

Smokey Bear Awards: Sample Nomination

This is a sample nomination. It has been anonymized/generalized for privacy purposes.

General nomination tips:

- **Show, don't tell!** Instead of stating "this person went above and beyond," describe the person's regular responsibilities and how this effort was done outside of those responsibilities.
- **Provide specifics.** When possible, provide statistics about people/places served, media hits, number of events, etc. Although not always easy to track, statistics about changes in human-caused wildfires are always compelling.
- **Describe the impact.** In answering each prompt, illustrate how the effort made a difference in each category (geographic area, people reached, creativity, partnerships, etc.). It should be clear (without the need to explicitly state) that this project was transformational in some way.

Describe the geographic scope of this wildfire prevention effort (within a state, multiple states, etc.):

Our agency established a new fire prevention program to address local prevention needs. While it is specific to our state, including state-specific statistics, the overall format of the training can be applied to multiple states. Additionally, Jane Spark traveled to other states to help other agencies modernize their fire prevention programs.

Describe how the wildfire prevention effort could be accomplished beyond its original geographic area or audience:

The training was originally developed as an onboarding for new agency employees, and to help integrate non-fire personnel into fire prevention efforts when needed. However, since its launch, it has now been made available to volunteer fire departments to help train their staff. It has also been shared with fire prevention personnel in a neighboring state as a model that could be used for their own state.

What works:

Introduces the scope of the work. It not only describes the geographic area but also the relevant groups. Both sections clearly illustrate how the project can be replicated and/or the potential to expand in geographic scope or project depth.

Please provide a 100- to 500- word summary of the nominee's work:

Jane Spark is a Staff Forester with the state's shared stewardship program. Her normal job responsibilities focus on sustainable forestry and silviculture. However, during a high wildfire season, she developed a keen interest in wildfire prevention and has since taken every opportunity to support fire prevention activities during heightened wildfire danger.

During the wildfire seasons of 2021—2023, Ms. Spark supported fire prevention activities across 25 counties, engaging in a total of 58 events, making 1,796 direct contacts, attended a major league baseball game where Smokey threw the first pitch, developed safety and prevention kits for schools and homeowners, and developed an innovative Fire Prevention online training. All counties, contacts, and events were tracked through Survey Monkey.

The prevention training was innovative and necessary because non-fire personnel, although always willing to help in fire prevention, often lack the specific knowledge of wildfire. Jane recognized that some basic wildfire information would make them more comfortable while carrying out prevention activities and interacting with the public. This new online training is now being used as an onboarding for new employees, and as a basic training for non-fire agency personnel that may be interested in or needed to assist in wildfire responses.

What works:

Clearly demonstrates how the nominee exceeds normal job expectations. It provides statistics and examples of implementation. It also identifies why the work was important and how it filled a unique niche/need in wildfire prevention.

Describe the service/project, tools or methods used, short- term and long-term outcomes, what objectives were met or exceeded, and, in general terms, how many people it reached:

In the three fire seasons combined, Jane Spark engaged in 58 events reaching a total of 1,796 people in direct contacts. Her training program was sent directly to 532 state employees, many of which provided positive feedback. Once shared with the agency employees, the training link was then shared to some volunteer fire departments. This was especially helpful in our more rural counties.

In the short term, all of Ms. Spark's efforts immediately raised awareness for wildfire and drought conditions during the fire seasons, but also proved successful activities that could be repeated in subsequent fire seasons. Her training program quickly and immediately prepared non-fire personnel with a basic knowledge of wildfire so they could better assist with prevention and outreach activities. It has also laid a foundation for future employees to gain a better basic understanding of wildfires in our state.

How did the nominee's work go above and beyond to prevent human-caused, unplanned wildfires?

As a Staff Forester with the shared stewardship program, fire prevention is not Jane's normal job duty, but something she is passionate about because she understands the negative impacts wildfires can have on our natural resources and communities. With the support of her supervisor, she has been permitted to support fire prevention activities as her time allows while remaining committed to all her primary job duties.

During the 2021 fire season, Ms. Spark started supporting fire prevention efforts in her district. This was her first experience with fire prevention, and this was when she had the initial idea for

developing a training as an introduction to wildfire. The thought was that this type of training would better prepare non-fire personnel that are interested in supporting fire prevention activities. Ms. Spark did her own research and borrowed materials from a coworker and set her sights on building the first ever state-specific fire prevention training. This project was accomplished in between her normal job duties, and some on her own time.

Also during this particular fire season, Jane developed fire prevention education materials for distribution to schools and community centers, attended a major league baseball game with a fire prevention booth and Smokey Bear, in addition to participating in ten other events.

