

# Northeastern Interagency Coordination Center 2018 End of Year Report

## Partners of NECC

## 2018 Overview

2018 here at NECC started out like any other year, a few resource orders here and there and then wham, come July/August we are busy as bees, just like any other year. At first I thought 2018 was going to be similar to 2017, however even though it was a busy year, 2018 ended up being just a little bit above average for mobilizations. Local reported wildland fires were low except for our Canadian partners especially Quebec, but on the States side, it was relatively a quiet year.

**Workload:** For those of you who do not know, the dispatch world is built on a tier structure. For NECC, National Coordination Center (NICC) is the 1<sup>st</sup> Tier, Eastern Area Coordination Center (EACC) is a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier, NECC is a 3<sup>rd</sup> tier and DWPC (NPS Delaware Water Gap Dispatch Center) is a 4<sup>th</sup> tier dispatch center. NECC mobilizes resources from 26 National Park facilities, and DWPC provides the mobilization for an additional 17 units in the NE. When an order comes in for one of DWPC's resources it first comes to NECC, and we filter it down to April at the dispatch center who then fills the order. Because it comes through NECC 1<sup>st</sup>, it is considered a workload and I count it as a NPS mobilization.

Our first bit of activity was in January bringing a Dozer and personnel from the Huron Manistee National Forest to assist Green Mountain National Forest with burning on DOD lands at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey, but our first out of area mobilization was in March sending a NPS electrician (ELEC) to assist with Hurricane Irma Recovery in the Everglades NP, and our final mobilization was in November to the Woolsey fire in Southern California where we sent a Forest Service Fireline qualified Resource Advisor (REAF). So basically we went from January through November with mobilizations of resources.

Early spring we brought in a Type 6 Engine from the Allegheny NF to assist Green Mountain NF with their local prescribed fire program but we also started moving Forest resources around to assist cooperators (DOD/TNC). Once local burning subsided, we began sending resources to other locations within the Eastern Area to assist with their burning programs. Kind of like buffalo roaming to where the grazing is, in our case moving resources to where the prescribed fires are.

The first engines began mobilizing out of area for wildland fire support in April. A MES engine headed to Virginia to assist the George Washington National Forest while another of their engines headed to Minnesota to assist with IA support on the Superior and Chippewa National Forests. Shortly thereafter, we moved engines to other Midwest states and it continued from there moving resources west to Idaho, Montana and California.

The first crew mobilizations started in July sending MES, NHS, MAS to Quebec to assist with their very active fire season, with an additional MES crew heading north 2 weeks later, but we also provided Quebec with a short NFFPC IMT consisting of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick resources. While these resources were still helping Quebec, we began mobilizing crews on the US side out west with the Forest Service and Connecticut State putting crews together for the Rocky Mountain Geographical Area.

NECC started providing 7 day Coverage on July 22<sup>nd</sup> when the National PL went to a 4 and a few days later to a PL5 and it stayed that way until winding down to a PL3 on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, about 10 weeks in all, a bit less than last year, still keeping us busy and needing to bring in additional dispatchers.

Visiting dispatchers started to arrive in April and continued throughout most of the season with the last visiting dispatcher from MAS demobing in September. This year we brought in 2 Supervisory Dispatchers from out of the area (Colorado and Minnesota) to assist while I was on AL.

**Logistics:** We had some snafus with the use of the compact purchase card this year and since I am unable to utilize the card to secure anything from a bus to a sandwich, those responsibilities fell onto Don and Mari. Luckily one of them was always here, so we never really had any issues. We secured 11 busses transporting crew personnel into Canada, over to the Harrisburg PA mobilization center and to our own Mobilization center in Manchester NH. We provided meals and motels for those resources located in Manchester during the mobilization and demobilization process.

This year was the first year that the NERV (National Emergency Rental Vehicle) Pilot program was utilized and we found it to be extremely successful and well received by those resources who utilized it. The program allows NECC to secure rental vehicles for individuals going to wildland fires in 4 Geographical Areas (Northwest, Southwest, Southern and Eastern GACC's) where all costs are centrally billed therefore freeing up the resource from the burden of putting a rental vehicle on their personal or agency credit card. Our hope is that this will be a National program in 2019.

**Extra activities:** The weekly NE LMAC calls continued from April through September with fire administrators updating each other with local activities and available resources. Once again NECC supported the National Forest Health program monitoring flights throughout New England and fortunately this year the weather was very cooperative so we were able to complete the project without having to staff on weekends. NECC dispatchers also assisted the Forest Service with providing communications support to the radio technicians while they were upgrading mountain top repeaters as well as provide Check in Check out services to Green Mountain personnel. We hosted one of the EA ROSS practice sessions bringing in new personnel that wanted to learn about dispatching.

**Staffing: Molly** continues to be the Administrative Assistant to the EA Coordinating Group providing monthly conference calls and attended the annual teams meeting. Molly attended the Compact Winter Meeting in Portland, attended the Compact's Commissioners Meeting in Rhode Island, participated in the compacts program reviews for most of the agency partners in both Canada and US, presented at one of the Maine State Ranger meetings and attended a retirement seminar (not to many years off ☺). Molly also continues to provide specific services for White Mountain and Green Mountain National Forest with things such as fire qualifications, AD hiring, and updates at fire refreshers.

**Don** currently is the compacts representative on the EA Dispatch Working Team (will be Chair in 2019), participated in a few of the agency reviews (US side), attended the WildCad Administrators Workshop in March, attended the Compact's Winter Meeting, and attended the ROSS reports training in October.

Don provides the daily WIMS inputs for the White Mountain and FWS 9 RAWs stations, and participated in the Fire Net training sessions.

Don started the year as a Seasonal for the Compact which is sponsored by the State of New Hampshire however in June he was hired into the Deputy Center Manager position. This was great news to my ears for many reasons, but the main reason is because now the center will have two supervisors so when I am not here (like during a Federal Government shutdown), Don can take over the Center Manager responsibilities. It also allows me more freedom to attend meetings, training, assignment's and provides a second dispatcher to assist with getting the winter work completed and share the on call responsibilities during the winter months.

**Mari** currently is the NPS representative to the EA Dispatch Working Team, attended the Compacts Winter Meeting, attended the ROSS reports training in October, she took one fire assignment and assisted North Country Fire Management with IQCS.

### **Looking towards 2019**

Now that we can hang up the 2019 calendar we begin planning and improving NECC procedures, guidelines, work schedules etc. The Forest Service was given the go ahead to hire an Initial Attack dispatcher which we hope to have in place sometime in 2019. Having the additional dispatcher (if it all works out) allows Don and myself a little bit more leeway in traveling for fire assignments, training, meetings, or just to meet with partners for wildland fire refreshers, answering questions, or just getting to know their programs a bit better. This increases the working relationships among NECC and all our partners which was something I wanted to make sure occurred from the first day I started at NECC.

