

Welcome to today's newsletter for families and friends of DSE, DPI and Parks Victoria fire personnel deployed to the USA.

Total ANZ Firefighters in USA

Victorian	WA	NSW	ACT	TAS	NZ	Total
15	7	11	2	4	11	50

A total of fifty Australian and New Zealand firefighters are currently deployed to the USA fires. See the table on the third page for the current location of crew members.

Due to continuing difficulties with wildfires in the north west of the country, the US has requested an additional deployment of 44 firefighters from Australia and New Zealand. Crews in the second deployment of ANZ firefighters will come from New Zealand, Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania and the ACT. Four firefighters from CFA will also be part of this deployment. Australian firefighters will be leaving Australia via Sydney at 9.45am on Friday 26 August.

Tom Frey from the National Interagency Fire Centre in Boise, Idaho, has thanked Australian and New Zealand agencies for their willingness to again support the NIFC by sending a second deployment of ANZ firefighters.

Second deployment leaving Sydney for the USA on Friday at 0945 (Melbourne time)

Victorian	WA	NSW	ACT	TAS	NZ	Total
4 DSE & 4 CFA	8	14	2	3	9	44

Weather Forecast:

Dry thunderstorms will continue over portions of the Northwest, Great Basin and Northern Rockies through mid-week with windy conditions across much of the West. This is in response to a low pressure system moving across the area. Thunderstorms should decrease by mid to late week with increased winds continuing into the weekend. Elsewhere, thunderstorms are expected over southern portions of California and Nevada through mid-week with above normal temperatures.

Red Flag warnings have been put out for portions of eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, Idaho, and Montana due to gusty winds, low humidity and possible lightning, and for portions of Nevada and Utah due to gusty winds and low humidity.

Current fire situation report:

As at 22 August 2006 (US evening) - 23 August (Melbourne time)

National overview:

There were 255 new fires in the USA reported in the last 24 hours; including 15 large fires. There are currently 12 large fires in Idaho, 9 in California, 9 in Oregon, 7 in Wyoming, and 6 in Montana. This equates to five each in the Eastern Great Basin and Northwest Areas, two each in the Rocky Mountain and Northern Rockies Areas, and one in the Western Great Basin Area.

Four large fires were contained, two each in Idaho and Utah, and one each in Florida and Texas.

Very high to extreme fire indices were reported in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

US Date	US Time	No. active, large fires	New large fires	Large fires not under control (Acres)	Large fires not under control (Hectares)	Total Acres burnt this season	Total Hectares burnt this season
22-Aug-06	1730	51	15	791,760	320,414	6,864,076	2,777,793

NW Geographic Area

The Northwest has gone from Level 4 preparedness to Level 5. They were very busy late Monday and overnight into Tuesday with 80 new fire starts. Five of these fires have turned into large fires. The Tripod the largest fire in the North West has now increased in size to 60,000 hectares and is 40% contained. This is where half the ANZ team is deployed. The fires as shown by satellite showed they were very active this Tuesday afternoon and a report from one of the ANZ liaisons said there was a high level of activity at the Tripod fire.

Northern Rockies Geographic Area

Light to moderate initial attack was experienced in the Northern Rockies with 39 new fires and two large fires. Australian liaison Liam Fogarty is travelling through the Northern Rockies at the moment checking in on two helicopter managers Shane Gerrin and David Vaskess. Liam reported this afternoon that there the sky was very threatening and that he was expecting to see some dry lightning in the area.

Eastern Great Basin

Moderate initial attack with 41 new fire starts and 5 new large fires. A total of 2,700 fire fighters are involved in 18 large fires in the region. The Crystal Fire has now increased to over 110,000 hectares and is by far has the largest burned area in the US at present. Two of our contingent members David Nugent and Andrew Morrow have now moved from the Potato fire to Red Mountain fire.

Western Great Basin

A high level of activity has occurred in this area over the past day. One new fire called the East Humboldt has started and this morning had burned 3,000 hectares. Five heavy air tankers were used and one MAFFS C -130 aircraft. The largest fire called the Charleston Complex has burned through an area of 70,000 hectares and is approximately 95% contained.

Southern Area

Very light initial attack and good progress made on the 5 large fires in the area.

Southern California

One large new fire.

All other fire areas have been fairly quiet.

Stories from the fireline:

Neil Cooper (ACT) says that the small contingent at 8-mile on the western side of the fire has now been fully assimilated into roles on the fireground. Chris Irvine (Tas), Glenn Launt (NSW), Russell Manning (Vic), John Duggan (Tas) and Nick McCabe (NZ) are all filling Divisional Supervisor roles. Neil (ACT) is filling a Branch supervisor role and is still the Liaison Officer.

Neil says that, interestingly, ANZ crews now control the majority of the fire line. This may change in the next day or so as the new IMT comes into place. They have been involved in some high intensity burning but have managed to contain the complete 8-mile section of the fire which is everything on the western edge.

Neil has had "nothing but great feedback" from the IMT team in regard to the way ANZ firefighters are all

performing. The IMT is very impressed how ANZ firefighters have "slipped right in and have taken control from the word go". It was mentioned by the Operations Officer that he wishes we had been put in place earlier.

David Nugent and Andrew Morrow (Vic) have been at the Red Mountain fire for the last couple of days. Yesterday was spent walking into and around the fire ground; a great opportunity to see spike camps in operation. This fire has three spike camps. The logistical and aircraft support to service these camps is quite extensive and saves crew time getting to the fire because the ICP base camp is about 3-4 hrs travel time from the fire.

