**6 Minutes**

**for Media**

Prescribed Fire Training Exchange

Niobrara Valley Preserve, Nebraska

March 8-22, 2014

**Non-verbal Communication**

Although much of the following information pertains to television interviews, the basic principles are common to any communications environment. For better or worse, *what* is said is not always as important as the manner in which it is said. Impressions that are given may outweigh the substance.

Here are some suggestions for improving your non-verbal communication:

* Maintain a pleasant, attentive appearance. On camera, smile only when it is appropriate. Match your facial expression to the seriousness of the issue.
* Don’t look at the camera. Concentrate on the interviewer, and establish eye contact with him/her.
* Keep your head up. If you’re sitting, sit up straight. Don’t slouch or lean to one side or cross your arms.
* When standing, keep still. Don’t sway or bounce on the balls of your feet. Any movement is exaggerated on camera. Let your hands drop naturally to your sides and use natural hand movements for emphasis. Avoid choppy motions with your hands. Keep your hands and arms below your shoulders and away from your face.
* Do not look at, lean into, or touch the microphone. The reporter will hold it at the appropriate distance.
* Avoid nodding your head unnecessarily. It may erroneously signal agreement with what was said.
* Wear PPE, including a hard hat, but remove sunglasses or dark eyeglasses in order to maintain eye contact with your interviewer.
* **Key Messages for the 2014 Niobrara Valley Preserve TREX:**

1. Safety is paramount.
2. Fire training is necessary and important.
3. **Like rain, fire is critical in the Great Plains.** **Controlled burning is a necessary part of habitat restoration and protection in many landscapes. Proactive actions like these are better for people, water, and wildlife.**
4. **Pay now, or pay later.** **Nebraska spent $12 million on wildfire suppression in 2012 (Nebraska Forest Service). From a strictly economic perspective, it is cheaper and more effective to keep woody fuels from building up than it is to deal with out-of-control blazes. Ranchers lose money on every grazing acre that is lost to cedar encroachment.**
5. The next generation of fire workers, managers, and conservationists are taking fire leadership seriously.
6. Building on past successes and lessons learned, the training exchanges have grown every year, attracting more partners and participants from around the U.S. and the world.
7. Wildfire effects, such as erosion and large numbers of dead tree skeletons standing across the landscape, are dramatic reminders of what the combination of unchecked, excessive fuel loads and drought will produce.

\*\*\*Portions of the information contained in this document were adapted from *A Guide to Successful Media Interviews* (NIFC, 2009), located at: <http://www.nifc.gov/PIO_bb/Background/NIFC-MediaInterviewGuide2009-Landscape.pdf>.