



Media Contacts:

NIFC: Stanton Florea 208-387-5437

stanton.florea@usda.gov

AFNORTH: Lt Col Karen Roganov 850-774-1044

afnorth.pa@us.af.mil

Two MAFFS-equipped C-130 aircraft mobilized to assist with wildfires

Earliest activation of aircraft with Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems (MAFFS) in a decade

McClellan, Calif., June 25, 2021 – The USDA Forest Service has activated two military C-130 aircraft equipped with MAFFS to assist with increased fire activity in several western states. The aircraft, from the California Air National Guard's 146th Airlift Wing and the Nevada Air National Guard's 152nd Airlift Wing, will join the USDA Forest Service and other wildland fire agencies fighting wildfires across the West. The aircraft will be operational beginning June 26 from McClellan Airbase in Sacramento.

“These aircraft will help augment our aerial firefighting capabilities,” said Kim Christensen, deputy assistant director for operations for the USDA Forest Service. “We’ve already reached National Preparedness Level 4 with elevated potential for significant wildfire activity in the western U.S. to further increase.”

Having military C-130s that can be converted into airtankers provides a critical “surge” capability that can be used to bolster wildfire suppression efforts when commercial airtankers are fully committed or not readily available. The activation of MAFFS-equipped military aircraft is a month earlier than in 2020 and the first activation in June since 2012.

“Our aircraft and aircrews are ready to respond to requests for assistance,” said Lt. Gen. Kirk Pierce, commander, First Air Force (Air Forces Northern). “Our MAFFS-trained team of professionals recently completed annual aerial wildland firefighting training with the USDA Forest Service to ensure they are fully prepared for the wildfire season. We take to heart our team’s effort to help protect property and critical infrastructure, with the ultimate goal of saving lives.”

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. In addition to the 146th and 152nd Airlift Wings, MAFFS program aircraft are from the Air Force Reserve Command’s 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson AFB, Colorado and the Air National Guard’s 153rd Airlift Wing, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

On June 22, the National Wildland Fire Preparedness Level was elevated to 4 (out of 5), indicating increased wildland fire activity across the western U.S. The level was raised by the Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC), composed of wildland fire representatives from each wildland fire agency based at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho.

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.

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

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