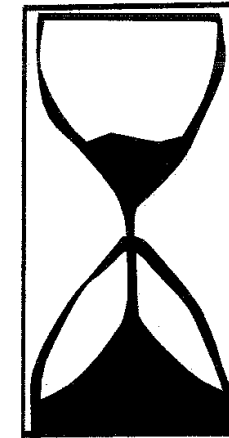
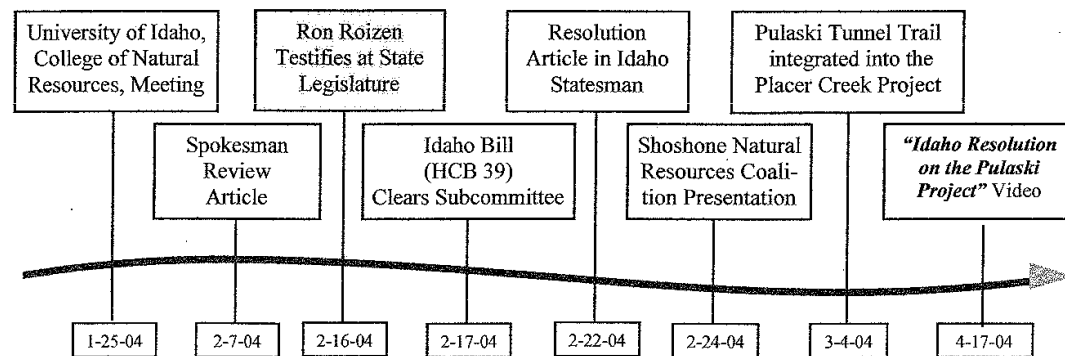
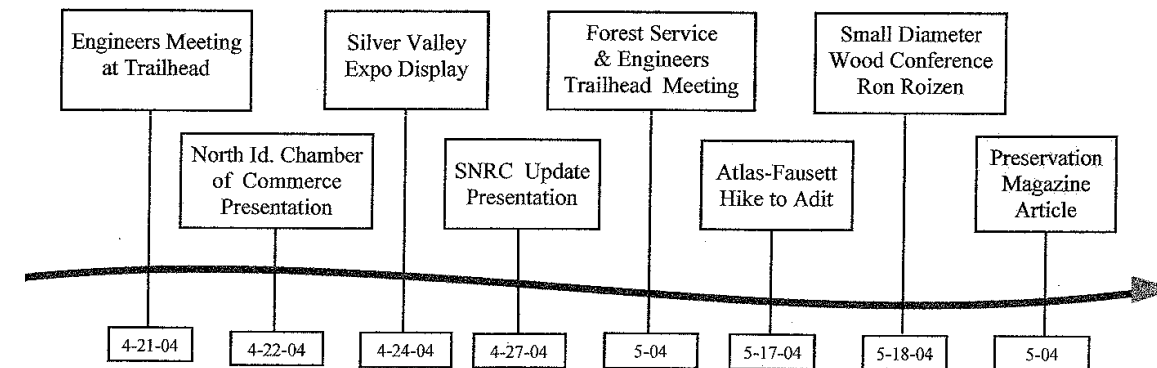


## Pulaski Project Accomplishments & Activities Timeline

January - May 2004



## and News & Media Coverage of the Great Fire of 1910



# Pulaski Project attracts bipartisan support

By DAVID GOINS  
Political correspondent

BOISE — North Idaho bipartisan support emerged at the state level Friday for legislation designed to encourage the Pulaski Project.

The Pulaski Project is a package of Silver Valley-based efforts to honor the memory of Edward C. Pulaski — an early 20th century North Idaho firefighting hero and inventor — and educate the public on modern forest management practices.

Don Pischner, a former Republican legislator from Coeur d'Alene, and Rep. Mary Lou Shepherd, D-Wallace, on Friday expressed support for the Pulaski Project legislation.

With Pischner looking on, Shepherd presented the measure endorsing the Pulaski Project to the House State Affairs Committee — which introduced the legislation to print. That committee action made the legislation an actual House Concurrent Resolution.

"This (project) could even become an eco-

nomic factor for our currently depressed Silver Valley," Shepherd told the committee.

"It's (the state legislation) just a symbolic gesture," said Pulaski Project Director Ron Roizen, Wallace. "But symbolic gestures help. And we're grateful to Mary Lou for carrying the ball on this."

