carrier. In 75 they had 2 rental vans and a Suburban, in which they thought they were living large.

In 76, the crew went to a longer season, and this reduced the number of students on the crew in order to accommodate personnel being available for the longer season.

In 78, the crew experimented with a 28 person crew with one Superintendent and 2 Assistants. During this year they utilized housing at a local trailer park, which only lasted for one year as a result of a couple of stabbings and several other law enforcement calls to the trailer park.

Today we carry on the same professional tradition of Region 3 IHC's, as they had in the past. That tradition continues and lives on with duty, integrity and respect.

### Hotshot Superintendents:

- Bill Scarborough 1973
- Jeff Luff 1974
- Dean Ziehl 1975 (Asst. in 1974)
- Jim Gutierrez 1976 (crewmember since 1973)
- Steve Rowe 1977-1978
  - a. Jimmy Gutierrez-Asst.
  - b. Bob Clark-Asst
- Dan Eckstein 1979- 1980
- Wilbur Belvado 1981- 1988 (crewmember since 1976)

- Jim Ets Hokin 1989- 1990
- Mark Kaib 1991-1992 (crewmember for few seasons in 80s)
- Louis Sandoval 1993- 2000
- Greg Smith 2001- 2007
- James Osborne 2008
- Mark Babieracki 2009 – Present (Fuels detail 2012)
- Nate Barrett 2012 (Acting)

**Background on the Superintendents:**

- Bill Scarborough was the Physical Education teacher at Globe High School for 25 plus years, and coached their baseball team. He passed away a few years ago. He worked Prevention during the summers on the District for several years after 73.
- Jeff Luff retired from the Payette NF as the New Meadows District FMO.
- Dean Ziehl is an attorney.
- Jimmy Gutierrez resides in Miami, AZ.
- Steve Row retired from the Forest Service.
- Dan Eckstein currently retired from the Payson Ranger District, as the AFMO, on the Tonto National Forest. Still active as an AD Air Attack.
- Wilbur Belvado retired from the BIA-San Carlos Indian Reservation in 2008.
- Jim Ets Hokin sustained an injury and changed career paths to the Coronado National Forest. He has since retired and works for the state during the fire season.
- Mark Kaib currently works for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Fire Management.
- Louis Sandoval currently works for the Globe Ranger District as the Fuels Specialist. Before Louis came to the Globe Hotshots he was a Flagstaff Hotshot working as the Assistant to Paul Musser.
- Greg Smith also came from the Flagstaff Hotshots, where he was a sawyer. At the end of the 07 fire season Greg was offered a job with a new Type 1 training crew for the State of Arizona, the “Ironwood Hotshots.” He is currently the Superintendent for the Ironwood Hotshots with the Northwest Fire District.
- James Osborne worked for all three hotshot crews on the Tonto National Forest. He was a Senior Crewmember for Globe Hotshots, Squad Leader on Pleasant Valley Hotshots, and an Assistant Superintendent for the Payson Hotshots under Fred Schoeffler. James also was the Acting Superintendent for Payson Hotshots for the 2007 fire season.
- Mark Babieracki came to the crew in 2001 as a Senior Firefighter from the Flagstaff Hotshots. He left in 2002 to the San Juan IHC as a Squad Leader during their first season, returning to Globe in 2003 as Squad Leader. He was the Assistant from 2006-2008. He detailed as the Superintendent in 2009, and accepted the Superintendent position at the end of the 09 season.

## The Logo

The Globe Hotshots have gone through several logo changes; the first logo was the “Armor All Man” with a shield deflecting a bolt of lightning. Surrounding the Viking are green pine trees to his left and Saguaro Cacti to his right, with orange and yellow flames on the ground. The inside background is light blue with a black circle that says “Globe Inter-Regional Hot Shots across the top and Globe Arizona across the bottom. It has an oversized Wildland boot. “Silk Screening” was just starting in those days, and an Architecture major on the crew, Dave Mitchell, developed and printed the logo for the shirts, purchased on discount at the downtown JC Penney store.

The second logo was established shortly thereafter for the crew. It was similar to the original except for the “Armor All Viking” was replaced with a firefighter digging line and the lightning over his head. A rainbow was added at the bottom, to signify unity and the diversity of the crew. The majority of the crew was comprised of Anglos, Hispanics, and Native Americans.

The third logo established in 2002 and was with the crew till 2008. It was a skull in the middle of the sun, with four flames jutting out in the cardinal directions. The Globe Hotshots name is in Old English text on black shirts.

The fourth logo which was established in 2009, it’s based on the original logo that the crew started with in 1974. It has a few changes from the original logo, such as the four peaks in the background symbolizing four peaks mountain which is a geographical feature on the Tonto N.F. The flames have changed location as well. They are in the middle ground instead of encompassing the Viking. The trees and saguaros still remain to signify our firefighting efforts in all fuel types. The R-3 was also added to the logo to signify where we are located and the pride that comes from being a part of region three’s IHC organization.

A fifth logo (and current) established in 2010 portrays a shield representing the Forest Service shield, with a scroll on the bottom with R3-TNF and Est. 1974 emblazoned within the scroll. Also is 2 crossed pulaskis inside the shield with the sun and four flames emblematic of the 2002 -2008 logo design.



**Granite Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew**  
1700 Iron Springs Road, Prescott, AZ 86305

## **GMIHC History**

In the spring of 1990, the City Manager of Prescott, Forest Supervisor of the Prescott National Forest, and Prescott Fire Department Staff met to discuss the potential for a devastating wildfire that could affect the community. The ideas that came out of the meeting were for the community to come together with the agencies to prepare for and mitigate this potential problem. The Prescott City Council, Yavapai County, Arizona State Land Department, and Prescott National Forest signed a joint resolution creating the Prescott Area Wildland Urban Interface Commission (PAWUIC), which is a citizen led, agency supported group that continues today as a national model in coordinating and mitigating the risk of wildfire in the Prescott area.

The year 2000 saw the implementation of the National Fire Plan. Prescott was well on its way with PAWUIC to take advantage of the resources in this plan. The problem was that the public education was happening, but we could not get the work done on the ground to protect the community.

In 2001 with the support of PAWUIC and the City of Prescott, the Prescott Fire Department created a Wildland Division. The first order of business for the Wildland Division was to conduct a risk assessment and to develop a Community-wide Vegetation Management Plan for the City of Prescott. The risk assessment found that Prescott was “living on the edge” and was designated as one of nine communities in the southwestern United States at risk of a catastrophic wildfire. The Vegetation Management Plan addressed the need for fuels reduction and the adoption of a Wildland Urban Interface Fire Code. The Division then took on the task of creating defensible space on private and City owned property via mechanical treatment carried out by a grant funded Fuels Management Crew of five to ten personnel.

On May 15, 2002, the Indian Fire burned 1,300 acres and seven structures adjacent to and within the City of Prescott, and forced the evacuation of 2,500 residents. This incident had a profound effect on public opinion surrounding the Fire Department’s new fuels management program, and also planted the seed for an expansion of the duties of the Fuels Management Crew.

In the spring of 2004, the Fuels Management Crew evolved into Crew 7, a Type II Initial Attack Crew, which not only continued the fuels reduction work, but also responded to wildfire and all-risk incidents both regionally and nationally. The Crew took the name, Crew 7, based on the number 7 being the common designator for all of the Prescott Fire Department's stations and engines. The original logo was a pair of "flaming dice" that, of course, always came up seven. The crew overhead consisted of crew boss Tim McElwee, along with Marty Cole, Duane Steinbrink, Todd Rhines, Dan Bauman and Eric Marsh. Seasonals made up the rest, with some members having previous Hotshot experience. From the beginning, the idea that it would be possible to develop a Type I IHC was considered, and every attempt was made to meet IHC requirements in both policy and professionalism.

Prior to the beginning of the 2007 season, Crew 7 was granted IHC trainee status by the Southwest Coordinating Group. This prompted a name change. Local landmarks provided choices such as Iron Springs, Sierra Prieta, and Whisky Row, but Granite Mountain Hotshots won out and the crew was named after the dominating land feature just northwest of Prescott. By this time, the crew had eight full-time permanent positions with the balance still being filled with seasonal employees. A tradition began of hiring three or four "overhires" which allowed for the fuels projects to continue while the crew was off district, and also allowed for some extra depth of employees in case of injuries or performance issues.

The IHC certification process was challenging, partly because no non-federal crew had ever been certified in Region 3 before. Through the use of the Region 5 IHC certification process, which later became the template for the national standard, and tremendous support from the fire community, Granite Mountain persevered. In September of 2008, while on an assignment on the Klamath NF, the crew received a phone call from their home unit stating that they had just received certification as an Interagency Hotshot Crew. A short "ceremony" ensued where the 't' that stood for trainee on the back of the Superintendent's truck was scraped off, finally reading Granite Mountain IHC.

*"Esse Quam Videri"*  
*"To be, rather than to seem"*

# Mescalero Interagency Hotshot Crew History 1987 – Present



The Mescalero Apache Type I Crew, Mescalero Apache Hotshots originated from the Mescalero Apache Redhats. Since then the Mescalero Apache Tribe under the guidance of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Mescalero Agency established a Type I Crew in 1986 called the Mescalero Hotshots. Mr. Gary Stone was detailed as the first Crew Supervisor of the Mescalero Hotshots. The Crew was based out of the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Forestry/Fire Management Complex (Apache Summit). The crew was dispatched during the '86 fire season to California, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, New York and various places in New Mexico.

After one year as a Type I crew the Mescalero Interagency Hotshot Crew was formed under the supervision of Mr. Steve Rowe in 1987. As the Crew Superintendent, Mr. Rowe supervised the Crew through the end of the 1988 fire season whereas Mr. Leo LaPaz was then appointed Crew Superintendent. Mr. LaPaz held the crew together until the 1994 season then Mr. Gary Ahidley assumed the role as the Superintendent. Mr. Ahidley stayed with the crew until the 1998 season. In 1999, Mr. Leland Pellman was appointed the Crew Superintendent up until the end of the 2003 fire season. In 2004, Mr. Lewellyn Mendez assumed the position of crew superintendent until the end of the 2006 fire season. The crew is currently in the process of selecting an IHC superintendent.

The crew has been deployed to many incidents throughout the United States ranging from the West Coast to the East Coast and all points in between. Not only has the crew suppressed wildland fires but have assisted in hurricane relief, flood control, prescribed fire, fire use and fuels treatment and continues to do so today.

The crew is employed for a six month period under the fire management program during the summer months and assists the home unit during the off season, funded by the fuels program at the home unit and surrounding communities.



The Mormon Lake Interagency Hotshot Crew is a U.S. Forest Service sponsored Type I crew based on the Coconino National Forest in Flagstaff, AZ. The crew was founded in 1976 and originally based at the Mormon Lake Guard Station, 25 miles south of Flagstaff. In 1979, the crew moved to the Mormon Lake Ranger station, on the southern edge of town and remains based there today. In 1989, the crew adopted red and black as crew colors and designed the current crew logo, a silhouetted elk head.

On July 7 1976, three crewmembers were entrapped and perished on the Battlement Creek fire in western Colorado. Steven Furey, Scott Nelson and Superintendent Tony Czak are remembered as pioneers of the Mormon Lake Hotshots and memorialized at the Western Slope Fire Center in Colorado.

After working his way up through the ranks from rookie crewmember in 1984, Kirk A. Smith was appointed Superintendent in 1996. Kirk ran the crew until he was diagnosed with cancer in 2001. Sadly, on September 11, 2002, Kirk passed away. He is remembered and dearly missed by the Hotshot community.

Robert Auza was appointed Superintendent in 2003 and serves in that position today. Mormon Lake IHC upholds a proud tradition of fire management and continues to produce leaders the wildfire community.

#### Superintendents:

Tony Czak	1976
Milford Suida	1977-1983
Dave Jones	1983-1987
Jesse Tisino	1987-1995
Kirk Smith	1996-2002
Robert Auza	2003-2006
Matt Caouette	2006 - present



## Mt. Taylor Interagency Hotshot Crew 2001-Present



The MT. TAYLOR HOTSHOTS were established in 2001 after the record breaking fire season of 2000. The crew was considered a type 1 trainee crew initially and had to work hard in becoming a fully certified Hotshot Crew. The crew was in trainee status for 3 fire seasons and at the end of the 2003 fire season the crew was officially recognized and considered a full fledged Hotshot Crew. The crew is based out of Grants, NM and hosted by the Mt. Taylor Ranger District off of the Cibola National Forest. The crew name was acquired from Mt. Taylor which is the highest point (11,301') on the Mt. Taylor Ranger District. The crew logo came about from one of the crewmembers designing it with a little Native American touch added since the local area is surrounded by different Native American cultures.

The Mt. Taylor Hotshots have assisted in numerous all risk assignments during the history of the crew. The crew has been involved on assignments in the Western half of the US, Georgia, and Canada. In 2003 the crew was also involved in the space shuttle Columbia recovery efforts. The crew has also assisted numerous forests across the country in fuels management by assisting in mechanical treatment projects and RX burns.

### *Superintendents:*

Joe Julian 2001 (acting)

Joe Julian 2002-2005

Manuel Martinez 2006-2007 (acting)

Brian Drinville 2007- present



## Navajo Hotshots Crew History

The Navajo IHC (Interagency Hotshot Crew) is a Type I wildland firefighting crew sponsored by the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs), Navajo Region Fire Management. The crew is based out of Fort Defiance, Arizona, on the Navajo Indian Reservation, and is located seven miles north of Window Rock, near the four-corners region. The Navajo reservation is comprised of more than 17 million acres of land within Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, where approximately 5.8 million acres of that is commercial timber.

The crew was established in 2002, after several years of planning within the BIA Navajo Region Fire Management, along with the Navajo Tribe and the National Interagency Fire Center. Initially identified as a Type I “training” crew, the Navajo IHC traveled to various locations within the country to assist in wildland fire suppression activities, as well as assisting in natural catastrophic disaster relief efforts. Because the crew met all requirements set forth in the National Interagency Hotshot Guide, they received equivalent assignments as other hotshot crews while on incidents. In August of 2005 the Navajo IHC acquired its certification status after being reviewed and evaluated by representatives of different federal agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the BIA.

Following certification, the Navajo IHC continued to excel both physically and mentally to exceed standards set forth by the National Interagency Hotshot Guide. This included physically training each crew member to meet and/or exceed the physical fitness standards within the Guide, where each crew member completes the mile and half running test in ten minutes and thirty-five seconds, as well as the push-ups, sit-ups, and pull-ups standards. The crew’s physical training program consists of 5 to 10 mile runs, as well as weight training. The Navajo IHC program’s overall goal is to offer training opportunities, either through classroom and/or on the job, to each crewmember, so that the minimum qualification within the crew is at least as a certified firefighter Type-one/Squad Boss.

In 2003, the Navajo IHC acquired a trailer, through government surplus, that was intended for use by the crew as office space and a training facility. However, due to the poor condition that the trailer was in, major repairs were needed prior to occupancy. Over several years, with purchases of supplies and equipment using hotshot funding, the crew was able to complete all major repairs, including building a deck and plumbing the building. In the fall of 2007, approval was given from facilities management to occupy the building. Living quarters that are available for crewmembers are located within the BIA Fire Management compound. Accommodations include a kitchen, a great room, men and women's bathroom and showering facilities, laundry room and a weight room.

The Navajo IHC Superintendent, Leo La Paz, with fourteen years of hotshot experience and twenty five years of overall fire management experience, was recruited in 2002 and is a member of the Mescalero Apache Tribe. He has been with the crew since it was established and currently has qualifications that include Division Supervisor, Safety Officer II, Burn Boss, Type 3 Incident Commander and a C-certifier, and is recognized as the National C-certifier Program Manager. In January 2007, the position of Crew Assistant Superintendent was filled by Johnson Benallie, who has been with the crew since 2003. He currently has qualifications as a Type 4 Incident Commander, Crew Boss, Strike Team Leader, and has a B.S. in Forestry. Former Crew Assistant Superintendents includes Nathaniel Nozie and Tony Parks. The current Squad Bosses for the crew include Vann Smith, whose qualifications include Crew Boss, Incident Commander Type 4, and Strike Team Leader; Learoyd Begay, with Incident Commander Type 5 and a Crew Boss task book; and Golden Moore with Incident Commander Type 5 and Crew Boss qualifications. All other crewmembers have varying qualifications that range from Firefighter Type II to Crew Boss trainees. Aside from the Superintendent, all personnel on the Navajo IHC are enrolled members of the Navajo Tribe.

The Navajo IHC logo was developed by various individuals within the Navajo fire program and represents the cultural values and beliefs upheld by the tribal members within the crew. Each symbol used within the emblem signifies traditional and sacred values passed on from previous generations.



## **PAYSON HOT SHOTS**

Payson Hot Shots was one of several R-3 Hot Shot Crews established in 1972, hired mostly as AD employees. In 1973, the Crew was more formalized under Crew Foreman Paul Hefner. In 1974, the Payson Hot Shots achieved Type I status and the Crew worked split days off and so only worked together three days a week.

The original Payson Hot Shot emblem was a stenciled outline of the Tonto N.F. within the State of Arizona on the back of a Filson vest. In 1975, Squad Boss Billy Hardt, designed the USFS shield outline with flame, lightning bolt, Pulaski, and tree. In 1976, the Crew adopted the 'Ruger Bird' and lightning bolt as designed by Donna Chapla. Payson Hot Shots has kept both of these as their emblems as well as the hallmark 'Superior Skill and Daring.'

Payson Hot Shots has had three bases in its history. Originally at the old Payson R.D on Main Street, now a museum; as part of the present lower Administrative Site; and its present location, the former Helitack Base, in 1999.

In 2002, Payson Hot Shots was "stood down" to a Type II Crew at the behest of management, a humbling experience, and in 2003 they regained their Type I status.

Payson Hot Shots has fought wildfires in virtually every state of the Union, including Alaska and one assignment to Ontario, Canada. They have continued to follow the Hot Shot traditions of duty, respect, and integrity.

### **CREW SUPERINTENDENTS**

Paul Hefner	1973 - 1975
Ken Eckstein	1975 - 1978
Dale Ashby	1978 - 1981
Fred Schoeffler	1981 - 2007
Mike Schinstock	2007 - present

### **DETAILED CREW SUPERINTENDENTS**

Tom Pearson	1990
Marty Rose	1996
Holly Maloney	1999
James Osborne	2007

## Prescott Hotshot History 1972– Present

# P R E S C O T T H O T S H O T



The Prescott Hotshots originated in 1972 with the formation of a regular crew. George Pittman was the crew boss with a crew made up of Prescott College students.

The Prescott Hotshot Crew was established in July 1973. The base of operations for the crew was and continues to be located in Prescott, Arizona. The original base for the crew was at the Groom Creek Work Center. The crew moved to the newly built Prescott Fire Center and Henry Y.H Kim Aviation Center in 1991. In 1973, Durk Lokes ran the crew and applied for and attained category 1 status.

In 1975, the crew took on a new look with Mark Zumwalt at the helm. It was at this time that Mark brought with him new technology and crew structure from California and the crew became truly Inter-Regional.

In 1977 the crew had 30 people assigned with three sections of ten persons each. The sections rotated and fillers were used from other sections to remain with a 20 person crew at all times.

In 1978, Glen Dundas became the Superintendent and made changes to the overhead structure of the crew to have one Superintendent, two Foreman and two working Squad Bosses. He also made changes to the physical standards and physical training program which the crew is still using today.

Tom Tobin assumed command of the crew in July of 1985. Physical standards remained the same as the integration of a diversified workforce began. That year new crew transportation was purchased which consisted of one chase truck and two nine passenger crew carriers. Due to an injury Tom was reassigned to dispatch in 1988.

Tony Sciacca a seasoned member of the crew took command following Tom's absence. In 1991 the crew moved from the Groom Creek Work center to the newly built Prescott Fire Center and Henry Y.H. Kim Aviation Center, Tony's tour as Superintendent ended at the end of the 1998 fire season, from there he moved on to be a District Fire Management Officer on the Prescott National Forest.

Curtis Heaton who worked his way up through the ranks became Superintendent in 1999 where he remained until the end of the 2001 fire season, he then moved on to the Fish and Wildlife Service as a

Wildland Urban Interface Specialist. Curtis eventually returned to the Prescott National Forest and became the Forest Fire Management Officer. In 2008, Curtis left the Prescott National Forest to become the Operations Section Chief of the Phoenix based NIMO team.

Jeff Andrews who also worked his way up through the ranks became Superintendent in 2002. Jeff remained in the position until 2005 and then took the positions of Assistant Fire Management Officer and Dispatch Center Manager at the Prescott Fire Center. Currently, he is the Prescott National Forest Fire Management Officer.

Darin Fisher took a position as a Captain in 2000 after time on the Eldorado, Flagstaff, Asheville, and Mormon Lake Hotshots. In 2005, he became the Superintendent which is the position he has to this day.

Since 1973 when the crew first received Type 1 status it has gone through many changes with equipment, technology, and training. But the overall job of a Hotshot has not changed, it still remains as an elite, professional, and outstanding crew of Wildland Firefighters.

### Crew Supervision:

George Pittman:	1972
Durk Lokes:	1973 – 1974
Mark Zumwalt:	1975 - 1977
Glen Dundas:	1978 - 1985
Tom Tobin:	1986 - 1988
Tony Sciacca:	1988 – 1998
Curtis Heaton:	1999 – 2001
Jeff Andrews	2002 – 2004
Darin Fisher	2005 - present



## Sacramento Interagency Hotshot Crew

Sacramento Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) is a nationally funded USDA Forest Service fire suppression crew. The crew was relocated to the Lincoln National Forest in south central New Mexico in 1983. The crew originally established with many other new Region 3 IHC's in 1973 on the Coronado National Forest. The crew was established as Catalina Hotshots based at palisades guard station on Mt. Lemmon, located just north of Tucson AZ. In 1982 the Coronado proposed to the region that the crew be moved due to insufficient funds and facilities. Interests came from many National Forests, the Kaibab, Apache Sitgraves and Cibola but the Lincoln proved to be the ideal location as they already had facilities and compound/admin site to host the crew and a growing urban interface. In December of 1982 the crew moved to Sacramento New Mexico. George Kleindienst the Superintendent of Catalina Hotshots moved to the Lincoln with just a few of his overhead. The first year in 1983 consisted of George a crew foreman, two squad leaders and 16 smokejumpers considered Missoula jumpers. This was technically called the Sacramento Hotshots. In 1984 the crew officially got organized as George left and Jerry Grim came in as Superintendent.

Sacramento New Mexico is located on the south end of the Sacramento Mountains in south central New Mexico. The Sacramento District office is located in Cloudcroft New Mexico that sits at 9000ft elevation. The Sacramento Hotshot base is located in Sacramento New Mexico, 35 miles south east of Cloudcroft and sits at 7200ft elevation with a dominate ponderosa pine forest. Sacramento Hotshots have occupied this base from 1983 to present.

### Catalina Superintendents

Greg Greenhoe	1973-1974
Andy Traverse	1974
Steve Gunzel	1975
Jeff Hogg	1975-1978
Scott Parsons	1978-1980
Steve Palmer	1980-1981
George Kleindienst	1981-1982

### Sacramento Superintendents

George Kleindienst	1982-1984
Jerry Grim	1984
Bob Pena	1985-1987
Ricky Smith	1988-1989
Bob Wright	1990-2002
Duane Tewa	2002-2005
Matt Barone	2005-Present



## **Our History:**

The Santa Fe Hotshots were established in 1977. A Fire Management Officer had wanted to call the crew the Redondo Hotshots (named after a prominent peak in the Jemez Mountains). After some negotiation the crew's name was chosen, and the Santa Fe Hotshots were formed. The crew was originally hosted by the Tesuque Ranger District, until that district combined with the Espanola Ranger District. The Santa Fe Hotshots are presently managed by the Supervisor's Office of the Santa Fe National Forest, but have a work center/base that they operate out of in downtown Santa Fe. The crew's current "Three Horsemen" logo represents the three dominant cultures in northern New Mexico: Native American, Anglo, and Spanish. It was originally drawn in 1997.

## **Superintendents and Years of Service:**

1977-1978	Al Lopez
1979-1984	Gary Olsen
1985	Bill Moulton
1986-1987	James Dean (JD) Killick
1988-1991	Alan Gillette
1991-1995	Andrew Serrano
1995-1996	Charlie Martin
1997	Robert Morales
1998-1999	Charlie Martin
2000-2006	Richard Tingle
2007	Vacant
2008-2010	Chris D. Tipton
Current	David M. Simpson



# Silver City Hotshots

## Gila National Forest



The Silver City Hotshots started in 1977 on the South end of the Gila National Forest on the Silver City Ranger District. The Gila National Forest covers 3.3 million acres and is home to the Gila and the Aldo Leopold wilderness areas. The crew was started from scratch and became an IHC their first year. They are stationed 10 miles out of Silver City New Mexico at Fort Bayard which is a forest service work center serving the hotshot crew, two engine crews, livestock and facilities for the range department. The crew has been based out of there since their inception. The base started out as a shop/training room, the District Rangers house and a small trailer. After their first season the shop burned to the ground during the winter. The facilities now include one bunk house a singlewide trailer a 4000 square foot metal building housing the crew carriers, shop, workout room and working space for the crew. Another building houses the training room.

The first Superintendent was George Grijalva who ran the crew from 1977 to 1986. The crew was known for wearing the old Silver aluminum hardhats polished to a sheen, the "chrome domes". George and the crew discovered the logo for the Silver City Hotshots pinned on a wall in a gas station down in Hanover New Mexico. It was a picture of Smokey Bear running thru flames bearing shovel with his teeth bared. It came from a MAD magazine and was quickly adopted as the crew logo and has been the same logo with only minor touch up throughout the years, the shovel was changed to a Pulaski in the 80's and color was added in the 90's. From 1977 to 1986 the crew traveled to and from fires in 10 passenger vans, receiving crew buggies in 1986.

Ricky Sedillo was the superintendent half way through the 1986 fire season up until 1988 and was followed up by Kevin Joseph from 1988 until 1992, Kevin changed the crew t-shirt colors to grey during this time and the crew hardhats changed from the aluminum "chrome domes" to yellow plastic bullards for the crew and red for the superintendent and foreman.



Mick Guck was superintendent from 1992 until 1995 and was then followed by Dan Key from 1996 until 1999. During this time the hard hats were changed to blue and the crew shirt was changed to the navy blue color that the crew still wears today. Another fact during Dan Key's time as superintendent the Regional Office tried to get rid of the fighting bear logo and Dan went to bat for it at the Regional Office and we allowed to keep it. In light of Dan Key's efforts to keep the bear, the crew voted in 2011 to officially name the bear "Dan". Since its introduction to the crew from George Grijalva, the fighting bear has been our first and only mascot.

John Burfiend was the superintendent from 2000-2001 followed by Keith Matthes from 2002-2003. Mark Bernal was the acting superintendent during the 2004 season. In 2005 Mike Schinstock was detailed from the George Washington-Jefferson National Forest in Virginia for the season. The superintendent was filled permanently in the spring of 2006 with Cathleen Lowe who was the Crew Superintendent until 2010 by accepting a transfer to the Mt. Taylor IHC Superintendent position. Pedro "Pete" Valenzuela is currently the superintendent as of 2011.

The crew has always started about the first to middle of April to be ready for the Southwest fire season and runs until the middle to end of September. They have traveled as far as Alaska, Canada, Minnesota, Florida, and North Carolina and all the western States. They also see a lot of time working with Fire Use here on the Gila.

**Superintendents:**

George Grijalva	1977-1986
Ricky Sedillo	1986-1988
Kevin Joseph	1988-1992
Mick Guck	1992-1995
Dan Key	1996-1999
John Burfiend	2000-2001
Keith Matthes	2002-2003
Mark Bernal(acting)	2004
Mike Schinstock(detail)	2005
Cathleen Lowe	2006-2010
Pedro "Pete" Valenzuela	2011-Present

**Past Logo**



## Smokey Bear Hotshot History 1976 – Present



Prior to the establishment of the Smokey Bear Hotshot Crew the Smokey Bear Ranger District, Lincoln National Forest utilized three six-man suppression crews. They were named Ruidoso, Eagle Creek, and Bonito. At one point there was a Ruidoso "Hotshot" Crew, comprised of volunteer firefighters.

The Smokey Bear Hotshot Crew was established in March 1976. The base of operations for the crew was and continues to be located in Ruidoso, New Mexico. The first crew consisted of 27 members with 7 day coverage of 20 people every day. The Washington Office approved the use of the name "Smokey Bear" due to the close proximity to the "Gap Fire" in the Capitan Mountains where Smokey Bear was found.

In 1976, the crew used a bunkhouse rented from the University of New Mexico. This also served as the crew's duty station. The duty station relocated to the District Office in 1977. No housing was available at the District Office until 1999. Crew facilities at the district were a shared office converted from a vehicle bay. The crew facility moved to a shared office in the newly constructed "fire barn" in 1988. In 2001, a Fire Operations building was completed with offices, cache, conference room and weight room for the crew.

