

# Cody Interagency Dispatch Center

## 2021 Year End Report



Crater Ridge  
Bighorn National Forest

## Cooperating Agencies in The Cody Dispatch Zone



Wind River/Bighorn Basin District - WBD

Shoshone National Forest - SHF

Bighorn National Forest - BHF

Wind River Agency - WRA

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area - BIP

Wyoming State Forestry Division - CDS

Big Horn - BHX, Fremont - FRX, Hot Springs - HOX, Johnson - JOX, Park - PAX, Sheridan - SHX,  
and Washakie – WAX Counties

[https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch\\_centers/r2cdc/](https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2cdc/)

### 2021 Narrative:

Cody Dispatch experienced a below average fire season. The first wildfire began January 7<sup>th</sup> and the last occurred on December 24<sup>th</sup>. A total of 11,580 acres burned across the dispatch area. The dispatch center supported one type 2 incident management team and five type 3 incident management teams. By the end of the year, Cody Dispatch had provided support to 139 local wildland fires. This is the slowest season, regarding number of wildland fires, in the last decade for the Cody Dispatch Zone.

The year began with drier and above normal temperatures. In January, the dispatch zone set new record highs with temperatures reaching up to 62 degrees. Rolling into early spring, the dispatch area received slightly below average amounts of precipitation from afternoon wetting rains and occasional snow flurries. Fuels were curing out in early June and by early July most of the agencies were in fire restrictions. In August, fire indices were at critical levels running in the 95<sup>th</sup> – 99<sup>th</sup> percentile across the entire zone. These critical fuels remained throughout September and into late October. Early November, the dispatch area finally received a light mix of snow and rain showers, which moderated fire danger indices. However, we ended December with drier than normal conditions for the time of year.

This spring, Cody Dispatch experienced a large turn over in Fire Management Leadership. Three agencies' head Fire Management Officers (Wind River/Bighorn Basin District BLM, Wind River Agency BIA, and Shoshone National Forest) either retired or moved onto other job opportunities in April/May. The transition with the new incoming Fire Management Officers went relatively seamless and effective partnerships with all agencies were maintained. The Operations Board met a few times to go over the percentage of dispatch workload per agency and how that translates into cost contributions for dispatch services. As always, there was many questions and confusion about the Cody Dispatch cost allocation amongst our many agencies. However, all agencies agreed to the calculated costs by December for 2022.

Cody Dispatch began mobilizing firefighting resources to support out of area incidents in February. By March, the dispatch zone was regularly sending firefighters to the Southern Area for prescribed burning. In May, we began mobilizing resources to support suppression efforts in the Southwest and

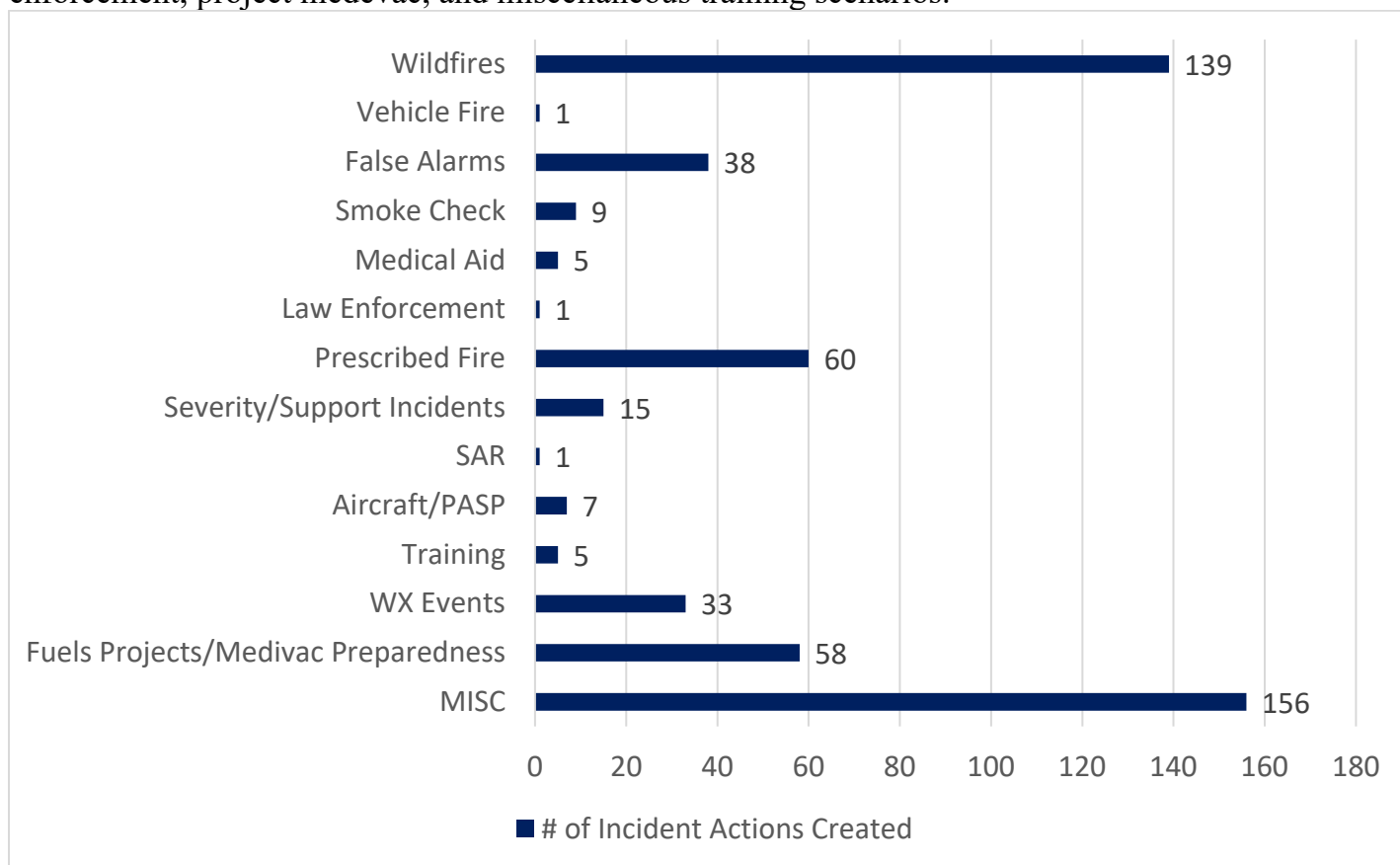
southern Rocky Mountain areas. By November, Cody Dispatch had sent additional suppression and support resources to wildfire and all risk incidents in Northern and Southern California, Northwest, Great Basin, Northern Rockies, and Eastern Areas.

