

NIFC News

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National Interagency Fire Center Coordinates Firefighting Assistance Request from Australia

February 11, 2009 [Boise, Idaho] The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) received a request for assistance from Australia, in the wake of unprecedented fire activity in the southeastern part of Australia. Wildfires in Australia have claimed at least 200 lives in the past week.

The United States will send 60 wildfire specialists to Australia to meet this request. American specialists include wildland fire personnel with expertise operations, planning and logistics. Two thirteen-person teams specializing in rehabilitating burned areas, and one 20-person suppression team also will be sent.

The specialists, all from federal agencies, will come from throughout the United States. Their length of deployment will be up to 35 days.

“We’re grateful for the opportunity to assist Australia during a difficult wildfire situation,” said Lyle Carlile, the fire director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs at NIFC. Carlile chairs an interagency group at NIFC with the responsibility of coordinating national wildfire response.

“Since 2000, Australia has sent wildfire specialists several times to help the U.S. in some of our worst fire seasons. We are pleased that we can reciprocate,” he added.

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