



Center for Wildfire Education, Training, Research and Interpretation

Vision & Mission Statement

The Columbia Breaks Fire Interpretive Center will provide a variety of quality learning experiences, interpretation, and research opportunities through active and dynamic exhibits, field trips, talks and lectures, demonstrations, and interaction with interpreters, researchers, curators, and fire managers.

The Center will examine and explain the role of fire in ecology and natural processes with particular emphasis on the Pacific Northwest, and will showcase past, present, and future interactions of people with the world of fire.

Emphasis will be placed on informing visitors on all aspects of natural, prescribed, and human caused fire.

The programs, interpretive exhibits, and facilities will be designed to serve the following audiences and customers:

- Local community (residents, schools, and colleges)
- Tourists
- Agency personnel
- Researchers (local, regional, and national)

The Columbia Breaks Fire Interpretive Center will be professionally staffed by paid employees and volunteers and will operate in a self-sustaining capacity through cooperation with other public agencies and private partnerships.

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Updraft

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Wildfire Education: A Reality at Columbia Breaks



Kimeko Nalle, fire prevention educator with the U.S. Forest Service held Eastmont School District's Sterling Middle School students' attention with a well-organized presentation about the importance of fire prevention, forest etiquette, and tools firefighter's use to control fires.

Sixty students and their teachers from Eastmont School District's Sterling Middle School were the largest group to take advantage of the Columbia Breaks Fire Interpretive Center (CBFIC) location and it's interpretive Trail of Fire and Forest. The classes, taught by Katie Tucker and Amy Pefferman, culminated a three-week study of the ponderosa/sage-steppe ecosystem by visiting the site and seeing firsthand what they had been studying in the classroom.

The students identified the flora that thrives in that environment and reviewed how all the living and nonliving components are connected to each other. They were also able to see how fire is an integral component of that system and how it can be both an agent of destruction and a key ingredient in the long-term health of a pine forest.

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Wildfire Education . . .



John Spencer, a science teacher at Wenatchee High School and a smokejumper at the North Cascades Smokejumper Base, tells students how wildland firefighters attack a fire and the equipment smokejumpers use.

Students were also able to see some of the key factors affecting the issues related to fire management, protection of our natural resources, and the encroachment of urban development into the wildlands.

Arnie Arneson, president of the CBFIC board, introduced the students to the Center. He explained the purpose of CBFIC and provided a brief history of fire lookouts as a fire detection tool. The students were excited to be able to climb the steep stairs in Chelan Butte's lookout tower to get a view from inside the lookout's cab.

Dave Spies, librarian at Sterling Middle School, then led the students along the interpretive trail, reviewing some of the concepts taught in the classroom. The students were able to take advantage of the new interpretive signs posted along the trail.

At the end of the trail, the classes had the opportunity to learn from John Spencer, a science teacher at Wenatchee High School and a smokejumper during the summer at the North Cascades Smokejumper Base, how wildland firefighters attack a fire and the equipment smokejumpers use.

Finally, Kimeko Nalle, a fire prevention educator with the U.S. Forest Service, held the students' attention with a well-organized presentation about the importance of fire prevention, forest etiquette, and more tools that fire firefighters use to control fires.

A major portion of the curriculum that Tucker and Spies used in the classroom consisted of material from the fire education kit developed by the U. S. Forest Service and CBFIC. Both teachers attended a training class funded by CBFIC that showed them how to use the lessons and materials in the fire kit. The teachers found that the lessons in the kit can easily be adapted to any age level.

With the success of this field trip and the positive response of students and teachers, eight intermediate teachers in the Eastmont School District plan to take advantage of the CBFIC's educational opportunities during the 2004-05 school year. If your school is interested in this program contact Arnie Arneson at (509) 662-3035.

By Dave Spies, Educator at Sterling Middle School and CBFIC Board Member

Smoke Signals From The President



Now that the smoke has settled. . .

it is time to touch base with our friends. We wish extend our thanks to those who participated in the February auction for their generous contributions and to all the many other contributors who have helped us make significant progress at Columbia Breaks again this year.

There has been lots of activity at the site. The conservation education program began operating and is successful. I hope you'll read the front page article about that. Another group of youth from WSU's Summer Conservation Program also learned about wildfire and helped with trail maintenance and lookout restoration. We have two new signs at the entrance and four new panels depicting the wildfire story on the kiosk located about halfway along the interpretive trail. These help with conservation education field trips and provide information for all our visitors. We extend our thanks to Barbara Fish and Dan O'Conner from the Forest Service for their help with the design of these signs and to volunteer Duane Broaddus for constructing the new entrance sign boards.

Projects in the works include regrading the front of the amphitheater so a stage can be installed, and burying utility conduit into the site. We look forward to having many interesting programs when the utilities and stage are completed. We are looking for support for a five-mile high loop scenic trail that will start at the site, climb over the backdrop cliffs and back to the site. This would compliment our existing trail and provide a unique low-elevation trail opportunity in a "shrub-steppe" setting for the hardy hiker.

We continue to work toward our goal of having an on-site presence and hope to finally make this a reality in 2005. To help us with this we are moving our annual auction to November and making it a **"Firefighter's Appreciation Night"** with the same quality auction items, food, and fun that have been highlights of past fundraisers. Please see the insert for more detailed information on this event. We would look forward to seeing you on November 13 at the Cashmere Community Center, in Cashmere, Washington.

We are also launching a **"Sponsors Program for the 2005 Summer Operation."** Please also see the insert for more detailed information. It is imperative that we cross the threshold of having an on-site presence in order to continue to build towards our goal of becoming a major center dedicated to wildfire education, training, research and interpretation. We value your support!

*By Arnie Arneson
CBFIC Board President*