## 2021 Fire Statistics

- 139 wildfires
- 11,580 acres burned
- 528 incident actions
- 73 days expanded dispatch was staffed
- 4,357 resource orders processed
- 41 nights staffed providing 24-hour coverage
- 27 detailed dispatchers
- 22 days at PL 3
- 13 coordinating group calls between 6/22 – 9/14

## Incident Action Breakdown

Cody Dispatch created 528 Incident Actions to support wildfire management responses, prescribed fire support, medical aid, public assists, search and rescue, resource flight following, weather events, law enforcement, project medevac, and miscellaneous training scenarios.



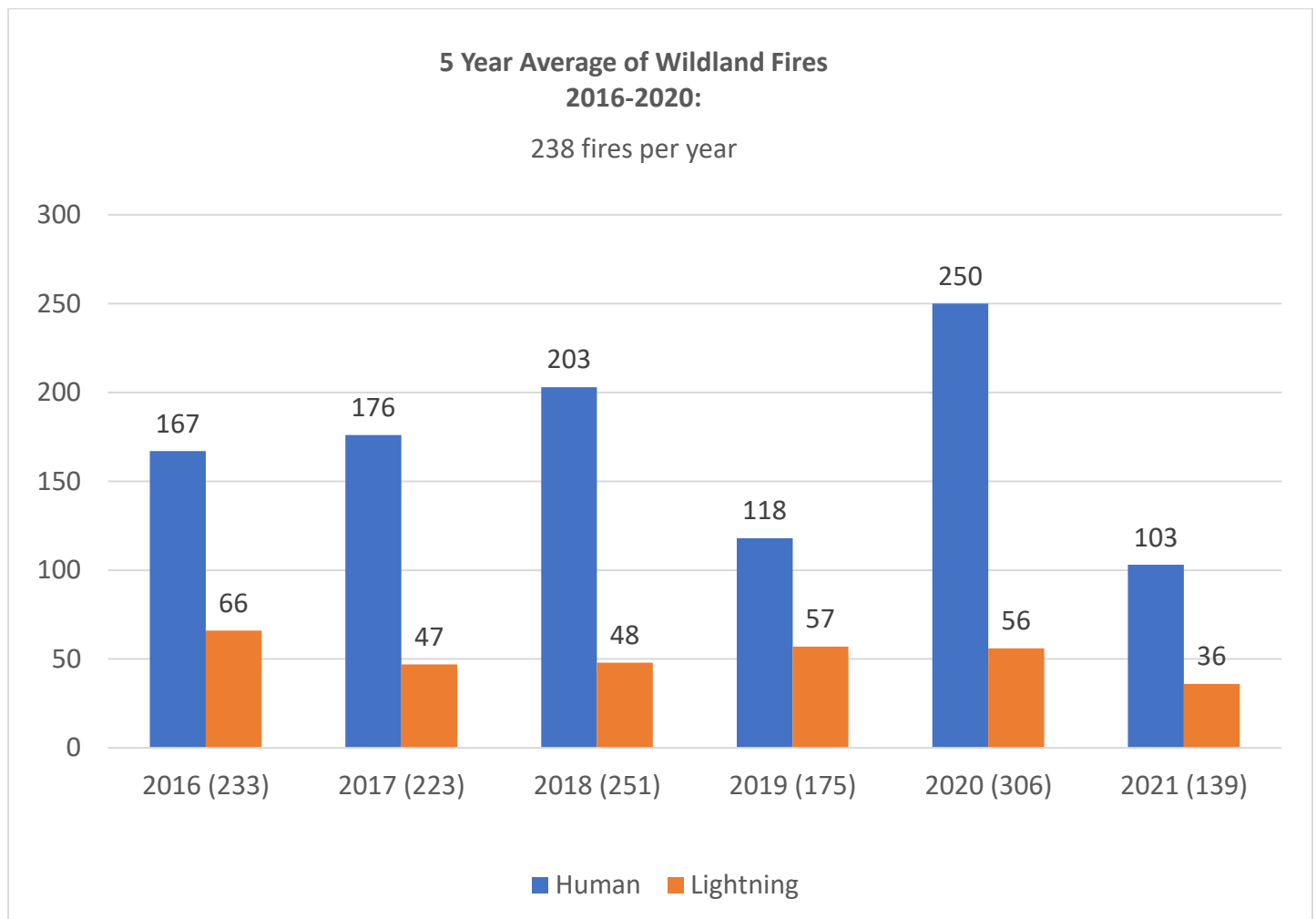
## Agency Wildfire Breakdown

UNIT	HUMAN		LIGHTNING		TOTAL	
	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres	Fires	Acres
BHF Bighorn NF	4	7682.3	4	1.32	8	7,683.62
BIP Bighorn Canyon National Rec. Area	1	0.1	2	0.4	3	0.5
HPD High Plains District	-	-	2	3.1	2	3.1
SHF Shoshone National Forest	7	939.69	6	0.75	13	940.44
WBD Wind River/Bighorn Basin District	10	1837.74	7	81.3	17	1,919.04
WRA Wind River Agency	56	92.48	2	23.4	58	115.88
WAL WY Bureau of Reclamation	2	6	-	-	2	6
CDS Wyoming State Forestry Division	0	5	2	0.2	2	5.2
BHX Big Horn County	5	31.85	-	-	5	31.85
FRX Fremont County	6	25.04	2	0.2	8	25.24
HOX Hot Springs County	4	73.1	7	441.4	11	514.5
PAX Park County	5	293.8	2	33.15	7	326.95
WAX Washakie County	2	7	-	-	2	7
SHX Sheridan County	1	1	-	-	1	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>10,995.1</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>585.22</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>11,580.32</b>

