

# Fire Management *today*

Volume 77 • No. 2 • 2019



## SMOKEY'S



# YEAR PREVENTING WILDFIRES



United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service



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*Fire Management Today* is published by the Forest Service, an agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC. The purpose of *Fire Management Today* is to share information related to wildland fire management for the benefit of the wildland fire community. No longer appearing in print, *Fire Management Today* is available on the World Wide Web at <https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/fire/fire-management-today>.

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August 2019

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## On the Cover:



The official logo for Smokey's 75th birthday, designed by the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program.

The USDA Forest Service's Fire and Aviation Management Staff has adopted a logo reflecting three central principles of wildland fire management:

- **Innovation:** We will respect and value thinking minds, voices, and thoughts of those that challenge the status quo while focusing on the greater good.
- **Execution:** We will do what we say we will do. Achieving program objectives, improving diversity, and accomplishing targets are essential to our credibility.
- **Discipline:** What we do, we will do well. Fiscal, managerial, and operational discipline are at the core of our ability to fulfill our mission.



Firefighter and public safety is our first priority.

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## SMOKEY'S LEGACY

Like many of us at the Forest Service, I started my career in fire, and I have always relied on Smokey Bear. Fire prevention is part of our cultural DNA.

It started with Gifford Pinchot, the first Forest Service Chief. In his 1905 *Use Book* for line officers, Pinchot noted that “care with small fires is the best way to prevent large ones” (Pinchot 1905). He instructed line officers to “cheerfully and politely” teach visitors about safe fire use.

Like Smokey Bear would eventually do (fig. 1).

The early Forest Service took Pinchot’s guidance to heart, and by the time this journal was founded



Figure 1—The first Smokey poster, based on a painting by Albert Staehle, showed Smokey teaching campfire safety. Source: USDA National Agricultural Library (1945).

in 1936, the agency had a well-developed fire prevention program. The first few issues of *Fire Control Notes* featured articles on prevention issues related to incendiary fires, fires started by railroads and powerlines, and accidental ignitions caused by forest visitors and residents.

During World War II, the ethics of fire prevention extended to national security. Beginning in 1942, a Japanese campaign of incendiary balloons started forest fires in some Western States (Jameson 2017). The Japanese attacks raised national awareness that timber supplies were critical to the war effort, and the Forest Service joined The War Advertising Council (now the Ad Council) and the National Association of State Foresters in establishing the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention (CFFP) Program. The program launched a campaign to make fire prevention a matter of civic pride and patriotism (Lawter 1994) (fig. 2).

In 1944, the partners sought a national fire prevention symbol, and Smokey Bear was born. Building on wartime patriotism, Smokey’s early posters featured the message, “This shameful waste weakens America!” Through such appeals, Smokey proved to be more effective and enduring than other early fire prevention symbols.

In the 7 decades since, Smokey has appeared not only in posters but also in song and story; on radio and TV; in

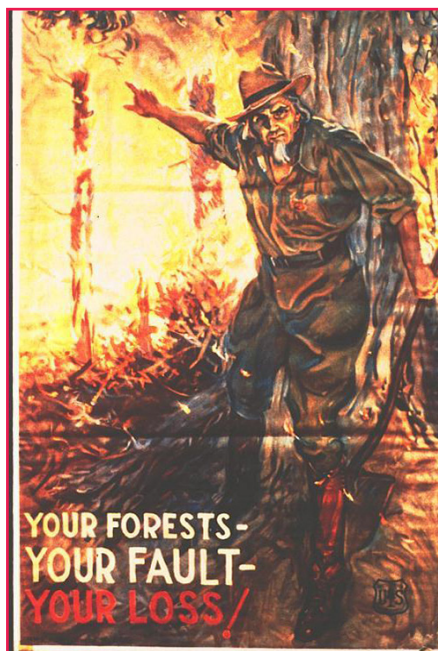


Figure 2—Early fire prevention posters with patriotic themes. A World War II poster with Uncle Sam calling for fire prevention foreshadowed a series of postwar Smokey posters featuring the message, “This shameful waste!” Source: Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program.



living form as a bear at the National Zoo; and “in person” across the Nation, both with celebrities and at events such as parades, rodeos, and baseball games. In tribute to Smokey’s longevity, we are celebrating his 75th birthday this year.

Since 1944, the CFFP Program has solidified Smokey’s legacy as an icon of American culture. In 2001, Smokey’s message changed its focus from forest fires to wildfires, which happen not only in forests but also in shrublands, grasslands, and other landscapes. The change to

“Only you can prevent [unwanted] wildfires” also conveyed the message that Smokey does not oppose the professional use of wildland fire to maintain healthy ecosystems.

Smokey’s warning not to start unwanted wildfires still makes sense:

- Almost all wildfires—nearly 9 in 10 nationwide—are caused by people, not by nature.
- People start fires heedless of their environmental effects, usually through carelessness, negligence, or arson.

- Preventable wildfires can cause environmental damage as well as untold human tragedy, including the loss of lives, homes, and livelihoods.
- Preventable wildfires nationwide can cause billions of dollars’ worth of damage each year and cost billions more to suppress or manage.

Accordingly, Smokey remains on guard today with his trademark warning: “Only You!”

As this issue of *Fire Management Today* shows, Smokey Bear has become part of our national heritage. Since 1944, Smokey has become emblematic of the “watchful fire patrol” envisioned for the Forest Service by Gifford Pinchot. I am confident that, with your support, Smokey will long endure as America’s national symbol of wildfire prevention.

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“Still on Guard,” by Rudy Wendelin (commemorating Smokey’s 40th anniversary in 1984). Source: *Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program*.

# THE ONGOING IMPORTANCE OF WILDFIRE PREVENTION

Shawna A. Legarza, Psy.D.

I am excited to celebrate Smokey Bear's 75th birthday. Since 1944, Smokey Bear has protected America's forests from unwanted human-caused wildfires. As one of the most beloved issue ambassadors of our time, Smokey and his signature phrase, "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires," have become truly iconic.

Although Smokey has played an essential role in reducing the number of unwanted human-caused wildfires over the last 75 years, he still needs help. Even today, people cause nearly 9 in 10 wildfires nationwide. In 2017, for example, 88 percent of the Nation's wildfires were caused by humans.

Wildfire prevention is anchored by the interagency partnerships embodied in the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. By joining with partners to prevent unwanted human-caused ignitions, we reduce exposure to risk for both wildland firefighters and the public we serve. Together with Smokey Bear, we must create and manage resilient landscapes and work with our partners to build communities that are adapted to wildfire.

It takes personal leadership by every citizen to recognize the importance of wildfire prevention, mitigation, and education. Together, we must commit to supporting an interagency wildland

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*Shawna Legarza is the director of Fire and Aviation Management for the Forest Service, Washington, DC.*



From Albert Staehle to Rudy Wendelin, various artists have added their touches to Smokey's appearance, but his fire prevention message has remained the same. Source: USDA National Agricultural Library.

fire prevention program. We must continue to educate the public about the importance of being careful with fire while knowing that people also want to enjoy a campfire with family and friends.

All of us can enjoy our national forests and grasslands by being prepared: know your location and how to describe it if you need to call 9-1-1 and report a wildfire; and make sure that you do not drag tow chains, exhaust pipes, or mowers on pavement. We know all too well the destruction caused by a handful of the largest wildfires each year. But we don't know (because the science for it is "soft") how many of those fires

you help prevent through vigilance and practicing personal responsibility when you visit the forest.

Over the past several decades, we have seen an increase in the acreage of fires burning on the landscape. We have also seen fires burning year round, with unusual weather events. We continue to use our predictive services, research, and technology to be prepared for the fire year. However, we need all citizens to do their part with respect to wildfire prevention, mitigation, and education because all of us value forested lands across America for recreation, water use, and so much more.

# CELEBRATING SMOKEY'S 75TH BIRTHDAY: OVERVIEW OF EVENTS

Gwen Beavans and Maureen Brooks

Numerous events are planned for the entire 2019 calendar year.

In 2019, Smokey Bear will celebrate 75 years as the national symbol for wildfire prevention. Smokey's official 75th birthday will be on August 9, 2019, but educational programs and materials, a variety of products, and numerous events are planned for the entire 2019 calendar year. Smokey Bear's 75th birthday celebration is an interagency, collaborative opportunity to encourage Americans to take personal responsibility for preventing unwanted human-caused wildfires. Smokey's birthday also establishes a framework for future collaboration on wildfire prevention well beyond 2019.

In fall 2016, a national strategy team formed to plan activities for Smokey's 75th birthday celebration. The team includes representatives from:

- The Ad Council's Washington, DC, and New York offices;
- National and State-level offices of the National Association of State Foresters; and
- The Forest Service director areas of Fire and Aviation Management, Conservation Education, Office of Communication, Partnership Office, and Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources.



and artwork all center on Smokey's 75th birthday celebration and his longstanding efforts to prevent unwanted human-caused wildfires.

The year of celebrations started with the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, CA, and will end with Smokey at the National Capitol Christmas Tree lighting ceremony in Washington, DC. Other planned events include:

- **May:** An exhibit by the Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute about the living symbol of Smokey Bear, wildfire prevention, and bear habitat.
- **May:** The Smokey Bear hot air balloon at Smokey Bear Days in Capitan, NM.
- **August:** An event for USDA employees to celebrate Smokey's birthday together with the

*Gwen Beavans is the wildfire prevention and mitigation branch chief and Maureen Brooks is a national wildfire prevention specialist for the Forest Service, Fire and Aviation Management, Washington Office, Washington, DC.*

National Garden Club Smokey Bear poster winner in the USDA Whitten Building.

- **August:** An event for partners in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC.
- **October/November:** Smokey Bear Live! educational school program.
- **November:** Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon entry in New York, NY.

The Ad Council has launched an intensive public relations campaign that includes traditional, outdoor, and social media elements.

The planning team also developed resources and materials to support local initiatives and events:

- A Smokey Toolkit with logos, artwork, public service announcements, and birthday event resources (check frequently—items are added periodically) at <http://smokeybear.adcouncil.org/toolkit/>;
- A *Highlights* magazine wildfire prevention supplement, to be distributed nationwide to everyone who already subscribes;
- New Smokey 75th items for sale at the national symbols cache ([www.symbols.gov](http://www.symbols.gov)) and National Association of State Foresters Store as well as new licensed products through official vendors; and
- A *Natural Inquirer* Burning Questions research-based education program at <http://www.naturalinquirer.org/Smokey-Bear's-75th-Birthday-v-214.html>.

Smokey Bear has always celebrated his birthday milestones in a grand way. His birthday celebrations happen throughout the Nation, hosted by a variety of agencies and entities. You can find events in your State at <http://www.smokeybear75th.org/>.

Messages, logos, products, and artwork all center on Smokey's longstanding efforts to prevent unwanted human-caused wildfires.

## COMMERCIAL LICENSING OF SMOKEY BEAR

The USDA Forest Service is responsible for managing the commercial licensing program and use of Smokey Bear. Licensing is required for any use that generates revenue from the image and likeness of Smokey Bear. Licensing may be for a term of years or for a one-time use, depending on the product and use of the Smokey Bear image.

The daily management of the licensing program is by a contracted licensing agency, Perpetual Licensing. Perpetual provides professional services that meet the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program's commercial licensing and marketing objectives as well as accord with the strategic expansion of the program. There are currently more than 100 Official Smokey Bear Licensees in the program, with products in categories including clothing, toys, collectibles, and accessories.

The USDA Forest Service directly manages the one-time use agreements. These are issued for projects that are not long-term commercial ventures but for outreach products like magazine articles, course materials, movies, or books. Corresponding requests should be sent to [sblicense@fs.fed.us](mailto:sblicense@fs.fed.us).

**Join us!** The licensing program is open for expansion! Corporations or individuals interested in becoming an Official Smokey Bear Licensee to produce and market products using the Smokey Bear image and/or likeness are welcome to apply for a license by contacting:

Perpetual Licensing  
Todd Lustgarten  
[info@perpetuallicensing.com](mailto:info@perpetuallicensing.com)  
(323) 284-5100  
[www.perpetuallicensing.com](http://www.perpetuallicensing.com)

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Visit [www.fs.fed.us/smokeybearlicensing](http://www.fs.fed.us/smokeybearlicensing) to find officially licensed Smokey Bear products.



