

**National Interagency Coordination Center  
Incident Management Situation Report  
Saturday, August 20, 2022 – 0730 MDT  
National Preparedness Level 3**

**National Fire Activity:**

Initial attack activity:	Light (100 fires)
New large incidents:	2
Large fires contained:	1
Uncontained large fires: **	24
Area Command teams committed:	0
NIMOs committed:	1
Type 1 IMTs committed:	2
Type 2 IMTs committed:	8
***Complex IMTs committed:	0

\*\*\*Complex Incident Management Teams (CIMTs) are configured to respond to large, complex fires and can expand and reduce staffing in all functional areas as necessary to meet the needs of the incident.

Nationally, there are 31 fires being managed under a strategy other than full suppression.

\*\*Uncontained large fires include only fires being managed under a full suppression strategy.

[Link](#) to Geographic Area daily reports.

[Link](#) to Understanding the IMSR.

On August 18, a firefighter on contract with the Oregon Department of Forestry was fatally injured while assigned to the Rum Creek fire in Oregon. The firefighting community extends its condolences to the family and friends of the deceased.

One RC-26 aircraft with Distributed Real-Time Infrared (DRTI) capability and support personnel from the 141st Air Refueling Wing (Washington Air National Guard) have been deployed to Boise, ID. One RC-26 aircraft with Distributed Real-Time Infrared (DRTI) capability and support personnel from the 162nd Operations Group (Arizona Air National Guard) have been deployed to Eugene, OR in support of wildland fire operations.

One Boeing 737 airtanker from New South Wales, Australia is supporting fire suppression efforts in the western United States.

Active Incident Resource Summary							
GACC	Incidents	Cumulative Acres	Crews	Engines	Helicopters	Total Personnel	Change in Personnel
AICC	1	20	2	1	0	40	0
NWCC	12	30,587	58	68	19	2,266	0
ONCC	3	112,611	58	110	22	2,532	0
OSCC	3	20,069	11	8	9	393	0
NRCC	20	37,820	22	38	14	957	-58
GBCC	11	104,000	22	76	18	1,372	-66
SWCC	1	341,735	2	3	1	461	0
RMCC	2	7,632	0	4	0	25	-36
EACC	4	3.3	0	16	0	64	0
SACC	13	14,907	2	28	1	218	-7
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>669,385</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>8,328</b>	<b>-167</b>

### Northern California Area (PL 3)

New fires:	26
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	4
NIMOs committed:	1
Type 2 IMTs committed:	3

**2022 SRF Lightning Complex** (2 fires), Six Rivers NF, USFS. NIMO (NIMO Team 1). Transfer of command from IMT 2 (CA Team 11) to IMT 2 (CA Team 14) will occur today. One mile northeast of Willow Creek, CA. Timber and slash. Moderate fire behavior with flanking, isolated torching and spotting. Several communities, numerous structures and infrastructure threatened. Evacuations, area, road and trail closures in effect. Reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping.

**McKinney**, Klamath NF, USFS. IMT 2 (CA Team 12). Fifteen miles northwest of Yreka, CA. Timber and brush. Minimal fire behavior with backing, creeping and smoldering. Several communities and numerous residences threatened. Evacuations have been lifted. Area, road and trail closures in effect.

**Yeti**, Klamath NF, USFS. Eight miles northeast of Happy Camp, CA. Closed timber litter and timber. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and smoldering. Several communities, numerous structures and communication infrastructure threatened. Evacuations, area, road and trail closures in effect.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
2022 SRF Lightning Complex	CA-SRF	25,733	-327	73	Ctn	8/27	1,463	-562	35	84	17	3	40.5M	FS
McKinney	CA-KNF	60,392	0	95	Ctn	8/30	940	-8	20	20	5	185	64.9M	FS
Yeti	CA-KNF	7,886	0	90	Ctn	8/20	129	-60	3	5	0	0	15.9M	FS
Leilani	HI-PTYQ	18,600	-6,400	100	Ctn	---	0	-49	0	0	0	0	450K	DOD

PTYQ – U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii-Pohakuloa Training Area, DOD

### Northwest Area (PL 3)

New fires:	12
New large incidents:	1
Uncontained large fires:	6
Type 1 IMTs committed:	1
Type 2 IMTs committed:	2

**White River**, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF, USFS. IMT 2 (NW Team 7). IMT is also managing the Irving Peak fire. Twenty-three miles northwest of Leavenworth, WA. Timber. Active fire behavior with flanking, backing and isolated torching. Numerous structures threatened. Evacuations, area, road and trail closures in effect.

