



Fuels Reduction Project Spurs Excellence in Collaboration Award Nomination

Andy Baker, Natural Resource Officer for the Winnebago Agency, was nominated for an Excellence in Collaboration Award for his two year project to reduce the encroachment of eastern red cedar on native prairie grasslands.



June 2001

The project has thus far restored 4,000 acres of tribal rangeland within the boundaries of the Santee Sioux Reservation and provided a buffer of defensible space around the community of Santee, Nebraska.

The fuels reduction project involved several stages of planning and was implemented utilizing mechanical fuel treatments, such as thinning and hand piling, followed by prescribed broadcast and pile burning to meet the objectives. The

crewmembers lived and worked out of several spike camps during the summer, putting in 10-hour days cutting, lopping and piling the cedar to prepare the area for prescribed burning. The burning phase initiated a move toward more natural conditions for the associated lands, and will enable the Natural Resources Branch to place the area on a sequential fire rotation to reestablish the natural fire cycle on much of the landscape around Santee.



September 2003

Mr. Baker was commended for cooperating with tribal leaders, hiring tribal employees, managing and distributing fuels funding and maintaining close oversight while allowing field personnel to do their jobs. He also showed creativity in the management of fuels funding for the project. Under agreement, Mr. Baker distributed the funds to the Tribe, which enabled the Tribe to hire and pay the workers, promoting the concept of self determination.

The Santee Tribe sent a letter of tremendous support to the Winnebago Agency Superintendent, Michael Hackett, to establish similar projects to benefit of land and people of the area.

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