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Kaibab National Forest
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National Park Service
Grand Canyon National Park
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News Release

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Northern AZ land managers recognized for leadership in fire management

Williams, Ariz., June 8, 2015—For Immediate Release. Managers of both the Kaibab National Forest and Grand Canyon National Park in northern Arizona were recently recognized for the leadership role they've played in managing wildland fire across the landscape and jurisdictional boundaries for the purpose of improving forest health conditions.

From the Kaibab National Forest, former Forest Supervisor Mike Williams, North Kaibab District Ranger Randall Walker, Tusayan District Ranger James Simino, and Williams District Ranger Danelle D. Harrison were honored with the "Excellence in Line Officer Commitment to Restoration of Fire Adapted Ecosystems" award by the Forest Service National Line Officers Team. The group award recognizes the efforts made by the leadership of the Kaibab National Forest in the restoration of forest ecosystems through the use of a variety of tools including wildfire, prescribed fire, and manual and mechanical fuel treatments.

"This group award represents well-deserved, national-level recognition of the significant work accomplished on a landscape scale by these line officers and by all the employees of the Kaibab National Forest," said Art Gonzales, fire staff officer for the Kaibab. "These individuals have provided an unwavering level of support that has allowed the Kaibab National Forest and its employees to be national leaders in restoring fire-adapted ecosystems."

In 2014, the Kaibab National Forest treated almost 29,000 acres with wildfire managed to achieve resource objectives, including the approximately 11,000-acre Sitgreaves Complex Fire that was active for two months in an area extremely visible by local communities and members of the visiting public. Of particular note, the Kaibab's average cost per acre of wildfires managed to benefit forest resources was about \$133 per acre, versus the average cost of \$2,500 per acre for wildfire with a full suppression strategy. The forest also treated thousands of additional acres with prescribed fire and various vegetation treatments.

From Grand Canyon National Park, Superintendent Dave Uberuaga was the recipient of the "Superintendent Fire Management Achievement Award" from the Intermountain Region of the National Park Service. The award is given annually to an Intermountain Region park superintendent who actively supports and is fully engaged with their unit's fire management program.

"Grand Canyon National Park is one of the most complex programs within the agency both in terms of park and fire management," read the letter to Uberuaga announcing his selection for the award. "The park

has recognized that wildland fire is an integral part of the landscape. ... Without your leadership the 2014 fire season would not have been as successful as it was.”

During the 2014 season, the park managed both the Kanabownits and Galahad fires over an extended period of time and had identified large planning areas for the potential expansion of the fires. Also noted in the award citation were Grand Canyon National Park’s mechanical and prescribed fire applications used to manage vegetation, and the Slopes Prescribed Fire project on the North Rim that was highlighted for its role in enhancing the park’s ability to better manage large fires in mixed conifer fuels in the future.

“Dave is very deserving of this recognition,” said Jay Lusher, chief of fire and aviation for Grand Canyon National Park. “He takes a hands-on approach with our fire program by making the time to interact and engage with crews on the ground during fire operations. To me, this instills confidence and camaraderie and allows for shared vision and purpose as we implement projects.”

Not only do Kaibab National Forest and Grand Canyon National Park share borders both north and south of the canyon, but the managers of each share a commitment to restoring fire-adapted ecosystems on a landscape scale and providing the leadership necessary to accomplish that important work.

The forest and park work together daily across jurisdictional boundaries on a variety of projects and even share a fire management organization on the north side. The North Zone Fire Management organization includes personnel from both the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest and the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park.

“Managing fire on a landscape scale and across administrative boundaries is key to building resiliency throughout the ecosystem,” said North Kaibab District Ranger Randall Walker, who was one of the recipients of the Forest Service award. “Together, we can maintain and build resilient landscapes; help protect the public, nearby communities and important infrastructure; and create a safe, effective and appropriate response to wildfire.”

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