

Rural Fire Departments Say Thank You for Assistance New River Gorge National River, West Virginia National Fire Plan – Community Assistance

Contract Specialist Peggy Maddy and Forestry Technician Mike Peck received special thanks from the 18 rural fire departments they helped through the Rural Fire Assistance Program since its beginnings. Chiefs of the volunteer fire departments in the four counties next to the park in southern West Virginia signed the back of the recognition plaques, presented at recent park employee meetings.

Volunteer fire department members respond to fires in and near the long, narrow park, often arriving before NPS forces. The RFA program has supported training and the buying of equipment for the largely volunteer departments. This includes the October 2005 distribution of \$80,000.00 worth of firefighting equipment. As New River's Contract Specialist, Peggy Maddy made sure that purchases were made properly and by often short deadlines. Forestry Technician Mike Peck did the legwork out in the field, working directly with the firefighters.



Mike Peck and Peggy Maddy with appreciation plaques signed by local fire chiefs – December 2005.

To get the signatures, NERI Fire Management Officer Bruce Miller traveled to each chief, building on the relationships key to successful firefighting. For the 18 fire departments and New River Gorge, the National Fire Plan's Rural Fire Assistance Program has been a real asset.

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