

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Fire FY10 Annual Report



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Fiscal Year 2010 Year End Report

Fire Management

The Indiana Dunes fire program saw two personnel changes this last year. The fire program at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore supports satellite parks of Sleeping Bear Dunes, Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial with fire refreshers, training, fiscal and administrative support. We issued and maintained 86 qualification cards for employees at INDU as well as our satellite parks, updated IQCS files, responded to training needs and managed position task books.

The fire management program responded to and extinguished 19 wildland fires in and bordering national lakeshore property, totaling 26 acres.

It was a slow year in getting firefighters out on wildland fires, but the program was still able to support 13 different resource orders. The fire program sent out 19 crew members to 10 different locations across the country, from prescribed fire support, to fire use and wildland fire support. One of these details was a 60 day detail with the Bandelier Fire Use Module. The crew members went out as fire effects monitors, engine bosses, hand crew members, helicopter crew members and filled in as supervisors at other parks. The fire program also sent out 7 crew members to the Mississippi Canyon Oil Spill for over 180 personnel days.



We supported many meetings and committees with personnel from the fire program including: the Eastern Area Training Working Team (1), the park Duneland Heritage Days Festival (3), (Whitenack was the Incident Commander), the IDEA committee (2), the park recruitment committee (1), a regional EEO representative (1), public meetings at the visitor center concerning wildland fire and the Indiana Interagency Coordination Center meetings.

The fire program assisted with numerous park projects for resource management, maintenance, resource and visitor protection and interpretation:

- Cleaned all of the pack test vests, cleaned and disinfected the weight room and bathrooms on a weekly basis.

- The fire fitness coordinator signed up over 20 employees throughout the year to use the fitness facility.
- Assisted at the Valparaiso University Recruitment Fair.
- Participated in the City of Lake Station 4th of July parade.
- The park safety officer (fire personnel) participated in the regional park safety audit, did safety inspections throughout the park, reviewed over 35 SMIS reported at the park, assisted Maple Sugar Time Festival in the spring, attended all safety committee meetings and managed the safety award programs.
- Cut, removed, and recycled the remaining fence at the national lakeshore property in Miller Woods, recycling well over 10,000 pounds of metal.
- Assisted interpretation by cutting down trees into fence posts for the farm.
- Assisted interpretation with set-up and day of logistics for the Duneland Harvest Festival.
- Assisted maintenance twice with filling the barricades at the campground.
- Assisted maintenance by flushing out the footbaths with the engine.
- Assisted maintenance by flushing out the well system (twice)
- Assisted maintenance by flushing out the septic system.
- Assisted maintenance with water handling, spraying off the roofs at the Bailly Homestead (twice)
- Outfitted, stored and responded on 2 different occasions for RVP with the stokes basket to National Lakeshore beachfront property.
- Assisted LE on the July 3rd, 4th & 5th at the grilling area at West Beach.
- Assisted RVP on multiple occasions to multiple locations to cut trees out of roadways.
- Assisted RVP by mowing 3 acres of marijuana.
- Assisted RVP with moving old metal desks to the dumpsters.
- Assisted RM on the Marquette Trail by cutting back the trees.
- Assisted RM with seed planting on multiple occasions.
- Assisted RM with Beaver Dam removal, using the engines.
- Assisted RM at Mnoke Prairie with restoration projects on a weekly basis.
- Assisted USGS by towing a stuck vehicle.
- Assisted USGS by driving wells in various locations on multiple occasions.
- Assisted the park by cutting up the remained of trees knocked down under power lines on US12, caused by last year's tornado.
- Assisted the park by cutting trees at the overlook platform in Miller Woods and trees over the trail.
- Assisted the park by moving all government vehicles for parking lot resurfacing project.
- Assisted park senior management staff with a firefighter riding the South Shore Line to determine and GPS and map the presence of hazard trees along the park corridor.



Prescribed Fire

The fall of 2009 and the spring of 2010 were very productive for the fuels program. The fire program was able to complete 12 planned ignitions for a total of 940 acres. In addition, in the spring and fall, small scale Oriental Bittersweet research plots were burned at 16 different locations on 8 separate days for a total of approximately 5 acres. The program cut and piled fuel on 26 acres of land at Mnoke Prairie.

A lot of time was spent working on Wildland Urban Interface projects throughout the park. A total of 14 acres of thinning around park structures was done in 7 locations (Bailly/Chellberg, the artist in residence, the 3 park dorms, the campground, and the Douglas Center). Approximately 70 acres of fuel breaks were created between national lakeshore property and the bordering towns. The fire program contracted a mowing project for 3 acres along the Old Harbor Belt in Miller Woods.



Training

The national lakeshore fire program instructed and sent crew members to numerous trainings.

Everyone completed mandatory DOI IT and FISSA training. Those affected received supervisory training and Botany field training. The fire program sent 5 crewmembers to the following NWCG classes: RX-310, Rx-301, S-230, S-231, S-234, S-215, S-200 and S-390 as well as 2 people to Hazwopper training, the Illinois Prescribed Fire Symposium Staved Rock State Park, GPS for Fire Management & ICS training at Smoky Mountains NP, and GPS training in Green Bay, WI.

National lakeshore personnel instructed many classes here at the dunes including: a chainsaw use classes for park volunteers, S-133 look up look down look around, 3 wildland fire refreshers, 3 first

aid/CPR classes, S-130/190 Basic Wildland Firefighter class and field day, and over 10 pack tests throughout the year. All courses were attended by park, state, local and interagency cooperators.

