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Smokejumper Obituary: Bordelon, Mike (Fairbanks 1976)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Bordelon, Mike (Fairbanks 1976)

Mike, 72, died April 2, 2024, at his home in Silverton, Oregon. He was born November 22, 1951, in Marksville, Louisiana. I spent my early years growing up in Bayou country in Louisiana and then my family moved to Bartlesville, Oklahoma, when I was in the 5th grade. I graduated high school in Bartlesville in 1969 and attended Oklahoma State University in Stillwater and earned a BS in Forestry in 1974. I also earned a MS degree in Forestry from the University of Idaho in 1978.

Mike started wildland firefighting in 1969 with the USFS in Idaho, was on the Coeur d'Alene Hotshot Crew 1970-73, and worked in Tok, Alaska, on a helitack crew 1974-75. He jumped in Fairbanks during the 1976-78 seasons.

I started my professional career (1979-86) in Olympia, Washington, with the Industrial Forestry Association (IFA). I worked with private industry, state, and federal cooperators to install genetic research trials for the purpose of breeding fast growing and well adapted conifers for reforestation projects across western Washington, Oregon, and Northern California.

From 1986-2014 I worked in several positions with the Oregon Dept. of Forestry including Tree Improvement Coordinator, Forest Biology Manager, State Forests Program Director, Regional Manager for NW Oregon, and Division Chief for State Forests. I was involved in a leadership role that created a new forest management plan for NW Oregon in 2001. This forest management plan covered about 600,000 acres including the Tillamook burn. This experience gave me insights into working with widely divergent interest groups and stakeholders like environmental groups, timber industry and the western Oregon counties. Given my background in fire, I was tapped to help the fire program during the summer and worked in various overhead positions on larger fires throughout the state. I retired from ODF in 2014 after 28 years.

Following retirement, I have taken up commercial fishing, part time, following in the footsteps of my older son who is a successful commercial fisherman in Port Orford, Oregon. I fish with my retired buddies, including some old jumpers.

(end of excerpt)