



Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Fire Ecology Workshop*

Local educators and interagency personnel participated in the first area Project Learning Tree Fire Ecology Workshop this month, learning about the role of fire in ecosystems and the use of fire to manage natural areas.



Led by the Project Learning Tree state coordinator and Grand Teton National Park's fire education specialist, workshop participants were first presented fire ecology material from Project Learning Tree's *The Changing Forest: Forest Ecology* guide. Each person attending the workshop received a copy of the activity book, filled with interdisciplinary lessons that allow students to examine ecological systems of a forest, analyze interdependencies within a forest ecosystem, and explore factors that shape the development of forests. Each of the module's activities has been correlated with Wyoming's state teaching standards.

The workshop then focused on *Burning Issues*, an interactive CD-ROM developed by the Bureau of Land Management and Florida State University. The CD guided participants through four ecosystems, using an interactive field notebook to teach about the natural history of the plants and animals along with their interrelationships with fire. The *Burning Issues* CD also presented lessons about prescribed fire, wildland fire suppression, the relationship between fire and invasive plant species, and constructing "firewise" homes. The CD's culminating activity required participants to put what they had learned to work when they found themselves in the Fire Command Center and a wildland fire was reported. Each workshop attendee received six copies of the CD. A curriculum guide for both teachers and students is included in the program.



The workshop gave teachers and natural resource agency personnel an opportunity to obtain material and form partnerships for teaching fire ecology lessons. Participants in the workshop included staff from:

- Teton County School District
- Wyoming Game & Fish Department
- Bridger- Teton National Forest
- Wilson Volunteer Fire Department
- National Elk Refuge
- Fossil Butte National Monument
- Grand Teton National Park



For more information about the Project Learning Tree program, visit www.plt.org. Copies of the *Burning Issues* CD can be purchased from the National Symbols Catalog at www.symbols.gov.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton National Park

PO Box 170
Moose, WY 83012

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307 739-3311 phone
307 739-3325 fax

Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Intermountain Region Award*

The fire management programs at Grand Teton National Park and Zion National Park received special recognition at the Intermountain Region Fire Management Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico last month. The 2002 Program Award for Excellence in a Complex Fire Management Program included the following elements:

- aviation
- prescribed fire
- fire ecology
- fuels management
- suppression
- interagency cooperation
- training
- support of satellite parks



Grand Teton National Park's fire management program works within an exemplary interagency partnership to provide the full range of fire management opportunities. The result is a fire management team that serves nearly five million acres of Grand Teton National Park, Bridger-Teton National Forest, and the Wyoming communities in and around western Wyoming.

Grand Teton National Park's Fire Management Officer, Lisa Elenz, accepted the award on behalf of the park's staff. The plaque is currently on display outside the Superintendent's Office.



Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Ske-Cology Workshop*



Teton interagency personnel teamed up with Wyoming's Project Learning Tree and the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort to expand the ski area's Ske- Cology program. Grand Teton National Park and Bridger- Teton National Forest personnel assisted in a one- day workshop held at the ski resort, providing supplemental environmental education training to ski instructors. The Ske- Cology

program's objective is to provide environmental education concepts to students during ski and snowboard lessons.



Each workshop participant received a copy of Project Learning Tree's *Environmental Education Activity Guide*. This resource guide gives ski instructors background information, multidisciplinary activities, and lesson variations to incorporate into the Ske- Cology program. Participants were led through a few of the activities.



The workshop also included a field session. Accompanying natural resource agency personnel shared information about local geology, plant life, and fire ecology as participants skied down the resort's Apres Vous Mountain. The class made a number of stops during the 2,170- foot descent to review basic tree identification and discuss the natural succession of the area.



The Ske- Cology program is used at ski resorts across the country and is modified at each resort to address local wildlife, habitat, and environmental issues. Environmental Affairs Coordinator, Bryan Foster, is working with Grand Teton National Park's Fire Education Specialist to incorporate fire ecology into Jackson Hole Mountain Resort's program. The Ske- Cology curriculum is centered around interpretive signs that give information on local animals and their habitats. Materials from the National Symbols Catalog will be used in conjunction with the panels, introducing various animals' response to fire. A display case outside the ski school lunch room at the mid- mountain Casper Restaurant will highlight local interagency fire management, outline the various methods used to manage fire and reduce fuels, and feature fire ecology materials.



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Grand Teton National Park

PO Box 170
Moose, WY 83012

March 2003

307 739-3311 phone
307 739-3325 fax

Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Fire Education Display at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort*

The Jackson Hole Mountain Resort teamed up with local interagency fire personnel to create a fire education display at the popular ski area. The exhibit highlights local fire management actions and fire ecology of the Bridger- Teton National Forest and Grand Teton National Park. Jackson Hole Mountain Resort is located within the national forest and shares a portion of the park's southwest boundary.



