



P-310 Unit 1: National Perspective

Unit Objectives:

- Identify the fundamental use of Fire Prevention Education Teams (FPETs).
- Describe the history of Fire Prevention Education Teams.
- Encourage the use of Fire Prevention Education Teams.
- Define and overcome challenges.

Unit at a Glance:

Topics	Method	Duration
Introduction	Presentation	10 Minutes
Use of FPETs	Presentation	20 Minutes
History of FPETs	Presentation	10 Minutes
Encouraging FPET Use	Presentation	10 Minutes
Challenges Faced by FPETs	Presentation	10 minutes
Total Unit Duration		1 Hour

Materials:

For Each Participant

- The Economic Benefits of Wildfire Prevention Education (<https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/58443>)
- Net Benefits of Wildfire Prevention Education Efforts (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/pubs/34905>)
- Effect of fire prevention programs on accidental and incendiary wildfires on tribal lands in the United States (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/pubs/50911>)

Classroom

- Ability to display images and video on large screen.
- White board or easel access for group breakout.

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Guides and Key

The presentations and instructor guides include notes to aid facilitators in instruction.

Key

- Indicates an action for the instructor to take.
 - Indicates topics and information for the facilitator to use as they see fit.

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- Review objectives with students.

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FPETs Introduction

- **Change is constant.**
- **FPETs offer a new aspect to the wildfire suppression scenario.**

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- Just the fact that there are more people in the world each day means the potential for careless or accidental wildfire increases. When you combine this fact with the number of communities popping up near the wildlands, the only things that will reduce loss are those actions taken before the fire burns.

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What Is A FPET?

FPETs are a group of trained professionals that...

- Are proactive
- Assess the problem
- Find solutions
- Set the stage for future change



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- This course will describe how fire prevention education teams fit into this puzzle.
- Each of these steps is a part of the total process that leads to reduced losses and lower suppression costs. A Fire Prevention Education Team must:
 - Be proactive in addressing the threat and risk of wildfire.
 - Assess the problem using scientifically tried analysis techniques.
 - Find solutions to prevention issues that meet the needs of the people and the community.
 - Set the stage for future change by changing people's minds about fire and how to deal with it.

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What is a FPET? (continued)

- Reduce human-caused fires.
- Reduce fire suppression costs.
- Reduce loss of lives, property, and resource loss.



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- Make people aware of the problem and demonstrate proper protection methods.
- Reduce costs by reducing the number of fires that must be suppressed.

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How is an FPET used?

- **Holiday Events**
- **Insect and Disease damage**
- **Wildland Urban Interface**
- **Major outdoor events and gatherings**
- **Forest Product Gathering**
- **Cultural Gatherings**
- **Recreation Events**

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How is an FPET used? (continued)

- **International Border wildfires**
- **Forest and Fire Management Issues**
- **Community Outreach**
- **Youth and Conservation Education Programs**
- **High Frequency of Ignitions**

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History of FPETs

- **Fire Season Of 1996, the Southwestern Area Of The United States.**
- **No one knew what a fire prevention education team was in the summer of 1996 when the southwest area of the United states was experiencing extreme drought and a large number of fires.**
- **Department Of The Interior Sent A Diagnostic Team**
- **National Park Service Funded The First Activity**
- **Teams Were Activated Throughout The Southwestern Geographical Area.**

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History of FPETs (continued)

- End Of Season Evaluation Panel Determined the success of the Program.
- Decided to develop and implement a national program.
- In 1997, training programs began for both Team Prevention Education Team Leader (PETL) and Prevention Education Team Member (PETM).
- In 2002, National Wildfire Coordinating Group approved a multi-year implementation plan.

