

News Release

National Interagency Fire Center
3833 S. Development Ave.
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<http://www.nifc.gov>



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Eight MAFFS-equipped military C-130 aircraft now mobilized to assist with wildfires

Boise, Idaho – The USDA Forest Service has activated two additional military C-130 aircraft equipped with Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems (MAFFS), bringing the total number of MAFFS-equipped aircraft to eight that are battling western wildfires. The MAFFS-equipped aircraft are operating out of McClellan Airbase in Sacramento and assisting the USDA Forest Service and other wildland fire agencies with multiple large wildfires. It's the first time all eight aircraft in the MAFFS program have been activated since a series of large wildfires in Colorado in 2012.

“Our military partners have provided valuable aerial firefighting assistance to numerous fires,” said Kim Christensen, deputy assistant director for operations for the USDA Forest Service. “The MAFFS aircraft have been heavily utilized so far this year as they were in 2020. We’re very appreciative of their efforts, including the focus on safety.”

“We are honored to provide assistance to the Forest Service during this challenging fire year,” said Col. Gary S. Monroe, AEG MAFFS Commander. “The team especially acknowledges the personal sacrifices of those on the ground battling the fires, which tragically includes loss of firefighter life. We are committed to our best effort working amongst the larger interagency team to help our nation.”

The MAFFS units and crews essentially convert the C-130s into airtankers that provide a critical “surge” capability during the height of fire season. The eight aircraft in the MAFFS program can be used to bolster wildfire suppression efforts when all commercial airtankers are fully committed or not readily available. The initial activation of MAFFS-equipped military aircraft occurred on June 25, a month earlier than in 2020 and the earliest activation of MAFFS-equipped aircraft in a decade. Four additional aircraft have been activated over the past sixty days. The 7th and 8th aircraft were activated August 22 and 25.

The C-130 aircraft are equipped with the U.S. Forest Service’s MAFFS, which can drop up to 3,000 gallons of fire retardant in less than 10 seconds across a quarter-mile line. The system slides into the back of the military aircraft, and retardant is released through a nozzle on the rear left side. Aircraft in the program are from the Nevada Air National Guard’s 152nd Airlift Wing, Reno, Nevada, the California Air National Guard’s 146th Airlift Wing, Port Hueneme, Calif., Air Force Reserve Command’s 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson AFB, Colorado and the Air National Guard’s 153rd Airlift Wing, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

For more information on Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems, visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/planes/maffs>.



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For background photos and videos of the MAFFS program, visit: www.dvidshub.net/feature/MAFFSAEG.

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The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is the nation's support center for wildland firefighting. Eight different agencies and organizations are part of NIFC including, the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, National Weather Service, U.S. Fire Administration, and the National Association of State Foresters.

