



Meeting Global Wildland Fire Challenges

The People, the Land, the Resources

July 23-26, 1989

Boston, MA

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE CONTACTS
LISTED AT END OF RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 22, 1989
CD-42

PROTECTING THE WORLD'S WILDLANDS FROM FIRE -- TOPIC OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SET FOR BOSTON

Last summer, people across the nation witnessed news accounts of the devastating fires which ravaged more than a million of Yellowstone National Park's 2.2 million acres. And, over the past few days, hundreds of people have been evacuated from their homes and many homes have been destroyed as the 1989 wildfire season heats up.

This past January marked the 50th anniversary of "Black Friday", the day one-third of the Australian state of Victoria burned. Hundreds of smaller wildfires and record-high temperatures converged on January 13, 1939, claiming 71 lives and blackening almost four-and-a-half million acres. And, 44 years later, tragedy struck again. In 1983, hot, dry winds fanned small fires in urban and forested lands in Southern Australia into one massive front. Known as "Ash Wednesday," that fire claimed the lives of 77 people and more than 300,000 farm animals and destroyed 840,000 acres and 2,500 homes.

During the past decade, wildfires have increasingly staked claims around the globe, devouring anything in their paths including grasslands, structures, resources, and lives. The problem is not unique to this country. And, as populations encroach more deeply into wildland areas and the wildland/urban interface (that boundary between homes and wildlands) expands, fire protection professionals are faced with the increasing and difficult job of preventing and suppressing these fires.

- MORE -

WILDLAND FIRE CONFERENCE

Page 2-2-2

In an effort to examine this global problem and develop methods to reverse the upward trend of wildfire losses, six organizations will conduct the first international conference of its kind. Entitled "Meeting Global Wildland Fire Challenges - The People, the Land, the Resources", the conference will be held July 23-26 at the Marriott Hotel, Copley Place, Boston, MA. Conference sponsors are: The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Forestry Canada; the United States Department of the Interior; National Association of (U.S.) Foresters; Subsecretaria de Desarrollo y Fomento Agropecuario y Forestal de Mexico; and the National Fire Protection Association.

More than 300 fire protection and related professionals representing at least 40 countries will gather to collaborate and share information, fire management techniques and suppression strategies. Participants will discuss the human and environmental factors contributing to the problem and will develop recommendations for multi-national efforts to prevent, control and decrease wildfire losses.

"During the past decade, wildfires have caused major losses of life, property and resources on virtually every continent," said Allan J. West, Conference General Chairperson and Deputy Chief, United States Forest Service. "The catastrophic effects of wildland fires are being felt globally. This conference, bringing together hundreds of fire protection professionals from around the world, will help us identify mutual concerns and problems, and ultimately develop strategies to better help us cooperatively combat this problem," said Mr. West who will officially open the conference at 8:30 a.m. (EST) on Monday, July 24.

Monday, July 24

Following the opening ceremony, *The Purpose Statement* will be the topic of the speaker session beginning at 9:15 a.m. led by Jean Claude Mercier, Deputy Minister, Forestry Canada. Speakers to develop an overall perspective of global resources will be: Jean Paul Lanly, Director of Forest Resource Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Chuck Lankester, Principle Technical Advisor, United Nations Development Program; M'hamed Essaafi, United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, Undersecretary General United Nations; and F. Dale Robertson, Chief, United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.

- MORE -

WILDLAND FIRE CONFERENCE

Page 3-3-3

At 1 p.m. on Monday, Jesus B. Cardena, Director General, Normatividad Forestal, Mexico and Session Chairperson, will introduce the afternoon's topic -- *The Issues of Decision-Making*. He will chair six 30-minute presentations centering on the physical and biological impact and ecological consequences of global fire regimes in six regions of the world. Presenters will be: *Africa* - Konan Soundele, Societe de Developpement Forestier, Cote d'Ivoire; *Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Region* - Roger Underwood; *Asia* - (to be announced); *Europe* - Ricardo Velez, Jefe del Servicio de Defensa Contra Incendios Forestales, Instituto Para la Conservacion de la Naturaleza, Spain; *Latin America* - Hugo Knockaert, Jefe Nacional Programa de Manejo del Fuego, Corporacion Nacional Forestal, Chile; and *North America* - Charles W. Philpot, Director, Pacific Northwest Experiment Station, Forest Service, USA.

