



**Forest Service**

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# News Release

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## North Zone Fire Management Hosts Their First Women in Wildfire Boot Camp

**FREDONIA, Ariz., Sept. 18, 2019** --The Kaibab National Forest and Grand Canyon National Park joined together to facilitate a Women in Wildfire (WIW) boot camp. Experienced firefighters from the forest and park mentored, taught and challenged 16 women selected to participate in the training, the first one the Kaibab has hosted.

The (WIW) boot camps are a pathway for women to learn about and prepare for careers in wildland fire, in many cases a profession that they may not have previously considered. The goal of this program is to increase the number of qualified, enthusiastic and professional women on certification lists for federal fire and aviation management hiring.

"I think part of the problem is that, all too often, women don't really "see" themselves as firefighters," said Kaibab National Forest Supervisor Heather Provencio. "Society, our families, and others don't always raise girls to think about the possibility of such careers. This class is an opportunity for women to learn from women and other fire professionals, in a comfortable atmosphere, with others like them, to see if this job is the right fit for them."

The boot camp took place during two three-day weekend training sessions held Sept. 6-8 and Sept. 13-15 at the Forest Service Jacob Lake compound. The participants received foundational firefighting training in both classroom and field settings with topics including fire behavior, physical fitness training, map and compass usage and orienteering, fire equipment and tool usage as well as fireline construction. After official duty hours continued to provide learning opportunities as participants gained crew cohesion by camping together as a crew, bonding around a campfire and getting to ask questions of women currently working in wildland fire.

For Vanna James from Tewa Village, First Mesa on the Hopi Reservation just as important as the training itself was the learning environment. "Being in a camp with other women, people who you can relate to and with, and getting to learn from them being so fully supported" helped make this opportunity a special experience. Lindsay Wilburn from Big Water, Utah, added, "When you see these other women





doing it, and hear their stories, the fact is that this is achievable. If you want it you can do it."

In addition to exposure to fire careers, guest speakers were also on hand to highlight other potential career opportunities for women within land management agencies such as forestry and silviculture, recreation, administration, wildlife biology, botany, archeology, emergency medical services, search and rescue and law enforcement.

Another component of the boot camp was training on resume writing and applying for jobs using the USAjobs.gov website, the clearing house for all federal jobs. "The timing for this boot camp is perfect in that these women will have the immediate opportunity to apply for jobs for next fire season" said Provencio. The Southwestern Region of the Forest Service which includes the Kaibab National Forest, is currently accepting applications for temporary jobs for the 2020 field season on [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). The application period closes on September 25.

Other forests around the region have already or will be hosting their own Women in Wildfire boot camps this fall including the Prescott, Coconino, Gila and Tonto National Forests. For more information or to apply please visit the Forest Service Southwestern Region's Women in Wildfire program webpage at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r3/fire-aviation/?cid=FSEPRD643422>

For more information on the Kaibab National Forest please visit:

- Kaibab National Forest Website: [www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab](http://www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab)
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/KaibabNF](http://www.twitter.com/KaibabNF)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/KaibabNF](http://www.facebook.com/KaibabNF)
- Flickr: <http://bit.ly/WomenInWildfire2019>

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