

USDA FOREST SERVICE
2010
NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
REPORT



USDA Forest Service National Smokejumper Report

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USDA FOREST SERVICE
National Smokejumper Program

2010 REPORT

Introduction

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Strategic Planning Objectives to achieve this goal include managing wildland fires efficiently and effectively and also reducing the risk to communities and natural resources from wildland fire.

This report summarizes the contributions that Forest Service Smokejumpers made in 2010 to support the agency's mission and long term objectives of restoring and sustaining resiliency in the nation's forests and grasslands.

The Smokejumper Mission

The mission of the U.S. Forest Service Smokejumper Program is to safely provide professional wildland firefighters to initial attack incidents, capitalizing on the efficiencies of fixed wing aircraft as the primary means of delivery. As available, Smokejumpers will support extended attack incidents and the agency's Natural Resource Agenda.

In the ever-evolving world of fire management, our goal is to provide the agency with whatever tool best meets the need of fire managers. The National Smokejumper program still maintains a strong focus on rapid initial attack of wildland fires. Aggressive initial attack is the core strength of the Smokejumper program and where we show the most efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Our secondary focus is to deploy experienced firefighters with qualifications and IC capability for emerging and extended attack incidents within the broad range of fire management objectives.

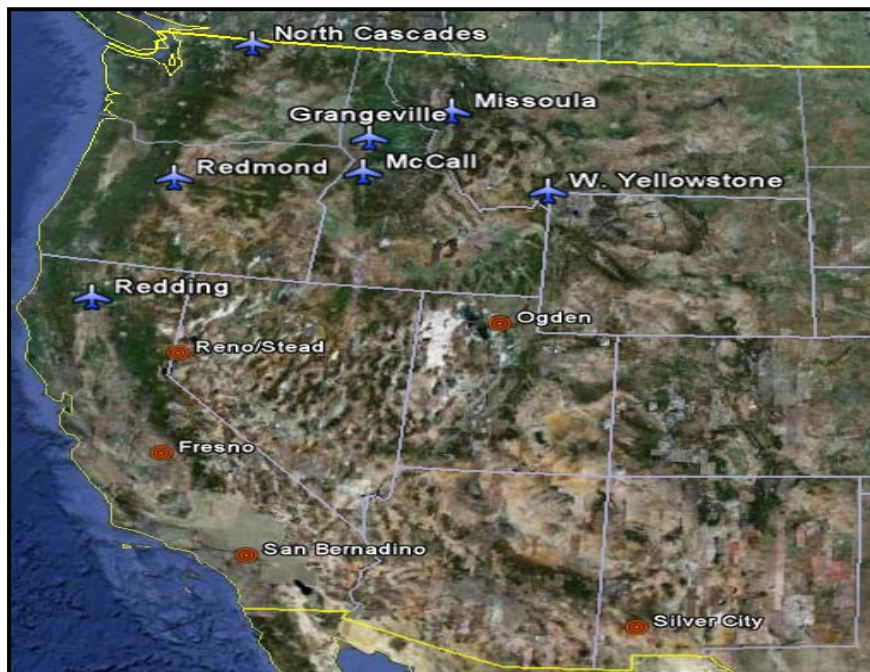
Outside of the fire management arena, we provide aviation management expertise, a workforce for prescribed fire, hazardous fuels reduction, timber stand improvement, exotic pest eradication, and recreation projects to support interagency landscape based ecosystem management objectives. Our service is anchored in safety, effectiveness, and flexibility in partnership with our users and cooperators.

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Smokejumper Base	Region	Aircraft	Call Sign	Smokejumpers
Grangeville	R-1	DHC-6 Twin Otter/Leading Edge	J-14	28
Missoula	R-1	DC-3/USFS Sherpa/USFS	J-15 J-79	72
West Yellowstone	R-1	Dornier 228 Bighorn Aviation	J-13	29
McCall	R-4	DHC-6 Twin Otter/USFS DC-3/USFS DHC-6 Twin Otter/USFS	J-41 J-42 J-43	71
Redding	R-5	Sherpa/USFS Dornier 228/Bighorn	J-51 J-52	40
North Cascades	R-6	Casa 212/Bighorn	J-09	35
Redmond	R-6	Sherpa/USFS Sherpa/USFS	J-73 J-74	53
7 Bases	4 Regions	12 Aircraft		328 USFS Smokejumpers

