



## Zion National Park Fire Management

### Color Country Interagency Fire Management Wins Prestigious Pulaski Award

Officials from the Color Country Interagency Fire Management Area proudly accepted the prestigious Pulaski Award for 2004 at a ceremony in Cedar City, Utah on June 2. Color Country earned the award for its achievements in interagency cooperation and coordination in managing wildland fire. The award was presented by Tom Boatner, from the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho.

The Pulaski Award, national award from the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior, is given annually by NIFC and recognizes outstanding contributions to wildland fire fighting and America's wildland firefighters. The award recognizes groups, not individuals. Color Country, a multi-agency partnership that covers 14 million acres, has long been recognized as a leader in using an interagency approach to managing wildland fire in southwestern Utah and northwestern Arizona

Color Country includes lands administered by five ranger districts of the Dixie National Forest, three Bureau of Land Management field offices, two national parks and five national monuments (National Park Service and BLM), Utah state lands, Arizona State Trust Land, the Shivwits, Kaibab Paiute, and several other Indian reservations. It covers five counties in Utah and two in Arizona.

In the early 1990's fire managers from federal and state agencies in Color Country started working cooperatively in fire suppression, training and other wildland fire projects. Finding that working together as a unit was more effective and cost efficient, the agencies joined formally creating the Color Country Interagency Fire Management Area.

This group leads a cooperative effort to assist with all phases of fire management on the public lands of Color Country. The mission is to promote safe and effective fire management through interagency cooperation. Since many wildland fires are of a multi-jurisdictional nature, interagency cooperation provides an ideal background for cohesive, ecological, social, political and economical considerations for land management.



The Color Country Fire Management Group, directed by agency administrators, develop an Annual Operating Plan, which documents cooperative agreements and is designed to set forth a framework for interagency organization in all aspects of fire management. The group receives information and recommendations from agency representatives from three committees; Operations, Fuels, and Information, Education and Mitigation.

- ◆ The Fuels Committee identifies and resolves wildland urban interface, hazardous fuel and vegetation management issues that directly impact firefighter and public safety. It provides effective management of Color Country's ecosystems in accordance with the National Fire Plan and agency land-use plans.
- ◆ The Information, Education and Mitigation Committee ensures that fire education and information in Color Country is seamless, consistent and effective. They develop fire - related programs to serve the needs of the local public and visitors alike.
- ◆ The Operations Committee promotes safety, professionalism, and coordination of fire management operations within Color Country. This committee also deals with aviation and training issues.

The Pulaski Award (a 30-inch bronze statue of a wildland firefighter created by Larry Noland) is named after a young forest ranger who led his crew through thick smoke, heat, and flames to the safety of a railroad tunnel during the Montana/Idaho inferno of 1910. Also named for this ranger is a half axe/half hoe tool used commonly in wildland firefighting. The award was first given out in 1998.

By working cooperatively among all the local agencies, Color Country Fire officials have proven that this cooperation can provide safe and more efficient fire management operations throughout the area. The Pulaski Award represents the value of interagency cooperation that is vital in our efforts to successfully manage fire in Color Country.



#### **Color Country Fire Managers**

Brian Bracken, BLM; Jeremy Ybright, BIA; Paul Briggs, BLM; Dave Hart, FS; Tooter Burdick, BLM; Larry LaForte, State; Brett Fay, FS; Jan Passek, NPS.



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