

BOISE WILDLAND
FIREFIGHTER ACADEMY

2019

INAUGURAL END OF YEAR REPORT



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Providing a training and mentoring platform open to everyone, focusing on diverse candidates including military veterans looking to pursue a career in wildland fire management. The program includes a Type 2 Initial Attack 20-person Hand crew and a Type 4 Engine crew.





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Unique Training Opportunity



Bobby J. Shindelar, Forest Fire Chief
Boise National Forest

The 2019 field season was an exciting time for the Boise National Forest, as they launched the newly formed Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy. The recruits selected were given the wildland fire education, fire training, firefighting field experience, and specialized skills to begin a rewarding lifelong career in wildland fire management.

Exceptional academy instructors and overhead of the hand crew module and fire engine have provided recruits with basic wildland firefighter training and unique practical experience. They set the stage for recruits to apply and be competitive for vacant seasonal and permanent wildland firefighter positions within the Forest Service and other agencies. All of our graduates have gained the required training and wildland firefighting experience to become senior wildland firefighters.

Our recruits are dedicated students of wildland fire. They are committed to be better tomorrow than they are today. They are eager to become our future fire management leaders. They will face many challenges in their careers, but they have been given the tools, guidance, mentorship, and foundation as described in our Wildland Fire Leadership Values of Duty, Respect and Integrity to prevail. Congratulations to our recruits and staff of our first graduating class at the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy.



Mike Towers, Fire Management Officer
Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy

Mission:

To place a diverse group of fire academy recruits into Federal, State and Local Fire Management careers. Recruits gain classroom and field training opportunities through mentorship, education and on-the-job training. This effort prepares recruits so they are marketable for Federal, State and Local Fire Management careers.

Vision:

To provide opportunities for a diverse group of fire recruits to gain experience and core knowledge within this specialized discipline. We mentor each candidate and emphasize their personal development toward becoming a wildland firefighter.

Through an accelerated and structured National Wildland Coordination Group (NWCG) course curriculum, supported with a strong emphasis on field training and wildland fire experience, the class of 2019 received the knowledge, skills, and abilities to compete for Wildland Fire Apprenticeship (WFAP) and temporary seasonal fire management positions across the country.

Objectives:

To place an emphasis in outreaching and recruiting college students, women, veterans, minorities, and others with diverse backgrounds looking to pursue a career in wildland fire management.

Values and Principles of Wildland Fire Leadership

Duty

- Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.
- Make sound and timely decisions.
- Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, accomplished.
- Develop your subordinates for the future.

Respect

- Build the team.
- Keep subordinates informed.
- Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.
- Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

Integrity

- Set the example.
- Know yourself and seek improvement.
- Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.



Wildfire in Nevada

A Resilient Organization



Academy overhead and recruits morning run

March 2019, the Boise National Forest began building the Boise Wildland firefighter Academy, after confirmation that Centennial Job Corps, located in Nampa, Idaho was closing. This sudden and unexpected closure effected the future of 31 Boise National Forest employees who were fully invested into the Centennial Job Corps Fire program. Fire staff reacted swiftly, reaching out to partners in a unified effort to support their employees and to develop a one of a kind wildland firefighter training academy.

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and outreach efforts began March 12, 2019. Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy employees took the initiative and began searching for (25) future fire academy recruits. Relationships were developed with state employment departments in Idaho and Oregon, local colleges and universities, other land management agencies, and the participation of local job fairs in the treasure valley. Through these efforts (77) applications were received, (55) Applicants interviewed, and (25) selected.

The (25) selected recruits included (19) from the Treasure Valley (4) women (2) former job corps students (6) from across the nation (2) veterans.

Thoughts from the Forest Supervisor

“

Cecilia Romero Seesholtz

2019 proved to be an outstanding year for the Wildland Firefighter Academy! The leaders of this program did an outstanding job in developing and implementing a high quality curriculum, in a very short amount of time, and I am very proud of what they accomplished. To all of those engaged in the 2019 Wildland Firefighter Academy - thank you for your commitment and dedication in providing training, education and experience to a diversity of individuals pursuing a career in wildland fire management. You are truly making a difference.”