In 1976, crew transportation was a school bus. In 1977 two rental vans provided transportation with fabricated plywood storage boxes affixed on top for tools and gear. From 1978 until 1984 agency vans were used. Since 1984, a Superintendent truck and two 10 person Crew Carriers have been used.

Transportation to assignments in the 70s and early 80s was often accomplished by use of a contract Convair 580, Douglas DC-3, or De Haviland Twin Otter aircraft. The crew would depart from airports in Alamogordo, Roswell, Holloman AFB and Albuquerque in New Mexico and El Paso, Texas.

Issued equipment the first year was limited to a red hard hat (assigned by the Regional Office), two nomex fire shirts, a one gallon canteen, a cruisers vest, a snake bite kit, a web belt with two 1-quart canteens, a canvas pack for personal gear, and an early version of a fire shelter worn around the waist. Crew members were responsible for furnishing their own gloves. The crew carried one pack set 4 channel

radio. Four Homelite or McCulloch chainsaws were available for use on both fire and work projects. Today, crewmembers are provided a full compliment of line gear and all season overnight gear. Each crewmember is assigned a project saw with multiple saws carried for Incident Assignment. Up to 12 handheld radios are used for assignments as well as GPS, laptops with remote access, and a satellite phone.

Work projects the first couple of years consisted primarily of a fuel break constructed on Grindstone Mesa, the ridge between Cedar Creek and Brady Canyon, and Alfred Hale Ridge. Due to limited chainsaw availability, much of the thinning was accomplished by Pulaski, double and single bit axes. Current project work includes Rx burn prep, Rx burning, thinning, trail maintenance and facility maintenance.

In the early years, physical conditioning consisted of group exercises and 1 to 3 mile runs up Cedar Creek or at a track that was located were the White Mountain middle school is now. The 1/4 mile fitness trail was constructed in 1978 by the Hotshot crew. A longer fitness trail of 1.3 miles was completed in 1980 and opened for public use. Currently crew runs up to 7 miles and fitness hikes are part of the PT program. The weight room is fully equipped and used daily except on days with extended runs or hikes.

In 1976, crew organization consisted of a permanent Hotshot Foreman and two temporary Squad Bosses, with the remaining personnel being temporary crewmembers. 1987 was the first year with a female crew member, Michelle "Ma" Rowe.

In 1991, the Foreman position was reclassified to Superintendent and a permanent Assistant position was established (13/13). In 1997, two permanent Squad Boss (13/13) positions were established. Currently, the crew has eight appointed positions, Superintendent (PFT), Captain (PFT), three Squad Leaders and three Senior Firefighters.

### Crew Supervision:

Andy Hale:	1976 – 1984
Jerry Grim:	1985 – 1987
Bob LaMay:	1987 - 1999
Rich Dolphin:	1999 – present

## Zuni Interagency Hotshot Crew History 2001-Present



The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Zuni Agency (Agency) established the Zuni Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) Program in September 2001. The IHC is based out of west-central New Mexico on the Zuni Indian Reservation, Zuni, NM. Zuni is one of 19 pueblos in the state. The Reservation is estimated at 463,270 acres, which includes 242,766 acres of forest.

The BIA, National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) funds seven hotshot crews nationally. The Zuni IHC is a proud member of the current seven active crews.

During the planning stages from 1997-1999, supervisory candidates including Paley Coonsis, Sr., Troy Cachini, and Todd Etsate were sent on detail assignments to the Mescalero Hotshots in Mescalero, NM and the Redmond Hotshot Crew in Redmond, OR to gain knowledge and skills in supervising a hotshot crew.

Upon receiving full funding from NIFC, the Zuni IHC was identified as a trainee crew from September 2001 to December 2003. The IHC's very first assignment was led by Carl Crawford to the devastated World Trade Center in 2001. Mr. Crawford was the Assistant Superintendent of the Chief Mountain Hotshot Crew for numerous years prior to accepting the Zuni IHC Superintendent position.

In September 2003, the Agency submitted to the Southwest Coordination Center and to NIFC documentation requesting for full certification of the Zuni IHC as a Type I Interagency Hotshot Crew.

In December 2003, the Agency was officially notified by Kirk Rowdabaugh, 2002-2003 Chairman, Southwest Coordination Group, and Jim Stires, Chief, Branch of Fire Management National Interagency Fire Center, that the Zuni IHC was granted full certification. The Zuni IHC has been available and served as a national resource ever since.

On August 12, 2004, the new Agency Fire Management Building was completed. This accommodated the Zuni IHC with modern office space, cache, training facilities, indoor crew carrier space, and a conference room.

### Superintendent

Myron Sheche	2010-Present
Troy Cachini	2006-2010
Tony Parks	2004-2005
Carl Crawford	2001-2003

### Assistant Superintendent

Todd Etsate	2011-Present
Myron Sheche	2007-2010
Wadell Kanseah	2006-2007
Troy Cachini	2003-2006
Paley Coonsis, Sr.	2001-2003

### Squad Leader

Chad Nastacio	2010-Present
Rickey Booqua Jr	2009-Present
Richard Lamy	2001-2009
Todd Etsate	2003-2011
Myron Sheche	2001-2007
Troy Cachini	2001-2003

# West Basin



## **Black Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew 1988 – Present**



The Black Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew was established in 1988 through the efforts of the Toiyabe National Forest's Fire Management officer, Stanley E. Fitzgerald. The crew's first fire season was the summer of 1989. The crew name was suggested by Jennifer de Jung, a former employee of Stan's, because "Toiyabe" is translated as "Black Mountain" in the local (Piute) Native American Language. Late that same year Robert Craig Workman was hired as the first Superintendent. Craig recruited 2 foremen and 2 squad leaders as well as the more time-consuming work of equipping the crew with tools, nomex, training materials, line and camp gear. The crew vehicles did not arrive in the first year so the crew used the Forest Assistant Fire Management Officer's Suburban, plus two rental Suburbans and a surplus GSA pick-up.

Designs for the Black Mountain Crew Logo were solicited from employees on the forest. Jan Sanchez who worked in personnel management came up with the basis of the logo. It incorporated a stylized black outline of a mountain with an orange sun (setting or rising) and the Toiyabe National Forest logo of a man on a horse leading a pack string.

The Black Mountain IHC was first based at the Stewart Indian Colony in Carson City, Nevada (1989-1990) where barracks space was rented; and a small storage garage at Stewart completed the station. Office space was at the Carson Ranger District Office in Carson City Nevada. In 1991 the crew base was moved to its present location at the Carson Ranger District Warehouse site, located in Minden Nevada. While this provided space for the crew to gather and crew "cache", no housing was available for two more years. The Forest acquired four modular office units from the abandoned Leviathan Mine that were remodeled and are currently being used for barracks for the crew.

The crew has always been sponsored by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and has never been disbanded or re-established.

During Craig Workman's tenure there were no fatalities and or serious injuries on the crew. Craig Retired in February of 2005.

Matt Hoggard the long standing Assistant Superintendent (1996-2005) took over the program as Superintendent along with Matt James (Assistant Supt.) in March of 2005. They continue to carry on the outstanding reputation that is associated with the Black Mountain IHC.

### **Superintendents:**

Craig Workman	1988-2005
Matt Hoggard	2005-present



## Ruby Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew History, 2001 – Present



Ruby Mountain IHC began as a Type 1 training-crew on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001 in response to the 2000 national fire plan initiative presented by President Bill Clinton. This initiative allowed for 19 other hand crews to start the process of becoming Type 1 Hotshot Crews. Ruby Mountain became available June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and was assigned to their first fire on the Salt Lake BLM district the next day. By the end of the season and 17 fires later, the crew was in a position to hire experienced permanent full time employees (WAEs) for the following year, with a view toward becoming a qualified hotshot crew.

The base of operations for the crew was and continues to be located in Elko, Nevada. Initially, the crew worked out of Elko's volunteer fire station. In 2002 the crew began lodging at the Great Basin Community College campus and acquired three crew carriers. The fire season began on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May; when the crew received an assignment in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The crew was busy throughout the season in 8 different states and 19 fires. In 2003 the crew became qualified as an Interagency Hotshot Crew. The fire season began in May with local fires and project work. Of the 82 days on the fire line, 28 were in Idaho and each of the four vehicles drove over 11,500 miles. The 2005 fire season was marked by the departure of Shane McDonald and promotion of Rich Stiles, as Superintendent. Additionally, the crew moved their crew housing to a local hotel. For the 2007 fire season, Spencer Gregory was appointed to Superintendent and the crew replaced a crew carrier with a support vehicle, equipped with water and a small pump. In 2009, Gabriel Donaldson detailed in as Superintendent, was hired as such in 2010. Also in 2010, the crew acquired a new superintendent vehicle and construction began on the long anticipated barracks and an operations facility in East Elko. Those buildings were completed the following year, and the crew moved into them. 2012 proved to be another productive year for Ruby Mountain, with 23 fires throughout Nevada, Utah, and Idaho. The crew sponsored one Wildland Fire Apprentice while hosting 10 detailers from numerous regions and districts.

RMIHC alumni have pursued career positions as smokejumpers, AFMOs, FMOs, Military Service Members, and law enforcement officers, among others.

Throughout the years, physical training has been a fundamental part of the RMIHC way of life. In the interest of quality work done safely and efficiently, Ruby Mountain adheres to a strict

physical conditioning routine. Exercises include group calisthenics, long distance runs, long duration fitness hikes, and the use of a fully equipped weight room in the new facility.

During the last decade, RMIHC has used time while unassigned to train crew members using formal courses, simulated incidents, staff rides developed by the crew, and communicating with other crew types and districts. Furthermore, Ruby Mountain has aided in the training of detailers from a variety of federal sources. RMIHC has spearheaded the Sadler staff ride and applied the principles of High Reliability Organizations to the crew. Completion of the Sadler Fire Staff Ride earned Gabe the Kevin Hull Nevada State Leadership Award In 2011. Gabe Donaldson and Assistant Superintendent Craig Cunningham have also begun the implementation of a new system of the After Action Review (AAR) that is found in the Incident Response Pocket Guide. Assigned the acronym, "P.L.O.W.S" the new debrief format uses the following topics to debrief after an incident: Plan, Leadership, Obstacles, Weaknesses, and Strengths. This method of examining an incident has proven to be invaluable to the crew. The creation and implementation of the P.L.O.W.S. format earned Craig Cunningham national recognition in the spring of 2013 as the recipient of the 2012 Bureau of Land Management National Wildland Fire Safety Award.

Ruby Mountain IHC is proud to provide a highly trained and experienced hand crew that provides an organized, mobile, and skilled workforce for all phases of wildfire management.

#### Superintendents:

Shane McDonald:	2001 – 2004
Rich Stiles:	2005 – 2006
Spencer Gregory:	2007 – 2008
Gabriel Donaldson:	2009 – present

**SILVER STATE INTERAGENCY  
HOTSHOT CREW**



[www.nv.blm.gov/carson/fire/sshs/sshs\\_home.htm](http://www.nv.blm.gov/carson/fire/sshs/sshs_home.htm)

Silver State Hand Crew has been around since late 1960's mainly consisting of Emergency Firefighters.

- Organized as a Crew in 1976
- Hotshot Crew in 1977
- Interagency Hotshot Crew in 1980

Established in Carson City, NV where the crew continues to reside.

Superintendents:	1976-1977	Dick Jackson
	1978	Kelly Clark
	1979	Tom Sullivan
	1980	Mark Lathrop
	1981- 1989	Steve Edgar
	1990- 1998	James Ogilvie
	1999- 2002	Jerry Soard
	2003- 2006	Nate Gogna
	2006-present	Kevin Kelly



# **Historical Articles**

# ADAPTING ADVANCED PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION AND FIRE-LINE CONSTRUCTION TO CCC SUPPRESSION CREWS

ROLFE E. ANDERSON, BOYD L. RASMUSSEN, AND VERNE V. CHURCH  
*Siskiyou National Forest*

Greater use of 40-man CCC crews in some regions was foreshadowed in the April 1940 issue of Fire Control Notes (The 40-Man Crew- A Report on Activities of the Experimental 40- Man Fire Suppression Crew) by the statement: "It is believed that this system can be applied to other crews organized from picked CCC enrollees..." The Siskiyou organized a number of these crews and here reports on the success of one of them. Region 6 now advised that every CCC Camp is required to have a special 40-Man crew, and that steps are being taken to equip these crews progressively.

In 1940, special suppression crews, patterned after the original 40-Man crew organized in 1939 on the Siskiyou National Forest and located at the Redwood Ranger Station, were set-up in CCC camps and forest-guard organizations on most of the national forests in the North Pacific region. A 40-Man CCC crew was organized at the Iron Mountain spike camp, China Flat CCC camp, on the Siskiyou, in the spring of 1940. About midseason, David P. Goodwin, Assistant Chief, Division of Fire Control, in the Washington office, observed this crew on a practice demonstration and was so impressed by its action and apparent high level of morale, that he requested a report on the organization of the crew, methods of training, and accomplishments on fires. The story of experiences and accomplishments which follows might be duplicated by any one of several forests in region 6 where similar CCC crews were trained.

## **Organization of Crew**

*1. Selection of men.*- In making up the China Flat CCC 40-man crew, an effort was made to select enrollees who were best fitted physically and emotionally for fire-fighting duties. The best men were taken from work crews on every work project. In some cases this caused a temporary handicap to current projects, but it resulted in development of a suppression crew made up of better-than-average enrollees. The majority of the men were accustomed to hard work at relatively low wage rates.

Two of the best qualified CCC foremen in the camp, Walter Barklow and Ralph Reeves, were chosen to take charge of the crew-Barklow as head foreman and Reeves as assistant foreman. These men are in charge of the road construction project on which the crew was engaged while not training or fighting fire. In this way the men on the fire crew worked under the same foreman at all times, resulting in a unity of thought and action essential for good teamwork and the up-building of morale.

*2. Selection of site.*- The Iron Mountain spike camp, where a road-construction project was in progress, was chosen as the most favorable site for the development of the crew. It provided work necessary for the training and conditioning of the men. It was located in a place where it could provide quick service for two ranger districts; and, not



necessary skill was acquired in the fundamentals of ax work, practice was continued throughout the summer on the road right-of-way clearing project.

A similar system was used in teaching the use of digging tools. It was found that less time was required to gain proficiency in these less exacting tools.

*Get-away action and travel to fire.*- This share of training was considered vitally important because it eliminated much waste of time which would have occurred had the men not known exactly what they should do in getting away to a fire with full equipment. To facilitate assembling of men for roll call, loading into trucks, unloading and receiving packs at the point where foot travel began, the men were numbered from 1 to 40, according to position in the crew. Each man's pack was tagged with his number so that each individual would receive his designated tool. Packs and tools were stored in a separate building at the spike camp and a truck assigned for transporting them.

A separate crew, consisting of the regular spike crew cookhouse staff, who were not members of the 40-man crew, were trained to load this equipment while the suppression-crew members were getting their work clothes and loading into two passenger trucks which were assigned to the crew.

Considerable time was spent practicing get-away on fire calls and by constant practice, get-away time was reduced to 7 minutes when enrollees were at camp at the time of the fire call. Training also included unloading from the trucks at the point where foot travel began and assembling in hiking order with packs and tools. Unloading required 2 minutes and the receiving of tools about 5 minutes. The crew was then hiked over trails and cross country to gain practice and get the "feel of the pack."

*Fire-line construction.*- The next training step was actual fire-line construction. This training included a demonstration of what a model fire line should be, followed by practice in the construction of such fire line. The crew worked as a unit using the one-lick method of fire-line construction exclusively under all fuel types found on the Siskiyou National Forest. The important element in the one-lick method was the spacing of the men, coupled with the regulation of the speed of construction. This was taught by actual practice of line construction in the various types likely to be encountered on a going fire. Training was carried on 1 day a week until the crew had reached the necessary degree of proficiency, and one-half day per week thereafter even after the crew had gained experience on going fires. Practically all of the line constructed during training was located around slash areas where the work was needed for hazard reduction and fire protection.

*Training for special jobs.*- Outstanding men were given special training on fire-line scouting, line location, speed regulation, burning out, and cooking. Most of these important jobs were necessarily taught during line-construction practice, although additional training was given off the job. Cooking dehydrated rations required some experimenting which was done in camp at the cook house by the men selected for the cooking detail.

*Off-the-job training.*- The foregoing training was done entirely during regular CCC work hours. In addition, however, the foremen gave off-the-job training in safety, fire behavior, and similar subjects.

## **Recreation and Morale**

Recreational facilities available were utilized as fully as possible to build morale. Each man proudly wore a red felt shield-shaped barge, stenciled "CCC, 40." Considerable competition developed among other members for the "CCC, 40" positions. When the boys went to town on recreation trips, all fire fighting equipment and clothes accompanied the crew.

## **Equipment and Supplies**

Each member of the crew carried a pack of tools and equipment, weighing about 36 pounds, similar to the ones used by the by the 1939 Siskiyou 40-man crew. Extra tools and supplies were carried in to supply truck. Lightweight goose-down sleeping bags and ample, condensed, high-quality rations are two essential items of equipment. The ration list was adapted from the list used by the 40-man crew in 1939, and weighed  $11 \frac{7}{8}$  pounds for 1 man 3 days.

Most of the food items were packed in individual sizes, but it was found most practicable not to break some of the items down into individual packages. The quantities were so distributed that each pack weighed about the same. Linen tags were attached to each pack listing the items it contained so that the cook could easily determine which pack to open so secure rations for any one meal. A few sad experiences with spilled food demonstrated that it was important that the rations be packed in cloth sacks as paper bags would not endure the wear and tear of cross-country travel.

The question of whether or not to carry prepared lunches was carefully considered in the operation of the crew. It was decided that prepared lunches would be packed of securing them did not delay get-away action and travel to fire. If the time did not allow for preparation of lunch, the first meal on the fire line was made from items requiring no cooking. Plans were made to obtain lunches if possible en route to the fire by ordering them by phone at some point along the route. This method was used in travel to one fire in 1940.

Fire packs and rations were always stored in complete readiness in the spike camp where they were hung in sequence of numbers in double rows on the walls of a special fire-equipment shed. In case of fire these packs were loaded into a truck in reverse order from which they were issued at the end of truck travel. They were placed flat in the truck bed in tiers three deep. In order to eliminate lost motion and misplacement of packs, the equipment truck driver placed all packs in the truck when loading and removed them when unloading at the point where foot travel began.

## **Transportation**

Two truck drivers not members of the crew, ate and slept on each of the three  $1 \frac{1}{2}$ -ton trucks used.

## Action on Fires

The CCC 40-man crew took complete action or assisted on seven fires during the fire season. The name, size, and dominant fuel type of each of these fires are listed in the following table:

*List of fires fought by the CCC suppression crew*

Name	Date	Area in Acres	Held line in chains	Fuel Type
Lone Tree Creek fire	July 06, 1940	7.0	40	MM
Scott Creek fire	July 06, 1940	7.0	51	HM
Green Knob fire	August 07, 1940	32.0	80	MH
Two Mile fire	August 10, 1940	.2	7	MM
Bingham Mountain fire	August 11, 1940	30.0	85	MM
Scott Creek fire #2	August 21, 1940	23.0	126	HM
Water Pipe Creek fire	September 01, 1940	15.5	58	MH

No time studies were made on speed of line construction for this crew while on fires, but it is well known that their accomplishments were much greater than those of an average CCC crew of 40 men, and better than the average crew composed of pick-up laborers.

Six of the seven fires upon which action was taken during the season were of incendiary origin. Five of them were located on the Agness Ranger District within a 3-mile radius and were presumably set by the same person or persons. These incendiary fires were set at times when burning conditions were most critical, and the prompt control by the CCC 40-man crew with the assistance of forest guards and other CCC enrollees is considered a fine accomplishment.

The following comments on one fire based on firemen's and dispatchers notes are indicative of the rapid getaway, fast travel, and hard striking power of this fire-fighting team.

*The Bingham Mountain Fire.*- The CCC 40-man crew was called at 5:30 p.m., and instructed to proceed to the Bingham Mountain fire. The men were in camp at this time and no time was lost in assembling the crew. Truck travel distance to the fire totaled 31 miles. The crew arrived at the fire at 7:50 p.m., and immediately went to work. Three squads of men were already working on the fire. The 40-man crew took over the line construction work and the other squads were assigned to line holding and burning out. At 11 p.m. the crew had built 5,610 feet of fire line to control the fire trail there were a number of burning snags and these were felled as the fire line progressed. The crew did an exceptionally fine job on this 30-acre fire.

## Summary and Conclusions

In organizing this crew, 40 better-than-average men were selected from all current projects. Because of loss of experienced men during reenrollment periods, many green men were also selected and much fundamental training was given in the use of hand tools.

It was found desirable that all men in the crew attain a certain degree of skill in ax work. After training the entire crew, the most adept axmen were chosen for ax work on the established crew. Learning to use the hoe and shovel is a relatively simple accomplishment after the enrollees attained a degree of skill with the ax.

As a suggestion for future crews of this type, it is believed advisable to provide a snag-falling or road-clearing project on which to train fellers and axmen beginning about 6 months before the opening of fire season. Experience has shown that at least that much time is necessary to develop green enrollees into experienced timber fellers.

Two CCC foremen are necessary for a crew of 40-men. These foremen must possess real leadership ability and should be well qualified in fire fighting, training, and morale building. Pride in accomplishment must be tactfully instilled into each member of the crew by the foreman. He must be able to mix with the crew in a judicious way and at all times keep the respect of the men.

CCC crews have these outstanding differences from civilian crews of the same type:

1. Qualifications required of candidates for the civilian crews call for experience in use of hand tools. A large percent of CCC candidates are inexperienced and must be given fundamental training in the use of tools.
2. CCC crews will respond more readily to systematic training since they are more amendable to discipline and will adapt themselves without question to the positions assigned in this form of fire-fighting team.

A high degree of morale is the most essential attribute of this type of organization. To cultivate this rather intangible spirit so necessary in a first-rate crew, much attention was given to recreation, good food, and work shifts on the fire line not excessively long with short rest periods as judged necessary by the foreman in charge.

The psychological effect of fast progress in line construction resulting in a quick decisive suppression of each fire attacked gave rise to ever-increasing confidence of each member in the strength of the unit. A series of failures would no doubt produce the reverse effect. It is especially important with an inexperienced crew that the first attempt be successful. Not the least important, from the enrollees' viewpoint, was the distinctive 40-man badge differentiating these men from other CCC men which fostered a healthy pride in the organization.

The special CCC 40-man fire-suppression crew demonstrated that CCC enrollees organized and trained in accordance with advanced principles of organization and fire-line construction were superior to the average CCC fire-fighting crew which does not have the advantage of special training and lightweight equipment; and better than the majority of civilian fire crews composed of pick-up laborers.



*This article recognizes the development of American Indian forest and wildland firefighters in the Southwest United States and their important contributions to firefighting nationwide. It provides an historical look at the purpose behind the original creation of Indian fire warriors and why the firefighter was—and remains—so important to American Indians individually and in tribal communities.*

# FIRE WARRIORS

## AMERICAN INDIAN FIREFIGHTERS IN THE SOUTHWEST

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**S**ince 1948, thousands of American Indians in the Southwest have fought wildland and forest fires. These men and women are modern day fire warriors, risking health and, at times, lives to defend forest resources across the nation. Although the risks are high, the work strenuous and dangerous, and the pay is

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low, many Indian men and women battle fires each year. While high unemployment rates encourage men and women to do so, many American Indians fight fires as a matter of pride.

Little effort was made to manage or preserve the nation's (or tribal) timber resources until the early twentieth century. In March 1909, Congress authorized the United States Indian Service to implement measures to preserve "living and growing timber," remove "dead timber, standing or fallen," and to "advise" the Indian tribes in caring for their forests. Armed with this authorization, Interior Secretary Richard A. Ballinger established the Indian Forest Service, which immediately established fire patrols and fire cabins on several reservations in the north. After installing 1,500 miles of telephone lines, most Indian fire lookouts were linked with fire control agencies. In 1913, the Indian Service, lacking the funds, manpower and expertise to implement a prevention program, entered into a cooperative agreement with United States Forest Service (USFS) to prevent and suppress fires bordering Indian and USFS lands.<sup>1</sup>

While fire protection and suppression were the cornerstones of USFS policy in the 1920s, private and Indian land holdings con-

tinued to lag in developing effective fire protection. J.P. Kinney, Chief Forester for the Indian Service, argued that although the federal government was trustee of Indian lands, it did not provide adequate funds for fire suppression. In 1927, Congress allocated \$50,000 of tribal trust fund monies for emergency fire protection and appropriated an additional \$50,000 for fire suppression on Indian lands. Fire prevention nonetheless remained secondary to suppression due to insufficient funds to manage tribal timberlands and the lack of organized and trained Indian forest firefighting crews. In 1930, the Indian Service reorganized its Forest Service as the Division of Forestry and Grazing, adding thirty-five million acres of Indian grazing land to the seven million acres of tribal timberland for which it already had land management and fire control responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

During the depression, Franklin Roosevelt established the Emergency Conservation Work program—better known as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)—to help protect national timber and grazing lands. When federal agencies expressed apprehension over administering the CCC in Indian Country, the Indian Service secured approval to maintain its own CCC Indian Division.

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**BY DAVID H. DEJONG**



*Santo Domingo (New Mexico) Indian firefighter in action on the Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona, June 1956.*

In the program's first year, a staggering \$9,570,000 was made available for conservation work in Indian Country, three times what the Indian Service had requested as part of a five year plan in 1927. Between 1933 and 1942, when the program was discontinued, the CCC Indian Division built nearly 100 fire lookout towers, installed 7,500 miles of telephone line, and built 600 cabins to help detect and prevent forest and range fires. Large forested areas that had previously been inaccessible were opened by trails, significantly reducing the time required to reach fires. In addition, two Indian forest fire training schools were established. Two-thirds of the conservation work in the first year of the program was done on reservations in Arizona, New Mexico, Montana and South Dakota.<sup>3</sup> Despite the accomplishments of the CCC Indian Division, the Indian Service fire suppression budget did not permit training Indian fire crews. When World War II preempted the depression-era programs, funding sources diminished; many roads, fuelbreaks, hazard reductions and other fire prevention measures in Indian Country fell into disrepair.

When the war ended, the USFS, through its wartime liaisons with civil defense and military agencies, found new means to replace those funds lost with the advent of war. For the first time, the USFS was able to organize and train firefighting crews with fire control viewed as "a paramilitary service of national defense."

Fire itself was typed as the enemy. To control fires in Indian Country, the Indian Service extended its cooperative agreement with the USFS in 1952 and developed a new one with the National Park Service.<sup>4</sup>

### MODERN DAY FIRE WARRIORS

The opening of new wilderness areas to the public by the CCC and increased tourist traffic to national scenic areas greatly added to the threat of fire in the post-war years. On the Mescalero Apache Reservation, in south central New Mexico, increased tourist traffic—along with drought conditions—resulted in increased fire damage to tribal timber. Responding to the crisis, A.B. "Bert" Shields, a ranger for thirty years on the Mescalero Reservation, sent out word in the spring of 1948 that he was organizing a trained Apache firefighting crew. "I hope to help you fellows organize into a group that will make history in the Southwest," Shields told nineteen Apache men, most of whom were World War II veterans. In announcing his intentions, Shields told prospective firefighters to "bring along another man you think might have what it takes to be a red hatted fire eater."<sup>5</sup>

The newly organized crew met weekly to train, practice line-building routines, and experiment with firefighting tools in



PHOTO BY CHESTER SHIELDS. U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTO #95-G-466491.

*Red Hat firefighters on the Mendocino National Forest, California, August 1951. These Mescalero Apache Indians from New Mexico were flown in from their reservation to fight the fire.*

a variety of terrain. Within months, the Red Hats received their first fire call. “We were in a timbered canyon of yellow pine where the fire was running through the tops of the trees,” Apache firefighter Rufus Lester recalled.

*The boys built their line while Shields watched the flames from a ridge. We couldn’t see the fire, but we could sure hear it roaring towards us. Shields shouted orders for us to stay on the line, but at the last minute we got scared, dropped our tools and ran. Of course the line held. Shields was pretty disgusted. Pretty soon all of us sheeped Indians came back to pick up our tools. He didn’t have to say a word.*

The Apaches never again panicked, demonstrating complete faith in their fire lines. On a different day, when strong winds swept the flames into a narrow canyon “with such ferocity that the sector boss yelled for [the Red Hats] to retreat,” Lester “quietly told his men: ‘I guess we hold it here.’ The line held.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1949, the USFS used the Red Hat crew on a fire in Lincoln National Forest, lying adjacent to the Mescalero Reservation, and found them “to be very good.” By 1950, the Red Hats won acclaim for their work on the Bonito and Weed-Mayhill fires in New Mexico’s Lincoln National Forest.<sup>7</sup> That same summer the Red Hats commanded a sector of the 17,000-acre Capitan fire in Lincoln National Forest that scorched the paws of the now infamous bear Smokey.

