



International Association *of* Wildland Fire

Firebreak Award for Excellence in Wildland Fire Management

2016 Recipient

**Jim Brenner, Fire Management Administrator
Florida Forest Service, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer
Services**

The “Management Award” was established to honor achievements and excellence in the management of wildland fire programs. This award recognizes an individual who have made lasting contributions in program management and inspired others through their creativity, innovation, leadership, application, guidance, and communication in response to challenging and controversial wildland fire management issues.

Jim was nominated by his peers in Florida who stated that he is one of the smartest, most innovative, and visionary people in this business. He has kept Florida fire management in the national forefront, providing a template for other states to follow.

Some, but certainly not all, his career accomplishments and contributions include:

- He was the first author to correctly correlate not only the impact of the warm phase of the Enso, but also the cold side of the ENSO and its impact on wildland fire activity in Florida and the Southeast. This work has proven markedly important, and notably in itself time in 1998 Jim correctly predicted the cold phase of that year that resulted in one of the worst fire seasons in Florida.
- Jim authored the Florida Prescribed Fire Act, passed in the Florida state legislature in 1990. This was the first statute passed in the nation that made the use of prescribed fire a property right. Jim also authored a revision to this act that now protects an individual burner from civil liability unless a court demonstrates the burner was ‘grossly negligent’. This unprecedented modification was a huge step in protecting the right to burn in Florida.
- Jim conceived and authored Florida’s Wildland Fire Risk Assessment system. Florida was the first state in the country to create a wildland fire risk assessment system based on



surface measurements of existing fuels. The Florida model was the basis for the Southern Risk Assessment that followed, and the current SouthWrap web based program that is being used by all 13 Southern States.

- As fire management administrator, Jim was concerned about the number of escaped prescribed burns because of an apparent lack of basic fire behavior knowledge. To address this problem, he developed the first statewide Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Program (IABPF) in the late 1980's. This program and the Certified Burner Program that he also devised and implemented have been used as a model by many other states. To date more than 3,000 individuals have graduated. His work and encouragement has led to an increase in prescribed fire activity that in large measure was responsible for Florida again recording a nationwide first in 2010 by treating over 2.6 million acres with prescribed fire.
- Jim developed the award winning Fire In Florida's Ecosystem's program that has educated more than 7,500 teachers in Florida about the important role fire has played both historically and today in benefiting both Florida flora and fauna.
- Jim has worked tirelessly over the years to improve the fire behavior program that he has been an integral part of, including instructing all federal fire courses from S-190 through S-490. He was one of the leaders in the redevelopment of the current version of S-490 and is currently working with the Missoula Fire Lab to redefine how fine dead fuel moisture is calculated. The improvements under way will make calculations using both PCBehave and GIS based programs like WFDS and FARSITE far more accurate.
- Brenner collaborated with Missoula Fire Laboratory scientists to develop the first gateway to the WIMS database. As a result, Florida was the first state to be able to send hourly weather readings to the WIMS program that not only benefited Florida but the country as a whole. This increased the number of stations in Florida by 67 locations (a 300% increase). • Jim was one of the first to recognize the importance of the EPA Exceptional Events Rule and wrote the first smoke management plan to be approved by the EPA. He also authored the revised 2014 plan to meet current EPA regulations; this document has also been approved
- Other endeavors include the Smokey and the Pros national program, the Fire Management Information System that Jim developed to handle all Florida fire management business (GIS based), and the Certified Pile burning

Jim was presented the award at the 5th International Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference in Portland, OR, April 11 – 14, 2016.