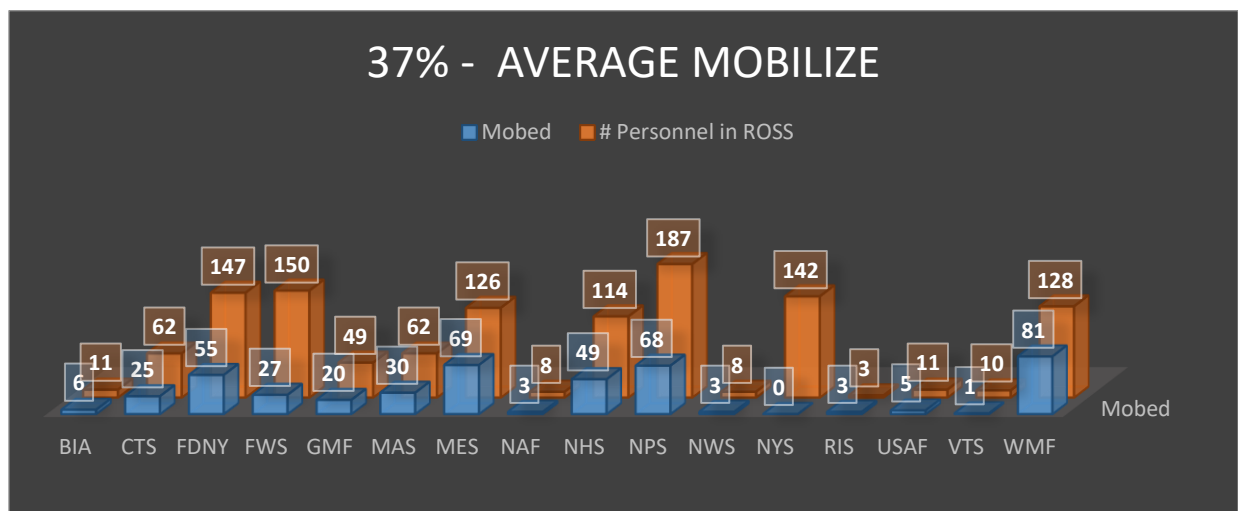
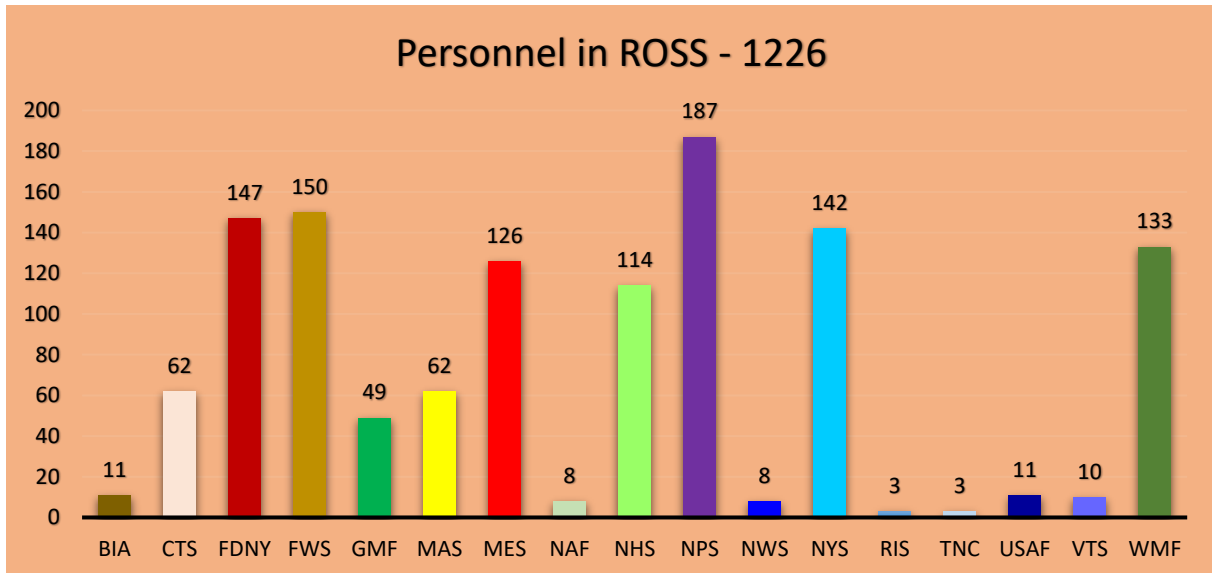
**EA Dispatch AWARD:** A congratulations is in order for 2 of the dispatchers which NECC is proud to work with. Don Tucker was selected as the Eastern Area's Dispatcher of the Year, and April Porth, the NPS dispatcher out of DWPC was one of the dispatchers nominated. Both are terrific dispatchers and a huge asset to NECC's success. I'm very proud of what NECC has accomplished over the years, and could not have done it without the support from not only the primary dispatchers in the center (s), but all those who come and give us a hand throughout the year. Because of this support, I see nothing but sunshine ahead (Ok a little snow, and a few stormy days and clouds as well, but mostly sunshine☺).

Enjoy

Molly, Don, and Mari

## ROSS (Resource Ordering and Statusing System)

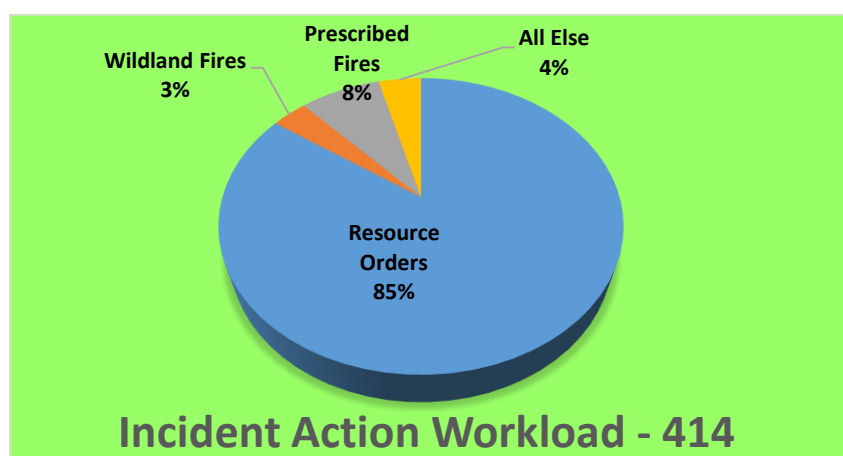
One of the things I wanted to get a feel for was how many personnel we have in ROSS and how many actually go out. On average, 37% of personnel in ROSS actually mobilized this year. The reason I wanted to do this was because I feel many of these folks don't necessarily need to be in ROSS, and keeping them active is an additional work load to those of us that do qualifications/redcards, so I'm hoping it will prompt folks to review their IQS/IQCS to see if folks in their data bases are participating.



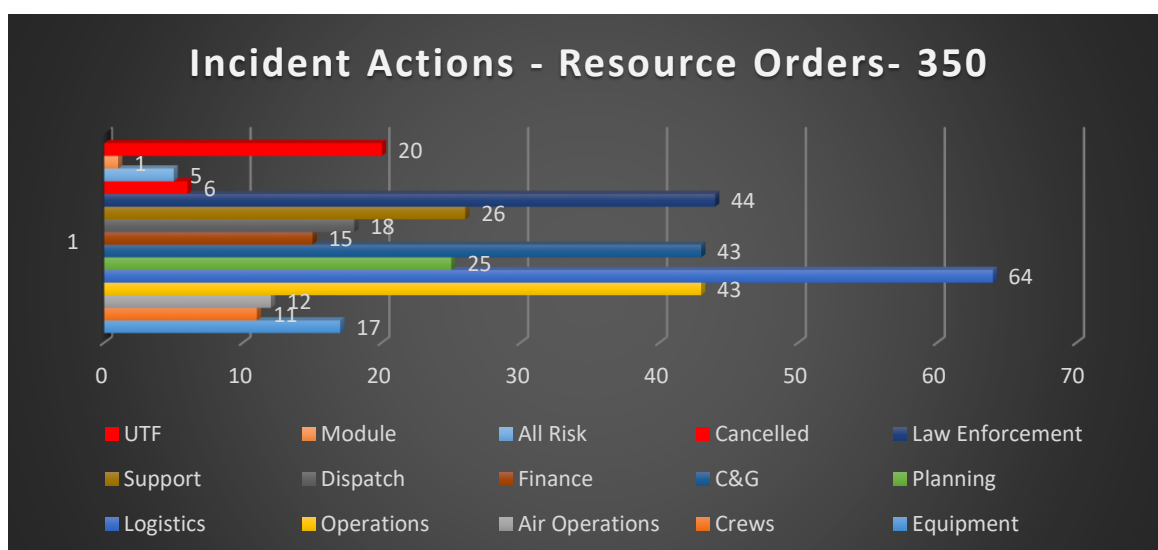
**Note:** 2018 was a busy year with local incidents and activities in the State of New York which prevented national resource mobilizations. If however, they were able to participate the average number of individuals mobilized would be closer to 40% participation.

