

News Release

National Interagency Fire Center
3833 S. Development Ave.
Boise, ID 83705

<http://www.nifc.gov>



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Military Personnel Mobilized to Provide Wildfire Support

Boise, Idaho – The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho, requested a Department of Defense (DoD) activation of approximately 200 active-duty U.S. Army Soldiers to assist with wildfire suppression efforts. The National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) at NIFC requested the personnel, along with command and support staff, from the DoD. After receiving training, the Soldiers will serve as hand crews, assisting with wildfire suppression efforts in Northern California. Two similar requests were granted last year to support the August Complex and Creek wildfires in California.

The Soldiers will be trained over the next week at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) near Tacoma, Washington and on the fireline to provide support in early September in Northern California.

“The United States has been experiencing above-normal fire activity throughout multiple geographic areas, which will likely continue into the fall. These conditions are creating competition for all types of wildland fire resources,” said Josh Simmons, NMAC Chair. “In order to meet current demands, we are working with the U.S. military to activate additional fire suppression resources.”

Currently, 84 large fires and complexes have burned 2.5 million acres in 9 states. Most of the large fires and complexes burned actively in California. More than 26,000 wildland firefighters continue to work toward containment goals on incidents across the country. The country has been at Preparedness Level 5 – the highest level of wildfire preparedness – since July 14. Several geographic areas are experiencing large, complex wildland fire incidents, which have the potential to exhaust national wildland fire suppression resources.

“On behalf of our cooperating agencies, the NMAC would like to thank the U.S. military for their assistance in protecting lives, property, and critical cultural and natural resources. Together, we work to reduce threats from wildfires and other disasters,” Simmons added.



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The training at JBLM will consist of both a classroom portion and field training in the basics of wildland fire suppression and firefighter safety. The Soldiers will be outfitted with wildland fire personal protective equipment (PPE) and other gear to serve as wildland firefighters. They will be trained by wildland fire agency personnel beginning Monday, August 30. The training is expected to conclude by Friday, September 3, with the Soldiers supporting wildland fire response operations thereafter. While providing support, the Soldiers will be accompanied by experienced wildland fire strike team leaders and crew bosses from wildland fire management agencies.

The DoD has been a key wildland firefighting partner for decades, providing aircraft and personnel to serve as wildland firefighters. This is the 40th time since 1987 that active-duty military personnel have been mobilized to serve as wildland firefighters. In addition to the U.S. Army activation, eight U.S. Air Force C-130s equipped with Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems (MAFFS) are currently serving as airtankers, providing wildfire support across the West.

For more information on military activations for civilian wildfire support, contact: Nicole Wieman, (210) 428-9835, email - usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.pao@mail.mil, or visit, www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_military.html.

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The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), located in Boise, Idaho, 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