Academy field training day



Specialized Fire Training and Physical Fitness

Recruits must be both mentally and physically ready for every type of incident or event. Crew preparation begins almost immediately. Firefighting is a mentally tough and physically arduous job therefore recruits must develop and maintain a high level of conditioning. Each day, recruits participate in a rigorous program that includes, Cross Fit-style workouts, team runs, and pack hikes in steep and uneven terrain. The recruits learn mental toughness, self-accountability, leadership and team work which are important skills to master as they transition from being a recruit to a Wildland Firefighter.

Left: Academy medical training, Willy Rockhill Crew 8 Squad Boss as patient

Center: Academy field training wildcat gulch Idaho City Ranger District

Right: Emily Corisis Academy Recruit, Ninety Eight Creek Fire, Alaska

Below: Engine 481, Corta Fire Nevada



2019 NWCG Course Completion

- Incident Command System (ICS) courses – IS-100, IS-200, IS-700
- S-190 Intro to Wildland Fire Behavior
- S-130 Firefighter Training (Included S-110 Basic Wildland Fire Orientation, and L-180 Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service)
- PMS 475 Basic Land Navigation
- S-211 Portable Pumps and Water Use
- S-212 Wildland Fire Chain Saws
- PMS 468 Delivering Tactical Decision Games Using Sand Table Exercises

Crew 8 and Engine 481 Overhead

Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy overhead have extensive crew and engine experience in diverse geographic locations. The overhead approach is designed to model leadership, mentor students and offer the best training possible. The following table denotes the overhead organization of each module.

Crew 8 Type 2 IA Crew

- 1) Crew Supervisor
 - (1) Assistant Crew Supervisor
 - (2) Squad Leaders
 - (2) Senior Firefighters
 - (4) Wildland Fire Apprentices
 - (3) Seasonals