## Incident Actions

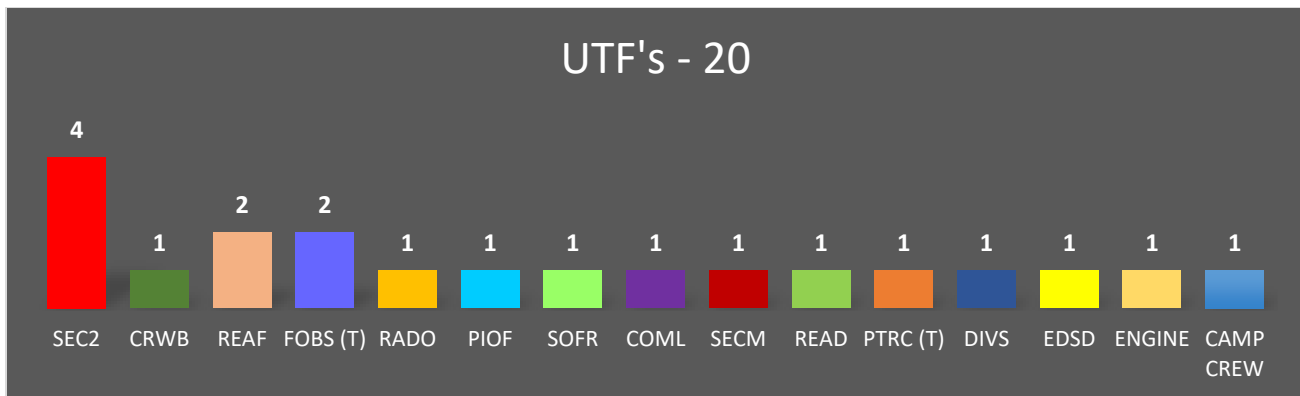
NECC has numerous tools to keep track of wildland fires, prescribed fires, mobilizations etc. The tools most used are ROSS and WildCad. ROSS is the National tool for mobilizing resources, however WildCad is a tool we use for tracking our workload. Every resource order, every fire report, every prescribed fire, and every miscellaneous activity which NECC dispatchers participate in whether it be over the radio or phone, gets captured in WildCad, through the “Incident Actions” tab.



The “All Else” tab above includes: S&R’s, Flight Following, LE assists, Managed Resource Objective projects, Smoke Checks, False Alarms and basic miscellaneous items. As you can see Resource Orders are by far our biggest workload as they are every year, however there are numerous other “behind the scenes” work we do that are not captured in WildCad. Agency specific duties like AD hiring, qualification management (IQCS/IQS), daily weather (WIMS), intelligence reporting, etc.



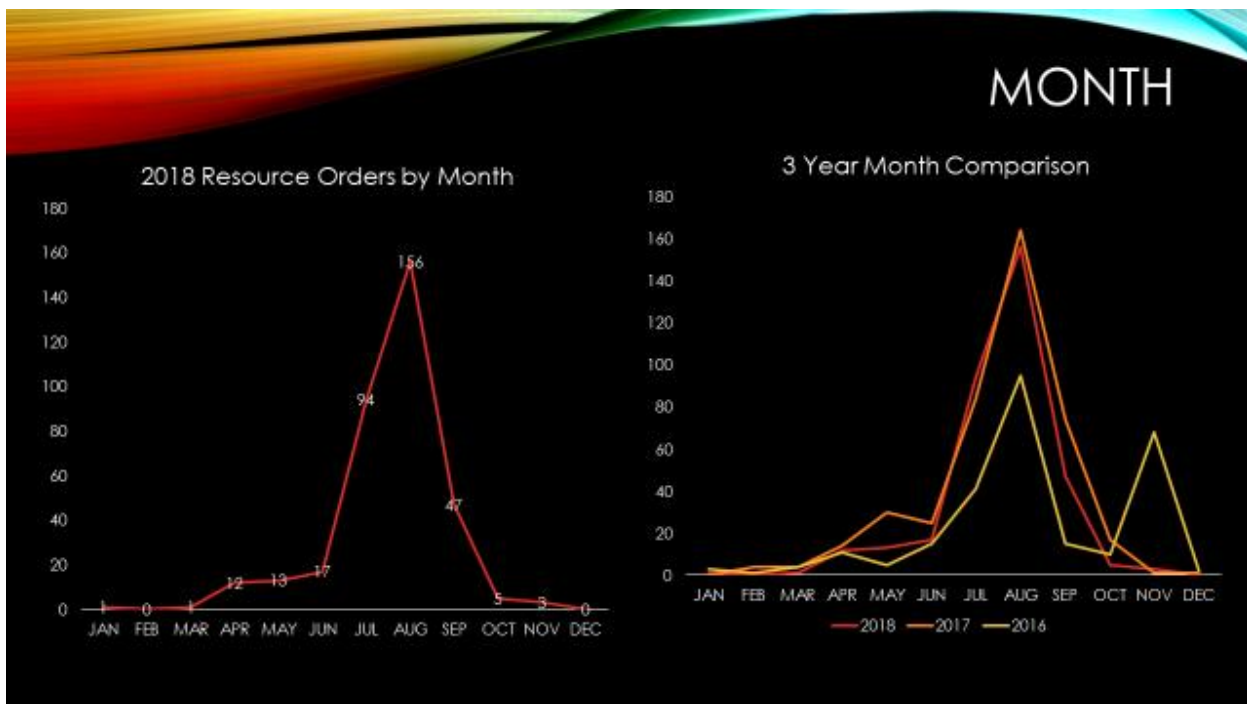
Of the 414 Incident Actions NECC generated, 350 of those were for resource orders. Here is a breakdown of orders which we received. Keep in mind that one of these orders may have 20 resources attached (crew for example).



UTF's occur when we are unable to fill a resource order which we received. Some of these are orders are sent to us to "shop around" to partners in hopes they can break someone free to fill, others may of occurred due to a incorrect status in ROSS (not really available to go out), or someone may have been available only to work on a task book and the rest of their qualifications did not get masked. UTF's however play an important role in the mobilization process because it shows the positions where shortages occur which in turn can gives fire managers information for planning/ training purposes.

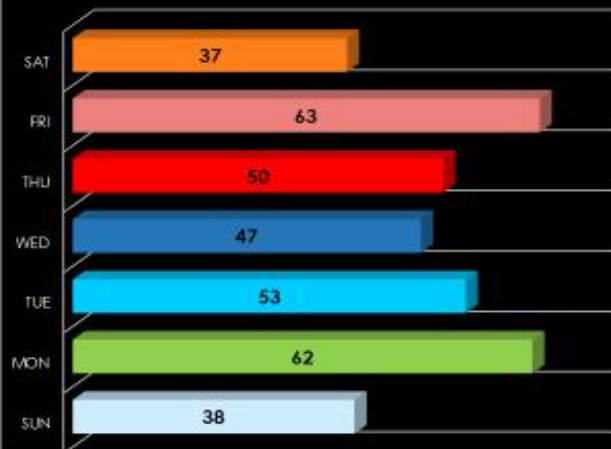
### Incoming Resource Orders

One of the things I enjoy learning is how the current year compared to previous years. The below graphs depict our resource order activities by month, day of week and time of day for 2018 and then I compared with the last two years. Each year you will notice is very similar.

