

# Northeastern Interagency Coordination Center



## 2020 End of Year Report

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I don't know about you, but I am thrilled 2020 is over, even if it means I become another year older. Covid Covid Covid 😊 that is what was on the top of everyone's mind almost the entire year. COVID directed this year's fire season like no top-notch IC could dream of doing. There was not a wildfire or resource order we worked on that did not have COVID19 front and center of our decision making.

The Forest Service hired 2 new Initial Attack dispatchers in 2020 for NECC. Gareth Weaver will be working year-round while Jenne Walker is a 18/8 (permanent seasonal working about 6-8 months). Neither one had previous dispatching experience, but both were White Mountain National Forest employees working in Timber and Visitor Services, so they know the forest extensively which became invaluable during the busy fire season. They also have years of radio communication experience which would be their main jobs at NECC. From day 1 they jumped right in providing dispatch support to not only the Forest's but all NECC partners. They are a great asset to NECC.

NECC had numerous challenges in 2020. Besides having to rearrange our dispatch office and work schedules, we also had a new mobilization program (IROC) we all had to learn on the fly (there was very little hands on training and many parts of the program did not work when it was rolled out), 2 new messaging systems (FireNet/teams) that were fairly new but were utilized extensively throughout the season, but the biggest challenge for us here at NECC was to figure out a way to cover NECC during a pandemic.

Single resource order mobilizations are something we could do from home, however when we start to get multiple orders, it gets a little more difficult to manage, especially when trying to learn a new program. Radio communications from home was not an option and because both White Mountain and Green Mountain National Forests were into their fire season when COVID hit, someone still had to come into the center to cover the radio's. Luckily for us, both myself and Gareth live close, so we came into NECC daily while Don and Mari both teleworked. (Jenne did not start until July). Once COVID in New England became more steady and the State of New Hampshire changed their restrictions, Don was able to come back into the office the end of May while Mari did not come back until the first part of July due to stricter restrictions for the State of Maine. The timing of it all was good because we soon started to get busy with fire activities and mobilizations.

Something new which NECC provided White Mountain NF, was providing documentation on all their reported abandoned and illegal campfires. Because of COVID, visitor use on National Forest as well as State Lands increased. NECC received reports of 68 abandoned campfires and 121 illegal campfires on the White Mountain National Forest alone. This additional reporting /support along with the 36 statistical fires they had, created an additional workload, however, because of the 2 new dispatchers, we were able to support the Forest without any disruption to mobilizations.

Covid had a large impact on NECC resource availability this year. Many of our partner agencies and individual resources were hesitant to travel out west, which was understandable. During 2020, NECC only had on average 10 resources showing available at any one time, which is not many considering we have over 1400 resources in IROC. With that said, we still were able to get 583 personnel out on National Incidents this year. 190 of our 291 single resource orders we filled were named requested. This is not normal operating procedures for national mobilizations, but because of COVID, the National Coordination Center allowed all name requested orders to be processed.

Another thing that COVID effected was Crew mobilizations. NECC did not mobilize any crews in 2020, in fact, there were no crews made available at any time throughout the year. Instead, 10 Person Suppression Modules were utilized. These units were easier for agencies to fill than the 20-person hand crew, it provided a

less risky environment for personnel being exposed to COVID, and it also enabled personnel to manage safe distancing while on the fire line. The receiving units also seemed to like these very mobile resources, especially for initial attack purposes.

One positive of COVID was it opened the door to, was virtual assignments. NECC filled 10 Virtual assignments Nationally (4-ESFL, IARR, MEDL, 2-PIO1, 2-EDSD) and ordered 2 for local activities (PETL, PIO2 – WMF Severity). The dispatch community utilized virtual assignments this year throughout the country, but mostly at the local levels. For example, NECC utilized this for a period when Don, Mari and Jenne were working from home, and EACC staff teleworked all summer, and continues to do so. I suspect, next year, virtual assignments will continue to be utilized and even enhanced with experimentation with other positions. Virtual assignments may allow for more resources being available throughout the year, and it also will save the government money due to no travel or per diem costs.

Incident Management Team support was a large part of our fills this year. Many compact resources stepped up and helped fill out the Eastern Area Type 2 Incident Management teams when they were in need, which was greatly appreciated by the IC's and EACC. 2020 was also a first for us when we mobilized the FDNY Type 2 All Hazard team to a wildland fire incident in California. We had mobilized them before to Hurricane incidents, but not to a wildland fire so it was exciting. FDNY provided Command and General Staff, Logistics, Planning, and Finance positions while the ordering unit (Los Padres National Forest) supported the Operations and Safety positions. The assignment was a success and hopefully assignments such as these will continue for their team.