2010 Temporary Spike Base Locations

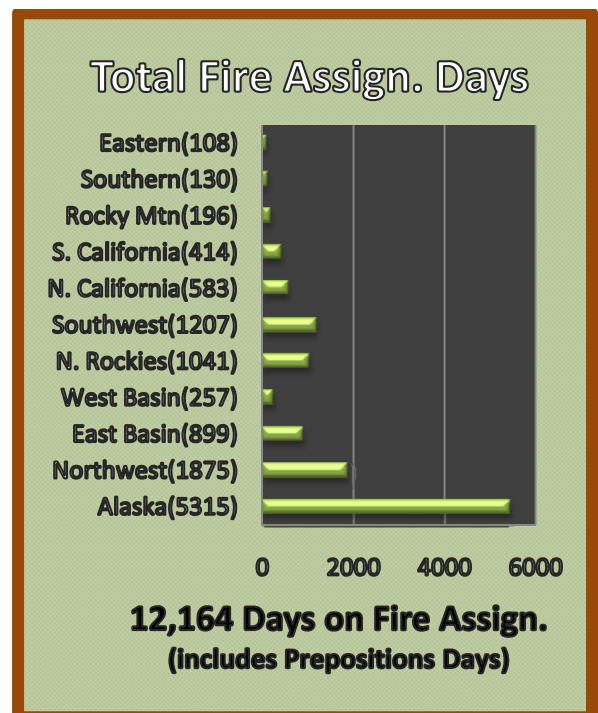
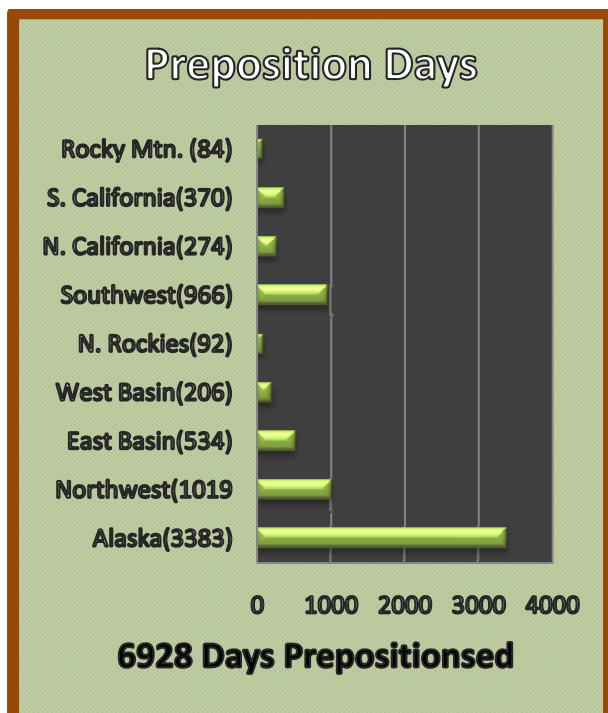
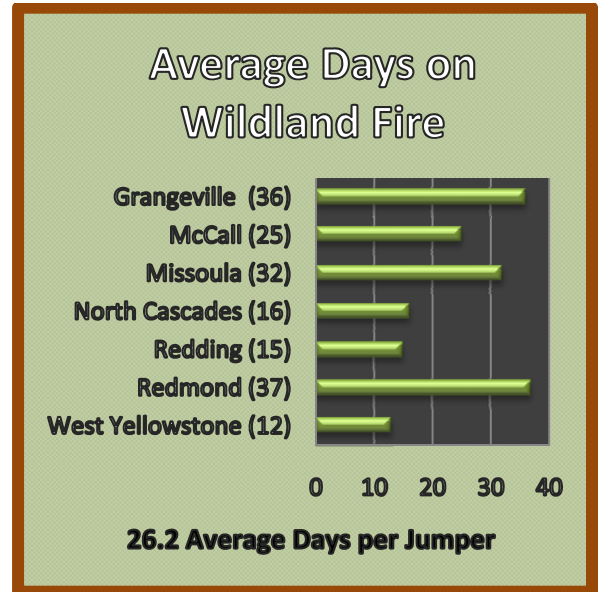
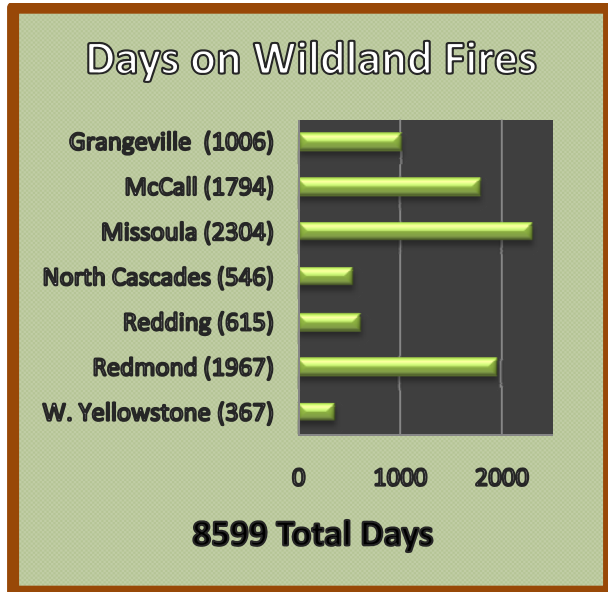
Temporary Location	Region	Dates	Number of Personnel	Fires Jumped	Ground Action	Single Resource	Total Fire Assignments
Silver City, NM	R-3	5/20 – 7/11	20	8	3	4	15
Reno/Stead, NV	R-4	7/25- 8/2	17	1	1	2	4
Ogden, UT	R-4	9/21-10/5	19	1	1	0	1
San Bernadino, CA	R-5	8/25-9/30	10	1	0	0	1
Fresno, CA	R-5	7/27-7/31 9/30-10/5	12 12	1 0	0 0	0 0	1 0