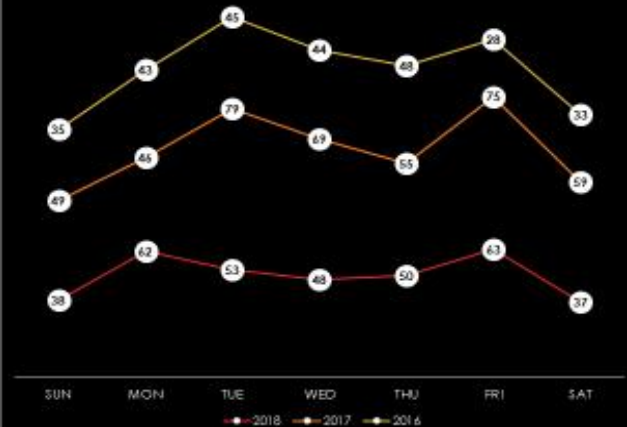


## DAY OF WEEK

2018 Day of the Week

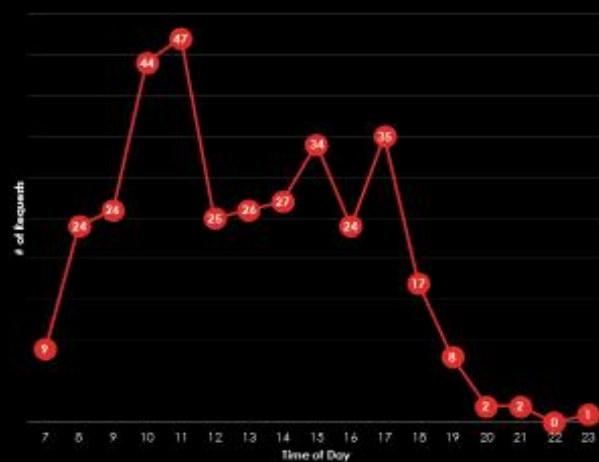


3 YEAR DAY COMPARRISON

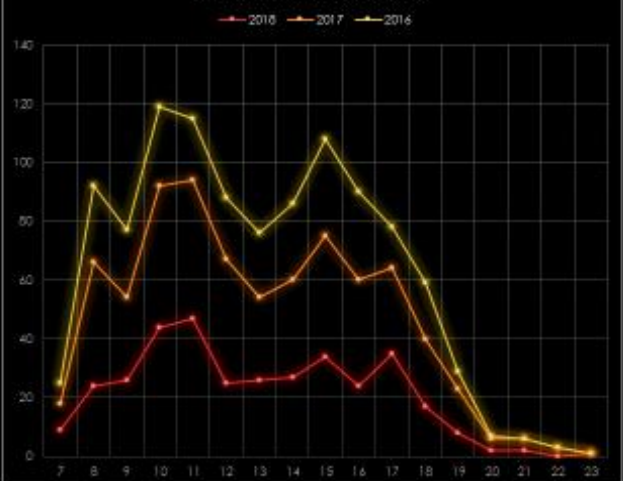


## TIME OF DAY

2018 Incoming ROSS Orders

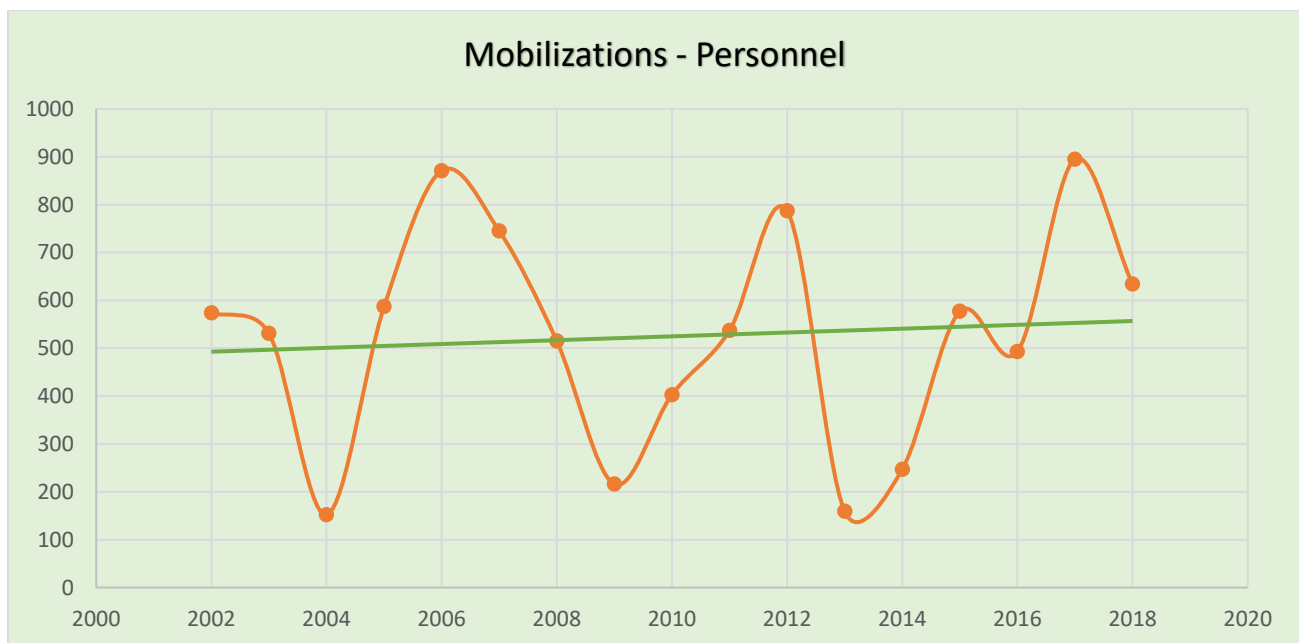
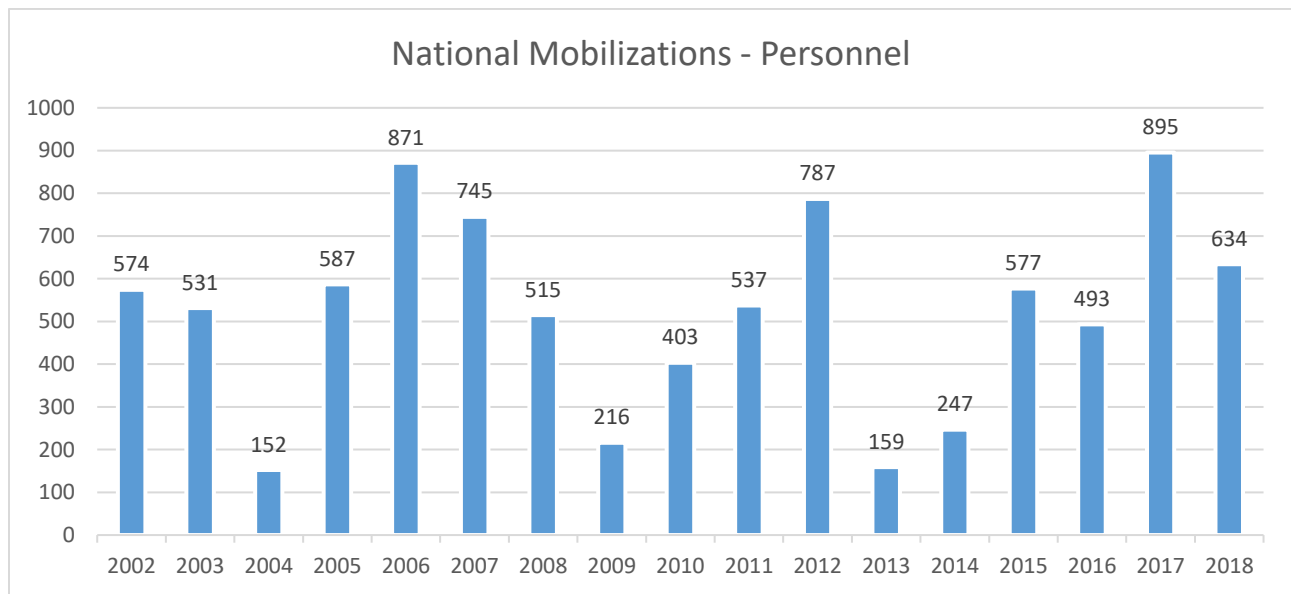


3 Year Hour Comparison



## Mobilizations

2018 was no different than any other year in the sense that mobilizations create our biggest workload here at NECC. You can see below we were not quite as busy in 2018 as we were in 2017, but busy none the less. The below graphs show the last 17 years personnel were mobilized out of NECC. The second graph clearly shows the ups and downs of activities from year to year, but it also shows a steady trend in mobilizations overall. It is very hard to predict what the next year will be like when it comes to wildland fire activities, however looking at the graphs one would think it will be a little bit slower in 2019 than the last few years. But then again I could be wrong ☺