2017 Recipient

Steven R. Miller, Chief, Bureau of Land Resources, St Johns River Water Management District, Palatka, Florida, USA

Steve graduated from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point with a degree in Forest Administration in 1985, and Masters in Ecological Restoration from the University of Florida in 2016. He has since worked for a private forestry consultant, the USDA Forest Service, Texas Forest Service, and Florida Division of Forestry and is currently the Chief of the Bureau of Land Resources for the St. Johns River Water Management District. In his present capacity, Steve is responsible for directing a multiple use land management program on over 600,000 acres. Most of the lands SJRWMD manages require fire on a 3-5 year interval to sustain them ecologically, so prescribed fire is a major part of his duties. Steve is active in the North Florida Prescribed Fire Council, serving on the steering committee since 1992. He served on the 1998 Governor's Task Force on Wildland Fire, Florida Forestry Blue Ribbon Commission, the Florida Georgia Fire Summits (I & II) and is a current member of the Florida Forest Council. He has feet firmly planted in both fire camps (suppression and prescribed fire) and is qualified as an ICT2, OSC2 and an RXB1. He is committed to preparing the next generation of land/fire managers, he regularly travels to teach NWCG classes, and is currently serving as an Adjunct Instructor for the University of Florida. Steve and his wife are parents of two adults; one of whom is a second-generation forester and fire manager.



Steve was presented his award at our awards dinner in Boise in October 2017.

2019 Recipient

Detlef Mashauke, Waldbrandteam Fire Crew

IAWF is proud to announce that the 2019 recipient of the IAWF Management Award is Detlef Mashauke. Detlef first became connected to the wildland fire community during a ride-along with the Los Angeles County Fire Department in California in 1997. The different approach of fighting fire with hand crews, aircraft, and the use of fire combined with the lack of specialized training in Germany aroused his interest.

Since this time, his is a story of passion, interest, and selfless commitment. He continued to travel to the USA usually taking vacation time and paying his own costs to learn and grow his skills. He also attended courses and rode along with local agencies.

Back in Germany, he spent time teaching local fire agencies how to safely attack wildfires and how to adapt US and German tactics to the local environment. This eventually



expanded to the use of using live fire for real training scenarios. As part of a German disaster response team, he delivered a presentation at the 2009 10th Wildland Fire Management Safety Summit in Phoenix, Arizona, about the use of National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) based training to enhance firefighter safety fighting fires in Germany.

Forestry, fire departments, and other agencies were all working separately in Germany (and still do in some instances). Detlef's goal has always been to bring everyone to the table to discuss synergies, training principles, and tactics. His teaching methods and mentoring, not only as a student of fire but also as a leader, are well known in Germany. Many of his developments and suggestions to the agencies are based on the NWCG wildland fire and leadership materials which he adopted and translated so they would fit into the European system.

The disaster team responded for several missions to northern Portugal under Detlef's command to aid local resources in Vila Real and surrounding villages with a hand crew and engine support team. He taught the dangers of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to local fire departments when asked to do so by the Fire Chief of the city of Vila Real.

Detlef has contributed to several articles and two books about vegetation fires in Germany and delivered numerous training sessions regarding the safe and effective use of handtools and mobile teams with backpack pumps and small diameter fire hose; a tactic seldom used in Germany until Detlef paved the way for increased use.

Detlef developed a proposal for ordering new fire trucks with a supplemental equipment package including small-diameter hose and backpack pumps. This has led to the reconfiguration of official standards for forest fire trucks in Germany.

In 2015, Detlef realized that the multi-functional disaster response team with a USAR team and other diverse goals was not meeting the goal of establishing a fully functional, mobile, tactical fire crew structure. So, he formed new alliances, almost from scratch, that brought all stakeholders together to create a fully functional Type 2 Initial Attack crew. This new association, Waldbrandteam Fire Crew, has been in existence since February 2015. Detlef has made major contributions to the equipment and training of the unit. The Waldbrandteam received recognition in 2017 in IAWF's Wildfire Magazine (Wildfire June 2017) as Fired Up honorees. All team members are volunteers and their contributions involve taking time away from regular jobs and families to go abroad and help others, often on their own vacation time. The guiding association for the Waldbrandteam is a Non-Governmental Organization that relies on membership fees and donations to help defray travel expenses and equipment. Their equipment ranges from a full set of hand tools, a small, self-sufficient fire camp with tents and mess equipment up to a Mark 3 pump with hose and nozzles. All of the equipment is either donated or purchased with money Detlef receives during presentations for fire departments and other agencies.