In January, Don, Mari and I attended the NFFPC Winter Meeting in Portland ME. We all also attended the Eastern Area Teams meetings in Madison Wisconsin (Don & Mari with the Dispatch Working Team, me as the Administrative Manager for the Eastern Area Coordinating Group). Don also got away one more time to attend a S491 class, but after February, any meetings/trainings etc. were all virtual. As chair of the EA Dispatch Working Team, Don organized numerous IROC practice sessions which NECC hosted and our militia dispatchers participated in.

So, what does 2021 look like? Even though COVID was a pain in the fanny, I do believe there were some work arounds from the standard operating procedures on wildland fire incidents that was found to be effective. 10 person modules, virtual assignments, virtual check ins, utilization of more NERV (National Emergency Rental Vehicles) vehicles, often getting things done with fewer people. I still believe COVID will be around for most of the fire season but I'm hopeful, with vaccines, it won't have such an impact on everything we do.

NECC will be also be providing additional support to White Mountain National Forest by providing Check in Check Out tracking of their personnel from May thru October. Our hours of operation will not be changing (0700-1730) but we will be staffing 7 days a week for those 6 months.

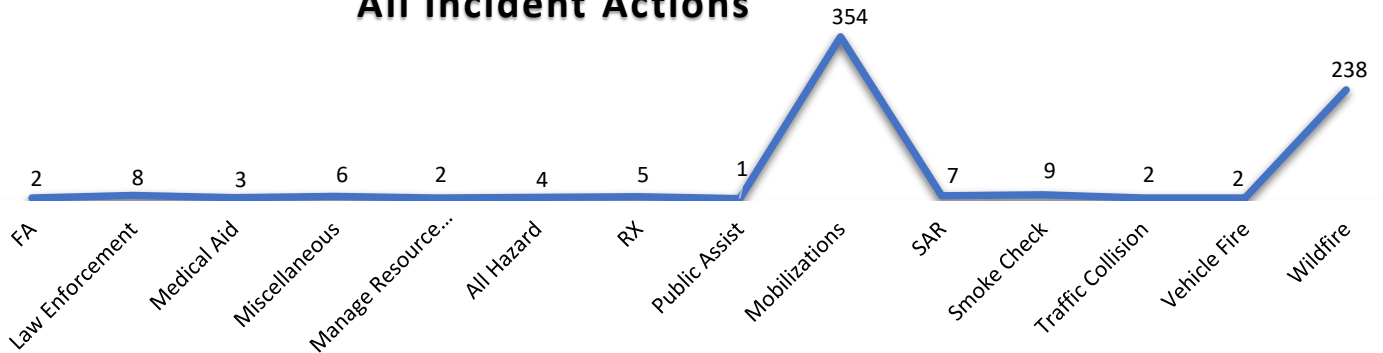
All in all, 2020 was a typical year in one sense, that we were busy with both fire and mobilizations, but not typical due to the COVID environment. We all, and I think I am speaking not just for myself but for Don, Mari, Gareth, and Jenne, that we hope COVID will be a thing in the past very soon, but until then – **MASK UP!**



## Incident Actions

For us to better understand the service that we provide all our partners here at NECC, everything we do is given an Incident Action number and is also associated with specific type of incidents. Some of our incident types also have sub types, which is how we break down every resource order into NWCG categories. In 2020, NECC created 643 incident actions. As you can see resource mobilization kept dispatchers busy however this year, we provided additional incident documentation for White Mountain NF in-regards to wildland fire activities as well as potential wildland fire risks (abandoned campfires, illegal campfires) so our wildfire incident actions increased a great deal compared to previous years.