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2010 Smokejumper Actions

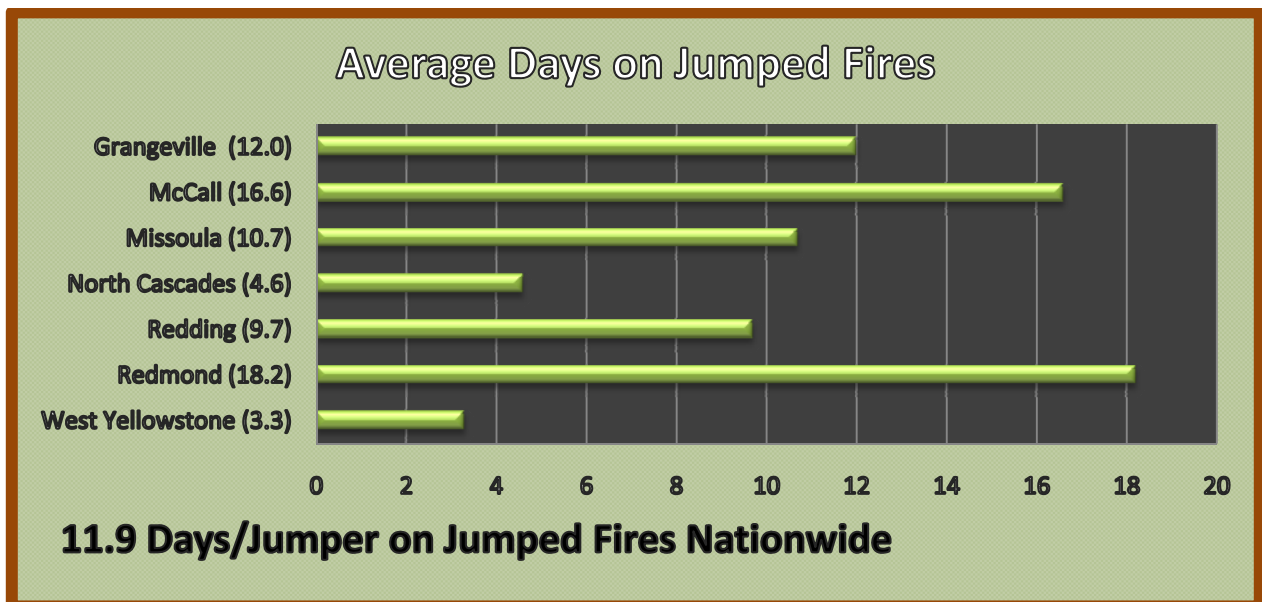
Nationally, USFS Smokejumpers worked 8,599 shifts on fires in 2010. This works out to an average of 26.2 days per jumper assigned to a wildland fire incident. An additional 6,928 days were spent prepositioned in geographic areas of high fire activity, which included 3,383 days in Alaska in support of their second record-breaking fire season in a row. When preposition days are totaled with actual days on wildland fires, Smokejumpers spent a total of 12,164 days assigned to wildland fire activities. This works out to an average of 37.1 days per jumper assigned to wildland fire support.



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NOTE: Jump numbers can have a wide spread amongst individual Smokejumpers with Foreman and Spotter positions having fewer operational jumps and days assigned than standard jumper positions. As a result, overhead jump averages tend to pull down the standard jumper average substantially.

