



Celebrating the New Year With the 70th Edition of Forestry News



As we head into the new year, it might be time to reflect on the year that has just passed. It has been one of change as 2017 promises to be as well.



Snow & conifers near Sunrise

The Branch of Forestry saw the retirements of Supervisory Forestry Technician Vernesto Armstrong, Fuels Technician Gerald Banashely, Engine Boss Amos Tate, Inventory Forester Jim Beyer, Timber Sales Forester Manuel Cruz, Presales Forester Joe Ringelberg, and Forest Manager Robert Lacapa. Additionally, Timber Sales Forester Jordan Peña transferred to the Navajo Regional Office and Engine Module Supervisor Phillip Quochoyetewa moved on to

the BIA Southern California Agency. Sadly, we also saw the untimely passing of one of our long-time foresters. On a brighter note, two former employees returned to the Fort Apache Agency in 2016: Supervisory Forester Mike Frank joined the Presales staff while Forester Aly Aday accepted a position in the Timber Sales section. These personnel changes in 2016 have to reflect one of the biggest employee changes in forestry in a long while.



Last year was also the year of the Lion and Cedar Fires on the reservation. Many people were involved in suppressing these two fires. The Cedar Fire became an especially high-profile fire when it ran six miles due south in one day and threatened the community of Cedar Creek. During the fire close-out meeting with the Incident Management Team, Councilman Jerold Altaha recalled his impressions of the day that the fire approached Cedar Creek: *“Father’s Day, 2016 — I will always remember that day as we saw the fire coming over the hill!”* Fortunately, although people had to be evacuated from Cedar Creek,

the blaze was contained just outside of the town, thereby protecting nervous residents. Part of the Cedar Fire legacy, however, was that areas to the north and east of the fire that had been treated by fuels and fire personnel prior to the fire became very helpful to firefighters battling the blaze.



This retardant drop on the Cedar Fire pales in comparison to the menacing smoke column

A 20-page report, entitled **“Landscape Treatment Effectiveness In Moderating a Wildfire”** was put together by Agency and Western Regional Office staff to document how prior treatments affected the Cedar Fire. The following was stated in the conclusion of this report: *“The Cedar Fire grew to 45,977 acres in size. Fortunately, because of the fuels treatments implemented to protect the northern communities in the path of the wildfire, and the activities of the suppression resources, no structures were lost and no serious injuries occurred. The Cedar Fire displays the benefits of combined fuels treatments of not only mechanical and prescribed burns, but also multiple objective wildfires on the Fort Apache Reservation.”* Fuels Management can be proud of their hard work.

PRESCRIBED BURN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A total of 22,284 acres were treated with prescribed burning during the months of October and November, 2016 on the reservation. Marwin Dazen provided a detailed spread sheet that outlined all of the accomplishments. The majority of the acreage was a result of broadcast burning in Gorduroy, Hon-Dah, Seven Mile, Turkey Creek, Elk Canyon, Coyote West and Beaver Creek. Additional pile burning occurred in four units.