



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Branch of Fire Management
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New Fire Crew Seeks FWS Firefighters

by Nicholas Soverel

FWS Student Conservation Association Intern

This is the debut year for this newly revamped crew in the Columbia River Basin of Washington State.



Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, WA

In the spirit of resurrecting the original Blue Goose Wildland Fire Crew, newly hired superintendent Jason Riggins and the Pacific Northwest Region are managing a new Blue Goose crew in Moses Lake, WA. The two primary goals of this crew are to provide training opportunities for agency firefighters, while partnering with a local Job Corps Center (JCC) to provide job skills to future firefighters. The crew plans to operate from June through mid-September for the 2007 fire season.

In previous years, the Blue Goose Fire Crew resided in Nampa, Idaho and its participants were all Job Corps students. Conversely, the new crew will be staffed with a combination of JCC students and FWS fire personnel. This Type 2 crew will be available for national wildfire and prescribed fire assignments, while focusing on training FWS staff in crew leadership positions.

The 20-person crew will have 8 positions available for JCC students and 11 detail positions for FWS fire personnel available for the 2007 fire season. Hiring priority will be for crew boss, squad boss, and ICT4/5 qualification seekers.

Of the 11 agency positions, there is an assistant superintendent position, 3 squad positions, and 7 crewmember positions. Crewmember positions are available to those who seek training at the squad boss level. Squad boss positions are open to firefighters who would like more training experience in the crew boss capacity. Finally, the assistant superintendent position is open to interested applicants who are Strike Team/ICT4 qualified and have proven leadership ability. Minimum detail length is 40 days inclusive of mandatory days off between assignments. For individuals applying for the Assistant and squad leader positions, preference will be given to those individuals available for the duration of the active operation period of 90-110 days, approximately the first week of June through the middle of September.

The superintendent position will be the only full time position on the crew. Detailer positions will have their base 8 paid for by their home unit. All travel expenses, line gear, and any fire assignment charges will be covered. Positions that are not filled with FWS staff will be filled with other agency personnel.

Jason Riggins expects to be on large fire assignments as much as possible depending on the severity of the fire season.

When not on fire assignments, the fire crew will be available to support



Columbia National Wildlife Refuge, WA

local refuges in project work, prescribed burning, and initial attack.

“For those folks seeking positions of leadership, this is an opportunity to gain new insight into leadership principles of self-sacrifice and duty...”

explains Jason Riggins. “I would like people to understand that the greatest benefit

will come if they are available for the entire season and that they will need to make the necessary mental shift to focus on the crew and what they are there for.”



DOI-sponsored Interagency Fire Crew on the Cooney Ridge Fire, MT, 2003

Moses Lake is approximately 180 miles from Seattle, and is 20 miles from the 30,000 acre Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. The Mid-Columbia National Wildlife Refuge Complex is an ideal location for a fire crew as it is home to many refuges including Hanford Reach National Monument/Saddle Mountain NWR.

About the Crew Superintendent: Jason Riggins started with the FWS in spring of 2003, building a recently established prescribed fire program on the Port Louisa NWR in southeast Iowa as a Prescribed Fire Specialist. His fire career began with the Kentucky Division of Forestry, where he worked for five years. During that time, he participated in dozens of fires each fall and spring, eventually working as a Crewboss/Incident Commander. In the summer of 1999 he detailed to the Sawtooth hotshots as a crewmember. In 2000, he left his forestry job for a squad leader position on the Sawtooth Interagency Hotshot Crew, developing his tactical and leadership skills in a variety of fire situations until 2002. He has a BS in Forestry.

To learn more about the Blue Goose Crew or to receive an application, contact:

Superintendent Jason Riggins at (509) 793-1675 or jason_riggins@fws.gov

Go to the Blue Goose Fire Crew Website:
www.fws.gov/pacific/bgcrew

Application deadline for overhead positions is: **March 15, 2007**. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis for crewmember positions.



The JCC is administered by the Department of Labor whose mission is to offer a comprehensive array of career development services to at-risk young women and men ages 16 to 24.

To learn more about the JCC in the Columbia Basin, visit their web site:

<http://columbiabasin.jobcorps.gov/>

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