

THE AMERICAN  
**WILDFIRE EXPERIENCE**

**WILDLAND FIRE DIGITAL STORYTELLING  
MICRO-GRANT SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY**



2019 Micro-Grant Winners

# The American Wildfire Experience (AWE) invites you to sponsor our Wildland Fire Digital Storytelling Micro-Grant Initiative

## What is Digital Storytelling?

At AWE, we define digital storytelling as the process of coupling personal stories with broader public issues (e.g., wildland fire) by leveraging digital technology and existing social media platforms. We believe digital storytelling builds community and is integral to wildland fire education.

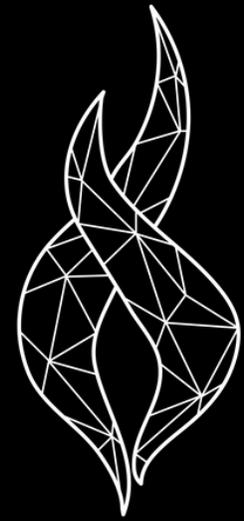
## What are Micro-Grants?

Micro-grants are small sums of money given to applicants for short term projects. AWE offers US\$500 micro-grants to support and encourage thoughtful wildland fire storytelling and content creation by wildland fire practitioners on social media and other digital platforms. These grants allow our recipients to improve their creative production value by upgrading and/or purchasing equipment, tools, and supplies to help get their project vision off the ground. Most notably this year, in order to capture and support global fire perspectives and experience, we opened up the grant cycle to international applicants. Grant winners are committee selected based on set criteria: vision, creativity, impact, and more.

## Why Become a Sponsor?

AWE is a small nonprofit rooted in understanding, examining, and telling the story of wildland fire - to the public and in partnership with the wildland fire community. AWE works to support and facilitate dialogue, communication, and education regarding the challenges and opportunities of our current global wildfire situation through multimedia storytelling, oral histories, and additional projects and initiatives - including these micro-grants!

The wildland fire community includes amazingly talented storytellers: photographers, videographers, writers, and artists - and we believe that supporting them is one of the best ways to have an impact on the way in which wildland fire burns across both our social and ecological landscapes. Showcasing their work to the general public illuminates this important issue in a compelling and thought-provoking way and shines a light on the passionate fire minds working on diverse solutions. **Sponsoring this grant initiative is a powerful way to show your support for the fire community while letting them know you value their work, creativity, and stories. Thank you for your consideration.**



**Micro-Grant  
Sponsorship:  
\$550/grant**

## Sponsorship Includes:

- Your logo on AWE's website
- Shout-outs on social media platforms throughout the fire season
- Mentions during grant winner announcements and featured winner profile posts
- Co-branded hashtags for 2020 grant cycle for sponsors of 4+ grants

Current sponsors include:

- Private donors
- Nonprofits (e.g., National Smokejumper Association)
- Corporations (e.g., MYSTERY RANCH and WATERAX)



The American Wildfire Experience cultivates talented digital storytellers – our champions, if you will – whose compelling and influential efforts reach a broad audience. Our vision is to connect individuals within the wildland fire community to work together to communicate the story of fire. These grants and your sponsorship help us do that. We would be thrilled to have you join this effort.

## **2019 Wildland Fire Digital Storytelling Micro-Grant Winners:**

**Amanda Monthei** | Videography

**Ben Gregory** | Photography

**Garrett Shepard** | Photography

**Bre Orcasitas** | Writing

**Jack Ramsay** | Videography

**Jake Niece** | Photography

**Greg Jones** | Photography

**Kane Wyatt** | Videography

**Kyle Miller** | Photography

**Lucy Grainger** | Photography

**Krystal Hazen-McCreary** | Writing

**William R. V. Eason** | Photography



"Really appreciated the grant last year. Having that faster lens has been awesome at night."

**KYLE MILLER**

2019 Grant Winner: Photography

<https://www.kylemillerphotography.com/>



# Thought Fire

A THOUGHTFIRE IS A SPOT FIRE OF AMBITION STARTED WHEN THE BELIEFS OF SUCCESSFUL WOMEN EMBED IN THE MINDS OF OTHERS. EVERY TIME SUCCESSFUL WOMEN SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES, VALUES, AND AMBITIONS THEY SHARE THE EMBERS OF EMPOWERMENT. THOSE EMBERS IGNITE THE ASPIRATIONS OF OTHER WOMEN AND ENCOURAGE LEADERS TO RISE.

CARRY THE EMBER. GROW THE FIRE.  
IGNITE THE FUTURE...

[www.thoughtfire.net](http://www.thoughtfire.net)

"When we set off in pursuit of our goals, we have two main choices: we can try to go it alone, or we can reach out and ask for help from others. There are no guarantees either way, but sometimes, someone comes along who can see the value in our dreams and lets us know that our ambitions are valid and worthy of pursuit. The American Wildfire Experience provided me with the help I needed in order to actualize my vision.