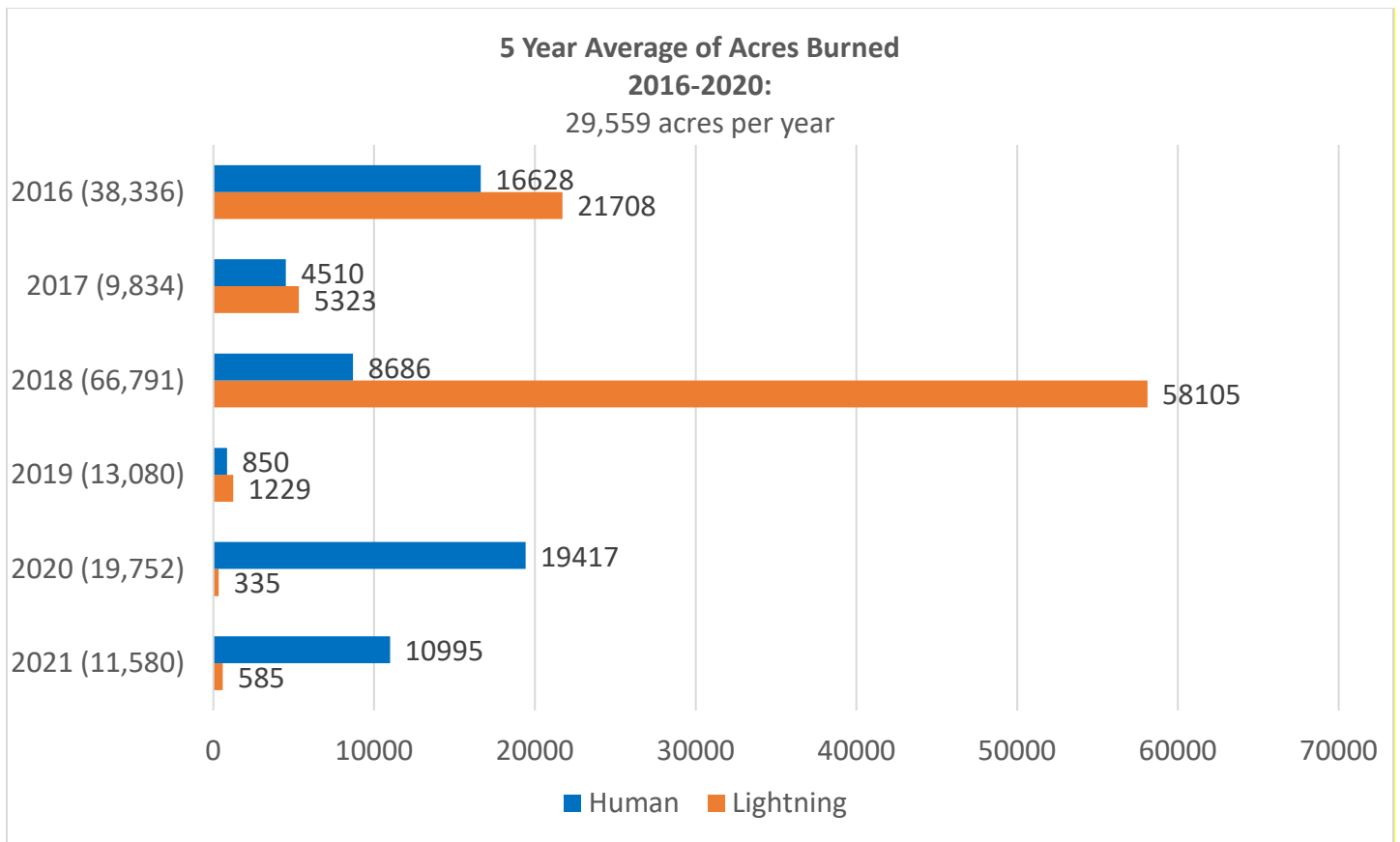
## Large Fire/Extended Attack Summary

Fire	Start Date	Cause	Final Acres	Unit	Complexity
Brokenback Creek	6/15	Human	1,523	WBD	Type 4
Crater Ridge	7/17	Unknown	7,682	BHF	Type 2 and Type 3 IMTs
Warm Oil	7/31	Lightning	394	HOX	Type 4
Sand Creek	9/09	Human	929	SHF	Type 3 IMT
Louis Lamour	11/15	Human	275	PAX	Type 4