*All officially licensed products are marked with this logo. Look for it when purchasing Smokey products!*



# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES CONNECTED TO SMOKEY'S 75TH BIRTHDAY

Heidi McAllister

When you walk into the offices of the Forest Service's Conservation Education Program in Washington, DC, one of the first things you see is a big banner of Smokey Bear offering bear hugs. Conservation Education has supported Smokey and his wildfire prevention message for a long, long time. Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl are known as the Forest

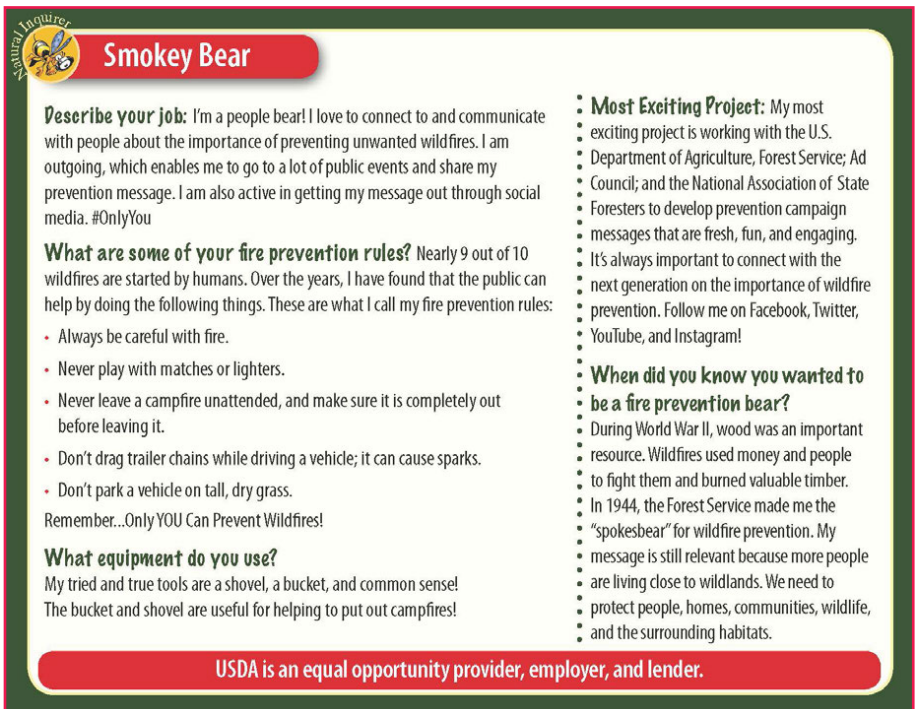
People cause most wildfires in the United States, so getting Smokey's fire prevention message out is important.

Service's National Symbols, and Conservation Education produces educational materials to support the Smokey Bear program and to help Americans understand wildfires and how people can prevent them.

People cause most wildfires in the United States, so getting Smokey's wildfire prevention message out is important. The National Symbols Program Cache distributes related materials through the Northeast Interagency Support Cache at very low cost to let partners share the information widely with the public.

*Heidi McAllister is the acting director of Conservation Education for the Forest Service, Washington Office, Washington, DC.*

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**Natural Inquirer**  
**Smokey Bear**

**Describe your job:** I'm a people bear! I love to connect to and communicate with people about the importance of preventing unwanted wildfires. I am outgoing, which enables me to go to a lot of public events and share my prevention message. I am also active in getting my message out through social media. #OnlyYou

**What are some of your fire prevention rules?** Nearly 9 out of 10 wildfires are started by humans. Over the years, I have found that the public can help by doing the following things. These are what I call my fire prevention rules:

- Always be careful with fire.
- Never play with matches or lighters.
- Never leave a campfire unattended, and make sure it is completely out before leaving it.
- Don't drag trailer chains while driving a vehicle; it can cause sparks.
- Don't park a vehicle on tall, dry grass.

Remember...Only YOU Can Prevent Wildfires!

**What equipment do you use?**  
My tried and true tools are a shovel, a bucket, and common sense! The bucket and shovel are useful for helping to put out campfires!

**Most Exciting Project:** My most exciting project is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Ad Council; and the National Association of State Foresters to develop prevention campaign messages that are fresh, fun, and engaging. It's always important to connect with the next generation on the importance of wildfire prevention. Follow me on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram!

**When did you know you wanted to be a fire prevention bear?**  
During World War II, wood was an important resource. Wildfires used money and people to fight them and burned valuable timber. In 1944, the Forest Service made me the "spokesbear" for wildfire prevention. My message is still relevant because more people are living close to wildlands. We need to protect people, homes, communities, wildlife, and the surrounding habitats.

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## Smokey Bear Poster Contest

As part of our work, we partner with the National Garden Clubs, Inc., to generate an annual art competition for children in first to fifth grade, giving kids the opportunity to highlight Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl. Each year, about 10,000 elementary schoolchildren from across the country are introduced to the contest and produce a few thousand wonderfully creative and colorful original works of art depicting Smokey and Woodsy and their messages.

In 2019, in commemoration of Smokey's 75th birthday, the contest is exclusively dedicated to Smokey and his wildfire prevention messages.

The title of the competition this year is National Garden Club Smokey Bear Poster Contest.

## Natural Inquirer

Another of our programs is the *Natural Inquirer* (at <http://www.naturalinquirer.org/>), a group of science education materials for children from preschool through high school. Based on Forest Service research from across the country, the publications this year are helping to celebrate Smokey's 75th birthday through materials specific to the occasion.

The materials began with an article published by a Forest Service fire scientist, rewritten for students at the middle school level. The *Natural*

*Inquirer* monograph “A Burning Question” will come out just in time for Smokey’s 75th birthday in August.

Along with this article, we are publishing a card to commemorate Smokey’s 75th birthday (see the illustration). The card has images of the wildfire prevention bear as well as historical facts and information on Smokey’s rules and messages in a small format that is easy to share.

## Smokey Birthday Celebration

And what would a birthday be without a celebration? To mark this historic milestone, Smokey will be celebrated in style this year. The celebration will take place on August 9 in the historic Whitten Building of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, DC. Smokey will have the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture as master of ceremonies as well as Federal employees in attendance, along with the winner of the 2019 Smokey poster contest. A discussion of Smokey’s history will accompany the sharing of birthday wishes and general merriment.

Help us celebrate Smokey Bear during the year of his 75th birthday, and remember ... ONLY YOU can prevent wildfires!

The Natural Inquirer monograph “A Burning Question” will come out just in time for Smokey’s 75th birthday in August.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

**Happy 75th Birthday Smokey Bear!**

As a wildfire prevention specialist for 75 years, I raise public awareness about how human behavior can accidentally cause a wildfire. My goal is for humans to be aware of their actions and take personal responsibility to prevent wildfires.

**Smokey Bear**  
Wildfire Prevention Specialist  
Washington, DC 20252

(psst... Did you know only the President of the United States and I have our own ZIP codes? Pretty cool! Send me a letter anytime!)

[www.smokeybear.com](http://www.smokeybear.com) [www.naturalinquirer.org](http://www.naturalinquirer.org)

Forest Service Program Aid 2227a February 2019

# SMOKEY'S NEW MEXICO CONNECTION

Linda Hecker

In 1950, a fire broke out in the Capitan Mountains on the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico. After the fire, firefighters rescued an injured bear cub from a tree (Lawter 1994).

The frightened cub was badly burned and orphaned by the fire. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish flew him to Santa Fe, where he was treated for his injuries by a veterinarian. The State

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In October 2018, partners traveled to New Mexico to meet with people who had firsthand knowledge of the living symbol of Smokey.

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of New Mexico offered the cub to the Forest Service to become the living symbol of Smokey Bear, and he was flown to Washington, DC, to spend his life in the National Zoo under Smokey's name.

On the occasion of Smokey's 75th birthday, the Forest Service and partners are celebrating the living symbol's special ties to New Mexico. Events include Smokey Bear LIVE and the 2019 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree.

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*Linda Hecker is the interpretive planner for the Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region, Center for Design and Interpretation, Lakewood, CO.*

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*Ray Bell with Smokey posters and young Smokey. Bell, the chief law enforcement officer for the New Mexico Game and Fish Department, took care of the cub together with his family before the bear was transferred to the National Zoo in Washington, DC. Photo: USDA National Agricultural Library (1950).*

## Smokey Bear LIVE

As part of the Forest Service's Nature LIVE distance learning program, a special edition is being developed to celebrate the 75th birthday of the Smokey Bear campaign and the 70th anniversary of the living symbol.

In October 2018, Forest Service employees joined members of the Prince William Network in traveling to New Mexico to meet with people who had firsthand knowledge of the living symbol of Smokey. The team collected oral histories from:

- Rich Smith and Dr. Kathy Bobesh (son and granddaughter of Dr. Edwin Smith, the veterinarian who treated the injured bear cub after his rescue);
- Betty Pickens Cabber (daughter of Homer C. Pickens, the assistant director of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish who escorted young Smokey to Washington, DC); and
- Larry Allen and Dick Cox (former Forest Service employees who arranged the burial of the living symbol in Capitan, NM, after he died in 1976).

These folks graciously shared family photos and home movies. The team collected new stories and images that will debut in a video to be released on October 6, 2019, during National Fire Prevention Week on <https://smokeybearlive.org/>.

A live broadcast is scheduled for November 7 from Capitan, NM. Special guests will include Larry Allen (invited); Bennie Long, director of the Smokey Bear Historical Park; and members from the Capitol Christmas Tree team who are bringing the tree from the Carson National Forest in New Mexico this year. Plan to join us for an exciting, fun, and historic event!

## 2019 Capitol Christmas Tree

Like the living symbol of Smokey Bear, this year's Capitol Christmas Tree will come from New Mexico.

The tree will be cut on the Questa Ranger District, Carson National Forest. Seventy smaller companion trees will also arrive in the Nation's capital to decorate Government buildings and public spaces. The Capitol Christmas Tree will grace the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol Building, with a public tree-lighting ceremony in early December.

Communities throughout New Mexico will participate in caring for the tree and transporting it to Washington, DC. They will contribute 10,000 handmade ornaments, which will capture the unique culture and beauty of New Mexico.

One of the stops on the tree's journey will be in Capitan, NM, to celebrate Smokey Bear's 75th birthday and to commemorate the 70th anniversary in 2020 of the live bear cub's designation as the

living symbol of fire prevention. The public will have opportunities to make Smokey-themed ornaments at various events throughout the State.

After the tree arrives in Washington, DC, Smokey Bear will be there to welcome his fellow New Mexicans. Smokey will also be a guest of honor at the Capitol Christmas Tree lighting ceremony on Capitol Hill.

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- Fire Ecology
- Fire Effects
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- Fuels Management
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- Training
- Weather
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Contact the editor via email at [SM.FS.FireMgtToday@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.FireMgtToday@usda.gov).

# NATIONAL ZOO EXHIBIT: CELEBRATING SMOKEY BEAR

Linda Hecker

One year after Smokey Bear celebrates his 75th birthday will mark the 70th anniversary of the living symbol of Smokey Bear. In 1950, an injured black bear cub was rescued from the Capitan Gap Fire on the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico. The cub was rehabilitated and relocated to the National Zoological Park in Washington, DC, better known as the National Zoo.

The zoo is part of the Smithsonian Institution, so visitors enter for free. The living symbol of Smokey Bear lived out his life in the Nation's capital, attracting millions of visitors. He received so many letters from well wishers that he was assigned his own ZIP Code. When the living symbol died in 1976, his remains were returned to Capitan, NM, and buried in what is now Smokey Bear Historical Park.

To honor the partnership with the National Zoo and commemorate Smokey's 75th birthday, the Forest Service and the Smithsonian Institution teamed up to create an exhibit at Smokey's former enclosure at the National Zoo. In March 2018, after almost 2 years of strategic planning, Forest Service representatives met with Cheryl Braunstein, manager for Exhibit Planning and Development at the National Zoo, to discuss moving forward with an exhibit.

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*Linda Hecker is the interpretive planner for the Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region, Center for Design and Interpretation, Lakewood, CO.*



*The living symbol of Smokey Bear in his enclosure at the National Zoo. Photo: USDA National Agricultural Library (1975).*

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## The year 2020 will mark the 70th anniversary of the living symbol of Smokey Bear.

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At first, the plan was for a temporary exhibit at the entrance to the zoo near an old guard station from the late 1800s. The station had once served as Smokey's Post Office with the ZIP Code of 20252. After further consideration, the National Zoo decided on a permanent exhibit at Smokey's former enclosure.

By April 2018, an exhibit outline was complete. The Forest Service was able to secure funds using Smokey

Bear royalties. In August, the project began to move forward with a compressed timeframe and a ribbon cutting planned for late March or early April 2019.

An interpretive planner for the Forest Service began working with the National Zoo's exhibit developer on the content and design of the exhibit. By December 2018, a project team including representatives from both the Smithsonian and the Forest Service was reviewing the drawings and wordsmithing the text.

An unexpected partial Government shutdown beginning in late December 2018 pushed the project schedule out by several weeks. Once back at work, the Forest Service and the National Zoo

resumed work on the project and began finalizing content. They procured a three-dimensional Smokey statue and made arrangements for the project team to visit the National Agricultural Library to obtain high-resolution Smokey images for the exhibit.

The Forest Service team also worked with a research ecologist for the Rocky Mountain Research Station's Fire Science Lab in Missoula, MT, to obtain the latest data and analysis of human-caused wildfires to generate a distribution map for one of the exhibit panels.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in late May 2019, but the exhibit will remain open to the public for at least 5 years. Visitors can take a walk down “memory lane” as they rediscover Smokey’s origins, follow his path to fame, and learn about the history of the wildfire prevention campaign. ■



*Smokey reading his mail, by Rudy Wendelin. Source: USDA National Agricultural Library (1989).*

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# HAPPY 75TH BIRTHDAY, SMOKEY!

Lisa Allen

**S**mokey Bear is true and timeless Americana. Even today, 75 years after he was created, 8 in 10 Americans recognize his image and know his call for taking personal responsibility: “Only You!”

But the Smokey Bear wildfire prevention campaign isn't over. Why? Because his work to prevent devastating, unplanned, and unwanted fires isn't done.

Nearly 9 in 10 wildfires in this country are started by humans. Now, perhaps more than ever, Smokey's message is critical to ensuring that our Nation's most treasured landscapes—and the

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*Lisa Allen is the President of the National Association of State Foresters and the State Forester of Missouri, Jefferson City, MO.*



*Lisa Allen, President of the National Association of State Foresters and State Forester of Missouri.*

people and wildlife who call them home—are safe from wildfire.

Throughout the year, thousands of people across North America will help us celebrate Smokey's 75th birthday and amplify his message.