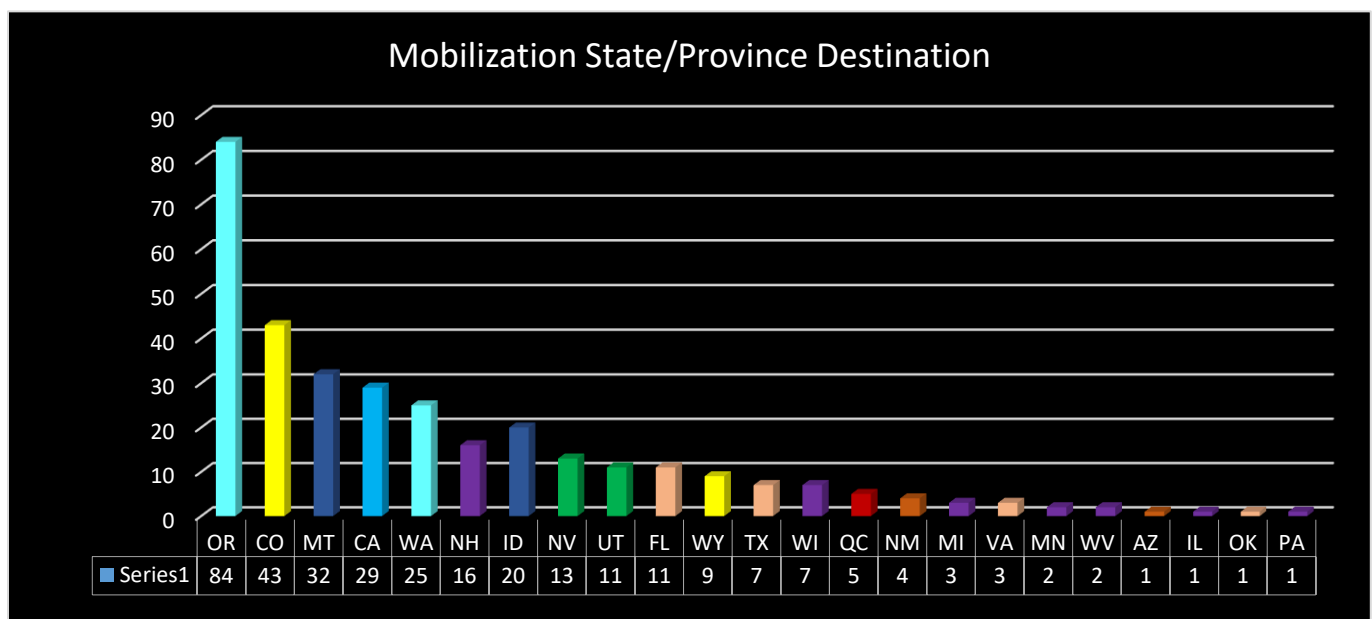


## 2018 Mobilizations

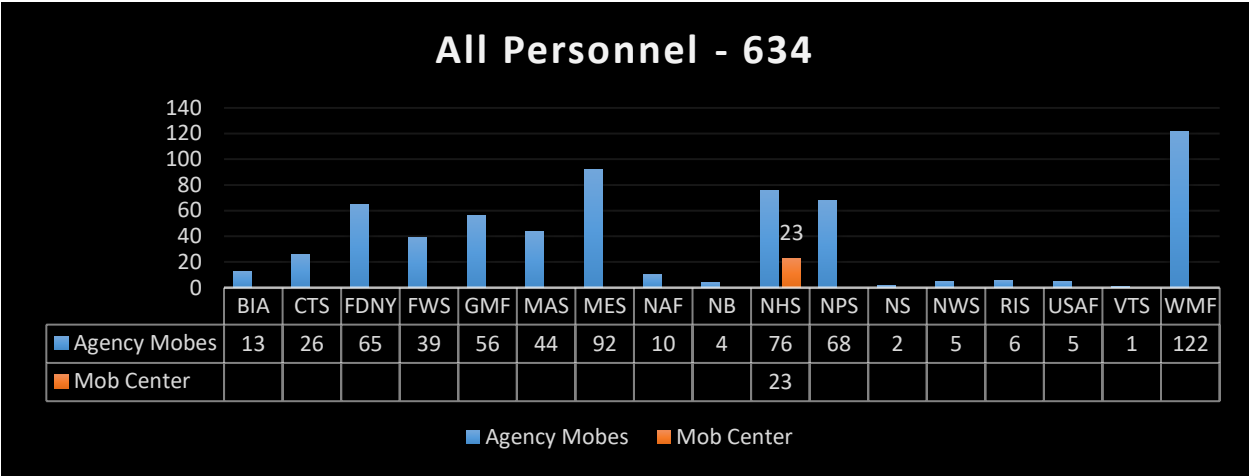
It is always fun to see where we send resources throughout the year. This year we sent 82 folks up to Quebec (QB) to assist with their very busy fire season, and on the US side of the border the Pacific Northwest was where most of our resources went, however the Rocky Mountain and Northern Rockies also was a popular destination for resources. Most of NECC partner agencies participated this year, whether it was helping neighbors as many of the compact Canadian provinces did or helping those on the other side of the country. We're all here to help and we do it in great numbers.



The below numbers are resource order requests, not individuals mobilized.



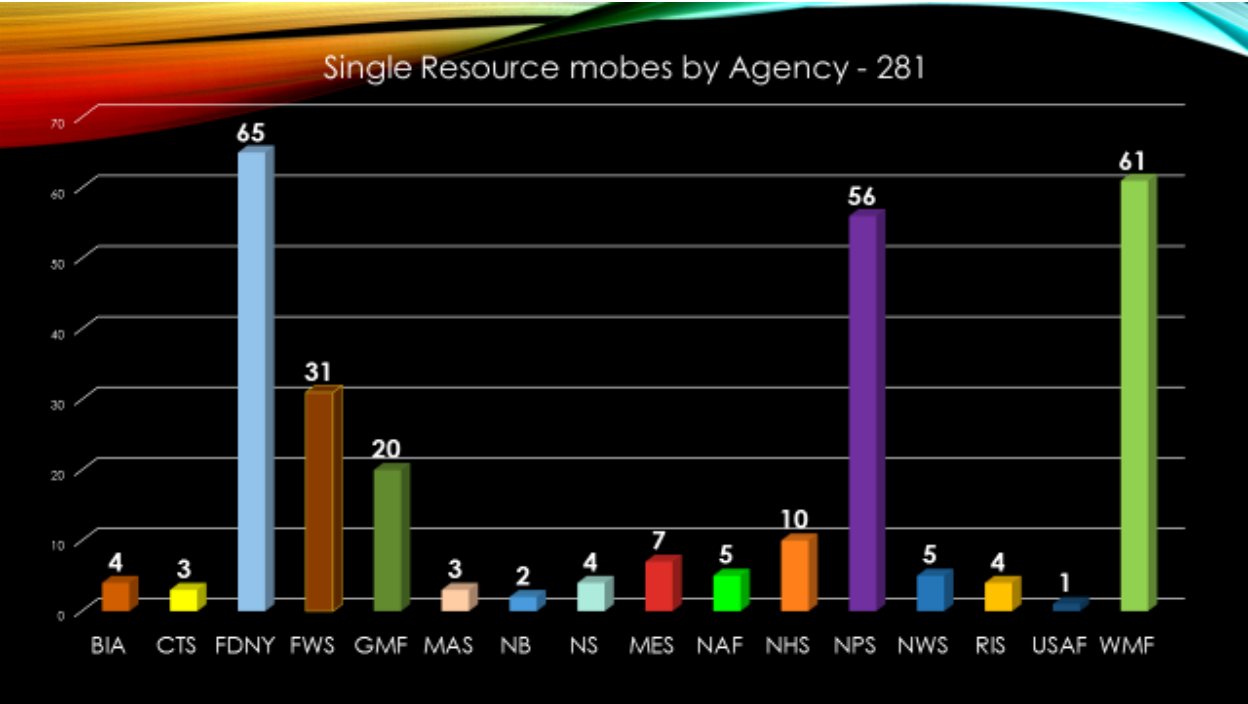
**Note in below documentation:** NB= New Brunswick; NS = Nova Scotia