His teaching goes far beyond the borders of Germany. He teaches the leadership course "Helicopter Wildfire Support – Branch Leader" at the Tyrolean Fire Academy and other locations in Austria. His main topics are the use of the Campbell Prediction System and the effective use of helitack crews.

Being the President of an all-volunteer, non-profit wildfire team means investing a lot of time and enthusiasm apart from his fulltime job as a fire captain/paramedic for the Salzgitter City fire department in northern Germany and volunteering as a firefighter for the local fire company in his village.

There is no doubt that Detlef Maushake has spent the past 20 years thinking, living and teaching wildfire safety. His groundbreaking accomplishments with the Waldbrandteam and in operational and safety training are significantly advancing wildland fire operations in Europe and many other areas of the world.



2020 Recipients Tim Sexton

Tim started his career as a seasonal firefighter on the Shasta-Trinity NF. Early in his career Tim held positions on various National Forests, the Bureau of Land Management, and National Park System, a few of which are highlighted below. Tim was also the Superintendent of the Redmond Hotshot Crew from 1981 through 1986, where he positively influenced numerous individuals who later went on to esteemed careers in resource and fire management. Tim then became a District FMO on the Winema NF, while obtaining a master's degree in Fire Ecology from Oregon State University. As the Deputy Regional FMO for the Intermountain Region of the National Park Service Tim's attitude and perspective of "fire use" began to evolve. With the support of mentors and leaders he began to understand the need for beneficial wildfire on the land and quickly became an advocate himself. After a year as Deputy Regional FMO Tim took on a new position as a Fire Ecologist for the National Park System. In this position, Tim showcased his deep compassion and empathy for folks in the fire community by unpopularly advocating for the crewmembers who were implementing the prescribed burn that escaped and became the Cerro Grande Fire. Many of those individuals have said that Tim's unwavering support was critical in the days after the fire when they felt vilified. Tim returned to the USFS as the national Fire Use Program Manager where he became a vocal proponent of the use of wildland and prescribed fire. Due to Tim's leadership in this area he participated in an interagency effort to update the federal wildfire management policy. This update was a major change in how federal land management agencies managed natural occurring wildland fires and removed many barriers to the flexibility needed in developing objectives and strategies to manage these fires. Currently, Tim is the Program Manager for the Interagency Fire Program Management RD&A program. He has been instrumental in improving the Wildfire Decision Support System by being responsive to users on needed updates for the next generation of the database. He and his staff provide



critical tools to support Agency Administrators, fire managers, and incident command teams in managing wildland fires.

Neil Cooper

Neil Cooper has made a defining contribution to modern fire management in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and his influence extends across the globe. Neil commenced firefighting in 1983 with the ACT Bushfire Service and has remained actively involved. Over the past 36 years, he has held every position from basic firefighter through Group Captain within the ACT Rural Fire Service. In 1999, Neil was appointed manager of all fire related activities within ACT Forests and in 2006 he was appointed Director of the newly formed ACT Fire Management Unit (FMU). The FMU was responsible for managing fire across 80% of the ACT including a large wildland-urban interface, fire-prone nature reserves within the urban area and steep, rugged alpine terrain of the Territory's water catchment. Neil developed a world class ACT fire program based on the latest science, technology, training and safety knowledge. Neil is a member of the National Council of Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council. As a member of the board of directors he represents the interests of all land management agencies from across Australia and New Zealand in their fire management functions within the Australasia's industry peak body. Neil is also Chair of the Forest Fire Management Group which reports to the Council of Australian Governments, the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. Neil is a founding member of the National Burning Project Executive Committee – a multi-million dollar project that delivers operational outcomes that provide consistency for the fire industry across Australia. He is also the ACT representative on the Forest and Forest Products Committee. Neil has twice represented Australia at the United Nations Committee on Forestry, and currently represents Australia at the North American Forest Fire Working Group meetings. Neil has also contributed to international fire-fighting deployments to North America in 2006 as Branch Director, in 2008 as Liaison Officer, and in 2017 as International Liaison Officer.



