

# National Fire Plan

## Cooperative work on the Sawtooth National Forest Idaho 2002



The summer of 2002 was a busy one on the Sawtooth National Forest (NF) in south central Idaho. The Forest utilized National Fire Plan funding and direction to increase collaborative work with communities and organization partners in many area. Key activities include:

### **1. Sawtooth National Forest hosts two Student Conservation Association Fire Education Corps teams (Key Point 4)**

The Sawtooth NF, in cooperation with the Wood River and Mid-Snake Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Districts in south central Idaho, acted as hosting agency for two teams of interns from the Student Conservation Association (SCA) Fire Education Corps. The teams, each consisting of a team leader and four team members, were fully integrated into the Sawtooth fire prevention organization. Planning for their employment during the summer was done in close cooperation with counterparts at the Shoshone Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and with local fire departments and districts.

The SCA teams worked with communities at risk in the Forest area and provided technology transfer from the national FireWise program to private citizens and local fire agencies. Public education was accomplished through booths at public events, community meetings, door-to-door canvassing, and courtesy home inspections. The teams assisted local fire agencies in providing WUI protection through demonstration fuel reduction projects, distribution of media kits, and GIS mapping of hazard areas. The teams were only employed in communities where full cooperation with the local fire agency was secured, and were a complete success wherever they operated. Several local fire departments have requested the assistance of additional teams for the 2003 fire season.

### **2. Contract engine agreement adds muscle to Sawtooth Fire Organization (Key Point 1)**

Using funds made available through the National Fire Plan, the Sawtooth NF entered into a very successful agreement with local contractor; Professional Response Organization, Incorporated (PRO-INC). Through this contract, the Sawtooth was able to add four additional Type IV engines, one Type VI engine, and one Type II water tender to their fire protection program.



All contract resources have been fully integrated into the Sawtooth fire organization and perform exactly the same duties as regular Forest Service resources: Initial attack, extended attack, fuels treatment projects, prescribed burning and project work. PRO-INC engine crewmembers have also successfully participated on the Sawtooth Regulars Type II hand crew. The flexibility of contract engine agreement has been a tremendous asset to the Forest and the additional positions have created new opportunities for local residents to pursue careers in fire management.

### **3. Joint fire training between Sawtooth NF and Shoshone BLM pays big dividends (Key Point 4)**

The Sawtooth National Forest and Shoshone BLM have pulled off a triple play by working together: duplication of effort has been reduced, training funds have been saved, and greater interagency cooperation has been achieved. By adding the resources of the Sawtooth NF Fire Organization to the already-growing BLM spring firefighter training sessions, more firefighters have been able to receive more training in an atmosphere that is more reflective of the interagency nature of wildland fire.

The four-week spring training sessions feature a busy schedule of firefighter classes ranging from recruit training through initial attack incident commander courses. By sharing the instructional burden between the Forest and the Field Office, more classes could be offered, and more firefighters received both the training and exposure to members of sister agencies.

The success of the training was complete, and tremendous cost-savings were realized due to the elimination of the need to travel to distant training sites. Planning is already underway for spring 2003, when it is hoped that there will be participation by local fire departments and fire districts.