Engine 481 Type 4 Engine

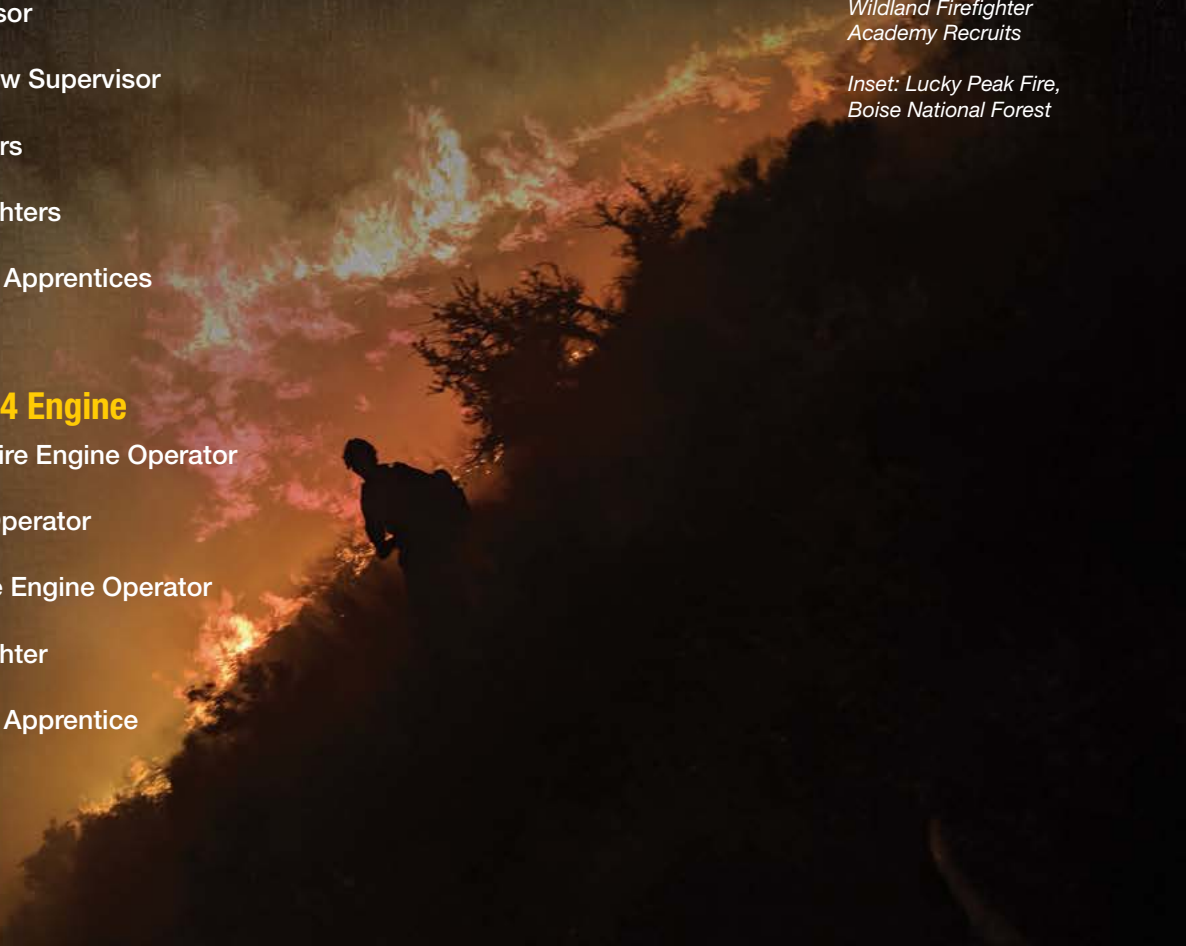
- 1) Supervisory Fire Engine Operator
 - (1) Fire Engine Operator
 - (1) Assistant Fire Engine Operator
 - (1) Senior Firefighter
 - (1) Wildland Fire Apprentice



Top: S-212 field day, chainsaw operations

Bottom: 2019 Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Recruits

Inset: Lucky Peak Fire, Boise National Forest



A Word from Leadership



PRESTON GLAISYER | Crew Boss
Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy

From being a concept discussed within a series of conversations about 10 months ago to an established “brick and mortar” realization has made for an exhilarating journey. The initial process of creating a program structure was a great exercise in collaborative effort and a unique experience for myself and my co-workers. We worked hard at formulating a system that would be effective in training and employing our recruits to the standards we envisioned while satisfying the pursuits of any aspiring wildland career firefighter.

Selecting the recruits was a very challenging endeavor as nearly all were exceptional and motivated individuals with an evident desire to be a part of this program. Ultimately we decided upon a very worthy group of folks that were hungry for experience and dedicated to the program. I enjoyed working with each and every one of them as they proved to be exactly what we’d hoped them to be.

The character of our recruits was reflected in their



high level of performance and engagement when in training and in their loyalty to the program when in fire readiness as it was a slower fire season. They maintained a positive attitude and stayed vigilant when it came to waiting for the call. I commend them for that and for setting the bar high for future recruits. The 2019 Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy will go down in history as a prime example of ingenuity on the part of its creators and one of commitment on the part of its participants. On account of the people within it, I am honored to have been a part of such an exceptional program and exhilarating journey.”



ANTHONY ROJO | Engine Captain
Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy

The Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy was launched after the closing of the Centennial Job Corps. Every bit of the uncertainty, frustration, consternation, long hours and reinvention became worthwhile and valuable when the recruits walked into the new facility May 17, 2019. The energy, intelligence, motivation and excitement of these aspiring firefighters was a whole level above our wildest expectations. On their very first day, and for most their very first pack test, the new recruits slogged through rain, puddles, and unseasonably cold temps to power through and dominate the arduous duty work capacity test. As the academy took form and classes and training started in earnest, our prospects for these recruits were constantly pushed higher. In the end, we were not disappointed.