Through a *Highlights* magazine activity insert, we'll

be reaching young children and educators—some of the most important audiences when it comes to successful wildfire prevention campaigns—with *Smokey's fire safety tips*.

The National Zoo in Washington, DC, will honor Smokey with a new exhibit about both the living symbol of Smokey Bear and the Smokey campaign. In November, we'll be with Smokey at the Macy's Day Thanksgiving Parade.

Nearly every State will host at least one Smokey Bear birthday party this year. Go ahead! Join in on the celebration of Smokey Bear's legacy—visit [SmokeyBear75th.org](http://SmokeyBear75th.org) to find an event near you. ■

# WHAT THE SMOKEY CAMPAIGN MEANS TO US

The Ad Council

Together, the Ad Council, the USDA Forest Service, and the National Association of State Foresters founded the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program, or CFFP. Established in 1942 when World War II brought new urgency to the issue of wildfire prevention, the CFFP was created to educate Americans about the importance of preventing wildfires.

In 1944, the partners launched the Smokey Bear Wildfire Prevention Campaign. The campaign uses public service media opportunities to educate Americans about the need to prevent unwanted human-caused wildfires.

We're celebrating our shared history through Smokey's 75th birthday in a lot of big ways. We kicked off the big birthday year with Smokey at the Tournament of Roses Parade. Then we launched our new public service announcement campaign, in which some of Smokey's biggest celebrity fans give Smokey a voice to

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*The Ad Council is America's leading producer of public service communications, with offices in New York, NY, and Washington, DC.*

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No other campaign has had an icon like Smokey to carry and deliver his important message, making him truly one of a kind.

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*Smokey tweeted the following for St. Patrick's Day in 2019: "Preventing #wildfires takes more than #luck. That's why I'm counting on #OnlyYou to put out your #campfires, secure dragging chains, and practice safe debris burning to keep our forests #green. Happy #StPatricksDay!" Source: Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program.*

expand upon his important wildfire prevention message through the use of the new animated emoji Smokey. We'll continue to celebrate his birthday for the rest of the year, with Smokey being represented at events like the

Albuquerque Balloon Festival and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The Smokey campaign has remained on the Ad Council docket since its creation, making it the longest standing public service announcement campaign at the Ad Council—and in U.S. history. No other campaign has had an icon like Smokey to carry and deliver his important message, making him truly one of a kind. This campaign and issue are critically important, both to the Ad Council and to our Nation. Over more than 7 decades, we've worked to revise and expand Smokey's approach to keep him and his message relevant while staying true to his core wildfire prevention message.

This campaign and our partnership with the National Association of State Foresters and the Forest Service have been a great ride for 75 years. We're looking forward to helping Smokey Bear share his wildfire prevention message for years to come. ■



# SMOKEY'S MESSAGE STILL APPLIES TO VIRGINIA

Robert W. Farrell

Trees and forests are critical for our water, air, economy, and quality of life in Virginia.

**A**s we prepare to celebrate Smokey Bear's 75th birthday next year, wildfires out West have raised questions about Smokey's message. Decades of preventing and suppressing wildfires have contributed to fuel buildup. Warming temperatures, drought, insects, and diseases coinciding with a decrease in forest

*Robert Farrell is the State Forester of Virginia, Virginia Department of Forestry, Charlottesville, VA. This article reflects an editorial he submitted to the Richmond Times-Dispatch.*



*Robert Farrell, State Forester of Virginia. Photo: Janet Muncy, Virginia Department of Forestry (2018).*

management on public lands also influence conditions for larger wildfires. In the West especially, the absence of timber harvests and thinnings has increased fuel loads, leaving dense stands of older trees susceptible to wildfire.

In Virginia, Smokey Bear's message, "Only YOU can prevent wildfires," remains relevant. Last year, 693 wildfires burned 23,081

acres (9,232 ha) and damaged or destroyed 69 structures. Eighty-one percent of these wildfires were human-related. Debris burning and arson are the top causes.

Where we build homes also matters. Building homes on the oceanfront comes with a hurricane risk, and building homes in the forest (what wildfire experts call the wildland-urban interface, or WUI) comes with a wildfire risk. WUI communities typically lack water service and fire hydrants and often have limited access for firefighting resources and escape, creating dangerous conditions for residents and firefighters. The Virginia Department of Forestry works with WUI communities to plan ahead and create defensible space around homes.

Smokey Bear is the longest running public information ad campaign in America, but Smokey's message has changed to reflect fire's role in keeping forests healthy. Smokey's message now refers to wildfires rather than forest fires. Foresters, wildlife managers, and ecologists recognize that well controlled prescribed fires make many forests healthier and safer. Trees and forests are critical for our water, air, economy, and quality of life in Virginia; we need scientific forest management now more than ever as our forests face mounting challenges.

The Virginia Department of Forestry is celebrating Smokey Bear's 75th birthday, and we continue to join Smokey in saying "Only YOU can prevent wildfires."

## SUCCESS STORIES WANTED!

We'd like to know how your work has been going! Let us share your success stories from your State fire program or your individual fire department. Let us know how your State Fire Assistance, Volunteer Fire Assistance, Federal Excess Personal Property, or Firefighter Property program has benefited your community. Make your piece as short as 100 words or longer than 2,000 words, whatever it takes to tell your story!

Submit your stories and photographs by email or traditional mail to:

**USDA Forest Service  
Fire Management Today**  
201 14th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Email: [SM.FS.FireMgtToday@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.FireMgtToday@usda.gov)

If you have questions about your submission, you can contact our FMT staff at the email address above.

# ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF WILDFIRE PREVENTION EDUCATION\*

L. Annie Hermansen-Báez, Jeffrey P. Prestemon, David T. Butry, Karen L. Abt, and Ronda Sutphen

From mid-2002 to mid-2007, the State of Florida spent an average of \$500,000 annually on fire prevention education to reduce four main types of fires ignited by humans:

1. debris-burning escapes,
2. campfire escapes,
3. children playing with fire, and
4. wildfires associated with smoking materials.

## Cost Savings From Fire Prevention

During that period of time, these four types of fire represented 36 percent of all wildfires and 9 percent of all acres burned in Florida (fig. 1). Prestemon and others (2010)

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*Annie Hermansen-Báez is the science delivery/Kids in the Woods coordinator for the Southern Research Station, Gainesville, FL; Jeff Prestemon is a research forester and project leader for forest economics and policy, Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Forestry Sciences Laboratory, Research Triangle Park, NC; David Butry is with the Applied Economics Office, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD; Karen Abt is a research economist for forest economics and policy, Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Forestry Sciences Laboratory, Research Triangle Park, NC; and Ronda Sutphen is the wildfire mitigation coordinator for the Florida Forest Service, Tallahassee, FL.*

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\* Adapted from L.A. Hermansen-Báez, J.P. Prestemon, D.T. Butry, K.L. Abt, and S. Ronda, *Economic Benefits From Wildfire Prevention Education: Fact Sheet* (Asheville, NC: Southern Research Station, 2011).

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Any additional dollar spent on fire prevention education in Florida would have a benefit-to-cost ratio of 35 to 1.

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found that by reducing accidentally ignited wildfires, Florida and its residents avoided the associated costs of firefighting and economic losses, such as property damage, timber loss, large-scale evacuations, and medical expenditures (for example, from issues associated with smoke inhalation).

The study indicated that additional increases in fire prevention education would be beneficial. Specifically, if it had been possible to increase spending on fire prevention education from 2002 to 2007, then any additional dollar spent on fire prevention education in Florida would have reduced fire-related losses and suppression costs by \$35, for a benefit-to-cost ratio of 35:1. (This ratio might not be applicable to other States and prevention programs because of differences in fire regimes, values at risk, and suppression costs.)

## What Activities Work Best?

Activities for fire prevention education come in many forms, such as media efforts, homeowner visits, informational brochures and flyers, and presentations. The study found that media efforts, such as

television and radio public service announcements, were the most successful fire prevention activities, followed by presentations to schools and homeowner associations. In addition, some of the costs of public service announcements through local broadcast and print media were paid for by media organizations, reducing overall costs for land managers.

## Timing and Location Matter

Conducting fire prevention activities just before and during the most active parts of the fire season might improve their effectiveness. If fire prevention education in Florida were emphasized during winter (such as in January and February), before the peak of fire season, and continued through the main fire season in spring (March through May), then the economic benefits of fire prevention and awareness would significantly rise (Butry and others 2010a). Specifically, if prevention activities could have been increased during the winter months in Florida from 2002 to 2007, then \$3.9 million would have been saved from economic losses and avoided firefighting expenditures.

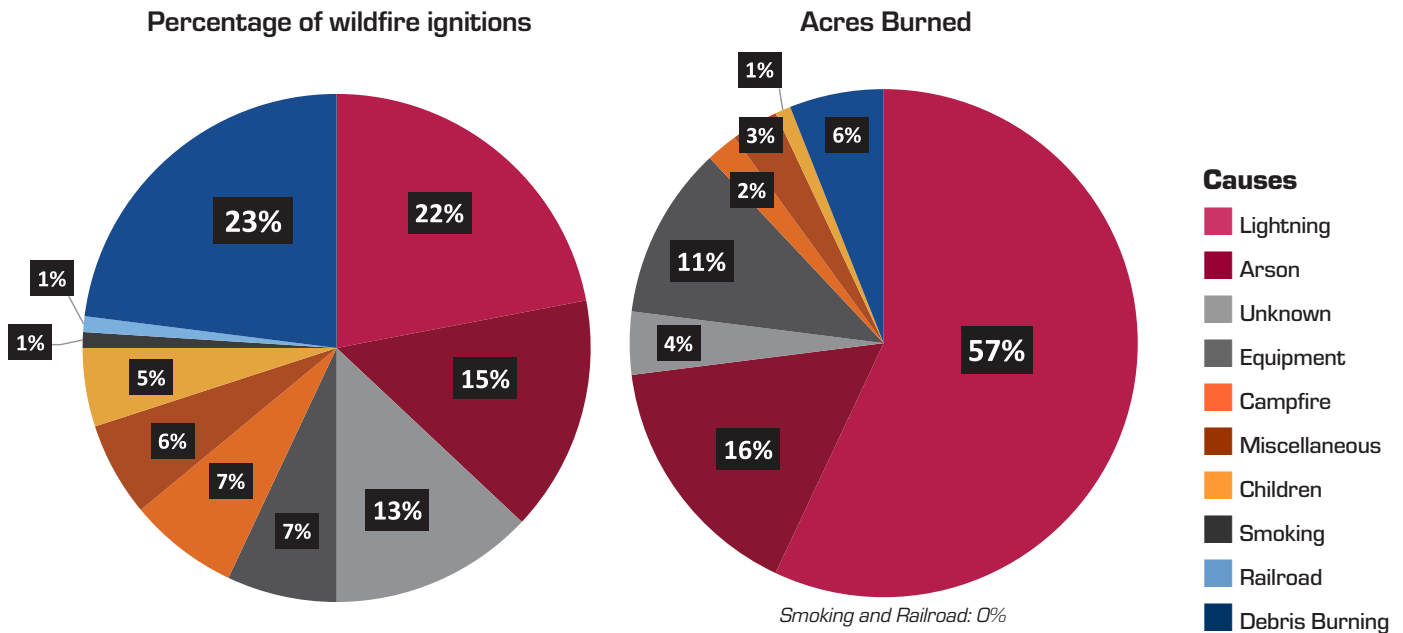


Figure 1—Percentage of wildfire ignitions (left) and acres burned (right) from 2002 to 2007.

Conducting fire prevention activities just before and during the most active parts of the fire season might improve their effectiveness.

Many fires are accidentally ignited by humans where large numbers of people live, work, and play—in the wildland–urban interface. The research found that focusing educational efforts on the wildland–urban interface could magnify the benefits of prevention spending.

### Prescribed Fire Gives an Added Boost

Where prescribed fire can be conducted safely and inexpensively, coordinating fuels reduction with fire prevention education can limit the damages from wildfire even more and at lower cost:

- By decreasing fuel loads, prescribed fire helps to reduce damage from all types of wildfires. However, prescribed fire cannot be used in all weather conditions and is more difficult to use in certain landownership situations. Although Florida has an extensive prescribed-burning program for both public and private lands, many lands are owned by people who choose not to burn. This limits how much prescribed burning that Federal, State, and local agencies can do.
- Fire prevention education programs provide flexibility because they can be increased during times of high fire danger and high fire activity. However, prescribed fire offers a

longer term solution to the problem of fuels buildups and consequent wildfire damage (Butry and others 2010b).

*Note: Care should be given in applying the results of this study to other locations, either across the United States or abroad, because they may differ in terms of weather, climate, recent wildfire activity, fuels management, and community profiles.*

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# 2017 TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE: PACIFIC NORTHWEST FIRE PREVENTION EDUCATION TEAMS\*

PNW Fire Prevention and Education Team

In 2016, Federal and State agencies and land managers in Oregon began preparing for the 2017 total solar eclipse, the first such event visible from the contiguous United States since February 1979. The event was expected at the peak of Oregon's fire season, bringing crowds of visitors during August's hot, dry, and unstable conditions. In response, agency leaders formed planning teams to find ways of coping with the expected strain on highways, backcountry roads, campgrounds, communities, infrastructure, airports, and airspace.