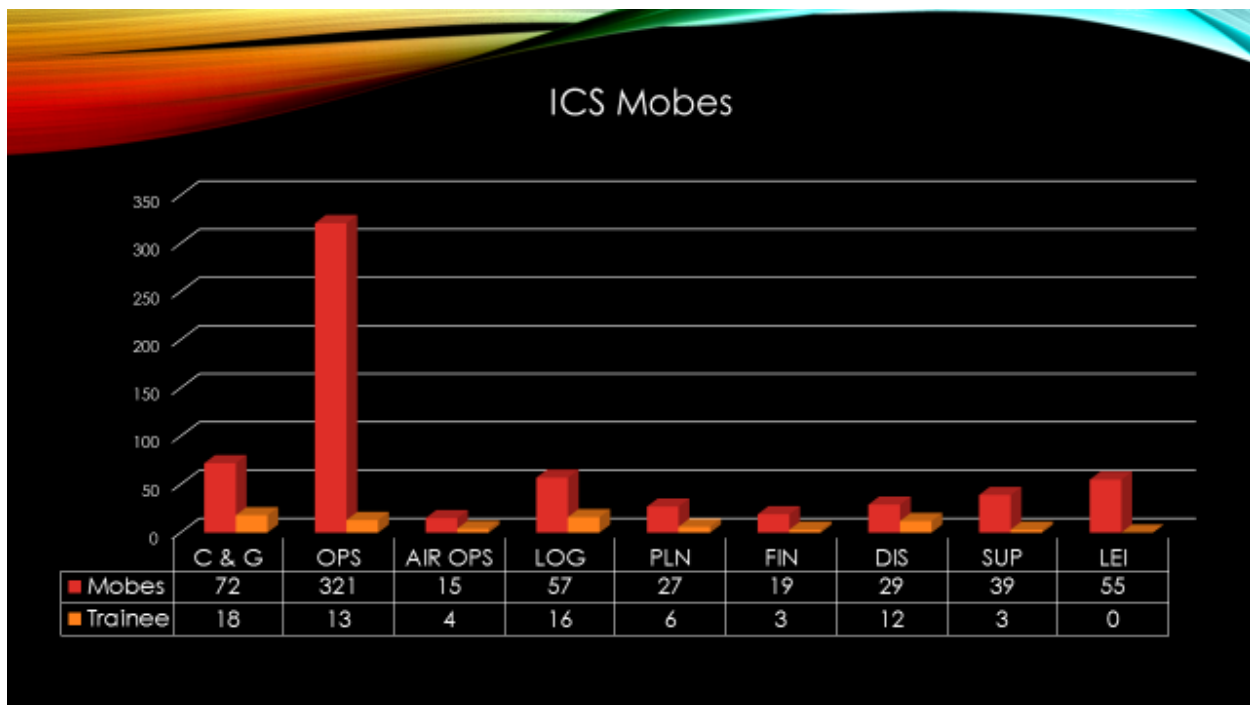


Manchester Mob Center is a huge partner when we are mobilizing crews, they do a lot of work and need numerous resources to provided services. The 23 that participated this year are also incorporated in the total NHS personnel that participated in mobilizations throughout the year.

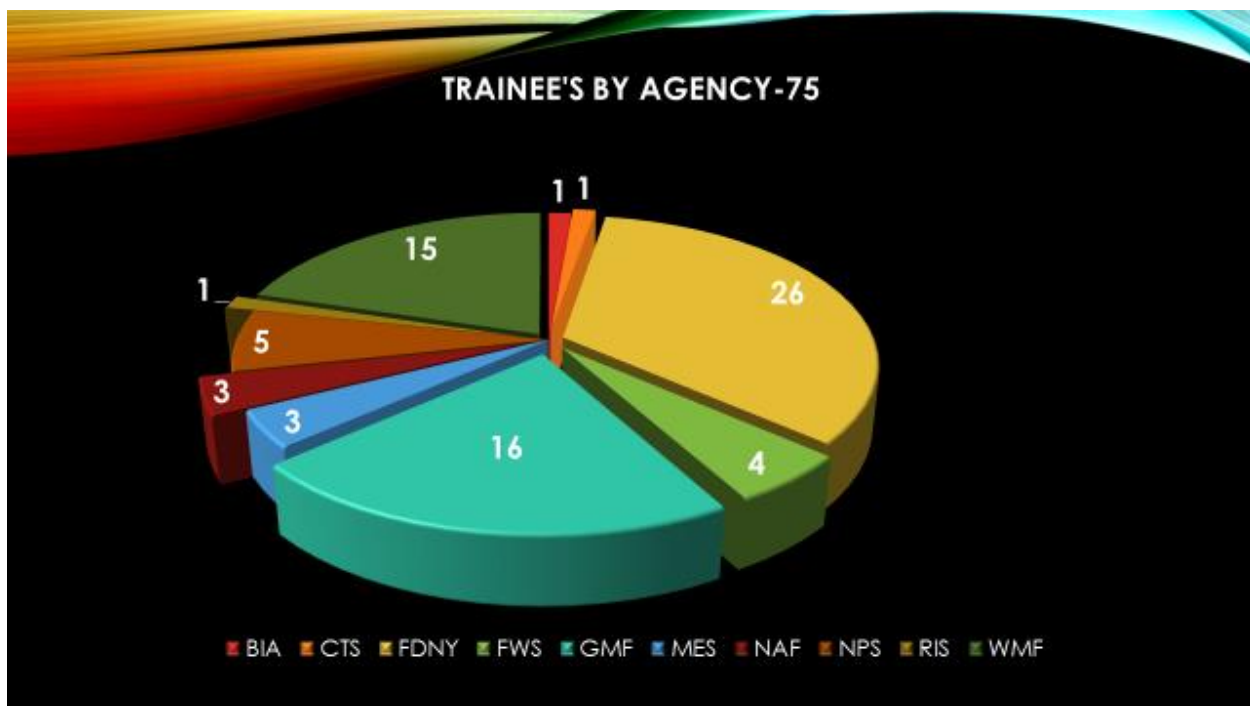
### Overhead – Single Resources

Single resource orders made up 85% of the orders we received. As in every year, the majority of our mobilizations are in the Operations with Air Operations and Finance still the least “active” ICS section. I hear that Finance is really a fun section to get into if only folks will give it a chance. (RG 😊)





The trainee numbers above are included in the “Mobes” numbers

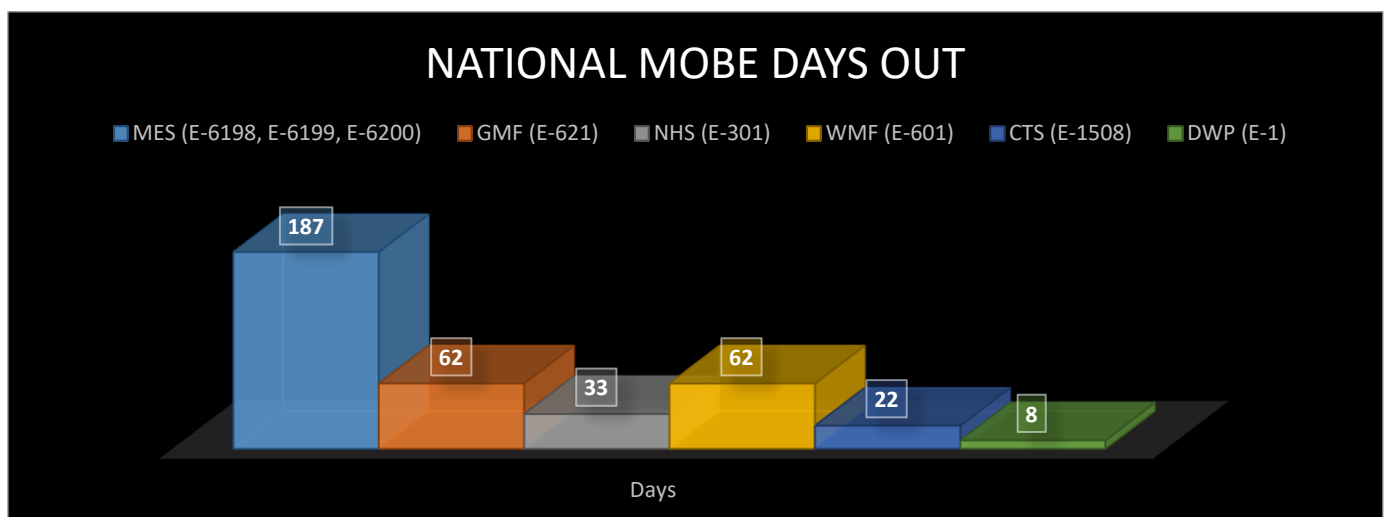
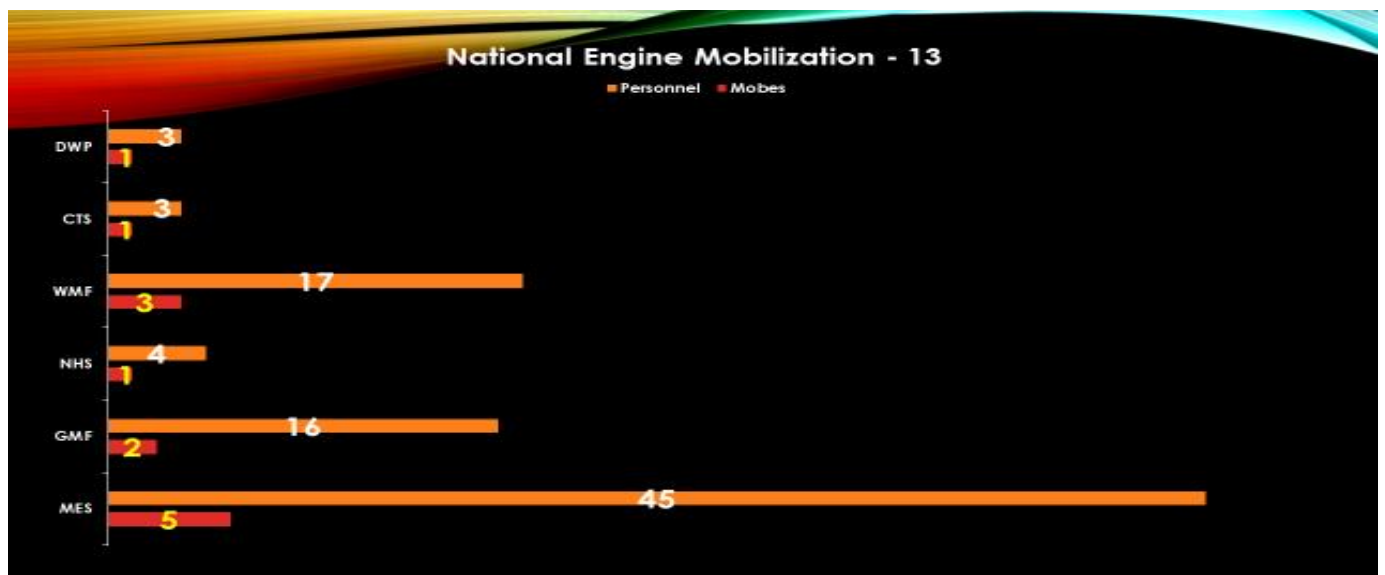