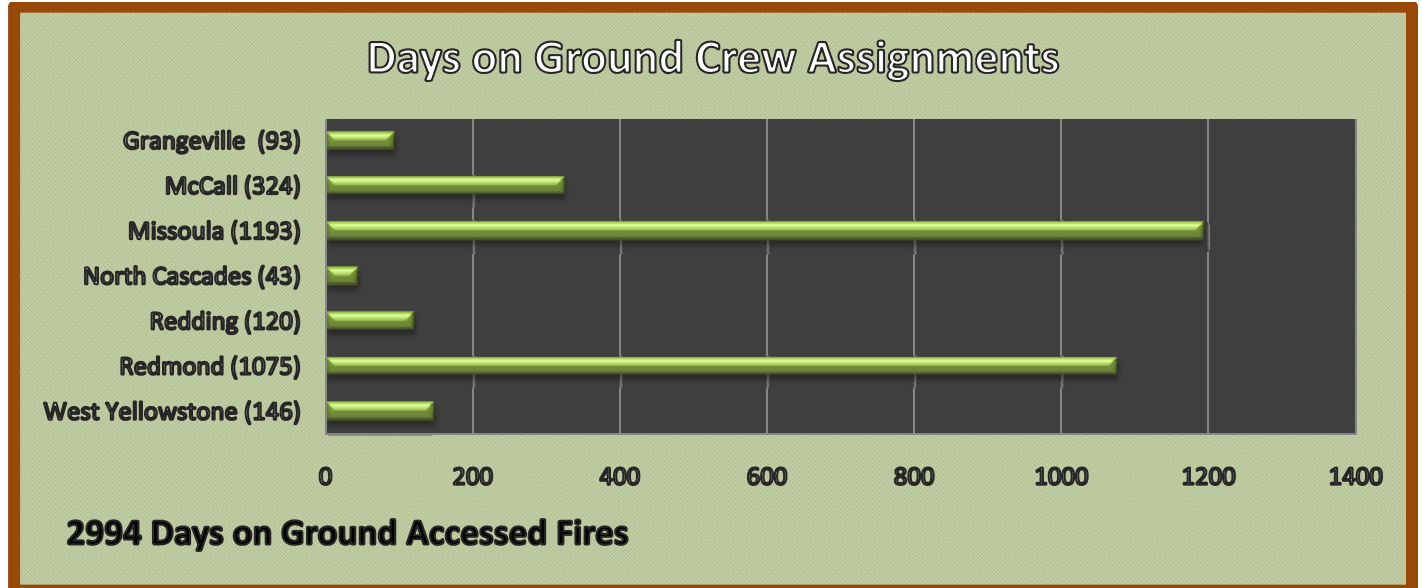
FIRE JUMPS



USFS Smokejumpers jumped 332 fires with 1,263 individual fire jumps on wildland fires nationwide. Additionally, Smokejumpers spent an average of 11.9 days per jumper on jumped fires for 2010.

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GROUND CREW ACTIONS

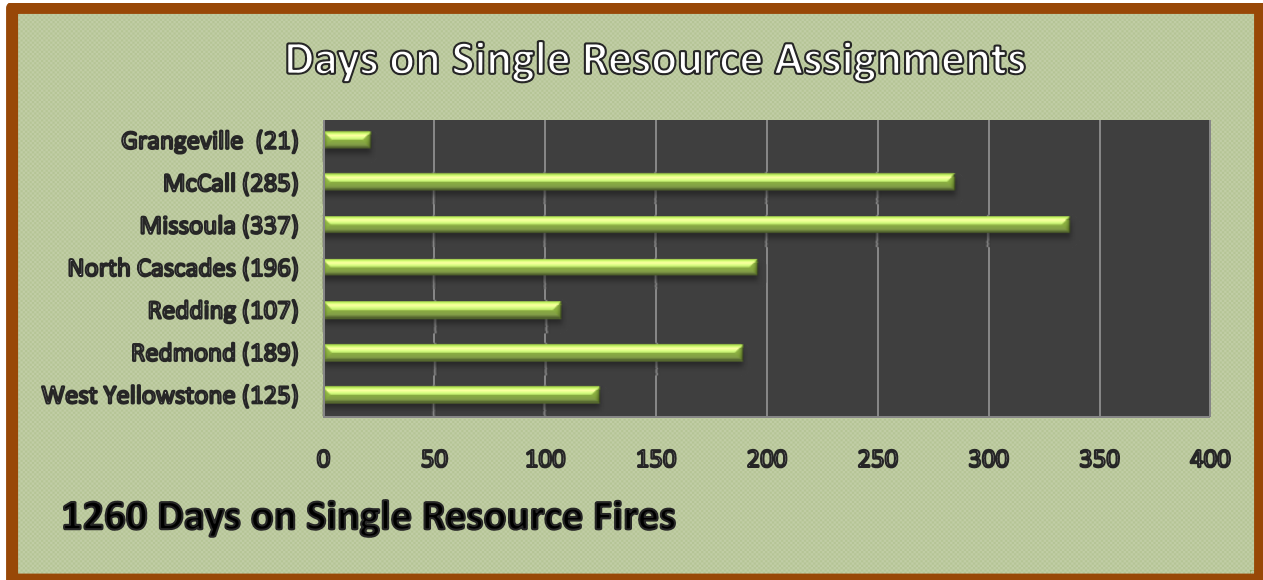


USFS Smokejumpers spent 2,994 days on “pounder” (ground accessed fires) in the 2010 season. These days exclude assignments in which Smokejumpers fulfilled single resource roles. In most cases, crew actions are prevalent in periods of low initial attack activity in specific geographic areas. Smokejumper Bases can then utilize their flexibility to send a greater number of individuals on collateral assignments.