Earlier this winter, the same agencies collaborated to include fire education in the resort's Ske- Cology program. Here, area ski instructors provide environmental education concepts to students during ski and snowboard lessons. The new fire education display case, located adjacent to the children's ski school lunch room at the Casper Restaurant, gives instructors an opportunity to expand on the subject of fire and its role in the local environment.

The fire education display showcases equipment such as protective clothing, a fire shelter, a drip torch used for ignition, and a belt weather kit for monitoring weather conditions. Also featured are educational CDs and videos, photographs, and defensible space information. Short narratives discuss wildland fire use and prescribed fire practices, suppression efforts, and wildland- urban interface challenges of local federal land managers. A fire ecology section of the display features tree species commonly found on the ski hill and a description of their fire adaptations.



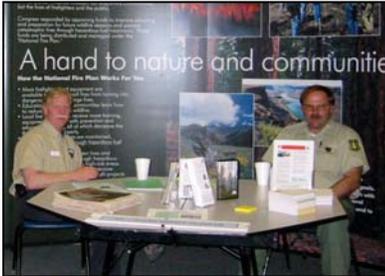
The Casper Restaurant is located at mid- mountain and is the resort's only on- slope dining facility. Jackson Hole Mountain Resort's Environmental Affairs Coordinator, Bryan Foster, assisted Teton Interagency fire personnel in transporting the materials to the site and setting up the display. The fire education message will continue to be a part of next year's program. "Environmental issues are pretty big," states Foster, "and we are taking steps to address them while still going forward with the business of providing amenities for visitors."

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Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Public Scoping Open House*

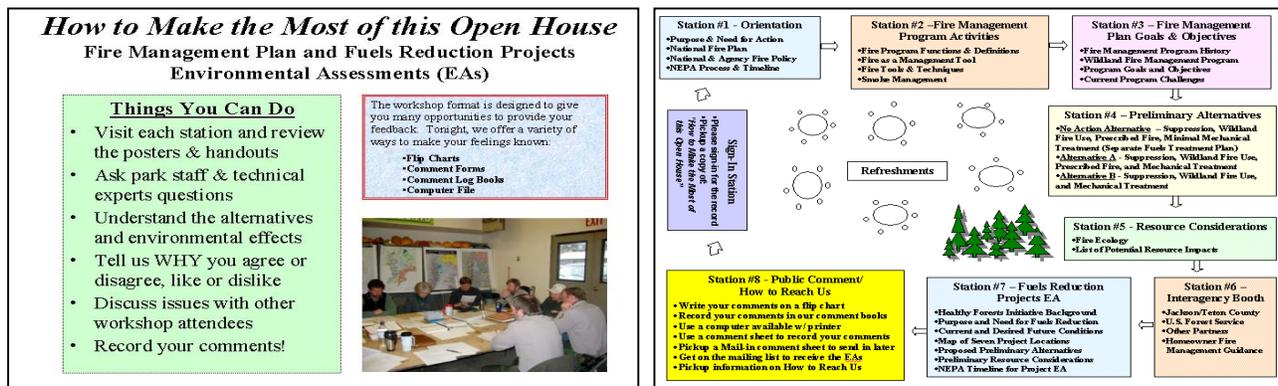


Grand Teton National Park hosted a Public Scoping Open House on April 24th to seek input on revision of the park's fire management plan and proposed fuel reduction projects for seven park areas.

Park officials are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) in support of an updated fire management plan. The park's present fire management plan was last updated in 1991 and is being revised to reflect changes in federal fire management and resource protection policies. The Open House allowed Grand Teton National Park to solicit comments from the public and help identify issues and develop alternative fire management approaches that will be evaluated in the EA.

Grand Teton officials also accepted public comment on seven fuel reduction projects selected as part of a national pilot program to streamline the environmental review. The pilot program, part of President Bush's Healthy Forests Initiative, was announced by U.S. Interior Secretary Gale Norton on January 15th at the National Fire Plan Conference in New Orleans. Grand Teton National Park recognizes that early public and agency scoping and participation are critical to the success of this project.

Visitors to the Public Scoping Workshop signed in and received an orientation guide that outlined the eight information stations. Attendees then rotated through the stations, visiting with staff, viewing displays, and picking up handouts. The Open House format was designed to give visitors many opportunities to informally interact with staff. Flip charts, comment forms, comment log books, and computer files were available for visitors to record their comments. Interagency partners were also on hand to answer questions about the fire management program and distribute fire protection information to the public.