**Irving Peak**, Okanogan-Wenatchee NF, USFS. Twenty-six miles northwest of Leavenworth, WA. Timber. Active fire behavior with flanking, backing and isolated torching. Structures threatened. Evacuations, area, road and trail closures in effect.

**Windigo**, Umpqua NF, USFS. IMT 2 (NW Team 10). IMT is also managing the Potter and Big Swamp fires. Twenty miles southwest of La Pine, OR. Closed timber litter, timber and medium slash. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and smoldering. Area, road and trail closures in effect.

**Potter**, Willamette NF, USFS. Forty-six miles southwest of La Pine, OR. Closed timber litter, timber and medium slash. Moderate fire behavior with wind-driven runs, single tree torching and spotting. Area, road and trail closures in effect.

**Big Swamp**, Willamette NF, USFS. Thirty-seven miles southwest of La Pine, OR. Closed timber litter, timber and medium slash. Moderate fire behavior with flanking, single tree and isolated torching. Area, road and trail closures in effect.

**Cedar Creek**, Willamette NF, USFS. IMT 1 (PNW Team 3). Fifteen miles east of Oakridge, OR. Timber and closed timber litter. Active fire behavior with backing, creeping and isolated torching. Structures threatened. Area, road and trail closures in effect.

\* **Wagner Road**, Washington State Fire Marshal's Office. Twelve miles west of St. John, WA. Tall grass and brush. Active fire behavior with flanking, backing and smoldering. Structures threatened.

**Thor**, Colville NF, USFS. Six miles southeast of Metaline Falls, WA. Timber and closed timber litter. No new information.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
White River	WA-OWF	871	121	1	Comp	10/30	458	105	13	20	4	0	2.8M	FS
Irving Peak	WA-OWF	615	365	1	Comp	10/31	38	-49	2	0	0	0	537K	FS
Windigo	OR-UPF	1,007	0	95	Ctn	10/1	280	-5	4	1	1	0	14.5M	FS
Potter	OR-WIF	597	46	44	Ctn	10/30	382	-22	12	12	4	0	8.2M	FS
Big Swamp	OR-WIF	121	0	29	Ctn	10/30	98	0	3	2	1	0	1M	FS
Cedar Creek	OR-WIF	5,719	883	0	Ctn	10/1	863	156	20	17	7	0	16.7M	FS
* Wagner Road	WA-WFS	7,381	---	80	Ctn	8/22	126	---	3	16	1	4	489K	ST
Thor	WA-COF	107	---	0	Ctn	10/31	15	---	1	0	0	0	150K	FS

### Northern Rockies Area (PL 3)

New fires:	3
New large incidents:	1
Uncontained large fires:	6

**Garceau**, Flathead Agency, BIA. Seven miles northeast of Hot Springs, MT. Tall grass and timber. Active fire behavior with creeping, group and isolated torching. Structures and energy infrastructure threatened.

**Quinn**, Craig Mountain Supervisory Area Office, IDL. Seventeen miles southwest of Grangeville, ID. Tall grass and timber. Moderate fire behavior with running, flanking and backing. Residences threatened.

**Blister**, Fort Peck Agency, BIA. Twenty-five miles north of Wolf Point, MT. Grass. Minimal fire behavior. Residences threatened.

**Sutton**, Kootenai NF, USFS. Thirteen miles southeast of Eureka, MT. Timber. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and smoldering. Road and trail closures in effect.

**Elmo**, Flathead Agency, BIA. Eight miles west of Elmo, MT. Grass and timber. Minimal fire behavior with creeping. Structures and energy infrastructure threatened.

**Deep Draw**, Crow Agency, BIA. Ten miles east of Bridger, MT. Timber and brush. Minimal fire behavior with single tree torching. Residences and energy infrastructure threatened.