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SINGLE RESOURCE ASSIGNMENTS



The Smokejumper program contributes a significant amount of their workforce to fire line leadership roles when initial attack responsibilities allow. Smokejumpers fill roles on National IMTs as well as contributing ICT3 management teams to the fire management effort as a whole. Smokejumpers have also been contributing to the NIMO teams in non-traditional areas such as GETA (Geospatial Equipment and Technological Applications). The extensive skill set and flexible nature of the program allow us to fill needs throughout land management agencies in a diverse range of roles.

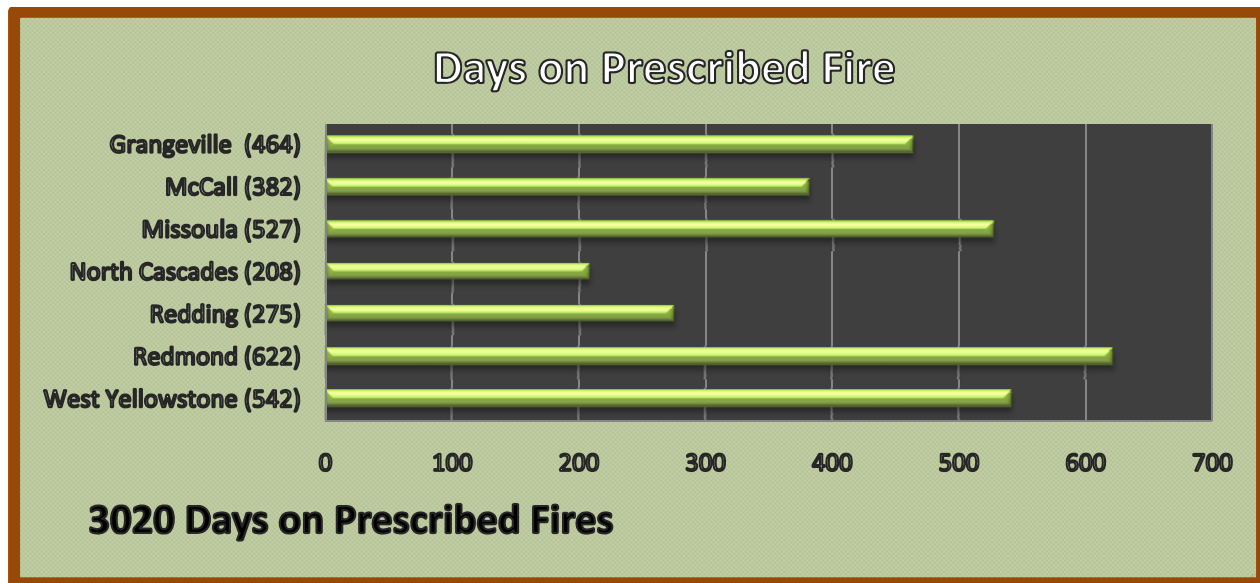
Frequently Utilized Single Resource Qualifications by Base

	GAC	MSO	MYL	NCSB	RAC	RDD	WYS
ICT3	5	12	9	5	3	5	6
DIVS	5	12	12	9	7	9	7
ATGS	2	2	1	4	2	2	1
TFLD	6	24	31	8	8	10	7
STCR	8	14	28	9	9	13	10

Information was taken from the Smokejumper Master Action program at the time of compilation. These numbers do not reflect task books and qualifications which were approved over the winter of 2010/11.

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FUELS TREATMENT



Smokejumpers make a significant contribution to the resource management objectives of various agencies nationwide through fuels treatment. The program has made significant headway finding work in the off season in areas where Smokejumpers were not traditionally utilized in previous years. Smokejumpers from every base worked in Region 8 throughout the spring, winter, and fall assisting with fire suppression, prescribed fire, and project work related activities. In addition, all bases have working relationships with local and regional units with regards to fuels and project work.

Smokejumpers also participate in mechanical fuels treatment, pre-commercial thinning contract implementation, and burn plan writing. The fuels arena makes up a significant portion of days in the field for the program. In 2010 Smokejumpers spent an average of 9.2 days per person on fuels assignments.