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U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton National Park

PO Box 170
Moose, WY 83012

April 2003

307 739-3311 phone
307 739-3325 fax

Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Teton County Workshop*

The Teton County Cooperative Extension Service hosted their annual Lawn and Garden Workshop last month in Jackson, Wyoming. The agenda offered a variety of presentations covering topics such as noxious weeds, aquatic ecosystem health, native grasses, and soil composition. This year's workshop included both a session and a display addressing wildland fire.



Chris Fallbeck, Assistant District Forester for Wyoming State Forestry Division, led a session entitled "Wildland Fire Mitigation." The presentation included an introduction to fire behavior and fire terminology, defining the wildland- urban interface and vegetation management. Participants were shown a series of pre- and post- treatment photos of work done on

private property to reduce fire behavior. The session emphasized to homeowners that objectives and aesthetics do not have to be compromised when creating defensible space.

A display in the registration area offered wildland fire information to all workshop participants throughout the day. Teton Interagency's Fire Education and Information Specialist staffed an exhibit that provided literature on landscaping for wildland fire prevention. A drawing was held for a copy of a locally produced video entitled "A Homeowner's Guide to Wildland Fire Protection." The film, funded through the Western States Wildland- Urban Interface Grant Program, highlights topics such as home design, building materials, landscaping, and zone management practices.



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Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Fire Effects School Program*



Kelly Elementary School 4th and 5th grade students continued their studies of fire ecology this month, working with the Teton Interagency Fire Effects crew to revisit plots installed last year in the Kelly Prescribed Burn unit.

The prescribed fire in late September targeted the sagebrush west of Kelly, reducing the amount of fuel and creating defensible space adjacent to the town site. Grand Teton National

Park's Fire Education Specialist visited the school the week prior to implementation, describing the objectives and how the burn would be carried out. Teacher Dan Thomasma and his class installed four test plots within the project boundary and took pre- fire photographs. After the burn was completed, the students returned to the plots to observe changes and take additional photos.



Now, nine months later, the class again revisited the sample areas. After reviewing the objectives of the project, the students led the Fire Effects crew to their sites and answered questions about continued changes to the area. In turn, the crew directed students to one of their fire effects plots and gave an overview of the post- fire monitoring and documentation required for their work. Each student experienced the work of a fire effects monitor firsthand, using a belt weather kit to record and measure wind speed, wind direction, temperature, and relative humidity.



The students plan to share their field experience with the community by writing an article for the town newsletter, *The Kelly Times*.



Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Interagency All Fire Days*

The 4th annual Interagency All Fire Days training was held on Saturday, June 21st near Granite Creek in Teton County. The day-long event gave fire personnel an opportunity to promote partnerships through cross training and active participation in wildland fire and urban interface drills. "Working and training together helps us get to know each other, learn each other's equipment, and compliment one another's strengths," said Rod Dykehouse, Bridger- Teton National Forest Fire Management Officer.



Agencies provided 14 engines, 2 water tenders, 1 helicopter, and other trucks and equipment for the day's activities. More than 80 firefighters and support staff participated from Sublette County, Lincoln County, Teton County, National Elk Refuge, Grand Teton National Park, and Bridger- Teton National Forest.



Granite Creek's Jackpine Summer Homes area provided a central location for the crews to train and practice responding to two typical fire situations. The first scenario- based drill gave responders an opportunity to implement all elements of a structure protection operation. "More and more wildland fire situations include protecting homes in wooded areas," said Willy Watsabaugh, Chief of the Training Division for the Jackson/Teton County Fire Department. "This wildland- urban interface segment was a vital part of

today's training." Firefighters made a quick structural triage of the homes in the subdivision, wrapped buildings, set up portable water tanks, and put in hose lays. The second training exercise practiced appropriate actions for a wildland fire. Crews sized up the mock fire, determined strategies, assigned resources, and began taking action as part of the drill.



Other situations tested the firefighters' abilities to improvise and overcome additional problems integrated into the scenarios. Role players, which included local residents, made worried homeowners, lost children, injured hikers, and a fire investigation all part of the situation firefighters encountered. John Ball, Fire Chief from Big Piney- Marbleton, was happy to be a part of the day's training. "This is the first year we've participated in All Fire Days," he noted. "It was a great learning experience, especially for the new red card holders." As the day progressed, the cohesiveness and efficiency of the crews increased. "We'll all work together again this summer," concluded Dykehouse at the debriefing, "but it may not be just a training session. Let's use what we've learned today and be safe out there."