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Human Carelessness

- **Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fires have become complex and costly.**
- **Fire Prevention activities have been shown to save money on suppression costs and losses.**



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Note to Instructor

- Hand out The Economic Benefits of Wildfire Prevention Education article. (<https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/58443>)
- Refer students to Net Benefits of Wildfire Prevention Education Efforts article. (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/pubs/34905>)
- Refer students to Effect of Fire Prevention Programs on Accidental and Incendiary Wildfires on Tribal Lands in the United States article, (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/pubs/50911>)

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Examples of FPET Historical Use

- **1996 Southwest Fire situation resulted in the use of the first FPET during extreme fire conditions.**
- **The Texas Forests Service developed a team and human ignitions dropped dramatically even though weather conditions worsened and 4th of July activity increased.**

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Note to Instructor:

- Direct the students through a series of examples showing how teams have dramatically reduced unwanted human-caused ignitions during periods of severe fire occurrence. The instructor may add to or replace the following examples.
 - **1996 Southwest:**
 - Conditions were extreme.
 - High severity conditions with energy release components and the drought index was very high to extreme. Highest fire severity on record up until that time.
 - **Dry Periods:**
 - More teams were developed in conjunction with the national team. This was the first time a requesting agency had taken on the responsibility of establishing more teams. Doing so substantially helped enhance and promote the FPET program.
 - The Texas Forest Service established a fire prevention program and a team effort within the state that is well supported by the agency and the state's legislature.

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Examples of FPET Historical Use (continued)

- In 2017, the country was going to experience a total eclipse during a severe fire season.
- No significant human-caused wildfires started in association with this several-day event.

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- The path of totality was traveling from the northwest in Oregon and exiting the United States in Charleston, SC.
- The weather conditions and fire danger ratings at the time of this August event ranged from High to Extreme.
- Fire Prevention Education Teams were mobilized to various locations in Oregon, Idaho, Kentucky, and North Carolina.
 - No significant human-caused wildfires started in association with this several-day event, and in many cases, there were fewer than average abandoned campfires and human-caused ignitions.

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FPETs Challenges

- **Teams not fully recognized.**
- **Short supply of qualified PETL and PETM.**
- **Not integrated in fire planning.**
- **Funding**

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Note to Instructor:

- Share with students the need to add prevention teams to the fire management planning process.
 - Prevention teams are not fully recognized by the fire community. Fire managers continue to have a suppression mentality. This means that prevention is often overlooked as a viable pre-suppression planning option.
 - The fire planning and budget process often leave out wildfire prevention training, personnel (capacity) needs, and prevention strategy implementation costs.
 - There is a short supply of qualified team members and leaders. Training is required for these positions and is often a low priority when funding and time are limited.
 - By leaving prevention teams out, the fire planning process fails to integrate all components and is heavy on suppression. This leads to high cost and resource loss.
 - The ultimate result is that prevention continues to be inadequately funded.
 - Funding for fire prevention education teams requires pre-planning and can change with policy. Sources of funding FPETs include severity funding, state funding through grants, trespass recovery funds, and the use of P-codes if appropriate.

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Overcoming the Challenges

- **FPET training programs**
- **Engage fire managers**
- **Documentation of successes**
- **Internal and External Community Outreach**

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- Training programs like this one will develop skilled people capable of developing successful, well-rounded wildfire prevention programs.
- Find ways to participate with teams and encourage fire managers to either participate or observe the work that is being done.
- Prevention teams should take the time to document their work. Write reports, papers, and articles so others can see the results and their successes
- Encourage the fire community to use prevention to its full benefit. This can take the form of education, enforcement, engineering, or administration (more to come on this). The key is to act.

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What Has Already Changed?

- National PETLs are available.
- States use teams as part of their fire program.
- NFPET Program Plan in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide.
- An official prevention element was added to the fire planning process.

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Note to Instructor:

- Give additional examples of what has already changed. Give examples of success stories from your experiences.
 - An official prevention element allows any federal or state agency that uses this process to budget for prevention education personnel based on their need.

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Why Are You Here?

- **Assessment**
- **Integrating prevention into the total fire program**
- **Proactive Education**
- **Adding tools to the toolbox**
- **Be an advocate for prevention**
- **Add to the infrastructure**



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- Use the tools of assessment, social interaction, and education to reduce human-caused ignitions.
- Carry these techniques back to your administrators and planners, to help them begin the process of integrating prevention into the total program.
- Become a part of a national group that emphasizes pro-active prevention strategies rather than reactionary suppression.
- Develop this concept within your agency or unit to be sure it fits their prevention education needs.
- Be an advocate for the integration of prevention education as a part of a unit's fire planning process. This step will assure a balanced fire program.
- Add to the infrastructure of the organization.

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Review Unit Objectives

- **Identify the fundamental use of Fire Prevention Education Teams (FPETs).**
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- Review objectives with students.