

Idaho Partnership Receives BLM “Cooperative Conservation” Award

On December 19, Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary C. Stephen Allred presented the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM’s) prestigious national “Cooperative Conservation” award at a special ceremony in Boise, Idaho.

The award was presented to representatives of the “Fire-Up for Summer!” program, a partnership effort of the Idaho BLM, Meridian School District and Northwest Nazarene University.

The BLM award recognizes collaborative conservation achievements, and this particular award recognizes the importance of connecting today’s youth with the environment. “As this country has become more urban, our youth have become more and more distant from the land that sustains us in so many ways,” said Assistant Secretary Allred. “We need to recognize efforts that educate and connect young people to their public lands.”



Assistant Secretary C. Stephen Allred (back right) honors representatives from the Meridian School District for their participation in the “Fire-Up for Summer!” program. These students are representing more than 50 young men and women who have participated in the program over the past three years.

According to Assistant Secretary Allred, “America’s young people will soon drive public policy relative to the environment and federal land management; it is critical that they are informed. A famous Native American quotation relates that ‘we don’t inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.’ It is my fervent hope that by educating our children on the environment, they will be knowledgeable public land stewards and will leave a wonderful legacy for those generations yet to come.”

The “Cooperative Conservation” award recognizes collaborative activity among a diverse range of entities, including federal, state, local and tribal governments; private for profit and nonprofit institutions; as well as other nongovernmental entities and individuals. This particular award recognizes the importance of educating and involving today’s youth with the environment.

“Now in its fourth year, the “Fire-Up for Summer!” program is helping students learn about wildfire behavior, its effect on natural ecosystems and what can be done to minimize rural communities’ susceptibility to wildfire,” Allred said.

BLM employees use the students’ findings to give homeowners suggestions on improving their homes’ resistance to wildfire. They also provide treatment options for fire-prone vegetation in and around the study areas, which will improve the communities’ overall resistance to wildfire. To date, the students’ work has benefited not only public lands and resources but also numerous homeowners in the communities of Garden Valley and Silver City.

The Fire-Up program will continue in 2007. The Fire-Up students will be doing work in the Pine and Featherville, Idaho area. The Boise BLM and the Boise National Forest are working on a joint project in the area to reduce hazardous fuels in the corridor of the South Fork of the Boise River. The students will gather data to input into the Firemon database. They will also do wildland fire home hazard assessments using Redzone software. The students will provide this data to the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council. The Council has a grant proposal to do hazardous fuels removal on private land in the corridor. The hazard assessments will also be provided to homeowners, so they can be aware of all mitigation measures that are applicable to their property.

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