

# A FIRST STEP TOWARD IMPROVED FIRELINE SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY



Paul Keller

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“This is the beginning of a new culture.”

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That’s how Ed Hollenshead, fire operations safety officer for the USDA Forest Service at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID, gauges the potential impact of the first Pulaski Conference.

Held in Alta, UT, the second week in June 2005, the Pulaski Conference was designed to “assemble foundational doctrine upon which the Forest Service will accomplish its mission in fire sup-

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*Paul Keller is the managing editor of Fire Management Today.*

pression,” says Hollenshead, who served as the conference’s incident commander.

“This doctrine is foundational, not operational,” he explains. “It is not yet the finished product, but rather the base upon which the finalized foundational doctrine will rest.”

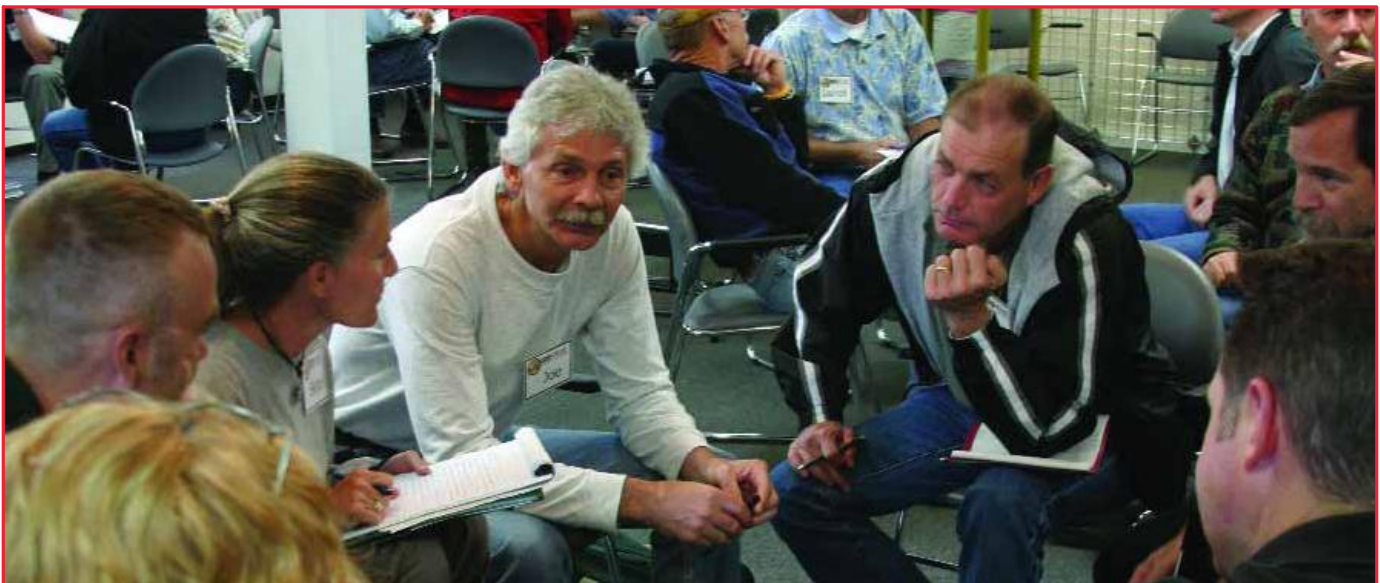
The conference’s attendees included wildland fire professionals from every Forest Service region—technicians, program managers, line officers, two regional foresters, research station employees—as well as safety and occupational health professionals.

In this safety themed issue of *Fire Management Today*, articles by Hollenshead and Tom Harbour,

Director of Fire and Aviation Management for the Forest Service’s Washington Office, Washington, DC, explain the agency’s central dilemma that prompted the need for this conference. Jack Kirkendall, fire management officer for the Bitterroot National Forest, Hamilton, MT, helps put this unique conference and its outcomes in perspective.

A chronological summary also provides an inside peek into how conference participants took this first significant step toward a framework of wildland fire suppression foundational doctrine.

Doctrine aimed directly at improving fireline safety and efficiency. ■



*Brainstorming. Pulaski Conference attendees quickly learn that the pace must be fast and the hours long to accomplish their landmark objectives. Photo: Gary C. Chancey, USDA Forest Service, Black Hills National Forest, Custer, SD, 2005.*