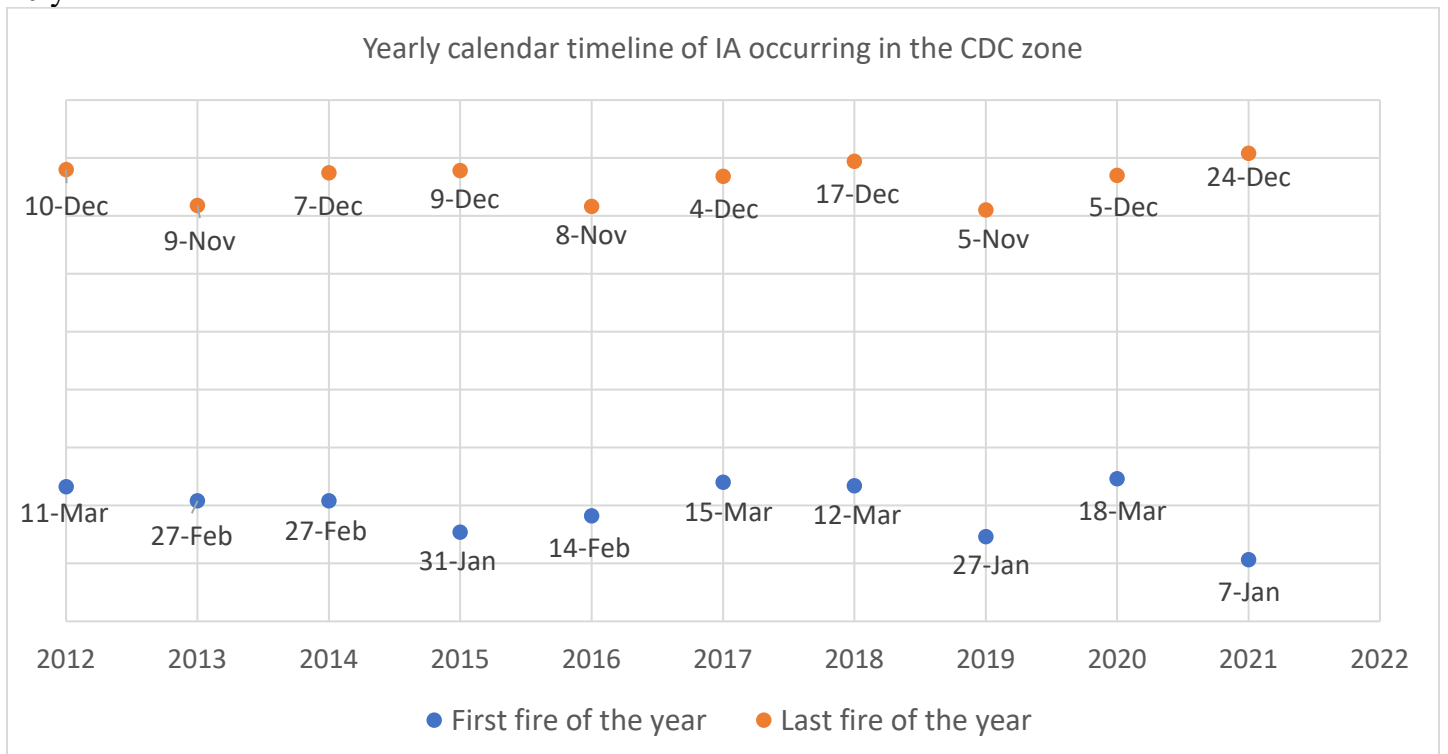
## 5 Year Averages





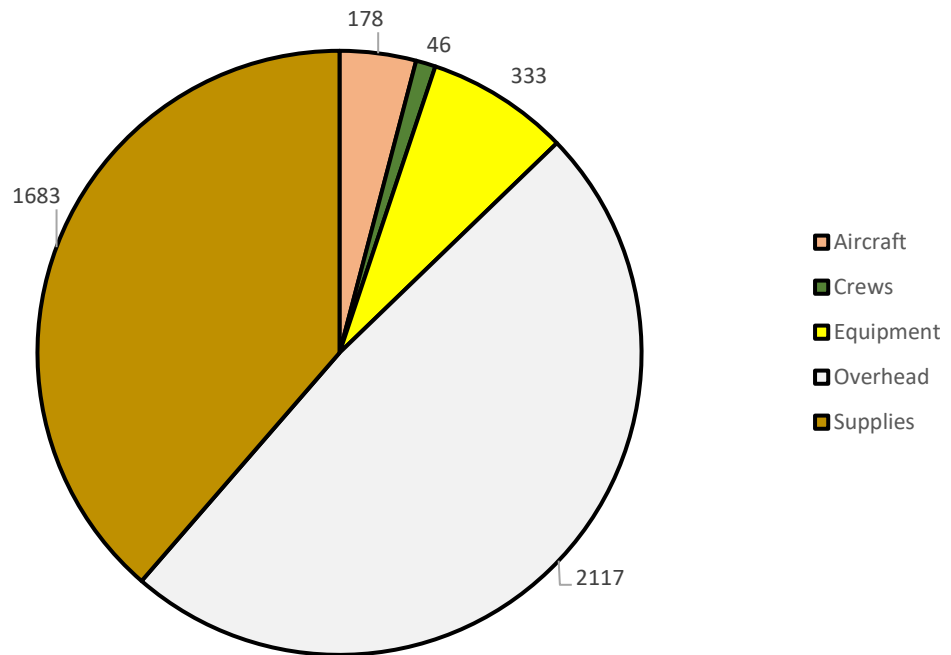


**The term “Fire Season” does not accurately depict the wildfire workload at the local dispatch level.** Calendar timeline of initial attack activity occurring in the Cody Dispatch zone based on the last 10 years.



## Resource Order Statistics

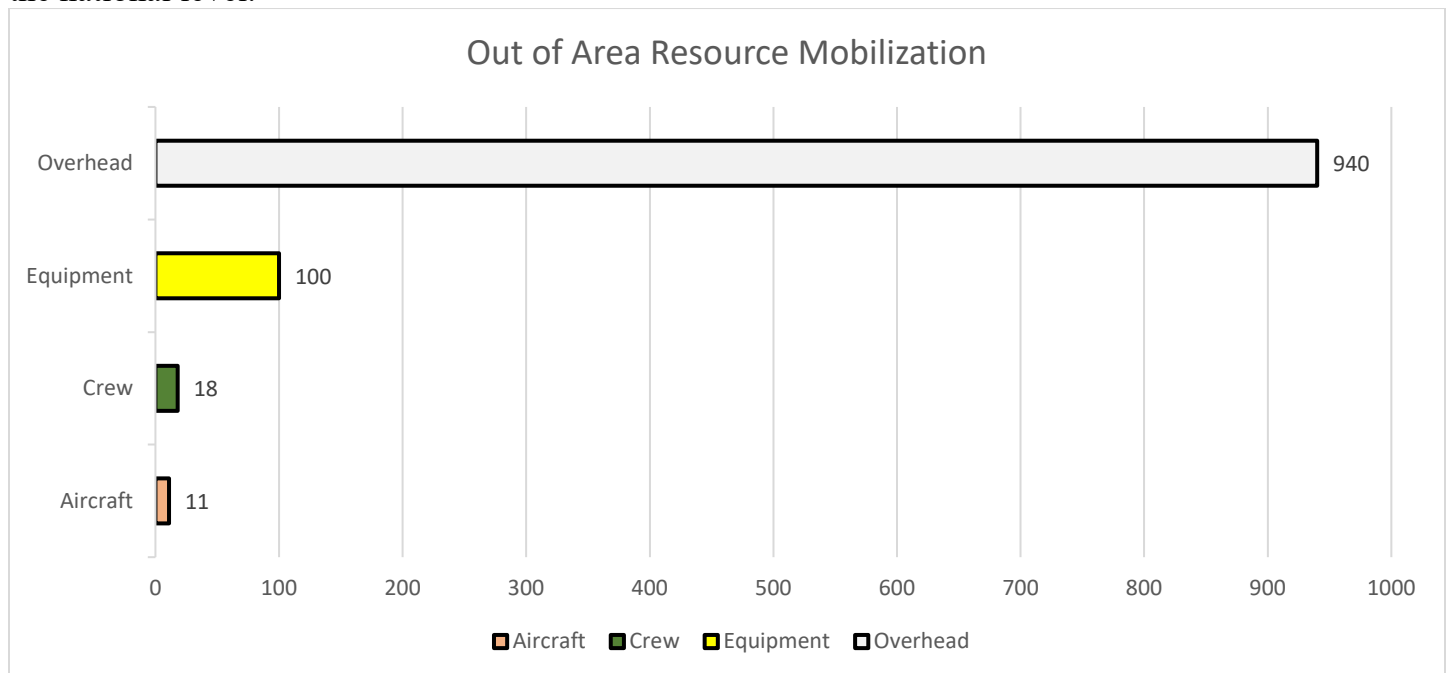
Cody Dispatch handled a total of 4,357 resource requests in 2021.