## Challenging Conditions

The path of totality stretched from Oregon's Pacific coastline eastward across multiple public lands (fig. 1), including parts of eight national forests, one national grassland, and three Bureau of Land Management districts. The Oregon Office of Emergency Management estimated that up to 1 million visitors would come to Oregon to witness the eclipse, mostly in the narrow 70-mile (113-km) path of totality. Rural towns and counties in the path lacked the infrastructure to support large-scale emergencies as well as the capacity to host the number of expected visitors. Fire

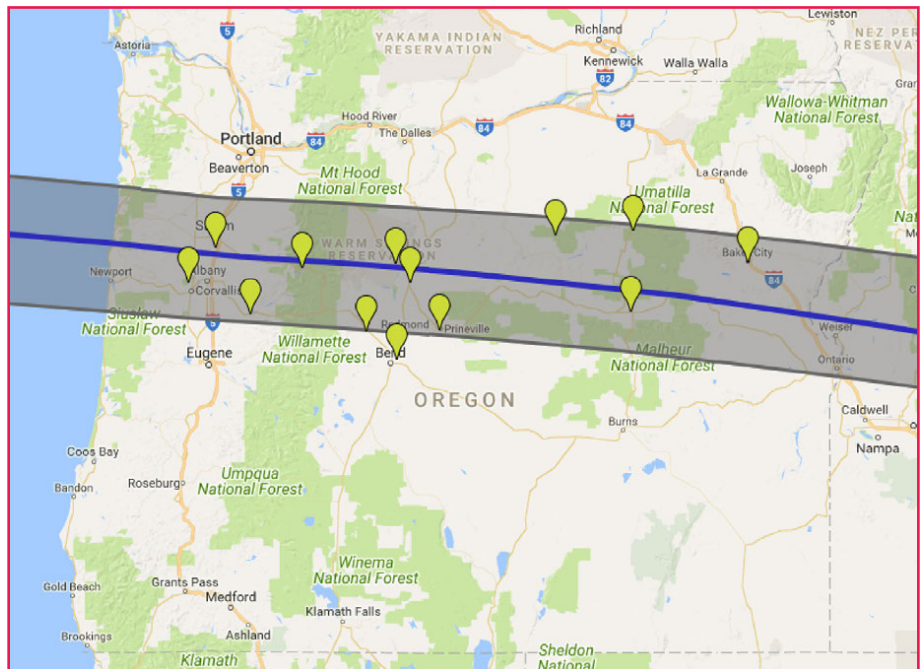


Figure 1—Path of the 2017 total solar eclipse across Oregon (shaded area—blue is the centerline), showing the approximate locations of the strategic information portals established by fire prevention education teams. Source: USDA Forest Service.

Fire managers expressed concerns about conditions that were hard to quantify and hazards that were difficult to calculate.

managers expressed concerns about conditions that were hard to quantify and hazards that were difficult to calculate. In the weeks and days before the event, worst case scenarios seemed imminent.

Oregon was already experiencing several large lightning-caused wildfires. In the days before the eclipse on August 21, fire activity continued to escalate, with residents

and visitors heavily affected by smoke, highway and road closures, and evacuations. Emergency services personnel expressed concerns about new ignitions and fast-moving fires in areas with concentrations of eclipse visitors. The logistical complexity of evacuating and accounting for the public and quickly transporting fire responders to fires during extreme traffic congestion added to these concerns.

*The Pacific Northwest Fire Prevention and Education Team deployed during the total solar eclipse in 2017.*

\* Adapted from the Pacific Northwest Fire Prevention Education Teams Eclipse Report, August 28, 2017.



*Crowd gathered near Prineville for Oregon's largest total solar eclipse event. Photo: Oregon State Police (August 24, 2017).*

The Whitewater Fire near Mount Jefferson closed miles of trails, including 30 miles (48 km) of the Pacific Crest Trail and hundreds of acres of forest and wilderness, potentially pushing more visitors into central and eastern Oregon each time the area and road closures increased.

In southern Oregon, the Chetco Bar Fire was doubling and tripling in size in the days before the eclipse. On August 11, the Pacific Northwest went into preparedness level 5, and campfire restrictions were in place across the State. Fuel shortages were reported in central and eastern Oregon, and traffic was backed up for 50 miles (80 km) in parts of central Oregon as event attendees began to assemble.

Following the event, firefighters in the Pacific Northwest were managing the Nation's highest priority incident, the Chetco Bar Fire, categorized as a megafire covering more than 100,000 acres (40,000 ha). The small coastal town of Brookings and adjacent areas

were under notice to evacuate immediately or prepare to do so.

### Cooperation and Early Preparedness

In 2016, the Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group's Communication, Prevention and Investigation Working Team began work on interagency wildfire prevention campaigns. Shared messages focused on the anticipated influx of visitors to witness Oregon's

total solar eclipse. All partners were concerned about human-caused wildfires at the peak of wildfire season. The group agreed to a summer schedule of press releases, with key messages targeting specific fire causes. The group continued to work on shared messages and partnerships leading up to Wildfire Preparedness Month in May, kicking off the summer recreation season.

In February, public affairs staff from three national forests in eastern Oregon contacted the State Office/Regional Office (SORO) requesting fire prevention education teams (FPETs) to help prepare prevention materials and conduct eclipse outreach in the field. Soon, other units began to inquire about hosting an FPET for the eclipse, and SORO's fire mitigation education specialist began to develop a seasonal FPET strategy. The goals included:

- Preplanning for the eclipse to mitigate anticipated issues stemming from high visitor numbers and expected human-caused wildfires,
- Developing materials and distribution/outreach strategies, and
- Providing for oversight and prevention support to field units during the eclipse.

In June, an FPET assembled in Bend, OR, to develop a communication plan. The team created key messages and an eclipse logo, which featured internationally recognized Smokey Bear to unify the wildfire prevention message across partner agencies and organizations (fig. 2). The team also established criteria to filter funding and development priorities, and it designed and ordered publications through the Government Printing Office. The publications included prevention education products



*Figure 2—Eclipse logo featuring Smokey Bear. Source: USDA Forest Service.*

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The teams made public contacts at almost 600 distinct locations and covered thousands of miles of Oregon roads.

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targeting anticipated human fire causes, user groups, and customers. The FPET in Bend also reviewed available digital resources and created additional materials for local adaptation, including Spanish translations. A social media campaign with graphics and seasonal messages was deployed through the Pacific Northwest Fire Adapted Community's (@PNWFAC) Twitter account. The team also worked with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Bureau of Indian Affairs regional prevention coordinator to support shared prevention graphics and messages and prepare for an FPET sponsored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs at Warm Springs, OR. Field units asked these and other FPETs to begin draft delegations of authority and to coordinate team logistics and focus areas.

## Graphics, Materials, Translations

In the month before the eclipse, an FPET worked with the Government Printing Office leads at the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station to finalize and submit additional product orders, coordinate delivery, and plan for dissemination of products. The team also coordinated logistics, including travel and lodging. Field preparations for all FPETs included finalizing inbriefing dates, submitting resource orders, assembling orientation packets, and coordinating the allocation and transportation of numerous products. The field teams received

# Who You Gonna Call? FIRE PREVENTION EDUCATION TEAMS!

When fire danger in your area rises, you can call various kinds of experts in wildland fire management. One resource is a team of fire prevention education experts.

A fire prevention education team (FPET) focuses on reducing the number of human-caused wildfires, educating communities to reduce their risk from wildfires, and working on special fire-related events. The teams are designed to supplement and support the wildfire prevention efforts of local personnel and agencies. They can assist a single unit or help in statewide interagency efforts.

The teams provide interagency expertise in wildfire prevention, public relations and outreach, fire safety, the role of fire, and the development and promotion of fire-adapted communities. They are highly successful at reducing the number of wildfires through the use of trained specialists and state-of-the-art communication and education techniques. These interagency teams are available to support any geographic area before, during, or after periods of high fire danger or fire activity. The requesting unit can use severity funds or a fire code to mobilize an FPET.

In 2013, FPETs helped carry out a statewide fire prevention campaign in California called One Less Spark—One Less Wildfire. In Colorado, teams worked with regional personnel to develop a social media campaign revolving

around the Fourth of July and the use of fire during hot and dry weather.

Wildfire prevention education activities can reduce the number of human-caused wildfires and fire-related costs. A 2009 study on wildfire prevention education programs in Florida found a benefit-to-cost ratio of as much as 35:1—that is, for every \$1 spent, up to \$35 was saved in fire suppression costs and fire-related losses of homes, timber, and other values. A study on Tribal lands found that fire prevention education reduced the number of human-caused fires on one Tribal unit by 93 percent.

A national FPET has at least three personnel:

1. A prevention education team leader,
2. A prevention education team member, and
3. A type 2 public information officer.

Additional resources can be added to the team as needed. Requests are placed through established ordering channels in the Resource Ordering and Status System using an overhead group request configured according to chapter 60 in the National Mobilization Guide. To find out more about the teams, contact the Forest Service fire prevention coordinator for your region/area or your agency prevention coordinator.

their first batch of products, which included table tents, rack cards, patrol cards, road signs, large and small banners, wooden trading coins, and stickers. As other products trickled in, the teams received “no fire” campfire pin-flags (fig. 3), trash bags with fire prevention messaging, and bumper stickers. Products were distributed equitably among the teams and shared with the cooperating Warm Springs team.

An FPET was collocated in Portland, OR, with a National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) team and other support organizations. Its task was to support the three field FPETs in northeastern, central, and northwestern Oregon. The Portland FPET coordinated local product delivery to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Mount Hood National Forest, SORO, and the NIMO team. In addition, supplementary fire prevention materials were made available for local customization through shared online storage. These products were used by the Forest Service’s Washington Office and sent out nationally to regional prevention coordinators. At the request of the Washington Office, the Portland FPET adapted the Oregon eclipse logo for use in the 11 other States in the path of totality, from Idaho to South Carolina.

The Portland FPET also provided Spanish translations for daily briefings and press releases for fires in Oregon and Washington. The team collaborated with the Forest Service’s public affairs office for the Pacific Northwest Region to produce public service announcements explaining evacuation levels in Spanish. These were distributed on the InciWeb homepage and shared with public information officers for incident management teams and



Figure 3—The fire prevention education teams used pin-flags to post “no campfire” warnings at campsites and dispersed sites and in day use areas. Photo: USDA Forest Service.

public affairs offices for Federal agencies. The materials included a 3-minute video, a condensed 60-second audio file, accompanying scripts, and formatted text documents for print.

### Fire Prevention Education Team Highlights

Leading up to the solar eclipse on August 21, the Pacific Northwest experienced extreme fire danger

indices and record temperatures. During the week before the eclipse, lightning storms moved through the region, igniting several fires in Oregon and Washington. Because of media reports about the wildfires and meteorology predictions about visibility, smoke, and further fire risk, the actual eclipse visitation numbers were reduced.

Beginning on August 19, crowds began to converge at planned event locations, the largest of which was expecting 30,000 participants. Over 70,000 actually arrived at this event. Other areas, such as portions of the Oregon coast and northeastern Oregon, received less-than-expected visitation, with crowds shifting to other areas.

The three field FPETs were tasked with fire prevention messaging across Federal lands and areas protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry in and near the path of total eclipse (fig. 1). In the western part of Oregon, one team worked on the Willamette National Forest, the Siuslaw National Forest, and the Northwest Oregon BLM District. In central Oregon, a team worked on the Deschutes National Forest,



Girl wearing protective eyewear with Smokey logo watching the solar eclipse in Oregon. Photo: USDA Forest Service.

the Ochoco National Forest, the Crooked River National Grassland, and the Prineville BLM District. The third team, located in northeastern Oregon, served the Malheur National Forest, the Wallowa–Whitman National Forest, and the Umatilla National Forest. The teams coordinated with the Warm Springs Reservation FPET.

The field teams focused on providing information along gateways onto the path of total eclipse. They positioned strategic information portals and stations at events and in public gathering places (fig. 1). By the time the teams demobilized, they had made public contacts at almost 600 distinct locations and covered

“One of the most notable success was in fire prevention, with no known human-caused incidents evolving into any fires of significance.”

–Portland National Incident Management Organization

thousands of miles of Oregon roads. The public service announcements, roadside banners, and social media campaign networks reached hundreds of thousands more.

The Warm Springs FPET participated in a National Aeronautics and Space Administration program for youth from 13 Tribes in the Pacific Northwest, including a project to

launch and track giant weather balloons containing sensors and carrying culturally significant items. This was the largest effort involving American Indian Tribes during the eclipse. The program’s goal was to feature topics related to science, technology, engineering, and math for students in culturally relevant ways.

### Fire Prevention Success

Following the eclipse in Oregon, as visitors left the State, indications were that fire prevention and education efforts were successful. No worst case scenarios played out. Land management agencies reported that human impacts were less than expected overall. Perhaps best of all, no known human-caused ignitions evolved into fires of any significance.



Smokey Bear deployed with the fire prevention education teams in Oregon. Photo: USDA Forest Service.



# THE HISTORY OF COOPERATIVE FOREST FIRE CONTROL AND THE WEEKS ACT\*

Lewis F. Southard

Most people familiar with the Weeks Act of 1911 associate it with the establishment of national forests in the Eastern United States. However, the Weeks Act did more for eastern forest conservation than fund the purchase of private forest lands by the Federal Government. The Weeks Act initiated the practice of cooperation among Federal, State, and private landowners that is the foundation of cooperative fire control and protection today (Pierce and Stahl 1964).