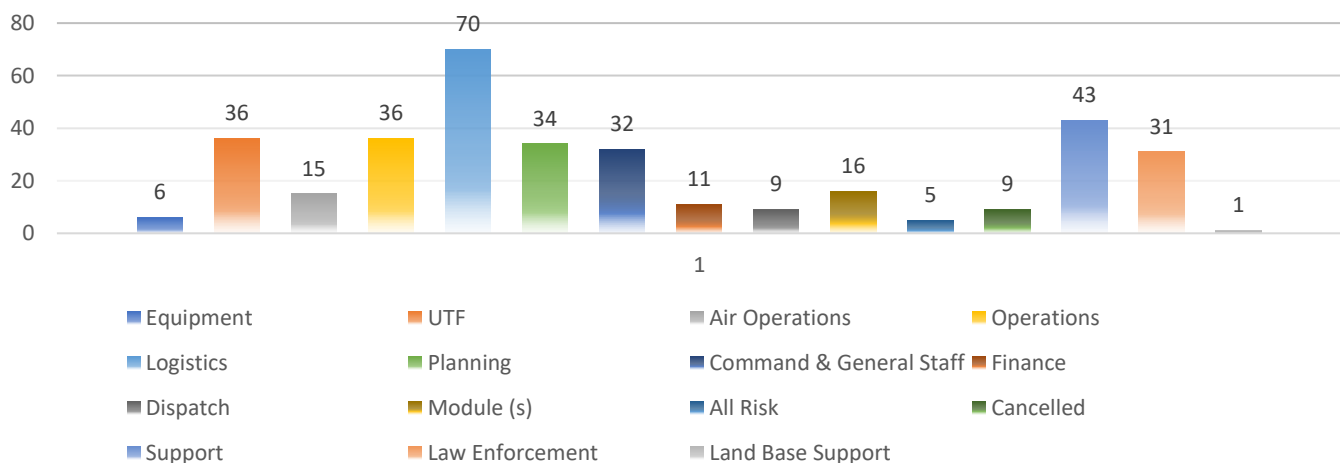
### All Incident Actions



The above graph shows all the incidents NECC created in WildCad, while the graph below breaks down those 354 mobilization incidents into NWCG categories. Keep in mind, each incident action is one order received and some orders may have multiple personnel filling the order (Example, one Engine order may have 4 personnel).

You can also see we had 36 UTF's (unable to fill's). Many times, especially in years like this where there is competition for the same resources, someone on the incident says "I know someone who has that specific qualification" so an order is created (mostly a named request) and processed, but unfortunately many times the individual being ordered has no clue the order is coming and can't go, therefore a UTF is created. We do shop around to see if we can fill with someone else, but that is not always successful.

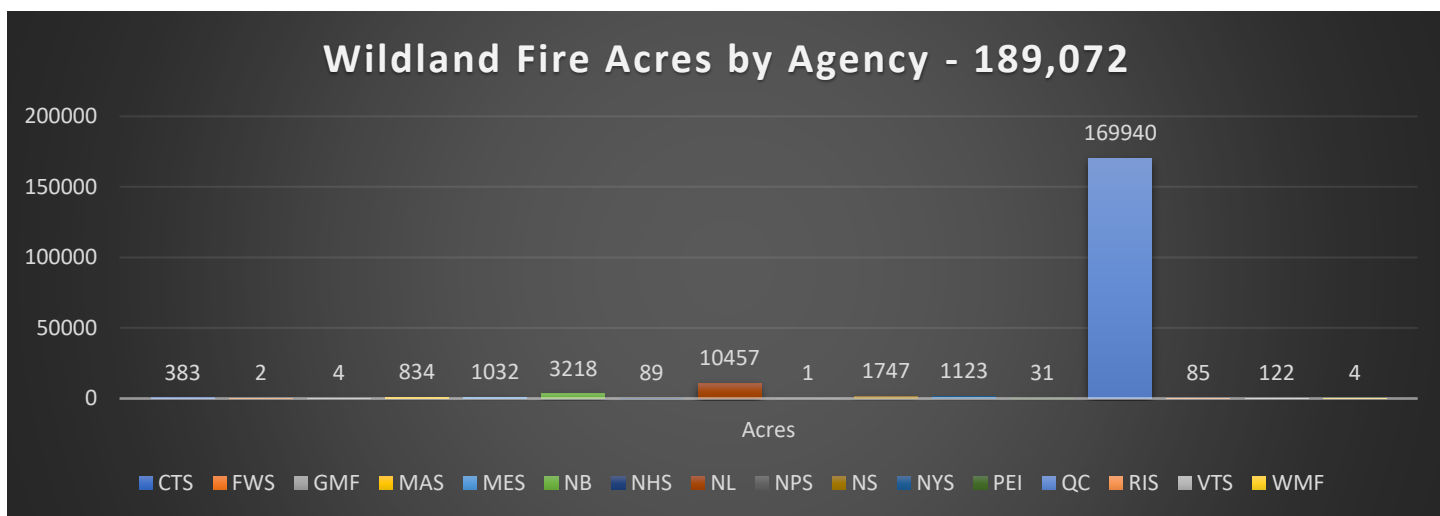
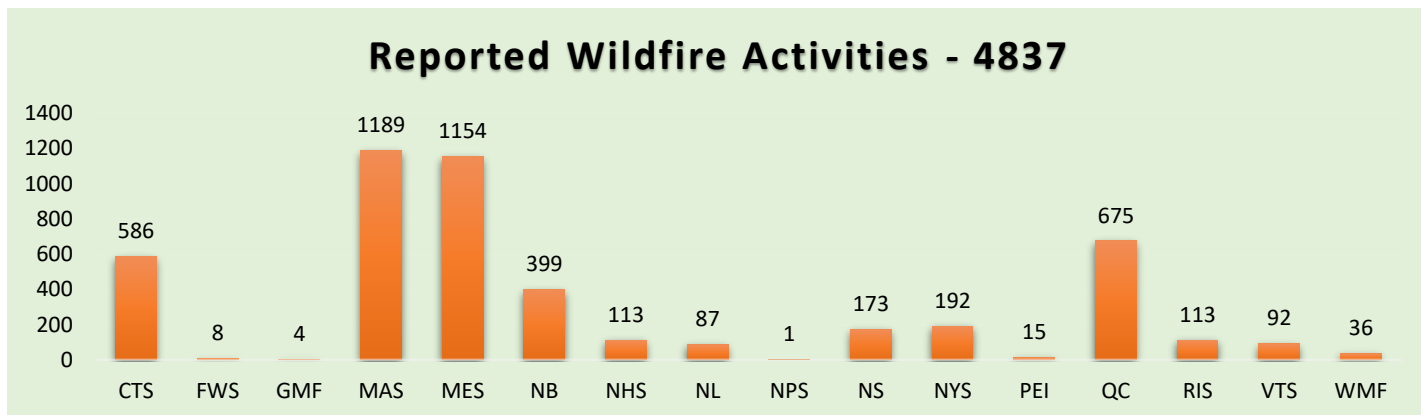
### MOBILIZATION - INCIDENT ACTIONS