\* **Castle**, Nez Perce-Clearwater NF, USFS. Fifty miles northeast of Lowell, ID. Timber. Moderate fire behavior with backing, creeping and group torching. Structures threatened. Last narrative report unless significant activity occurs.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Garceau	MT-FHA	5,987	2,525	30	Ctn	8/31	210	26	5	8	7	0	2.7M	BIA
Quinn	ID-CMS	450	0	50	Ctn	8/22	145	0	4	6	0	0	724K	ST
Blister	MT-FPA	3,500	0	80	Ctn	UNK	29	-3	0	7	0	1	25K	BIA
Sutton	MT-KNF	105	3	35	Ctn	10/15	117	-4	3	2	0	0	1.5M	FS
Elmo	MT-FHA	21,349	0	81	Ctn	8/31	32	-8	0	5	0	8	15.3M	BIA
Deep Draw	MT-CRA	794	0	74	Ctn	8/23	64	-5	2	3	1	0	900K	BIA

Large Fires Being Managed with a Strategy Other Than Full Suppression Without a Type 1 or 2 IMT Assigned

* Castle	ID-NCF	400	---	0	Comp	12/31	0	---	0	0	0	0	50K	FS
Redhorn	MT-FHA	511	0	5	Comp	10/1	10	0	0	0	1	0	2.9M	BIA
Hog Trough	MT-BRF	1,620	219	75	Comp	10/15	134	-4	1	1	3	0	9M	FS
Clover	MT-BDF	1,103	0	51	Comp	10/30	13	-45	0	0	0	0	2.1M	FS
Weasel	MT-KNF	1,683	---	20	Comp	9/30	9	---	0	1	0	0	1.3M	FS
Diamond Watch	ID-IPF	597	---	0	Comp	9/30	25	---	1	1	0	0	425K	FS
Indian Ridge	MT-BRF	4,425	---	0	Comp	10/31	8	---	0	0	0	0	18K	FS
Quartz	MT-GNP	500	---	0	Comp	10/31	8	---	0	0	0	0	5K	NPS
Eneas Peak	ID-IPF	150	---	0	Comp	9/30	4	---	0	0	0	0	17K	FS
Cannon	MT-FNF	995	---	0	Comp	10/31	1	---	0	0	0	0	17K	FS

BRF – Bitterroot NF, USFS

BDF – Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, USFS

IPF – Idaho Panhandle NF, USFS

GNP – Glacier NP, NPS

FNF – Flathead NF, USFS

### Great Basin Area (PL 3)

New fires:	17
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	2
Type 1 IMTs committed:	1
Type 2 IMTs committed:	1

**Moose**, Salmon-Challis NF, USFS. IMT 1 (NR Team 2). Seventeen miles north of Salmon, ID. Timber. Moderate fire behavior with uphill runs, isolated torching and creeping. Numerous residences and energy infrastructure threatened. Area, road and trail closures in effect.

**Four Corners**, Payette NF, USFS. IMT 2 (GB Team 4). Six miles west of Cascade, ID. Timber. Active fire behavior with short crown runs, group torching and spotting. Numerous structures threatened. Evacuations, area, road and trail closures in effect.

**Porphyry**, Payette NF, USFS. Previously reported incident. Nine miles east of Warren, ID. Brush, short grass and timber. Active fire behavior with uphill runs, flanking and running. Structures threatened. Area and trail closures in effect. Last narrative report unless significant activity occurs.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Moose	ID-SCF	89,344	3,242	34	Ctn	10/31	776	0	10	40	6	7	47.9M	FS
Four Corners	ID-PAF	5,560	1,448	0	Ctn	8/30	419	24	10	24	6	0	4.9M	FS
Large Fires Being Managed with a Strategy Other Than Full Suppression Without a Type 1 or 2 IMT Assigned														
Porphyry	ID-PAF	1,500	700	0	Comp	10/15	36	-1	0	3	0	0	60K	FS
Ross Fork	ID-STF	459	132	0	Comp	10/31	17	0	0	1	0	0	400K	FS
Woodtick	ID-SCF	5,721	23	17	Comp	9/30	34	-5	1	0	2	0	3.2M	FS
Dismal	ID-PAF	1,664	---	0	Comp	10/15	12	---	0	0	1	0	38K	FS
Norton	ID-SCF	679	---	0	Comp	10/31	2	---	0	0	0	0	98K	FS
Halfway Hill	UT-SCS	11,702	---	93	Comp	10/1	11	---	0	2	0	2	11.7M	ST
Wolf Fang	ID-SCF	1,266	---	0	Comp	10/1	1	---	0	0	0	0	60K	FS