## Framework for Cooperation

Official Federal cooperation with the States in protecting forest lands from wildfires originated over 100 years ago, when President William Howard Taft signed the Weeks Act. Prior to its passage, just 25 of the 46 States had some type of forestry organization. (New Mexico and Arizona were admitted to the United States in 1912 and Alaska and Hawaii in 1959.) Some States were organized to protect only State-owned lands, and only 16 States

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*Lew Southard, now retired, was the assistant director for partnerships for Fire and Aviation Management, Forest Service, Washington Office, Washington, DC.*

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\* Abridged and adapted by permission of the Forest History Society from James G. Lewis (ed.), *Lands Worth Saving: The Weeks Act of 1911, the National Forests, and the Enduring Value of Public Investment* (Durham, NC: Forest History Society, 2018), ch. 2.



*State/Federal partnerships have always played a key role in the Smokey Bear program. The living symbol of Smokey Bear was a live bear cub found clinging to a tree in 1950 following a wildfire on the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico. Saved and nursed back to health, he was sent by the New Mexico Game and Fish Department to spend his days as the living symbol of Smokey in the National Zoo in Washington, DC. Here he is before getting on his way, posing on a Piper Cub with Ray Bell, a State law enforcement officer who helped take care of young Smokey. Source: USDA National Agricultural Library (1950).*

had any kind of fire suppression organization. In the aftermath of the great 1910 fires in the West, several private protection organizations formed. However, these organizations were membership based and therefore did not function well in mixed landownerships.

The importance of cooperative fire control to lawmakers and policymakers a century ago is evident from the position of this requirement in the Weeks Act. It is in section 2, just after the section explaining the

purpose of the law and before the instructions on how land was to be acquired. Specific language in the act encouraged States to control forest fires and permitted the Federal Government to assist the States financially in controlling fires on non-Federal lands. This cooperation with the States was a new and untried policy. Although the Federal Government was protecting its own lands, 80 percent of all forest land in the United States was privately owned and almost wholly unprotected. The Weeks Act sought to remedy the risk

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to all lands at what is now known as a landscape scale.

The Weeks Act provided a written agreement between the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and participating States (even those without national forests could participate) and designated the Forest Service to administer the act.

small Federal appropriation limited the Forest Service's influence on fire control to simply encouraging the States to establish and maintain forest fire protection organizations. There was little money to actually fight fires, and private landowners received no funding for fire control whatsoever. The law itself was

organizational and institutional support. This situation changed when, in November 1920, forestry officials from 13 States met in Atlantic City, NJ, to work out a program of support for Forest Service Chief William B. Greeley's recommendation to Congress for greater Federal/State cooperation on fire prevention. From this meeting came a call for a national association to coordinate the efforts of State Foresters.

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An important component of cooperative fire management is the Smokey Bear program, used to educate the public about the importance of preventing unwanted human-caused wildfires.

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The law initially set aside \$200,000 in matching funds to be distributed to States with forest protection agencies. Those forestry agencies could then apply for up to \$10,000 to be used for fire patrolmen's salaries, provided that the State matched the amount. The funding also encouraged several States to establish or expand State forests as well as State forestry associations. These types of agreements are still in use today. But now they involve all six Federal land management agencies as well as State agencies and American Indian Tribes, reflecting today's more complex environment—both legal and ecological.

To be eligible to receive the funds, a State had to provide, by law, a system of forest fire protection. The cooperative fire control provisions of the Weeks Act required each State to devise a fire plan. Federal expenditures in any State in any fiscal year could not exceed the amount appropriated by that State. Thus the 50:50 cost-share match was instituted.

Not long after the Weeks Act passed, its shortcomings for cooperative fire control became apparent. The

restrictive because it required that protected lands contain the headwaters of navigable rivers. Another law was needed to rectify the situation.

### **The Clarke–McNary Act**

The next stage in the development of a more cooperative relationship between the Forest Service and the States was the passage of the Clarke–McNary Act of 1924. The law eliminated the Weeks Act's restriction that Federal cooperative fire control funds be used only on forested watersheds of navigable waterways. Clarke–McNary expanded financial and human resources made available for the protection of public and private lands. In 1944, for instance, Congress tripled the amount of money authorized under the Clarke–McNary Act for cooperative fire protection (Steen 1976).

The Weeks Act also had far-reaching effects on the Forest Service's State and Private Forestry programs. Although these initiatives had emerged in the late 19th century, before the Forest Service was established, they lacked sustained

One month later, Gifford Pinchot (the first Chief of the Forest Service, who was then serving as the chief of the Pennsylvania Department of Forestry) responded by sponsoring a meeting in the Pennsylvania capital, Harrisburg. This was the initial organizational meeting of the National Association of State Foresters. Today, State Foresters have the primary authority to manage and protect State and private forests, which account for two-thirds of the Nation's forests—work that requires close cooperation with the Forest Service and other Federal agencies. The partnership between the Forest Service and the association has strengthened in the recent past. An important component of that partnership is the Smokey Bear program, used to educate the public about the the importance of preventing unwanted human-caused wildfires. This framework for fire issues has also been used in efforts to combat insects and forest diseases.

### **Legacy**

Today, the Forest Service's office of Fire and Aviation Management, under which cooperative fire management is carried out, is part of the agency's State and Private Forestry branch. The partnership among the National Association of State Foresters, the Forest

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Service, and organizations and agencies with interests in wildland fire is one of the best examples of State, local, Tribal, and Federal cooperation. It extends to the many nongovernmental organizations that work collaboratively with the wildland fire community.

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The framework provided by the Weeks Act remains the national foundation of cooperative fire management.

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Collaboration between the Federal Government and its partners on private forest lands and in the State agencies began with the Weeks Act in 1911, but it continues at an even broader scale and more vigorous pace today. In response to requirements of the Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009, the intergovernmental committee known as the Wildland Fire Leadership Council directed the development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. This strategy entailed a collaborative process involving

all levels of government as well as nongovernmental organizations and the general public in seeking national, all-lands solutions to wildland fire management issues.

The Cohesive Strategy is needed to deal with one of the unintended consequences of the Weeks Act. Because lands for national forests in the East were acquired from willing sellers on an opportunistic basis, landownership is fragmented (Shands and Healy 1977). The restored lands have attracted homeowners to properties adjacent to or within the boundaries of national forests, creating forest management challenges resulting in part from the Weeks Act land purchases. Over time and across the country, this pattern of ownership, termed the wildland–urban interface, has necessitated landscape-scale discussions of local, State, Tribal, and Federal land management issues.

The Cohesive Strategy recognizes that addressing wildfire is not simply a fire management, fire operations, or wildland–urban interface problem: wildland fire is a larger, more complex land management and societal issue. The vision of the strategy for the next century is to “safely and effectively extinguish fire when needed; use fire where

allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a Nation, live with wildland fire” (WFLC 2010). The strategy underscores the need for and development of partnerships with the States, Tribes, and localities, which the Weeks Act first promoted.

No matter how the various players respond to those challenges, the framework provided by the Weeks Act remains the national foundation of cooperative fire management.

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# SMOKEY BEAR GETS HELP ANSWERING LETTERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Robert Schneider

The best volunteer job in the world is helping Smokey Bear answer letters from hundreds of schoolchildren as well as from teachers and other adults.

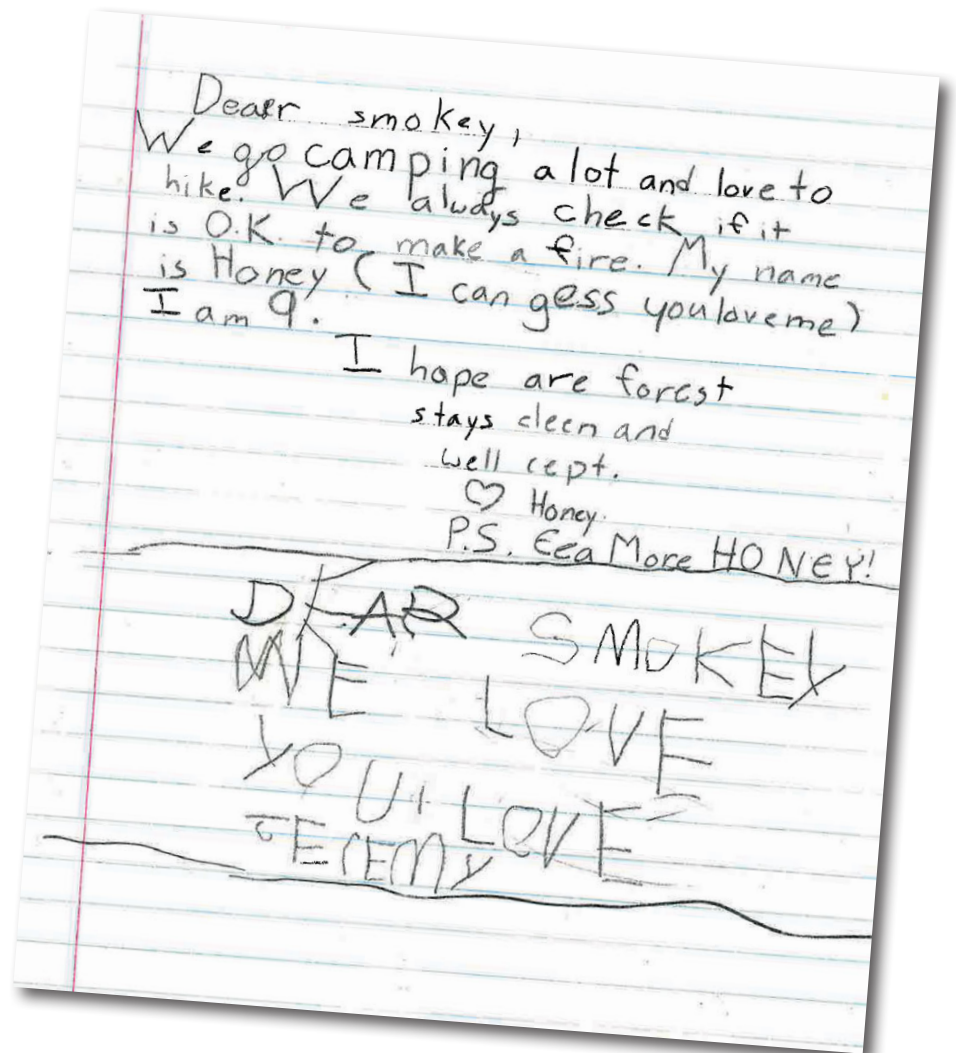
Although busy all year long, Smokey's mailbox heats up in October, the busiest month for letters.

I know. I've been with Smokey for 6 years as a volunteer. However, Smokey has been part of my life for 58 years as our family spent time camping throughout the West from our home in Idaho. Our family knew and understood the warning from Smokey, "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!"

Now, as a volunteer with the Forest Service's Conservation Education Program, I get to share my love of Smokey and the outdoors with children from around the world.

Since 2012 alone, letters sent to Smokey came from 49 of the 50 States as well as from Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. We're not sure why letters have not come recently from Rhode Island, but Smokey

*Bob Schneider is a national symbols volunteer for the Forest Service, Washington Office, Washington, DC.*



*Smokey Bear receives hundreds of letters each year from schoolchildren. The writer of this letter proudly tells Smokey her name is Honey. She also allowed her little brother to add his note. Source: USDA Forest Service.*

remembers lots of Rhode Islanders writing him in the past! Other letters since 2012 have come from Argentina, England, Greece, Iceland, Norway, Russia, and Taiwan, just to name a few.