In January of 2019 I started a modest nonprofit called ThoughtFire Media. I wanted to use digital media to incite connection, empowerment, growth, and leadership among women in the fire community. I had grand ideas but limited resources. The funding I received from the 2019 AWE Digital Storytelling Micro-Grant helped me purchase needed software programs, establish a website, and commission custom artwork and logo designs. Without the funding I received from the AWE Digital Storytelling Micro-Grant I would not have been able to share the wisdom and inspiration of successful women in fire in an effective or meaningful way. The success of the fire community depends not on individuals acting in their own best interests, but rather, on interested individuals willing to support and encourage others to grow and lead. I am grateful to all the contributors to the 2019 AWE Digital Storytelling Micro-Grant for offering me an ember to grow my fire of ambition; I hope someday I can do the same for others."



**KRYSTAL HAZEN-MCCREARY**

2019 Grant Winner: Writing

<https://www.thoughtfire.net/>



# AMANDA MONTHEI

2019 Grant Winner: Videography

<https://www.amandamonthei.com/blog>

"For years I'd wanted to create a big project about fire, and particularly about hotshotting, but I never gave it much thought until I received the American Wildfire Experience grant last spring. It immediately got me thinking about how I can best go about sharing my own experiences in fire, which led to me being able to share the experiences of a handful of women who fought fire in the 70s and 80s. The final project—The Women Before Me—ended up being shared thousands of times, garnering over 13,000 views on my website. I received dozens of comments from people in all ranks of the fire world, including a number of women who also fought fire in the 70s and 80s and appreciated the awareness I had brought to these early pioneers of the hotshotting and fire worlds. It also led to an inquiry from an editor at Outside Magazine, who was interested in a larger story about this topic; I'm working on this story now, with an expected publishing date in early summer.

I would have never thought of this project—let alone followed through on it—if it hadn't been for the help from AWE. The feeling of support from the fire community and companies close to it was also invaluable, and perhaps the biggest motivator in all of this. I can't thank you guys enough for the support, and I look forward to seeing what AWE grant recipients create in the future!"



## The Women Before Me

from [Amanda Monthei](#)

# The Women Before Me



# EXCERPTS FROM 2019'S APPLICATIONS

"Good stories raise questions and leave the audience searching for something they hadn't known was missing. The storyteller has nothing without interesting characters and this story will be full of them. This portion of the American Wildfire Experience digital storytelling grant will cover the 2019 fire season from a first-hand photographic account. Over the summer, I will be capturing portraits (using 35 mm film, digitized) and stories of firefighters I encounter and documenting the season as it pertains to the personal experience of the individuals who live it."

**"I want people to see what life is like day in and day out for an entire season. To show how camaraderie is built and team cohesion in motion. How leadership is so much more than standing on a dozer line watching crewmembers chain out a swamp, and what actually goes in to putting out a fire."**

"My vision is to bring to light the changing conditions Wildfire Firefighters are experiencing and the ever-mounting challenges we face. By documenting what we call "the new normal" through the eyes of a wildfire fighter I hope to bring people face-to-face with the rapid and aggressive affects of climate change. I hope by contributing to the story of Wildfire we can start connecting some crucial pieces to the puzzle of how to live alongside these natural phenomena."

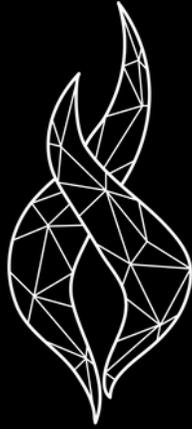
**"My plan is to combine a written essay with images and video shot over the summer to not only outline what hotshotting looks like on a daily basis, but to showcase the people who do it."**

"Beyond the incredible sights we're privileged to experience as wildland firefighters, I've been fascinated by the fire culture from the incredible camaraderie among tight crews to the maddening bureaucracy we must tolerate, and the results when everything is thrown together in the pressure cooker."

"Technology has been able to remove the danger and physicality from a lot of modern industries, but firefighting is one of the increasingly rare professions that still challenges the full range of human attributes, from physical capability, intelligence, and skill to teamwork, decision making and emotional fortitude – all of which must come together in very real and uncontrollable situations. Throughout the 2019 season I'm going to take photos which illustrate why the human element is the most important factor in wildfire."

**"My aim is to show what a season of fire looks like from a crewmember's perspective. By sharing scenes of daily life on a hotshot crew, I hope to break down some of the common misconceptions about wildfire, and to reinforce the importance of managing our nation's forests with fire."**

"After two of the most destructive fire seasons in BC history, the long summers are visibly taking a toll on firefighters. I wanted to focus on the importance of mental health on the fireline by interviewing and photographing the same wildfire fighters at multiple points throughout the summer."



# THE AMERICAN WILDFIRE EXPERIENCE

## HOW TO BECOME A SPONSOR:

Email: [grants@wildfire-experience.org](mailto:grants@wildfire-experience.org)

Call Bethany Hannah, AWE Founder, at  
+1-530-598-5535 (personal cell)