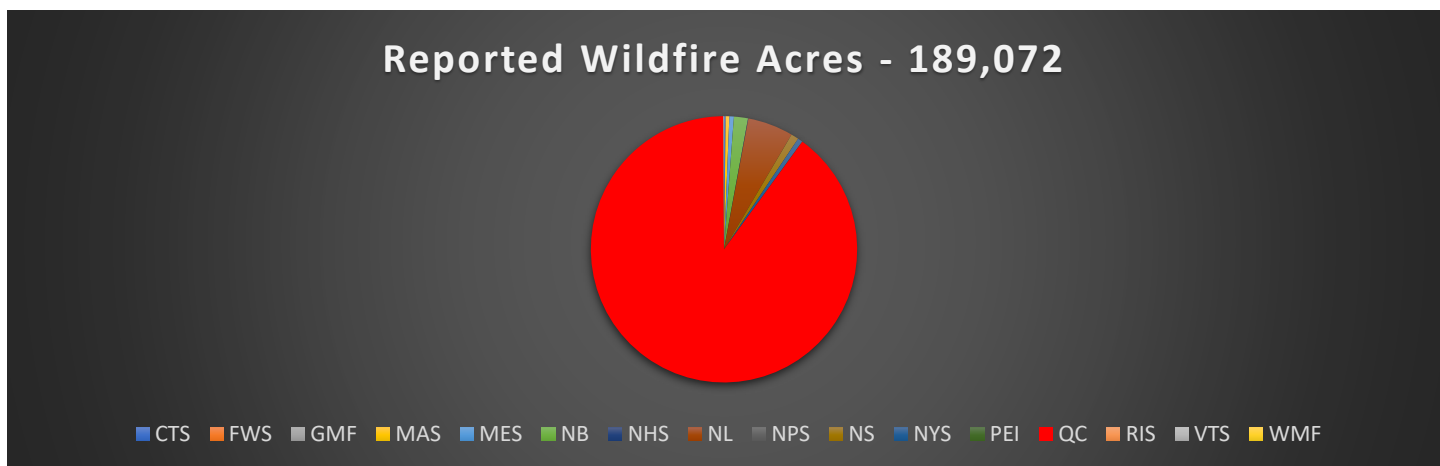


## Wildland Fire Activities

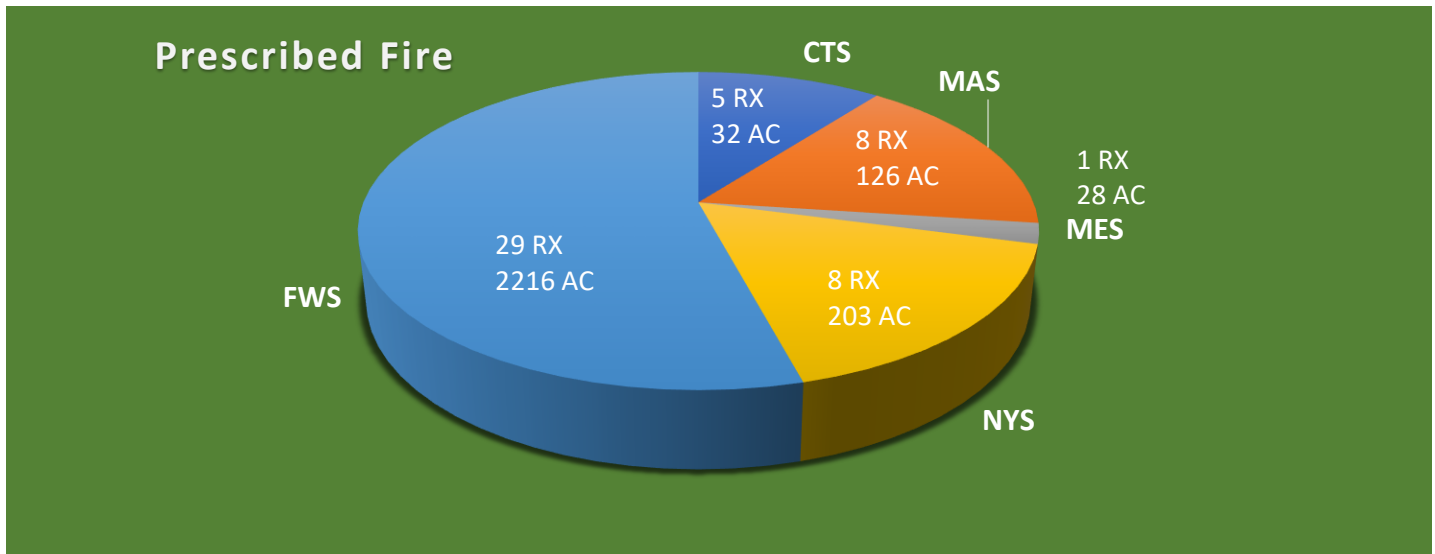
2020 was a busy year for wildland fire activities throughout the Northeast Compact. Some of our units had fire restrictions/ burn bans in place at some time during their fire season. NECC assisted New York and Maine State with 209 reports and as mentioned in the introduction assisted White Mountain National Forest in tracking numerous abandoned and illegal campfire activities (only statistical fires are shown below). Kudos to our Canadian Partners for getting this information into the center every day for NECC's sit report, which provides all our partners a snapshot of current activities.



The below graph gives a good visual of the acres that our Canadian partners had in 2020. The bar graph above contains the same information, but the below graph has more of an impact on the size of acres burned.



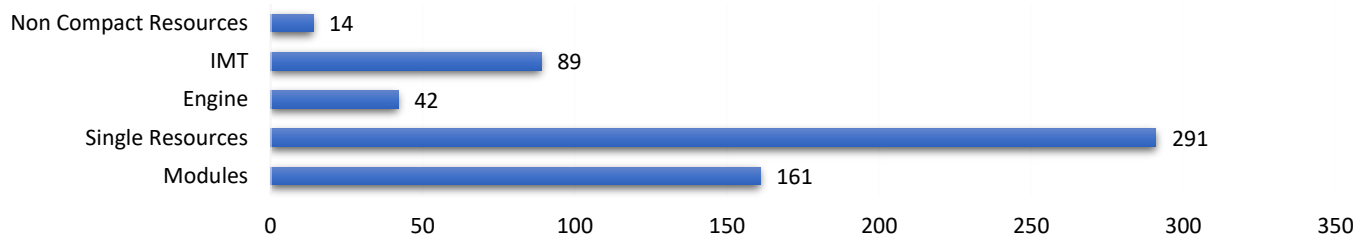
Due to COVID, many agencies stood down on prescribed burning activities. The projects below were all completed prior to COVID restrictions being put in place.