Summary of Fire Management actions

For the second year in a row the Smokejumper Program had below average initial attack activity in the Western United States. Smokejumpers in Region 6 were busy for a portion of the season, accounting for many of the jumped fires in the Lower 48. Alaska's busy year resulted in a heavy commitment of Smokejumpers from across the nation, with multiple booster crews being sent from all 7 USFS bases. With that said, significant contributions were made to project and fuels related work, as well as wildland fire actions throughout the West. Listed below are examples of significant actions carried out by USFS Smokejumpers on wildland fires in the Western United States.

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Significant Actions

The following incidents were of note in the 2010 season

Region 1

Missoula Smokejumpers

Rock Creek Fire - State of Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

On July 22 a Missoula Smokejumper aircraft detected smoke west of Missoula during a routine training mission. The aircraft relayed to dispatch photos and a size-up of the Rock Creek Fire, located just west of Frenchtown in inaccessible terrain. Shortly after, Smokejumpers were ordered to initial attack the incident. Upon arriving over the fire and determining it had serious potential to become a large scale incident, 16 Smokejumpers were deployed. This load included a short Type 3 Incident Management Team, which quickly assessed the incident, established a management structure, and ordered appropriate resources and crews. By the morning hours of July 23, hand line had been completed around the 26 acre incident by 26 Smokejumpers and 14 DNRC firefighters. Additional crews arrived on July 23 to secure and control the fire, which was handed back to a DNRC Incident Commander on the afternoon of July 24. Due to the incident's close proximity to urban interface, a major power corridor, and potential to impact Missoula air quality, there was significant potential for the Rock Creek fire to become a major incident. The Incident Command structure established by the Smokejumpers, coupled with an aggressive initial attack and timely air support, enabled this fire to be contained quickly, safely and in a cost-effective manner.

Missoula Smokejumpers

Alder Creek Fire –Lolo & Bitterroot National Forest

On August 22nd at 0930 Missoula Smokejumpers responded to a jump request on the Lolo NF near the headwaters of Alder Ck in the Rock Ck drainage. Jump 79 located the fire on an east aspect in subalpine fir with heavy downfall. Six Smokejumpers were dropped a mile and a half away on the west side of the ridge into a small opening in an old clearcut. By the time the six Smokejumpers reached the top of the ridge the fire was growing rapidly and progressing upslope toward the ridge, now estimated at 5+ acres. Reinforcements were requested but increasing erratic winds made jumping impossible. Reinforcing Smokejumpers returned to Missoula and configured para-cargo of drip torches, fuel and additional chainsaws that were soon after dropped near the ridge top. The six Smokejumpers proceeded to direct air drops of water and retardant and burned out along a two track/ATV trail on the ridge top. The ridge top was the border between the Bitterroot and Lolo NF's. On August 24th the local forest took over the Type 3 Incident Management with the Smokejumpers filling in key positions as Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Line Safety Officer, Division Sup, EMT's and Lookouts for the next 6 days to assist with the fire suppression efforts and direct the 3 IHC crews and 2 T2 crews, 3 heavy helicopters, 2 medium helicopters and the 20 plus loads of retardant that were utilized. The fire was stopped at 595 acres keeping it from burning remaining timber and vegetation not previously consumed in 2000 and 2003 fire seasons on the Sapphire Mt Range encompassing the Bitterroot and Lolo NF's.

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Grangeville Smokejumpers Packer Meadows Fire – Lolo National Forest

On July 26th, the Grangeville Smokejumpers received a call to staff the Packer Meadows fire on the Idaho/Montana border on the Lolo National Forest. The fire was already 125 acres and was staffed just an hour before with a load of 10 Missoula Smokejumpers. Fire activity was crowning and torching through predominantly sub-alpine fir, leaving large pockets of unburned fuel within the perimeter and numerous spots outside it. At a minimum, the fire was going to be a Type 3 organization and fire managers hoped to be able to manage the fire without going to a Type 2 team.



The Missoula Smokejumpers provided the Type 3 incident commander for the first shift and both crews organized to establish access to the fire, an anchor point, and the beginnings of an overhead structure for the upcoming days.

The Lolo provided a Type 3 incident commander on the second day and both Missoula and Grangeville filled overhead positions from their Smokejumper Crews. Grangeville provided a DIVS, STLC, and CRWB from their original 8 Smokejumpers and the remaining 5 worked as a short squad in conjunction with other arriving resources.

The Smokejumpers remained on the fire for a week, with the good work and progress made by all the crews assigned, were demobilized when the fire was controlled and turned over to an ICT4.