Within two years, the Red Hats were called to battle fires throughout Forest Service Region 3 (Arizona and New Mexico). In 1950, crews from Mescalero and Hopi were dispatched to battle a fire in California, the first time Indian crews were sent outside of their home region. When they arrived in San Bernardino National Forest, they faced a new type of fire environment: “brush so thick a man couldn’t walk.” On arrival, the Indian firefighters were sent to the roughest terrain—the steep, rocky hillsides. Ranger John Hayward, who accompanied the Indians to the fire site, opined that “a white man would have given up when he learned how hard it was to cut that brush, but those Indians kept chopping and digging until I wondered if they ever took time to breathe.” Later that summer, when the crew was sent to the Jimjam fire in Trinity National Forest, in northern California, six Apaches were taken by helicopter “to the inaccessible head of the fire” and within thirty minutes had built a controlling fire line. The rest of the crew worked fourteen hours clearing a line to the firehead.<sup>8</sup>

In 1954, the Red Hats were awarded the Interior Department’s top honor for meritorious service by distinguishing themselves “for gallant performance in service and for conservation and prevention of destruction of our natural resources.” In customary fashion, Lester turned to his Apache comrades and told them firefighting was not a one-man job. “It was you who worked and trained for the job and performed that job when the need was there.” The Red Hats had earned a reputation, one contemporary





Bureau of Land Management foreman, Calvin Jorgensen, instructs the crew of Ute Indians at the Utah Cooperative Fire Fighters training sessions on the Ashley National Forest about firefighting tactics, May 1953.

writer observed, as forest firefighters “only a cut or so below superman.”<sup>9</sup>

Although the Red Hats were the first organized Indian crew, they were not the last. In 1949, a Hopi crew was established and, in 1951, a joint USFS/Indian Service training program prepared Navajo and Pueblo Indians for emergency fire suppression. The program provided training in safety precautions, first aid, use of tools and fire fighting procedures.<sup>10</sup> That same year the Zuni Thunderbirds were formally organized, although they had previously fought fires as an untrained adjunct unit. Within several years, 250 Indians from Zuni, 50 from Taos, 25 each from Jemez, Zia, and Cochiti as well as 100 Hopis had completed the course. In 1952, the USFS, National Park Service, Indian Service and Bureau of Land Management coordinated their efforts to organize and train Indian fire crews, with representatives from each agency meeting annually to discuss common challenges and improvements in fire suppression procedures.

Indian firefighters from Arizona and New Mexico quickly won fame. For their efforts in Trinity National Forest, the Red Hats were decorated with praise from the district ranger. “This type of crew is far and above any other crew used on the fire,” the ranger explained. “Their discipline, fire camp manners, and general behavior make them an outstanding crew, not even consid-

ering their fire fighting efforts. As for line construction, I personally would prefer one 25-man Indian crew to any other three 25-man crews.” In 1954, the Zuni Thunderbirds were rewarded for their training and received a unit citation from the US Department of Agriculture for “meritorious services as unusually skillful, hardy and courageous” firefighters. Due to their dedication and hard work, other crews referred to the Thunderbirds as “human bulldozers.” The Thunderbirds were the first called to so-called *project fires*—or fires too large to be handled locally—in Arizona and New Mexico.<sup>11</sup>

Demand for Indian fire crews led to the organization of other crews, some of which fought fires with little or no training. A Zuni firefighter recalled the days of unorganized crews as a time when the firefighters “didn’t have no helmets, no nothing. We were just wearing our clothes and hats.” Whoever walked the quickest on the fireline became crew foreman. A Taos firefighter remembered that all you had to do was “know how to swing the axe and use the shovel.” Even without training, unorganized Indian crews proved to be excellent firefighters.<sup>12</sup>

By 1951, the first year of large-scale employment of Indian firefighters, some 2,000 fire warriors from the Southwest were battling fires. That same year they were organized as the Southwest Indian Forest Firefighters (SWIFF), with each crew

consisting of 21 trained firefighters, three straw bosses and one crew leader. Clarence Collins, chief of fire control for USFS Region 3, praised the Indian crews but believed that no more than 750 firefighters should be organized until an exact need could be determined. By 1961, requests for organized SWFF crews could not be filled, despite the fact that there were 1,500 Indians approved as firefighters.<sup>13</sup>

By the early fifties, Indian crews from Region 3 were flown to battle fires in Montana, Idaho, Colorado, California and Washington, in addition to Arizona and New Mexico. With Indian crews in demand, and because of the success of the SWFF Indian crews, other tribes sought to organize crews. In 1953, crews were organized from the Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Blackfoot tribes in Montana. Following the lead of SWFF, 1,200 firefighters from seven reservations in Montana and Idaho created an organization known as Montana Indian Firefighters (MIF) in 1955. After a disastrous fire season in Alaska in 1957, the Bureau of Land Management organized crews among the Indians and Eskimos of Alaska, as well.<sup>14</sup>

Wherever Indian fire crews were organized, they were deemed among the best due, in part, to a deep sense of pride and their *esprit de corps*. A veteran Taos firefighter recalled an experience when his crew was sent to battle a blaze in Idaho. Upon arrival, the crew was told they would be transported 86 miles into the wilderness along with an Alaska Native crew from Ft. Yukon. "The crew representatives were laughing," the Snowball firefighter recalled, "because the [USFS] officials were talking about who was going to last out there [in the wilderness], the Indians and the Alaskans.... It was a compliment and made me feel good."<sup>15</sup>

Because of their accomplishments in defending the land against destructive fires, American Indian firefighters developed a deep sense of pride in their work. Blackfoot firefighter Joe Bear explained in 1987:

*As long as I can remember, Indian firefighters have taken pride in fighting fires. They didn't want to be second best, they wanted to be number one in this field. Not only does firefighting bring prestige and pride, but it also...creates employment for men and women. It helps our economic situation by bringing money home to pay rent and buy clothes for the families.... The Tribe stands 100 percent behind us and expects us to act as tribal emissaries.<sup>16</sup>*

Pride in their work, in turn, was a big factor in the success of Southwest Indian firefighters. Tribal leaders considered their actions a reflection of the tribe. They sought to do a good job, and they did. A legacy of fire knowledge, pride and a competitive spirit helped establish the quality of firefighters. Good-natured inter-tribal jesting enhanced this competitiveness. The Hopis, very serious and quiet, were battling a fire in the Mount Wilson Wilderness Area in northwestern Arizona. Charlie Shamte, a Mescalero firefighter "led the remarks of the laughing and boisterous Apaches by stating, 'What's the matter with the Hopis? They don't get any fun fighting fires. Nobody knows a joke.' As the Zunis arrived to replace the Apaches for the night shift, Shamte hollered, 'It's a hot devil. You probably won't hold it, but we'll stop it for you in the morning.'<sup>17</sup> In turn, the Zunis believed they were better firefighters than the Navajos because they were better walkers and superior in using a shovel, an axe and a Pulaski,

all of which were viewed as natural extensions of the Zuni. As well, they believed that centuries of farming prepared them to work harder and longer in the open, scorching sun.

In addition to their work habits and accomplishments, there were a number of reasons Indian firefighters were so highly valued. Pueblo crews, including the Hopi and Zuni, were better organized than non-Indian crews because they came from a close-knit communal social structure. Pueblo lifestyles were "strict and discipline high." Consequently, they typically set the pace that other crews had to maintain or face being dropped from the program. The writer of a Phoenix-based magazine suggested in 1961 that SWFF Indian crews were exemplary firefighters because complaint was seen "as a sign of weakness." S.T. Carlson, regional forester for the National Park Service in Santa Fe, argued that the SWFF Indian crews were successful because they were very safety conscious and somehow had "the ability to work with a minimum of accidents." They also seemed to have an "inherent quality that causes them to sense danger."<sup>18</sup>

Although a competitive spirit was visible among the crews, individual glory was not sought nor permitted on the fire lines. Shields was careful to note that the Red Hats did not seek individual glory from their job, but worked "so in unison that they are not considered as individuals but as an intricate machine which turns out a precision job." Indian firefighters, above all, were team members. As such, they were assigned to the hottest and roughest sectors of the fire. The SWFF Indian crews were rated as "greatly superior in efficiency" to other crews.<sup>19</sup>

The Mescalero Red Hats, as was true of other Indian crews, viewed firefighting as modern day *warfare*. The Apaches believed how one approached the fire site was important. One did not walk to the *battle site*; one trotted in military fashion. As they trotted, the Red Hats sang war songs to help them maintain the pace. A logger returning from the 1950 Capitan fire in New Mexico found the Red Hat approach admirable. "We had a long uphill hike before we reached the fire line. Me and my crew was so puffed when we got there we couldn't do a lick of work 'till we got our wind. But you should have seen those Red Hats. They dogtrotted all the way up the mountain and fell to line building the minute they hit the fire."<sup>20</sup>

Because of the historical relationship that American Indians had with fire, spiritual and ceremonial practices were often encountered at the fire site. When a crew of Navajo Scouts was called to battle a 40,000-acre blaze in Gila National Forest in the 1950s, they first listened to their leader sing and say a prayer. While USFS officials questioned the timing of the ceremony, Pat Murray, USFS liaison to the Scouts, explained: "You can't hurry an Indian. He has to know the why, where, when and how about this firefighting business."<sup>21</sup>

Indian ceremonies seem to have more than once proven successful. In the 1950 Gaston fire, in San Bernardino National Forest, a fire jumped the firebreak and sped up a hill. An Apache crew attacked the fire but seemed to make no progress in containing it. In near desperation, the Apaches withdrew from the fire and began singing. When they returned to the fire, it continued to spread for a few minutes and then, for no apparent natural reason, it "lay down and was easily controlled." When Forest Ranger W.L. Graves asked what had happened, he was told the firefighters made medicine with their songs, causing the fire to lie down naturally.<sup>22</sup>

On another occasion, a Hopi crew was battling a fire in Southern





*Indian firefighters on the Gila National Forest, New Mexico, in 1951. This was the McKnight Fire, a 41,000-acre fire that crowned out continually, often sweeping over back-fire areas and across the fire line into virgin territory.*

California when it decided to hold a rain ceremony. Within two hours there was “a veritable cloudburst.” All that remained of the fire was a mass of “steaming mud.” Later, the Zunis and Apaches held a rain ceremony while battling a fire in Idaho. Ranger Paul Weld was elated with the result: “Our sector was the only place that got a shower the next day.” On another fire in California, Zuni firefighters carved religious symbols and figures on the alder trees lining the creek where the fire line was located. When they were reprimanded for defacing the trees, the Thunderbirds justified their actions by pledging “fire would not cross a line that was guarded by the symbols and figures.” The fire line held.<sup>23</sup>

In later years, the spiritual aspect of firefighting—particularly among younger firefighters—diminished, although some ceremonies are still evident among firefighters. A Mescalero Apache remarked that while older firefighters were “very religious [and] there were a lot of prayers and songs,” today’s firefighters have it “within themselves, not really showing it.” In addition, some crewmembers carry sacred medicine with them to the fireline as a source of protection. In a 2001 interview, Randy Pretty on Top, a Crow firefighter from Montana, spoke for many American Indian firefighters when he said fire fighting today is a lot “like the old warrior society” of yesteryear when physical strength and spiritual power enable tribal societies to defend themselves against the enemy.<sup>24</sup>

The tactical fire policy of the USFS—and indirectly the Indian

Service—changed after the mid 1950s. While the USFS emphasized manpower as the predominant method of suppressing fires prior to the middle fifties, it emphasized mechanization and fire research after. New strategies and weapons were introduced to aid in the battle against wildland and forest fires. Airplanes and helicopters were used to drop chemical retardants and water on fires, and helicopters were used to drop specially trained fire crews near fire lines. Increased mechanization resulted in bulldozers, chainsaws, four-wheel drive vehicles and other resources invading the fire scene. In the 1990s, Global Positioning System (GPS) mapping and aerial reconnaissance were added to the fire fighting strategies. Yet, despite mechanization and technical improvements, the principal burden continues to fall on the firefighters in the field. On the major fires in the West, that burden continued to fall on American Indian firefighters. In 2001, Jim Stires, chief of the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ branch of fire management, argued Indian fire fighters were still “at the top of the list as the most desired fire fighters.”<sup>25</sup>

When SWFF Indian crews were organized, they were in high demand throughout the West. The money earned from fighting fires constituted an important source of cash-income to the firefighters. Since many Indian firefighters worked as ranchers or artists, or were unemployed, the fire call could be easily accommodated. This readiness factor, combined with working in a rugged environment that many Indians were used to, as well as



U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTO #95-G-522361

*Indian firefighters putting out a burning stump in June 1956 on the Sitgreaves National Forest, Arizona.*

the manpower shortage in the post war years, made Indians a logical choice. Indian firefighters were initially attracted to their work because of economics. “Firefighting employment was welcomed [in the mid-fifties],” Ruben Romero, a Tiwa from Taos Pueblo and a firefighter since 1955, explained in a 1990 interview, “because of the high unemployment at the time.... When the green [USFS] truck drove up, we were attracted to it like flies.” Romero knew that “firefighting to the Indian was money” even though his heart told him it was much more than that. “It was necessary for the preservation of the old Indian ways.”<sup>26</sup>

Bleak economic conditions on the reservations served to push many Indians into firefighting. The demand for manpower and the attractiveness of cash income pulled them. In 1950, the first year in which Indian crews were used outside of Indian Country, the Mescalero Apaches earned \$10,000 fighting fires. The following year, the gross earnings of the Apaches, Hopis and Zunis exceeded \$100,000. During the 1953 fire season, the Red Hats brought home over \$40,000. By 1954, SWFF Indian crews were earning \$500,000 per year. That figure rose to \$1.5 million by 1961.<sup>27</sup> As a source of employment, firefighting also helped restore and enhance self-esteem.

In 1961, after nearly a dozen years of discussion, the USFS further modified its tactical policy by training a rapid deployment firefighting force known as an Interregional Fire Suppression Crew. These rapid deployment “hotshot” crews were made up of non-Indian USFS personnel and were trained to suppress fires on short notice anywhere in the United States. An elite and highly trained and self-sufficient crew, the hotshot crews arrived as a package, bringing with them their own tools and supplies. Within two years, there were nine such crews, each of which consisted

of forty highly trained firefighters.

Corresponding with the increase in hotshot crews was a decline in SWFF Indian crews. The manpower shortage experienced by the USFS after World War II, which at one time hampered fire suppression efforts and led to the utilization of SWFF Indian crews, had been largely overcome. The added expense of sending Indian crews outside of their home region was also no longer cost-effective. To reduce costs and attack fires more quickly, fire suppression efforts focused on the closest-first policy, meaning crews closest to a fire were the first dispatched. The use of USFS hotshots, the increased utilization of non-Indian seasonal firefighters, prohibitions against retaining SWFF crews on standby for more than two weeks and several slow fire seasons all led to a declining use of SWFF crews.<sup>28</sup>

The declining use of Indian crews also had other points of origin, including the introduction of fitness tests in the 1970s. Fighting fires, in the words of fire management specialist Jim Abbott, “is one of man’s most strenuous jobs. Working on steep terrain and in a hot, smoky environment demands maximum energy output.” As a safety precaution, the USFS established mandatory physical fitness standards in 1975, with all firefighters subject to the new standards. To measure physical endurance and stamina, firefighters were required to take—and pass—a five-minute step test.<sup>29</sup>

When Indian crews were first organized, firefighters came from a cultural and social background that required a “different lifestyle ... [with men] ... more involved in physical labor.” When many veteran firefighters began leaving the SWFF program in the late sixties, they were replaced by younger, less physically fit firefighters. By 1970, the composition of fire crews had changed. Where once firefighters were predominately over the age of 25,



they were now overwhelmingly under 25.<sup>30</sup> With the mandatory step test, many Indian firefighters were dropped from their crews. By the mid-1970s, the number of Indian firefighters significantly declined. Among the Taos Snowballs, many firefighters—or would-be firefighters—found employment in the War on Poverty programs. A worldwide demand for Zuni-made jewelry precipitated a number of Zunis to forgo the hazards of firefighting. As permanent job opportunities increased, firefighting lost its importance as a wage-earning activity. By 1970, Zuni no longer supported a firefighting crew. Hopi fire crews declined when tourism became more profitable than firefighting. Among the Mescalero Apaches, morale declined, and changing economic conditions and declining interest in firefighting led to the demise of the Red Hats. While a hundred men could be assembled at Mescalero on short notice in the 1950s, the Red Hats ceased to exist by 1973.<sup>31</sup>

The changing economic scene in the late sixties and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 led to additional changes in the Indian firefighting program. In 1973, largely to comply with the equal employment opportunity standards mandated by the federal government, women were for the first time admitted to the ranks of firefighting. The following year, an all-woman crew was organized on the White Mountain Apache and San Carlos Apache reservations. Other tribes incorporated women into their regular crews. Women firefighters are “just as good as men,” Walt Sixkiller, fire management coordinator with the Indian Bureau’s Albuquerque Area Office noted, “and their production is as good.”<sup>32</sup>

As economic conditions and opportunities deteriorated in Indian Country in the early 1980s, a number of tribes sought to reactivate their crews. In 1981, the Jicarilla Apache requested basic fire training from the Bureau of Indian Affairs for activating a SWFF crew on the reservation. Two years later, Acoma Pueblo requested assistance in initiating a crew. Blessed with a decrease in wildland fires in the west, however, federal agencies were not looking to add crews. Calendar year 1982 marked the first year in a decade that the twenty-two SWFF Indian crews were not assigned to fires outside of Region 3.<sup>33</sup>

Max Peterson, Chief of the USFS, explained in a 1982 memo to New Mexico Representative Manual Lujan why additional crews were not being approved. Additional crews would reduce the number of assignments for existing crews, Peterson pointed out. If crews averaged fewer than two assignments per season (between 1970 and 1981, 110 SWFF crews were sent on 193 assignments, clearly fewer than two per crew), it would not be worth “the time and expense for either the individual or the [US] Forest Service for testing and training.” If additional crews were needed, Peterson promised, tribes that had traditionally participated in SWFF would be given preference.<sup>34</sup>

The diminished demand for crews remained through the first half of the 1980s. Then, in 1985 and continuing until the end of decade, the Southwest experienced an increased number of destructive forest and wildland fires that required mobilizing additional fire crews. There was even a renewed demand for the highly trained and specialized, labor-intensive Type I hotshot crews. Apache hotshot crews were organized on the Mescalero, White Mountain and San Carlos reservations, with the San Carlos hotshots being an all-woman crew. Other hotshot crews were organized among the Blackfeet Tribe in Montana, the Warm Springs Tribes in Oregon and several Alaska Native tribes.<sup>35</sup>

## THE LEGACY OF FIRE WARRIORS

Today more than 6,000 American Indian firefighters continue to battle forest and wildland fires across the United States. More than 1,600 are SWFF Indian firefighters from the Southwest who represent 78 different crews. The largest contingent of American Indian firefighters today comes from the Montana Indian Firefighters, who number more than 3,500.<sup>36</sup> Approximately one out of five forest and wildland firefighters today is an American Indian or Alaska Native. Firefighting remains a much-needed source of income for Indian firefighters. Firefighting wages represent approximately one-third of the income Indian firefighters earn each year, meaning firefighting remains a big part of employment on the reservations.<sup>37</sup>

The inherent danger in fighting fires remains today and was epitomized in the June 1990 Dude Creek fire in central Arizona’s Prescott National Forest, a fire that claimed the lives of six firefighters. James Moore, a member of the Navajo Scouts firefighting crew, recalled seeing a “tidal wave of fire” come down upon the firefighters. Fellow Scout Eldon Jones described how the fire seemed to race down on the firefighters. In addition to the six lives lost, the fire consumed 45 square miles (over 28,000 acres) of Tonto National Forest.

It was a strong work ethic and a fierce pride in a job well done that led to the organization of American Indian firefighters. Fewer than two-dozen Mescalero Red Hats joined the ranks of trained firefighters in 1948. Since then thousands of American Indians have been recruited and trained to battle fires throughout the United States. In addition to those *fire warriors* battling forest and wildland fires, hundreds of other American Indians and Alaska Natives are maintaining important environmental connections to the land by working in tribal forest management programs.

The legacy of the Indian fire warriors, while having its genesis in the Southwest, resulted in American Indian crews being organized in Montana, Alaska, and the Rocky Mountain region. Individual crews were also organized among the Red Lake Chippewa in Minnesota; the Seminole of Florida; the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Cherokee, Choctaw and Kiowa nations of Oklahoma; the Alabama-Coushatta of Texas; the Cherokee of North Carolina; and the Passamoquoddy Tribe in Maine. The legacy of SWFF Indian crews today is aptly summed up by Jim Stires, national head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs branch of fire management based at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. “We have some real high level, sophisticated computer modeling to understand fire behavior” today, Stires explains. “But if a veteran Indian firefighter told me what a fire was going to do, I’d believe him over the computers.”<sup>38</sup> □

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## NOTES

1. 35 Stat. 783. In 1889, the first national policy affecting tribal timber was enacted. The Dead and Down Act (25 Stat. 673) authorized the sale of “Dead timber, standing or fallen...for the sole benefit of such Indian or



- Indians." In 1908, the Indian Forest Service and the USFS signed a cooperative agreement with the USFS establishing firewatchers and forest protection corps on four northern tribal forests. The agreement was canceled in 1909. Ballinger and Gifford Pinchot, head of the USFS, differed in forestry goals and over the fact that the USFS had to include Indian labor in its forestry management program. "United States Congress, Joint Committee to Investigate Interior Department and Forestry Service," *Investigation of the Department of Interior and of the Bureau of Forestry*, Senate Document no. 719, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 61st Congress, 3rd Session, 1911), 1192. Indian foresters were responsible for fire prevention and suppression on an average area exceeding 80,000 acres, considerably more than the 50,000 acres for which USFS personnel were responsible. Alan S. Newell, Richmond L. Clow, and Richard N. Ellis, *A Forest in Trust: Three-Quarters of a Century of Indian Forestry 1910-1986* (Seattle, Washington: Historical Research Associates, prepared for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Forestry, 1986), 3-4. The Indian Service lacked resources and expertise largely because of Congressional parsimony and the tenuous nature of the Indian Service, which was frequently the target of elimination. The Indian Service also made cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (to run agricultural research stations), the U.S. Reclamation Service (to build and operate irrigation projects) and the USFS. The Indian Service was notorious for attracting less than qualified personnel. In 1909, the Indian Service contracted with the Public Health Service for a variety of health care services, including medical experts to operate the Indian health program.
2. J.P. Kinney, *Indian Forest and Range* (Washington DC: Forestry Enterprises, 1950).
  3. Calvin W. Gower, "The CCC Indian Division," *Minnesota History* (Spring 1972) 43(1): 9; and J.P. Kinney, "E.C.W. on Indian Reservations," *Journal of Forestry* (Washington DC: Society of American Foresters, December 1933) 31:8, 911.
  4. Stephen J. Pyne, *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 287. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1952), 410.
  5. Dorothy Gray Guck, "Apache Red Hats," *New Mexico Magazine* (September 1951) 29(9): 47; and Steven Lowell, "Indian Firefighters Best, Forest Service Declares," *Arizona Daily Star* (23 August 1959), A-4. Prior to training the Red Hats, Shields had relied on unorganized Indian mill hands and local cowboys to suppress fires.
  6. Dorothy Gray Guck, "Redhats on the Warpath," *Empire Magazine* (copy on file at the University of Arizona Native American Research and Training Center, Tucson), 13.
  7. Catherine Christopher, "Peace Pipes on the Warpath," *Point West* (July-August 1961) 3(7): 40.
  8. Guck, "Apache Red Hats," 48. Dorothy Gray Guck, "War Whoops on the Fire Line," *American Forests* (January 1952), 59.
  9. Lowell, "Indian Firefighters Best, Forest Service Declares," 4-A; and Christopher, "Peace Pipes on the Warpath," 40.
  10. Steven Lowell, "Indian Firefighters Assigned to Worst Forest Blaze Tasks," *Arizona Daily Star* (1 January 1954), A-1.
  11. Letter from Trinity National Forest, Big Bar, California, October 8, 1951, on file at the University of Arizona Native American Research and Training Center, Tucson. "Surpluses in U.S. are Hailed by Nixon," *New York Times* (19 May 1954), L-5.
  12. Jennie Joe, "Interview with Zuni Firefighters," Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico, (University of Arizona Native American Research and Training Center, Tucson) 10 May 1990, 3; Jennie Joe, "Interview with Taos Firefighters," Taos Pueblo, New Mexico, 10 May 1990, 2; and "Indians Fighting Fire," *New York Times* (31 May 1951), 31.
  13. The "I" was dropped in 1953 when Hispanic crews were added to the program. Clarence K. Collins, "Indian Firefighters of the Southwest," *Journal of Forestry* (January 1962) 60(1): 88.
  14. John Clarke Hunt, "The Peaceful Warpath," *American Forests* (March 1964) 70(3): 38. The crews came from the Crow, Flathead, Northern Cheyenne, Rocky Boy, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck and Fort Hall reservations.
  15. Joe, "Taos Firefighters," 9.
  16. *Indian Forest Management* (Washington DC: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Trust and Economic Development, Division of Forestry, 1987), 2.
  17. Lowell, "Indian Firefighters Best"; Dorothy Gray Guck, "Apaches on the Warpath", (Capitan, New Mexico: Mesa Ranger Station, n.d.), 7.
  18. Collins, "Indian Firefighters of the Southwest," 90; Christopher, "Peace Pipes on the Warpath," 40; and Lowell, "Indian Firefighters Best."
  19. Collins, "Indian Firefighters of the Southwest," 89, notes that SWFF Indian crews were also paid more than the unskilled pick-up firefighters. Fewer crew bosses, fireline supervisors, and firefighters were needed when SWFF crews were used, thus lowering transportation and food costs.
  20. Guck, "Red Hats on the Warpath," 13.
  21. Guck, "Apaches on the Warpath," 2. Ceremonial fire was important for symbolic and natural effects. The kindling of fire and the process of creating fire were also highly ceremonial among American Indians. Old fires had to be ceremonially extinguished before a new one could be kindled. Among the Hopi, for example, two ceremonies—the Greater and Lesser New-Fire ceremonies—were held each year. The former was one of the most important ceremonies among the Hopi, with its flames regarded with absolute reverence. The Navajo Fire Dance is another example of the ceremonial importance of fire. This dance was a spectacular all night event concluding the Mountain Topway Ceremony and was reserved for the fire god Hastsezini. To kindle fire for the ceremony, a fire drill had to be crafted from a cedar tree that had been struck by lightning. After the ceremonial participants left the site, spectators come forward to pick up charred fragments of cedar bark and bathe their hands in the flames to ward off "the evil effects of fire." See Jesse Walter Fewkes, "The Lesser New-Fire Ceremony at Walpi," *American Anthropologist* (July-September 1901) 3(3): 438, 445; Washington Matthews, *The Night Chant, a Navaho Ceremony* (New York: AMS Press Inc., reprint, 1978), 26; Washington Matthews, *The Mountain Chant* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institute, 1887), 442. The Fire Dance was not uniquely Navajo, as many tribes, including the Apaches and Pueblos, had a similar ceremony.
  22. Christopher, "Peace Pipes on the Warpath," 54.
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  24. Joe, "Interview with Mescalero Apache Firefighters," Mescalero, New Mexico, 11 May 1990, 19, and "Taos Firefighters," 11-12. Robert Struckman, "Indians play pivotal role in fighting nation's wildfires," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 May 2001, 2.
  25. J.L. Ball, "Angels in Hard Hats," *American Forests* (January 1972) 78(1): 13. Struckman, 2.
  26. Cordova, "Weekly Report" 30 May 1990, 4, 6.
  27. Hunt, "The Peaceful Warpath," 62. This figure includes all SWFF crews, not just SWFF Indian crews. In 1989, SWFF Indian crews from

- Acoma, Jemez, Jicarilla, Laguna, Mescalero, San Felipe, Santa Clara, Taos, Zia, Zuni, Hopi, Hualapai, Navajo, San Carlos, Tohono O'odham, White Mountain Apache and Yavapai earned \$6,469,011. *Indian Forest Management: 1989 Accomplishment Report* (Washington DC: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1989).
28. Stephen J. Pyne, *Fire on the Rim* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), 166. Pyne, *Fire in America*, 100, notes that some Indian crews rebelled when they were sent not to fight fires but to mend fences in National Park sites.
  29. Jim Abbott, "Physical Fitness for Firefighters," *Fire Management Notes* (Summer 1975) 36(3): 3. Roger Sylvester, *Fire in the Northern Environment*, 251, ed. C.W. Slaughter (Portland, Oregon: Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, Forest Service, US Department of Agriculture, 1971). The step test was actually introduced in 1973, but it was not mandatory until 1975. It was intended to be a non-discriminatory way of determining a firefighter's physical fitness and stamina.
  30. Younger Indian firefighters were more likely to imbibe alcoholic drinks, creating even more difficulties. If a firefighter was inebriated, the entire crew could be sent home. Some Zuni crews were disbanded due to crewmembers having been "sent home drunk." See Joe, "Zuni Firefighters," 19. Hunt, "The Peaceful Warpath," 61, noted "If a member becomes intoxicated or even drinks intoxicating liquor while on a fire his ID card will be permanently canceled." Personal Telephone Interview with Fernando Abeita, Albuquerque Area Fire Management Officer, 24 August 1990. Many Indian communities had once excluded younger Indian men from firefighting through traditional internal controls.
  31. C.L. Sonnichsen, *The Mescalero Apache* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1973), 293.
  32. Mary Vargas Albertson, "Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action in Fire Management," *Fire Control Notes* (Winter 1979–1980) 41(1): 3. By 1978, when Congress enacted the Civil Service Reform Act, all federal agencies that were major employers of fire-related personnel were mandated to establish a workforce that reflected the nation's diversity. Personal Telephone Interview with Walt Sixkiller, Fire Management Coordinator, Albuquerque Area Office, 27 August, 1990.
  33. The 22 SWFF Indian crews came from Hopi (2), Navajo (6), San Carlos Apache (6), Zuni (3), Jemez (1), Santo Domingo (3), and Taos (1). Each was assigned to short engagements in the Southwest during 1982.
  34. Memorandum from R. Max Peterson to Representative Manual Lujan, January 22, 1982 (copy on file at the University of Arizona Native American Research and Training Center, Tucson).
  35. Hotshot crews are limited to the amount of funding available and fire occurrence. The BIA, however, does not view the creation of hotshot crews as one of its fiduciary responsibilities. Regional and national limits also restrict the number of crews. A hotshot crew from the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon became the second self-supporting hotshot crew in the nation, in 1987, contracting for all of its work. See Holly M. Gill, "Warm Springs Hotshots," *Fire Management Notes* (Spring 1989) 50(1): 14. In 1990, the Chief Mountain Hotshots (Blackfoot Nation) were organized in Montana. In 1999, the crew received the distinguished National Safety Award for zero time lost to accidents and zero vehicle accidents. [http://www.blackfeetnation.com/home%20Page/chief\\_mountain\\_hotshots.htm](http://www.blackfeetnation.com/home%20Page/chief_mountain_hotshots.htm) (accessed on 24 February 2004). Alaska Native crews come from Chena, Denali, Midnight Sun and Tazlina.
  36. Jennifer Perez, "Indian fire crews headed east," *Great Falls Tribune online*, 14 November 2001.
  37. "Indian firefighters contribute their expertise," *CNN.com*, U.S. News, 5 September 2000.
  38. Struckman, "Indians play pivotal role in fighting nation's wildfires," 2.