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U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton National Park

PO Box 170
Moose, WY 83012

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307 739-3311 phone
307 739-3325 fax

Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: SCA Community Outreach



With the smell of fried chicken lingering in the air, two local Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns took the opportunity to use an annual community event as a forum to encourage homeowners to assess defensible space around their homes.

The interns are part of SCA's Fire Education Corps, now in its second year in the valley. Their internship this summer includes serving as an educational outreach resource for the local fire community. Trained in assessing property for wildland fire protection, the team offers a valuable free service to area homeowners. They attended the Wilson Fire Department Chicken Fry this month to promote their service and offer fire education materials to the public.

The annual Chicken Fry draws thousands of people from around the community and is a major fund raising event for the agency. The interns staked out a location along the path where the food line formed, using a backdrop that explained the importance of defensible space. An assortment of literature was available at a booth, and homeowners were also offered a chance to test their knowledge with a defensible space quiz. Regardless of their score, all participants were rewarded with a customized fortune cookie that promised a bright future to those that practiced Firewise principles.



"We had a high profile location, and we made some good contacts," said David Marks with SCA. "It was a fun way to interact with the community," added partner Erik Peterson. The two also plan to publish an interagency newspaper insert and organize a community fuels reduction project before they complete their internship this fall.

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August 2003

307 739-3311 phone
307 739-3325 fax

Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Community Fuels Project*



Residents of the Snow King Estates and Ridge subdivisions in Jackson, WY were part of a community fuels reduction project this month, removing 23 tons of debris from private property. Approximately 15 households from the two subdivisions participated, clearing brush, small diameter trees, and dead and downed wood from their lots. With the interagency assistance of the Town of Jackson, Bridger- Teton National Forest, Grand Teton National Park, Jackson/Teton County Fire Department, and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) Fire Education Corps, the debris was collected and hauled away for free.

Two SCA interns working in the Grand Teton National Park Fire Management Office this summer coordinated the fuels project. Their internship includes acting as an educational



outreach resource for the local interagency fire community and encouraging defensible space work on private property. After working with the Jackson/Teton County Fire Department to determine a project location, the interns established contacts with the homeowners and lined up the necessary equipment. "Jackson's Public Works Department was very supportive and provided the front-end loader and trucks," explained Erik Peterson. "We really appreciated their hard work and willingness to help." A 10- person interagency crew worked for a full day collecting 15 dump truck loads of woody debris.

The effort was part of an area fuels reduction effort which began in mid- July when fire managers from the Bridger- Teton National Forest implemented a 30- acre fuels reduction project to remove dense vegetation on federal land east of Snow King Resort. The Snow King area fuels reduction project is in response to the goals and objectives of the 2000 National Fire Plan. This community fuels project extended the work to private residences in the area. "We're thrilled with the amount of debris collected," said Fire Education Specialist Lori Iverson.

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PO Box 170
Moose, WY 83012

September 2003

307 739-3311 phone
307 739-3325 fax

Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Congo Basin Forest Partnership*



A recent U.S. Study Tour brought technical experts from Central Africa to visit U.S. national park and forest areas in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and allowed local land managers an opportunity to spotlight the interagency fire management program to an international audience.

The study tour was planned in support of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and is one component of a larger technical assistance program for that region. The project supports training for directors of forestry, wildlife, and parks in Congo Basin countries.



During their two-week visit, representatives from the countries of Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cameroon experienced how land management planning and its implementation can be accomplished. Through on-the-ground site visits and discussion with National Park, National Forest, and Fish and Wildlife Reserve administrators, the group received an

overview of area land management practices and partnerships. Fire managers, speaking through a French language interpreter, presented a session on fire's role in the ecosystem, fire management practices, community outreach programs, and interagency cooperation.



From here, the U.S. Study Tour continues to the National Conservation Training Center in Sheperdstown, West Virginia to complete exercises as to what tools, approaches, and methodologies in park and forestry planning may be adaptable and appropriate for the Congo Basin region.

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PO Box 170
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October 2003

307 739-3311 phone
307 739-3325 fax

Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *WUI Funding Project*

Grand Teton National Park's fire education and information efforts were enhanced this season through wildland-urban interface funding, allowing local fire managers to augment public outreach techniques and products.



Monthly newspaper advertisements throughout the summer featured logos from the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Jackson/Teton County Fire Department, emphasizing the need for wildland fire defensible space and caution with campfires. *The Jackson Hole News & Guide* has a circulation of approximately 11,000 copies, reaching both local readers and out-of-state subscribers. Additionally, an eight-page newspaper supplement, entitled *Wildland Fire: Fueling Community Knowledge*, was published in September. Compiled by two Student Conservation Association (SCA) Fire Education Interns, the insert covered topics such as implementing defensible space practices, fuels reduction management options, and both current and scheduled interagency fuels projects.

