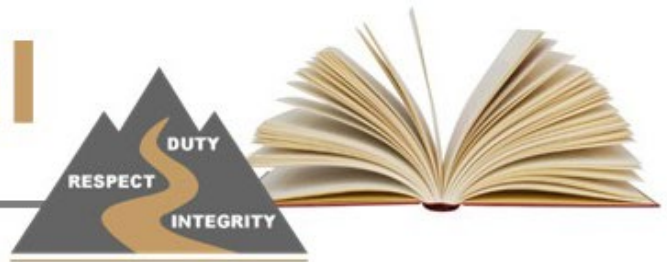


# Professional Reading Program

Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program



## *The Wisdom of the Bullfrog* by William H McRaven

**Best Wildland Fire Leadership Level to read this book:**

- All leadership levels

### Why Read *The Wisdom of the Bullfrog*?

*“But leadership, no matter whether you are a midshipman or an admiral, is never easy. Even those who seem to carry the burden of leadership with ease often struggle.”*

*“Everything in leadership is simple, it’s just that the simplest things are difficult. It would be simple to say ‘be men and women of great integrity’ or ‘lead from the front’ or ‘take care of your troops,’ but it is difficult to do. Why? Because we are humans and each of us has our foibles, our weaknesses, and our shortfalls that can affect how we lead. But as difficult as leadership is, it is not complicated.”*

*The Wisdom of the Bullfrog* is a great book on the simple but difficult principles of leadership that deserves a spot in every leadership library. It’s short, simple, easy to read and remember, and uses focused personal experiences to illustrate the points being made in each chapter. Retired Admiral William H. McRaven is a highly respected leader who served for many years in the U.S. Navy, and is a product of a culture that highly prizes reading as a professional development tool. The principles that are highlighted in each chapter are all valuable to new and experienced leaders alike.

A short video about the book is found at the link below:

- **Wisdom of the Bullfrog: Leadership Made Simple (But Not Easy) (Heroic +1 #1659) (4 minutes):**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXio4Y\\_dS2o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXio4Y_dS2o)

For more leadership ideas and to dig deeper, check out the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) blog, Facebook page, Professional Reading Program, and more at the links below:

**Blog:** <http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/WFLDP>

**Professional Reading Program:** <https://www.nwccg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp>

**Main WFLDP page:** <https://www.fireleadership.gov>

## *The Wisdom of the Bullfrog Discussion Questions*

### **Chapter One:**

What are some ways that you can demonstrate the principles found in this chapter as a fire leader? How do they align with the WFLDP Values and Principles?

### **Chapter Two:**

Why is it important at all leadership levels to “show up” for those you lead? What are some ways that you can build trust in a team, as a leader or follower?

### **Chapter Three:**

How can you be confident and decisive, and yet also involve others on the team? What are some ways that you can show your employees that you care about them and the mission of your organization?

### **Chapter Four:**

Why is it so important in the wildland fire service to do the little things well, especially as a leader? How can you react when asked to do something that you think is below your station? How is humility a good trait for a leader?

### **Chapter Five:**

How do you show up for work each day? Why is it important to show up and be ready for mission-critical work every day?

### **Chapter Six:**

How can you balance being aggressive and “running to the sound of the guns” with being able to “best assess the nature of the problem?” Why is providing leaders intent to your team at every step of the way important in the fire environment?

### **Chapter Seven:**

How can you reward enthusiasm while also recognizing that sometimes people make mistakes, even with the best plans and intentions? Why is it important to empower those around you to take initiative?

### **Chapter Eight:**

How can you plan to mitigate risk in the fire environment (as discussed in this chapter)? Why is it important to learn from your mistakes? How do you do that? How can you keep from letting a failure be a barrier to future success?

### **Chapter Nine:**

What are the differences between vision, strategy, and plans in your organization? Why is important to identify who is responsible for what?

## **Chapter Ten:**

What are some worst case scenarios that you train for in your organization? Do you test emergency plans? How can you plan for the “unknown unknown” worst case scenarios?

## **Chapter Eleven:**

Why is it important to set measurable standards for performance (physical, mental, or otherwise)? Most people are familiar with fitness standards, but what are some other things that we don't set standards for that we probably should?

## **Chapter Twelve:**

How can you get out and “smell like the sheep” in your program or organization? Why should a leader make sure to actually get out and experience the things their followers do? Why is it important to listen to those you might lead?

## **Chapter Thirteen:**

What are some “small” problems that you can solve? What “little” problems do you face in your organization? How can you get out and find these problems in your crew, module, or organization?

## **Chapter Fourteen:**

While military-style inspections aren't a tradition in much of the wildland fire world, why is it important to make sure that standards and core competencies are known, and checked? How can you, as a leader, make sure that you convey the importance of these standards and skills?

## **Chapter Fifteen:**

How do you communicate with your followers as a leader? How do you communicate with your leaders as a follower? Why is it so important to communicate with everyone in the organization? What are some perils of not communicating?

## **Chapter Sixteen:**

What does hard work look like for you as a leader? Has the type of work, or what it means to work hard, changed as you've grown as a leader and moved up in your organization? Does the type of work look different for a chief officer than it does for an entry level firefighter?

## **Chapter Seventeen:**

How can you prepare for the “long green table” in the fire service? Have you thought about what's moral, legal, and ethical in the context of wildland fire?

## **Chapter Eighteen:**

Who are your “swim buddies” If you don't have one, who could you be swim buddy to? Why is it important to have peers you can lean on in the fire service?