**Note:** NECC creates resource orders for Forest Service resources when they go assist DOD or TNC with prescribed fire. These projects gives many Green Mountain and White Mountain National Forest personnel opportunity to work on task books, however the majority of the trainee assignments above were single resource orders outside of the Northeast.

## Engines

Getting engines out is a big deal because it saves agencies money, so when things get busy nationally, there is opportunity to get our available engines out on assignments. In 2018 Maine State had 3 engines out numerous times going to Virginia, Minnesota and California; White Mountain National Forest put a lot of miles on their Type 6 engine traveling to Illinois, Michigan and Montana while the Green Mountain engine visited Michigan and Idaho. New Hampshire and Connecticut took the very long journey to California and Delaware Water Gap's traveled to Virginia.

Crew rotations are essential especially on the long distance mobilizations. NECC works with the home unit and receiving unit to get crews rotated in and out as simply as possible. This is a lot of work and time consuming so we like to get the ball rolling about 1 week before the transition. Below you can see the number of engines and number of personnel we mobilized in 2018, as well as the day's each piece of equipment was committed.

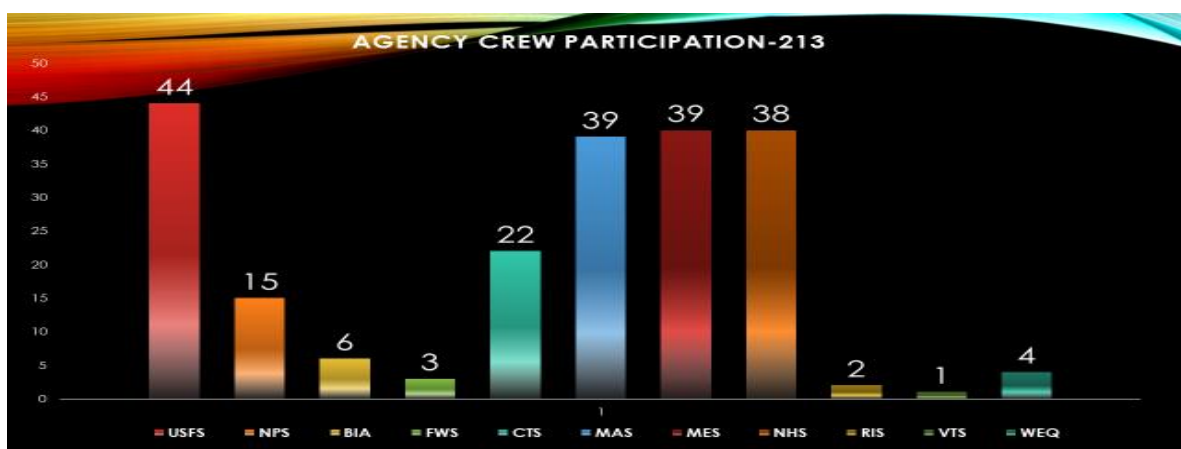
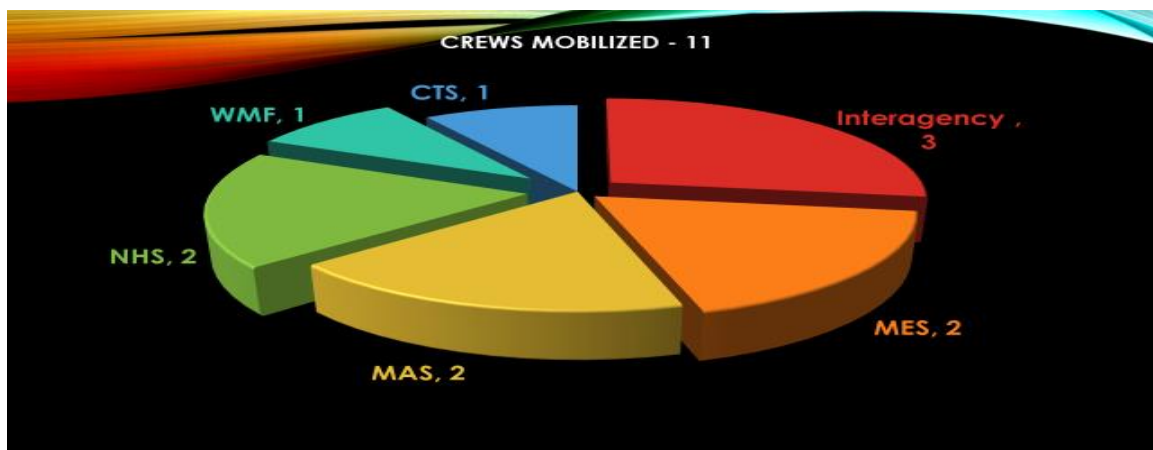


## Crews

I'm not sure why but crews are fun to get out. Maybe because we can get a large number of folks out all at once, maybe because there is always a need for crews, or maybe because we like stress, but one thing I know for sure is crew mobilizations take a lot of time and team work, not just among us dispatchers but with the sending and receiving units. Whether we are mobilizing a Type 2IA or a Type 2 (which we did this year) crew, we have to make sure position and crew weight standards are met. We have to make sure everyone gets to the mob centers or airports in time, and if flying commercial we work close with the travel agents assuring the names are spelled correctly and each person gets into the same destination close to the same time as others (this does not always happen). On Canadian mobs we have to assure border crossings go smoothly, and if needed for any mob, make sure someone on the other end picks them up or secure vehicles and rooms if needed.