All age groups have reached out to Smokey. A 4-year-old's line drawing

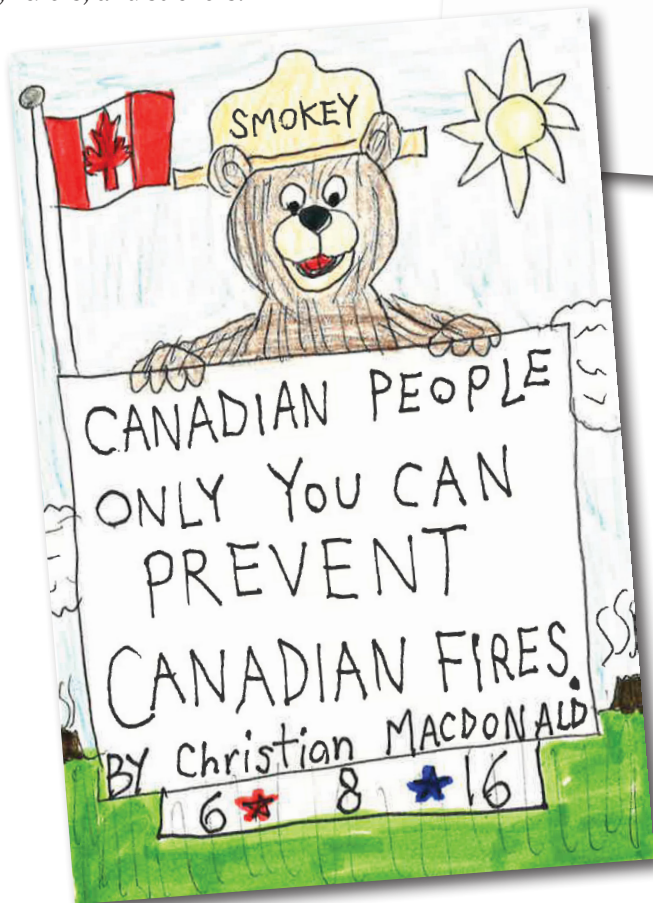
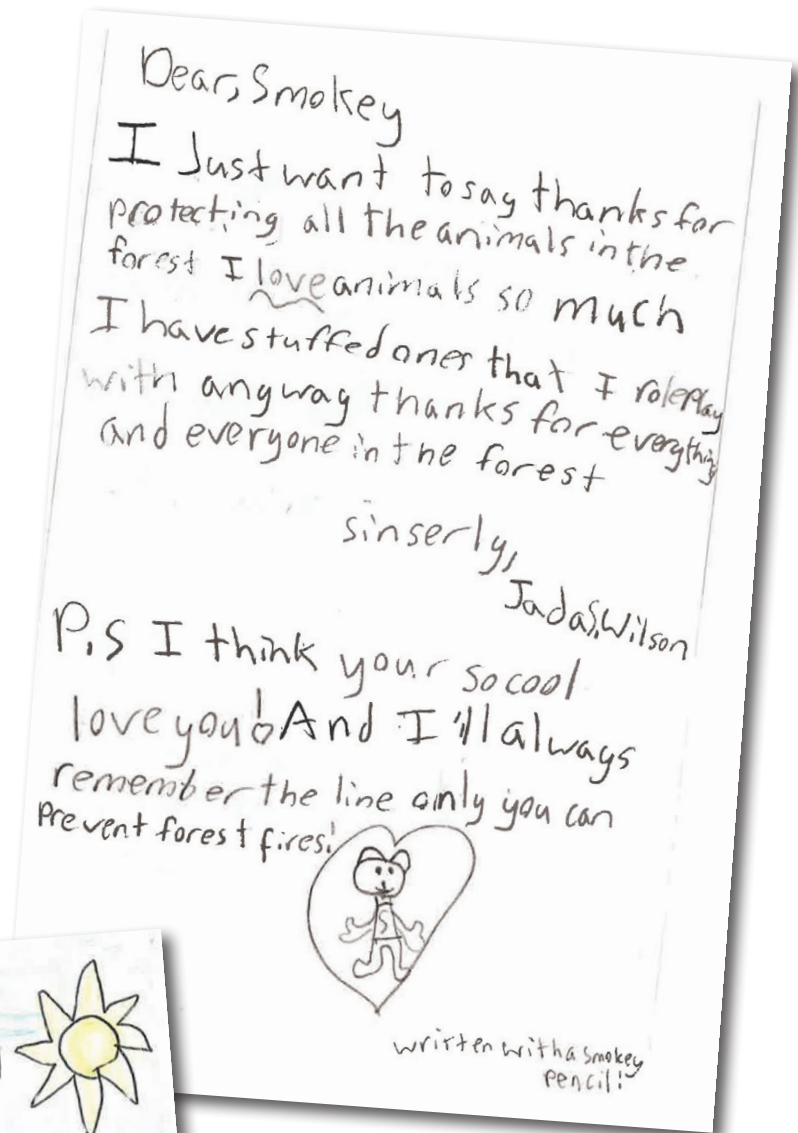
and a 98-year-old's request for a Junior Forest Ranger kit all landed in Smokey's mailbox.

Some letters pull at the heartstrings. A prison inmate once wrote expressing sorrow about how he missed his daughter's birthday. He asked if Smokey could help her by

sending something special to brighten his daughter's day. Smokey obliged.

Although busy all year long, Smokey's mailbox heats up in October, the busiest month for letters because it includes Fire Prevention Week, part of National Fire Prevention Month (taught in most schools). Annually, Smokey gets letters from 18 schools on average, representing about 440 students. Each year, he also gets about 260 personal letters. Some people thank him for his work. Some kids write that it's sad that he lost his mother in a fire.

Smokey Bear replies to each letter with care, answering any questions asked. The recipient of a Smokey letter—always signed by Smokey—receives a packet that includes the Junior Forest and Snow Ranger handbooks; a set of coloring and activity sheets; and other Smokey memorabilia, such as pencils, erasers, rulers, and stickers.



Smokey Bear answers letters written to his special address: Smokey Bear, Washington, DC 20252. Many letter writers are children, who express gratitude to Smokey because he helps the animals be safe. Source: USDA Forest Service.

Children around the world know about Smokey Bear. In 2016, a child drew a special message that included the Canadian flag. Source: USDA Forest Service.

# VINTAGE LETTERS TO SMOKEY BEAR

Hutch Brown

In preparing this special issue of *Fire Management Today*, the coordinators showed me a hardcover booklet from 1966, a compilation of letters from children to Smokey Bear. Edited by Bill Adler, it was published by Wonder Books (a division of Grosset & Dunlap, Inc.) in New York City. The cover says it originally cost 59 cents.

Editor Bill Adler, according to an obituary in the *New York Times* (Martin 2014), “pursued his goal of being the P.T. Barnum of books by conceptualizing, writing, editing, compiling, and hustling hundreds of them.” He started out by collecting and publishing letters by children to President John F. Kennedy (1961–63), then followed up with children’s letters to the Beatles, Santa Claus, and others, including Smokey Bear.

*Hutch Brown is the editor of Fire Management Today for the Forest Service, Washington Office, Washington, DC.*

Adler’s illustrated booklet contains about 40 letters to Smokey, all short and humorous.

With his *Letters to Smokey Bear*, Adler jumped on the bandwagon of Smokey’s popularity in the 1950s–60s, especially with children (Lawter 1994). The first official Smokey product was a stuffed bear in 1952, followed by Smokey Bear clocks, bedspreads, slippers, and more. By 1971, 46 commercial licensees were marketing 160 different Smokey items. Kids could even eat a Smokey Bear cereal with a Smokey Bear spoon.

Adler’s illustrated booklet contains about 40 letters to Smokey, all short and humorous, chosen to amuse the reader. A typical letter goes like this:

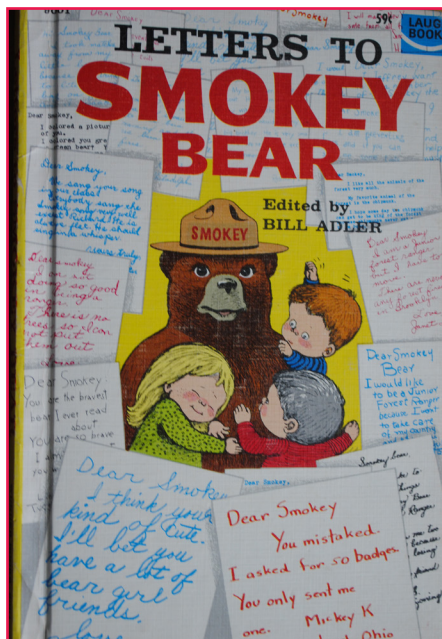
*Dear Smokey,  
I like you very much. I've got a fire engine to help you put out fires.  
Please call me to help you because my fire engine isn't very busy.*

*Your Little Forest Ranger,  
Gregory B.  
Crestview, Florida.*

Susan Perl, the illustrator, conveyed the spirit of the booklet with dozens of cutesy drawings of kids, like the one on the cover of the book.

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*(Left) A copy of Letters to Smokey Bear. (Right) A girl (Elizabeth Forte) posing with some of the items produced by toy and novelty companies carrying the Smokey name. Photo: USDA National Agricultural Library (1967).*

# SMOKEY BEAR COSTUME USE



## Please DO....

Individuals who use the costume must agree to the following:



**USE** the Smokey Bear costume **ONLY** to further public information, education, and awareness of wildfire prevention.



Smokey & escort

**Effective uses** of the Smokey Bear costume are public events such as parades, school appearances, fairs, youth-group meetings, conservation activities, television appearances, sporting events, civic and community events and similar functions **where a wildfire prevention message can be conveyed.**



Private dressing area



Costume out of sight



- Secure a **private dressing room** for **putting on and taking off** the costume, preferably with air conditioning for hot months.
- Keep** costume **out-of-sight** before and after use.
- Use** only a **clean, complete, and good-conditioned** costume.
- Remain anonymous** at every appearance and in any publicity connected with an appearance.
- Exhibit appropriate animation** to be effective. Express sincerity and interest while appearing in the costume by moving paws, head, and legs. **Appear dignified and friendly.**
- Always be accompanied by** an appropriately **uniformed escort** in public appearances, except where not practical, such as on a parade float where space is limited. The escort shall guide Smokey at the elbow.



Remain anonymous

- A **round-point shovel** is part of the Smokey Bear image. It **shall be used** for appearances, when appropriate. A bucket is also a good idea.
- Limit appearances to 15-20 minute segments** to minimize personal discomfort and avoid heat-related illnesses. Have drinking water available.
- Let the visitor initiate** a hug, paw-shake, or other greeting. Spreading his arms or extending a paw, and waiting, is a good way for Smokey to let them know it's OK to be approached.



No ill-kept Smokey!

- Before leaving the changing room** inspect the following:
  - Is the drawstring tucked in?
  - Is the zipper out of sight?
  - Are the buttons fastened?
  - Is the belt firmly fastened to pants?
  - Are the pant cuffs neat?
  - Is the hat crown up?
  - Is the head straight on the shoulders?
  - Is the fur brushed neatly?



# SMOKEY BEAR COSTUME USE

Please

## DON'T

Individuals who use the costume must agree to the following:



**Never put** Smokey in an unsafe environment, or difficult situation. This ranges from uneven footing situations to tight quarters with numerous people to skiing, driving or boating.

**DON'T USE** when:

- Ⓢ At a function where **wildfire messaging is NOT conveyed**. Examples: holiday and retirement parties, summer picnics, job fairs, Combined Federal Campaign, etc.
- Ⓢ In any situation that might **compromise Smokey Bear's integrity** or give the appearance of impropriety, solely a "celebrity appearance", or a photo opportunity.



Too dangerous!



Smokey Bear is not an Agency or Department mascot and should never be treated as such!

## Ordering a Costume

Official Smokey Bear costumes must be ordered from authorized manufacturers. The Forest Service's Office of Inspector General has determined that costume manufactures can only sell costumes to federal agencies, state forestry agencies and only those other organizations specifically authorized by the Forest Service or State Foresters.

Currently there are four manufacturers:

- 👍 **Facemakers, Inc.** <http://www.facemakersincorporated.com/smokeybear.html>
- 👍 **Shafton Inc.** <http://www.shaftonic.com/smokey.htm>
- 👍 **Signs and Shapes** (has an inflatable Smokey Bear costume) <http://www.walkaround.com/about/walkarounds>
- 👍 **Smokey Signals** (formerly Sykes Services) <http://www.smokeysignal.com/>

- Ⓢ **Never appear** in less than full costume. This includes being photographed without the head.
- Ⓢ **Do not allow** any photographs when getting into and out of the costume.
- Ⓢ **Avoid** clowning, horseplay and vulgar gestures.
- Ⓢ **DO NOT SPEAK** during appearances. Conversations or explanations should be carried out by the accompanying official escort.
- Ⓢ **Do not use** alcohol or illicit drugs prior to and during the Smokey Bear appearance. This applies to the uniformed escort as well.
- Ⓢ Smokey Bear **should not act aggressively** and should always let the public approach him first, especially small children.
- Ⓢ **After use** do not put a sweat-soaked costume back in the box. **Allow to air-dry** first.



Friendly but not aggressive.





# SMOKEY BEAR

## Frequently Asked Questions



### Q. Who owns and manages Smokey Bear?

**A.** By law Smokey Bear is managed by the US Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Ad Council which make up the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Program (CFFP) committee. Since the inception of the CFFP Program, the professional advertising firm of Foote, Cone and Belding (FCB) West has donated its time and talent to the Smokey Bear campaign. Go to [PSACentral.org](http://PSACentral.org) for current Ad Council PSAs you can use.

### Q. How does the Forest Service pay for advertising?

**A.** The Forest Service does **not** pay for advertising. Working with the Ad Council, the Forest Service national and regional managers secure donated media time and space be it television, radio, newspaper and magazines, transportation shelters, internet service providers and/or outdoor advertisers.



### Q. Where can I get Smokey Bear products?

**A.** Check the following websites for various products:  
• [www.symbols.gov](http://www.symbols.gov) • [www.stateforesters.org/store](http://www.stateforesters.org/store)

### Q. Can local units produce their own wildfire prevention materials?

**A.** Yes, local units may produce fliers, brochures, and educational materials when it is determined that they are needed to supplement the national campaign, or to address specific local or regional problems. To insure high standard and uniformity, field units need to work with state/regional wildfire prevention coordinators. Only approved Smokey Bear art shall be used and care must be taken so that these materials do not conflict with or detract from the national effort.

### Q. Is it ok to use Smokey's image for other things other than wildfire prevention?

**A. Absolutely not!** Smokey is not any agency's mascot and shouldn't be treated as such. Areas that are especially subject to abuse include: t-shirts and jacket art for fire crews, employees, and ranger districts. If for any reason these products are offered for sale they are subject to regulations governing licensing. Smokey's image is not to be used for special events that are unrelated to wildfire prevention such as fun runs, community events, and retirement notices (unless the individual had a direct connection with the wildfire prevention program). It is inappropriate to use Smokey's image on email signature lines, cover sheets, book/folders, conference notices, etc. Units are not at liberty to create or modify existing Smokey artwork or graphics. Smokey's image shall not be demeaned or tarnished.



### Q. Who manages Smokey Bear social media platforms?

**A.** The Ad Council manages all of Smokey Bear's social media platforms.

### Q. Who can post on Smokey Bear social media platforms?

**A.** Original feeds come from the Ad Council, but the public can follow Smokey and engage with him on all his social media channels.

### Q. How can a unit get their information posted to one of Smokey Bear's social media platforms?

**A.** Share the information with the Ad Council Smokey Bear Campaign Manager at [zwilliams@adcouncil.org](mailto:zwilliams@adcouncil.org), the NASF Communications Chair at [wforman-cook@stateforesters.org](mailto:wforman-cook@stateforesters.org), or the USFS Wildfire Prevention Program Manager at [gbeavans@fs.fed.us](mailto:gbeavans@fs.fed.us).

