



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Francisco Bay Area
National Parks

Point Reyes Station, CA
415 464-5100 phone
415 663-8132 fax

Sausalito, CA 94965
415 331-6374 phone
415 331-6942 fax

S. F. Bay Area National Parks Fire Management

San Francisco Bay Area National Parks Support Interagency Fire Management Response Throughout 2006 Season

During the record breaking fire season of 2006, the San Francisco Bay Area National Parks mobilized resources to support numerous incidents throughout the western states. Resources from Point Reyes National Seashore, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, John Muir National Historic Site and Pinnacles National Monument were dispatched to fire suppression, wildland fire use, severity pre-positioning, and burned area emergency response (BAER) assignments throughout the long fire season. The first dispatch was in January to drought-stricken Texas and Oklahoma, and the year progressed into an extended period at National Preparedness Level 5, when the potential to exhaust all U.S. resources existed, and international agreements for assistance were activated. The resources mobilized from the Bay Area National Parks include Engine Operator, Engine Boss, Crew Boss, Firefighter Type 1, Firefighter Type 2, Helicopter Manager, GIS Specialist, Emergency Medical Technician, Personnel Time Recorder, Resource Advisor, Fire Effects Monitor, Public Information Officer, and BAER Team Leader.

Over 9.7 million acres burned nationally during 2006, greatly surpassing the 8.4 million acres of the landmark fire season of 2000, which had led to the National Fire Plan. A key component of the National Fire Plan is to assure that necessary firefighting resources and personnel are available to respond to wildland fires that threaten lives and property.

Suppression dispatches from the Bay Area Parks were to: Northeast Texas Initial Attack, Lufkin, TX; Warm Fire, Kaibab National Forest, AZ; Observation Complex, BLM Susanville District, CA; Millard Complex, San Bernadino National Forest, CA; San Rafael Complex, Los Padres National Forest, CA; Uncles Complex, Klamath National Forest, CA; Bassetts Fire, Tahoe National Forest, CA; Horse Creek Hill / Lava Creek / Battle Mountain Fires, Grand Teton National Park, WY; and Rattlesnake Complex, Boise National Forest, ID.

Wildland Fire Use (WFU) dispatches were to: Yolla Bolly WFU, Mendocino National Forest, CA; Lava WFU, Lassen Volcanic National Park, CA; Caribou WFU, Klamath National Forest, CA; Frog Complex WFU, Yosemite National Park, CA; Bybee WFU Complex, Crater Lake National Park, OR; Doublerock / Luckens / King WFU's, Yosemite National Park, CA; and Middlefork Complex, Salmon-Challis National Forest, ID.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Severity dispatches were to: Lassen Volcanic National Park, CA; Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, WA; Susanville, CA; and Bridger-Teton National Forest, WY. The engine crew assigned to Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area for severity assisted Washington Department of Natural Resources by responding to the Sunrise Fire which occurred on private land nearby.

A single BAER dispatch was to Death Valley National Park, where approximately 16,000 acres burned in a series of lightning ignited fires collectively called the Kelly Complex. The assigned BAER Team leader coordinated a 7 day process to develop a plan for mitigating potential post-fire emergency flooding and resource damage such as theft of exposed cultural artifacts.

Although suppression and wildland fire use dispatches were distinguished by each incident's foremost objectives, the complexes of multiple fires typically involved a wide range of fire management responses within a single incident. The response to fire burning in remote areas often involves more indirect techniques and monitoring by air, especially when firefighter safety is a concern. Meanwhile, the response to fire burning toward developed areas with buildings and other infrastructure, typically involves more aggressive action such as the use of bulldozers to protect life and property.

Wildland fire use has been defined as "the application of the appropriate management response to naturally ignited wildland fires to accomplish specific resource management objectives in predefined designated areas outlined in fire management plans." Wildland fire use recognizes the benefits of fire to the ecosystem, and manages fire within established boundaries to reduce hazardous fuel and enhance biodiversity.

At the same time, there are situations where fire suppression can also benefit resources. For instance, fire suppression may prevent excess sediment from getting into a sensitive stream which was a concern during the Uncles Complex. It may also keep a plant community in a mature stage which could be critical habitat. For instance, during the Observation Complex, a primary suppression objective was to keep 16 fires to less than 8,000 acres because they were burning in mature sagebrush which supports a declining sage-grouse population and the available habitat had been significantly reduced by another large fire in 2001.

In addition to responding to unplanned wildland fires in 2006, staff from the Bay Area National Parks assisted with many prescribed fire projects throughout California. These projects include the Southeast Caldwell and Big Nasty Prescribed Fires at Lava Beds National Monument; Soup Bowl and Mariposa Grove Prescribed Fires at Yosemite National Park; Upper Redwood Prescribed Fire and Cabin Meadow Prescribed Fires at Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks; and Briones and Point Pinole Prescribed Fires in the East Bay Regional Parks. The objectives of these prescribed fires were aimed at reducing hazardous fuel and

improving the health of ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, sequoia, grassland, and coastal scrub ecosystems.

Fire resources from the San Francisco Bay Area National Parks are mobilized through a geographical area coordination center in Redding, California, with orders being placed through Mendocino National Forest. The Bay Area National Parks will work more closely with Mendocino National Forest in the future under a new national fire planning and budgeting system which is based on the interagency sharing of resources to increase cost effectiveness. The southernmost park in the San Francisco Bay Area, Pinnacles National Monument, is in a different planning unit and receives assistance from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) whose lands are in the vicinity the monument.

By sharing resources, large interagency fire crews can be formed which increases efficiency, especially for smaller jurisdictions. For example, firefighters from Point Reyes National Seashore and Pinnacles National Monument joined BLM firefighters from Fort Ord to create a large crew which supported the Bybee WFU Complex at Crater Lake National Park this past September. This was the first wildland fire use event managed under Crater Lake's new fire management plan.

Contact: Roger Wong, Fire Management Officer
Phone: (415) 464-5243