2021 Recipient Arthur “Butch” Blazer

The International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF) Firebreak Award is given to recognize and acknowledge sustained achievement in wildland fire management. This award was established to recognize achievements in the management of wildland fire programs. It recognizes individuals who have made lasting contributions in program management, influenced practices and protocols, and inspired others through their creativity, innovation, leadership, application, guidance, and communications in response to challenging and



controversial wildland fire management issues. While the Firebreak Award does not have a lengthy history, it has been awarded since 2016 and has been bestowed on four individuals to date. Selection of the recipient is based on open nominations reviewed by a sub-committee comprised of previous award recipients, IAWF Board members, and IAWF general members. Specific areas of sustained achievement in career service, management direction, program oversight, program influence and direction, and other achievements that improve the wildland fire management system are evaluated. This year's recipient of the IAWF Firebreak Award has a storied career with many achievements that have influenced wildland fire program management from numerous organizational levels. His primary interest focused on natural resources, forest management, watershed protection, and wildland fire management and his contributions are many and varied with countless ones continuing to guide and influence national program management. He has many innovative and creative achievements and some of the most notable include:

A lifelong Tribal member of the Mescalero Apache Tribe in New Mexico involved with wildland fire management, either directly in positions affecting fire management or indirectly while serving in consulting and program and policy making positions. Appointed by former NM Governor Bill Richardson as the first Native American State Forester, he led change within the agency as well as the NM Department of Energy and Natural Resources directed at greater focus on the use of wildland fire and landscape restoration. He initiated and completed a reorganization of the State Forestry Division into a model management structure that managed the State Forestry Program and concentrated on increased program production and accountability resulting in improved statewide forest and watershed health with reduced threats from catastrophic wildfire. Led the creation and implementation of the first truly comprehensive effort in New Mexico to bring together all affected stakeholders in wildland fire management for the purposes of community protection, ecosystem maintenance, and improved and sustained landscape resilience. – the New Mexico Healthy Forest and Watershed Plan. This yielded the first inclusive classification of all communities at risk, identified cooperative treatment projects and initiated advanced collaborative planning among local communities, counties, the State of New Mexico, federal land management agencies, private landowners, and the public. Appointed In 2011 by then-President Barack Obama as Deputy Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and the Environment within the U.S. Department of

Agriculture (USDA). He provided oversight and direction to the U.S. Forest Service and was responsible for overseeing USDA Natural Resources and the Environment – Forestry staff and operations. He worked closely with U.S. Senators, senior Congressional staff, various corporations and environmental groups and influenced or directed the drafting of public statements on natural resource and wildland fire management issues within the jurisdiction of USDA. In 2016, he received one of the highest federal service honors and was presented the President’s Lifetime Achievement Award for Volunteerism, signed by President Obama.

His achievements throughout his career have led to the establishment of influential and beneficial policies, programs, and practices highly instrumental in improving wildland fire management effectiveness today and will into the future. More recently, he served as the President of the Mescalero Apache Tribe located in southcentral New Mexico where he provided executive leadership to the Mescalero Apache People; served as Chairman of the Mescalero Apache Tribal Council, CEO of the Mescalero Apache Tribe, and provided oversight to the wildland fire management program for the Tribe; a very important role as Tribal lands are situated in one of the highest at-risk areas in the state. While his service has had substantial impacts on the wildland fire management community, it is also important to note that throughout his career, he has promoted and led the advancement of Native Americans as well as all others in fire management and natural resources. He was the first Native American State Forester in NM and the first Native American Undersecretary in the USDA. His extensive experience in working with Federal, Tribal, and State entities, as well as non-profit organizations and experience in executive management and leadership positions over his 40+ years as a public servant has made him a leader in this field, and even more importantly, a well-respected and admired role model for Native Americans in wildland fire management, natural resources, and public service, and exceedingly deserving of the recognition of the IAWF Firebreak Award for Excellence in Fire Management. Ladies and gentlemen, it is our great pleasure to announce that the recipient of the 2021 IAWF Firebreak Award for Excellence in Wildland Fire Management is Arthur (Butch) Blazer, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA. Congratulations Butch!