OFS OKLAHOMA FORESTRY SERVICES

Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
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MEET OUR FIREFIGHTING TEAM

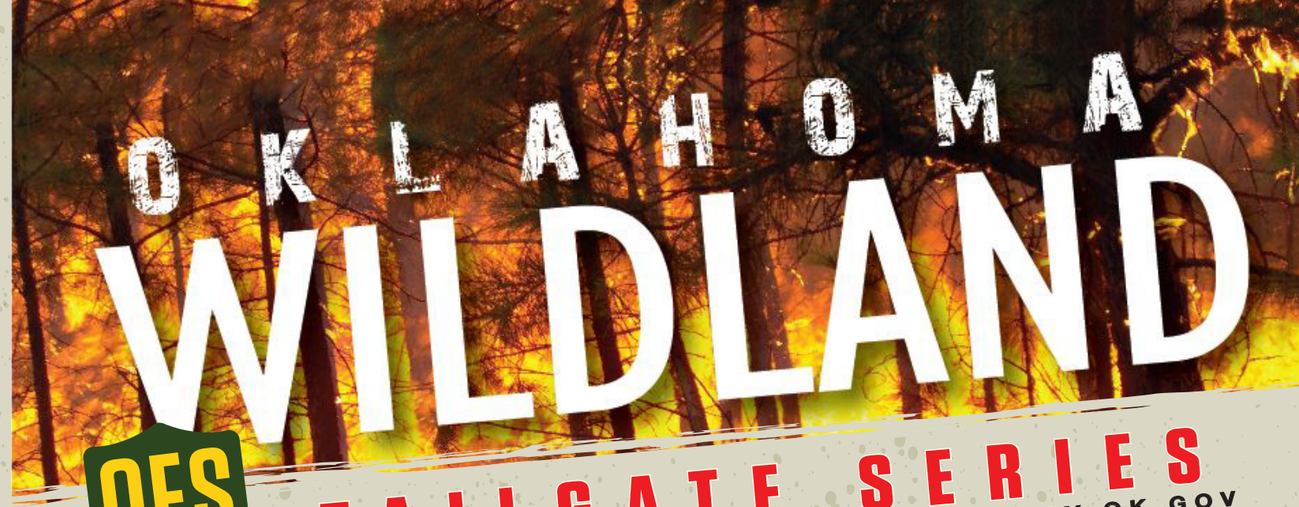
Arron Sumpter

Arron Sumpter, Forest Ranger 1 with Oklahoma Forestry Services, works in eastern Latimer and western LeFlore counties in the East Central Area. His responsibilities include fire suppression, fire prevention and education. Forest rangers also work alongside professional foresters cruising timber, finding property corners, applying prescribed fire and providing technical forestry assistance to landowners.

Hired in 2015, Sumpter is on a training path to gain the experience and qualifications to progress to incident commander and beyond. He is currently working through his single resource boss task book that documents successful completion of activities associated with a crew boss, a heavy equipment boss, an engine boss and others. Sumpter will go through progressively more detailed and complex training to fill important operational and overhead positions required in fire suppression. Alternate training tracks can lead to filling positions in other incident command branches which include plans, logistics and finance. A ranger's leadership abilities also figure prominently in his success, as does his response to leadership from supervisors and veteran rangers.

Sumpter is required to annually pass the arduous level of the work capacity test. At this level, he is required to carry a 45 pound pack over a three-mile course in under 45 minutes. Keeping an eye toward fitness and conditioning for fire season are important aspects of a ranger's routine.

For questions or comments contact Drew Daily, fire management staff forester, at drew.daily@ag.ok.gov or call 405-522-6158.
To sign up for our email list, suggest topics for future issues or download Oklahoma Wildland Tailgate issues visit forestry.ok.gov/tailgate.



OKLAHOMA WILDLAND

TAILGATE SERIES

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OFS MANAGE PROTECT

Oklahoma Forestry Services developed this training tool for fire departments as a supplement to formal firefighter training. Watch for a new message quarterly to use in formal safety meetings or in small "tailgate" groups as an effective way to increase preparedness and improve safety. The Tailgate Series is available at www.forestry.ok.gov.

