

Veteran Wildland Fire Leader Julie Molzahn Brings Decades of Fireline Experience to Running Through the Fire

A powerful novel of survival, sacrifice, family, and enduring love takes readers beyond the headlines and into the human heart of wildland firefighting



JULIE MOLZAHN

Airway Heights, Washington Sep 22, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Few people understand the intensity of a wildfire from the inside. Julie Goodspeed Molzahn does. After more than three decades of service with the U.S. Forest Service and years spent working directly on the fireline and with Incident Management Teams, Molzahn brings a lifetime of firsthand knowledge to her novel, *Running Through the Fire: Annie's Story of Fire, Family and Love*.

Blending contemporary romance with the danger, urgency, and sacrifice of wildland firefighting, *Running Through the Fire* follows Annie, a woman whose life has been shaped by fire, family, duty, and a bond formed long before either she or her childhood best friend, Cole, understood where their lives would lead.

Annie grows up surrounded by boys, with Cole occupying a special place in her life from childhood. While Cole pursues a future in football, Annie follows a very different calling and becomes a wildland firefighter. Their paths separate as ambition, disappointment, and the choices of adulthood pull them in different directions.

Years later, Annie has risen to become a Fire Chief with extensive experience battling wildfires across the United States. When the devastating Bench Fire threatens towns and traps families in its path, she is placed at the center of a rapidly unfolding disaster.

The emergency becomes intensely personal as Annie confronts burning homes, endangered communities, and children who need to be rescued before time runs out. Meanwhile, Cole watches the crisis unfold and recognizes the firefighter risking everything to save others as the childhood friend he once allowed to walk out of his life.

What follows is more than a story about surviving a wildfire. It is a story about recognizing what matters when everything familiar can disappear in an instant.

Molzahn gives the novel an authenticity rarely possible from research alone. She dedicated more than 35 years to the U.S. Forest Service, serving in roles that ranged from local ranger districts to national leadership. Her career encompassed fire, fuels, timber, recreation, planning, research, conservation education, and climate change.

Her experience also includes 18 years of direct work on the fireline, where she reached Strike Team Leader status, along with 30 years serving on Incident Management Teams in logistics, planning, and incident information. For a decade, she served as a Line Officer on large fires, participating in the difficult decisions that must be made when communities, resources, and lives are at risk.

That experience gives *Running Through the Fire* its distinctive foundation. Behind the fictional characters lies an understanding of incident command, evacuation, dangerous fire behavior, field decision-making, and the physical and emotional demands placed upon the people who confront major fires.

Yet Molzahn does not lose sight of the people inside the uniforms.

Her novel explores the courage required not only to enter danger but also to live with loss, disappointment, responsibility, and unresolved love. Annie's strength is not presented simply through the risks she takes. It is also revealed in the choices she makes, the people she protects, and the life she continues to build after painful experiences.

At its heart, the book asks what survives when certainty disappears.

For Molzahn, writing the novel also offered an opportunity to honor a community that has remained important to her throughout her life and career. As she explains on her website, her heart remained with the crews working on the ground even as her career carried her into national leadership positions.

That commitment extends beyond the pages of the novel.

Proceeds from Molzahn's books will be donated to the Wildland Firefighter Foundation, an organization dedicated to supporting wildland firefighters and their families during injury, tragedy, hardship, and long-term recovery. Through this connection, a story inspired by years of service becomes another way to

support the people whose lives are touched by the realities of wildland fire.

For readers, *Running Through the Fire* offers several stories at once. It is a romance shaped by years of separation and unfinished feelings. It is a survival story set against the unpredictable force of wildfire. It is a tribute to the men and women who protect communities when conditions become dangerous. Most importantly, it is a story about resilience and the relationships people discover are worth fighting for.

Julie Goodspeed Molzahn is a graduate of Iowa State University, where she earned degrees in Forestry Management and International Studies. In addition to her Forest Service career, she has supported charitable and community organizations focused on youth sports, military families, and conservation. She is a mother of six and grandmother of eight.

Running Through the Fire: Annie's Story of Fire, Family and Love is available in paperback, hardcover, and digital editions through major booksellers, including [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#).

To learn more about Julie Molzahn, her career, her writing, and *Running Through the Fire*, visit juliemolzahn.com.

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