

Fire workshop on 2003 fires and fire ecology at Glacier National Park

The “Fire in the Crown” workshop was held on April 15, 2004 at the West Glacier Community Building at Glacier National Park. The objective of the fire workshop was to summarize the fires of 2003, place them in an ecological context, and acknowledge the importance of fire as an ecological process in Glacier National Park. Approximately 70 people participated in the workshop, including members of park staff from most disciplines and divisions at Glacier, concessionaires, and park partners.

The 1-day workshop consisted of 2 half-day sessions. The morning session included an overall summary of the 2003 fires, an initial assessment of the 2003 fires, a lecture on regional to local fire history, summaries of the cultural and ecological BAER reports for the 2003 fires, and a report on the Healthy Forest Initiative and fuels modification in the northern Rockies and implications. The morning concluded with a panel discussion of the lessons learned from the 2003 fires and future strategies for Glacier National Park and a talk on lessons learned from the 1988 fires in Yellowstone National Park. The afternoon session consisted of a series of talks. These talks were about: the effects of smoke on health, the effects of fire on plants, the effects of fire on T&E species and ungulates, fire-dependent birds, the effects of fire on amphibians, the effects of fire on water quality and fish habitat, fire and the health of wildlife populations at the regional level, fire modeling and fuels management, and predictions for the 2004 season. There was also a panel discussion on air quality alerts and future actions.

Presentations were made by Glacier National Park staff, a staff member from Yellowstone National Park, U.S. Geological Service scientists, U.S. Forest Service specialists, a university scientist, resource managers from the State of Montana, and an independent contractor.

The fire workshop was a collaborative effort between the Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center and staff from the Divisions of Science and Resources Management, Interpretation and Education, and Visitor Services.