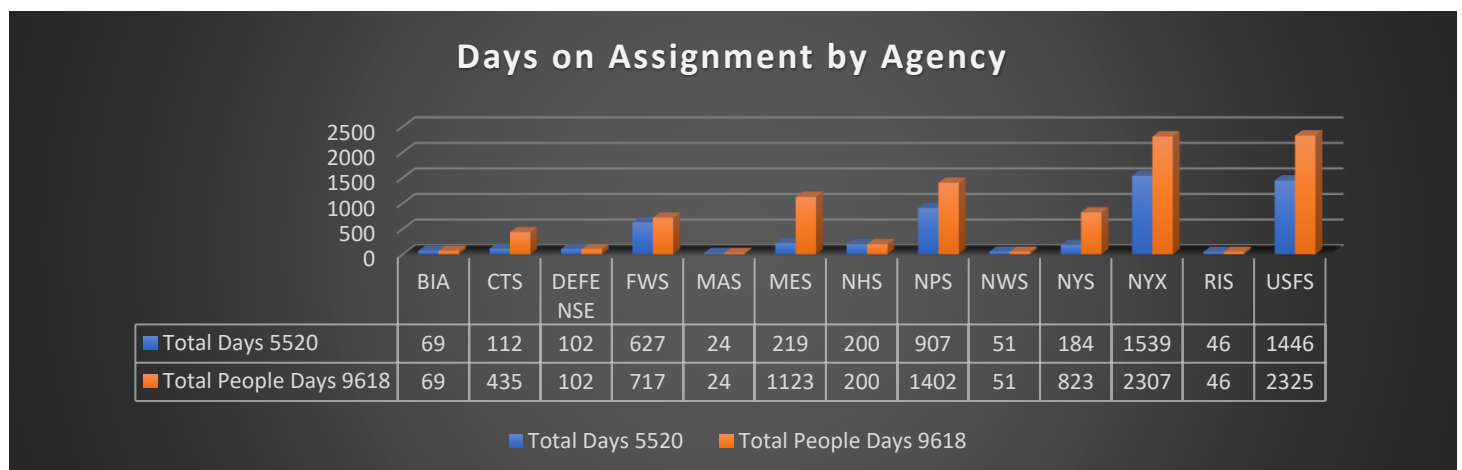
## Mobilizations

2020 was above average for mobilizations for NECC. What was different for us was that there was an active local fire season occurring the same time as western mobilizations.