The project's main components include the future development of an historic museum highlighting the Pulaski story, the renovation of the Pulaski Trail near Wallace, and the promotion of an Internet Web site ([www.pulaski-project.org](http://www.pulaski-project.org)) on the subject.

"The citizens of Wallace came up with this Pulaski Project idea," said Pischner, now a lobbyist for Coeur d'Alene-based Stimson Lumber Co. "And I think it's a marvelous idea and project, and I want to support them in every way I can."

Pischner, still active in Republican politics, said Stimson Lumber is also supportive of the Pulaski Project.

At the federal level, Idaho Republican Sen. Larry Craig earlier brought home \$297,000 in

congressional pork for the trail improvements portion of the project.

"Sen. Craig was the hero of that appropriation," Roizen said.

The U.S. Forest Service is the lead agency on the Pulaski Trail improvements project.

Executive work on the trail portion is ongoing, according to Roizen. Actual physical labor on the project is expected to begin during the summer, he said.

The Pulaski Project originates from Pulaski's heroic efforts during what the legislation describes as, "the worst forest fire in American history," which broke out in the mountains of North Idaho and western Montana 93 years ago. The fire, driven by freak, hurricane-force winds, peaked on Aug. 20, 1910 and when it was over, 3-million-plus acres of timberland were gone—along with part of the city of Wallace itself.

It was Pulaski, the story goes, that helped save 39 men on a 45-man firefighting crew by directing them to shelter in the abandoned Nicholson Mine, now known as the "Pulaski

Tunnel." Legend also credits Pulaski for inventing a unique firefighting tool that is still in use today.

"Pulaski was kind of a hero as a person," Pischner said. "I grew up with the name. I never met him. For his (Pulaski's) time period, he was very well-known and well-liked. And I don't think it was just because he was a hero in the disaster. It was because he was liked as a person."

Shepherd emphasized the Pulaski Project's planned development of a National Wildfire Education Center and Museum in either Silverton or Wallace. The U.S. turned to a "total (fire) suppression model" after the 1910 disaster, Roizen noted. "We feel the nation is going through a paradigm change . . . about how we see our forests," Roizen said.

Launched in 2002, the Pulaski Project goals also include improving the "Pulaski Tunnel" mine entrance and upgrading the two Nine Mile Cemetery gravesites where victims of the fire are buried.

SECTION

**B**

Saturday, February 7, 2004  
The Spokesman-Review  
Spokane, Wash./Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

# Handle

**Rebecca Nappi**  
Catholics need more  
time to heal before  
forging ahead /Page B6

Opinion/B4 Roundtable/B5

## Historians work to preserve Pulaski Tunnel

### Memorial proposed for site of legendary fire rescue

By **Betsy Z. Russell**  
Staff writer

BOISE — Ed Pulaski may be best known for the firefighting tool he invented, a cross between an ax and a hoe that bears his name and still is used in firefighting today.

But Pulaski's heroics during the 1910 wildfires that devastated the forests of North Idaho, Eastern Washington and Montana tell an even more compelling story — one that Silver Valley residents hope will draw tourists and others to a historic site, trail and interpretive center.

Long before he invented the handy tool that kept forest firefighters from having to carry both an ax and a hoe, Pulaski was a Forest Service ranger in Wallace in August 1910 when the woods exploded into a fire-

storm, trapping 1,800 firefighters between Wallace and Avery.

Drawing on his knowledge of the area, Pulaski led his 45-man crew to safety in an abandoned mine, now known as the Pulaski Tunnel. There, they lay face down through a suffocating night of smoke and heat. Their leader kept some from panicking and heading outside to certain death with the end of his pistol. He beat out flaming timbers at the mine's entrance with horse blankets and mine water he gathered in his hat.

Though the whole group lost consciousness during that night, including Pulaski, nearly all survived, and crawled back through the smoking, charred woods to Wallace in the morning.

"The fire was so hot that it killed the fish in the creek," said Jim See, a guidance counselor and teacher at Mullan High School. "When the firefighters came out, they could not sit on the rocks because they were so hot beside the creek."

See is an avid hiker and amateur historian who noticed that the historic tunnel site and the trail leading to it have been deteriorating, and feared they could soon be lost forever. Now, a Silver Valley group is working to restore the historic site and trail, build a new trailhead and historic markers and eventually create a national wildfire education center and museum at the trailhead site.

