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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: May 21, 2009

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FAMU hosts 1890 Student Firefighter Training Program

TALLAHASSEE, FL— Florida A&M University is the host site for a two-week basic firefighting training session for students from nine 1890 land-grant universities. The session began on Tuesday, May 19, 2009, and ends on Friday, May 29. Sponsored by the National Forests in Florida (Southern Region), this training program is funded through a grant from the National Fire Diversity Committee (NFDC).

The purpose of the 1890 Student Fire Fighting Program is to increase minority student awareness of fire management and to provide opportunities for interested students to get first-hand experience in wildland/prescribed fire management. The program encourages students to consider a career in fire management or a related natural resource management discipline. This is the fourth year of implementation for this program.

Upon completion of the training, students are assigned to various ranger districts throughout the Southern Region. Over the past 4 years, the 1890 Student Firefighting Training Program has trained fifteen students for summer employment at various fire units throughout the Forest Service. The program directly enhances the workforce by preparing trained personnel to successfully counter the costly damages associated with forest fires throughout the country.

“I enjoy working with these students and providing them with the unique opportunity to be exposed to fire management,” said Ted Willis, Forest Service Liaison at FAMU, who recruited students and coordinates the training program. “I want to thank the Forest Supervisor and Fire Management Officer of the National Forests in Florida, as well as the Jackson Hotshots, for their support.”

This year students from the following 1890 institutions are participating in the training: Alabama A&M University; Alcorn University; Fort Valley State University, Langston University; Prairie View A&M University; Southern A&M University; and Tuskegee University. The 1890 universities are land-grant institutions designated to receive benefits of the Morrill Act of 1890 to promote liberal and practical education. Florida A&M University is the 1890 institution for Florida. For more information, please contact Dr. Ted. Willis at (850) 412-7383 or email: twillis@fs.fed.us.



Top: 2009 participants in the 1890 Student Fire Fighting Training Program; *Center:* 2008 trainees in fire gear at Apalachicola Forest. *Right:* Ted Willis, USDA Forest Service Liaison, FAMU Site Coordinator

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