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ARE YOU READY TO LEAD? The fireground is a dynamic environment with numerous hazards and inherent risk. These dangers make it imperative that every leader on the fire is focused on safe and effective tactis that support incident objectives. What does it mean to lead on the fireground?

WILDLAND TAILGATE MINI-SERIES

This issue, and the three following, will address topics that are pertinent to leading on the fireground. The Leadership Series includes:

- Operational Leadership
- Duty, Respect, Integrity
- Risk Management Process
- After Action Review

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The topic of Leadership has had volumes of "how-to's" developed, been debated as to whether leaders are born or made, and spurred numerous training opportunities. But, when on the fireground, leadership is required from every level. Incident Responder to Incident Commander - all are required to make timely leadership decisions that affect incident success measured in incident personnel and public safety, and effectiveness in achieving incident objectives. There is a foundation for operational leadership in the wildland fire service that establishes a solid platform for success in the organization no matter if you are a follower, leader of people, leader of leaders or leading an organization. Duty, Respect, and Integrity...

Operational Leadership: Provide purpose, direction and motivation for wildland firefighters working to accomplish difficult tasks under dangerous, stressful circumstances.

• **TAKE CHARGE** of assigned resources.
- Recognize that a coordinated attack is the most efficient method of suppressing a fire safely and effectively. Establish a plan accounting for all of your resources taking advantage of their strengths.

• **MOTIVATE** firefighters with a "can do safely" attitude.
- Utilize the Risk Management Process to establish a focus on safe and effective actions by identifying and assessing hazards, developing and implementing hazard controls and continually evaluate the effectiveness of operations gauged against safe practices.

• **DEMONSTRATE INITIATIVE** by taking action in absense of orders.
- Recognize that the wildland fire environment is dynamic and that tactical adaptation is often required to be successful. Utilize the strengths and abilities of personnel and equipment to take advantage of favorable changes in the Fire Environment (Fuels, Weather, and Topography)

• **COMMUNICATE** by giving specific instructions and asking for feedback.
- Brief resources effectively identifying the Task (what is to be done), Purpose (why it is to be done) and End State (how it should look when done).
- Be mindful of feedback from fireline subordinates and encourage candid, meaningful input

• **SUPERVISE** at the scene of action.
- Leadership on the fireground is a continual process of monitoring progress weighed against strategies supporting incident objectives. Assess progress toward completion of tasks, encourage successful actions and make adjustments when necessary.

ON THE FIREGROUND

APPLYING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

THE SITUATION

You have been assigned to the Coyote Fire that started from an unattended debris burn yesterday afternoon. Presently, the fire is approximately 450 acres actively burning in hardwood timber with a grass understory in rolling/rocky terrain. Upon checking in at the Incident Command Post, you are assigned as a Division Supervisor on the west side of the fire (Division Kilo). The Intial Attack IC informed you that Division Alpha has the anchor point established along a road and is progressing on the east side of the fire with dozers and a handcrew working to tie in with Division Uniform. The IC instructed you to progress up the west side from the anchor point working as direct as possible while also protecting three homes with a handful of outbuildings.

The following resources have been assigned to you:
• Smith County Task Force (Task Force Leader, 2 Type 6 Engines, 2 Type 2 Engines, 1 Water Tender)
• State Forestry Task Force (Task Force Leader, 2 Type 6 Engines, 2 Type 2 Dozers)
• Sundown Fire Department (Chief 2, Brush 1, Brush 2, and Tanker 1)

Utilizing the Operational Leadership foundation described previously, consider the following questions:

1. Take Charge: ***Describe how you will establish your leadership presence.***
   A. Organize the resources assigned to you establishing span of control matching your resource capabilities to the task to be completed. Develop a plan and seek input from the resources assigned to you.
2. Motivate: ***Identify what needs to be accomplished to motivate resources assigned to you.***
   A. Brief the resources assigned to you addressing the task at hand, the purpose for the actions to be taken and how you envision progress toward achieving success accounting for the safety of responders.
3. When you arrive at the location the IC indicated you should begin your work, you observe that the fire is making a rapid push toward structures on the west side of the fire. ***What are some actions that you should consider taking?***
   A. Initiate point protection on the structures identifying escape routes and safety zones for the resources you assign.
   B. Communicate the changes to the IC and request additional resources when available to assist with fire suppression since you had to commit many of your folks to structure protection.

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