

## **Benji Hegg, USDA Forest Service, Ninemile Ranger District, Lolo National Forest**

Benji Hegg is an Engine Captain at Ninemile Ranger District on the Lolo National Forest, and is detailed as the Field Module Coordinator at Missoula Technology Development Center (MTDC).

Benji has worked in fire and fuels management for the past 18 years and has a high level of experience in operational fire suppression and incident command, fuels mitigation work, and logistical support in managing wildland fires.

While working at his home unit, Benji supervises a 25 person fire suppression and fuels crew. He is also the Lolo National Forest Chainsaw Coordinator, providing training to all levels of sawyers and certifying advanced sawyers in difficult and complex felling techniques. He regularly provides instruction and enjoys sharing his knowledge with the next generation of firefighters.

Ninemile Ranger District has a very active fuels program, where they mechanically treat and conduct prescribed fire on several thousand acres per year to provide forest health and reduce the hazard of catastrophic fires in the urban interface. Benji is a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss and is often supervising the completion of hundreds of acres of prescribed fire.

At MTDC, Benji works with Joe Domitrovich in developing new revised medical kits for the firefighting community. As an Emergency Medical Technician he has provided his knowledge of the medical field as well as his operational experience to modernize the medical kits that firefighters carry, to better prepare them to help an injured firefighter should an accident occur. He is also the Field Module Coordinator, where he supervises and supports the research modules managed by Joe Domitrovich. He assists the modules logistically and moves them throughout the United States from fire to fire.

On wildland fires Benji is a qualified Division Supervisor, where he coordinates the safe operation and completion of fire suppression. He manages miles of fire line construction and assures safety is the priority for all those working for him. He coordinates with aircraft to utilize water and fire retardant to assist in the suppression efforts, and also utilizes heavy equipment to construct line where its use is appropriate.