



Nathan C. Benson

Senior Fire Ecology and Fuels Specialist

STI | Sonoma Technology

Mr. Benson joined Sonoma Technology in 2022 to support the company's work in wildland fire and smoke sciences. His focus is on pre-fire planning, prescribed fire and fuels management support, using data to support decision-making processes, and the development of wildland fire software applications.

In 2021, Mr. Benson retired from his 34-year career with the National Park Service (NPS), where he served as the NPS Lead for Wildland Fire Science and Ecology. His position was located at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho, where he helped facilitate collaboration and cooperation among federal wildland fire management programs. His primary responsibilities included overseeing several NPS program areas, including fire Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and geospatial analysis; fire ecology and fire effects monitoring; post-fire burned area rehabilitation and restoration; smoke management; and the Remote Automated Weather System (RAWS). He also led the development and implementation of the NPS Wildland Fire 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and assisted with developing NPS and federal wildland fire policies and guidance. During his NPS career, he worked in a variety of wildland fire positions at the Glacier, Yellowstone, Great Smoky Mountains, and Everglades National Parks. At these parks, Mr. Benson's focus was on the planning and implementation of prescribed fires and managing wildfires. He has maintained his Prescribed Fire Burn Boss qualification and continues to support wildfire incidents as a Strategic Operational Planner.

Mr. Benson was one of the pioneers of the NPS Wildland Fire Module Program. He also helped develop and grow the Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity (MTBS) Program, an interagency program with the goal of consistently mapping the burn severity and extent of large fires across the United States from 1984 to the present. Mr. Benson also oversaw the development of FFI, an interagency plot-level monitoring software application that integrated the Fire Ecology Assessment Tool (FEAT) and Fire Effects Monitoring and Inventory System (FIREMON). FFI was designed to assist managers with the collection, storage, and analysis of ecological information.

For 9 years, Mr. Benson served as the Chair of the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) Governing Board. The JFSP provides funding and science delivery for scientific studies associated with managing wildland fire, fuels, and fire-impacted ecosystems to respond to emerging needs of managers, practitioners, and policymakers from local to national levels.

Education

- MS, Land Resources, University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Environmental Studies
- BA, Ibero-American Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Memberships

Association for Fire Ecology

For a list of publications, see sonomatech.com/ResPub/NCBpub.pdf.