## The Chiefs Remember: The Forest Service, 1952–2001

by Harold K. Steen



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# “HOT SHOT” CREWS

Stanley Stevenson

Fire Control Officer, Cleveland National Forest

Scouting revealed that the head of the Burma Fire of 1949, Cleveland National Forest, was spreading rapidly uphill through medium to heavy brush and would reach the rim of an adjacent watershed unless checked on a small ridge  $\frac{1}{4}$  from the top. One “hot shot” crew under Foreman George McLarty, San Bernardino National Forest, had been working the northern flank from the bottom and would reach the top too late to effect the check. The Cleveland “hot shot” crew Foreman Leon Ballou, and 4 men were flown via helicopter from the southern flank of the fire to the ridge at the head of the fire. The 5 men hurriedly cut a line in front of the fire, back-fired it out and started a direct attack on the fire edge down the south flank to meet the rest of the crew. The crew on the northern flank meanwhile had pushed through and tied to the northern end of the fired out line. Although numerous spots occurred and the crews lost the south flank twice because of whirlwinds, they closed the gap and effected control on a 280-acre fire that would probably have more than tripled its size within 4 hours unless the check had been made and the lines tied together.

Since these crews are trained to subsist on the line with bare essentials, a sustained push taking advantage of lulls in fire intensity is possible. This was demonstrated by the San Bernardino “hot shot” crew on the Agua Tibia Fire of 1950.

Lightning started this fire in very steep to precipitous terrain covered with medium to extremely heavy brush and scrub oak. The west flank of the fire had slopped over the planned control ridge approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the top of the main divide. Helicopter scouting at 10:30 a.m. revealed that if the slop-over could be controlled the lines being constructed from the top and bottom along the flank would probably control that side of the fire.

Foreman McLarty was flown by helicopter around the slop-over and he then jumped about 6 feet to the ground inside the burn above the slop-over. He subsequently cleared a landing spot and 4 additional men were flown in to begin work on the line. Meanwhile, the rest of the crew were started down the ridge top along an old trail. Helicopter coverage guided the crew to their destination where they split forces and started around the slop-over. Although this action was completed within 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours after the initial scouting, the slop-over had spread to a perimeter of approximately 65 chains on a very steep rocky slope in medium to heavy brush oak type.

McLarty and his whole crew worked until dark. They were sent food, lights, and blankets by helicopter. The crew was fed and rested in relays until a “scratch” line was constructed around the slop-over about 11:00 p.m. Early the following morning, the crew was again serviced by helicopter and the fire line finished and mop-up started.

Stubborn aggressiveness on the part of this crew prevented the fire from crossing the drainage and establishing a new head on even more precipitous terrain.

These two examples illustrate the flexibility of "hot shot" crew action. Similar action has been taken many times during the past 4 years. Control possibilities such as these would have been impractical without well organized, trained, and conditioned crews.

One of the "hot shot" crews has been based during the fire season on the Cleveland National Forest. The following notes, although concerned primarily with the Cleveland "hot shot" organization and operational procedures, are representative for "hot shot" crews in the California Region.

The crew is composed of young men whose primary requisites are physical fitness and a will to work. Their lack of experience and conditioning are compensated by intensive training in fire line construction and use of hand tools and fire hose lays at the beginning of each season. These men are termed "fire fighters" and receive fire-fighter rates of pay while on a fire. When not engaged on fire suppression they are paid laborer wages and used on forest projects.

A sub-foreman or straw boss works with and has charge of from 5 to 8 fire fighters. The straw boss is an integral part of each crew and takes his days off at the same time as the crew. Two assistant foremen acts as crew bosses and are each assigned one-half the straw boss squads. One of the crew bosses is capable of assuming temporary charge of the whole crew during the absence of the foreman.

The crew is under the direct supervision of an experienced fire fighter who can act, as one foreman put it, "from general to father confessor." This foreman must be a skilled leader, fire-wise, and physically fit for very arduous work. He usually assumes the duties of sector boss on fires.

Crew members are hired only after full understanding and acceptance of the rigid rules set up. Camp routine is fashioned after that of athletic training camps with scheduled hours for meals, work, recreation and sleep. Although some men quickly drop out of the crew because of the difficulty of the job and the rigid discipline, three have returned each year since 1947 and ten others including the foreman have been on the crew for the past 2 seasons.

Conservation, wildlife, general forestry, and training films give the reasons for the "why" and "how" of forest fire protection. The crew is given instruction in the use and care of fire line hand tools, followed by intensive work-outs on practice fire lines. Several afternoons during the first part of the season are spent on illustrative lectures, orientation, fire behavior, safety, and correct fire line construction practices. Action on early season fires is discussed on the ground with a large part of the constructive comment coming from the crew members.

After several successful attacks on early season fires, crews begin to develop an esprit de corps and an eagerness to prove their ability. Several distinctive arm patches have been designed and worn by crews hailing their identity. The competitive spirit on large fires requiring more than one crew has provided additional incentive toward better production.

The following summary of work accomplishment, although reflecting considerable more suppression time during the heavier fire season of 1950, indicates the advisability of preplanning and budgeting forces primarily for fire suppression.

Cleveland crew activities:	<i>Percent of total man-hours payrolled</i>	
	<b>1949</b>	<b>1950</b>
Training	12.6	6.6
Project work(nonfire)	10.7	17.1
Fire Suppression	48.6	62.6
Headquarters camp maintenance and operation, Cooks, and annual leave	<u>28.1</u>	<u>13.7</u>
	100	100

A sample of fire line construction rates by direct attacks on fire perimeters in Southern California vegetative types, computed from the data recorded on the ground by the Cleveland crew foreman and including rest periods, lunch time, and delays due to lost line, is given in table 1. Comparable line construction rates are difficult to evaluate since the "hot shot" crews are generally placed on lines where untrained or unorganized crews would make very little if any progress.

TABLE 1. – *A sample of fire line construction rates by the "hot shot" crew, Cleveland National Forest*

Cover Type	Condition of Crew	Time	Character of Fire edge	Slope	Men	Fire Line	Built
						Total	Average per man-hour
Medium to heavy brush	Fresh	Day & Night	Hot	Moderate <sup>1</sup>	Number 23	Chains 74	Chains 0.21
Chamise	Do.	Day	Do.	Steep	26	135	.86
Medium brush	Do.	Night	Do.	Do.	28	40	.35
Heavy Brush	Do.	Do.	Mod. Hot	Moderate <sup>2</sup>	20	13	.23
Chamise	Tired	Do.	Do.	Steep <sup>3</sup>	12	41	.34
Chamise & Brush	Fresh	Day	Hot <sup>4</sup>	Do.	38	23	.30
Medium to heavy brush	Very tired	Night	Do.	Do.	42	65	.25

<sup>1</sup> Scattered scrub oak stems

<sup>2</sup> Very Steep ½ mile hike to line

<sup>3</sup> Some mop-up, rocks, cliffs

<sup>4</sup> Line abandoned two time because of flare-ups

The value of a trained unit of men that can be sent into difficult sections of a fire perimeter with a high degree of certainty that control will be effected, has been demonstrated many times during the past. The ever increasing demand for "hot shots" when the going gets rough is the fire manager's endorsement of the "hot shot" program.

## ***High Mobility***

# **The Interregional Fire Suppression Crew**

***Martin E. Alexander***

From Fire Management, Summer 1974 issue

The wildfire problem is of major concern to all western forest resource management agencies and organizations. During the average year, some 12,000 wildfires blacken 200 thousand acres of the 210 million protected acres of the National Forest System. One of the longtime objectives of the U.S. Forest Service has been to provide highly trained, well conditioned, versatile fire suppression crews to critical fire situations. A fire suppression crew with high mobility that can reach a large project fire on short notice and do an effective job during the first burning period, has always been the dream of fire control managers. The Interregional Fire Sup-

pression Crews developed by the U.S. Forest Service serve this purpose.

### **Background and History**

For many years, forest protection agencies relied on pick-up firefighters that were hired on an "as needed" basis. Men for these crews came from every walk of life; from skid row bums to short order cooks. In most cases these men had very little fire suppression training or experience. It was not until the advent of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930's and early 40's that any semblance of organized fire suppression crews was achieved (1). The CCC crews were used primarily for

conservation projects such as trail and campground construction, but doubled as a firefighting force.

The first organized U.S. Forest Service fire suppression crew was the "40-man" crew established in 1939 on an experimental basis (2). The 40-Man crew was located on the Siskiyou National Forest in southwestern Oregon. The crew was very effective in fire suppression in the Region 6 National Forests. The Oregon "Red Hats," co-sponsored by the School of Forestry at Oregon State College and various State agencies in 1940, was organized along the same lines as the 40-Man crew (4). During the

war years programs like these were largely discontinued. However, some of the principles of training, organization, and use were to be later adopted by other U.S. Forest Service fire suppression crews.

In 1947, Region 5 of the U.S. Forest Service began to organize "Hot Shot" crews for use in California (5). They were well trained, fast and hard hitting handline crews. Such crews as the El Cariso (Cleveland National Forest) and Del Rosa (San Bernardino National Forest) Hot Shots proved themselves more than once under difficult conditions in the brush fields of southern California.

During the 1950's most of the western U.S. Forest Service regions maintained large brushcrews to do slash disposal and other timber sale work. There were also several hundred blister rust control crewmen organized into 25-man fire suppression crews in regions with blister rust infested stands. These crews provided trained manpower for use on large project fires. "The Redmond Raiders," a TSI crew stationed on the Deschutes National Forest, was a good example. Because of transportation problems in dispatching these crews to other areas of the West, their most common use was local. With the termination of the blister rust program and the transition to bulldozer slash piling, such project crews were no longer available.

In the late 50's, fire control personnel in Washington, D.C. felt fire suppression crews could be used more efficiently if men were stationed near an airport. It was felt that a large airplane immediately available to transport men was necessary to

carry out the concept of quick mobilization and dispatching. Such a plan became a reality when 5 IRFS crews were organized for the 1961 fire season (3). The first IRFS crews were located in the far West and Northwest. By 1963, the number of IRFS crews increased to 9. Through the years their value in fire suppression became quite apparent and allowed for an expansion of the IRFS crew program. In 1970, 15 IRFS crews were available for summer fire season. At present there are 19 IRFS crews stationed in the western U.S. during the summer fire season (table 1).

#### **Recruitment and Organization**

Men for IRFS crews are recruited predominantly from the western U.S. Most often they are college students majoring in some phase of forestry. The Forest assigned an IRFS crew is responsible for screening, recruiting, and hiring crewmen and overhead. Crew members must be at least 18 and preferably not over 45, with the average age being 21. They must pass a yearly physical examination, be willing to fly, and be away from home base for extended periods of time. Employment is from about mid-June to early September. Some IRFS crews, specifically the Region 5 crews, terminate in November. Most IRFS crews have experienced fire fighters-65 to 95 percent are former crew members.

The crew headquarters have been strategically placed. Ideally they are located near large airports, which permits rapid transport by aircraft to going wildfires and high fire-danger areas. Crew members are housed in some sort of barracks, varying from reconditioned garages to

elaborate college-type dormitories.

An IRFS crew is normally composed of 25 men, consisting of a foreman, assistant crew foreman (who may or may not be one of the squad bosses), 3 squad bosses, and 20- to 21-crew members. Overhead positions on IRFS crews are usually based on past fire experience, training, and crew seniority. The IRFS crew foreman is responsible for supervision of the crew, both on fire assignments and at home base. Crew size and structure vary among the regions, depending upon the objectives and the needs of the home region.

Movement and use of these crews within their own regions is coordinated by the regional fire dispatchers. Requests for IRFS crews from other regions are coordinated through the Boise Interagency Fire Center (BIFC) at Boise, Idaho. BIFC arranges for air transportation and maintains a national listing of available IRFS crews (6). BIFC provides logistic support rather than serving as a command center. This permits a central office, which has fire suppression crew requests coming from all over the West, to analyze and estimate potential situations and assign priorities when the demand for IRFS crews is greater than the supply.

#### **Training**

Crew members usually receive 2 weeks of both formal classroom instruction and field training. Training is given in various facets of the fire suppression job. Training is intensive because without it crewmen would be no better than pick-up firefighters.



Classroom training consists of films, lectures, and programmed instruction texts in Forest Service organization. This includes fire and crew organization, fire behavior and weather, the 10 Standard Fire-fighting Orders, safety, first aid, retardant and aircraft management, radio communications, fire suppression principles for both small and large fires, fire control attack methods, woodsmanship, and thinking and reasoning during emergency stress conditions. Field demonstrations are given in various fireline construction methods (progressive, one-lick, etc.), care and use of hand tools, and specialized equipment such as chain saws, portable and slip-on pumps, and drip torches.

Physical conditioning is stressed during the 2-week training period. It consists of calisthenics, hikes, obstacle courses, and outdoor sports. Refresher training and conditioning are continued as needed.

IRFS crews are often faced with long working hours, little food, high air temperatures, and low humidities, all of which take their toll on crew members. Another fatigue factor is the required traveling from one fire to another. It's not uncommon to find IRFS crews that have been away from home base for 2 or 3 weeks during a busy fire season. But despite the hazards and hardships, the safety record among IRFS crews is extremely good.

When not actively engaged in training or suppression, the crew performs district project work such as hazard reduction, maintenance and construction jobs, fire proofing heavy use areas, slash disposal, timber stand improvement, trail building, and reconditioning

firefighting tools and equipment. These activities keep crew members in shape and provide a ready work force for priority district work. The IRFS crews are on a 24-hour alert, 7 days a week. A sign-out roster system is utilized by most crews to determine where individual crew members may be reached at any particular time during off-duty hours.

#### **Philosophy and Crew Morale**

The effectiveness of any fire management organization is no greater than the morale of its personnel. Recognition of this has fostered a high degree of *esprit de corps* among IRFS crews that consider themselves the "best." It is customary to assign the IRFS crews control of the most difficult sectors of project fires. Crew morale appears to soar the hotter the fireline gets.

IRFS crew members develop nicknames as the result of incidents, individual characteristics, or backgrounds. Good-natured kidding among fellow crew members prevails constantly. Several IRFS crews have developed shoulder patches exemplifying their crew name or locality.

Crew morale is a necessary component of an IRFS crew. Only through a sense of personal satisfaction and pride can the individuals obtain the desire required for successful action in difficult fire situations.

#### **Mobilization**

The primary purpose of IRFS crews is to provide highly trained and well-equipped reinforcement crews for large fire suppression. All 19 IRFS crews are air-mobile and can be moved to any location in the western U.S. in 6 to 8 hours after being dispatched. Thus, approximately

420 highly trained men can be mobilized very quickly for any large project fire or lightning bust.

In one instance, 12 of the 15 IRFS crews were used in the 4,000 acre Pumpkin Creek fire on the Bighorn National Forest in 1970. IRFS crews are used in different types of wildland fuels, burning conditions and terrain - from mopup in heavy West Coast fuels to punching line in southern California's Class 14 brush type.

IRFS crews are used for both day and night duty. They are sometimes used as an initial attack force on their home forest and by nearby cooperating agencies and organizations. In such cases they will travel to a fire utilizing their own crew vehicles. At certain times and because of individual experience, the crew may be split up and used as smokechasers during a large lightning bust. Individual crew members can also be utilized as "straw" bosses for pick-up and district crews. Besides serving as handline crew, they also fill in on fire control specialty jobs such as helitack crewmen and managers, retardant mixmasters, and tank truck operators.

Although IRFS crews are used primarily by the U.S. Forest Service in all of the western regions, 2 unusual fire assignments for IRFS crews were the Russian River fire and the Chaldron fire. The first occurred in 1969 when 4 IRFS crews from Region I were used on the Russian River fire on the Chugach National Forest in Alaska upon personal written communication from Philip W. Gum, R-10, Div. of Fire Mgmt. and Air Operations. The second occurred during the 1973 fire season when three Region I

crews and one Region 2 crew were used on the Chadron fire on the Nebraska National Forest.

The eastern and southern U.S. Forest Service regions have never used IRFS crews, nor do they anticipate using them because of readily available manpower, generally small and short duration fires, and because their fire season does not coincide with IRFS crew employment periods (personal written communications from Wayne E. Ruziska, R-8, Div. of Fire Mgmt. and Monroe E. Kimsey, R-9, Div. of Fire and Air Mgmt.). Therefore, although IRFS crews are available to the eastern and southern states, it would require extreme fire danger over a large area for an extended period of time to warrant dispatch.

The IRFS crews are also used by other federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They are also called upon for fire suppression by western state forest resource management agencies, private forest industry, and timber protection associations.

When the regular fire season is finished in the crew's headquarters area, a crew may be moved to some other part of the West if needed. This type of arrangement usually consists of a 30- or 45-day detail. The

Bighorn IRFS crew was used in this manner during the 1972 fire season in California (1). The Lolo and Pike IRFS crews were also assigned to the Lassen and Los Padres National Forests, respectively. Such an arrangement not only provides the Forest with an extra fire suppression force, but allows crew members to gain more varied experience and see different parts of the country. Similar arrangements include stand-by duty at fire coordination centers during periods of extreme fire danger.

An extremely valuable asset of IRFS crews is that they arrive at a fire as a complete "package" outfit—they have their own overhead, chain saws, crew radio communication system, and hand tools (if ordered with crew). Crew members carry their own fire pack which includes a sleeping bag, personal gear, and fire suppression clothing and equipment. The requesting fire control agency has only to provide food and water.

#### **IRFS Experience Important**

Experience and training on IRFS crews is sometimes used as criteria for selection of smokejumpers. Because of the wide variety of fire management experience gained on these crews, crew members should be well qualified to pursue careers as fire control technicians or professional wildland fire man-

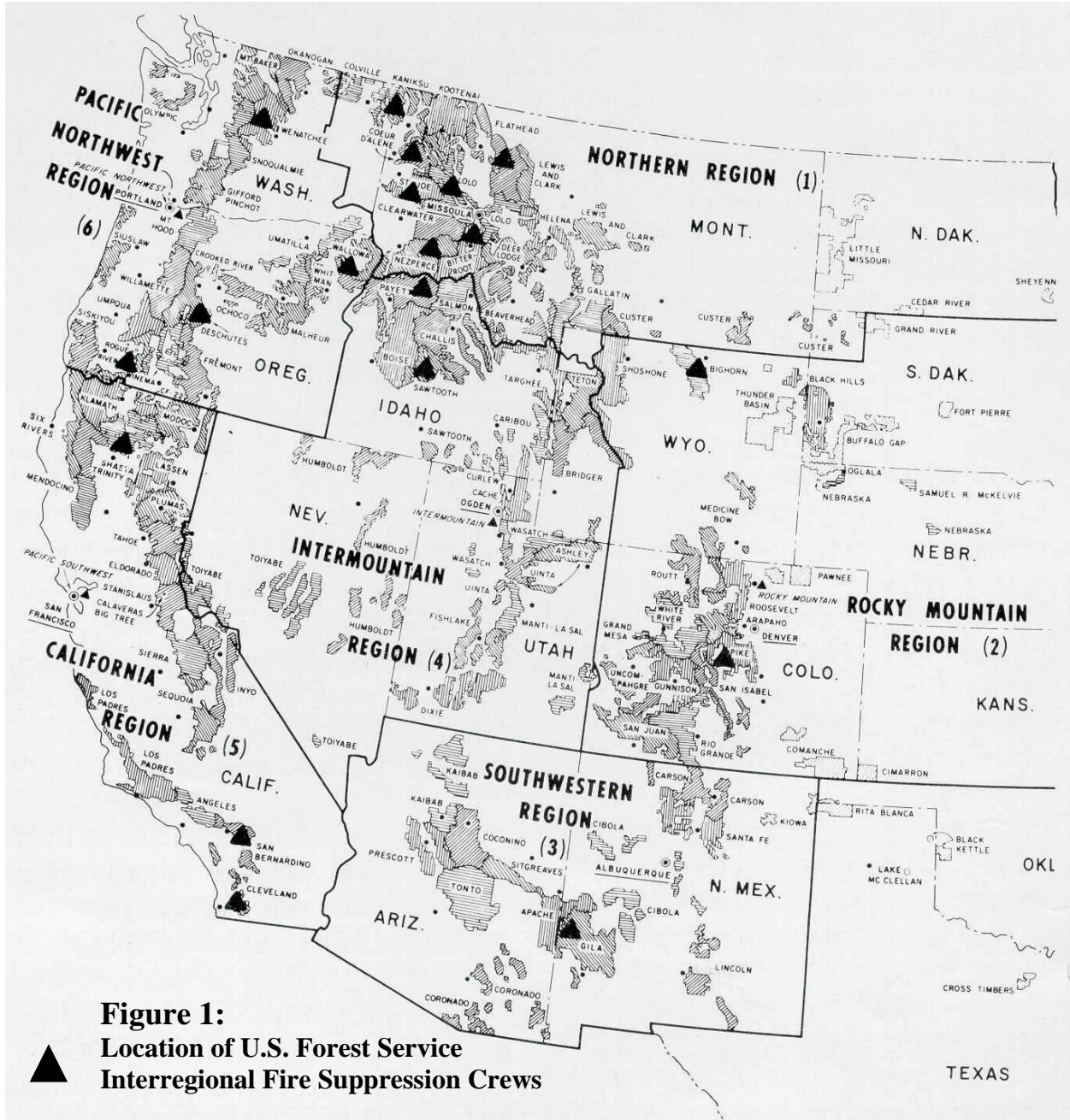
agers, depending upon their education. Many fire control personnel have worked their way up through the ranks from seasonal fire control jobs such as lookouts, fire guards, fire prevention patrolmen or as IRFS crewmen. The experience gained on an IRFS crew not only allows young men to gain district fire control fundamentals but also allows them to experience all phases of large fire suppression. This experience is necessary to all persons pursuing a career in wildland fire management.

The development of the Interregional Fire Suppression Crews by the U.S. Forest Service marks a major milestone in wildland fire suppression. Philip V. Cloward, fire staff officer on the Sawtooth National Forest, once said that "what the smokejumper is to small fires, the IRFS crew is to large fires." Performance to date indicates that the IRFS crews are meeting their objectives and giving fire management agencies a new dimension in wildland fire suppression not previously available.

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**Figure 1:**  
▲ Location of U.S. Forest Service  
Interregional Fire Suppression Crews

**Table 1. – National Forests assigned IRFS crews by U.S. Forest Service regions with year of crew organization and crew name**

<b>U.S.F.S. Region</b>	<b>National Forest Assigned IRFS Crew(s)</b>	<b>Year of Crew Organization</b>	<b>Crew Name</b>
Region 1	Bitterroot	1963	Bitterroot I.R.
	Flathead	1966	Flathead I.R.
	Idaho Panhandle <sup>1</sup>		
	at Wallace	1967	Coeur D’Alene Hotshots
	at Priest Lake	1967	Kaniksu Hotshots
	at St. Maries	1967	St. Joe Hotshots
	Lolo	1961	Lolo I.R.
Nezperce	1962	Slate Creek Hotshots	
Region 2	Bighorn	1967	Gibhorn I.R.
	Pike <sup>2</sup>	1962	Pike I.R.
Region 3	Gila	1970	Gila I.R.
Region 4	Payette	1961	Payette I.R.
	Sawtooth	1967	Sawtooth I.R.
Region 5	Cleveland	1961	El Cariso Hotshots
	San Bernadino	1961	Del Rosa Hotshots
	Shasta-Trinity	1967	Redding Hotshots
Region 6	Deschutes	1962	Deschutes I.R.
	Rogue River	1963	Rogue River Roughriders
	Wallow-Whitman	1967	Wallow-Whitman I.R.
	Wenatchee	1966	Wenatchee Bushmen

<sup>1</sup> In 1974, the IRFS crews stationed on the Coeur D’Alene, Kaniksu, and St. Joe National Forests were reorganized into the Idaho Panhandle National Forest (personal written communication from William R. Moore, R-1, Division of Fire Management).

<sup>2</sup> Originally the crew was assigned to the Roosevelt national Forest but was reassigned in 1969 to the Pike National Forest (personal communication with Glen C. Scott, former Pike IRFS Crew Foreman).

# OREGON'S "RED HATS"

GEORGE H. SCHROEDER

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The constant and prompt availability of "snap" crews is most important in the use of a crew like the Red Hats. The author's description of a cooperative approach to the problem indicates how the 40-man crew principle may be adapted to varying administrative conditions.

During the summer of 1940 the school of Forestry at Oregon State College instituted a program for organization and training of forest fire-suppression crews. Cosponsors included the National Youth Administration, States Forester, United States Forest Service, Oregon Forest Fire Association, and others vitally interested in the protection of Oregon's forest wealth. The objectives of the program were:

1. Furnishing the State of Oregon with an efficient fire organization for call in handling emergency fire situations.
2. Training of forest-fire overhead
3. Furthering the forestry education of participants.
4. Providing deserving students with a means of earning money for school attendance.

Based at a camp on the McDonald State Forest 7 miles from the Forestry School in Corvallis, the crews participated in a unique training program. Two hours of study, 2 hours of training, and 4 hours of hard work on approved N.Y.A. projects constituted the day's schedule. Study included a wide range of practical forestry subjects such as first aid, use of the compass, tree and shrub identification, knot tying, and life saving. Among other things training consisted of and long hard hikes over the rough topography of McDonald Forest. Among the work projects were the following: Road and trail construction, road and trail maintenance, thinning of forest stands, pruning of forest stands, soil erosion control, white pine blister rust control, and snag felling.

During recreation hours some of the men went swimming in the nearby lake, others played games or passed the time by reading the material furnished by parents and well-wishers. Leave from camp was allowed, but not more than 10 percent of the camp strength was granted leave at any one time. Those who were fortunate enough to be on leave went skating at the nearby roller rink or enjoyed a show in town.