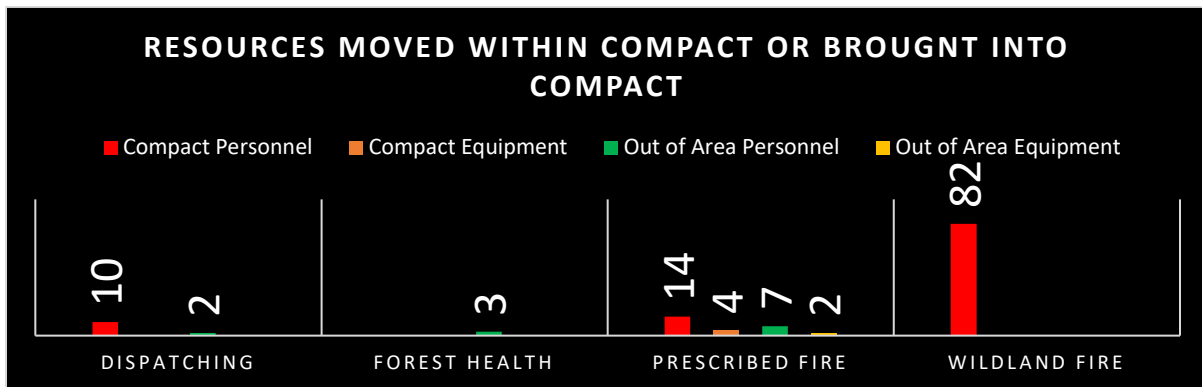
213 personnel participated in crew mobilizations this year. Crews began Mobilizing during the first week of July with the last crew returning home on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- 4 State Crews were mobilized to Quebec Incidents going to the: Maniwaki, Matagami, Val -d'Or and Baie Comeau fires
- 7 Crews (3-Interagency, 3-State, 1-USFS) were sent out west beginning July 25. Colorado (2), Oregon (1) and Montana (4)



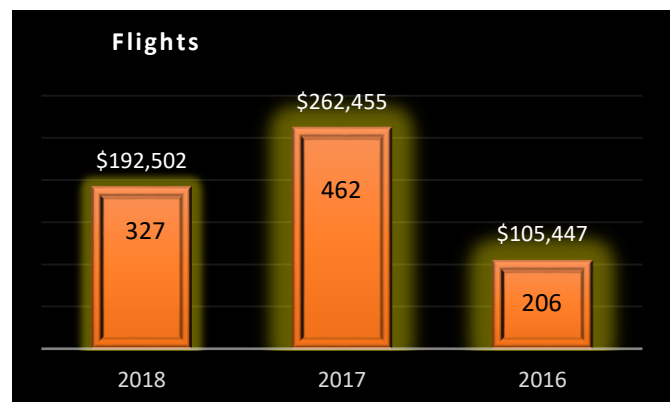
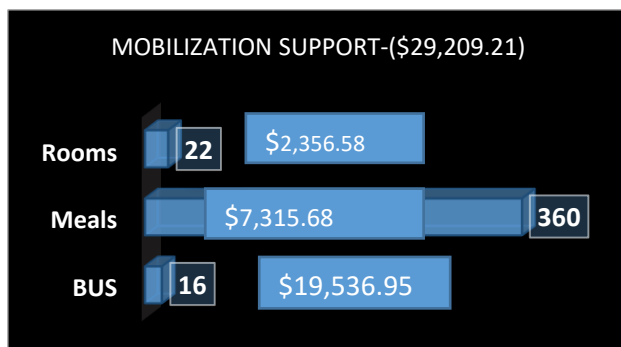
## Local Movement of Resources

Besides mobilizing resources to national incidents, NECC assists all our partners when they are in need. For example whenever our Canadian partners have wildfire activities, we mobilize resources to assist them, whether it is hand crews from the US or team members from other Canadian Provinces. When Gettysburg NP was planning to do some prescribed fire projects and needed an engine, we assisted DWPC with the order, or when the Forest Service assisted the DOD with burning or invasive species work, we keep track of compact resources used as well as resources we bring in to assist. Any need our partners may have, NECC does everything we can to provide them with what they request. Just ask!



## Support

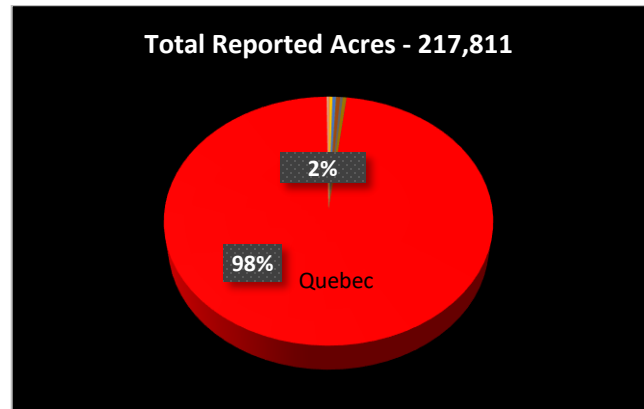
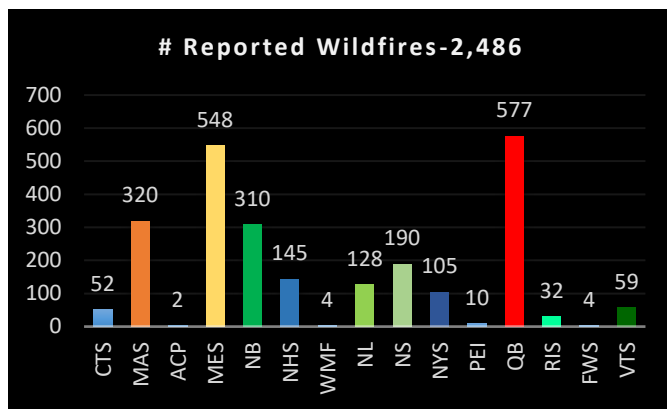
As we all know, wildland fires are expensive (pay attention to US National daily sit reports just to give you an idea of the costs), and I know the numbers below are a drop in the bucket in the final tallies and the whole scheme of things but NECC secured almost a quarter of a million dollars of support in 2018 just to get folks to where they are going. This does not include all the mob center costs or the cost of a NICC jet, but it is none the less a lot of money. So just keep in mind that when we are making flight arrangements or securing busses/meals or motel rooms that we do consider costs and we do have to assure we are spending money wisely. So you may get a middle seat instead of a first class seat (you can always dream you're in first class), and you may have to share a room instead of getting your own room, but keep in mind we will get you to your destination, and hopefully it is by the time and date needed.



## Reported Wildfires and Prescribed Fire

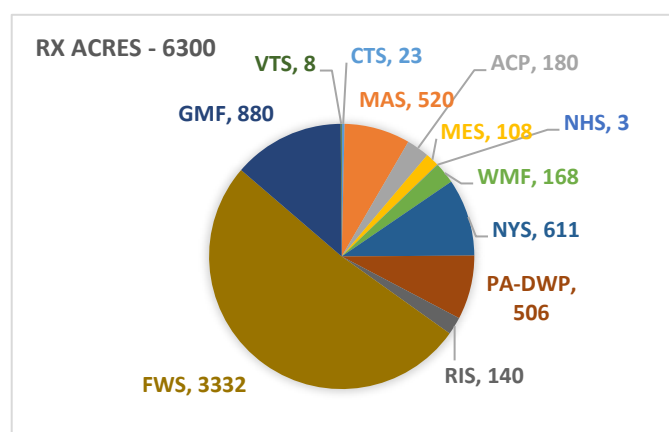
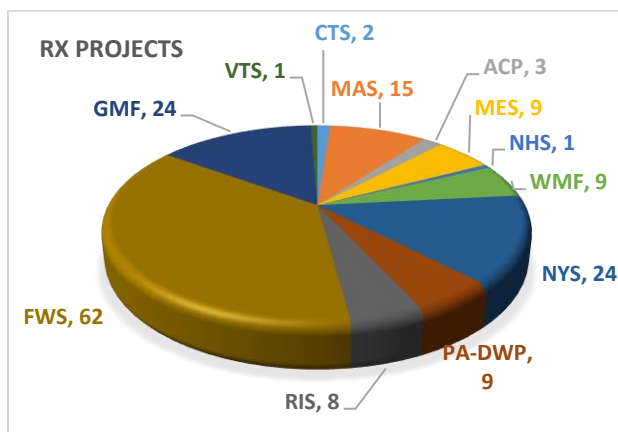
NECC provides communications for initial attack and prescribed fire activities for the Green Mountain and White Mountain National Forests, however we also support all our agency partners in their local fire activities if needed. All agencies report their activities to NECC, and for the US partners, NECC reports these activities onto the daily national situation report.

We don't always receive the totals until the end of year for final reporting, however what the information shows is whether it is wildland fire activities or prescribed fire activities, NECC partners are active.



The above and below graphs shows the activities partners had in 2018. The above acres for wildland fires just goes to show how active Quebec was this year. 98% of the acres reported were from Quebec, the other 2 % are from the other 14 units that reported fires and acres.

You can see between the two graphs (WF/RX) that our Canadian partners were very busy with wildland fire activities whereas the US partners were able to focus on prescribed fire activities.





This Outstanding Service Award was presented to NECC for the 2017 season, however we had not yet received it prior to the publication of our 2017 Year End Report. I just wanted to state how proud I am of what all we have accomplished at NECC and we all thank the Compact for this recognition. It truly means a lot to all of us who work here at NECC.

Molly