"It's already on the National Register of Historic Places," See said. "And so is the escape route."

The project is now known as the Pulaski Project, and work is scheduled to start this summer on restoring, realigning and marking the trail and the tunnel entrance. At the behest of Idaho Sen. Larry Craig, Congress has appropriated nearly \$300,000 for the Forest Service to take on the project.

On Friday, Rep. Mary Lou Shepherd, D-Prichard, told the House State Affairs Committee about the project and the story. Eventually, a \$15 million interpretive center

and museum is envisioned, to serve as a national center for wildfire education. A "fire room" would give visitors the experience of the sights, sounds and smells of a raging wildfire, she said.

The House committee agreed to introduce a resolution Shepherd proposed to "express support and encouragement for the efforts of the Pulaski project, and acknowledge the dedication of the wildfire fighters, past, present and future."

Former Rep. Don Pischner, R-Coeur d'Alene, has been working with the project.

"My dad knew Ed Pulaski," Pischner said. "In my generation, Ed Pulaski was this big hero."

When the backers had access problems to part of the trail, Pischner discovered that the land is now owned by his employer, Stimson Lumber. Soon, there was a letter of agree-

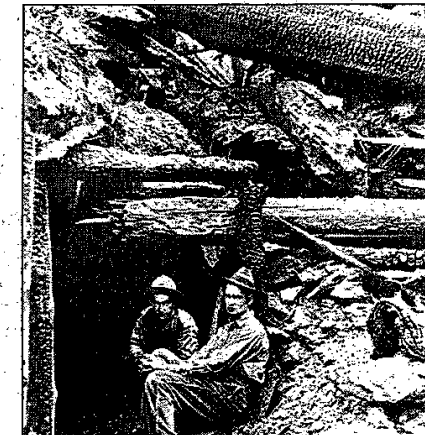


Photo courtesy of Museum of North Idaho

In this undated photo, Joe Helm, left, and a man identified as Mc Kay sit at the mouth of the mine where Ed Pulaski saved a crew of firefighters.

Continued: Pulaski/B2

REGION

## Pulaski: Facility could cost up to \$15 million

Continued from B1

ment for access, including easements and possibly a land sale.

"We're working with them," See said. "We need to get a survey done."

Idaho Historical Society Director Steve Guerber said he thinks the Pulaski Project is "a great idea," that could both preserve and make more accessible "the site where a significant historic event took place."

The trailhead is about half a mile south of Wallace. From there, the trail runs about two miles to the tunnel.

See said, "We're going on a hike with the engineers in April, once the snow allows that to happen, so we can identify exactly where the trail is."

The tunnel itself is too dangerous for public access, he said, but possibilities include an overlook or structure where visitors would be able to peer into the old mine.

Eventually, the Pulaski Project could include the Pulaski trail and memorial, the interpretive center, and another historic site at the Wallace cemetery where victims of the 1910 fire are buried.

"You could have a number of things that people could come and see related to Pulaski and the 1910 fire," See said. "This would be a world-class hiking trail, for people to come and enjoy the story and learn about the 1910 fire and the history of Pulaski."

The interpretive center and museum could be a \$15 million building, and it's uncertain at this point how the project would be funded.

But already, the Pulaski project has gotten several grants, county funding and the federal appropriation. The project has a Web site at [www.pulaski-project.org](http://www.pulaski-project.org).

Ron Roizen, a Wallace sociologist who has been writing grants for the project, said, "Up here in the Silver Valley, these are struggling economies, and people are looking for new institutions to develop in the valley. So this seemed like a good shot."

■ Betsy Z. Russell can be reached toll-free at (866) 336-2854, or by e-mail at [bzrussell@rmci.net](mailto:bzrussell@rmci.net).

PAGE B5

Sunday, February 22, 2004  
The Spokesman-Review  
Spokane, Wash./Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

EYE ON BOISE

## Lawmakers' Pulaski tribute gets go-ahead

The Spokesman-Review



Betsy Z. Russell

It took special security clearance, but Rep. Mary Lou Shepherd, D-Prichard, and former Rep. Don Pischner of Coeur d'Alene brought in a real Pulaski to show the House State Affairs Committee, as it considered a resolution supporting the Pulaski Project in the Silver Valley.