Having advertised themselves as ready to report to a forest fire at a moment's notice, the Red Hats were necessarily very highly organized. The basic unit was a squad of 4 men and a straw boss. One of the straw bosses in each group of 10 was the ranking officer, and a foreman was assigned to each crew of 25. Equipped with pick-ups, trucks, and three 25-man busses the camp had ample transportation. Hand tools and mess equipment were packed ready to go at any time. When a fire call came in, the supervisor designated the responsible officer; drivers slipped behind the wheels of the trucks; men who had practiced the procedure beforehand slid tool caches into pick-ups; straw bosses checked off their squads; bed rolls were stacked in the rear end of busses and the men loaded in, caulked boots in hand.

On the fire line the crews worked as originally organized or expanded by absorbing civilian fire fighters into their squads. On at least two large fires assistant foremen were detached from their squads and given civilian crews to supervise. Orders were that an assistant be trained for all overhead positions so that supervision would always be available. Since the training program provided timekeepers, torch men truck drivers, cooks, scouts, and other workmen, members of the crews were often used to facilitate the handling of pick-up labor assigned to him. If such substitution was impractical, however, the crew proceeded with control of operations as best it could.

The Red Hat crews were trained in the progressive method of fire-line construction. They did not, however, confine themselves to this operation alone, but burned out their line and mopped-up the area after backfiring operations. Then men were assigned positions because of aptitude shown in training and practiced the duties of those positions in order that the need for supervision in emergency situations might be minimized.

While on fire-suppression detail the men were paid a minimum of 40 cents an hour plus their expenses, the overhead jobs paying more according to their importance. Agreement on the wage scale was reached with the forest-protective agencies in the area before the fire season. The agencies all seemed pleased with the results and their average daily earnings of \$5.48 also proved satisfactory to the fire fighters.

While participating in the base camp training and N.Y.A. work program, the men were only allowed \$1 per day, but since this amount covered expenses, it did make it possible to train and organize the crews in readiness for fire duty. The resulting total average earning (fire fighting and N.Y.A.) was \$120 per man above expenses for an average enrollment period of 52.71 days. In addition, 24 men were placed in summer jobs with the forest-protective agencies. The average income per man on these positions was approximately \$100 a month plus expenses.

The program enrolled a total of 113 men. The largest number enrolled at one time was 87. Three 26-man crews were active during the peak of fire season, and 2 such crews were available for practically the entire 4 months (June 1 to October 1).

The camp was initiated for the benefit of first-year students in forestry who were unable to obtain other employment. Because of an abundance of summer jobs last year, all except a small number of the foresters were placed in positions before the fire season opened, and the camp was thrown open, therefore, to any young man in need of employment who was physically fit and wished training in the forestry field. Men were enrolled from almost all of the institutions of higher education in Oregon. College men from at least six other States took part and older high-school students proved very good material.

Popularity for the training program is indicated by the fact that, although plans for the summer of 1941 are at this time very incomplete, applications are already on hand from several States showing the interest of young men who have heard of the organization but did not take part in 1940. With a strong force of veterans returning and with the probability of a guarantee of minimum earnings in prospect, it would seem that Oregon's Red Hats have proved their value and established the program as a permanent institution.



# THE 40-MAN CREW- A REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL 40-MAN FIRE SUPPRESSION CREW

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and

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Region 6, throughout the summer season of 1939, conducted an experiment in organizing and operating a special 40-man suppression crew. With regard to this venture in an important field, Regional Forester Lyle F. Watts in his letter of January 09 states:

“The past season’s experience has been valuable. All forests are enthusiastic about well organized, trained, and properly equipped mobile crews. Special instructions have been prepared for forests, so they can organize such crews from their own resources. The region is going to spend several thousand dollars for light beds and special equipment. Special overhead training is going to be handled as a project. New ideas in organizing and managing crews on the fire line are being developed and tried out. Reducing overhead costs, particularly behind the line, is almost daily talk on many forests. Costs on walking men to and from camps have been analyzed and discussed. The impetus to these and many other matters has, it is believed, been brought about in part, at least, by the need of the 40-man crew.

If total expenditures for the 40-man crew, exclusive of the road and bridge construction, is prorated to each mile of fire line constructed, it cost \$871 per mile. Long distance transportation, camp construction, etc., are all included. If only fire equipment, training, transportation, and suppression costs are included, the crew constructed each mile of fire line for \$325. By comparison, it cost an average of \$1,991 to construct and work each mile of 229 miles of fire-line on six of our largest fires. If one-third of this was expended for mop-up and thus eliminated, the 40-man crew constructed line 35 percent cheaper, if all its costs are included, as compared to ordinary crews. Such a rough comparison does not tell the whole story as the 40-man crew in every case worked on the most inaccessible and difficult sections on fires, and time and expense of transportation were usually high because of long distances traveled.”

Mr. Watts’ letter transmitted the comprehensive illustrated and charted report on the project. In addition to this detailed report, Messrs. Cliff and Anderson have prepared for publication in Fire Control Notes a most interesting condensed version.

Fire control men have realized for several years that the practice of recruiting untrained fire fighters for the suppression of large fires has proved inefficient and expensive. The 40-man fire suppression crew was organized in an effort to overcome apparent weaknesses in this important phase of forest management. Plans originating in Region 6 and the Washington office called for the organization, on an experimental basis, of a carefully selected, highly trained 40-man fire suppression crew equipped to sustain themselves for periods of at least 3 days in inaccessible back country where the work of ordinary crews is inefficient. Each member of this crew was to be selected for his physical prowess and woodsman ship, hardened by work, and trained to use the correct technique in handling each foot of fire line without detailed supervision.

The Redwood Ranger Station on the Siskiyou National Forest was selected as the best location for the crew. This station was on the areas along the coast and Pacific highways, and forests east of the Cascade Range. In addition, this headquarters site was in the immediate proximity of needed project work, which would help finance the crew, and was located on a forest with large inaccessible areas and difficult fire problems.

## **Preparation and Training**

**Recruiting.-** A junior forester with 10 seasons' experience in supervisory work on fires was chosen as leader. In an effort to choose qualified men for the crew in a limited time, the regional office requested each forest to submit the names of several qualified candidates. The crew members were selected from these candidates by the leader immediately after his assignment to the job. Most of the crew members reported for duty between June 16 and July 1, and the crew reached full strength by July 9. Eight additional men were recruited throughout the ensuing season to replace men found to be unqualified because of poor health, poor workmanship, and other deficiencies. Four squad bosses were selected who were well qualified in the instruction and management of small crews on fires, in camp, and on work projects. In picking other members of the crew, men were selected who were not only capable fire fighter, but who also had specialties in other line of work. The crew included 2 qualified first-aid men, 2 "cat skimmers," one grader man, 10 fallers, and 3 men capable of doing fire line cooking. A professional cook and 2 flunkies were hired to prepare all meals for the crew while in camp. The leader and squad bosses were included as part of the total crew of 40 men. The kitchen force was in addition to the regular to the regular 40 men of the crew. Since the work of this crew was largely experimental in nature, a special recorder was added to insure obtaining necessary detailed records of the activities and accomplishments of the crew.

**Salaries and Civil Service Status.-** Members of the crew were hired as guards (CU-4) pending certification of eligibles, at an entrance salary of \$110 per month. The squad bosses were given a CU-5 rating, with a salary of \$125 per month. When away from Grants Pass. The crew members were supplied board and lodging by the Government.

**Camp Site and Quarters.-** A camp site was selected one-fourth mile from Redwood Ranger Station on the bank of Illinois River. Eleven tents set up on the tent frames provided comfortable living quarters for the crew. Two portable wooden buildings were constructed for use as a mess hall and bathhouse. A third portable building, loaned by the Siskiyou National Forest, was erected for use as a study hall, conference room, and office quarters.

Water was distributed to all parts of the camp by a pipe line tapping the ranger water system. Electricity for camp lighting was purchased from a commercial power distributor. A grounded telephone line, 800 feet of road, and a 20-foot bridge were constructed by the crew to provide communication and access to the camp.

A number of recreational facilities were provided to occupy the leisure time of the men closely confined to camp. A gravel dam was thrown up across the river to form a small lake for swimming. A soft-ball diamond and volleyball and horseshoe courts were cleared and leveled for the enjoyment and conditioning of the men.

The cost of constructing and maintaining the camp and supplying fuel amounted to \$6,245, which includes the value of the time devoted by the 40-man crews to these activities.

**Equipment and Supplies.-** The objective in equipping the 40-man crew was to select tools, bedding, and rations which would convert the crew into an effective fire-fighting unit, self-sustained for a minimum period of 72 hours, and which at the same time could be carried over trails and rough country at a creditable speed without unduly tiring the men. This objective was met by building up packs which included essential fire tools, concentrated rations consisting mainly of dehydrated food, and lightweight, goose-down sleeping bags which rolled into bundles 13 inches long and 7 inches in diameter. These compact bags, well tailored, with zipper on both inner bag and cover, proved sufficiently warm for summer use.

Table 1 shows the content and weight of an average pack with essential equipment. The complete list of fire tools carried to and used on all fires upon which the 40-man crew took action is shown in table 2.



Contents of 40-man pack

TABLE 1.- Contents of an average 40-man crew pack

Number	Item	Weight in pounds
1	Pack board, Trapper Nelson	5 ½
1	Headlight with 3 extra batteries	1 ½
1	Canteen with water (to hang on belt)	2 ½
1	Sleeping bag, light weight	5 ½
2	Lunches in cloth sack (to hang on belt)	1 ½
1	Rations, 3 days	11
	Cook and mess outfit or extra equipment	2
	Personal effects	2
	Tool, fire (average weight)	4
	Average weight per man, total	35 ½

TABLE 2.- *Fire tools carried to and used on fires by the 40-man crew*

Number	Item	Weight in pounds (each)
4	Axes, cruisers	2 ½
6	Axes, swamping	3 ½
10	Pulaskis	3 ½
10	Hoes, hazel	3 ½
10	Shovels, baby (6 carried by last 6 hoe men)	2
12	Fusees (for burning out)	½
2	Saws, falling, with handles	10
1	Back-pack bag, with pump	6 ½
4	Axes, falling	4
2	Oil cans, 1-pint	1
4	Wedges, wooden	½
10	Axestones, carborundum	½
10	Files, 10-inch	½
4	Bags, water, 2 ½-gallon	½
1	Bags, water, 5- gallon	1

Surplus saws, axes, steel wedges, sledges, hoes, and shovels were always carried on the fire tuck for use in case the regular tools were not sufficient. During the season no use was made of this extra equipment except in the exchange of dull tools for sharp ones.

Equipment used by this crew and found to be especially adaptable included hardwood wedges which can be driven with the side of an ax, and fusees for backfiring. Fusees were particularly adaptable for this crew because of their lightweight, which made it possible to carry enough to enable several men to backfire at one time.

Special equipment such as radios, compasses, and first-aid kits was used by the crew on all fires.

Various kinds of concentrated food were tried by the 40-man crew on the fire line. Table 3 lists items of food by weight and calorie content which proved to be the most satisfactory combination. It is felt that through further study, however, it might be possible to devise a lighter ration with equal nutritive value.

On going to a fire each man carried two lunches on his belt to that no time would be lost in preparing meals during the first shift on the fire line.

TABLE 3.- *Ration list, 1 man 3 days*

No.	Item	Weight in lbs	Calorie Content	Where to obtain
1	Eggs, powdered	1/2	1,330	Eddie Bauer, 2d and Seneca Sts., Seattle, Wash., or sports Craft Inc., 512 Southeast Yamhill St., Portland Oreg.
2	Cervelat	1	1,800	Nearly all grocers
3	Bacon, canned	1	2,600	Do.
4	Soup concentrate	1/2	2,500	Eddie Bauer, 2d and Seneca

				Sts., Seattle, Wash.
5	Potatoes, dehydrated	½	1,800	Do.
6	Rice, white	1	1,600	Any grocer
7	Apple concentrate	½	1,500	Columbia Fruit Processors, Inc., Pateros, Wash.
8	Sugar	½	900	Any grocer
9	Tomato Juice	½	100	Do.
10	Hardtack	1	1,600	Do.
11	Coffee	¼	-----	Do.
12	Lemon Drops	½	850	Any confectionary
13	Anchovy paste	1/8	600	Any grocer
14	Dates	1	1,600	Do.
15	Figs	1	1,400	Do.
16	Salt	1/8	-----	Do.
17	Butter, canned	½	3,500	Order through grocer
18	Milk, powdered	½	2,300	Any grocer
	<b>Total-----</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25,980</b>	

According to dietitians, hard manual labor requires 3 calories per pound per hour. A 180-pound man working and/or hiking 16 hours per day for 3 days requires 25,920 calories. Therefore, the ration listed in table 3 is ample, and the 2 lunches carried by the men on the first shift offer a large margin safety.

Based on the experience of 1939, it is advisable for the leader of the crew to make out a basic menu with a choice of substitutes of about equal weight and calorie content. The men may be allowed to choose any substitute listed in table 4. This will assure a balanced food ration. It was found that a free individual choice usually does not result in a balanced menu.

TABLE 4.-*Desirable substitutes for 40-man crew ration*

Number	Item	Weight	Substitute for-	Where to obtain
1	Dried beef	-----	Cervelat	Any meat market
2	Lemon Juice	12 ounces	Tomato Juice	Any grocer
3	Grapefruit Juice	----do----	-----do-----	Do.
4	Raisins	----do----	Dates	Do.
5	Cheese, dried	8 ounces	Anchovy paste	Do.
6	Peaches, dried	1 pound	Figs	Do.
7	Apricots, dried	----do----	-----do-----	Do.
8	Spaghetti	2 pounds	Rice	Do.
9	Oatmeal	----do----	-----do-----	Do.



Cooking on the fire line

**Transportation.-** Three 1939 model, 1 1/2 –ton Chevrolet trucks were used for transportation of crew, supplies, and equipment to and from most of the fires and on work projects. Two of these trucks were equipped with comfortable, upholstered seats for hauling the men, and one was used for supplies and fire packs.

On the longer and more tiring trips such as the 360-mile trip to the Big Cow Creek fire on the Malheur and Whitman National Forests, commercial busses were used. These busses added greatly to the comfort of the men and made it possible for them to rest en route, and arrive on the fire in better condition than if they had traveled by truck.

**Personnel Management.-** Some restrictions were required in order to keep the men constantly within fire call. Camp rules were established, outlining the responsibilities of the crew members as to fire duty, fire calls, camp police duties, and personal conduct and appearance. Only a few instances of infringement of these rules occurred during the season. Tension of stand-by duty was lessened considerably by frequent fire suppression jobs.

Opportunity was given to each member of the crew to leave camp periodically to purchase tobacco and other personal effects and to attend the local theater once or twice weekly, provided they signed out and agreed to stay in a group going to and returning from the theater. Excursion trips were made under the same arrangement.

Softball and volleyball teams were organized, and weekly games with Cave Junction and the Oregon Canes CCC Camp were played throughout the early part of the summer. Swimming, horseshoe pitching, and punching-bag work-outs also absorbed no small amount of surplus energy. Some leisure time was devoted to study of the handbooks, bulletins, and periodicals contained in the 40-man crew library. Leisure time classes in first-aid, lifesaving, and safety were conducted by qualified crew members.

Because of the seriousness of the fire season and the shortage of manpower caused by sickness and injury, only a small amount of annual leave was given during the main part of the fire season. Two more men were added to the crew during the latter part

of the season so that accumulated leave could be granted and till maintain the crew strength of 40-men.

**Fire Training.-** Fire training was started in June 20, immediately after the first large influx of recruits. Frequent training sessions continued up to July 21, when the crew was called on the first fire. An occasional training period was given subsequently for the benefit of the new recruits.

In the first training periods emphasis was placed of fire line organization and construction so that the crew would be in readiness for immediate call. Training continued with practice hikes and drills in unloading fire packs from trucks and reloading them again so that a certain speed and precision was acquired in performing these routine jobs. Conferences were held on methods of line construction, fire behavior, and fire strategy in various fuel types, in conjunction with the field training sessions.

Special training was given to selected crew members in radio operation, fuel type mapping, and first aid by qualified instructors.

**Work Projects.-** Two work projects, located 9 miles from camp, were selected to utilize the time and energy of the crew members when they were not occupied with training or fire fighting or engaged in camp construction activities. The purpose was threefold-namely, to keep the men in good physical condition, to help finance the crew, and to accomplish useful and needed work. The construction of the Illinois Bridge and the Eight Dollar Mountain Road were the two projects selected. The bridge was a creosoted wood, Howe truss structure, with a main span of 137 ½ feet and an approach on one end of 52 feet. This bridge was completed by the crew in the fall of 1939. A total of 815 man-days was spent on the project.

The crew spent a total of 672 man-days on the Eight Dollar Mountain Road and brought a 2-mile section to about 75 percent of completion.

### Action of Fires

The 40-man crew worked on 8 class C or larger fires located on 5 national forests in Region 6 between July 21 and September 2, 1939. The two periods worked by this crew on the Saddle Mountain fire were counted as two fires since they ere analyzed separately and were widely divergent in location and time. The fires on which the 40-man crew worked and the time and travel chargeable to these fires are listed in table 5.

*TABLE 5.- Fires worked upon by the 40-man crew in 1939*

No	Name of Fire	Forest	Dates	Days on fire (w/ travel)	Miles traveled
1	Horseshoe Bend	Siskiyou	July 21 - July 26	5 ½	80
2	Blue River	Willamette	July 27 - July 28	2	421
3	Wheeler Creek	Siskiyou	Aug 7 – Aug 8	2	150
4	Saddle Mtn.(east)	Siuslaw	Aug 10 – Aug 13	4	300
5	Willard	Columbia	Aug 14 – Aug 17	4	543
6	Eagle Creek	Siskiyou	Aug 18 – Aug 21	4	127
7	Saddle Mtn(west)	Siuslaw	Aug 22 – Aug 26	6	663
8	Big Cow Creek	Whitman	Aug 28 – Sept 2	6	725
	<b>Total-----</b>	-----	-----	<b>33 ½</b>	<b>3,009</b>



**Get-Away Action.-** Get away time on fires varied from 31 to 75 minutes, according to circumstance at the time of the call. The crew was dispatched from their headquarters camp on four occasions. Three of these calls came in the late afternoon before supper and the fourth immediately after breakfast. On two occasions the crew was working on the road project 9 miles away, and it was necessary to assemble them at camp before leaving.

If the call came near mealtime and the meal was practically prepared, the men were usually fed before leaving. Assembling and feeding the men resulted in rather slow get-away time on several occasions. However, it is believed that the practice of feeding the men before leaving is justified, particularly if a long trip of several hundred miles is involved, because it avoids making a meal stop en route and the men arrive in better condition than if they travel without food.

Experience in 1939 brought out that the following considerations should govern action looking toward faster get-away time:

1. Keep all members of the crew in direct telephone communication at all times. Use large extension bells, sirens, and other signals where necessary.
2. Order lunches or prepared meals ahead on route of travel if time can be saved in this way.
3. If dinner is prepared at camp at the time of the call, the crew should be allowed to eat before leaving in order to avoid losing time en route.

**Meals and Stops En Route.-** One or more meals were usually eaten en route to the more distant fires. In all but a few cases, a dependable restaurant was notified by phone in advance and no time was lost in the preparation of meals.

**Time Distribution on Fires.-** Table 6 shows the distribution of fire time for the 40-man crew, based on data recorded on the eight fires upon which the crew worked. These computations include time from start of work to completion of control line on all fires or sectors of fires handled by the crew.



40-man crew hiking to a fire

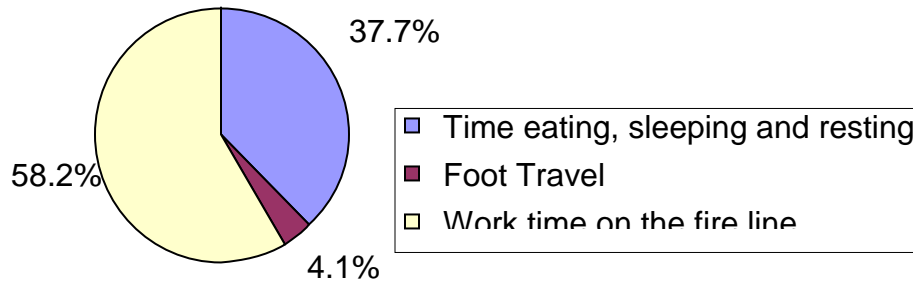
TABLE 6.- Time distribution of 40-man crew on fires

Time Element	Total hours	Percent of time
Foot travel	12.31	4.1
Worktime on fire line	176.58	58.2
Time eating, sleeping, resting	114.36	37.7
<b>Total-----</b>	<b>303.25</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Distribution of time as recorded above is shown graphically in the chart below.

No comparable figures are available for other crews, but it is believed that this table shows plainly the advantages of using self sustaining crews in inaccessible sectors of fires. Foot travel to and from such sectors by ordinary crews serviced in established base or line camps usually consumes a great deal more than 4 percent of the time of fire fighters and saps a tremendous amount of energy of men who are unaccustomed to hiking in rough country. The usual practice of camping on or near the fire line wherever the night overtook the crew insured the effective use of a large proportion of the day with a minimum of lost motion. Truck- and foot-travel time to the fires from the time the crew was dispatched up to the point control action was started is not included in these figures. However, when determining the distance practicable to dispatch such a crew, it should be considered that more than one-quarter of the total time charged to fires was consumed in travel by truck and on foot to the fires.

**Time Distribution Chart**



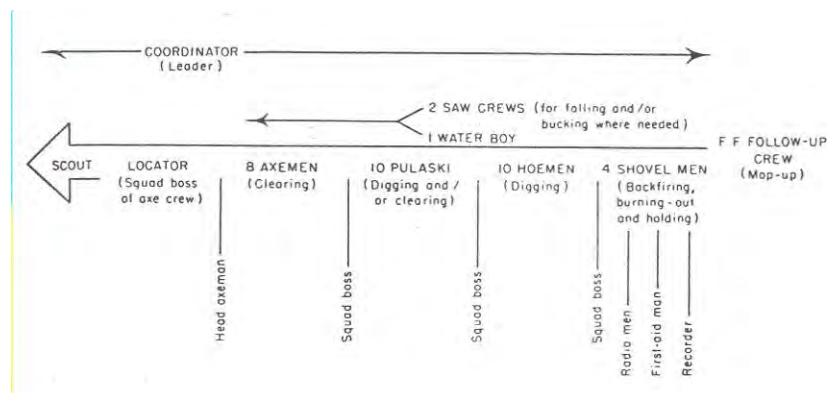
**Organization and Method Used in Line Construction.-** A progressive method of line construction, which in reality is a variation of the one-lick method, was used successfully by the 40-man crew on all fire suppression work.

The progressive method used has the advantages of the one-lick method; namely, the elimination of lost time occasioned by men passing each other in the line and the enthusiasm and unity of effort generated by rapid and continuous progress. It is superior to the one-lick method in that men can do more effective work by taking a stance and completing a unit of work and each man can be held accountable for a given segment of line. The form of organization is illustrated in the diagram on page 57.

A description of the organization of the men on the line and their duties under the progressive system follows:

1. A scout from the crew was used when no outside scout was provided. When not scouting, this man worked as an axman.
2. The line locator selected the location and blazed the way. He was directed from the time to time by the crew leader as information was received from the scout or direct observations of the fire were made.
3. Nine axmen, using three cruiser's axes and six 3 ½ -pound swamping axes, followed the locator. Ordinarily the ax crew did from 50 to 100 percent of the clearing, depending on the relative amount of clearing to be done as compared with digging and holding.
4. Ten Pulaski men worked behind the axmen and cleared or dug line as the needs justified. The Pulaski men hold a unique and vital position on the line. By using the cutting edge of the tool for clearing they may speed the clearing and slow the hoe work, and by turning over the same tool the opposite effect can be accomplished. The versatility of the Pulaski men enabled the crew to adapt itself to a great variety of cover types without changing the line-up of tools.
5. Ten hoe men followed the Pulaski men and completed the line digging. IN favorable types one or more Kortich tools were substituted for hoes. Six of the hoe men carried extra shovels to the point of attack so as to have them when needed to assist in holding and mopping up the line. These extra shovels were called into action on almost every fire in order to take care of the emergency "break-overs" and spot fires which the usual shovel crew could not handle. After arrival on the fire, the spare shovels were carried by the shovel men in an extra pack sack with the fuses and other miscellaneous items. By following this practice, the hoe men were not burdened with an extra tool while working.
6. Four regular shovel men were on hand at all times to do the burning-out and holding the line behind the line construction men.
7. Two sets of fallers equipped with falling tools worked as and where needed for falling or bucking. They were usually directed by the coordinator.

DIAGRAM OF PROGRESSIVE METHOD OF LINE CONSTRUCTION  
USED BY THE 40-MAN CREW



8. One man was always used to carry water, and two were so employed when needed.

The crew leader controlled the movement of the squads in such a way as to affect the highest rate of held-line production. A qualified squad boss was used as a line locator. When not engaged in locating he was in charge of the ax crew. Where he considered of vital importance the leader did his own locating. The second squad boss was in charge of the Pulaski crew. It was his responsibility to keep a balance of work between clearing and digging by shifting his men from one operation to the other as needs arose. The third squad boss was in charge of the hoe crew. It was his function to complete the line and cooperate with the burning-out and holding of the completed line until it was taken over by the follow-up crew.

**Numbering of Men and Packs.-** Each man of the crew was given a number, according to his place in the line and, except for a few changes, each man kept this number throughout the summer. Each fire pack was also numbered 1 to 40, corresponding to the number of the man carrying the pack.



Building fire line

Unloading from the trucks and hiking to the fire form was done in sequence numbers. Upon returning from the fire the packs were placed in the truck in reverse order from which they were taken out- that is, number 40 pack was the first to be loaded. This system of unloading and loading made for speed and precision. A quick deployment of men in working positions was facilitated by arriving at the point of attack in regular formation.

**Foot Travel.-** Upon reaching the end of motor transportation, each man received his pack and the crew was led over trail or rough country in single file formation to the point of attack. Rest stops were made during hikes as needed. Average rate of foot travel was computed at 2.5 miles per hour, including rest stops of less than 30 minutes.

**Deployment of the Crew on Fire.-** Upon arrival on the fire, a quick size-up was made and, if necessary, the 40-man crew scout was sent out to look over the country immediately ahead. Scouting was usually done by scouts not attached to the 40-man

crew. If the entire crew worked as one unit, they fell to work in line in the regular unloading and hiking order. If the crew was split into tow units, as was occasionally done, the even-numbered men went one way and the odds another. This resulted in the even division of both men and tools. Unless the direct method was used, the burning-out crew followed and kept apace, but at a short distance behind the hoe crew. If a follow-up crew was worked immediately behind, the burning-out crew was usually able to keep up without additional help. If adequate follow-up was not provided, however, it became necessary to drop more and more men from line construction work to burning out and holding.

The practice of splitting the crew into two or three work units worked out very satisfactorily on spot fires and in cover having low to medium resistance-to-control factors. The gain in splitting of crews, of course, is brought about by saving in total time devoted to walking. In high resistance-to-control types, however, the relative saving in walking time is much reduced, and it is believed the advantage is negligible in an extreme resistance-to-control type. Another advantage of a split crew is that work can often begin at the ahead of a fire, and one unit can work each way to affect a faster control.

The greatest disadvantage in the division of the unit was the difficulty of giving adequate supervision. This disadvantage can be overcome by careful training of overhead. In the heavy resistance-to-control types found on three fires in 1939 the crew worked to greatest advantage as one unit.

**Packing on the Fire Line.-** An ever-existing problem was that of keeping the fire packs up with the men. This problem was solved by using a variety of methods as follows:

1. By intersecting the fire at a central point so that the crew can work both ways from the starting point. Upon arrival at a fire it was often possible to predict where the crew would stop work at the end of the shift and drop the packs there.
2. By leaving pack at the point where work began and retuning after them when an opportunity permitted.
3. By delegating the burning-out crew to take charge of moving the packs forward as the line progressed.
4. By delegating as FF or CCC crew to carry packs ahead from time to time. Horse packing was not feasible on account of the inaccessibility of the country in which the 40-man crew worked. Horses were utilized but once during the season.

**Follow-Up.-** One of the biggest problems which confronted the 40-man crew was securing adequate follow-up action. Almost every forest on which the crew worked showed a readiness to cooperate by sending ample follow-up behind the 40-man crew. The failures usually arose from not making certain that the men arrived when and where they were needed. For example, on one fire a night crew was sent out, but they were poorly guided and did not arrive. On another fire they worked on a "cold" line to the neglect of a mile of "hot" line. In each instance it was necessary for the 40-man crew to put in a double shift in order to prevent the loss of line they had constructed. It is recognized that the ordinary follow-up crew hiking in from a central camp each day, is under a tremendous handicap. After the second or third day behind the 40-man crew, the follow-up crew spends more and more time walking to and from work, which progressively reduces the amount of time and energy available for effective action on the

line. The solution to this problem apparently lies in equipping the follow-up crew with light sleeping bas and condensed rations so that they too can stay out on the line.

