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Bryce Canyon National Park Fire Management

Bryce Canyon Educational Outreach Programs Include Wildland Fire

Recently, Bryce Canyon National Park hosted local area high school students who visited the park to learn about employment opportunities and other issues related to park management, including wildland fire. Andrew Hostad, the park's Engine Foreman, took the lead for the fire management staff in these school visits which were sponsored by the Bryce Canyon Natural History Association's Education Coordinator. These education outreach programs provided the students a chance to interact with park staff and to learn about some of the many opportunities that the National Park Service (NPS) has to offer and a variety of the issues that are addressed to successfully manage our parks.

All of the students were given an introduction to fire management, as well as other park service disciplines. They then broke up into smaller groups, based on their interests, for more detailed discussions about their chosen discipline. The 10 students who choose fire management were given a more in depth look at wildland fire and what a career in fire is like. They looked at what firefighters do, what the work is like and how to apply for summer jobs. They also got to look at a wildland fire engine and some of the associated tools.

Later that same month, 40 students from local Earth Science classes came to talk about natural systems in the park, including wildfire. Hostad again lead the discussions about fire management including such topics as nutrient recycling, forest regeneration, fuel loading, prescribed fire, smoke issues and climate change. After these general discussions, the students were taken by bus to the site of this summer's Bridge Fire and last summer's Puma Prescribed Fire to compare them and learn more about fire in the Bryce Canyon ecosystem.

By offering these educational outreach programs to local youth, a more cooperative relationship can be established which will benefit both the NPS and youth groups and lead to a better understanding of how and why wildland fires are managed in our national parks.