



National Wildfire Coordinating Group

Leadership Committee



Media Contact:

BLM_FA_Leadership_Feedback@blm.gov

For Release: August 11, 2026

2025 Paul Gleason “Lead By Example” Award Winners Announced

National Wildfire Coordinating Group Leadership Subcommittee selects four annual winners

Boise, Idaho – The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Leadership Subcommittee has awarded the 2025 Paul Gleason “Lead By Example” award to four individuals for the annual categories of *Initiative and Innovation*, *Mentoring and Teamwork* and *Motivation and Vision*.

The award was created by the NWCG Leadership Subcommittee to remember Paul Gleason’s contributions to the wildland fire service. During his career spanning five decades, Paul was a dedicated student of fire, a teacher of fire, and a leader of firefighters. The intent of this award is to recognize individuals or groups who exhibit this same spirit and who exemplify the wildland fire leadership values and principles.

Chris Delaney, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, received the award this year in the area of *Motivation and Vision* for his pivotal role in developing the BLM Operational Medical Support Program and designing standardized trauma bags for Class 600 fire vehicles filling a critical gap while providing a highly effective and professional program that has saved countless lives. Chris is often called upon to assist with challenging situations, including helping teams navigate complex problems, build cohesion or solve longstanding organizational issues. He has a unique ability to bring people together and strengthen team environments, making him a trusted resource for many.

Shannon Deane, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, was selected for this year’s award in the area of *Initiative and Innovation* for her initiative to rethink fire business across the Intermountain Region through the application of novel, innovative approaches. She has created a network-based support system, fostering critical thinking from field to national level staff that incorporates a mental health culture greatly strengthening the operational continuity towards the mission. She has transformed administrative and operational staff into integrated team members who rely on one another’s distinct strengths throughout the fire year.

Hunter Bell, U.S. Forest Service, also received this year’s award in the area of *Initiative and Innovation* for his work increasing the wildland-urban interface knowledge library and improving the tools and approach for work around structures. His development of the *Wildland Urban Interface & Structure Protection Guide* and updates to the NFES standard for sprinklers provides not only a great evolutionary step in structure protection, but also serves as a larger example to the wildland fire community as to how to effect change. It takes sustained effort to create momentum for change – he not only identified a gap, but developed an idea and continued to champion the improvements in an effort to better serve the public.

Sean Peterson, U.S. Forest Service, was selected for this year’s award in the area of *Mentoring and Teamwork* for creating the National Dispatch Academy reshaping dispatcher development through a comprehensive and innovative training program. He’s worked to bridge the qualification standards of international wildland fire services through the creation of the International Mobilization Guide, helping to build trusted international relationships through seamless support. Colleagues, subordinates and team members turn to him because he empowers them by listening to understand, modeling the value of accountability, and serving with humility.

To learn more about the NWCG Leadership Committee visit nwcg.gov/committee/leadership-committee. To submit a nominee for the Paul Gleason “Lead By Example” award visit: nwcg.gov/wfldp/lbe.