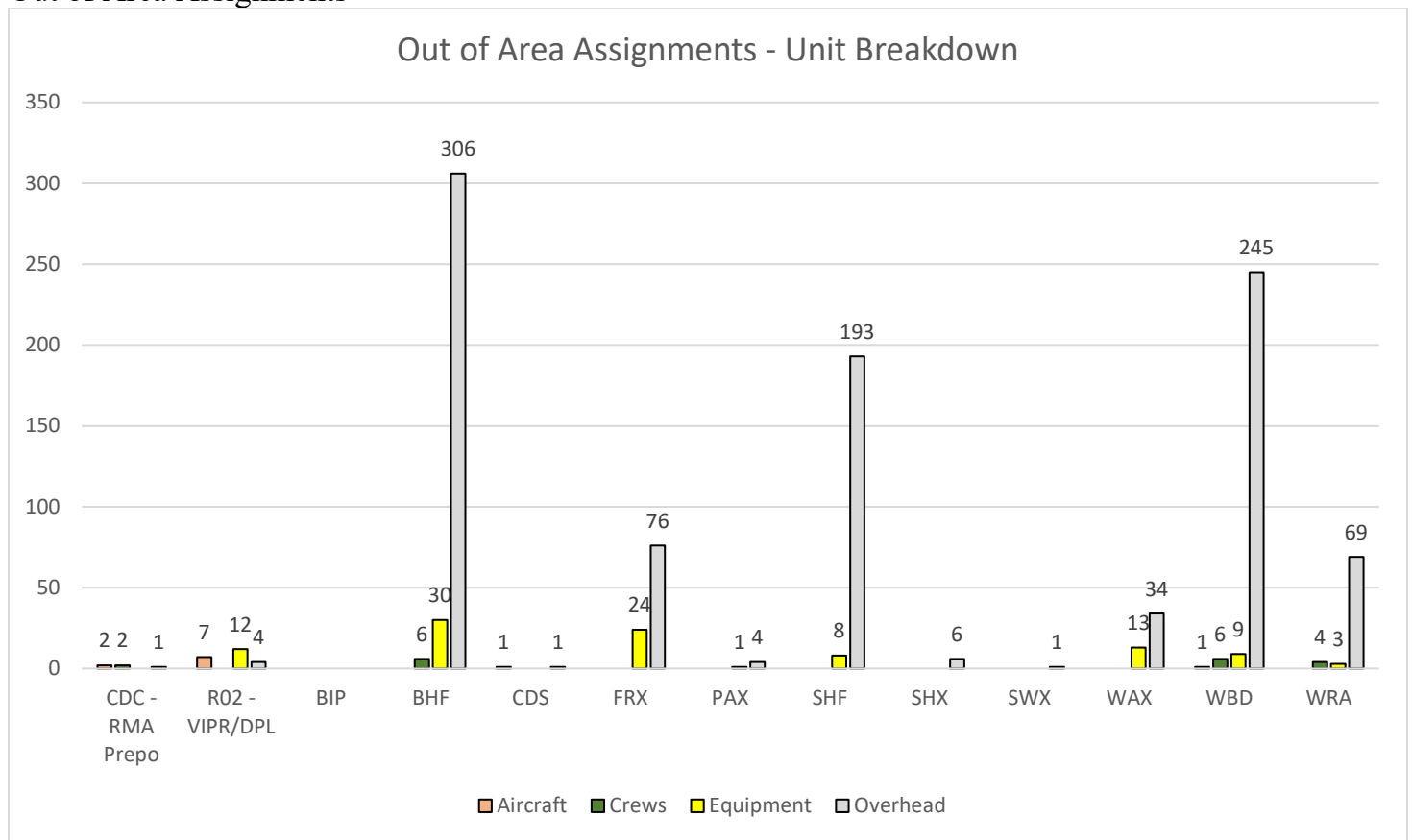
Total Requests by Functional Area

## Out of Area Assignments

We mobilized 1,069 resources for out of area fire assignments to support efforts within the RMA and at the national level.