They had very good views of fire behavior at this incident, predominantly in subalpine fir which has distinctive fire behaviour of torching and spotting ("pulsing") with very little ground fire. This fire is located in an area that has lots of small freshwater lakes and so water use is a major part of the suppression effort.

They also witnessed aircraft operations, in particular the Skycrane at work. It had a two-minute turnaround operating from one of the lakes.

In his role as Task Force Leader, Trevor Bullock from New Zealand recently gave a lesson on the dynamics of pumping water on the fireline. Trevor is working at 5,000 feet and had to pump water up and over the hill to a point some 300 feet lower. Before the lesson, crews were blowing hoses.

Bryan Cartelle from New Zealand gave an update on ANZ firefighters at the Tripod Fire on the Conconully Zone. The fire gained about 10,000 acres on the group Monday, and Tuesday it was "heading for Canada with the conditions we have this morning". ANZ members have integrated well into the management roles required on the Conconully Zone. Michal Priyjma (NSW), Paul Devlin (NZ) and Terence Auton (Vic) all fill the roles of Division Sup, Trevor Bullock (NZ), Ian Bounds (Tas), Craig Burley (NSW), Eddie Te Kahika (NZ) fill the roles of Task Force Team Leader, Robert Ratcliffe (Tas) fills the role of Strike Team Engine and Julian Armstrong (NSW) fills the role of Feller Boss. Bryan has several roles, one with the Div Sup in the Burning Group, another as Liaison, as well as working with members of the IMT.

At the helibase Mark Williams (NSW) is the Helibase Manager, Ashley Frank (NSW) is Air Support Supervisor and Evan Rarer (NZ), Peter Windle (NSW), Wayne Leader (NSW), and Barry Scott (Vic) are Helimanagers. The Helimanagers are rotating between all aircraft to gain a better understanding of the various aircraft.

On Monday Mike Wright (WA) and Rob Round-Turner (WA) were working at the Blister Fire (approx 700 acres) as Strike Team Leaders. There has been good work done in backburning in difficult terrain and fuels. Both Rob and Mike report "needing to change to smaller fire pants due to all of the exercise"!

Scott Cashmere (ACT) relocated to support Helicopter operations at the Blister Fire and returned to work on the Lake George fire on Tuesday.

Where are ANZ crews?

Victorian members of ANZ are marked in [blue](#) in the table below.

Their numbered location on the USA map is provided - please check against the map.

Deployment	Fire fighters/liaison	Other information
Wenatchee / Tripod fire / Concully Base Camp (Fire number 13)	Field Liaison: Brian Cartelle Julian Armstrong Terence Auton Ian Bounds Trevor Bullock Paul Devlin Michal Priyjma Robert Ratcliffe	

	Craig Burley Edward Te Kahika	
Wenatchee / Tripod fire / 8 Mile Base Camp (Fire number 13)	Field Liaison: Neil Cooper Chris Irvine Glenn Launt Russell Manning Nicholas McCabe John Duggan Evan Rarere	
Aircraft – Wenatchee (Methow Valley RD)	Ashley Frank - leader Wayne Leader Barry Scott Mark Williams Peter Windle	
National Inter Agency Fire Centre (NIFC) Boise liaison	Liam Fogarty John Barnes	
Portland GACC	Dennis Matthews	
Mt Hood Complex - Aircraft (Fire number 10)	Michael Morley <i>Michael Sullivan</i>	
Mt Hood Complex (Fire number 10)	Steve de Voogd <i>Michael Grant</i> <i>Kevin Ihaka</i> John Sutton Michael Wright	
Blister (Fire number 7)	Robert Round-Turner <i>Michael Wright</i>	
Baston Cook Complex	<i>Shane Geerin</i>	
Sand Basin (Northern Rockies) (Fire number 45)	David Vaskess	David Vaskess is at the Sand Basin Fire near Phillipsburg in Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
National Inter Agency Fire Centre (NIFC) Red Mt Fire (Fire number 35)	David Nugent Andrew Morrow	Shadowing the Incident Management Team
Lake George Wildland Fire (Now Cascade Crest Complex) (Fire number 9)	<i>Scott Cashmere</i> Peter Driscoll Ian Dicker Peter Gibson Alan Daw Rodney Simmonds Matt Potter Peter Bidwell Paul McCoughtry Darryl Burns Ed Hatherley Phillip Savage Angela Lonergan	Darryl Burns and Ed Hatherley on Night shift



Prepared by Situation Officer Greg Harry, 23 August 2006 (MELBOURNE time)

US Local News

For up-to-the-minute local news on the US fire situation, including a special mention of the ANZ contingent, check out www.nuggetnews.com

Helpful Contacts

- The facts and figures on this newsletter will be updated daily. Family and friends are also encouraged to check the US websites for latest updates- www.nifc.gov/fireinfo/nfn.html
- For map of major fires in the US http://activefiresfiremaps.fs.fed.us/lq_fire2.php
- Time zones - Australia is approximately 16 hours ahead of the USA ie. 6 pm Melbourne time is 2am in Idaho and 1am in Oregon

**We will update you with any new information on Wednesday 23 August.
In the meantime, if you have any concerns or questions about the Victorian members of the ANZ deployment, please contact the US Coordination Group (Melbourne) if you need any specific information at the following:**

Phone: 1300 13 4444 (local call cost, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
Email: us.coordination@dse.vic.gov.au