Crewmembers also instructed many classes out of the park including: the wildland fire refresher at Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, a field day of drills and training at Sleeping Bear Dunes NL, S-212 Wildland Fire Powersaws at the Missouri Wildfire Academy, and the wildland portion of the structural firefighter I/II class at the Indiana Firefighter Training System District 1 Fire Academy.

The park Safety Officer (lead firefighter) took the following safety classes; Hazwopper.



Fire Effects

The Fire Effects crew had a busy summer reading all scheduled 258 reads representing 189 plots.

Fall 2009– Total: 54 pre and post reads:
INDU: 44 reads (21 plots)
LIBO: 10 reads (5 plots)

Spring 2010- Total: 99 pre and post reads:
INDU: 99 reads (57 plots)

Summer 2010-Total: 105 summer reads (105 plots)
INDU : 25 FMH plots
74 PLM plots
LIBO 6 plots

Reports generated by Lead:

Rx Reports: 7

Post Burn Assessment analysis and reports written: 6 reports

LIBO site visit report-1

Training consisted of review of written INDU protocols and FMH manual, and sampling and FFI data base entry exercises. For the second year, a week-long Botany training focusing on sight identification by vegetative characteristics was continued. The FFI database instructions refinement was continued and proved effective reference for the crew.

Mary initiated a Fire Effects Plant Identification Workshop for 13 Park personnel.

Early spring, Scott Weyenberg and Mary, reviewed the sampling schedule and protocol/design. Diversity frames in FMH plots were added to better capture bio-diversity of herbaceous layer. In addition, Scott visited the park mid-summer to conduct sampling with the seasonal team to view application of protocol

changes in the field. Additionally, a formalized Program Overview Notebook, of pertinent Fire Effects working documents was developed.

In 2010, a push was made to clean up the FFI database from the conversion and all years of data entry. A review of all years past data, and improvements to the data related to the species resulted in a cleaner and more useful database.

Last year, in late winter/early spring, sampling in Cowles Dunes was completed to help the regional fire ecologist estimate historic oak density to aid in stating target conditions in savannas.

LIBO Fire Effects

This year saw a lot of activity with LIBO. Scott worked with crew to see the application of LIBO protocol. Mary and Scott are working on determining the best way to bring the USGS_LIBO database forward with INDU fire effects data, as the conversion of LIBO database to FFI does not appear will happen as originally thought.

SLBE Fire Effects

No Fire Effects monitoring activities occurred this year.

Education/Prevention

The fire program had a booming year concerning fire prevention and education. The program:

- Awarded 418 Jr. Firefighter badges to kids who completed the program and activity booklet.
- Assisted Beverly Shores, Chesterton, Union Township, South Haven and Portage Fire Departments at their Open houses during prevention week with an engine and Smokey Bear.
- Distributed flyers to local residents for fall and spring prescribed fire units, including schools, gas stations and post offices.
- Provided 3 children's programs at the field station for the pre-school children and provided the Jr. Firefighter program, awarding badges to the kids.
- Completed a wildland fire instructional class to the Hobart Vocational Program for 17 students.
- Put on an impromptu wildland fire instructional program to 15 kids and their parents that showed up to enjoy Mt. Baldy, and we happened to be just finishing up our prescribed burn.
- Supported the interpretation division with materials, posters and a slideshow of wildland fire at an elementary school in Chicago and at Ball State University – Muncie.
- Supported interpretation with two wildland fire programs at the Douglas Center open house.
- Represented the park and the fire program at the 'Touch a Truck' program at Sunset Hill County Park in Valparaiso, interacting with over 200 kids and families.
- Assisted the RVP division with 4 DARE programs, teaching wildland fire materials.
- Completed 3 Junior Firefighter Programs at the campground, and one at West Beach.
- Completed 3 Park Kids Programs for interpretation.
- Completed a Jr. Firefighter program at West Beach for the Boy Scouts.
- Supported the park at the Gary Railcats game with personnel, an engine and Smokey Bear, making well over 100 contacts.
- Attended Earth Day festival at Sunset Hills County Park with Smokey and met with over 100 visitors.

- Assisted interpretation with an Arbor Day program at the visitor center.
- Represented the fire program at the Green Gary event at Marquette Park with an engine and staff.

INDU Fire Management Permanent Staff

Fire Management Officer	Dan Morford
Fire Program Management Assistant	Erin Skaggs
AFMO – Wild Fire Operations Specialist	Mary Ellen Lothschutz
Interagency Dispatcher (IICC)	David Nugent
Biological Science Technician	Neal Mulconrey
Lead Fire Effects Monitor	Mary Fisher-Dunham
Prevention/Education Technician	Micah Bell
Supervisory Forestry Technician	Joseph James
Lead Forestry Technician	Jim Whitenack
Forestry Technician (senior)	Evan Jones
Forestry Technician (Firefighter)	Jeff Nieland
Forestry Technician (Firefighter)	Vacant
Supervisory Forestry Technician (St 2)	Brandon Ramirez
Lead Forestry Technician	Nate Orsburn
Forestry Technician (senior)	Bill Mullins
Forestry Technician (senior)	Mike Grismer
Forestry Technician (Firefighter)	Brad Tyskiewicz

INDU Fire Management Seasonal Staff

Forestry Technician	Crystal Starkel
Fire Effects	Mary Wiseman
Fire Effects	Jillian Mueller
Fire Effects	Jillian Post