### Q. Can I create my own Smokey Bear artwork?

**A.** Under Freedom of Speech individuals can draw and create new images. However if they use the image to sell a product then they must have a commercial license and the image and product must be approved by the USFS Wildfire Prevention Program Manager. Agency personnel are not at liberty to create or modify Smokey Bear's image. Only approved and dated Smokey Bear artwork by the Director, Fire and Aviation Management, Washington Office, may be used. Reproductions of existing art may not be approved. When in doubt check it out, by contacting the USFS Wildfire Prevention Program Manager at [gbeavans@fs.fed.us](mailto:gbeavans@fs.fed.us).



# SMOKEY BEAR Frequently Asked Questions



## Commercial Licensing

### Q. Who needs to have a commercial license?

**A.** Any entity that uses Smokey Bear's image for profit is required to have a commercial license. The Smokey Bear Act, P.L. 82-359, as amended by P.L. 93-318 regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (36 CFR 271), and 18 USC ch.33-711 provide for the commercial use of the character and name of Smokey Bear. His image will always be used in conjunction with an approved wildfire prevention message. By words or illustrations, Smokey

Bear will not endorse a commercial product or service. All licensees shall display the official logo on products, packaging and/or advertising. Unauthorized commercial uses are punishable by law. Currently there are over 100 licensed vendors who create commercial products.

### Q. Is Smokey Bear image trademarked?

**A.** It is not trademarked or copyrighted, however the name and image of Smokey Bear are protected by acts of Congress. Despite incorrect information on the internet, Smokey Bear is **not** in the public domain and **approval for use is required**.

### Q. What are the requirements for Smokey Bear licensing?

**A.** The requirements for Smokey Bear licensing are (1) the proposed product(s) must promote wildfire prevention education and Smokey Bear's message (2) the person must be a U.S. Citizen or the company must be a U.S. company and (3) the applicant may not have any adverse actions against the U.S. Government (such as lawsuits or tax delinquencies). Persons interested in submitting a license proposal should write to [sblicense@fs.fed.us](mailto:sblicense@fs.fed.us).

### Q. Do I need to get a commercial license if I just want to use Smokey Bear's image once?

**A.** A commercial license is required anytime the user is charging a price for the product or likeness of Smokey Bear, regardless of the amount being charged or the frequency. The type of commercial license will vary between the full license and a one-time-use agreement depending on the use. To acquire a one-time-use agreement contact the USFS Wildfire Prevention Program manager at (202) 205-1488.

## Q. What are the Smokey Bear Awards?

**A.** There are five official awards: Golden, Silver, and Bronze Statuettes, Appreciation Plaques and Appreciation Certificates. These awards were developed to recognize individuals and organizations for outstanding service in wildland fire prevention.

## Q. Who is eligible to compete for a Smokey Bear Award?

**A.** Individuals or organizations that make outstanding contributions in wildfire prevention efforts including, but not limited to: educational activities, forest management, law enforcement, journalism, media coverage, advertising campaigns, engineering activities, and informational programs. Having wildfire prevention duties as a part of one's official job does not make a person ineligible.

## Q. What is the process for the Smokey Bear Awards?

**A.** Nominations for all National Smokey Bear Awards can be made by anyone having knowledge of the outstanding wildfire prevention efforts of the nominee. Submit nominations on the official form in accordance with instructions provided at [www.smokeybear.com/awards](http://www.smokeybear.com/awards).



Further clarification regarding the official Forest Service program policy and guidelines can be found in Forest Service Manual Chapter 3110, Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention (CFFP) and Forest Service Handbook 5109.18, Chapter 20, CFFP, and the Smokey Bear Use Guidelines at [www.smokeybear.com](http://www.smokeybear.com)



# SMOKEY BEAR COSTUME USE

**Smokey Bear correctly attired:**



# THE NIGHT WE BURIED SMOKEY BEAR

Larry Allen

**T**he national symbol of forest fire prevention, Smokey Bear, and the slogan, “Only you can prevent forest fires!” already existed when a group of firefighters on the Capitan Gap Fire found an orphaned bear cub clinging to a tree after a flareup. The May 1950 fire, in the Capitan Mountains on the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico, had made a sudden run, forcing the firefighters to retreat to a rockslide. When the smoke cleared, everyone was okay and the bear was discovered.

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Due to the excellent care at the National Zoo, Smokey lived much longer than the average bear in the wild.

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Homer Pickens, the first game warden/pilot for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, flew little Smokey to Santa Fe, where he was cared for by Law Enforcement Officer Ray Bell and his family. With help and support from State Game Warden Elliot Barker and Ray Bell, the cub was flown to the National Zoo in Washington to become the living symbol of fire prevention.

A combined effort by the Forest Service, the State Foresters, and the Advertising Council made

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*In the 1970s, when the events described took place, Larry Allen worked for the Forest Service in the supervisor's office on the Lincoln National Forest, Alamogordo, NM. This is a lightly edited version of his story.*



*The living symbol of Smokey Bear was a live bear cub found clinging to a tree in 1950 following a wildfire on the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico. Saved and nursed back to health, he was sent to the National Zoo in Washington, DC. Here he is before he gets on his way, posing in front of a contemporary Smokey poster. Photo: USDA National Agricultural Library (1950).*

this one of the most effective advertising campaigns in U.S. history. Schoolchildren all over the world know Smokey, and anytime the bear costume is taken to a school, the kids mob the bear with a show of love. (I was the first one to wear the bear suit in rural New Mexico.) The Smokey Bear hot air balloon is also incredibly popular throughout the Nation.

Due to the excellent care at the National Zoo, the original bear lived much longer than the average bear in the wild. He was 26 years old when he died in Washington, DC, in November 1976. That morning, I was privileged to be acting forest supervisor on the Lincoln National Forest because Supervisor Jim Abbott was out of town. I rode my



*Smokey Bear at the National Zoo in Washington, DC. In the photo is Judy Bell, whose father Ray Bell and family helped care for the orphaned bear cub before he was moved to the National Zoo. Photo: USDA National Agricultural Library (1958).*

bicycle to work at about 7:30 a.m., and folks at the office said, “Guess what happened last night?” with great amusement.

All of us who were occasionally acting supervisor were aware that there was a plan for the eventual death of the bear, but I was not personally familiar with the plan. I asked for a copy of the plan and found a well-orchestrated series of steps:

- The supervisor will call the mayor of Capitan.
- The mayor will arrange for a backhoe to dig the grave.
- The National Zoo will package the bear for shipping.
- Trans World Airlines will transport him to Albuquerque Airport.
- The Forest Service will send a pickup to Albuquerque to transport the box.
- Forest Service personnel and the mayor will quietly bury the bear, without ceremony.
- A few days later, there will be a dedication of Smokey Bear State Park, and the politicians will be able to talk. Elliot Barker will be given a prominent place in this celebration.

The plan included the necessary phone numbers, and I called the mayor’s number. His wife answered and told me that the mayor was away in El Paso and would not be back for a few days. However, she knew the backhoe operator (everyone in Capitan knows each other) and would get the hole dug that morning.

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### We were also faced with a dilemma: What do you say at a bear’s funeral?

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I had several calls from the Forest Service Washington Office during the day, and things seemed to be proceeding on schedule from that end. They encouraged me to be very secretive about the whole process because we didn’t want to “bury the fire prevention program.” We were also faced with a dilemma: What do you say at a bear’s funeral? Another consideration was that there was a rumor going around Washington that someone was going to attempt to kidnap the bear. I found this hard

to believe, but it reinforced the need for discretion.

In midafternoon, Fire Management Officer Dick Cox and I left for Capitan and dispatched two pickups from Ruidoso (Smokey Bear Ranger District) to Albuquerque. District Ranger Ray Page and Forester Bob Wagenfehr drove one while Assistant Fire Management Officer Paul Jones (who had been on the Capitan Gap Fire when the cub was rescued) and Forester Jim Paxon took another truck. We sent four men so they could handle the 500-pound box.

The bear was on a commercial flight, which was delayed and arrived late in Albuquerque. Public Information Officer Chuck Williams and others from the Regional Office were at the airport to welcome the plane. The New Mexico State Police furnished an escort along the backroads to Capitan. Ray told me that the police were going about 80 miles an hour at one time and it was hard to keep up with a 500-pound box bouncing around in the pickup.

Meanwhile, back in Capitan, Dick and I arrived at about 6 p.m. The casket did not arrive until about midnight, and it is hard to entertain yourself in Capitan after dark. The volunteer fire department was holding their monthly meeting and card game, so we watched the game. About that time, Forest Supervisor Jim Abbott joined us. It was deer season, and a hunter from Texas was hanging around. We finally confessed our mission to him and invited him to help with the burial detail.

When Ray and the crew arrived with their cargo after midnight, we immediately lowered the box into the hole the old-fashioned way, using nylon straps. I had a camera and got several pictures of the process. The Texan approached me and said,

The park now has a well-done display of wildland firefighting and prevention, which includes one of my pictures of Smokey's burial.

"I need one of those pictures 'cause when I go back to Houston and tell my wife that I was a pallbearer for Smokey Bear, she will say, 'Son, what have you been drinking?'" I mailed him a couple of five-by-seven photos.

We then parked the backhoe on top of the grave and started for home. Just as we were leaving, a reporter

from the Associated Press appeared. He was suspicious about all the secrecy, but we were very open with him and won him over. He asked if we had opened the box. We said no, but we could assure him that it weighed 500 pounds and included dry ice. It seemed that the idea of shipping a dead bear halfway across the continent was crazy enough

without thinking of shipping 500 pounds of rocks.

About a week later, the dedication of the park occurred. Elliot Barker (who was about 90 years old) and several local politicians made speeches. The park now has a well-done display of wildland firefighting and prevention, which includes one of my pictures of the burial.



*Aging and sick, the living symbol of Smokey Bear "retired from the Forest Service" in 1975 and died the following year. A younger bear became the living symbol of Smokey until he died in 1990. Forest Service artist Rudy Wendelin honored Smokey's retirement with this poster from 1975 showing Smokey's continuity as America's symbol of wildfire prevention. Source: USDA National Agricultural Library (1975).*

# SMOKEY BEAR—HE'S JUST DOING HIS JOB, WELL

Lincoln Bramwell

**T**his year, Smokey Bear turns 75. Think about that for a second—a public service announcement campaign just turned three-quarters of a century old!

The Smokey program is the longest running public service announcement campaign in U.S. history and is still running strong. The campaign's simple fire prevention message, delivered by an anthropomorphized bear, transcends language and cultural barriers. As the wildfire situation in the United States becomes ever more complex, it is important to reflect on Smokey's history to help the fire community shape the campaign's future.

## Early Fire Prevention Messages

Fire prevention messages predate the Forest Service. Private companies,

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*Lincoln Bramwell is the chief historian for the Forest Service, Washington Office (detached), Fort Collins, CO.*

State governments, and the U.S. Department of the Interior all produced fire warnings in the 1800s. The first notices lacked graphics and resembled newspaper headlines warning forest users not to smoke in the woods (McClellan 2010).

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Many early fire prevention messages tried to scare the public into being careful.

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Wildfire was a ubiquitous part of life for American Indians and Euro-Americans in the West. Explorer John Wesley Powell remarked in his report to Congress in 1879 that the burned areas he saw in the State of Utah were so extensive that they equaled the entire remaining forested areas (Powell 1879). Records kept by the National Interagency Fire Center for the early 20th

century show that fires regularly burned 25–30 million acres (10–12 million ha) of wildlands annually (NIFC 2019). Compare that to today's 10-year average of less than 10 million acres (4 million ha).

At the turn of the 20th century, the country was literally built from wood. Americans relied heavily on wood products for energy and building materials to house their families and do indoor jobs of all kinds. Wildfires therefore threatened not only lives but also an essential natural resource of high capital value. Accordingly, when fires swept across the northern Rocky Mountains in 1910, the Federal Government responded to the outcry for wildfire protection by doubling the Forest Service budget in 1911 and charging the agency with ridding the woods of fire's menace.

Fire prevention posters and other forms of communication increased after 1910 as the country searched for an effective fire prevention message. Many early messages tried to scare the public into being careful. Wolves and skeletons on horseback lighting the forest were common images. One image from Montana featured a skeleton with a smoking torch that lists all the careless ways people start fires that consume “forests, homes, and industries” (fig. 1).

Such dire images reflected the consensus that fire was a destructive force that served no good purpose. Official Federal policy reinforced the same perspective when the Forest Service instituted the 10 A.M. Policy



Figure 1—Early fire prevention poster. Source: *Western Forestry and Conservation Association brochure from the 1910s.*

in 1933, with the goal of controlling all fires by 10 a.m. on the morning after they were first reported.

## The War Years

During World War II, fire prevention posters focused on wood's importance for the war effort. The War Advertising Council assisted the Forest Service in creating a number of messages, including a series of disembodied hands warning against cigarette butts and matches. A more notorious series of images featured dehumanizing caricatures of German and Japanese leaders in warning that "careless matches aid the Axis." Nonetheless, fires burned up to 32 million acres (13 million ha) each year from 1941 to 1945 (McClellan 2010; NIFC 2019).

During the war years, the War Advertising Council also experimented with an animal figure on its posters. First came a squirrel protecting its family in a tree from fire. Next, the office reached a 1-year deal with the Walt Disney Company to use three characters from the popular children's animated movie *Bambi*. A grownup Bambi urged, "Please, Mister, don't be careless."