### Total Personnel Mobilized through NECC - 597

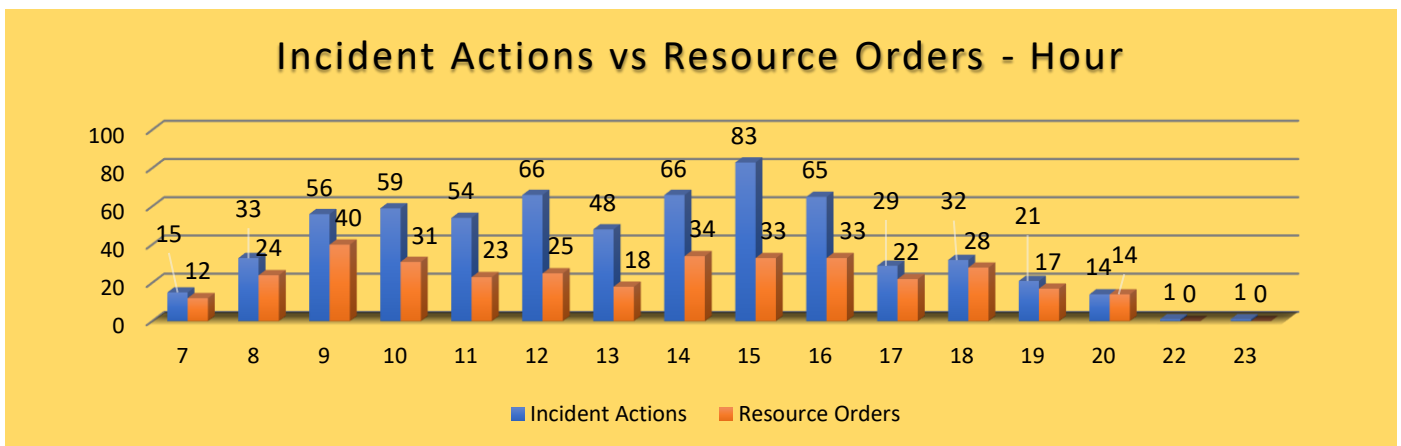
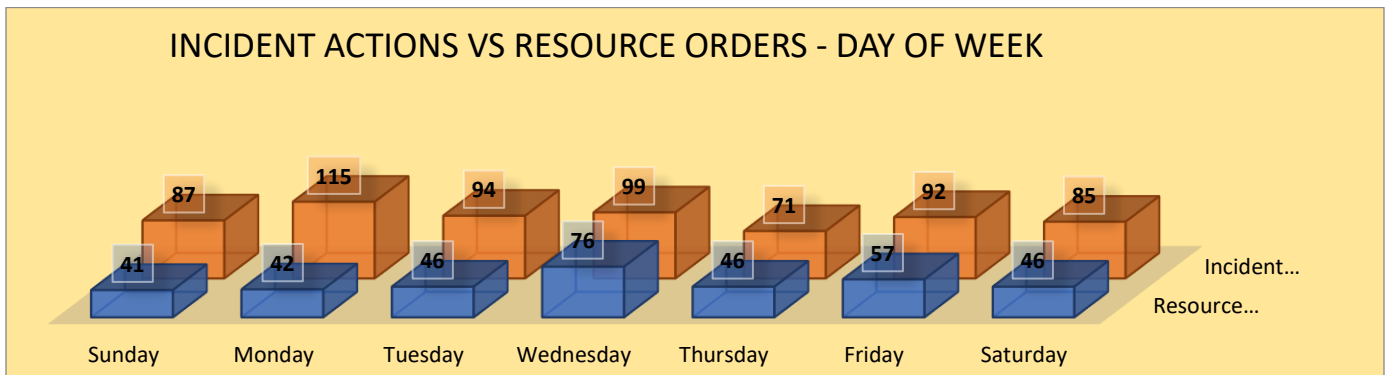
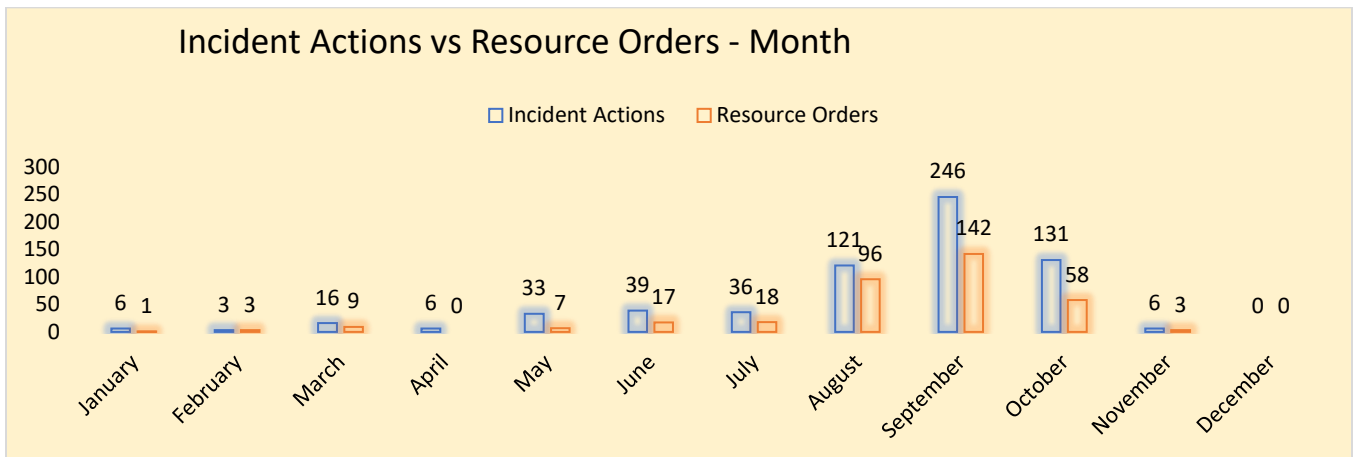