**Cover types.-** Several cover types were encountered by the 40-man crew, including high and low brush, Douglas fir timber, lodge-pole deadenings, and ponderosa pine types and snag areas. The progressive method of line construction, with slight variations, worked well in all these types, and the crew proved to be a versatile unit and readily adapted itself to the various conditions encountered. The tools carried by the crew adequately met the needs in all types encountered. The Pulaski tools are the “balance wheels” which made it possible to work efficiently in the various types with the same equipment. Experience during the 1939 indicates that a trained crew of 40 men is about the proper size for work in moderate and high resistance-to-control types such as are encountered over most of the Douglas fir region, and that smaller units of about 20 men will work more efficiently in the low resistance-to-control cover which is characteristic of ponderosa pine forests.

### Accomplishments

A careful record was made of the action of the crew and rate of line construction on each fire. At the completion of the fire season a detailed review was made of each fire by the leader of the crew. Space will not allow these records or reviews to be presented here. By way of summary, however, two measurements of the efficiency of the crew are given by comparing its rate of held-line production with the Region 6 standard was made by computing the length of time that it would take to build under regional standards the same line as was constructed by the 40-man crew on the various fires. In making these computations due weight was given to the proportion or length of line on each fire in the different resistance-to-control classes. Complete data for this comparison were taken on six fires are summarized in table 7.

TABLE 7.- Held line production, 40-man crew 1939, compared to Region 6 standard

Name of fire <sup>1</sup>	Resistance to	Control	Rating	Total Line Worked		40-man production held line per man hr chains	Region 6 standard held line per man hr chains
	Low	Medium	High	Chains <sup>2</sup>	Hours		
Horseshoe Bend	51	42	19	112	67.4	1.66	0.53
Wheeler Creek	15	25	22	62	46.5	1.33	.45
Saddle Mtn (east)	55	30	9	94	87.1	1.08	.62
Willard	32	20	7	59	42.5	1.39	.56
Eagle Creek	40	124	63	227	319.8	.72	.42
Big Cow Creek	97	29	4	140	100.5	1.39	.73
<b>Total or Average</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>663.8</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>.51</b>

<sup>1</sup> Accurate data were available only on 6 fires

<sup>2</sup> This figure includes only length or record held line. About 1/3 of held line built was recorded and given resistance-to-control ratings. A total of 28 miles of control line was worked in 1939, in addition to a large amount of unmeasured work on spot fires.



The comparison of the accomplishments of the 40-man crew with other crews shows that throughout the season it attained an average rate of held-line production of 0.34 chains per man-hour as compared with 0.07 chains per man-hour for large crews working in Region 6 on fires 300 acres or larger from 1936 to 1938, inclusive. The data for these large crews were taken from the July 1939 issue of Fire Control Notes. It may be noted that the rate of line production in this second comparison is less than that shown in table 7. This is accounted for by the fact that burning-out, holding, and mop-up, as well as travel time while on a fire or sector of a fire, were included when computing this average in order to make the 40-man crew rates comparable to those listed in Fire Control Notes.

These figures show that the 40-man crew produced line at twice the speed set up by Region 6 standards and about five times the rate produced by other crews on all large fires in Region 6 over the last three years. Even so, these figures do not give a true picture of the efficiency of the 40-man crew in comparison with other crews because of the following factors:

1. In the first comparison the regional standards are based on small as well as large fires, and accomplishments on small fires are usually greater than on fires of the size acted upon by the 40-man crew.
2. The 40-man unit was in most cases dispatched to the most rugged and remote sectors of the fires in which the fatigue factor of travel is more pronounced than for crews working near the road.
3. The 40-man unit was sometimes used as "pinch hitters" on sectors difficult for other crews to hold. On these sectors the 40-man crew was valuable chiefly as a holding crew and line production was a secondary factor. After hours of difficult holding under heavy smoke conditions, the crew was in poor condition for high production on the line.

### **Weak Points**

The 40-man crew was organized and trained as a line-building crew. Plans were made for the 40-man crew to burn out and hold their own line for about 3 hours after construction, after which time the line would be taken over by an FF or CCC crew. The men were told that they would be expected to work at a fast rate of speed for a definite shift of 8 to 10 hours and that mop-up and holding would be taken over by another crew. To work a longer shift would definitely call for a slower pace.

As it actually worked on many of the fires, the men walked long distances, then worked on line construction at a fast pace for 8 to 10 hours; but instead of being relieved it was necessary for the crew to do their own mop-up and patrol for long periods after the line was constructed. This worked the men excessively long hours. In one case the crew was engaged more than 20 hours in continuous work and travel with only short intervals of rest. It is not physically possible to continue at a fast pace for such long periods, and the men will consciously slow their pace to avoid complete fatigue.

The ultimate results of this practice, if continued, will be to slow down the rate of line production. The men will expect to stay out on the line for excessive hours and will work at a speed commensurate with those hours in order to sustain themselves throughout the day. In working excessive hours day after day, we have lost sight of that part of our



objective of maintaining a fire-fighting crew capable of working at unprecedented speed to stop the first run of fire, burn out the line, and turn the mop-up over to a relief crew.

## **Costs**

A total allotment of \$35,090 was set up to the forest to finance the 40-man crew from the time of recruiting to the end of the fiscal year 1940. This allotment was planned to cover all costs of camp construction, subsistence, transportation, and wages throughout the work season, including fire suppression and project work. It was planned that a contingent of \$7,000 should be carried over to finance the crew in the spring of 1940.

Actual expenditures for the crew through the season of 1939 totaled \$30,914. Of this amount \$2,642 was spent on overhead and \$5,491 was used for the subsistence of the crew. The entire cost of camp construction and maintenance totaled \$6,245 and fire training was recorded at \$1,082. The contribution to fire suppression work by the 40-man crew amounted to \$6,742. All other cost, including labor, cost of transportation to and from work on the bridge and road projects, and other miscellaneous items of cost, totaled \$8,712. The work of the crew on these two projects was appraised at \$5,000 at the close of the season.

The balance in the available allotment, plus the unexpended F.R.D. earnings, amounts to \$9,176, which will be available to pay the salary of the leader during the balance of the present fiscal year and finance the crew for approximately 2 months next spring.

## **Conclusions**

It is felt that the 40-man crew experiment was successful in achieving the purpose for which it was conceived. The careful selection and methodical training of personnel and the choice of lightweight equipment, including concentrated rations, featherweight beds, and up-to-date fire tools, combined to make a sturdy fire-fighting unit of great mobility, which was able to sustain itself in inaccessible country for periods of 72 hours or more and take effective independent action on the most remote sectors of a fire. The merits of this form of organization are obviously shown in the records of rate of line construction contained herein.

It is believed that this system can be applied to other crews organized from picked CCC enrollees and the personnel of construction crews. Units so organized will probably not measure up to the 40-man crew in physical development, but would have the advantage of mobility and self-reliance made possible by the use of lightweight beds, concentrated rations, and a judicious balance of tools.

It is also believed that the special equipment can be used to advantage by crews of untrained pick-up laborers by enabling them to stay out on the fire line, thus reducing the large expenditure of time and energy used in walking to and from established camps and curtailing the expense of servicing fire-fighters in inaccessible country.

## **Where Did We Get Our Hotshot Crews?**

By Lincoln Bramwell, PhD, Historian, USDA Forest Service

Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHCs) form the backbone of the Forest Service's response to wildland fire. IHCs are twenty-person, rapid response fire crews specializing in large fires the federal government dispatches to trouble spots across the nation. Due to their high levels of physical fitness, training, self-reliance and expertise, they are the Forest Service's elite firefighters, relied upon to fight the worst fires in the toughest terrain under the most dangerous circumstances. The Forest Service developed hotshot crews specifically to fight fires in the West's rugged terrain. After a 1935 decision to control all fires the morning following their first report and became national policy, the U.S. Forest Service designated hotshot crews as the means to achieve its policy ends.

\* \* \* \*

The loss of seventy-eight lives in the devastating Northern Rockies fires of 1910 provided the catalyst for public and Congressional support of fire suppression.<sup>1</sup> The 1911 Weeks Act legislated emergency firefighting funds making aggressive wildland fire suppression a reality. In the decade following the 1910 fires, the U.S. Forest Service experimented with various firefighting strategies. Newly designated Chief Henry S. Graves commented on the importance of using trained, organized crews to protect forests from blazes. In a 1910 Forest Service bulletin he wrote: "The following are of 1<sup>st</sup> importance: 1) Quick arrival at the fire; 2) and adequate force; 3) proper equipment; 4) a thorough organization of the fighting crew; and 5) skill in attacking and fighting fires."<sup>2</sup>

Following its increased desire to suppress wildfires, the Forest Service studied factors that led to large, destructive fires. After examining conflagrations such as the

Tillamook, Oregon burn of 1933 that scorched 270,000 acres, one of the principal causes of the failure to contain these blazes was the lack of explicit guidelines for initial attack.<sup>3</sup>

As one USFS forester recalled:

[Investigations of disastrous fires] found one characteristic common to all of them: lack of aggressive all-out action due to the 'too little or too late,' 'take-a-chance,' 'herd-em,' 'let-burn' attitudes resulting from fire-control policies then in effect in many places. With that germ isolated, the specific curative treatment was not long in being discovered and applied.<sup>4</sup>

The cure was a national fire policy that shaped suppression for the next forty-five years.

In 1935, USFS Chief Ferdinand Silcox issued a national wildland fire directive. Known as the 10 AM Policy, the mandate standardized the response to wildfire. The policy ordered firefighters to control a fire by 10 AM the morning after its first report, making aggressive fire suppression the standard response. Suppressing fires by 10 AM the morning after the report was also viewed as cost effective because it was far less expensive to suppress a number of small fires than to suppress one large conflagration.<sup>5</sup>

By 1939 the agency completed experiments and adopted two programs to carry out the 10 AM Policy goals. Conceived as small fire specialists, smokejumpers could quickly stop small fires in remote, roadless backcountry areas.<sup>6</sup> If small fires grew into conflagrations, then specially trained forty-man crews would fight them for extended periods.<sup>7</sup> Both programs were successful and are still used in modified forms today. As the West's remote backcountry shrank in size, smokejumping remained a small program.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, the forty-man crew developed into the interagency hotshot program that serves as the foundation of campaign fire fighting efforts.

For many years, USFS fire wardens and management officers desired better-organized fire crews.<sup>9</sup> With the restriction on using Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees

on fires during the 1930s, experiments began in 1939 to create economically efficient firefighting crews. L.L. Colvill, Assistant Forest Supervisor on the Siskiyou National Forest in Oregon, spent much of the previous summer battling the largest fires in the Pacific Northwest. He found fires in the backcountry presented problems for poorly conditioned, trained, and supervised fire crews. They simply took too long to get to a fire, were too worn out from the hike to be effective on the fireline, and were not adept at living away from their base for several days without considerable support. Colvill recognized the need for “trained crews of physically [sic] supermen capable of sustaining themselves on the fire line for periods of several days with a minimum of [support].”<sup>10</sup> Intrigued, the Forest Service ordered the supervisor of the Siskiyou National Forest to organize a forty-man crew of “supermen” to test Colvill’s theory.

Nearly all future hotshot crew protocol and routine came from the Siskiyou experiment. First, the supervisors chose a junior forester with ten years of fire experience to lead the new crew. They based prospective members’ selection on their “physical prowess, woodsmanship, and self-motivation.” Operating on the “every private a captain” principle, the supervisors wanted experienced personnel who could make decisions during critical situations. Two recent hotshot superintendents wrote of the experiment’s guiding principles; “Professionalism, through organization, training, and experience incorporated not only safety, but a commitment to excellence, technical expertise, strong esprit d’corps, and a no excuses ‘can-do attitude.’”<sup>11</sup> One forester colorfully described the crew as “compact gangs of smoke-eating hellions in which every last man is a triple-threat to any fire.”<sup>12</sup> Potential candidates had to be males between the ages of twenty-one and forty in addition to having experience. Except for some

exceptions as fire lookouts, the Forest Service held a de facto policy that excluded women from firefighting. Because their duties required extended time away from their duty station, the job attracted unmarried foresters, a pattern that is still evident today. In addition to attracting a majority of unmarried foresters, the Siskiyou experiment attracted men from rural upbringings, comfortable with physical labor in the outdoors.

Each man carried enough provisions to support himself for three days in order to tackle fires in the inaccessible backcountry where logistical support was difficult to arrange. The supervisors on the Siskiyou estimated the caloric intake for each man at three calories per pound per hour. Thus, a 180-pound man working sixteen-hour days for three days required an amazing 25,920 calories. The high calories were essential to a crew expected to work at unprecedented speed to stop the first run of a fire. One forester described the crew's job: "It is man-killing work too, for the pace set is terrific and no woodsman likes to show or to admit fatigue."<sup>13</sup>

The forty-man crew experiment on the Siskiyou National Forest was a resounding success. Forest supervisors studying the performance of the crew after the 1939 season found that in the course of traveling over 3,000 miles to fight fires on five different national forests of varying fuel types, the crew constructed an average of three times the amount of fireline per hour than the regular Forest Service crews. The leaders of the crew felt that even this incredible figure underestimated performance because the fireline they constructed usually fell in the roughest terrain on the hottest part of the fire. Significantly, efficiency and lack of logistical support brought the costs of financing the forty-man crew to thirty percent below that of a comparable crew of Forest Service firefighters.<sup>14</sup>

America's entry into World War II took away much of the Forest Service's manpower, particularly the Civilian Conservation Corps firefighters, necessitating reliance on forty-man crews. The federal government recognized that protecting America's timber resources was essential to the war effort, but the military draft dramatically decreased the number of men the Forest Service could retain for fire fighting. During the war, women entered the firelines for the first time, replacing large numbers of men drafted into military service. Like most wartime occupations, women were laid off after the war to make way for returning servicemen. After being dismissed from the firelines, women did not return until after the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex.<sup>15</sup> The act however, did not bring an immediate return. Not until the early to mid-1970s did women work on firelines again. The very first woman to do so is lost to history; her story became a myth that varies from region to region.

After the war ended and the Forest Service permanently lost the manpower and large budgets from New Deal programs like the CCC, experiments began to reduce the forty-man crew's size and cost. Near the Siskiyou, the Willamette National Forest developed a smaller twenty-man crew. When fire calls came the crew gathered at prearranged points before traveling to the fire. Dubbed the "Willamette Flying 20," the supervisors organized the crew with one foreman and two squad bosses as overhead management, a pattern generations of hotshot crews subsequently adopted.<sup>16</sup>

By the end of the war, the twenty-man crew emerged as a more than adequate response to the 10 AM Policy. It also materialized as an exclusively male occupation. Early experiments illustrated how organization, training, and physical fitness combined

to create a fire crew that proved efficient, cost-effective, and safe. Recognizing that the experimental crews were given the toughest assignments and performed their duties with much greater speed and without significant injuries, Forest Service officials began to understand the potential benefits specially trained and organized hand crews had to offer.

Reliance on smaller variations of the original forty-man crew continued after the end of World War II. Routinely, the USFS pressed non-specialist employees into fire crews known as “regulars” for local fires, but to control fires by 10 AM required mobile, flexible and well-organized crews. By 1947, following the examples of the Oregon Red Hats and the Willamette Flying 20, twenty-man crews appeared in the chaparral covered national forests of Southern California.<sup>17</sup> Based in the San Bernardino, Cleveland, Angeles and Los Padres National Forests, the Southern California crews first used the title “hotshot.”<sup>18</sup> The new title reflected the speed of the mobile crews and their fearlessness as they shot into the hottest parts of the fire. It also was indicative of the self-confident image the crews wanted to portray as they instituted themselves as the most effective option to fighting large western fires. Streamlining as much as possible to decrease their response time to fires, these Southern California crews shrank in size but increased in effectiveness.

More than anything else, the development of mechanized fire equipment impacted crew structure. The original forty-man crews required eleven to eighteen men to fell trees and clear smaller vegetation with axes and hand-saws. By the 1950s new lighter power chainsaws required only six men to accomplish an equal or greater amount of work.<sup>19</sup> The helicopter increased hotshot crew mobility by rapidly delivering



them into critical fire areas. The use of helicopters so impressed a 1950 fire conference in Ogden, Utah that it recommended “aerial shock troops” be stationed at critical locations throughout the nation. Despite advances in weather prediction and observation in recent years, firefighting technology changed little since the introduction of the helicopter and chainsaw. It is still left to firefighters on the ground with simple handtools to stop a fire’s advance.<sup>20</sup>

The Forest Service established five Interregional (IR) Fire Suppression Crews in 1961 based on the 1950 Ogden conference’s idea to place “aerial shock troops” at strategic locations.<sup>21</sup> The delay was due in large part to the size of the agency’s bureaucracy and the time it takes to adjust policy. Modeled on the half dozen hotshot crews operating in California in the 1950s, IRs consisted of close to twenty members. IR crews’ size, structure, and mobility place them in the same lineage of today’s hotshot crews. Beginning each June, an IR crew would remain on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. When not on duty, sign out sheets informed supervisors of the whereabouts of crewmembers in case of a fire call. The IR crews were advantageous because they could reach any location in the West within six to eight hours, and arrived as a complete package: supervisors, crew, tools, radios, bedding and enough food for forty-eight hours.<sup>22</sup> The Forest Service coordinated all requests for IR crews from the National Fire Control Center in Washington, DC.<sup>23</sup> By 1963 the number of IR crews had doubled to ten and the rapid growth rate continued before the hotshot program consumed them over the next decade.

In the 1960s hotshot crews began distinguishing themselves from “regular” fire crews through crew insignia, hats, and t-shirts. The pride associated with this separation

became one of the key ingredients to IHC success. Several crews began wearing shoulder patches on the new orange fire-resistant shirts first issued in 1961.<sup>24</sup> The El Cariso (California) Hotshots wore berets during the 1960s, in emulation of Special Forces in Vietnam. By this time hotshots crews adopted orange flame retardant shirts, hard hats, blue jeans and a pair of White's logging boots--a hand-stitched, cowboy-heel boot that could cost a month's salary--as their own standard fireline attire.<sup>25</sup>

The IHC program enjoyed success and acceptance from federal fire officials by the 1970s. Struggling with the dual challenges of sharply rising fuel and mechanized equipment and aircraft costs and shrinking budgets related to the national recession, the USFS searched for ways to save money.<sup>26</sup> The hotshot program received praise for its cost efficient performance. Fire management officers pointed out that hotshot crews produced fifty percent more fireline than regular Forest Service crews.<sup>27</sup> One fire officer on the Tonto National Forest in Arizona explained that three hotshot crews on his forest saved millions of dollars in projected suppression costs and resource losses.<sup>28</sup>

By the end of the 1970s, a number of forest ecology and wildlife researchers, along with acts of Congress and new fire management techniques, combined to alter federal fire policy. The 1964 Wilderness Act declared designated areas within national forests off limits to mechanized fire suppression equipment. In addition, some fire managers recognized that fire equipment such as bulldozers sometimes damaged more land than they protected. New research on forest ecology, particularly in relation to wilderness areas, began to suggest fire played a beneficial role in forest ecosystem health. Concurrent with this, the controlled application of fire to the ecosystem, known as prescribed burning, gained wider acceptance as an effective tool to increase forest

health and prevent large conflagrations.<sup>29</sup> All these factors led to the replacement of the 10 AM Policy at a National Fire Planning Meeting in Denver in July 1977. The new National Forest Manual rejected the old policy's implicit assumption that all fires were bad. The new management policy still mandated aggressive initial attack on fires, but if initial attack failed, the incident commander had many more alternatives, such as allowing naturally caused fires to run their course or initiating a cost benefit analysis before extended suppression efforts began. Hotshots had little to do with the 10 AM Policy's abandonment, and despite the policy alteration, hotshots' job on the ground did not change.<sup>30</sup>

Concurrent with the new policy the first females broke into hotshot crew ranks in the late 1970s. Besides the biggest hurdle of the physical ability to do the work, once on the job female hotshots had to endure the sexism and chauvinism of a formerly all-male occupation and the extra pressure and scrutiny this entails. The path-breaking women experienced a combination of acceptance and resistance. The loudest resistance most often came from the older generation of fire fighters and managers. For example, Carl Hickerson, head of USFS fire operations for the Pacific Northwest region in the early 1970s, repeated a speech to senior fire officials over the course of a year and a half titled, "Should Firefighters Wear Petticoats?" His argument, that women lacked the emotional stability to make critical decisions and their presence would diminish the stature of firefighters, was enthusiastically received. "I simply cannot imagine a truly feminine woman even considering fire suppression work, and all the adversity, filth, and hazard it entails," Hickerson claimed.<sup>31</sup> In fire camps, the first women endured whistles, stares, and obscenities. Former hotshot Lael Gorman recalled, "Back then, I

knew I was in a job that was basically a man's world. I told myself that I had chosen to be there, so I accepted a lot...I accepted things in that time that no woman would accept now and that most men would find objectionable."<sup>32</sup> One of the first female hotshots, Cheryl Surface-Wilcock, remembered entering the Silver State Hotshots' ready room in Carson City, Nevada in 1977 to find the walls plastered with *Playboy* centerfolds. Often the public's introduction to female hotshots was skeptical as well. Surface-Wilcock remembered washing off soot from a fire in a restaurant's women's bathroom to the horror of other female patrons. One asked, "You mean they let girls fight fire?" Her fellow female hotshot chimed in, "No ma'am, we just make sandwiches and sweep rocks." Satisfied, the patrons returned to their meals.<sup>33</sup> As more women broke down the all-male world of wildland firefighting and hotshot crews in particular, they won the begrudging respect of their peers.

During the last quarter of the century, increasing outdoor recreation and home building at the edges of forests and grasslands put more lives and property at risk of wildfire than ever before.<sup>34</sup> In one policy review the Forest Service warned that "More and more people are moving away from the city...and away from things they generally take for granted, like fire protection. A house or a group of houses in an otherwise undeveloped area can turn a routine fire into a nightmare for firefighters and homeowners."<sup>35</sup> As an "ex-urban" population reclaimed the rural landscape, the need for hotshot crews that could handle the technical challenge of urban interface fire escalated. The hotshots accepted the increased suppression burden. By 1981 there were fifty-four hotshot crews nationwide.<sup>36</sup> The Department of Interior started its own hotshot crews among its subordinate agencies. Starting in 1981 with the National Park

Service's Arrowhead, Alpine, and Bison hotshot crews, the Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs each fielded hotshot crews by the mid 1980s.

Hotshot crews, now totaling one hundred and eight, continue to shoulder the responsibility of suppressing large fires.<sup>37</sup> With ever increasing pressure by the public to protect its urban/rural interface homes and the extremely high complexity of that challenge, the specialized skills of the hotshots remain in high demand. Stretched to the limits to protect homes and natural resources and driven by their can-do attitudes, hotshot crews suffered a number of fatalities in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In light of recent tragedies, however, fire management has adopted the tenet "Firefighter safety comes first on every fire, every time."<sup>38</sup> While the public's perception of the Forest Service's ability, obligation and eagerness to suppress all wildland fires may not change, the agency and the hotshots themselves recognized there are definite limitations to their fire suppression mission. Their tempered aggressiveness is reflected in today's National Interagency Hotshot Crew Steering Committee's official motto: "Safety, Teamwork, Professionalism."<sup>39</sup>

Wildland fire is an ever-increasing threat in the West. The intensity and frequency of fires crescendo each year.<sup>40</sup> As more and more people move into formerly rural areas, the demand for fire suppression and protection increases each year. Examining the history of the elite firefighters relied upon to carry out these demands provides a better understanding of the changing nature of federal fire policy and its relationship with the men and women who implement that policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Cook et. al., *Lessons Learned, Fatality Fire Case Studies PMS 490*, Trainee Workbook, (Boise, Idaho: National Wildfire Coordinating Group, December 1998), 2. See also Stephen Pyne. *Year of the Fires: The Story of the Great Fires of 1910*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Graves, "Protection of Forest from Fire" *Forest Service Bulletin*, no. 82, 1910.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen J. Pyne, Patricia L. Andrews, and Richard D. Laven, *Introduction to Wildland Fire*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), 412. The first of the Tillamook destroyed over 270,000 acres of dense Douglas-fir timber in the coastal range of Oregon in August of 1933. The region burned successively almost every six years until by 1951, nearly 3 million acres of timber had burned in the area.

<sup>4</sup> Earl W. Loveridge, "The Fire Suppression Policy of the U.S. Forest Service," *Journal of Forestry*, 42 (1944), 552.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 552. Pyne, *Fire in America*, 282-286.

<sup>6</sup> There are many records and accounts detailing the inception and growth of the smokejumping program. For early accounts of this see "History of Smokejumping," (U.S. Forest Service, 1976); "History of Smokejumping, 1939-1949," *Fire Control Notes*, 11 (July 1950), 1-11; David P. Godwin, "Smokejumping," *American Forests*, 45 (December 1939), 590-592; and "The Parachute Method of Fire Suppression," *Journal of Forestry*, 39 (February 1941), 169-171. The National Smokejumper Association released an excellent visual history in 2000. The video is available directly from the Association at PO Box 4081, Missoula, MT 59806-4081.

<sup>7</sup> In an effort to stop a fire, wildland firefighters construct breaks in the vegetation known as firelines. By cutting away vegetation with saws and digging away the remaining organic material down to mineral soil, a fireline starves the fire of fuels to burn, thereby stopping a slow moving blaze.

<sup>8</sup> Craig Chandler, et al., *Fire in Forestry: Volume II: Forest Fire Management and Organization*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983), 123.

<sup>9</sup> Pyne, *Fire in America*, 368; Guthrie, 238; "'One Lick' Method on the Chippewa," *Fire Control Notes* (1937), 301.

<sup>10</sup> L.L. Colvill, "Lessons From Larger Fires on the Siskiyou," *Fire Control Notes*, 3 (July, 1939), 20-21.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Linse and Larry Edwards, "Beyond 2000: will the Hotshot Legacy Continue?" *Wildfire* 6, no. 2 (June 1997), 4.

<sup>12</sup> Stewart H. Holbrook, "Forty Men and a Fire," *American Forests*, 46 (June 1940), 251-253.

<sup>13</sup> Holbrook, 253.

<sup>14</sup> Cliff and Anderson, 47-62.

<sup>15</sup> Claire M. Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran, eds. *Women, Men, and Society: The Sociology of Gender* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1989), 175-176, 198.

<sup>16</sup> Roy Elliott, "The Willamette Flying 20," *Fire Control Notes*, 5 (October, 1941), 179-180.

<sup>17</sup> There is no definitive answer as to which fire crew referred to itself as a "hotshot" crew first. Stanley Stevenson, the fire control officer of the Cleveland National Forest mentioned the El Cariso Hotshots from the Cleveland N.F., and the Del Rosa Hotshots on the San Bernardino N.F. Stanley Stevenson, "'Hotshot' Crews," *Fire Control Notes*, 12 (April 1951), 29-31. As an editor's note in the preface to a reprint of this article in *Wildfire*, the Chileo Hotshots, formed in 1949 on the Angeles N.F., were mentioned as "the first to form as an official hotshot crew." See Stanley Stevenson, "'Hotshot' Crews," reprinted in *Wildfire*, vol. 6 (June 1997), 16.

<sup>18</sup> There has been quite a bit of discussion and little documentation as to how the term "hotshot" originated. Stephen Pyne writes that special fire fighting crews organized in CCC camps in the 1930s were sometimes known as hotshots. In the 1940s, a number of 40-man crews organized in Southern California were referred to as hotshot crews. In an editor's note in *Wildfire* magazine, one more explanation is added: "Harry Grace, a former Fire Control Officer on the Angeles National Forest, tells how he thinks the term 'hotshot' got started: 'Walt Jefferson (Jeff), about the middle of the war in 1944, (was sent to) a fire raging on the Klamath. 'Hell of a fire.': He found virtually no manpower available, everybody in the region was involved at the time, so he organized these people, administrators and office people, and called them jokingly his 'hot shots.' Harry seemed to feel that's where the term started. Cause I know in 1946 or '47, we had a fire in Little Rock Canyon, on the Valyermo District, and a crew came over from the Los Padres, and they called them hot shots. That's were [sic] I first heard the term. They were the only crew, as such, as hot shots. I forget where they were based. I have a feeling it could have been San Marcos. Called it the Sycamore Fire. It was across from Sycamore campgrounds.'" Editor's Note to Rolfe E. Anderson, Boyd L. Rasmussen, and Verne V. Church, "Adapting Advanced Principles of Organization and Fire Line Construction to CCC Suppression Crews," reprinted in *Wildfire* 6, no. 2 (June 1997), 8.

<sup>19</sup> The Sawtooth IHC travels with eight chainsaws while the Logan IHC travels with 10. This is more than three-times the number of chainsaws a regular fire crew handles and indicates how much more fireline an IHC can clear. Normally, three saws are carried into any fire assignment, requiring three sawyers and three swampers to clear the downed vegetation.

