

## Recreation Area Provides Financial Assistance Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, Texas National Fire Plan – Community Assistance

On December 13, 2006, Superintendent Karren Brown of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area announced that several area fire departments have received grants to enhance the fire protection capabilities of Rural Fire Departments (RFD) through Department of the Interior Rural Fire Assistance Program. These include Fritch Volunteer Fire Department- \$18,000, Hutchinson County Precinct Two Fire Department- \$12,000, Potter County Fire Department- \$8,000, Dumas Fire Department \$16,000 and Stinnett Volunteer Fire Department- \$13,000.

The funding was provided through the authority of Public Law 106-291, Title IV, Wildland Fire Appropriations for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Act, 2001. The law states, in part, that the Department of the Interior will provide rural fire assistance to qualifying RFD's. In order to qualify for assistance through the program, the RFD's must have a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service and they must serve a community with a population of less than ten thousand. The program funds training, equipment purchases and prevention activities on a cost-share basis. The RFD must share a minimum of 10 percent of the costs, which may include in-kind services. Safe and effective fire suppression in the wildland-urban interface demands close coordination between local, state, tribal and federal firefighting resources. The public will benefit by having reduced fire loss, development of fire prevention programs and the reduction of occurrence and intensity of wildland fires within the urban interface. The National Park Service may provide technical assistance, training, supplies, materials, and equipment and participate in interagency prevention and educational activities.

Lake Meredith Fire Management Officer Michael Bland and Fire Chiefs worked together and wrote the successful grant applications and the money will be used to purchase personal protective clothing, fire fighting equipment, and fire shelters for wildland firefighting for the RFD's. "This program provides funds to rural fire departments to purchase equipment that is compatible with National Park Service equipment and upgrade existing equipment and replace personal protective gear. In return, the park benefits from their assistance and professional expertise when needed. These partnerships were especially critical during this year's wildland fire catastrophes in the Texas Panhandle and in the recreation area," said Superintendent Brown.

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From top to bottom: Stinnett VFD, Dumas FD, Hutchinson County Precinct 2, Fritch VFD, and Potter County FD.