The above graph shows the total number of personnel which NECC either mobilized or ordered in, while the below graph shows the number of days NE Compact resources provided to US suppression/incident efforts.



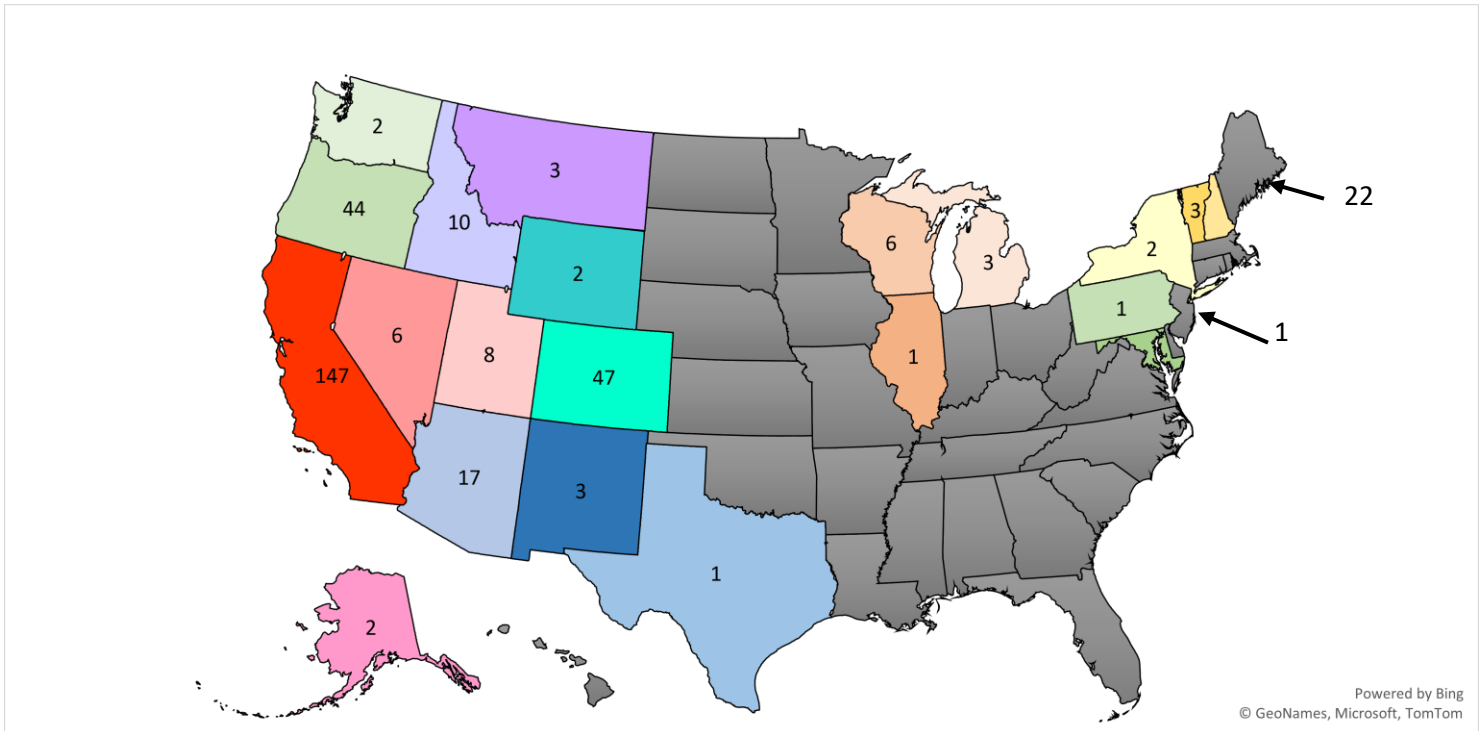
## When is my order coming?

