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ARKANSAS FORESTRY COMMISSION  
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## **New Forest Rangers Complete Dozer Training at Camp Robinson**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR** – Twelve new forest rangers completed classroom instruction and field operations in the annual Dozer Training class held by the Agriculture Department's Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC) at Camp Robinson last week. The training, led by highly experienced AFC firefighters, is held annually to keep wildland firefighters safe and effective in their role of protecting Arkansas residents and forests from wildfires, a primary mission of the AFC.

"Getting our firefighters cab time in the dozers is the best way to develop seasoned, confident operators during emergency situations," says Training Supervisor Kevin Kilcrease. "We work to balance classroom instruction with serious, in-depth field exercises that force these new operators into uncomfortable situations and complicated maneuvers similar to those they would experience during wildfire response. Using our more experienced Rangers to teach classes and develop outdoor training stations also helps build rapport among our crews, which can be just as important during emergency response."

Four outdoor dozer stations are set up to replicate conditions during an actual wildfire. The Pioneering Station teaches the process of constructing a fireline by digging and scraping areas down to mineral soil. By creating a fireline of mineral soil, firefighters establish a barrier that stops the movement of flames. The Plowing/Blading Station focuses on finishing and smoothing out a fireline. A Slope Station provides maneuvering techniques for the safe operation of equipment on steep ridges and uneven ground. Finally, the Snagging Station addresses how to identify and bring down hazardous "snags" or dead trees. Snags pose a safety risk to firefighters because they may hold flames inside rotten or hollow trunks for many days after other flames are extinguished, or may fall over a fireline and transfer fire to flammable vegetation.

"Training is our primary focus during periods of lower wildfire activity in Arkansas," says State Forester Joe Fox. "Our own operators developed this course and designed the curriculum specifically for Arkansas wildfire behavior and equipment utilized by our own crews. We are proud to offer highly trained, well equipped crews across the state to Arkansas residents, partners in forestry and conservation, and the forest industry for all hazard response throughout the year."

The AFC is responsible for the protection of over 16 million acres of non-federal forestland in Arkansas, and has a total of 105 firefighting units, each comprised of a bulldozer and transport truck. Contact your local AFC Crew by selecting your county, [here](#).

The Arkansas Agriculture Department is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit [www.agriculture.arkansas.gov](http://www.agriculture.arkansas.gov).

