

# SWOSU Wildland Firefighting Students Participate in Pack Test

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SWOSU students in the wildland firefighting program recently participated in a “pack test” that was conducted on the Weatherford campus by reps from the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest in Arkansas. Students had to walk three miles in 45 minutes while wearing a 45-pound weight vest. Participating were (from left) Brendan Moser, Anadarko; Sawyer Barnard, Moore; Colby Challis, Clinton; Korbin Polston, Midwest City; Riley Akin, Frederick; Chandler Pettit, Carnegie; and Jarech Page, Edmond.

The United States Forest Service recently conducted a wildland fire refresher activity on the Southwestern Oklahoma State University campus in Weatherford.

Two individuals from the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest in Arkansas were on the SWOSU campus to conduct the training that consists of classroom instruction and the administration of a work capacity test, commonly known as the pack test. Each wildland firefighter must annually pass the test, walking three miles in 45 minutes while wearing a 45-pound weight vest.

Acting Deputy Fire Staff Officer Teresa Williamson and Fire Management Officer Johnny Lindsey represented the Arkansas national forest at SWOSU.

The SWOSU Parks and Recreation Management Department offers an Associate of Science degree in wildland firefighting and a minor program in wildland fire Management. Program graduates typically find employment as wildland firefighters with federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Other graduates work with a variety of municipal fire departments.

As administratively determined firefighters for the Ozark – St. Francis National Forest, SWOSU students have the opportunity to be sent out on fires with U.S. Forest Service supervisors.

Anyone with an interest in the SWOSU Parks and Recreation Management Department’s wildland firefighting program can contact instructor Eric Pritchard at [eric.pritchard@swosu.edu](mailto:eric.pritchard@swosu.edu) or Department Chair and Associate Dean Dr. Chad Kinder at [chad.kinder@swosu.edu](mailto:chad.kinder@swosu.edu).