



International Association *of* Wildland Fire

Excellence in Wildland Fire Management

2016 Recipient

**Jim Brenner, Fire Management Administrator
Florida Forest Service, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer
Services**

The “Management Award” was established to honor achievements and excellence in the management of wildland fire programs. This award recognizes an individual who have made lasting contributions in program management and inspired others through their creativity, innovation, leadership, application, guidance, and communication in response to challenging and controversial wildland fire management issues.

Jim was nominated by his peers in Florida who stated that he is one of the smartest, most innovative, and visionary people in this business. He has kept Florida fire management in the national forefront, providing a template for other states to follow.

Some, but certainly not all, his career accomplishments and contributions include:

- He was the first author to correctly correlate not only the impact of the warm phase of the Enso, but also the cold side of the ENSO and its impact on wildland fire activity in Florida and the Southeast. This work has proven markedly important, and notably in itself time in 1998 Jim correctly predicted the cold phase of that year that resulted in one of the worst fire seasons in Florida.
- Jim authored the Florida Prescribed Fire Act, passed in the Florida state legislature in 1990. This was the first statute passed in the nation that made the use of prescribed fire a property right. Jim also authored a revision to this act that now protects an individual burner from civil liability unless a court demonstrates the burner was ‘grossly negligent’. This unprecedented modification was a huge step in protecting the right to burn in Florida.



- Jim conceived and authored Florida's Wildland Fire Risk Assessment system. Florida was the first state in the country to create a wildland fire risk assessment system based on surface measurements of existing fuels. The Florida model was the basis for the Southern Risk Assessment that followed, and the current SouthWrap web based program that is being used by all 13 Southern States.
- As fire management administrator, Jim was concerned about the number of escaped prescribed burns because of an apparent lack of basic fire behavior knowledge. To address this problem, he developed the first statewide Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Program (IABPF) in the late 1980's. This program and the Certified Burner Program that he also devised and implemented have been used as a model by many other states. To date more than 3,000 individuals have graduated. His work and encouragement has led to an increase in prescribed fire activity that in large measure was responsible for Florida again recording a nationwide first in 2010 by treating over 2.6 million acres with prescribed fire.
- Jim developed the award winning Fire In Florida's Ecosystem's program that has educated more than 7,500 teachers in Florida about the important role fire has played both historically and today in benefiting both Florida flora and fauna.
- Jim has worked tirelessly over the years to improve the fire behavior program that he has been an integral part of, including instructing all federal fire courses from S-190 through S-490. He was one of the leaders in the redevelopment of the current version of S-490 and is currently working with the Missoula Fire Lab to redefine how fine dead fuel moisture is calculated. The improvements under way will make calculations using both PCBehave and GIS based programs like WFDS and FARSITE far more accurate.
- Brenner collaborated with Missoula Fire Laboratory scientists to develop the first gateway to the WIMS database. As a result, Florida was the first state to be able to send hourly weather readings to the WIMS program that not only benefited Florida but the country as a whole. This increased the number of stations in Florida by 67 locations (a 300% increase).
- Jim was one of the first to recognize the importance of the EPA Exceptional Events Rule and wrote the first smoke management plan to be approved by the EPA. He also authored the revised 2014 plan to meet current EPA regulations; this document has also been approved
- Other endeavors include the Smokey and the Pros national program, the Fire Management Information System that Jim developed to handle all Florida fire management business (GIS based), and the Certified Pile burning

Jim was presented the award at the 5th International Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference in Portland, OR, April 11 – 14, 2016.