

SWOSU Students Participate in Prescribed Burn

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SWOSU wildland firefighting students and graduates recently participated in a prescribed fire south of Weatherford. Among those involved in the program are (from left): Jacob Pool, Clinton; Justin Snider, Clinton; Aaron Gray, Hydro; Dr. Chad Kinder, SWOSU associate dean and department chair; SWOSU Wildland Fire Management Program Coordinator Josh Williams; Chris Ruiz, Weatherford; Steffan Hakanson, Skiatook; Chase Didier, Fay; Kalyp Oliver, Weatherford; Matt Whitney, Ponca City; Jeff Vest, Oklahoma City; and Jason Montgomery, Granite. Not pictured are: David Weaver, Ontario, CA; Trent Keasler, Weatherford; Walt Ginn, Hydro; Michael Dragg, Norman; and Wade Hair, Chickasha.

A recent prescribed burn south of Weatherford resulted in 90% consumption of Eastern Red Cedars on the property. At times there was a 60 to 80 foot flame wall in the burn.

SWOSU students and faculty conduct a prescribed fire south of Weatherford.

The Southwestern Oklahoma State University Parks and Recreation Management Department's Wildland Fire Management Program recently conducted a prescribed burn south of Weatherford.

Dr. Chad Kinder, associate dean and chair of the SWOSU Parks and Recreation Management Department, said the intent of the burn was two-fold: learning experience for the SWOSU students and dealing with invasive Eastern Red Cedars.

Kinder said the uncontrolled spread of the Eastern Red Cedar is one of the largest environmental problems facing the state of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Conservation Commission has identified the spread of the Eastern Red Cedar as the greatest ecological threat to face Oklahomans since the Dust Bowl era. Eastern Red Cedars are encroaching upon 762 acres per day in the state.

"These cedars render rangeland unusable, consume massive amounts of water, destroy wildlife habitat, produce huge amounts of allergens and greatly increase the threat and intensity of wildfires," Kinder said.

The burn, planned and conducted by SWOSU Wildland Fire Management students under the supervision of certified wildland firefighters, was also intended as a learning experience. SWOSU Wildland Fire Management Program Coordinator Josh Williams led the exercise. Williams, also a national certified burn boss, said the burn was a complete success.

SWOSU currently offers two programs in wildland fire management. The first option is an eight credit hour wildland fire management specialization area within the Parks and Recreation Management major. The second option is an 18 credit hour wildland fire management minor. The PRM Department teaches seven wildland fire management

courses, and successful students gain certification in 12 national wildfire coordinating group areas including:

- Firefighter Training
- Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior
- Introduction to Incident Command System
- Human Factors on the Fireline
- Firefighter Type I
- Portable Pumps and Water Use
- Look Up, Look Down, Look Around
- Basic Incident Command System
- Wildland Fire Chainsaws
- Ignition Operations
- Followership to Leadership
- Wildland Fire Observations and Origin Scene Protection for First Responders

Many wildland fire management program students work as wildland firefighters in national parks and forests during the summer and fall seasons. Successful program graduates are entering wildland fire related careers throughout the nation with a variety of federal natural resource management agencies including the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Individuals interested in pursuing wildland fire training at SWOSU can contact Kinder at 580.774.3291 or chad.kinder@swosu.edu.