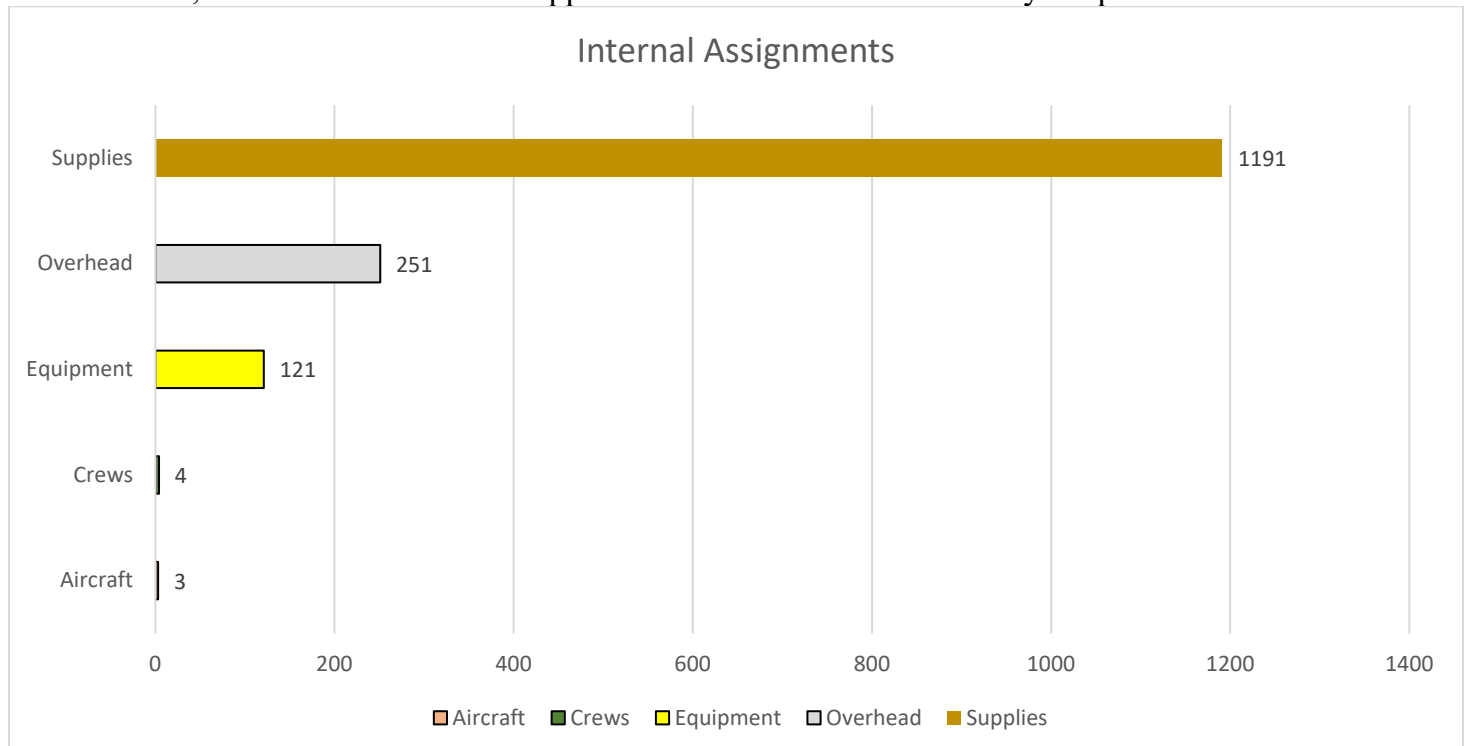


## Out of Area Assignments



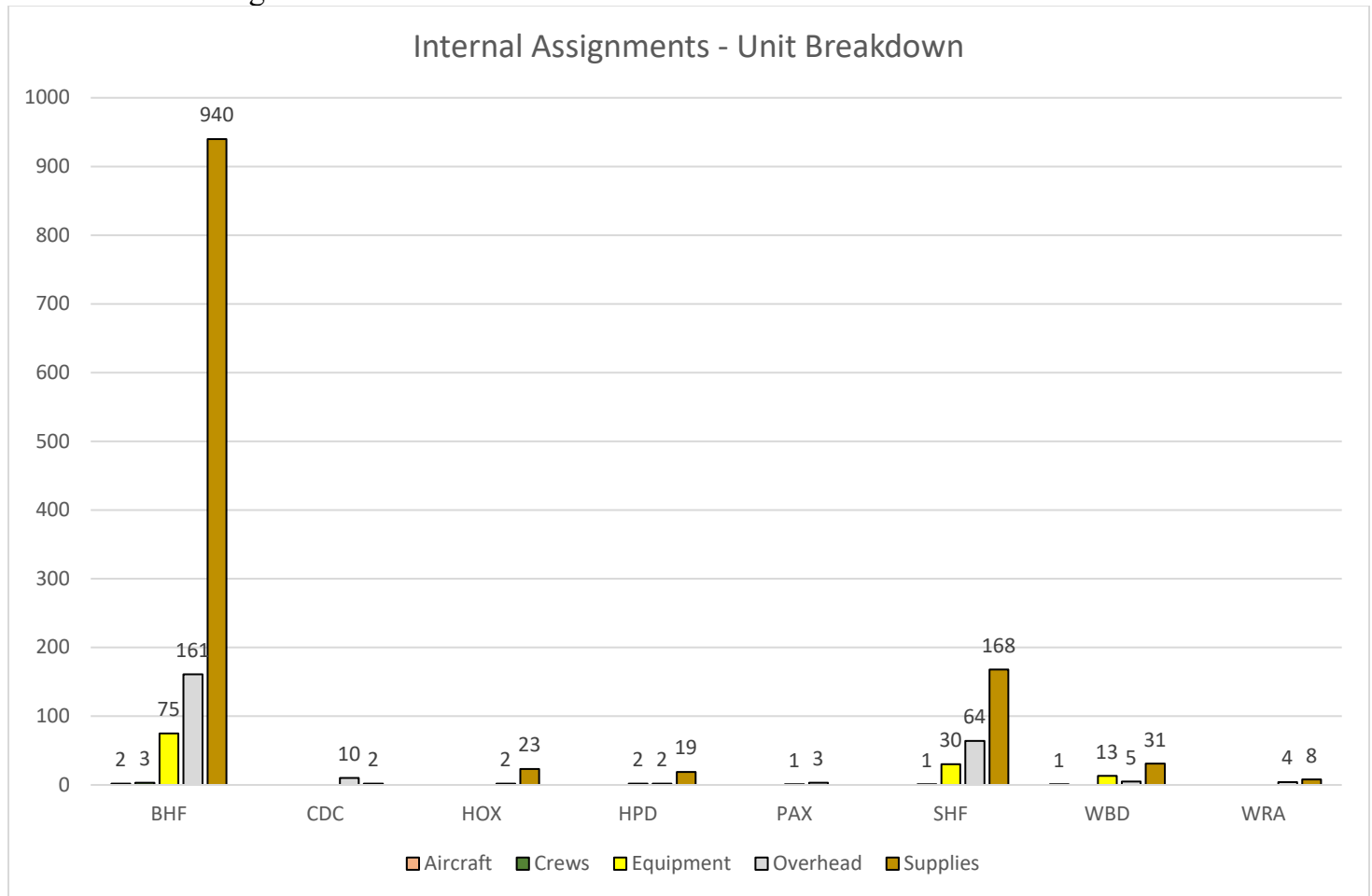
## Internal CDC Assignments

We created 1,570 resource orders to support internal incidents in the Cody Dispatch zone.



