



Mississippi Fire Planning Blue Grass Base Camp

For Immediate Release

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Wiggins Camp Leads Six County Firefighting Operation

(Wiggins, MS) A field that usually plays host to an annual bluegrass festival has become home for some 100 firefighters from all over the country as they join local organizations to deal with wildfires in the area.

Working through the State of Mississippi Forestry Commission, the wildland firefighters are here to assist with operations in six local counties by providing personnel, bulldozers, fire engines and water carrying helicopters.

Their base of operations appropriately called Bluegrass Base Camp is located off Magnolia Avenue near Highway 49 on a site provided by local businessman A.R. Byrd. The Type 3 Incident Management Team and crews are living in a tent city that will be their home for approximately 45 days. The group, comprised of firefighters from as close as their home state of Mississippi to as far away as New Mexico, Arizona, Oregon and Utah.

“This is a challenging fire season for Mississippi,” said Incident Commander Dean Fernandez. “There hasn’t been much rain since Hurricane Katrina and with all the fallen and piled fuels in the area, the fire danger is very high. We know that folks would like to get rid of debris on their property, but we would encourage everyone to check their local fire ordinances and with the Mississippi Forestry Commission at 1-800-240-5161 for information on burn bans or obtaining burn permits before they consider burning anything in these dry conditions.”

Fernandez has seven fire task forces under his command and each day they leave camp to either fight fires or clear areas of potential dangers. He says his group is dealing with about six or seven fires every day in the six county area where his crews operate.