

Fireline Fitness

Bequi Livingston

Abstract

“Fireline Fitness” is an exciting, innovative, and novel approach to physical fitness for wildland firefighters. It is a known fact that physical fitness plays an important role in improving firefighter effectiveness and safety both on and off the fireline. Currently there are no standard guidelines or training in place for developing and maintaining a consistent, well balanced fitness program for interagency wildland firefighters which incorporates wellness and safety on a year round basis. Recent surveys of wildland fire crews show a high rate of overuse injuries and decreased productivity due to poorly planned and executed physical fitness programs. The results are further exaggerated on the fireline, therefore affecting the overall productivity of the crew while affecting health and safety of the crewmembers. The intent of “Fireline Fitness” is to provide the wildland firefighter with the basic information to help them develop a fitness regime that is basic and balanced while still meeting the demands of wildland fire. “Fireline Fitness” provides guidelines to help the firefighter develop an individualized or crew fitness program that incorporates cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength and endurance, and flexibility while emphasizing overall wellness. It also provides guidelines on how to continue implementing a fitness regime during the off-season in order to keep the firefighter in an acceptable level of fitness. This will also encourage overall health while making it easier to transition into fire season thus empowering them to take personal responsibility for their own fitness levels. In summary, the program is beneficial not only to the agency but primarily to the individuals themselves by promoting fitness and wellness while providing the support and information needed to have a safe and healthy wildland fire workforce. For further information on “Fireline Fitness” please visit our link on the U.S. Forest Service website (www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/).



Bequi Livingston is with the USDA Forest Service- Region 3 Southwest Fire Use Training Academy, Albuquerque, NM. email: blivingston@fs.fed.us

In: Butler, B.W and Alexander, M.E. Eds. 2005. Eighth International Wildland Firefighter Safety Summit: Human Factors - 10 Years Later; April 26-28, 2005 Missoula, MT. The International Association of Wildland Fire, Hot Springs, SD.

The Author

Bequi Livingston started her career with the U.S. Forest Service in 1979 on the Young Adult Conservation Corps as a wildland firefighter. She has remained in wildland fire management since that time working on a Hotshot crew, helitack, engines, fire lookout, fire prevention technician and dispatch supervisor for the National Park Service in 1993. She has worked primarily in the Southwest Area except when she accepted her first appointment as an Assistant Fire Engine Operator in Region 5 on the Cleveland National Forest in 1989. Bequi took a leave of absence from 1990-1995 after the birth of her daughter Amity, to continue her personal fitness consulting business, "BodySense" and travel with her helicopter pilot husband to operate their personal helicopter business throughout the United States. Bequi returned to the Forest Service in 1995 and moved back to Albuquerque to work on the Sandia Ranger District as their first Fire Information Technician. She became the District Assistant Fire Management Officer on that District and in Fall 2001 came to the Fire Use Training Academy (FUTA) as their Prescribed Fire Operations Specialist where she still remains. Bequi is also very involved with Fire Operations Safety for the Region and a member of the National Forest Service Fire Operations Safety Council. Bequi is also a member of the Southwest Regional Office Wellness Committee and Regional Health and Safety Leadership Team. She has been instrumental in the implementation of the "Work Capacity Test" nationally and is the developer of "Fireline Fitness" which promotes physical fitness for wildland fire personnel. Bequi's true profession, other than fire management, is health and fitness. She has been pursuing her degree at UNM in Exercise Science and Athletic Training and is a nationally certified Personal Fitness Trainer specializing in youth sports and firefighter wellness. Aside from work, Bequi is married to Ron Livingston who works for the Bureau of Land Management as their Aviation Airworthiness Program Director and has 2 kids, Amity age 15 and Parker age 10. Bequi's hobbies include power walking and helping to coach her kids' sports teams.