The ax-and-hoe combination firefighting tool never made money for its inventor, Ed Pulaski, because it was in use for a year before Pulaski thought about trying to patent it. By then, it was too late. But it did immortalize the Forest Service ranger and firefighting hero's name.

Now Silver Valley residents want to memorialize Pulaski's heroics in the great fire of 1910 with a restored trail, memorial and possibly an interpretive center to draw tourists and others. The legislative committee endorsed the idea unanimously, approving a resolution Shepherd proposed.

A legendary firefighter who was both inventor and hero is to be honored with a memorial called

# The Pulaski Project

By Betsy Russell  
Idaho Spokesman-Review

Ed Pulaski may be best known for the firefighting tool he invented, a cross between an ax and a hoe that bears his name and still is used in firefighting today.

But Pulaski's heroics during the 1910 wildfires that devastated the forests of North Idaho, Eastern Washington and Montana tell an even more compelling story — one that Silver Valley residents hope will draw tourists and others to a historic site, trail and interpretive center.

Long before he invented the handy tool that kept forest firefighters from having to carry both an ax and a hoe, Pulaski was a Forest Service ranger in Wallace in August 1910 when the woods exploded into a firestorm, trapping 1,800 firefighters between Wallace and Avery.

Drawing on his knowledge of the area, Pulaski led his 45-man crew to safety in an abandoned mine, now known as the Pulaski Tunnel. There, they lay face down through a suffocating night of smoke and heat. Their leader kept some from panicking and heading outside to certain death with the end of his pistol. He beat out flaming timbers at the mine's entrance with horse blankets and mine water he gathered in his hat.

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Former Rep. Don Pischner, R-Coeur d'Alene, has been work-



This undated photo was taken at the mouth of War Eagle Mine, now known as the Pulaski Tunnel, near Wallace. The tunnel is named for Ed Pulaski, who invented the handy tool that kept forest firefighters from having to carry both an ax and a hoe. He was a Forest Service ranger in Wallace in August 1910 when the woods exploded into a firestorm, trapping 1,800 firefighters between Wallace and Avery. Drawing on his knowledge of the area, Pulaski led his 45-man crew to safety in the abandoned mine. Pictured are Joe Helm, left, and a man identified only as McKay.

ing with the project.

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On the Net:

Pulaski Tunnel:  
[www.pulaski-project.org](http://www.pulaski-project.org)

# Pulaski Project measure clears House panel

By DAVID GOINS  
Political correspondent

BOISE — Don Pischner got real with the Pulaski Project.

A former Republican state lawmaker from Coeur d'Alene, Pischner on Monday morning brought an actual iron-bladed, wood-handled Pulaski tool to show members of the House State Affairs Committee.

After obtaining clearance from the Statehouse security corps, of course.

Promoting legislation that encourages the Silver Valley's Pulaski Project, Pischner made an unusual exhibit of

the Pulaski tool he borrowed from Idaho State Liquor Dispensary Supt. Dyke Nally, a former firefighter.

"That tool has been well-used," Pischner said. "It's been bailed out of an airplane many times with (Nally)."

Around the committee table, legislators passed the classic Pulaski firefighting tool — said by many to have been invented by early 20th century North Idaho firefighting hero Edward C. Pulaski.

Pischner used the powerful visual aid to testify in favor of House Concurrent Resolution 39 — non-binding legislation that supports the

Pulaski Project. The Pulaski Project is a package of Silver Valley-based efforts both to honor the memory of Pulaski and educate the public on modern forest management practices.

Pischner's exhibit was partially in response to an erroneous request Feb. 6 by committee chair Bill Deal, R-Nampa, to "hear about the Pulaski shovel," at Monday's public hearing.

The tool actually is used dually on the fire lines as a "hacker" (ax) and a "grubber" (hoe), Pischner said.

"I would like to believe that Mr. Pulaski invented that tool," Pischner said. "Like all inventions, there are con-

tradictory stories about who invented it."

Sponsored by Rep. Mary Lou Shepherd, D-Wallace, HCR39 was sent to the House floor on a unanimous committee vote.

The Pulaski Project originates from Pulaski's heroic efforts during what the legislation describes as, "the worst forest fire in American history," which broke out in the mountains of North Idaho and western Montana going on 94 years ago. The fire, which peaked on Aug. 20, 1910, destroyed three million-plus acres of timberland and wiped out part of Wallace.