<sup>20</sup>“Topic 3. Aerial Fire Control,” in “Servicewide Meeting. Fire Control, Fire Research, and Safety. Ogden, Utah, 1950” (U.S. Forest Service, 1950), 8. Ralph G. Johnston, “Helicopter Use in Forest Fire Suppression; 3 Decades,” *Fire Management Notes*, 39 (Fall 1978), 14-16. Stevenson, 29-30.

<sup>21</sup> Martin E. Alexander, “High Mobility: The Interregional Fire Suppression Crew,” *Fire Management* 35 (Summer 1974), 15.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-17.

<sup>23</sup> “Interregional Crew,” *Fire Control Notes*, 24 (Oct. 1963), 93.

<sup>24</sup> Alexander, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen J. Pyne, “Flame and Fortune,” *Wildfire*, 3 no. 3 (September 1994), 34. Pyne, *Fire in America*, 384. In “Dad and I and the Forest Service,” *Wildfire* 6, no. 2 (June 1997), Doug Campbell recalls some of the firefighter attire changes in the early years of the hotshot crews. When he started with on the Angeles National Forest in 1952, he was required to wear Levi’s and a khaki long sleeved shirt and 8” top boots. In 1961 as the superintendent of the El Cariso Hotshots, Campbell recalled “Ted Zerlak, a graduate forester...walked into camp wearing White [sic] Boots and a Filson Cruiser vest. Our boots were Redwing or Chippewa lace to tow and we had not one vest among us. I think it was Ted Zrelak that started the White’s Boot and Filson Cruiser vest hotshot uniform in California,” Campbell, p.24.

<sup>26</sup> Pyne, *Fire in America*, 292.

<sup>27</sup> Lynn Biddison, “The Changing Role of Fire Management,” *Fire Management Notes*, (Winter 1977-78), 20.

<sup>28</sup> Jerry Ewart, “Hotshot Crews Pay Big Dividends,” *Fire Management*, 37 (Winter 1976), 14-16.

<sup>29</sup> Schiff, Ashley L. *Scientific Heresy in the Forest Service* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

<sup>30</sup> L.T. Egging and R.J. Barney, “Fire Management: A Component of Land Management Planning,” *Environmental Management*, Vol. 3 no. 1 (1979), 15-20; see entire issue of TTFEC no. 14; Lynn R. Biddison, “Legislative and Economic Realities: Impacts on Federal Agencies,” in Richard G. Barney, ed., *Fire Control for the 80’s* (Missoula, Mont.: Intermountain Fire Council, 1980), 34-37; Chandler, et al., 5-7. Pyne, *Fire in America*, 291-294.

<sup>31</sup> Thoele, 139-140.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>33</sup> Bushman interview. Cheryl Surface-Wilcock, “Making Sandwiches and Sweeping Rocks,” *Wildfire* 6, number 2 (June 1997), 32-35.

<sup>34</sup> Margaret Fuller, *Forest Fires: An Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior, Management, Firefighting, and Prevention*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1991), 32.

<sup>35</sup> Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review. “Answers For Public Land Users and Neighbors,” 1995. In possession of author.

<sup>36</sup> Rowe Findley, “Our National Forests: Problems in Paradise,” *National Geographic*, vol. 162, no. 3 (September 1982), 330.

<sup>37</sup> U.S. Forest Service, “Hotshots” [http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/hotshots/IHC\\_index.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/hotshots/IHC_index.html) (accessed September 11, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Michael G. Apicello, “FIRE 21-Fire Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Fire Management Notes* 56, No. 3 (1996), 4.

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Forest Service, “Fire Policy” <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/policy.html>. (accessed April 6, 2000). Cover. National IHC Steering Committee 2004 Newsletter. In possession of author.

<sup>40</sup> J.L. Pierce, G.A. Meyers, and A.J.T. Jull, “Fire-induced Erosion and Millennial-Scale Climate Change in Northern Ponderosa Pine Forests,” *Nature* vol. 432, 4 November 2004, 87-90. Thomas V. Veblen, Thomas Kitzberger, and Joseph Donnegan, “Climatic and Human Influences on Fire Regimes in Ponderosa Pine Forests in the Colorado Front Range” *Ecological Applications* vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 1178-1195. P.M. Brown, M.W. Kaye, L. Huckaby, and C. Baisan, “Fire History Along Environmental Gradients in the Sacramento Mountains, New Mexico: Influences of Local Patterns and Regional Processes” *Ecoscience* vol. 8, pp. 115-126. W.W. Covington et al., “Historical and Anticipated Changes in Forest Ecosystems of the Inland West



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of the United States,” *Journal of Sustainable Forestry* vol. 2, 1994, pp. 13-63. M.G. Rollins, P. Morgan, and T. Swetnam, “Landscape-scale Controls Over 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fire Occurrence in Two Large Rocky Mountain (USA) Wilderness Areas,” *Landscape Ecology* 17, 2002, pp. 539-557.

# Interviews

**Leaders We Would Like to Meet**  
**Ben Charley** January  
24, 2004  
by **Jim Cook and Angela Tom**



**Ben Charley and three of his sons on a fire in 1983  
(left to right - Shelby, Dirk, Ben, and Rocco)**

Ben Charley is unique among fire leaders. He may be the oldest Hotshot Crew Superintendent on record...he retired in that position at the age of 61 with 23 years of service with the U.S. Forest Service. Prior to that, he spent 20 years with the U.S. Marine Corps, retiring as a Gunnery Sergeant. Ben is also a tribal elder in the Mono Indian Tribe. And if that is not enough, Ben Charley has sons and grandsons who followed him into the military and into the wildland fire service. When we interviewed Ben, he didn't want to talk about himself, only about the questions we had regarding leadership. Later, he relented and provided the following first person biography to his son Shelby Charley and long-time co-worker Bob Bennett:

“I was born and raised in the small community of Dunlap, California in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. My parents were American Indians from the Mono tribe. The town of Dunlap, at my childhood was about half Indians and half non-Indians. All of us were poor economically, but we grew up together. When I was 4 years old, I was placed in an Indian boarding school for approximately 2 years; I lost my fluency with the Mono language, although I can still understand and speak the Mono language. I went to Dunlap Elementary School with about 15 other kids, now the student population has grown to over 600 students. In 1940, I started attending Reedley High school, and then joined the U.S. Marine Corps in February, 1943.”

“I went to boot camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California; then on to an Infantry Training Regiment at Camp Elliot in Miramar, California; then to Rifle Range Camp Mathews in Torrey Pines, California. After training, I went aboard the ship USS Sea Ray, with the 3rd Marine Division. We shipped out for the South Pacific – stopping in Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, Okinawa, and Guam. The war ended and I came home, the ship docked at San Francisco

late in 1945. After leave, I shipped out to Eagle Mountain Lake, near Fort Worth, Texas. This was a base for gliders. I did not want to fly in a glider, I lucked out...the base was disbanded, and I was promoted to Corporal. I reported to Camp Pendleton in California as a Rifleman.”

“In October 1949, I was sent to Korea, went ashore at Wonsan, up to Koto-ri, in the north, almost to Chosin Reservoir, then turned around and went the other way back down the road. This was in November and it was very cold! Then we went to Hung Nam in North Korea, by way of an LST (landing ship transport), hard ride, especially through a typhoon. From Hung Nam we went to Massan in South Korea. After required R&R, we started back up again. The Commandant of the Marine Corps said no Marine will spend two Christmas’ in Korea, so I came back home on December 21, 1950.”

“After Korea, I was stationed at Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro, California with Motor Transport, at the rank of Sergeant. Next, I went to Japan and Okinawa with the 3 rd Marine Division. Then I returned state side, for cold weather training at Bridgeport, California. My next duty station was the Marine Corps Air Facility at Irvine, California. It was originally used as a blimp base, but I was assigned there to the 1 st Marine Corps Air Wing working with helicopters.”

“I retired as a Gunnery Sergeant, with 20 years of military service. During my time spent in the military, I met and worked with a lot of senior Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). These were good leaders, all were combat veterans...I learned a lot from them.”

“I returned home to Dunlap and later began working with the U.S. Forest Service in 1966. I started working with the Hume Lake District of the Sequoia National Forest in a Recreation job. I then moved to a Fire Prevention job and then to an Engine Foreman job.”

“In 1974, the Horseshoe Meadow Handcrew was established and I was assigned to run the crew. The crew was stationed at an old CCC site and that had also been a logging camp. In the beginning, the crew was 25 persons for seven day coverage. The program started with crewmembers as temporary Forest Service personnel. However, in 1976 funding was cut and to keep the crew going I started recruiting with various Human Resource Agencies, such as California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC), Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), and with various Indian Reservations to keep the crew staffing up and operational. The employees we hired stayed with the crew for one fire season to get training and experience. Then we tried to place them as temporaries within the Forest Service hiring system. I recruited American Indians throughout the western states. During the late 1970s the crew size was reduced to 20 persons. The crew received Hotshot status in 1980. Through most of this time, Bob Bennett was my Foreman. Sometimes, the only non-Indian on the crew, he had some rough times, but he toughed it out and is still there as the current Superintendent. He’s the 2nd Superintendent since we started.”

“I received an award from the Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service for the Supervisor of the year in 1988 and traveled to Washington D.C. to receive the honors.

I was also awarded in 1988 from the California Indian Manpower Consortium for outstanding supervisor of the year, voting was by all Indian programs in United States. I traveled to Pensacola,

Florida for that presentation.”

“After retirement from the Forest Service, I drove fire crew vehicles for the Special Operations Company and for the California Department of Forestry until 2002. I’m completely retired since, well, not completely; I’m currently the elected Tribal Chairman for the Dunlap Band of Mono Indians. Life has treated me good during these 43 years in Public Service.”



**Ben Charley on a lightning fire right before his retirement**

**Cook / Tom:** You know a lot of people have followed you in a lot of different environments, as Chairman of the Mono Indian Tribe, as a Marine Corps Sergeant, and as a Hotshot Superintendent. What makes you want to follow somebody else?

**Ben Charley:** What makes me want to follow somebody else...well, when I first came to the Forest Service, Bill Sandborg kind of showed me the ropes. Billy was the kind of guy who if you done a good job he would let you know, and if you do a crappy job he would let you know. He is a guy that is hard to know. He was a good friend. When I came out of the Marine Corps, I didn't know anything about fire, and I already had twenty years in the military. A lot of times I was lucky to be put in with Bill. I learned a lot from him.

**Cook / Tom:** Going back when you were Gunnery Sergeant or Superintendent, what did you look for in those people that you respected?

**Ben Charley:** Well, you see guys like Chesty Puller, I knew Puller. I served for a couple of officers when I first went into the Marine Corps, the way they acted and the way they talked, just their manner, something that told you this is the guy you want to follow. I tried to do the same when I became a Hotshot. I never would lead guys down into a hole unless it was safe, I would go down there first to see what it was doing, and then I come back and we all go back down together. I believe in that. Too many people sit in their vehicle. I got promoted to Sector Boss on a fire, by a guy named Bill Bowmen. He says “You’ve been leader of crews now for quite a while and I like how you do business. Right now I am making you one of my Sector Bosses.” He is another guy I looked up to, just his mannerisms, just the way he talks. A lot of people will come up and tell you something and leave. He wouldn't, he would explain things to you and ask if you understand...that

old feedback stuff.

**Cook / Tom:** Do you think leaders are born or made?

**Ben Charley:** Both, if you have the aptitude and want to do it, you can do it. You can be a leader, anybody can. A few are just born to it. They just stand out, you have an intuition about those guys.

**Cook / Tom:** I know the Marine Corps believes strongly that certain individual traits are the basis for good leadership. What one or two characteristics of a leader are most important to you?

**Ben Charley:** I think the first thing is you have to have respect for your people. Don't be telling them things that you can't fulfill. You want your guys to know you and respect you. They have to respect you, don't do or promise anything you can't back up.

**Cook / Tom:** If you were to look back at your whole life, what do you think was the key influence that helped you become a leader?

**Ben Charley:** Well, you know my Dad was a kind of a visionary. He was a guy that knew what he wanted. That is what made my family, kind of an outcast. The other Indians would say, you think you are too good for us. He would grow things. We had peach trees here, we sold peaches, we had potatoes and peanuts. He would do things. We grew hay, we would bail hay, we would sell it. This land here was completely covered in Oak trees, and I remember we used to come down and blast and burn and dig them out of the ground. We had to work, we learned how to work. There were three of us kids and he worked us hard.

**Cook / Tom:** The older you get the more willing you are to look at yourself, what do you consider your biggest strengths and weaknesses?

**Ben Charley:** I think my biggest strength is treat your people like you want to be treated. Sure I would work them hard, but they would come through. After a hard assignment I'd say "Okay I will buy you guys ice cream." I bought them ice cream. A reward, you work for me I will treat you good.

**Cook / Tom:** The harder question is what do you consider your weaknesses?

**Ben Charley:** I guess it is being too compassionate sometimes, that will ruin you. Some of these guys will pick up on that. I do have a lot of feelings for people. If they have hard times, I will do what I can to help them. They will burn you sometimes. You have to have some compassion, but you have to control that.

**Cook / Tom:** Since you started in 1966 what do you think are the biggest improvements in firefighting?

**Ben Charley:** Safety has improved a lot. In the old days, they would say shut up and go out and do your job. The mechanized equipment and other new stuff is a good thing. You will not get lost anymore, you have GPS, and that is pretty accurate. Safety has come a long ways though, and that

is the best change.

**Cook / Tom:** How about some of the changes that have not been so good?

**Ben Charley:** I don't know, when I started out in fire, you walked your piece of line at least three times during your shift. I believe in that very strongly. You don't go to leave until your relief comes on, you tell them about all the problems and you really know what you are talking about.

**Cook / Tom:** Yesterday we were at a training session a bunch of young squad bosses. If you had an opportunity to stand in front of that class and talk to them what two or three lesson might you give?

**Ben Charley:** I have always tried to keep my kids informed, so that they know what is going on. I come from briefing, and before we hit the line, I say this is what we are looking at, so they know. I think if you keep your kids informed they will really want to follow you.

Also, see what you got. Really go out and look at the fire and figure out all the stuff that you have available to use. Think about what you are going to do, before you start doing it. Then you have to be out there with them, leading from out front.

And last thing, don't be ashamed of making mistakes, everybody does it. I have made a lot of mistakes. Yeah, it makes you feel crappy, but what is done is done. Learn from it. A lot of things happen on a fire that you can't do a thing about.

**Cook / Tom:** If there was one thing that you would hope the firefighters that have worked for you would take away from their time with Ben Charley, what would you want your legacy to be?

**Ben Charley:** I always taught my guys to do what is right all the time. It is a good feeling to see guys that have worked for me move up in the system to higher positions than me. I hope that lesson was part of their success.

*This interview with Ben Charley was conducted by Jim Cook and Angela Tom in Dunlap, California on January 24, 2004.*



**LEADERSHIP TOOLBOX  
REFERENCE  
Leaders We Would Like to Meet  
January 2004**



**Interview:** Chuck Wolfe  
**Crew:** Wenachee Bushmen  
**Date:** unknown

I started with the crew in 1963 and went with them until 68, spring of '68.

I went on to the FMO job on the Lake Wenachee RD

Where based?

Right here in Entiat, the barracks were leased around for several years. They were either apartment quarters or they were in, we leased one growers kitchen and housing. A hotel kind of thing.

Fitzmocker's Cabin?

That was in '63, when we first started. It was right in town.

Chevy flatbeds?

Yes, with crummies on them.

Background of the word; crummie?

Crummies come from loggers in Washington and Oregon and northern California.

I think Weyhauser crews were the first ones to call them that.

The reason they were called crummies, they were essentially crummy. A crummy piece of equipment in crummy condition.

They were crew haulers, those were line units; crews that went out. Anywhere from four to ten people in them. They traveled quite a ways out in the woods. A lot of the stuff was off road so you didn't ever see them.

The Forest Service was into using crummies quite a bit. We weren't the first in Region Six They called them inter regional crew.

Mt.Hood's older than us, Deschutes are older than us. On the Siskyou there was a crew.

The Mt Hood IR crew, the Roadrunners; which was Redmond. And the Rogue-that's the Siskyou crew. All those were out of Oregon. The Entiat crew was the only one out of Washington, up until Mt.Baker crew came in. That's the only two IR crews in the state. They're on both sides of the Cascade range.

Uniforms?

I think the second year we go the orange shirts. The original orange shirts which was a fire resistant shirt. A 3M was used. If the fire was pushed through the threads, it would go out. Smolder and go out.

The original symbol for the Bushmen was a single pine tree with a diagonal inscription "bushmen" on it.

Name?

That name I picked myself for the crew. Before that it was an inter forest crew called "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs". It was a pretty good crew, it was run by Doug Bowie. It was made up of local kids; out of high school and in college. They were a pretty good unit. No disrespect. They went on some tough fires and did a damn good job. They kind of, in a nostalgic way, named themselves Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs because there was only eight of them. That was crew size in those days. Eight was the crew size. Why they picked that, I'm not sure. I think it's based upon the linear supervision principle of a foreman. A crew boss, two squad leaders and then five crewmen.

We selected the bushmen from the fact that, we'd taken the name from, the wording both from Australia and from South Africa. They were pretty fierce people with a lot of independence, a lot of durability. That's why we chose the bushmen, in honor of those people. We were pretty self-reliant ourselves.

Do with what you had, get the job done. Then think about coming home.

Training?

We mostly trained right there on the ground. We went to classroom. There was about, out of a ten day period; four days of that was fire behavior. Fairly extensive, it would probably equal what they call the 390 now. Plus a lot of other stuff: weather, as far as the 10 standard firefighting orders and 10 situations that shout watchout. At that time we only had ten. I don't remember when we picked up twelve, then we went to sixteen. I think they're 16 now.

Ten days of extensive classroom. About half the day was that, about half the day was out actually digging line on proposed burn units or just digging along ridgelines in case there was fire in that area they'd have something to go to, be able to go to it quickly.

The FMO on the district, called the Fire Control Officer, he was the primary appointee at that time, of the people that made applications directly to the district.

The ones that showed the best potential for doing that. There was kind of a need for people to enter, that are new and so on. And bring them along. That was excellent money for their furthering their education. They'd go to college from there and we'd pick up high school people. Coming out of people, mainly out of the local region, local area. Cause they had applied directly to the district. After a while it went through the forest and then. All we had all hiring practices changed. Then the affirmative action propaganda came in and everything else. We proceeded a lot of them, ahead of time. In fact, our first two. We had congressional appointments too. Appointees choose. We had a pretty good cadre, most of those people that were on those crews are leaders of today.

How much was the hourly wage?

Not a hell of a lot but it was a lot more than anybody else was getting.

How much OT?

Probably averaged 10, 10 hours a week up until the pit of the fire season, which started around, really the tough part started around the 20th of July and went around the 15th of September. There we could rack up some pretty long hours. It wasn't uncommon to be out for a full 24 hours, two days at a time.

Just picking people off the line, putting lookouts by 'em and letting them catch an hour of sleep. By squads, did that a few times. Done that a few times, didn't like doing it but we did it. Pick a good safe place to do it. Had sector bosses in concurrence with it.

They went off the payroll at that time. The time would stretch over a quiet morning and be over by ten o'clock. It would be different squads would go off at different times. Sack out off along the line. Have a guard with them.

What size crews?

First year was 15, the following year we went to twenty-five. Went to twenty-five until 1966, I believe it was. They reduced up back to twenty because of the concern over the DC-3 loading. That's mainly how we traveled.

Where you guys went?

We went to California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana. Northern Wyoming and southeastern Montana.

When we stepped on the scene there was a lot of expectation in our work. And we had to hold up to it.

Pickup crews for main manpower?

Yes, most of those people weren't used in active fire lines. They used a lot of them before that time and they found that crews were not very productive. They picked them up right off the street and brought them by bus right to the fireline. Hell, I've seen before I took over this crew and while I was running the Bushmen, there were people out there, literally, with no shoes on. They'd buy 'em boots and put them up on the mountain then they'd crawl on all fours to get back off. Got their wine jugs and canned heat taken away from them and it made 'em see big monsters. Sometimes it could be a chore just getting them all herded out of there.

More trouble than they were worth?

Yeah, that's true and that's what really evolved these crews into elite units. When we were first started working with the IR crews they were looking more at organized units to take over sections of fire. When we got there, we stayed there until it was out. Or we were moved off to a hotter unit, multi fire starts.

Fire camps were smaller, less manpower?

I don't know if they were smaller then or not. They used loggers much more than they do today. You could come across a 50 man Weyerhaeuser crew in some places. Particularly when you get over on the Olympic or on the west side of the Cascades. In Oregon, it wasn't uncommon to see those size crews. They were trained loggers, they're loggers and

they were trained to fight fires. They could build line, they weren't exactly as speedy as we were.

The lumber companies supplied manpower?

Yeah, it was on a payroll situation. They were second line protection. They would provide crews in there when things turned dry and bad. I have an awful log of respect for logging units. I've seen them bust their butts right along with us.

Most loggers didn't feel they made much money when they fought fires, they weren't in favor of that. They made better money out there logging. They did the work.

Tools?

Starting with, we only carried about two chainsaws. One mainline and one backup. That was back in the days of the old Mac 10s, the old Homelite Zips and stuff.

The crews; they were really held to pulaskis and adz hoes and shovels. Their main working tools and still is.

You see other inventions coming down the line. We were the original ones to carry the waist belts. Got that idea from the military and made it to fit us. We had the smokejumpers at NCSB (North Cascades Smokejumper Base) make up versions for the crew. We used those for two years, things just evolved.

Describe that stuff?

Now, they're pretty much standard equipment for the crews. The waist belt carried their water, their hand tools, extra gloves, meal of the day, their coat. Whatever.

These were the predecessors of the modern line pack like Eagle Gear?

You bet! That's what they call them now; line packs.

They evolved from PG bags?

No, they came from actually the IR crews trying to come up with something they could carry their stuff and still stay on the move. The smokejumpers helped build them because they had the sewing machines and the heavy canvas and lanyards that was needed to make them up.

Filson vest?

Mostly the squad leaders and foremen. That was too much heavy material around the linemen. Hell, they needed to breathe; they were soaking wet every day. All of us were, had to keep some air flowing around people's bodies to keep them from having heatstroke. Really the crews had to have loose arms, nothing to weight them down because they had to swing tools and carry on.

Put all the weight down on the legs where the legs got the power to carry it. The back was relieved of that extra weight swinging around up there.

Blue jeans, orange shirts, tin hard hats and Whites?

Them Whites' boots are synonymous with firefighting.

Otto White.

He actually changed, I don't know. I think he more or less locked on that need well in advance of line crews and stuff. He had a design called a jumper/logger which is now used. That's more or less elite style footwear. It spread to Kerns, Nick's, Marconi, Bone Dry came out with one. Danner came out with one. So it's kind of spread out. Nick's and Whites are pretty much the elite of the boots.

Career?

AFCO in spring of '68, in the spring of '69 I moved to Wenatchee as the assistant fire dispatcher. The following year I moved to the Cle Ellum RD as the fire management officer. Five years later I moved back to Entiat as the fire management officer here. In '90 I retired.

Tyee & Rat Creek vs Wenatchee fires?

I don't know because in seventy I had my own problems on the Cle Ellum RD and those were beau-coup little fires up in the crags of the Cascades. That were persistent in burning and back then they didn't have any kind of prescribed fire policies so we were working on that, trying to get personnel and all the personnel was being pulled away. I had to stay home take care of my own back yard.

I think back in the seventies the management of those camps was a little bit better because it was more remote. Handled more remotely. It wasn't a desire to try and move them close in on the towns. The impact to the community wasn't as much as during the Tyee fires.

Another thing, in 88 when the Hickleman Ridge fire came along. The Hickleman Fire was in need of additional crews and there just wasn't any. They had to scrounge up as many as they could. A lot of state personnel to try and make up the shortcomings. Because of those large fires, I think Hickleman got a head start, that was a man caused fire that had probably the better part of a day burning conditions running free on a very steep slope. The only thing that held it down was the inversion and lack of active sunlight on the slope. Once it got cooking and it come up that slope there was no stopping it. That was a freight train on the wild loose. Just like the Entiat did, created a fire storm and it was on its way. Followed the terrain and it was on its way.

Rogue rivalry?

I don't know where that comes from. I think that's more story than true.

I didn't feel that there was a conflict there other than the fact that maybe; jovial competition. I know that the foreman of the other crew was kind of a loose cannon kind of guy but I could tolerate that. That wasn't a problem. That's probably where the stories come from.

A reputation for being non conformists

That's a good way of putting it. They were hard working boogers.

Just plain fact, you get an IR crew in and there was work to do, and did it's work. There wasn't anything asked. Probably the crews asked to be left out on the line and be serviced there. That's where the thing of the coyote camps started coming in. They started recognizing all that transportation time was just burning the people out. Better to spike them out there in a safe place and keep them out there on the fire. It was more manageable.

I know when I took a team down to northern California in '89 that was so successful for us, we figured we saved eight days coming out. We were in the Shasta Trinity mountains. Pretty tough terrain to get anybody around, including helicopters.

How long did you keep the IR name? We became Entiat Hotshots. I think that was '83 or '84. About the same time Sonny O'Neil started working. A lot of people took poor reviews for that name and the reputation it carried. The crew really in those years didn't conduct themselves in a very rewarding manner. They were roughriders. They did their job but kind of left a tarnished reputation. That hurt them. See, you've got men in there instead of women and men. So you've got a gender thing in there.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs; that was a good crew. I remember them on Forest Mountain. They did some good work.

Corn started in '65.

David Stanoway when the crew started up. Kay Johnson, had run smokejumper base and loft foreman. Came here after Stanoway. Kay is in BLM in Alaska, retired up there.

**Interview:** Don Biedebach

**Crew:** Chilao

**Date:** 4/17/92

There was a crew in '48, tried to call themselves hot shots.

Built the camp in '49. I had been sent to a station called High Summit, which is now Mill Creek. It was down on the Forest Highway. That was a new station, they were just building that. I opened that up and I was offered the Hotshot crew job. So I moved up to Chilao.

It was July 2nd, 1949. I recall getting about 30 men and here's the July 4th period coming up. It was almost inevitable that we would get some kind of call. I put them through a torrid training session. None of them had had any experience. I crammed everything I could into 2 days to get them as ready as possible. We lasted then until sometime in October.

30 man crews:

It didn't seem to make a lot of difference. I averaged between 25 and 30 for the season. Some would go and some would come.

I got out of high school, I found I was having to compete with men 40 years of age with families for 15 dollar a week jobs. It seemed to be an out for me and I liked it. It was July 24th I was inducted. I wound up at Lake Hughes, in the Lancaster-Palmdale area. Two day later, they emptied the camp and moved us to a fire on the upper Arroyo Seco; The Brown Mountain Fire. I sorta took a liking to fire control. I was on the fire suppression crew. I stated in the CCs for 3 years. I had to get 2 extensions. From there it was just sort of an automatic drop into the Forest Service. My first 3 years was in a fire lookout tower.

There was a breakup in 1941. I was inducted into the Army. You only went in for a year and then you got out. The Japanese seemed to have a little different idea about that come December 7th. I got out in '45. Tail end of '45 and they put me on the Buckhorn Patrol. Just about 10 miles up the road from Chilao. Real beautiful country. I was a patrol on a segment of a ranger district.

After that I got sucked in at Vallyermo Ranger Station and I was there for 25 years. 27 years come to think about it. With just the one break and this all happened in the year of 1949. I went to the High Summit station and then to the Chilao Hot Shots. At the end of the season, I managed to get back to Valyermo and I stayed there, I didn't want anymore of the hot shots.

I was 34 years old at the time and I recognized very quickly that that's a young man's job to stay with. You know every year, you get a year older but the kids don't. I realized that when you're a hot shot crew and soon as you roll into a fire camp, they're pointing at the tallest mountain and the deepest gulch. You know. Which is understandable because they're trained men, supposed to be good efficient crews. That part I accepted. Just to keep at it, on a steady basis, I've known a couple who have done that, it just beat 'em



down. Course I had already had my share of hiking and so forth thought New Guinea and the rest of the South Pacific. I had used my legs quite a little bit over the years. Which I'm paying for now, I think.

1949. Actually was the first year they became an organized crew and were called the Hotshots.

Very little has changed (in fire fighting). From the time I started in the CCCs, it was entirely a hand tool show.

Tractors.

Aviation moved in, we incorporated that. When I was at Chilao in '49, was when we first really got started on heli-jumping. From helicopters. Fact I made a film on jumping from the helicopter. The old copters, you didn't have a bubble in front, just open cockpit. They didn't have skids, they had wheels. Try to jump off a wheel, it wasn't easy. It kind of died then. Well, somebody got hurt. Jumping and all of a sudden, that was the old way of doing things. Don't go into a training phase to try and correct a problem. Let's just knock the problem off. They banned heli-jumping for about 2 or 3 years. Somebody came along and pounded at it and finally got it back in but they had to wear all kinds of equipment and everything.

I was involved in copters over the years...Saigon.