During the 2023 fire season, Jane Spark again volunteered to support fire prevention activities, and even joined up with a National Fire Prevention Team. Her new training was completed and launched publicly in March 2023 and received much positive feedback from agency coworkers. During this fire season, Jane developed school kits that were delivered to 23 primary and elementary schools, in addition to participating in 35 other activities.

Throughout these past couple years and all her prevention activities, topics addressed by Ms. Spark included promoting local burn bans, equipment safety, Smokey Bear history and messages, careless debris burning, vehicle safety, and campfire safety. All of which were new to Jane and she had to learn the details of these messages, including the appropriate timing and methods of delivering the messages to target audiences. She went the extra mile to focus on the most common human-caused wildfire starts in each county to tailor her prevention programming at the local level. This helped to reduce human-caused wildfires by as much as 50% in some counties.

What works:

Show, don't tell! This section illustrates how the nominee worked out of her own passion, not due to any job requirements. It shows Ms. Spark's passion and dedication through research, reflection, innovation and collaboration.

Provide examples of how this project was creative and innovative:

Ms. Spark developed the ideas of preparing fire prevention education kits for community centers as well as preparing school kits. The community center kits helped reach slightly older (non-elementary) children, especially at-risk youth. Her school kits included lesson plans and ideas, educational materials, and Smokey Bear books that then prepared teachers to be able to deliver the prevention lessons to their students themselves. By incorporating the participation of the teachers and schools, Jane was able to directly increase our agency's capacity for educating the public by empowering the teachers to do it on their own. Once prepared and given the appropriate supplies, the teachers were excited to incorporate these lessons into their classrooms.

Lastly, her Fire Prevention online training is the first of its kind. This training specifically targets state fire cause statistics broken down by county, wildfire history, and notable national historical

events that have influenced wildfire strategies in the state. It is now being used as an onboarding training for new agency employees, a way to better prepare non-fire personnel who are interested in supporting wildfire response in any capacity, and also as a reference for anyone to look back on for help in preparing for school programs, setting up information booths, learning the rules of Smokey Bear or knowing where to order prevention supplies. Having these standardized resources has greatly improved agency capacity and will likely continue to help decrease human-caused wildfires in the future.

What works:

This section shows how the project was new to this organization's wildfire prevention strategy, including new materials and audiences. It also demonstrates long-term sustainability through capacity-building.

Describe how the project/service targets national audiences, themes, messages, and goals:

Ms. Spark's efforts during the two fire seasons and the new innovative training she developed, utilizes standard fire prevention themes and messaging for careless debris burning, equipment safety, campfire safety, road-side ignitions, and burn bans so it is easily recognizable on the national scale, regardless of target audiences.

Her efforts accomplished goals set forth in the National Cohesive Strategy, specifically one of the four broad challenges of Managing Human-caused Ignitions. She also helped accomplish several state goals: X, Y and Z.

Describe how the project or activity engaged groups, organizations, or agencies, and whether these participants were new to this activity:

Jane Spark's efforts have brought together multiple departments within the state forest service and provided an opportunity for collaboration with U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management offices. While her innovative ideas were her own, they were quickly shared and put into action by others working in prevention during the fire seasons. For example, elementary teachers and volunteer fire departments were able to carry out wildfire prevention education programming more frequently and on a more local scale. Jane also shared her experiences and her passion enticed other foresters non-fire personnel to join the efforts and replicate her ideas across more counties.

While Ms. Spark reached many schools in her efforts, she also engaged new groups with community centers and title and loan companies. All these new audiences helped build our agency's capacity for outreach and education, as well as strengthen partnerships for any future agency opportunities.

What works:

This section not only lists the audiences and organizations involved but demonstrates the degree of collaboration and the scope of impact. It shows how partners were engaged and clarifies which groups were existing or new partners.

Describe how the project or work was funded through volunteer time, existing programmatic funds, and/or any external sources:

The training program was developed using Articulate software and a license that was already owned by the agency, and therefore did not require any additional funding. The sunburst chart and race chart built within the training program was done so using the free online version of Flourish.

All of Jane Spark's fire prevention efforts during the three wildfire seasons were fully supported and funded utilizing state allocated funding.

Describe the publicity plan that would be deployed in the event this nominee is selected for a Smokey Bear Award:

The State Forest Service will post to all social media channels and leverage traditional media through a press release recognizing Jane Spark's outstanding efforts. Jane would also be recognized at a state award ceremony with employees from all state agencies. The State Forest Service will also engage with our fire partners to promote the Smokey Bear Award by providing information for their newsletters and blogs.