The great thing about this year's fire assignments was that each assignment built upon the foundational training we provided. Despite the slower fire season, recruits had opportunities to step up into leadership



roles and perform as an "Advanced Firefighter" or Firefighter Type 1 designation. This class of new and developing wildland firefighters rose to all challenges. They persevered through muscle aches and lack of sleep; through rainy weather and temperatures exceeding 100 degrees. They used their heads as well as their physical strength and determination to make 2019 a successful, productive and meaningful year. Kudos to all!"



BLAKE ABBOT | Crew Boss
Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy

Being involved with the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy was a rewarding experience on all fronts. Six weeks after the closing of the Centennial Job Corps fire program, we stood up the Boise National Forest Wildland Fire Academy. We recruited, interviewed and intensively trained 25 individuals committed to a career in wildland fire. Many Recruits received on the job training as both a hand and engine crew, providing them a well-rounded skillset they can use for future employment. The Academy provided a positive environment allowing the Forest Service and recruits to participate in an alternative hiring, training and mentoring process. Together we developed another avenue for local residents, aspiring to be wildland firefighters, to enter the firefighting workforce and gain unique and specialized experience. These recruits have built a solid reputation and are ready for the next step to work for any of the state or federal wildland fire agencies."



Top and right: Crew 8, Alaska fire assignment

Assignments

Crew 8's first resource order was June 27 for the 98-creek fire in Alaska. The engine module and crew stayed busy throughout the remainder of the season with fire assignments in Idaho and Nevada. The season wrapped up on October 4th with the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Awards Ceremony.

Crew 8 and **Engine 481** accepted a total of 10 resource orders, for a total of 151 days on various assignments throughout the western states. The students gained knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform arduous work in inclement conditions and challenging terrain. Recruits gained experiences in: fire hotline construction, engine mobile attack, firing operations, air operations, mop-up, gridding, radio operations, leadership, and cohesive teamwork in dynamic environments.



