

May 2006 Team of the Month
C-41A Fire Team

Okeechobee Field Station Employees:

Kent Mills	Carl Poorbaugh	Jerry Cope
Steve Ball	Jeff Platt	

In January, Excavation/Earthmoving Operators Kent Mills and Carl Poorbaugh were working on the west side of C-41A canal between structure S-83 and SR70. The right-of-way appeared to have been recently mowed with thatches of grass cuttings scattered on top of the berm and slope areas. Kent Mills had noticed a District vehicle and two contractor vehicles on the other side of the canal from where they were working. At approximately 11:20 AM Kent noticed a grass fire on the right-of-way near the vehicles. Carl contacted Jerry Cope, the Crew Chief to apprise him of the situation. Jerry contacted the field station, who then notified the Division of Forestry.

Jose Guardiario, Sr. Engineer, CERP, who was the driver of the District vehicle across the canal called upon Kent and Carl for assistance. Kent, operating a front-end loader/backhoe and Carl Poorbaugh proceeded to the other side of the canal to assist in extinguishing an approximate .25 acre grass fire. They met Jerry Cope at the entrance gate of the right-of-way and proceeded to where the fire started. With the help of the front-end loader and the responding Division of Forestry Ranger they were able to extinguish the brush fire before it jumped to the adjacent landowner's property.

At 12:45 PM the crew was alerted that there was another grass fire approximately 5 miles upstream from the first. Jerry, Kent, Carl and the forest ranger quickly responded to that fire as well. Terry Peters, Acting Director of the Okeechobee Field Station, and his passengers Steve Ball and Jeff Platt also provided assistance in extinguishing this one acre grass fire before it spread to adjacent properties.

Not long after that, a third fire was called in. This fire was breaking out on the C-41A right-of-way east bank. Again, District staff and the Division of Forestry quickly responded to this approximate one acre grass fire and extinguished it before it was able to spread.

Thanks to the quick actions of District staff the grass fires on C41A right-of-ways were contained and extinguished before any of the fires spread onto adjacent landowner properties.