



Wildland Fire Festival at Nondalton Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska National Fire Plan – Community Assistance

In fall 2005, Alaskan wildland fire interagency partners spent three festive days in Nondalton teaching the community about fire. Nondalton is a small Dena'ina Athabascan community located south of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve (NP/Pr) and the home of two Alaskan Type 2 crews. On September 30 and October 1, teachers took a 1 credit fire ecology, behavior and management course presented by the Alaska Division of Forestry. Educators learned a variety of hands-on lessons for grades 4–12 from two standards-based curriculums, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service *Role of Fire* and U.S Forest Service *Fireworks*. On October 2, Alaska National Park Service Fire Management led a new Firewise workshop developed for communities adjacent to NPS lands. More than 30 adults and youth learned about the natural role of fire in the boreal forest, local fire history, prevention, and resources for homeowners seeking Firewise assistance. Held in conjunction with the workshop, students presented art posters depicting their interpretations of fire at a community potluck. A community forum followed, at which the crew boss of a Nondalton Type 2 crew spoke to his community about the importance of each resident taking action to prevent the risk of wildland fire threatening homes. The workshop concluded with a Firewise home assessment in which adults and children learned about safe home construction, landscaping, and maintenance. This workshop would not have been a success without Lake Clark NP/Pr Interpretive Ranger Jennifer Shaw's assistance, guidance and support.



Educators test the fire triangle during the Fire in Alaska workshop. NPS Photo.



A wildland fire poster created by a Nondalton student. NPS Photo.

Through this creative partnership between the community, Lake Clark NP/Pr, Alaska NPS Fire Management and Alaska Division of Forestry, the festival successfully conveyed to participants that they can no longer ask, “If a fire will burn,” but rather, “When will a fire burn?” The community now knows how to prepare for such an event and where to seek out assistance. This timely festival followed Alaska's third largest wildland fire season to date. With over 4.4 million acres burned this season and 6.59 million acres burned in 2004, the largest season since reliable records began in the 1950's, two of Alaska's top-three wildland fire seasons have happened in two consecutive years.

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