In addition to print media, the wildland urban-interface funding was used to air a series of 30-second radio public service announcements that ran from early July through mid-September. Interagency fire managers recorded the messages on fire preparedness and defensible space. The public service announcements encouraged listeners to obtain further information by scheduling a free home assessment with local SCA Fire Education interns or by accessing the Teton Interagency Fire web site.



An assortment of display items for both indoor and outdoor use was purchased to assist with fire information postings. Four wooden bulletin boards were constructed to exhibit maps, photos, and news releases during fire events. The boards were used this fire season for both wildland fire use and suppression events and were instrumental in helping provide up-to-date information at trailheads, parking areas, and along major highways. Fire information signs made from core plast, a durable coated material, were printed and will serve as a header for any outdoor display area. A group of lightweight folding easels displayed wildland fire use posters this summer in park concession lobbies and will be used indoors for a variety of educational opportunities. For larger indoor exhibits, a folding tabletop display was purchased to feature fire management topics at workshops, conferences, and community events.

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PO Box 170
Moose, WY 83012

December 2003

307 739-3311 phone
307 739-3325 fax

Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Young Women in Science*



Grand Teton National Park's Fire Management Office participated in the Teton Science School's "Young Women and Science" program last month, leading an afternoon session in the week-long course. The program, targeting ninth-grade female students from around the country, drew participants from Wyoming, Nebraska, Utah, Montana, and Vermont. The class gave them an opportunity to study the ecology and natural history of the area while establishing friendships with other like-minded young women.

The unique program, now in its thirteenth year, consisted of a combination of hands-on field explorations, research projects, and investigations of local ecological issues. The students had opportunities to interact with women working in a variety of local agency positions and receive an overview of careers available to them in the fields of science, resource management, policy, and education.



As part of the course curriculum, the students were divided into four field groups to explore various park topics. One of the teams studied fire's role in the ecosystem, beginning with fieldwork in three park locations. Their investigation centered on sage regeneration after a fire, exploring the relationship between the number of growing seasons and the percent cover of sage. The group then met with Fire Management staff to discuss current issues and policies in the wildland fire program. Through discussions of public perception of fire and fire management practices, the students gained an understanding of the complexity of the program. They incorporated the information into a skit that they presented later that evening to the other field groups.

Each participant received a packet of information on wildland fire in the national parks to take back to their respective schools and share with classmates. The opportunity to learn about the Fire Management program exposed the students to another aspect of resource management and encouraged them to become involved with issues affecting their own communities.

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Grand Teton National Park Fire Management: *Field Observation Studies*



Two groups of Jackson Elementary School second graders used the Blacktail Fire burn area as a location to conduct field observations last month, practicing their skills in prediction, comparing and contrasting, and critical thinking.

The Blacktail Fire began in Grand Teton National Park on August 10th when an active thunderstorm moved through the area. With sagebrush and grass as the primary fuel types, the fast-moving fire burned 2,650 acres before being contained three days later. As an introduction to their lesson, the second graders viewed photos taken during the event and learned the chronology and details of the fire. The students noted the affected vegetation and blackened soil where the fire had passed through. Following the slide presentation, the students wrote predictions in their field journals, anticipating what they would see in the same area two months after the fire.



*I think I will see a lot of ashes.
Maybe I will see a helicopter.
I think I will see ground that is black but not very black.
I will smell the burning.
I might see black ground and sticks and tracks from the fire trucks.
I will see a lot of birds and bugs and burned grass.
I think I will see black grow.*

The following day, the students boarded a bus and headed north to the Blacktail Butte area. They walked through an area adjacent to the Blacktail Fire to note the thickness and height of the sagebrush and envision what the area may have looked like before the fire. From there, they hiked onto a bench and into the burn area, using their observation skills to note what changes had occurred from the scenes they had viewed the previous day. The students also role-played how various mammals, reptiles, and birds may have left the area during the fire and subsequently returned to take advantage of the fresh new growth and nutrients. Once back in the classroom, the students discussed their observations and again wrote in their journals.

*I saw lupine. I climbed a big hill. I saw green too.
I heard the wind. Dust devils were chasing us.
I might have seen an antelope, but it was far away and
I'm not sure. Are they mostly brown?
I saw one of the holes that sink where a stump was.
I was surprised to find bones, but they were there before the fire.
It looked pretty good.*



"It was really fun," said one young budding naturalist before she departed for the day. "Maybe I'll grow up to be a scientist sometime."