The campaign's simple fire prevention message, delivered by an anthropomorphized bear, transcends language and cultural barriers.

The Bambi posters proved very successful, particularly with children, but the campaign had one problem—Disney only allowed the characters' use for 1 year. The search for a new campaign face began (McClellan 2010).

## Early Smokey

In 1944, a task force from the Forest Service and partners chose a bear to be the spokesperson for fire prevention. On August 9, the task force debuted the bear, dubbed "Smokey," using the slogan "Care will prevent 9 out of 10 forest fires!" (The poster is shown above on page 4.)

The name "Smokey" came from a popular New York City Assistant Fire Chief, Smokey Joe Martin. Artist Albert Staehle rendered the image of Smokey wearing a campaign hat and blue jeans (fig. 2).

Several other artists contributed to the campaign in the 1940s,

adding their own take on the bear's appearance while maintaining the general hat-and-jeans motif. By 1947, the campaign began to include the now familiar phrase, "Remember—only you can prevent forest fires!" (McClellan 2010).

After World War II, the War Advertising Council transitioned into the Ad Council and continued working on public service messages. The New York City advertising firm Foote, Cone & Belding remained with the Smokey campaign on a pro-bono basis, as it does to this day.

Retired advertising executive Nancy Budd recalled the effectiveness of making an animated bear the face of fire prevention (Lawter 1994):

If you want to speak to the heart, you can do it with an animal. The most effective ads combine the head and the heart—one-half cerebral and one-half emotional, especially when asking people to

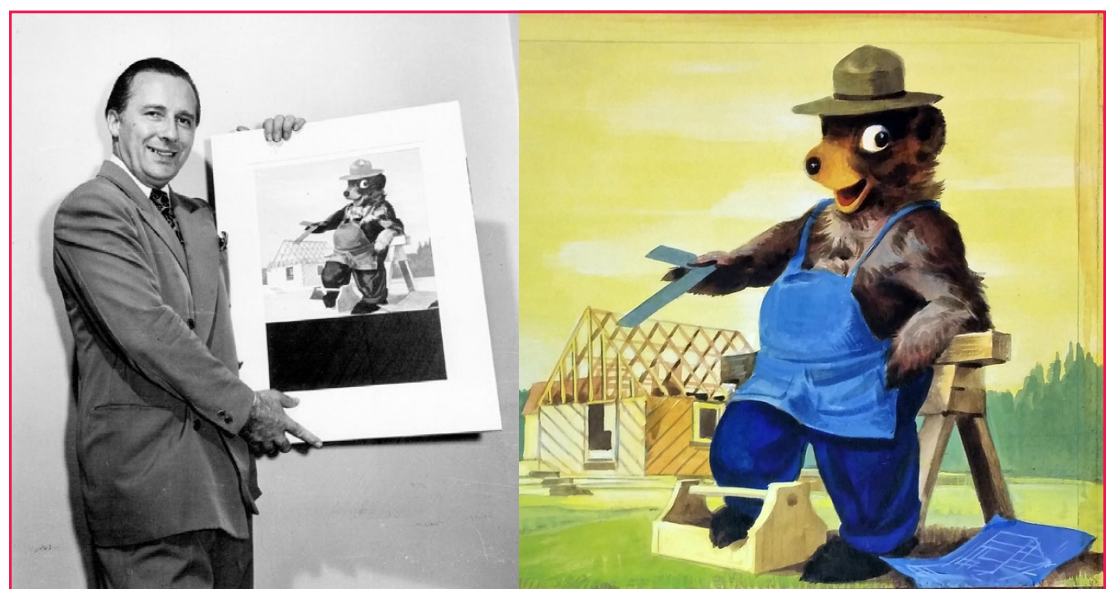


Figure 2—Artist Albert Staehle holding one of the earliest Smokey posters. Photo: USDA National Agricultural Library (1947).



use their conscience. You want to strike an emotional chord, which can be much more effective in affecting behavior.

The new program proved quite effective in preventing the unintentional human-caused fires that constitute the vast majority of wildfires. From the time of Smokey's introduction in 1944, the number of human-caused wildfires remained relatively constant, even though the number of national forest visitors increased exponentially, testifying to the effectiveness of the Smokey campaign.

Because Smokey's message is so effective, it would be a mistake to alter it.

The Smokey campaign gained a living symbol after fire crews rescued a bear cub from a fire in New Mexico in 1950 and transferred the animal to the National Zoo in Washington, DC. The living symbol of Smokey grew so popular that the U.S. Postal Service gave the bear his own ZIP Code—20252—to handle all his fan mail.

## Same Message—Different Forms

Over the past 75 years, the campaign has adopted a number of themes and basic messages, such as “Remember, only you,” “Smokey's Friends,” and “Repeat after me.” The messages have appeared on hundreds if not thousands of licensed products, from magnetic signs to hot air balloons (fig. 3).

In 2001, the message changed from “Prevent forest fires” to “Prevent wildfires” in recognition of the fact that many fires occur outside of forested areas in various kinds of vegetation, such as grasslands and shrublands. Although the messages were slightly different, the basic themes remained the same—preventing the careless start of fires.

Over the years, the image of Smokey changed as different artists retired and advertisers used new communication platforms to reach broader audiences (fig. 4). Most recently, Smokey has given responsible campers a hug in several

## TECH-SAVVY SMOKEY

The Ad Council

For a 75-year-old bear, Smokey is quite tech savvy. He's on all the leading social platforms and engages with hundreds of thousands of followers daily. Social media play an important role in connecting Smokey with his lifelong fans as well as introducing him to those who may be newer to his message of wildfire prevention.

In addition to using social media to share wildfire prevention information and tips, Smokey actively taps into current trends, from memes to timely cultural moments, allowing him to remain relevant through the years. Examples of Smokey's timely interactions include engaging in lively conversation with Sonic the Hedgehog on Twitter and tweeting at HQ Trivia after a questioner incorrectly referred to “Smokey the Bear” and “forest fires.”

This year and in the years to come, Smokey Bear will continue to embrace the latest innovations in social media. For example, Smokey has had his own special photo filters and frames on popular platforms like Snapchat and will be developing new frames for fans to use in celebration of his 75th birthday. From interactive Q&A sessions on Instagram Stories to leveraging new ways of spreading his message of wildfire prevention, you can expect to hear from @SmokeyBear on social for many years to come.

*The Ad Council is America's leading producer of public of public service communications, with offices in New York, NY, and Washington, DC.*



Figure 3—Smokey balloon for the 1968 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The balloon was 58 feet (18 m) high. Photo: USDA National Agricultural Library (1968).

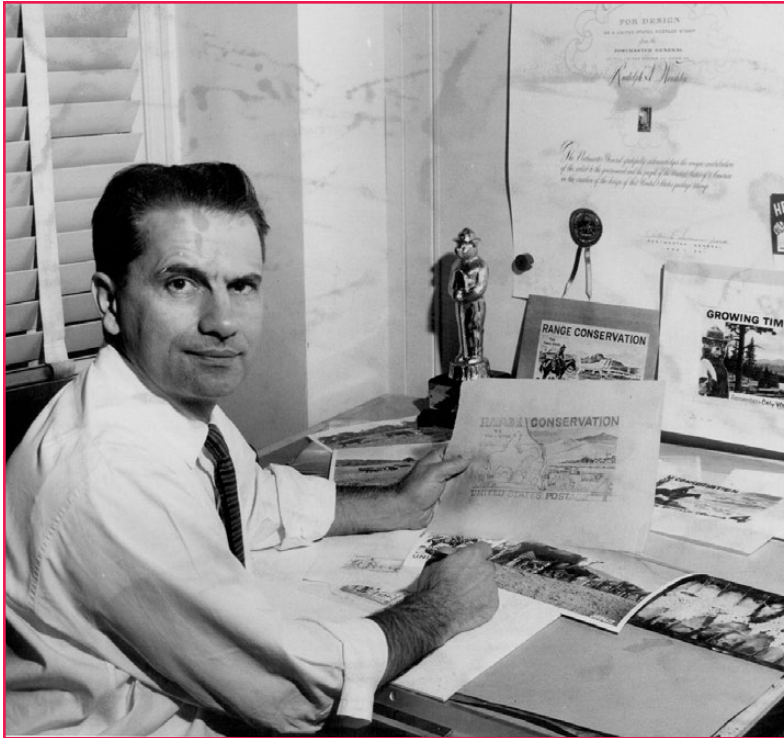


Figure 4—Smokey artist Rudy Wendelin left a lasting legacy of Smokey images, including a classic poster from 1985. Photo: USDA National Agricultural Library (1960).

print and television ads. Smokey Bear is so successful in transmitting his wildfire prevention message because he reaches people of all ages, from backgrounds of all kinds.

### Ongoing Relevance

Due in part to the Smokey program's visibility and recognition, some attach Smokey to the wildland fire issue in all its complexity. Some criticize Smokey for a message that is purportedly outdated and ecologically unsound as land managers grapple with landscape restoration, including returning fire to landscapes that depend on it for their ecological health.

Because Smokey's message is so effective, however, it would be a mistake to alter it. As we move

further into the 21st century and as human encroachment on forests steadily increases, Smokey's simple admonition that people need to be careful with fire will become more relevant than ever.

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# THE HILLS OF YOSEMITE

Randall C. Thomas

It was late July 1985, and I was working for fire management on a helitack crew for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. I was dispatched with some other park personnel to go to Yosemite National Park and help them with some small lightning fires as part of an initial-attack hand crew. I was very eager to go fight a fire and somewhat curious because I was a young country boy from the mountains of northwest Montana and had never been to Yosemite.

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Firefighting and aviation gave me the opportunity to discover the spectacular place that is Yosemite National Park.

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It was only a few hours' drive to Yosemite National Park. As we drove through the park, I had the unique experience of seeing Yosemite Valley, the most beautiful place I had ever been. I grew up near the Cabinet Mountains in Montana, but I had never seen a view like this. I was overcome with the spectacular scenery—Half Dome, El Capitan, and the beautiful waterfalls in the park.

We reported to the helibase in the park. Our crew would be split up, and

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*Merced River, Yosemite National Park. Source: National Park Service.*

we would take a helicopter to different small lightning fires up in the hills. We were put together with park personnel from various parks.

I had a few years of experience flying in different helicopters, but the flight in that particular helicopter was especially memorable. It was a Bell Long Jet Ranger with a seat aft of the cockpit, positioned so you faced the rear of the helicopter. The flight was spectacular, affording a great aerial view of the park.

Years later, I read a book by Bob Madgic titled *Shattered Air*. The book tells the story of five hikers who went up to Half Dome. A lightning storm came through the area, and two of the hikers were killed by a lightning strike, with the other three injured. This happened on July 27, 1985,

during the same lightning storm that ignited fires throughout the park, resulting in the need for firefighters, including the crew I was on.

I have always cherished the opportunity to travel to Yosemite National Park and be able to enjoy its natural beauty. Years later, I told my wife what a beautiful place Yosemite National Park was, and on a vacation in California, I took her through the park. My adventures in firefighting and aviation had the collateral benefit of giving me the opportunity to travel—and to discover the spectacular place that is Yosemite National Park. ■







***Fire Management Today (FMT)*** is an international quarterly magazine for the wildland fire community. The purpose of FMT is to share information and raise issues related to wildland fire management for the benefit of the wildland fire community. FMT welcomes unsolicited manuscripts from readers on any subject related to fire management.

However, FMT is not a forum for airing personal grievances or for marketing commercial products. The Forest Service's Fire and Aviation Management staff reserves the right to decline submissions that do not meet the purpose of the journal.

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Send electronic files by email or traditional mail to:

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Submit electronic files in PC format. Submit manuscripts in Word (.doc or .docx). Submit illustrations and photographs as separate files; do not include visual materials (such as photographs, maps, charts, or graphs) as embedded illustrations in the electronic manuscript file. You may submit digital photographs in JPEG, TIFF, EPS, or other format; they must be at high resolution: at least 300 dpi at a minimum size of 4 by 7 inches. Include information for photo

captions and photographer's name and affiliation at the end of the manuscript. Submit charts and graphs along with the electronic source files or data needed to reconstruct them and any special instructions for layout. Include a description of each illustration at the end of the manuscript for use in the caption.

For all submissions, include the complete name(s), title(s), affiliation(s), and address(es) of the author(s), illustrator(s), and photographer(s), as well as their telephone number(s) and email address(es). If the same or a similar manuscript is being submitted for publication elsewhere, include that information also. Authors should submit a photograph of themselves or a logo for their agency, institution, or organization.

## Style

Authors are responsible for using wildland fire terminology that conforms to the latest standards set by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group under the National Interagency Incident Management System. FMT uses the spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, and other styles recommended in the U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual, as required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Authors should use the U.S. system of weight and measure, with equivalent values in the metric system. Keep titles concise and descriptive; subheadings and bulleted material are useful and help readability. As a general rule of

clear writing, use the active voice (for example, write "Fire managers know..." and not "It is known..."). Give spellouts for all abbreviations.

## Tables

Tables should be logical and understandable without reading the text. Include tables at the end of the manuscript with appropriate titles.

## Photographs and Illustrations

Figures, illustrations, and clear photographs are often essential to the understanding of articles. Clearly label all photographs and illustrations (Figure 1, 2, 3; photograph A, B, C). At the end of the manuscript, include clear, thorough figure and photo captions labeled in the same way as the corresponding material (Figure 1, 2, 3; photograph A, B, C). Captions should make photographs and illustrations understandable without reading the text. For photographs, indicate the name and affiliation of the photographer and the year the photo was taken.

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