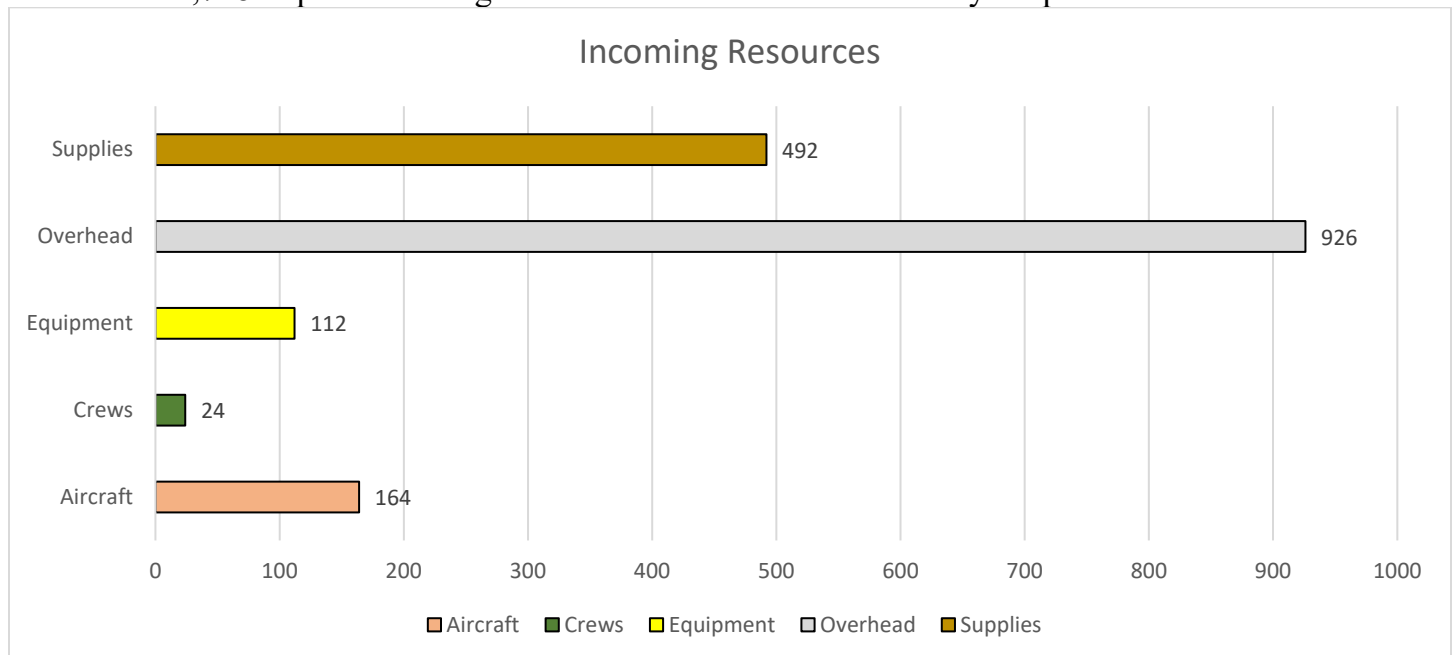


## Internal CDC Assignments

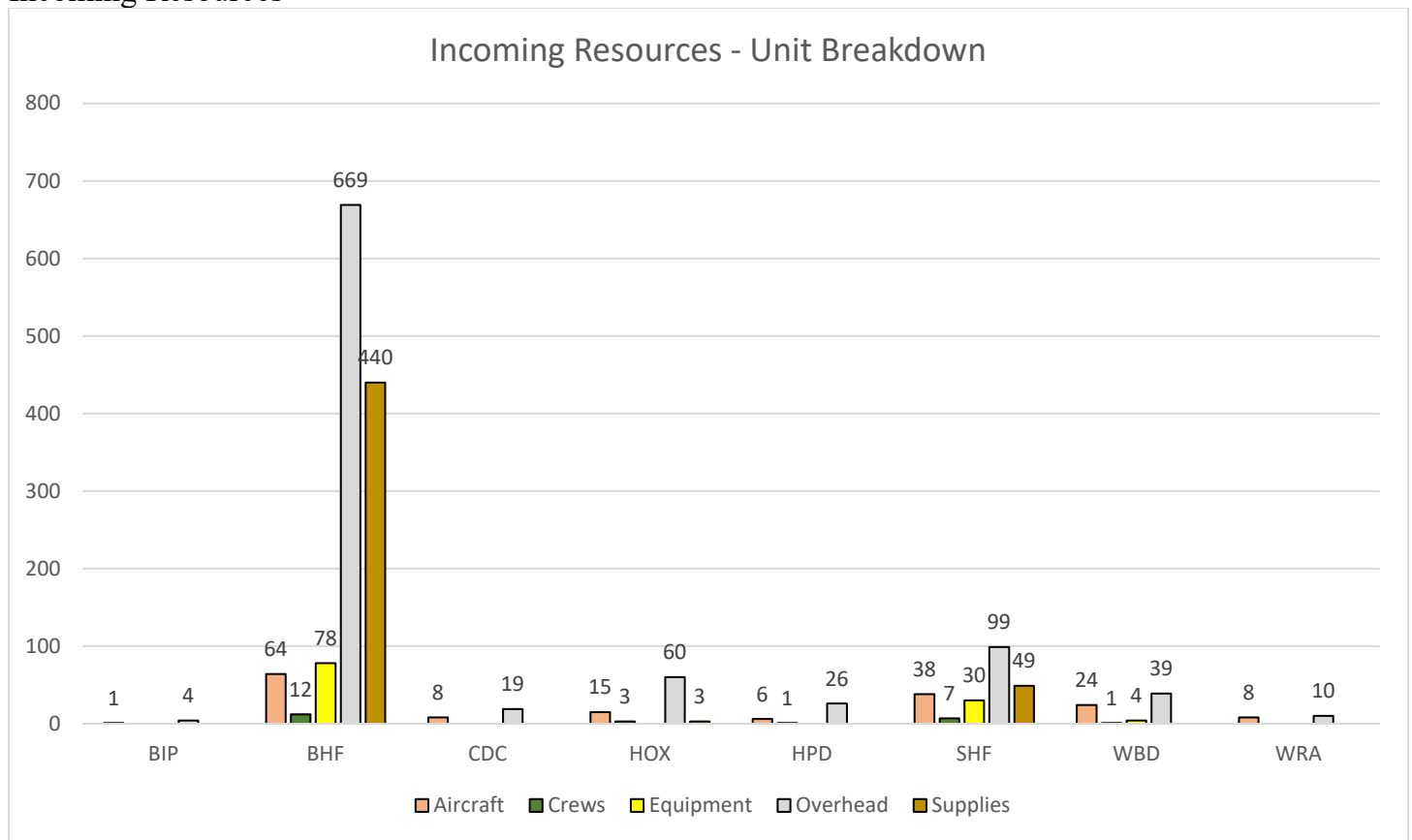


## Incoming Resources

We created 1,718 requests to bring out of area resources into the Cody Dispatch zone.

