



A Day in the Life of an NMAC Rep

John Glenn, BLM Fire and Aviation Operations Division Chief

As the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Fire and Aviation Operations Division Chief, John Glenn represents BLM Fire and Aviation as a part of the National Multi Agency Coordination Group (NMAC), based out of the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho. The group is comprised of representatives from each federal firefighting agency: the BLM; U.S. Forest Service; National Park Service; Bureau of Indian Affairs; National Association of State Foresters; Department of Homeland Security; US Fire Administration; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition to providing agency insights, each NMAC member represents a Geographic Area (GA).

NMAC establishes national firefighting resource priorities throughout the country, then directs, allocates, or repositions resources amongst GAs to meet those national priorities. For example, if wildfires are burning in California, the Northwest and the Great Basin Areas, NMAC will set priorities for the GAs and determine what type of firefighting resources will be sent to each area. NMAC also conducts a host of other duties, such as establishing Preparedness Levels throughout the calendar year to help assure that firefighting resources are ready if new incidents arise. Preparedness Levels are dictated by fuel and weather conditions, fire activity, and resource availability.

During fire season, as the BLM's NMAC representative, Glenn's typical days are busy and full of high profile decision-making. First thing in the morning, he participates in a conference call with all of the Incident Commanders who manage large wildfires within the Great Basin geographic area. This allows him to determine large fire resource needs, such as air tankers, helicopters, and firefighting crews. After this call, he contacts Fire Management Officers in each state, then meets with other NMAC members to determine which geographic area, and the wildfires burning within it, will receive wildland firefighting resources such as air tankers, helicopters, and firefighting crews. In some cases, Glenn and the NMAC group must determine how to move firefighting resources to other countries, such as Australia and Canada. This is how wildland firefighting resources are mobilized; it involves intense, well-informed, scientifically based, decisive work.

"My father worked for the U.S. Forest Service and my grandfather worked for CAL Fire," says Glenn. "From day one, firefighting has been in my DNA. I started as a BLM firefighter and have always enjoyed the intriguing nature of this field; it's challenging, scientific and calculating, yet at the same time, it involves the ability to adjust at a moment's notice because of fire's volatile nature."

When asked what he particularly enjoys about his line of work, he adds that wildland fire professionals are always a pleasure to work with. "It's pretty amazing that we will go into a meeting, receive a briefing, and 45 minutes later, we have determined how to address the wildfire situation across agency lines and state boundaries, then dispatch wildland fire resources throughout the entire country," says Glenn.

Organizations and professionals from around the world have continuously shown interest in how NMAC, and people like Glenn, coordinate between different agencies, across geographic areas, and even across international



John Glenn, BLM representative on NMAC at the National Interagency Fire Center.

boundaries, to suppress wildfires. International visitors frequent NIFC, wanting to know how NMAC seamlessly prioritizes the wildland fire situation and moves such a large volume of equipment, aircraft, fire managers, firefighting crews, and other necessary support resources during one 45 minute meeting, every day.

Glenn's job is definitely not without its challenges, as the public, politicians, and other high-ranking officials can easily become passionate when a wildfire is threatening their homes, communities, and precious natural resources. Glenn and the NMAC group have to ensure they make scientific, risk-based decisions, even when emotions are flying high.

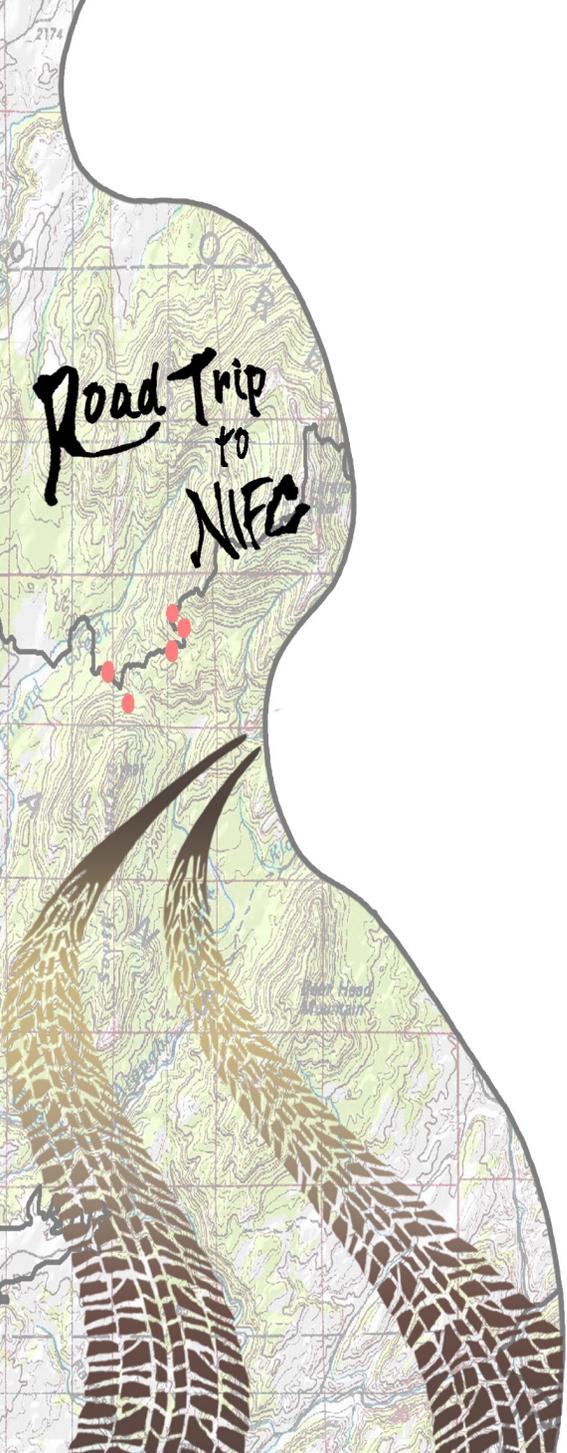
"It requires a certain sense of calmness, calculation, and conviction to consider the whole country if you are receiving emotional phone calls from politicians or your home, your cabin, your favorite national park, or your ideal hunting grounds are threatened by wildfire," says Glenn. "It's not always easy, but at the end of the day, if we've prioritized wildfires, distributed our resources accordingly, and in the process saved one more home, one more structure, or one more acre of valuable wildlife habitat, we've done our jobs well."

Glenn is an avid horseman; he has three horses, a mule, three black labs, and one tabby cat on his 10 acre property outside of Boise, Idaho. When asked to provide an interesting fact about himself, he admits, "I love romantic comedies. The world is already full of treachery, so after a stressful day at work, there's nothing more relaxing than letting my mind be entertained by something happy, with an ending that doesn't leave me in a dark mood."

**ROAD TRIP
TO
NIFC**



Road Trip
to
NIFC



Red Head Mountain