

A FIRE AND AVIATION MANAGEMENT SUCCESS STORY

New Smokey Bear Video Teaches About Fire Prevention

The Challenge:

On average over 22,000 wildfires burn nearly 900,000 acres of land in the United States every year. Over the past 20 years the number, size, and intensity of wildfires have increased. Yet one statistic has stayed the same through the years—9 out of 10 wildfires are caused by people. Children and adults continually need reminders to be careful with fire when enjoying our natural resources and to follow the five rules of fire prevention.

Since 1944, the Forest Service has used Smokey Bear as the national symbol to teach children about the dangers of wildfires. Studies have shown that Smokey Bear is one of the most recognized public figures, next to Santa Claus and Mickey Mouse. New campaign material was needed to keep Smokey Bear relevant in today's society, in order to continue delivering the fire prevention message.

The Solution:

The Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry provided a grant to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, as part of the State's core funding, to develop new resource material to spread Smokey Bear's fire prevention message. The Division of Forestry teamed up with a diverse group of students from the Columbus College of Art and Design and professional mentor 2Tall Animation Studio, to research, design, and create a new Smokey Bear animated video and song.

For the college students, creating a new animated video and song was a valuable learning experience. The creativity, fresh ideas, and inspired originality of the students and professional mentor culminated in a product that can easily be added to wildfire prevention programs across the country.



This still image from the new animated video of Smokey Bear and friends shows them entering a classroom.

The Division of Forestry added value to the video by creating a companion teacher kit. It includes two student activities correlated to Ohio Department of Education curriculum standards, a detailed facilitator guide, additional educational supplements, and several products available through the [U.S. Forest Service Symbols Cache](#). For ease of delivery, the teacher kit (Smokey video, song, and student activities) was packaged neatly onto a USB flash drive. Plans include producing 900 teacher kits for distribution across Ohio.

Resulting Benefits:

- Students created a useful product that is targeted, precise, attractive, engaging, and fun for children in kindergarten through second grade.
- The video is intended for classroom or group watching and learning. The song audio file was created to help spread the message at larger open-air venues, such as fairs, festivals, and ball games.

Sharing Success:

- The new [Smokey Bear video and song](#) and teaching material are available on the Ohio Division of Forestry Web site.
- The video is also available on [YouTube](#), and has surpassed 14,000 hits in the first 6 months.
- The animation won a Judge's Award from the Columbus Society of Creative Arts.

Federal Award 2011-DG-11420004-204

Smokey Bear's Five Rules for Fire Prevention:

1. Only you can prevent wildfires.
2. Always be careful with fire.
3. Never play with matches or lighters.
4. Always watch your campfire.
5. Make sure your campfire is completely out before leaving it.



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