Fire crew foreman at Valyermo.  
Engine & crew.  
Fire behavior studies and lecturing.  
'73 Little Tjunga Training Center. Set up.

Ron Smith: Good Heavens! He's one guy I was referring to that stayed with it. That guy is a rock. He could stay with it.

Ray Bond from Los Padres took over in 1950 to '53.

2 years was prison inmates.  
Agua Dulce retired. Bill Myreck was super. Think he was.

Hot Shot Name Origin.  
Harry Grace, Angeles FCO, story: Walt Jefferson, "Jeff", about middle of the war, '44, there was a fire raging on the Klamath. "Hell of a fire." He found virtually no manpower available, everybody in the region was involved at the time, so he organized these people, administrators and office people, and called them jokingly his "hot shots". Harry seemed to feel that's where the term started. Cause I know in 1947, '46, we had a fire in Little Rock Canyon, on the Valyermo District, and a crew came over from the Los Padres, and

they called them Hotshots. That's where I first heard the term. They were the only crew, as such, as hot shots. I forget where they were based. I have a feeling it could have been San Marcos.

Called it the Sycamore Fire. It was across from Sycamore campgrounds.

I thought it was pretty much a California term, Region 5 term.

Native Americans:  
Indian school in Riverside: Sherman Institute

Pete Trujillo, killed in wreck on crest highway, Chilao foreman.

Ralph Johnston, Boise, Idaho 83705

Fish fork ridge 1950 lighting fire, number, no name of fire  
Blue Ridge above Big Pine.

I finally learned this much: We put the fire out when it's ready to be put out. There will come a time when all the influencing circumstances begin to lay down, or enough of them begin to lay down and the fire responds accordingly. Then it's time to move in. I can recall times when we've knocked our crews out, by the time that fire laid down, was ready to be put out, our crews were so beat, they could barely get in and do the job. I changed my feelings about how aggressive you should be. You got a small fire, get in and beat the heck out of it right away. Once it gets involved and get moving, there's not too much of a point in exposing yourself unless you have to protect life and property.

**Interview:** Doug Campbell  
**Crew:** El Cariso  
**Date:** unknown

I was the El Cariso Hot Shot Superintendent during the years of 1961 & 1962. We were reorganizing the crew and decided on 2 - 15 man crews with a crew foreman for each crew. This made the crew number 32.

Del Rosa and El Cariso Hot Shots had a DC-2 stationed at Ontario airport for our crews and one of the crewmembers said during the war it was called the ruptured duck. The crew did not have a mascot, and in one of the crew meetings it was decided that the concept of the Ruptured Duck would be our logo.

My wife was a good artist and produced the drawing of the mascot. The injury to the mascot was the crew's idea. What it represented was toughness.

For those who care the duck was sexless and not representative of any sex, race or anything else, just an old mascot from the war reused. I never thought it would last this long. But there was no great thought put into it. Patty Campbell got direction to make it like daffy duck with a splint, a blister and using a crutch. We reproduced the duck on hardhats, vests and on the basketball backboard. I can still see Mike Alaga painting it on the backboard in camp.

The crew cut 28 miles of hot line in 1962 and made me very proud of their work. We had injuries but none serious these years. These years of working with the men on the crew were the best of my 30 years in the Forest Service.

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**Interview:** Joe Tsabetsaye

**Crew:** Chilao

**Date:** 10/25/95

I came out here to CA in September of 1958, here to fight lightning strike fires.

Had you been a firefighter before?

I used to fight fires with organized crews out of Zuni Pueblo.

I think the Zunis were the very first to start fighting fires in the New Mexico area.

We went down to Arizona and before you know it, they start coming out here to California. The Forest Service called for us. A Liason Officer that comes out of Albuquerque or Grants, New Mexico area would bring us out here.

Come over for the season specifically recruited?

No, I just, I was involved in a, I was in a Zuni organized fire fighting crew.

Like the Navajo tribe, I think if they did it, then, when they were recruiting a hotshot crew they used to go to Riverside Indian School and they used to recruit some of the Navajo kids out of that indian school.

The Zuni organized fire fighting crews were really actually originated right in Zuni Pueblo. It was sort of, it was sort of organized by the Forest Service and the Governor of the Zuni Tribe. Which he was my grandfather, Conrad Masaywee(sp).

At first he used to travel with them, when they flew up to Wyoming and all those places he used to fly with them. And out here for a while.

Came over with a tribal crew, how to get hooked up with hotshots?

When I came out here with the crew in September of 1958, it was an organized crew out of Zuni Pueblo. Then, I was involved in this lightning strike fires here on the Angeles and one of the, at that time they used to call them Fire Control Officers, one of the Fire Control Officers, Assistant Fire Control Officer. He was pretty well, he was pretty well aware of the Zuni organized crew. He was interested in recruiting Zunis. He was talking to me, he asked me if I would be interested in joining the hotshot crew. So I told him ; “if there’s a chance. If there’s an opening. Yeah”. So he talked with our crew leader and the first time they came out of the bus, an arrangement was made and said ok. They took me down. They took my physical and they took me up to Chilao, that’s where I started.

How long at Chilao?

Probably about six or seven years. Then I was on Oak Grove too. Oak Grove Inter Regional Hotshots. They used to go all over the region.

Dalton & Texas Canyon all Zuni?

I think about 1955 and 57. There was Zuni crews over at Texas Canyon. They more or less came up like I did. The organized crews, organized down in Zuni, they brought them out here to fight fires and the whole crew decided to take on a job here and they were hired. They were picked up as a whole crew. But in my case, I was just more or less, I came out here on an individual basis. All I had was a fire pack and when I stepped off the line, when I was given permission. That’s what I did.

30 man crew?

Up at Chilao we used to have twenty man crews. Twenty Five with the crew pusher and saw bosses. Two twenty fire man crews.

Both Chilao Hotshots?

They were all Chilao Hotshots there.

How has fire fighting changed, what type of gear?

They got a lot of modern equipment. We used to just carry, for the water we used to always carry two military canteens and those two gallon canteens in a backpack. You can't be confined to two canteens, I had a couple canteens you know. One of my uncles was in the military, he brought those back home. I had those and they used to issue us those two round, two gallon canteens.

No safety gear. Orange shirts?

What we used to wear were khaki shirts. Khaki shirts and blue jeans.

No nomex, no fire shelters.

Used to live up at Chilao?

We had barracks up there where we stayed. They used to have a cook up there, used to cook meals and everything. We didn't get paid like the hotshots do nowadays. There was really no such thing as the overtime cause you were required to stay at the camp like from six in the morning til ?. Where would you go at six in the morning? You lived there so you had to stay there, at the camp. You had to wear your boots until ten o'clock at night. You actually work out in the field. You work out in the field eight hours and after like five o'clock, you still got to be ready to go to a fire until ten o'clock at night. You can't leave the camp or nothing. For twenty five per cent of your salary, which amounts to about twenty five cents an hour at that time.

You were getting a dollar an hour?

Yeah, then if you, after ten o'clock; if you worked to midnight. Then you get straight pay, that's from one o'clock to eight o'clock in the morning. Then you get your regular eight hours in. So there's really no chance of getting any kind of overtime.

No such a thing as a time and a half.

Who ran Chilao?

When I started up there, a person name of Woody Hite was superintendent, he passed away about a year ago.

I worked under him and I worked under another man who comes from Taos Pueblo. His name was Pete Trujillo.

The majority of people when I started up there, was hispanic. Spanish. Speak spanish, people from like Taos and Santa Fe area. They had a bunch of those people up there.

When I came down to Oak Grove, it was mostly Navajo that come from Riverside Indian School.

Went to Oak Grove in '64?

It was basically the same. Everything was the same. There was nothing different.

They were the Angeles Arroyo Seco District hotshot crew.

Oak Grove, I think we had 40. Two hotshot crews, then we had an engine.

The same work, the same work ethic. The rules, all the same.

Who ran Oak Grove?

The superintendent was Ken David.

Pete Trujillo passed away. Most are retired.

The work environment was real different than the way it's set up now. As far as the environment, I can't see any difference. Actually it's a heck of a lot easier than our days were. They have it easier now days. They can fly them up to the places we used to hike in to and stuff.

No helicopters, no water drops. When you had to hike into a fire, sometimes you had to stay there, go without maybe food and water for thirty some hours. A lot of guys, a lot of people used to drop out. Just walk off and don't want to stay around.

Stakebed trucks?

We used to have some open trucks that seated men in back. A lot of times, we used to throw a canvas over it like a covered wagon.

We didn't have no fuel breaks here like now days, they got fuel breaks to where they can anchor their line in to and from. There's always a, there's just always a big place where you can, in those days, it would be a rock outcrop or something, that's where you tied you line off. Or where you had to tie in to. Everything was so primitive then. They didn't have no bulldozers, they got bulldozers but they were cable dozers and they weren't well versed like the new machinery we got now days.

Cable dozers?

You couldn't, they can't cut into a mineral soil like a hydraulic blade can. You just go by the weight of it, the weight of it was just scratching the soil.

Even at that, you don't hardly see any bulldozers.

Build the fuel breaks as project work?

Yeah, right. The fuel breaks, the work didn't actually come around until, probably around '60. They used to call it pre attack. Pre attack work. More and more, pre planning.

Cutting the fuel break and they designated certain areas for the fire camps and stuff like that. Right now they got maps, everything is designated to where they go. It's all preplanned.

Chilao was up on top?

Right, that's the high country on the Angeles.

Chilao moved around to other forests?

Yeah, during fires we'd go to other forests.

If they needed us out of state, I know I went to Colorado a few times with the hotshot crew. At that time, they used to fly us. You don't get a first class flight here. You're flying in an old military plane. They gear you up with a parachute and everything. They give you crash training on what to do if something happens. Jump.

How long had you fought fire before joining Chilao?

I fought fire with an organized crew, for about, probably about two years.

Brush hook era

We had used to configure the brush hooks with the chain saws.

We didn't have no chain saws in those days.

In timber country, we used to carry those hand saws. They called them misery whips. Crosscut saws. We used them on timber fires or lightning fires, to cut the tree or something.

Tjunga District used to be part of Arroyo Seco District. 4 to 5 Districts on Angeles. The hotshots used to live in the houses, in the old CCC buildings (At Chilao)

Dick Dorn hired Joe. Ran the Texas Canyon Hotshots as a Zuni crew.



**Interview:** Lynn Biddison  
**Crew:** Chalio  
**Date:** 6/19/92

They started in Southern Calif. It was a name to distinguish them from anybody else. Who actually came up with it, I don't know.

Started on the Angeles, then on San Bernardino as District Ranger, then FCO

I started on an engine crew, what they called tankers in those days, engine crew member in Soledad canyon in 1943. You could start when you were 16 in those days. I was extremely fortunate to hold every job in the fire organization from a crewmember to the director of aviation and fire control for both R3 & R5. Every job in the fire organization except smoke jumping. I was really fortunate. I was really lucky.

Superintendent of Chilao 1950

I left the crew in August of 1953, I became assistant ranger and district FCO on Arroyo Seco Dist. Ray Bond actually succeeded Biedebach and he was there for a year. I was a foreman for Ray. Then I became the superintendent for 51, 52 & 53.

The biggest change was primarily in the numbers (of crews) but also they travel a lot more than we did in those days. For example, on the Angeles, we had both Chilao & Oak Grove, that's all they had at that time. Because both of them were financed from special Los Angeles River Flood money, one of the two had to be on the forest at all times. So that restricted the amount of travel you could do to other forests.

I was there, they had the first hot superintendent's meeting they ever had about 4 years ago in Portland. I was invited to come up and sat there in the back of the room. I listened to those superintendents talk and I thought. My God, am I glad I was superintendent in the 50s and not today. Because all I had to worry about at that time was whether we had food, water, tools and putting the fire out. Today that is the least of their worries. They're so damn wrapped in the social issues, they don't have time to worry about what they were hired to do. From my standpoint, I was just damn glad I don't have to put up with the crap that superintendents have to put up with today.

We were there to do a job and we could do that job.

They tell a story about Jim Smith, superintendent of the Fulton Hot Shots several years ago. When he first had females on the crew. Jim, as you may or may not know is a minority and a super neat guy. He had several females and they just could not keep up with the crew even walking into project work. Finally he went to the District Ranger and said 'this is not right, they can't keep up with the crew. I always have to leave a squad boss behind with 'em'. The District Rangers response was: Your standards are too high, lower them. Horrible.

Los Padres  
Chilao  
Oak Grove  
Del Rosa  
Laguna  
original 5 crews

There were a lot of Blister Rust Crews in those early days. There was a lot of competition between those crews and some of those BRC crews were very good crews. They didn't have any money for things like that in Southern California, it was just purely fire dollars. I guess the hot shot was the name originated there. Part of it, at least was to distinguish them from all those other crews. There were a lot of other crews that were financed from money other fire. But they were hand crews, just like hot shot crews were. Even in those days we had, what are now type II crews. They were Mexican nationals (braceros). Hell, those guys used to come out there, their shoes were thongs made out of tires. Good workers, never any complaints and if there was, nobody understood 'em. Cause you couldn't talk to 'em. But they were good.

The SWFFs came out of Region 3, the Mescalero Red Hats. Those were good crews but the Hot Shots were always the standard from which everything was measured.

For example, when I was at Chilao. The Del Rosa's. They were tough. They had one of the colleges, Chaffey College or one of the colleges in the San Bernardino area. They had the football team on there. Or a good part of it. That was their summer conditioning program. They were tough. A lot of competition. There was no fooling around. You either did the job or you got somebody that would.

One of the things that was unique in those days at Chilao, was that we had a year round hot shot crew. We started that in 51, it went thru 54. It was a year round crew. They did a lot of project work when they weren't on fire suppression or training.

When I was superintendent, it was an inmate crew; San Quinten prisoners. In 50 it wasn't it, It was a freeman crew. All Indian, they were all students at Sherman Institute at Riverside. In 51 we went to San Quinten prisoners. That was a real education for a young person like myself, and all the rest of our foremen. The first 3 months, they tried everything, and once they figured out what the limits were. It was neat then. One of the things you found, one of the reasons those people were in prison was they didn't get there because they liked to work. If you set the standards, and they would meet those standards just as well as any other hot shot crew. That proved to me that people, no matter who they are and what they've done in their lives. They will meet any expectation you set for 'em, if you go about it in the right way. And they did that. But for the first 60 days, they tried us every which way they could. Just to see what they could get away with. It's understandable. Pretty soon after that it was all right. That was the year around hot shot crew. It was the only one, I guess they ever had. It was 1951, 52, 53 and 54.

Chilao was discontinued in '81. I was director of fire and aviation in the region at the time. Ben Clar, one of my assistants said we gotta cut hotshot crews and Chilao because of these criteria falls out. I didn't like that but his analysis made sense. We did it but that hurt me.

Oak Grove went down before Chilao but no sure when that happened.

Two Tours on San Bernardino. District Ranger on Cajon District from '56 to 60.

FCO on Cleveland 60 to 64

FCO on San Bernardino 64 to 68

3rd generation Forest Service, all worked on the Angeles.

My grandfather was the first forest guard in Bouquet Canyon.

My father was a technician on the Sagus. He was the first Assistant Fire Control Officer on the Angeles, and the first AFCO in the nation as far as I know. He'd been district FCO on Arroyo Seco and the Sagus before that. Be he'd started in the CCC program.

He'd been a foreman in the CCC program.

Mill Creek and Converse are one and the same. On the same district. Converse is where the station is. Mill Creek is the Ranger Dist.

San Jack, San Jacinto is Vista Grande. San Jacinto RD

Del Rosas.

Got hot shots started in Region 3.

When I first came to the region in '68, they didn't really have a fire plan that was done to national standards. So we did a fire plan to national standards and found that we needed all these things. By using the manning plan and money that was available through action and specific action and management we were able to start all those crews. The first hot shot crew in the region was the Negrito. There was special money available in Region 3 for employment of people in northern New Mexico. We were able to use that money to start the Negrito Hot Shots. We hired all the people for the crew out of northern New Mexico. And just put 'em on the Gila. That's how the program started.

Once we made a fire plan that met national standards, they had never done that in Region 3. Then what we did, in those days, they had an item called; specific manning and action plan. It authorized the use of emergency funds, when you met certain fire conditions. That's how we started to finance all those crews. Then after a while it became a regular budget item.

The most we had at one time was 16. I think there are 14 now.

Some crews that call themselves hot shot crews that really are not.

I'm not sure, don't know how to say that..they call themselves hot shots, but aren't part of the national system of recognized hot shot crews.

## Hot Shot Crews.

Those were purely Southern California entities, it was while I was on the Cleveland as Fire Control Officer and El Cariso was there at the time and it was about '62 that the Washington Office, when Merle Outten was the director of fire and aviation for the Forest Service, put out an edict that those were now national resources, not just southern california resources and they became part of the way they were financed. Money was earmarked by Washington for those particular crews. But they weren't considered to be national resources until about '62. They just became a national resource.

We were on an airplane every once in a while. Buses really didn't come about until I was Fire Control Officer on the San Bernardino. About '66 or '67, the Del Rosa crew was on a fire on the Angeles. One of the stake sides went off the road and rolled down the mountain and a couple of kids were killed. That led to the Forest Supervisor, Don Bauer, being very emphatic in his instructions to me that we were gonna start putting those people in buses. There weren't any using buses until '68. That was what brought the buses was the accident with the Del Rosa Hot Shot Crew.

We pulled some long trips in the back end of those trucks. Really, the size of the hot shot crews were dictated by the capacity of the stake bed. That's how the numbers were established. The old CC crews were 32 people and they had benches they sat on crosswise. Had to carry all our tools and our bags and all that. We had to make boxes down either side and cross the front and on top were the seats and you could only get 20 people in there. No matter what they did. That's how the size of the crew was established. By the size of the trucks.

It happened long before the airplane. We tried to cut 'em to 18 at one time, when I was in Region 3, because we could get that many on a Twin Otter.

Region 3. They used the SWFF crews primarily.(Before hotshots) Just took a long time to get 'em going.

The FS: They've almost become a social agency rather than a land management agency. It's not as true in Region 3 as it is in Region 5. Or any other region as it is in Region 5. There the Consent Decree is the real problem. That judge said:" your work force will be proportional to the population. If there's 43% women in the population, 43% of your work force will be women." By God, he meant it.

The FS was the training ground. On the Angeles, we went through a period where we were a training ground for the Los Angeles County Fire Department. And then the whole of Region 5 was a training ground for CDF. There are some pluses to that. Course there are some minuses. As far as cooperation out on the fireline and all that. It's a real plus. You know 'em and you can trust 'em. Worked out really well in that respect but it was sure hard on your programs.

The hot shots are probably the soft spot in my heart.  
No matter what job I held in the outfit, that was my favorite.  
It's the Marine Corps of the whole fire organization. There's nothing they can't do.  
When they arrive, they're prepared to go on the line and stay there. We were proud of  
that. You could do things no other crews could do. You were proud, the most difficult  
part of the fire, that's where you were.

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## **Leaders We Would Like to Meet - Lynn Biddison**

**by Jim Cook and Mark Linane**

[http://www.fireleadership.gov/toolbox/leaders\\_meet/interviews/leaders\\_LynBiddison.html](http://www.fireleadership.gov/toolbox/leaders_meet/interviews/leaders_LynBiddison.html)

**Interview:** Toby Ortega  
**Crew:** Del Rosa  
**Date:** 7/21/94

Started fighting fire in 1938, as a volunteer. I was born in Banning, CA.  
I must have been 16, 17, (when I started fighting fire)  
My first fire was over in the Arrowhead District.  
A big major one was the Bull Canyon Fire over below Palm Springs.

I got to know most of the Rangers, Porky (John) Harris, he was well known here on the San Bernardino Forest. Scotty Bowman, Bill Clark, all were involved in the CCCs. Whenever there was a fire in the Santa Rosa Mountains or anyplace, they would send the Forest Service truck or a CC truck and anybody that was qualified or, they were screened pretty well, as far as health. They got to know me. I was the first one on the truck. It was to my advantage. Every summer they'd come and pick me up, they wouldn't make you do stuff like they used to. When I was a kid, I remember the police used to stop the cars, and stop them and say: "you're going to fight fires" and off they went. When I started, they brought the truck near the police station or anyplace here in town. Word got around and everybody volunteered. Whoever wanted to go. A lot people didn't want to go. Most of the guys my age, they volunteered, they wanted to go. From then on, John Harris. (He said) "You guys want to fight fire, why don't you join the CC Camps." So, we went to the CC Camps. At Mill Creek, City Creek and Del Rosa.

When I got known through most of the people, they would have the first, second and third suppression. Which was the crew trucks. When I went into the camp, I was assigned to the second suppression. I guess, some of the people that I knew, said: "he don't belong in the second suppression, he belongs in the first suppression." So we were the first out. Then the war came.  
(spent 2 years in the Army, got out in 45)

When they started (Del Rosa) it was 1946, like you say, and they would engage on various fires and then they would assign them at Converse as a road crew.  
(Ortega was on 1946 Del Rosa Hotshots)  
Then in 1947, they moved the camp to Sycamore Flats on the Cajon District and we were the hotshot crew from there.  
1948 out of Del Rosa, the whole camp was moved to Del Rosa.  
(Current location)  
The old house used to be where the dispatch was.

I worked for George McClarity. Both of them worked together, George and Gordon (Boesteader).

(How many years as a hotshot?)  
About 11, I guess. In between, as District Rangers and Fire Control Officers, knew me, they would offer me jobs as Tank Truck Operator or a Foreman on a suppression crew. On a fire truck.

In '49, I went to work out of Sycamore as a Tank Truck Operator.  
1950, I went back to Del Rosa with Del Rosa Hotshot crew. As they gathered for both crews, they assigned Al Stewart as a foreman and me as a crew boss and we opened the first camp out at Vista Grande. There was nothing to cover (that area) as far as a hotshot crew.

In '51, I guess they decided they wanted both crews back at Del Rosa.

It was originally the first hotshot crew out of here, Vista Grande Hotshot crew. They had the tanker crew, which wasn't part of us. But they had the hotshot crew there.

(Del Rosa moved over there?)

No, it was completely different. At Del Rosa, they split the crews, one went here and the other stayed at Del Rosa. We had maybe 15, 18 people down here, and they did too.

'51 we went back to Del Rosa, we worked out of there.

'52 we did the thing, we worked out of Del Rosa.

In '53 I went as a foreman, to one of the stations, as a crew foreman.

'54

'55, I went back to Del Rosa, as a hotshot crew. As a crew boss.

'56, Still...

'57 I was a crew foreman.

'58, '59

'61, I went as a foreman to one of the stations.

From then I went '62 or '62 as a camp superintendent and we traveled out of state.

That was the end of my Forest Service career, then I went to Edwards Air Force Base on the fire department. I worked as tank truck operator or engineer as I guess they called them. I worked as a crew chief assigned as a house captain.

(63 to 77 at AFB, I retired)

Bill Stevens, he took it over.

Ernie Lemlin, he came after Bill.

Bud Parrott(?) he was under my supervision.

Joe Cottier (out of Del Rosa, he was one of the crew foremen)

Andy Horene

(A superintendent, a crew foreman and two squad bosses)

What was hotshotting like?

Levi's and work boots and suntan shirt, that was our uniform. In 1950, they didn't emphasize hardhats yet. I would say about 1952, they started bearing down. We used to go up north and work on timber fires, safety comes first. Then it was mandatory, even when we used to. The college boys went to go back to school in September and they

brought in the Indians from New Mexico, they were mandatory that they wore hardhats, which they were not used to.

I remember we had this big fire on this range right here. I came in with a loaded crew. They said: "we got to leave Friday, cause we go to school Monday". I went back with three men to Del Rosa. Then we started bringing in Mexicans or Indians.

They were a hassle, those Indians. They were good workers but no regimentation. You had to teach them. Don't walk behind a man with your tool over your shoulder and all that stuff. The safety. You had to show them all this.

To me, I was, in other words, raised with George McClarty and Gordon Boesteder and they were very strict. There was no, It was that way, even when I went to the superintendent, I was the same way. I was a bad guy, but there was nothing I could do about it.

Off season?

I worked for the road crew, I was a crew pusher, I'd still hold like my rank. I'd push the crew. We'd build new road, drainage, anything. I'd still push the crew. They'd bring people from other districts to work out of Del Rosa and I'd push them.

What changed over the years in firefighting styles.

I would say less (aggressive), cause even now I see, they depend too much on like aircraft or "we won't move til we make a drop here or til they make a drop for us." When I was a crew foreman for one of the fire stations, I wouldn't hesitate for somebody to tell me:

"Well, you go from here to there, or go do this". I did what I had to do and I'd do it.

Same way with a hotshot crew. We traveled.

Carl Hickerson, I knew him well. He knew my capabilities. I'd go to plans, he'd give me the layout and that was it. Cause I, like I said, I'm from the old school.

Airtankers:

They used the Stearmans, the two wingers. They'd drop the stuff, they'd be pretty high and they'd drop the stuff, you know. Now, they have more sophisticated aircraft.

I go to those these fire musters. I meet some people I know and some that I don't.

I tell them, like the fire down here; we'd be up there, they'd leave us on a ridge for a couple of days. They'd drop equipment to us, food and juice. Stuff like that.

They'd say: "you're kidding!" No, I'm not. That's the way it was. You had your shovel, your ax, your pulaskis, your brush hooks, your light. You did the best you could, they didn't put you in a helicopter and brought you back and forth.

I enjoyed, mainly, the hotshot crew.

A lot of people ask me: "what do you do it for? Do you do it for the glory?"

No, I said. I like it.

We went to a fire in Santa Barbara, one of the big fires. The Coyote Fire.

We had, I had a very good crew. But they came out of Pennsylvania, New York. Some locals. I remember Robbins was the other foreman and he stayed behind and he said:

"take the crew and go up and see what you can do with this hot line that is going up



here.” I told the crew; take your shelters, your tents. I was watching as the fire kept burning. It was at night. It was acting funny. It was doing this, like a wave. I told the crew; we’re gonna get very hot, embers are going to fall on you and all that. You’re going to get burned, you can bet on that. It’s going to be smoky, it’s gonna be bad. We hit that fire, a firestorm, whew! It looked like an ocean. The fire turned toward the ocean, came down slope. I remember the crew at Del Rosa, when we got back, they gathered around and said: “thank you, Toby, for saving our lives.” I said; I didn’t save your lives, it’s just, I know fire behavior. This is experience. Some of you guys that are going to forestry school, you’ll learn that through experience. It’s no magic or anything like that.

Trucks? Flat bed trucks?

On both sides they had tool boxes and they sit on them. They had a sign on the back, a sign on the front: Fire Crew. Then on the side, we had the Del Rosa Hotshot Crew or Vista Grande Crew. They enjoyed that open air. When it got hot, I remember, the guy in front, against the cab, would get a canteen, turn it over, and whoosh.

Vista Grande?

1950 was a split crew with Del Rosa.

They did the same thing on the Mill Creek with Converse. They had the Converse Hotshot Crew. They would work the same way we did up here. I guess the district funded them, or somehow they funded them too, just at Converse.

Insignia/Big Horn Sheep?

The only thing we had was an emblem, that looked like a Forest Service patch. It was red and yellow and said: San Bernardino National Forest but it didn’t say hotshot crew or anything like that. On the helmets, they had a decal that said; Del Rosa Hotshot Crew. At Vista Grande we didn’t have anything

When we went to Elko, Nevada. That’s all flat land but they’ve got brush, it burns fast! We’re used to climbing hills. It was nothing but flat land!

At El Cariso, a guy by the name of Gordon, he was with the hotshot crew, he was under my supervision then. He stayed with them and he transferred to the Cleveland. I think he was foreman with El Cariso. Gordon King. I think he got hurt in one of the fires down there one summer.

Cleveland Hot shots started?

I would say in the ‘50s. Cause I remember Pittman, I think he must have been a crew boss or foreman.

When I interview people that were coming to the hotshot crew, I would tell ‘em: I ain’t going to pull no bones, it’s hard work. It’s a dirty job. You’ll be out all night pounding brush. I says: so, you better make up your mind. You either want it or you don’t want it. Most of them stuck it out. I could tell, like two o’clock in the morning, I could tell, “why

did I get myself into this?" I'd tell 'em: I told you it was rough work. But they stuck it out. I think it was only one, that can I remember. He had girlfriend problems mainly. It wasn't on account of the work, but most of them stuck it out.

The superintendent at Del Rosa told us, he says: "they have a crew at Los Padres", I think Campbell was in charge. "Los Padres is the number one hotshot crew". It was just coincidence that we went to a fire and worked with them. To me, I'm not trying to make points or anything like that, but I think we worked them.

We used to compete all the time with others, cause Del Rosa was well known. We worked with the Cleveland, we worked with the Los Padres, the Angeles. Dalton, Texas Canyon.

Marcel Ortega, Toby. I used to fool around with boxing gloves once in a while.