Nevada, Corta Fire

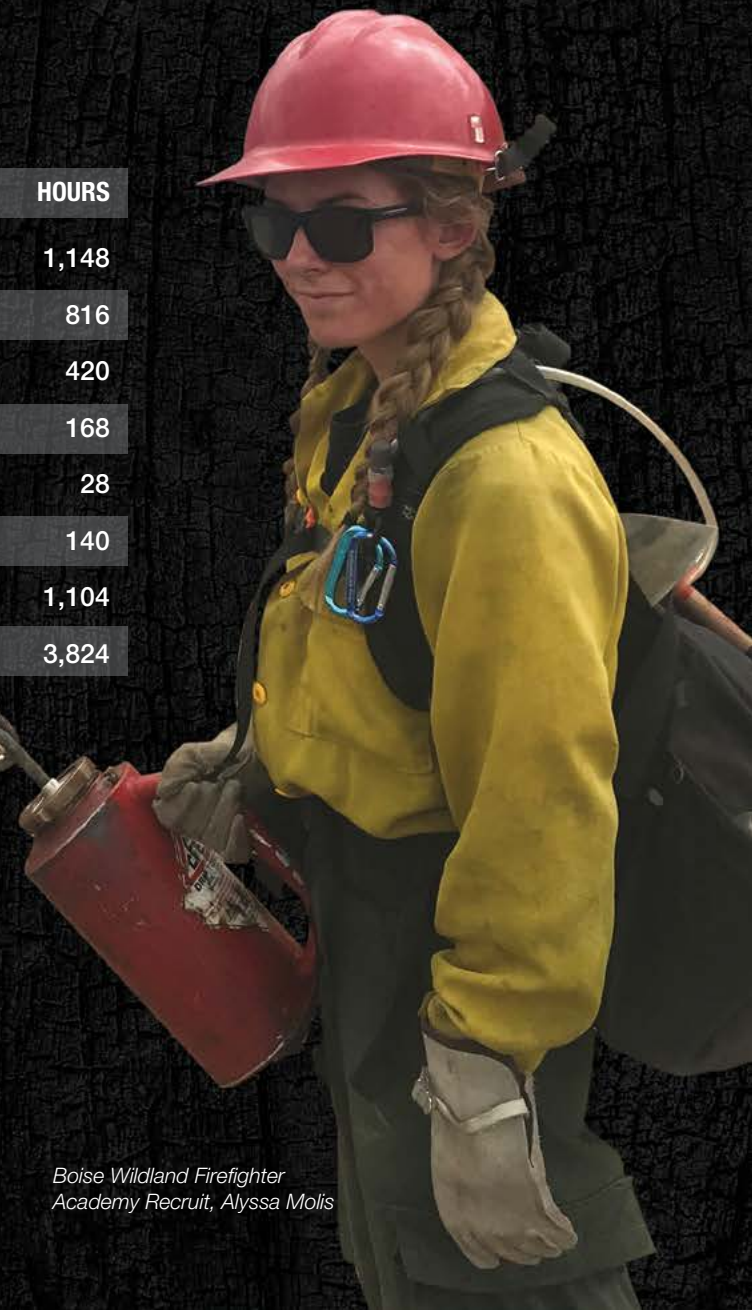


Crew 8, Hungry Fire Nevada



Crew 8 Mobilizing to Ninety-eight Creek Fire, Alaska

ELEMENT	RECRUIT DETAILERS	ASSIGNMENTS	DAYS	HOURS
Crew 8		6	82	1,148
Engine 481		4	69	816
Crew 3	6	3	30	420
Crew 5	1	1	12	168
Boise NF Fire Cache	3	1	2	28
Boise BLM	1	1	14	140
Pre-Position			92	1,104
Total	11	16	301	3,824



Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Recruit, Alyssa Molis



Above: Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Challenge Coin passed from academy overhead to academy recruit during the 2019 Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Awards Ceremony

Awards Ceremony

October 4th—the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy held the first annual Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy end of season awards ceremony. Twenty-two recruits were recognized by Forest Leadership with certificates of achievement, three were recognized with honorable mention awards, and 7 were recognized with individual achievement awards.

Representatives from the Boise National Forest, Matt Zeigler and Emily Webb from the National Wildland Firefighter Apprentice Program, Intermountain Region Deputy Fire Director Craig Glaizer, Regional Director to Congressmen Russ Fulcher, Dirk Mendive, and family and friends of Academy Fire recruits came together to honor their accomplishments.

(7) Individual awards

- Firefighter of the year
Cody Albert
- Duty Respect and Integrity
Stefan Leach
- Work Ethic
Stefan Leach
- Most Physically Fit
Cody Albert
- Leadership
Cody Albert
- Academic Award
Caleb Ankeny
- Most Improved Physical Fitness
Reed Snow



Cody Albert— Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy's 2019 Firefighter of the year, giving the closing comments during the 2019 Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Awards Ceremony



Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Awards Ceremony Honorable Mention Award Winners—Left to right: Mike Towers, Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Fire Management Officer, Academy recruits: Brock Hommerding, Trish Quinn and Justin Hughes and Bob Shindelar, Boise National Forest Fire Chief



Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy's Fire Fighter Of the Year, Cody Albert with Mike Towers, Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Fire Management Officer and Bob Shindelar, Boise National Forest Fire Chief

(21) Recruits recognized with Certificates of Achievement

- Cody Albert
- Caleb Ankeny
- Bri Basterrecha
- Wyatt Bray
- Emily Corisis
- Chase Fillmore
- Stephen Fletcher
- Colton Frederiksen
- Caden Holland
- Brock Hommerding
- Justin Hughes
- Stefan Leach
- Justus Logan
- Jason McCrary
- Alyssa Mollis
- Joshua Morris
- Andrew Murray
- Patricia Quinn
- Ethan Smith
- Reed Snow
- Jared Teicheira
- Harm Venhuizen



Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Crew Supervisor, Preston Glaisyer addressing the Academy recruits during the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Awards Ceremony

(3) Honorable Mention Award Winners

- Brock Hommerding
- Justin Hughes
- Patricia Quinn



Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy overhead and recruits during the 2019 Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy Awards ceremony

Recruit Profiles



“The reason I became a Wildland Firefighter, is because I love working in the outdoors. I was first introduced to fire at Trapper Creek Job Corps Darby Montana. I am currently on my second season, so far I am loving every second of it. This season I am hoping to gain as much experience as I can to help further my career to become a more valuable team player. I would eventually like to work on a Hotshot crew throughout my career in fire management.”