Tuesday, July 25

The Social, Political and Economic Issues of Decision-Making will be the morning topic led by Session Chairperson Giancarlo Calabri, Dirigente Tecnico del Corpo Forestale dello Stato, Italy. Presenters will be: *Africa* - Kofi Portuphy, Director of Operations, National Mobilization Program, Ghana; *Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Region* - Jale Baba, Fiji Pine Commission, Fiji; *Asia* - A.G. Oka, Inspector General of Forests, Ministry of Environment and Forests, India; *Europe* - Pierre Delabrazé Former Head of the Forest Research Department, Departement des Recherches Forestieres, France; *Latin America* - Hugo Kugler, Interventor, Instituto Forestal Nacional, Argentina; and *North America* - Rafael Hernandez Ochoa, Sub-Secretario Forestal, Secretaria de Agricultura y Recursos Hidraulicos, Mexico. A summary will be presented by Charles W. Philpot, Director, Pacific Northwest Experiment Station, USA.

A noon-time round-table luncheon focusing on *Issues, Barriers and Solutions* will be chaired by Dave Wright, Forest Supervisor, Allegheny National Forest, USA. Participants will work together to overcome barriers to international cooperation and propose solutions to the management and control of wildfires.

- MORE -

WILDLAND FIRE CONFERENCE

Page 4-4-4

At 2:30 p.m., Chairperson John J. Moeller, Assistant Director, Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of the Interior will introduce presentations on *International Cooperation - Case Examples*. Denise Decker, formerly with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and Jay Perkins, USDA Forest Service will talk about *Latin American Fire Suppression Courses*. *China and International Assistance* will be presented by Ralph Roberts, Director, Forestry Sector, Canadian International Development Agency. *International Wildland Fire Cooperation Between the Forest Service and the Mexican State of Sonora* will be discussed by David F. Jolly, Regional Forester, Southwest Region, USDA Forest Service. Jan Troensegaard, Senior Forestry Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will present *A Review of FAO's Program on Forest Fire Protection*. Mr. J.P.L. Srivastava, Modern Fire Control Project Leader, India will present information on the *Modern Fire Control Project of India*.

Wednesday, July 26

Wednesday morning's session, beginning at 8:30, will be a continuation of Tuesday afternoon's case examples and will be chaired by William T. Sommers, Staff Director, Forest Fire and Atmospheric Science Research, USDA Forest Service. Harry Layman, State Forester, North Carolina, will lead a talk on the *North American Forestry Commission - Fire Management Study Group* and H.E. Rothsay, Deputy Chief Officer, County Fire Authority, Australia will discuss *Wildland/Urban Interface - The Ash Wednesday Story*.

At 9:50 a.m. on Wednesday, Mr. Sommers, will also chair a panel on *Why Programs Succeed*. Panel members will consider the political, legal, social, economic, biological and physical factors that foster and impede the successful implementation of effective programs. Panel members will be: Johann G. Goldammer, University Professor, West Germany; Lowell Smith, Nevada State Forester; Menachem Sachs, Director Israel Land Development Authority; and Oliver Davidson, Assistant Director of Operations, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development, USA.

The Wednesday afternoon session beginning at 1:15, will be chaired by William L. McCleese, Assistant Staff Director, Fire and Aviation Management, Forest Service, USDA. Topics to be addressed will be: *The Issues and Opportunities of International Cooperation* by Bob Lee, Professor of Forestry, University of Washington; and *Approaches to International Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management*, by John Goodman, Executive Director, Forest Resources Group, Ontario, Canada.

-MORE-

Educational Displays from more than 100 public and private organizations worldwide will be exhibiting approaches and programs on wildfire management. Displays will be set up in University Hall and open: Sunday, 2 - 8 p.m.; Monday, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 4:45 - 7 p.m.; Tuesday, 4:20 - 7 p.m.; and Wednesday, 11:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

#

Note to Media:

The **Press Room**, located on the hotel's 4th floor, will be open:

Sunday 12:30 - 5 p.m.

Mon & Tues 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Wednesday 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon

For more **advance information**, contact:

Jamie E. Haines, APR, Director of Public Affairs,
National Fire Protection Association, (617) 770-3000

Bob Swinford, United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
(703) 235-3220