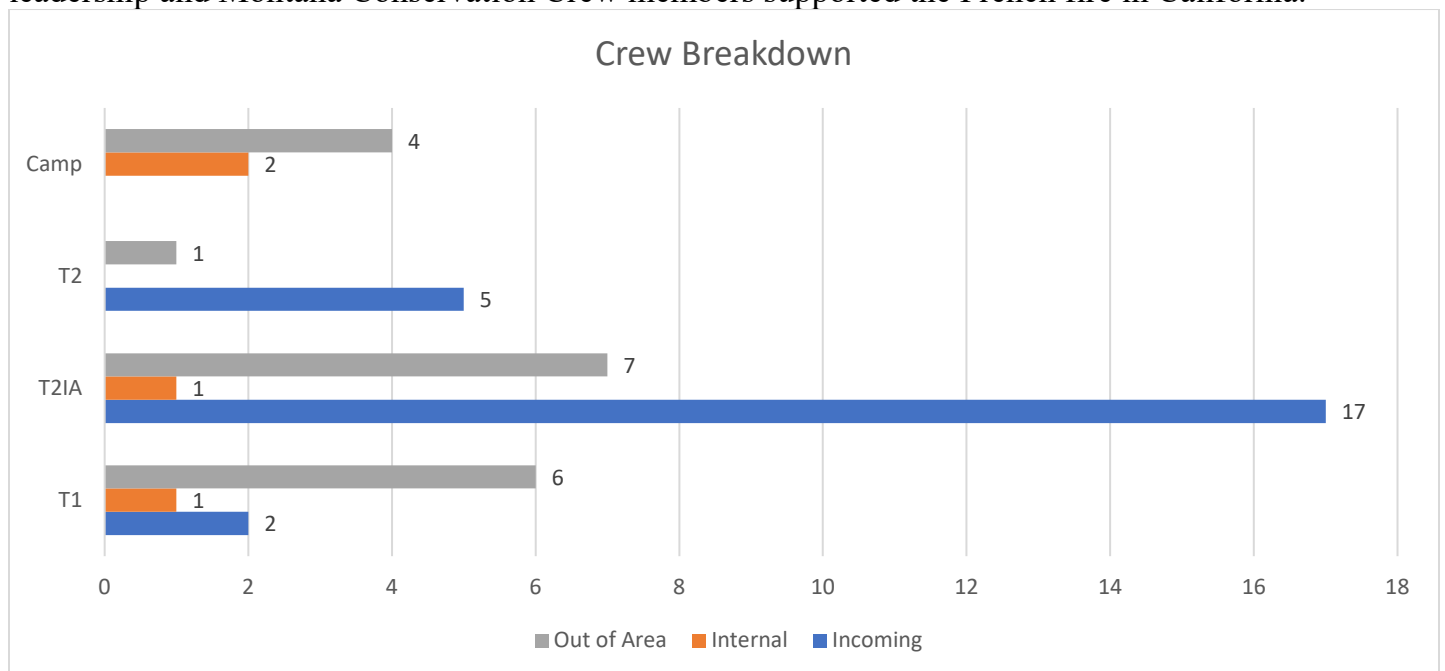


## Incoming Resources



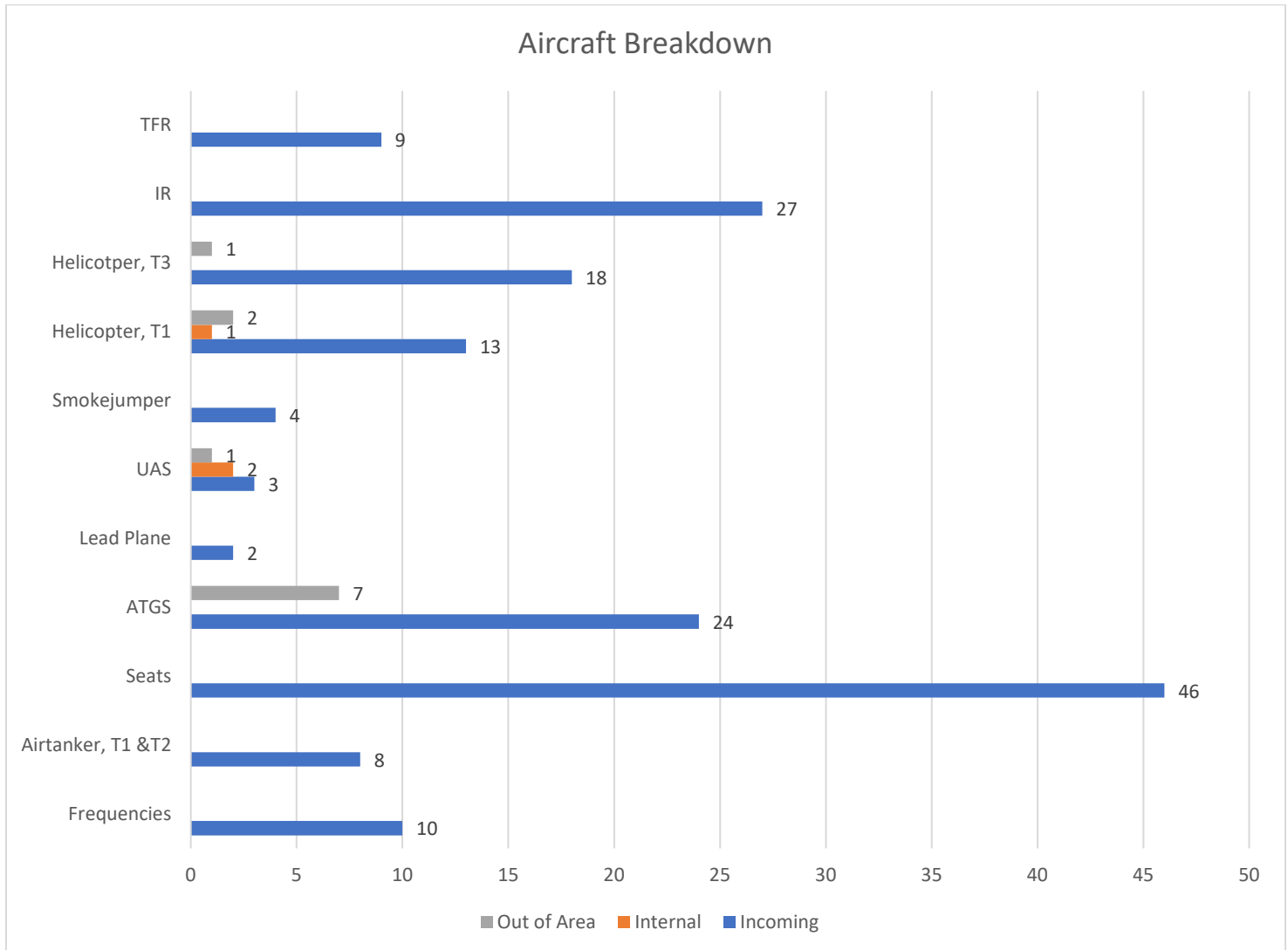
## Crews Statistics

Wyoming IHC, Devils Canyon T2IA, Bighorn Basin T2IA, and Wind River Camp Crew supported fires throughout the Rocky Mountain Area and on a national level. A type 2 crew comprised of WBD leadership and Montana Conservation Crew members supported the French fire in California.



## Aviation Statistics

The Riverton and Greybull seat bases were available for use in early June. A total of 90,250 gallons of LC95A and 1,568 gallons of foam was utilized to support local and neighboring dispatch zone incidents. Most of our fixed and rotor wing use was in support of large fire suppression on WY/MT Forest Service and MT BLM lands.



## Challenges

- There is a major shortage in qualified dispatchers nationwide. Each year, the dispatch community struggles to find aircraft, initial attack, expanded support and supervisory dispatchers. The COVID vaccination mandate and continuous technology changes have made this struggle worse. Many AD's and militia dispatchers did not participate in the 2020 and 2021 fire seasons. The lack of help has put more stress on the local dispatch centers to maintain normal operations.
- Many agencies have been hiring more firefighters, increasing tours of duty for permanent firefighters, and upgrading GS pay scales for their operational fire personnel. However, dispatch center staffs seem to be overlooked and not considered essential during these discussions. This has led to a drop in morale and created recruitment/retention issues within the dispatch

community. Agencies aren't recognizing with the increase in numbers of firefighter personnel working year-round, they need more dispatchers to track these employees in the off season. Most dispatch staffs are temporary or career seasonal appointments. It is difficult for the local dispatch center to maintain year-round coverage when 60-70% of their staff is laid off. However, all fire operational personnel are still working and require dispatch tracking and logistical support.

- Interagency cost contributions, for annual dispatch center services, is always confusing for the multiple agencies involved. Local dispatch centers should be funded from a national versus local level. There is always an agency that feels they are paying too much for dispatch services and don't agree with the percent of workload calculations. Every year this adds more stress to local dispatch centers and agencies as we negotiate the funding contributions. A national cost analysis tool for dispatch services should be implemented and agreed to by each of the agencies.

## **Successes**

- Cody Dispatch staff assisted fire programs in the Rocky Mountain, Eastern, Southern, Northwest, and Northern Rockies areas with leadership, intelligence reporting, initial attack mobilization, and aircraft dispatching support.
- Expanded Dispatch was staffed 73 days to primarily support the Crater Ridge and Sand Creek fires. Fortunately, Cody Dispatch had a local AD Supervisory Dispatcher who was able to oversee the expanded operations for 50+ days. She offered excellent training opportunities to new dispatchers, provided consistency for the IMTs, and maintained exceptional communication with the Center Manager and initial attack staff. Having her available for such a long period really alleviated stress in the dispatch center.
- This year Cody Dispatch ordered in several pool trucks to be utilized for fires within the dispatch zone and out of area assignments. This was a huge benefit for all our agencies due to the shortages in local fleet programs and expedited mobilization of resources.
- Interagency coordination and cooperation have resulted in excellent partnerships across the dispatch zone. The Cody Dispatch Coordinating Group attended weekly calls and shared many lessons learned throughout the year.

## **2022 Outlook**

- Cody Dispatch will be fully staffed with 8 personnel for the upcoming fire season. Currently, all regular staff plan to return.
- Cody Dispatch continues to represent and support the dispatch community at the local, geographical, and national level with staff participating on the RMCG Dispatch and Training Committees. Additionally, staff is primary members on the NCSC and NICAD committees under NWCG.

**Crater Ridge**  
**Bighorn National Forest**



Picture taken by IC – Jesson Vasey, September 14, 2021



**Crater Ridge**  
**Bighorn National Forest**



Picture taken by IC – Jesson Vasey, September 18, 2021

**Sand Creek**  
**Shoshone National Forest**



Picture taken by Chris Norquist, September 9, 2021



**Sand Creek**  
**Shoshone National Forest**



Picture taken by Chris Norquist, September 9, 2021