"One witness described it as a thousand trains going across a thousand trestles," Pulaski Project Director Ron Roizen, Wallace, said during Monday's meeting.

With knowledge of the mines and mountains in the Wallace area, Pulaski, a forester, led his crew of more than 40 men into a mining tunnel, saving many lives.

"And he held them with his pistol so they could not leave," Shepherd said.

Major objectives of the project include restoring the Pulaski Trail, the

See PULASKI, Page 10

## PULASKI

Continued from Page 3

Pulaski Tunnel, and creating a National Wildfire Education Center and Museum in either Silverton or Wallace.

Shepherd said two "grants" from Kootenai County have totaled \$60,000. Additionally, \$297,000 in federal money, has been gained through the work of senior U.S. Sen. Larry Craig, an Idaho Republican. That federal appropriation is primari-

ly for renovating the Pulaski Trail.

Shepherd said an economic stimulus could result from the project's historic interest. Tourists often are attracted to such novelties. But the Pulaski Trail and entrance to the Nicholson Mine (where many of the firefighters went to survive), "have fallen into severe disrepair," Shepherd noted.

"We're not delusional, however, that this (project) will be completed over night," Shepherd said. "It could take as many as 10 years."

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The Spokesman-Review

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Betsy Z. Russell

# SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 2004

Visit us online at [www.shoshonenewspress.com](http://www.shoshonenewspress.com)

## Planning starts now for possible Placer Creek fire

By DON SAUER  
Staff writer

WALLACE — It was nearly a century ago when fire roared through the region, scorching three million acres and killing 86 people in August of 1910.

One of the hardest hit areas was Placer Creek near Wallace, where Ranger Edward Pulaski led his crew of firefighters to the War Eagle mine portal and saved many of them from the inferno.

With the specter of that catastrophe still looming over the area, the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and local agencies are addressing the possibility that the another fire of that magnitude could happen again.

Representatives from those agencies were in Wallace Thursday night to discuss projects which are planned for the Placer Creek area to reduce fire fuels throughout the drainage.

Sherri Lionberger, Ecosystems Staff Officer for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District, outlined some of the projects which include brush field burning, timber harvest, culvert upgrading and the relocation of trailhead of the Pulaski Trail.

Lionberger said the three main goals of the work will be to reduce fuels, promote the growth of more larch, which are less susceptible to fire and disease and the improve the

See PLACER, Page 10

## PLACER

Continued from Page 1

Pulaski Trail for use as a fire education tool.

Among the proposed projects will be the controlled burning of approximately 1,200 acres of brush fields, the harvesting of 360 acres of lodgepole pine, 420 acres of thinning to promote larch growth and the clearing of 150-foot fire breaks along the Placer Creek road.

Also, there will be several culverts replaced to improve fish habitat and the trail head of the Pulaski trail will be moved a short distance for easier access, Lionberger said.

Joe Stringer, District Ranger for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District, said that once the clearing and burning is done, the process of protecting the area will not be over.

"This is a continuing process, the brush will grow back, other trees will die," Stringer said. "You can't just

do this once and walk away, we'll have to keep coming back over the years to maintain the area."

Lionberger said that partial funding for the work will come from the sale of the trees which will be harvested but additional funding sources are being sought.

"One timber sale will not be able to pay for everything," Lionberger said.

She added that the entire process, from initial studies to completion of clearing, burning and harvesting, will take around five years with the first work planned for later this spring.



Ron Roizen visits with David Bond at the Pulaski Project booth at Expo 2004 on Saturday at Sunnyside Elementary.

THE NEWS-PRESS Thursday, March 11, 2004 3

## Senate OKs Pulaski legislation

BOISE — The Pulaski Project legislation, House Concurrent Resolution 39, has gained the Idaho Senate's approval.

HCR39, which encourages the Silver Valley's Pulaski Project, passed the Senate Tuesday morning on a unanimous voice vote. The legislation now needs only the signature of Idaho Lt. Gov. James Risch, the Senate's presiding officer, to become law.

Sponsored in the Senate by

Sen. Marti Calabretta, D-Osburn, the non-binding measure encourages a package of efforts in the Silver Valley to enhance the historic value of the story of early 20th century North Idaho firefighting hero Edward Pulaski.

Major objectives of the Pulaski Project include restoring the Pulaski Trail, the Pulaski Tunnel, and creating a National Wildfire Education Center and Museum in either Silverton or Wallace.