STF – Sawtooth NF, USFS    SCS – South Central Area, Utah DOF

### Southern California Area (PL 2)

New fires:	13
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	1

**Wishon**, Sequoia NF, USFS. Six miles northeast of Springville, CA. Timber, brush and chaparral. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and smoldering. Road and trail closures in effect.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Wishon	CA-SQF	325	0	75	Ctn	8/28	305	-53	8	6	7	0	2.3M	FS
Large Fires Being Managed with a Strategy Other Than Full Suppression Without a Type 1 or 2 IMT Assigned														
Red	CA-YNP	500	---	0	Comp	9/28	24	---	2	0	1	0	20K	NPS

YNP – Yosemite NP, NPS

### Southern Area (PL 2)

New fires:	21
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires	4

**Juniper Road Two**, North Carolina Forest Service. Seven miles northwest of Holly Ridge, NC. Southern rough. Minimal fire behavior with smoldering.

**Pine Pond**, Texas A&M Forest Service. Started on private land nine miles east of Bastrop, TX. Timber and brush. Minimal fire behavior with creeping and smoldering. Residences and energy infrastructure threatened.

**Black Rock**, Osage Agency, BIA. Thirteen miles northeast of Pawhuska, OK. Tall grass. No new information.

**58**, Oklahoma DOF. Nine miles west of Apache, OK. Timber, short and tall grass. No new information. Last report unless new information is received.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Juniper Road Two	NC-NCS	1,226	0	79	Ctn	9/15	76	0	0	0	0	0	634K	ST
Pine Pond	TX-TXS	700	0	85	Ctn	8/21	43	-34	1	7	0	0	NR	PRI
Black Rock	OK-OSA	2,743	---	85	Ctn	8/20	10	---	1	1	0	0	5K	BIA
58	OK-OKS	4,761	---	80	Ctn	UNK	14	---	0	5	0	0	80K	ST

### Southwest Area (PL 2)

New fires:	0
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	1
Type 2 IMTs committed:	2

**Hermits Peak**, Santa Fe NF, USFS. IMT 2 (SW Team 3). IMT 2 (SW Team 4) mobilizing. Twelve miles northwest of Las Vegas, NM. Hardwood litter and timber. Minimal fire behavior. Area, road and trail closures in effect. Precipitation occurred over the fire area yesterday.

Incident Name	Unit	Size		%	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Hermits Peak	NM-SNF	341,735	0	98	Ctn	10/18	461	-9	2	3	1	913	298M	FS
Large Fires Being Managed with a Strategy Other Than Full Suppression Without a Type 1 or 2 IMT Assigned														
Dragon	AZ-GCP	1,362	---	0	Comp	9/1	7	---	0	1	0	0	900K	NPS
Keystone	AZ-FTA	471	---	60	Comp	10/1	2	---	0	1	0	0	50K	BIA

GCP – Grand Canyon NP, NPS    FTA – Fort Apache Agency, BIA

**Alaska Area (PL 1)**

New fires:	2
New large incidents:	0
Uncontained large fires:	0

Incident Name	Unit	Size		% Acres	Ctn/ Comp	Est	Personnel		Resources			Strc Lost	\$\$ CTD	Origin Own
		Acres	Chge				Total	Chge	Crw	Eng	Heli			
Large Fires Being Managed with a Strategy Other Than Full Suppression Without a Type 1 or 2 IMT Assigned														
Christian	AK-UYD	8,769	---	0	Comp	9/30	0	---	0	0	0	0	10K	TRI
Minnkohwin	AK-TAD	4,718	---	0	Comp	10/1	0	---	0	0	0	0	30K	FWS
Clear	AK-FAS	73,284	---	91	Comp	8/31	18	---	0	1	0	33	27.1M	ST
Hardscrabble Creek	AK-SWS	2,514	---	0	Comp	10/31	0	---	0	0	0	0	3K	ST
Middle Tanana Complex	AK-DAS	62,861	---	0	Comp	10/31	1	---	0	0	0	0	3.4M	ST

UYD – Upper Yukon Zone, BLM    TAD – Tanana Zone, BLM    FAS – Fairbanks Area, Alaska DOF