Colton Fredrickson

1 season Trapper Creek Job Corps

“I chose the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy, because the training they provide gives me the education and experience that will carry me through my future as a wildland firefighter. I am currently pursuing a degree in forestry at the University of Idaho. I would love to fight fire for the Forest Service as long as I can.”

Emily Corisis

First Year Wildland Firefighter



“I applied for the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy to get my foot in the door, as a Wildland Firefighter. I felt that the Academy was the best place to do that. The Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy offers cross training to work on Crew 8 and Engine 481. I will be able to learn many skills vital to Wildland firefighting. I hope by the end of my first season, to be a well-rounded wildland firefighter. I would eventually like to work on a Hotshot crew and then smoke jumping. “

Cody Albert

First Year Wildland Firefighter



“I chose the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy, because of the training and management. Being a well-rounded firefighter in a management position is my end goal. And with the way things are going, I can see myself headed in that direction. With all the extra classroom and field training. I feel much more confident going into my career. Along with that I have an amazing girlfriend, eight month old son, and a dog. This career will give me the stability in my life while I am gaining new experiences. A career as a Wildland Firefighter is interesting, not only challenging me physically, mentally and emotionally. Having the three of those things together in a career environment, is a breath of fresh air.”

Stefan Leach

First Year Fire Fighter



Post Academy Success

Anwar Abdela emigrated from Ethiopia to the United States in 2015. Having zeal and determination to become a wildland firefighter, he joined the Centennial Job Corps Fire Program in Nampa, Idaho. Upon completion of mandatory training, he became a crew member on Crew 8. Anwar's grit and consistent efforts secured a detail with the Boise Interagency Hotshot crew during an assignment in Wyoming—where he excelled.

Anwar had aspirations of joining a federal firefighting crew during the 2016 fire season, but was not eligible to apply as he was not a U.S. citizen. However, through strong collaborative partnerships, Anwar was able to secure a job with the Idaho Department of Lands fire organization. Anwar has continued to gain specialized firefighting experience and training through their organization.

After nearly five years of working through the process, Anwar became a U.S. Citizen November



November 21st 2019 Anwar Abdela earned his U.S. citizenship during the Naturalization Ceremony held at Boise State University. Idaho Department of Lands and Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy staff were in attendance.

21, 2019. His long-term goal is to secure a leadership role on the Boise Wildland Firefighting Academy with crew 8. He wants to help mentor a diverse workforce of employees who have a desire to be wildland firefighters.

Anwar's story truly epitomizes the values and principles of wildland fire management. His determination, perseverance, grit and resiliency are the characteristics of recruits and overhead needed in today's wildland firefighting organizations.

Final Thoughts

2019 was the inaugural year for the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy. This academy provided recruits with training and development opportunities with mentorship from exceptional crew and engine leadership. Recruits were exposed to classroom, field training and fire suppression. The Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy provided an excellent path for recruits to gain the experience for careers in federal, state and local fire management programs.

I am very proud of the work accomplished at the Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy, and extremely excited for the growth of our recruits into future fire management careers. The Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy is on the right track for recruits



to gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities in a variety of different fire management elements. This has clearly led to opportunities for them to build their resumes for future career opportunities in fire management. The determination and integrity of the recruits has led to a resounding success this year!

Mike Towers, Fire Management Officer
Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy





For more information about the
Boise Wildland Firefighter Academy please contact:

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