"We need to communicate better about the importance of fires."

Lauren Fins, University of Idaho tree geneticist

# Wildfire plays lead role in UI dramas

Students write, stage plays about role of fire in forests

By James Hagengruber  
Staff writer

MCSCOW, Idaho — The budding playwrights couldn't borrow much from Shakespeare or Tennessee Williams when they created a series of wildfire-themed performances, but there was no lack of available stage music.

Between each of the seven original plays that debuted Wednesday night at the University of Idaho were well-known fire songs.

There was James Taylor's "Fire and Rain." And Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire." Of course, The Doors' "Light My Fire" was also used.

The music and drama were part of the university's Night of Fire, the capstone project for a freshman seminar class on wildfire and society.

The 38 students had spent the semester studying the science, history and politics behind wildfires. They took field trips to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise and to Wallace, where massive wildfires in 1910 prompted a revolution in the country's fire policy. The final class project was putting it all together in an original play.

"I don't know any other university that offers something like this," said Bill Loftus, one of three instructors who teach the class.

Most of the plays Wednesday evening were less than 10 minutes long. In "Blowup," an inexperienced crew boss meets the ghost of a fallen firefighter during a dangerous day on the fireline. Another play, "Flames of Our Lives" includes what is probably the only plot in history that focuses on wildland-urban interfaces.

All of the plays were based on a general theme of society's troubled relationship with



Rajah Bose/The Spokesman-Review

Cody Hatch and Amy Grimmert perform "Flaming Misconceptions," a play about the necessity of forest fires as part of UI's Core Discovery 102 course.

wildfire, which happens to be the heart of the course.

Fire, Myth and Mankind was first taught two years ago under the notion that wildfire is a complicated topic best studied through multiple disciplines, said Loftus, a longtime Idaho journalist and science writer.

Two other professors share teaching duties:

Lauren Fins, a tree geneticist with a love of theater; and Nancy Lee-Painter, a theater and film professor with a passion for natural resource issues.

Fins said she hoped the marriage of drama and forestry science would give students the tools they need to share their new knowledge of wildfire.

"We need to communicate better about the importance of fires," Fins said. "Foresters are notoriously introverted. Many of these students have never been on stage before. This is a great leap forward for them."

The class reading list includes articles from technical forestry journals as well as John

Continued: Wildfire/A6

FRIDAY  
MAY 7, 2004



Partly cloudy

Highs in low 70s/See A2

## Wildfire: Flames usually took leading role

Continued from A1

Maclelean's account of Colorado's 1994 South Canyon Fire, "Fire on the Mountain." The students also read from Norman Maclean's classic "Young Men and Fire," which told the story of the 1949 Mann Gulch blaze near Helena.

Although the students dip their toes into drama, journalism and silviculture, the entire course is based on a single premise about wildfire, Loftus said, "Simple answers can get you into dangerous territory."

The lesson wasn't lost on Joseph Melior, an English major with a tufty goatee. "Previous to this class, I always thought of myself as an environmentalist and was critical of the Forest Service," Melior said. "It opened my eyes to the complexities of the issue. There are no easy answers."

This was all reflected in the plays. Fire was granted a leading role in most of the productions.

In "Tragedy on the Mountain," fire took the form of a menacing character dressed entirely in black. The actor danced in the darkness just off stage, tossing orange

ribbons at the firefighters.

Another play featured a dialogue between fire — this time a young man wearing a bright orange shirt — and a tired firefighter deep in the forest.

"What are you going to do, smother me with a fistful of dirt?" Fire asked.

Fire erupted in laughter when the firefighter told him he was destroying the forest.

"I haven't laughed that hard since 1910," Fire exclaimed. "I bring life and nutrients to this place. . . . The forest would be better if you would just let me do my job."

The stage was littered with dead wood during "Ma and the Boys," which opened with a youthful Mother Nature telling her two companions to clean up the forest.

"Oh my Lord! Look at this mess. Fire and Lightning, get in here," she said. "I need you boys to start a fire."

The loudest applause went to "Aqua Team and their Adventures in Burnsville," in which Burning Man and Burning Boy attack a small town to seek revenge on the U.S. Forest Service for a century's worth of wildfire suppression policy.

Chris Sermon, a freshman chemical engineering major, played a dead firefighter in one of the productions.

"I've not done anything like this before," he said.