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Region 3

Silver City Smokejumpers in Texas

Smokejumper history was made when Smokejumpers were utilized for the first time in the state of Texas. Five Smokejumpers from the Silver City detail set up an Incident Command Type 3 Team (ICT-3) for Big Bend National Park on the Sublett Fire. This incident was managed for resource benefit and historical landscape restoration. Two weeks later, the Gila Smokejumpers were deployed on another Texas wildfire, the Cut-Off Fire, which was burning in the Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

Another notable fire included the Long Canyon fire for the BLM Las Cruces District. An initial load of Smokejumpers was able to establish a Type 3 organization. A second load reinforced the fire, filling various overhead positions. Due to limited availability of logistical resources, a para-cargo supply order of needed food and water was also delivered to the fire by Smokejumper aircraft.

Region 4

McCall Smokejumpers 8 Mile Fire - Salt Lake BLM

On the evening of October 1st McCall Smokejumpers on stand-by at the Ogden Spike Base received a dispatch order for a DC-3 load (12 Smokejumpers) to respond to the 8 Mile Fire that was recently discovered burning on Salt Lake BLM lands outside to Tooele, UT. At the time of jump operations the fire was very active and estimated to be 100 acres and growing. Local resources were responding to the fire as well, but were experiencing significant draw down levels due to the time of year and many temporary employees having already been laid off. A local Type 3 Incident Commander had assumed command of the fire, however due to the lack of local resources additional Type 3 command positions could not be filled. The load of Smokejumpers was ordered to fulfill this need of leadership positions within the Type 3 organization. The Smokejumpers were able to respond rapidly and once on the ground they stepped into Operations, Plans, and Division Supervisor (3 divisions) positions within the Type 3 command structure, as well as providing an experienced squad of firefighters. The leadership the Smokejumpers provided proved invaluable as the incident grew in complexity due to fire size and the number of committed resources. At the height of the incident resources included 4 IHC Crews, 3 Type 2 Crews, numerous engines, 2 Water Tenders, numerous air resources and 2 loads of additional Smokejumpers (reinforcement loads came out of McCall and Rawlins, WY). Final fire size was 1500 acres. As a result of the strong Type 3 leadership provided by the Smokejumpers, the incident was kept as a Type 3 incident, thereby saving money by not having to order a Type 2 Incident Management Team.

Region 6

North Cascades Smokejumpers

Rainbow Bridge Fire – Okanogan/Wenatchee National Forest

In late July, a lightning storm passed through the eastern part of Washington State igniting several fires on the

Okanogan/Wenatchee N.F and the North Cascades National Park, including a start located just ½ mile from the remote town of Stehekin at the end of Lake Chelan. This lightning caused fire quickly grew from a few to several hundred acres and was highly visible for miles around. The fire was located in extremely steep terrain and



threatened homes and the local school as well as valuable timber resources. Smokejumpers were requested and two loads of Smokejumpers from NCSB were inserted that evening. The Smokejumpers were able to provide an ICT3 as well as DIVS in order to establish a command structure. The fire was broken into three divisions and a structure group. Because of the terrain the only option was defense from the valley bottom with objectives being to protect life and property (homes, historic structures, businesses and community infrastructure). After several long days the Smokejumpers, with the help of 10 district firefighters, National Park staff, several IHC crews, and air support from air tankers and helicopters, were able to contain the fire by using previously completed Rx treatment areas to safely launch defensive tactics such as burnout operations, hoselay/sprinkler deployment and fireline construction. Around some structures, old prescribed burn firelines were simply refreshed. As a result of thinning and prescribed burning to create fuel breaks and actions by Smokejumpers to utilize these areas, no structures were lost and no injuries occurred. Rainbow Bridge Initial Attack Incident Commander and North Cascades Smokejumper, Inaki Baraibar sums it up well, “All the preparation for this kind of wildfire, in regards to hazard fuel treatment and aggressive initial attack, came to fruition on this incident. It all paid off, “notably in the vicinity of the old (Nationally Registered Historic Structure) and new schoolhouses”. The residents of this secluded valley consider these buildings to be demonstrative of the heart of the community, which includes planning for and taking care of Stehekin’s future.

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Redmond Smokejumpers

Mt. Washington Wilderness – Willamette National Forest

Lighting ignited a fire in the Mt. Washington Wilderness on August 23rd, 2010. The fire quickly grew during initial attack and a 10 person load of Redmond Smokejumpers was ordered to reinforce the local initial attack resources. Upon arrival, the Smokejumpers had the qualified individuals necessary to form a Type 3 Incident Management Team and had the depth of 6 remaining Smokejumpers that scouted and constructed line in support of the team. Though the fire eventually transitioned to a Type 1 IMT, the Smokejumpers successfully provided fireline leadership on an emerging fire in remote terrain. This was an excellent utilization of Smokejumper resources.