SWS – Southwest Area, Alaska DOF    DAS – Delta Area, Alaska DOF

### Fires and Acres Yesterday (by Protection):

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIREs	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	6,551	0	6,551
Northwest Area	FIREs	1	0	0	1	7	3	12
	ACRES	1	0	0	0	23	1	25
Northern California Area	FIREs	0	1	0	0	19	6	26
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	51	1	52
Southern California Area	FIREs	0	1	0	0	11	1	13
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	17	6	23
Northern Rockies Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	219	219
Great Basin Area	FIREs	0	9	0	0	4	4	17
	ACRES	0	157	0	0	44	5,407	5,608
Southwest Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rocky Mountain Area	FIREs	1	0	0	0	4	1	6
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	7	7
Eastern Area	FIREs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ACRES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southern Area	FIREs	5	0	0	0	16	0	21
	ACRES	21	0	0	0	137	0	158
<b>TOTAL FIRES:</b>		7	13	0	1	63	16	100
<b>TOTAL ACRES:</b>		22	157	0	0	6,823	5,642	12,643

### Fires and Acres Year-to-Date (by Protection):

Area		BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	ST/OT	USFS	TOTAL
Alaska Area	FIRES	0	186	0	0	345	30	561
	ACRES	0	1,521,544	0	0	1,573,631	10	3,095,185
Northwest Area	FIRES	130	268	23	26	631	548	1,626
	ACRES	1,215	45,514	257	3	13,305	8,624	68,917
Northern California Area	FIRES	6	23	5	16	2,201	250	2,501
	ACRES	2	286	20	87	14,318	84,775	99,489
Southern California Area	FIRES	23	37	8	23	2,826	350	3,267
	ACRES	114	295	103	5,372	18,563	3,012	27,458
Northern Rockies Area	FIRES	356	18	4	2	723	298	1,401
	ACRES	26,883	2,103	527	1	9,129	10,832	49,475
Great Basin Area	FIRES	28	466	5	32	565	235	1,331
	ACRES	6,568	26,764	58	29	36,200	144,114	213,733
Southwest Area	FIRES	382	182	6	26	515	767	1,878
	ACRES	39,403	13,326	15	2,717	159,631	760,791	975,883
Rocky Mountain Area	FIRES	262	306	12	22	1,024	254	1,880
	ACRES	18,062	5,916	130	597	177,394	10,631	212,730
Eastern Area	FIRES	88	0	20	11	5,427	319	5,865
	ACRES	253	0	680	17	38,977	2,893	42,821
Southern Area	FIRES	792	4	26	65	21,348	628	22,863
	ACRES	103,503	88	5,942	3,054	1,026,661	39,584	1,178,833
<b>TOTAL FIRES:</b>		<b>2,067</b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>35,605</b>	<b>3,679</b>	<b>43,173</b>
<b>TOTAL ACRES:</b>		<b>196,003</b>	<b>1,615,836</b>	<b>7,732</b>	<b>11,877</b>	<b>3,067,809</b>	<b>1,065,266</b>	<b>5,964,523</b>

<b>Ten Year Average Fires (2012 – 2021 as of today)</b>	<b>38,404</b>
<b>Ten Year Average Acres (2012 – 2021 as of today)</b>	<b>4,727,324</b>

\*\*\*Changes in some agency YTD acres reflect more accurate mapping or reporting adjustments.

\*\*\*Additional wildfire information is available through the Geographic Areas at <https://gacc.nifc.gov/>

### Canadian Fires and Hectares

PROVINCES	FIRES YESTERDAY	HECTARES YESTERDAY	FIRES YEAR-TO-DATE	HECTARES YEAR-TO- DATE
BRITISH COLUMBIA	20	143	869	37,418
YUKON TERRITORY	0	0	273	175,285
ALBERTA	3	0	812	113,585
NORTHWEST TERRITORY	19	10,223	230	407,153
SASKATCHEWAN	6	42	336	224,292
MANITOBA	2	0	149	135,054
ONTARIO	4	4	201	2,431
QUEBEC	2	0	358	29,574
NEWFOUNDLAND	1	0	72	23,989
NEW BRUNSWICK	1	3	173	137
NOVA SCOTIA	0	0	117	3,363
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	0	0	2	0
NATIONAL PARKS	1	16	49	6,386
TOTALS	59	10,432	3,695	1,158,667

\*1 Hectare = 2.47 Acres

**Predictive Services Discussion:** Isolated to scattered mixed wet and dry thunderstorms are likely to develop across northern Washington, much of Idaho, and western Montana. Temperatures 5-15 degrees above normal are likely to continue across the northwestern US, with temperatures above 100°F also expected in the California Central Valley. Afternoon relative humidity will drop to 10-25% but may drop into the single digits across portions of northern California. Widespread monsoonal thunderstorms will continue across the Southwest, with scattered wet thunderstorms from the central Great Basin into Colorado. Scattered to numerous thunderstorms will develop across the southern Plains and much of Texas into the Mid-Mississippi Valley and Great Lakes along and ahead of a cold front. Scattered thunderstorms are forecast from the Gulf Coast through the Southeast and into the Mid-Atlantic as well.

