

Ecological Services Biologist, Dave Smith, Receives National Award for Outstanding Achievement in Management

Dave Smith, a Fish and Wildlife biologist at the Arizona Ecological Services Field Office – Flagstaff sub-office, was recently awarded the National Award for Outstanding Achievement in National Rangeland Management for his participation on the Wallow Fire Range Restocking Team. Dave worked in close collaboration with U.S. Forest Service staff to evaluate grazing on approximately 18 allotments following damage from the May 2011 Wallow Fire, the largest wildfire in Arizona’s history. Smith was nominated by USFS staff.

The fire burned across approximately 538,000 acres on the Apache-Sitgreaves and Gila National Forests. Multiple watersheds were compromised and a diverse array of resource management issues followed. However, as a result of the intensive effort demonstrated by Smith and his team members, approximately 115 miles of fence was reconstructed, 50 earthen tanks were cleaned, and 6 corrals were rebuilt. More importantly, as the award notes, “The Wallow Fire Range Restocking Team has been responsive to meeting and providing for the multitude of resource needs across the burned area, including those associated with proposed, threatened, and endangered species, and overall watershed health and restoration.”

For Smith, this award “shows biologists, particularly Ecological Services biologists, the importance of getting out into the field with our federal counterparts during Section 7 consultations, listing processes, and recovery actions to make site-specific recommendations and decisions regarding potential effects of the action on listed species. The knowledge of site-specific field data is crucial when implementing the ESA.”

At-a-way, Dave, we are proud of you!



Ecological Services biologist, Dave Smith, collecting aquatic insects from Larry Canyon. Credit: USFWS



Biologist, Dave Smith, with a male sage grouse. Credit: USFWS.