International commitments

Canadian Wildland Fire Aid

Once again Forest Service Smokejumpers sent a total of 22 Smokejumpers to Fort St. John British Columbia to help with wildland fire suppression efforts. Smokejumper boosters were drawn from Regions 1 and 6, and unlike last year which saw a majority of Smokejumpers formed into handcrews, Smokejumpers initial attacked fires out of a Twin Otter platform contracted to British Columbia. A total of 15 fires were jumped, resulting in 51 individual fire jumps and 250 days committed to Canadian wildland fire incidents.

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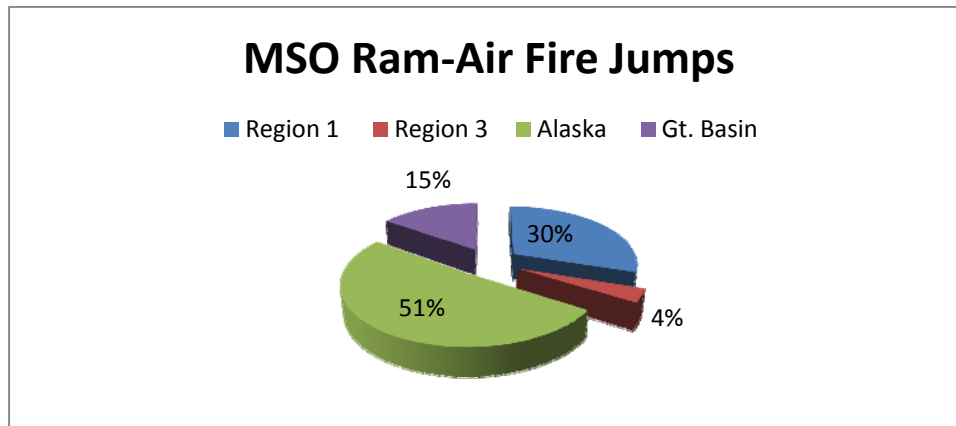
FOREST SERVICE RAM-AIR PROGRAM

2010 was the third season of the collaboration between the BLM and the FS in Region One for using the drogue deployed Ram-Air Parachute System in Forest Service country. While the fire season in R1 was fairly benign, it was an optimal opportunity to build a general base of Ram-Air experience that was geared towards evaluating the Ram-Air system. Throughout the 2010 season we achieved several benchmarks that show promise towards progression in the project.

The start of the 2010 season began in March with four FS trainers attending both the Boise and Fairbanks BLM instructor training. Two of our FS personnel were sent to Boise and another two were sent to Fairbanks for an immersive course in proper presentation of Ram-Air material. Each session lasted 3 weeks and was a practical, hands-on program designed to ready Ram-Air trainers for instruction to candidates who were new to the drogue-deployed Ram-Air system. The FS trainers were required to competently present material and demonstrate the skills pertinent to operating the Ram-Air canopy in field conditions. These trainers will continue on as instructors in the first Ram-Air refresher held in R1 in Missoula.



The first FS Ram-Air refresher was held in Missoula, MT in April for returning FS Ram-Air Smokejumpers followed by the first New Man Ram-Air training done in Missoula. All Ram-Air Smokejumpers either trained or rigged for these 4 weeks and the end result was a fresh group of 9 more Ram-Air Smokejumpers ready for action. At the end of the season we performed “test jumps” on all three of the chutes that the BLM is evaluating (Eiff Classic, Eiff Pro and CR360). This process was done with the BLM in place overseeing and partially done as an exercise in the processes involved in evaluating new chutes. The Ram-Air program is proceeding as planned and everything is set in place to train another 10 during the spring of 2011 in R1.



2010 Ram Air Fire Jumps: 53

2010 Ram Air Practice Jumps: 443

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This page clarifies terms used by the Smokejumper program. Please see the [USFS Smokejumpers National User Guide](#)” for a thorough explanation of terms.

Fire Jump- One jumper going out the door for fire suppression mission.

Jump Fire- Wildfire that is staffed with Smokejumpers jumping from the airplane.

Para-cargo- Supplies delivered to a fire or project by parachute. Every Smokejumper fire receives para-cargo consisting of tools, food, and water. Para-cargo is also provided to other fires.

Permanent Base- An established facility staffed year round with Smokejumpers. There are 7 established Forest Service Smokejumper bases, Grangeville, McCall, Missoula, Redding, Redmond, West Yellowstone, and Winthrop.

Pounder Fire - A fire that is staffed by Smokejumpers via transport other than jumping.

Smokejumper Fire- Historically, remote fires that are not readily accessible by means other than jumping. This definition is changing to include various other roles from support, to leadership on a large variety of incidents. The critical element is that Smokejumpers are delivered via parachuting.

Spike Base- Temporary jump base placed in an area of high fire activity. Spike bases may be located at any where the following are available: Jet A Fuel, adequate runway for Smokejumper Aircraft Take-off and landing. Spike bases are supported and staffed with Smokejumpers and overhead from an established base or bases.