<http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/outlooks.htm>



This Day in History is a brief summary of a powerful learning opportunity and is not intended to second guess or be judgmental of decisions and actions. Put yourself in the following situation as if you do not know the outcome. What are the conditions? What are you thinking? What are YOU doing?

## The Great Fires of 1910 (The Big Blowup) - August 20th

**Incident Summary:** The 1910 fire season in the Northern Rockies was an unprecedented challenge to the US Forest Service. Record drought conditions had combined with an unusually strong lightning cycle and an abundance of man-caused fires. By July 15, there were over 3000 firefighters on the fireline in Region 1 of the Forest Service alone. On August 8, President Taft deployed numerous companies of the regular Army to northern Idaho and western Montana.

On August 20, an upper-level trough, centered in Saskatchewan, moved through the Northern Rockies between 1000 and 2100 hrs. This cold front passage brought a strong west/southwest wind that caused numerous fires to blowup and join together to create large fire fronts that moved across the landscape. Fire crews across the Northern Rockies found themselves in danger of entrapment. Many were able to take refuge in previously burned areas, natural safety zones, and mine tunnels. Some were completely cut off, and by the end of the day, 85 persons - 78 of them firefighters - had lost their lives at 9 separate fatality sites.

*This day in wildland fire history is dedicated to all those at the Big Blowup.*

### Discussion Points:

The fire behavior on August 20 was influenced a great deal by the drought conditions.

- *Discuss what a [National Fire Danger Rating System pocket card](#) tells us and where to get them.*

Messengers were sent to some of the crews to warn them of the impending windstorm, but most of the crews received no warning.

- *We often depend on our handheld radios to receive critical weather updates. What backup systems / technologies can be used if our radios don't work?*

On the West Fork Big Creek fire, a 60-person crew was instructed by their supervisor to choose between two safety zones, the black from the previous burning period or the creek bottom below. 19 firefighters chose to take shelter in a nearby homesteader's cabin which ignited as the flame front passed. 18 of them perished rushing outside. The one survivor tripped at the door and fell to the ground.

- *What is your agency's policy on taking refuge in a structure? What considerations would you take into account?*

The 18 firefighters on the Stevens Peak fire burned out a safety zone in light fuels. One firefighter perished when he breathed in super-heated air.

- *Discuss the importance of protecting your airway in entrapment situations, and methods of doing so.*

When the 70 firefighters working on the Setser Creek fire were instructed by their supervisor to proceed down-



stream to a safety zone, 27 of them disregarded the order and chose instead to follow the instructions of the Camp Cook who insisted there was no danger. All 28 lost their lives.

- *What tools are used by your crew/unit to improve crew cohesion in times of stress?*

On the Middle Fork Big Creek fire, one crew had retreated to a two-acre clearing with a stream running through it. Most of the firefighters who sought refuge in the stream survived. Three

firefighters, however, were killed when a large tree fell on them.

- *What factors influence the selection of a good safety zone? (Review Safety Zones found under Operational Engagement section (green) in the [Incident Response Pocket Guide \(IRPG\), PMS 461](#).)*

On the Storm Creek fire, the crew supervisor had led his 70-person crew to a safety zone consisting of black from the previous day's burn. This safety zone proved to be a good one, as the crew safely watched the fire burn around them. One firefighter left the protection of the safety zone and was found dead the next day.

- *How do you and your crew provide for firefighter accountability?*

After the Big Blowup, there were 116 injured firefighters. Some received their initial care from Army field surgeons. Others, including famous Ranger Ed Pulaski, were left with long-term disabilities.

- *What are the burn injury protocols on your unit?*

### Resources:

[Year of the Fires by Stephen Pyne](https://www.stephenpyne.com/works.htm), <https://www.stephenpyne.com/works.htm>

[National Fire Danger Rating System pocket cards filed by geographic area](https://famit.nwcc.gov/applications/WIMS/PocketCards), <https://famit.nwcc.gov/applications/WIMS/PocketCards>

“This Day in History” is a collaborative project between 6 Minutes for Safety and the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center

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