



COLORADO WILDLAND FIRE CONFERENCE 2021

// September 21-23 // Grand Junction, Colorado //

A Fire Story

Brian Fies is a writer and cartoonist. The day after he and his family lost their home in northern California's Tubbs fire in October 2017, Brian bought paper, pens and colored highlighters, and began writing and drawing A Fire Story, a nonfiction account of his and his community's response to the historic disaster. Posted online, the comic was seen by more than 3 million people and gained national media attention. Brian expanded A Fire Story into a full-length graphic novel, which was published by Abrams ComicArts in 2019. An updated and expanded paperback edition was published in 2021.

Brian's other published books include the graphic novels Mom's Cancer, Whatever Happened to the World of Tomorrow, and The Last Mechanical Monster. His work has received several honors, including the comics industry's Eisner, Harvey and Inkpot awards, as well as the American Astronautical Society's Eugene M. Emme Award. In 2018, an animated version of his original Fire Story webcomic, produced by San Francisco PBS station KQED, won an Emmy Award.

Brian has a degree in physics and has worked as a journalist, chemist, and science writer. He and his wife, Karen, have rebuilt their home on its original site, a decision they second-guess every fire season but don't regret.

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The Wildland Fire Challenge - How Did We Get Here, What's Next

Bill recently retired after a career of 47 and a half years with the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. For the last three and a half years of his career, he served as the Deputy Director for Fire and Aviation Management in the Forest Service National Office. On the continuing professional side of life, Bill's goal is to support the wildland fire community in responding to the challenges of today and the expectations of society. He believes it is critical to understand history to see the present and future more clearly. Consequently, he enjoys sharing knowledge of formative events in the history of wildland fire management coupled with his first-hand experience gained in a variety of roles.

Prior to moving to Washington DC he was an Incident Commander (IC) for one of four National Incident Management Organizations (NIMO). Before he moved to the full time IC position with NIMO he was the fire management officer for the Upper Colorado River Fire Management Unit based in Grand Junction. He turned to fire management full time in 2003 after 23 years as a District Ranger on the White River and Mark Twain National Forests

His experience includes serving as a type one incident commander (IC) since 2011. One of the more notable large fires he managed was the High Park Fire adjacent to Fort Collins during the summer of 2012. He was a national fire use IC from 2005-2008 managing challenging fire use events. During his career as a type 1 or 2 IC he managed 35-40 complex fires.

Bill is thankful for a long, interesting and challenging career with more than 40 years of fire experience. He graduated from Michigan State University in 1973 with majors in Forestry and Soil Science. He enjoys living in Grand Junction and recreating in the outdoors with his wife Liz.

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Brian Fies



Bill Hahnenberg