Looks like your order is probably coming around 0900 on a Wednesday in September 😊



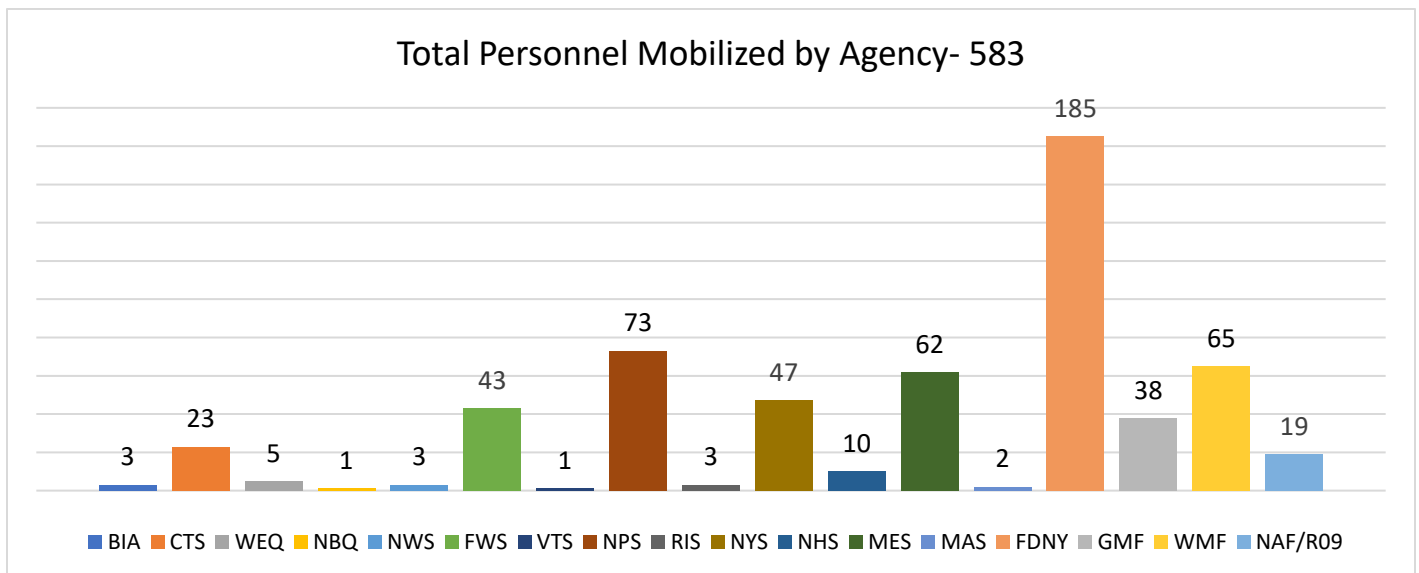
These 3 graphs show how busy NECC is with resource order mobilizations in conjunction with other incident actions such as fire activities. For example, in September, we had 246 various incidents we created in WildCad with 142 of those incidents being mobilizations. You can also see that Mondays were our busiest days with incident activities, but it was on Wednesdays that most of the incident actions we created were for mobilizations.

## Where am I going?



As you can see, California was the destination for most of our resources (keep in mind these are “initial” mobilizations only), although Oregon and Colorado saw a substantial number of NE resources come help. What is not seen is NECC also sent one person to Australia early in the year when they were having devastating wildfires. A PSC2 from the Park Service (PA-DWP) went down under.

Our Canadian partners were busy with wildland fire activities of their own this year and with COVID affecting both countries, borders were closed. However, plans were in place on both sides, that if emergency resources were needed, resources would be allowed to cross. I’m just happy we didn’t have to test that out.



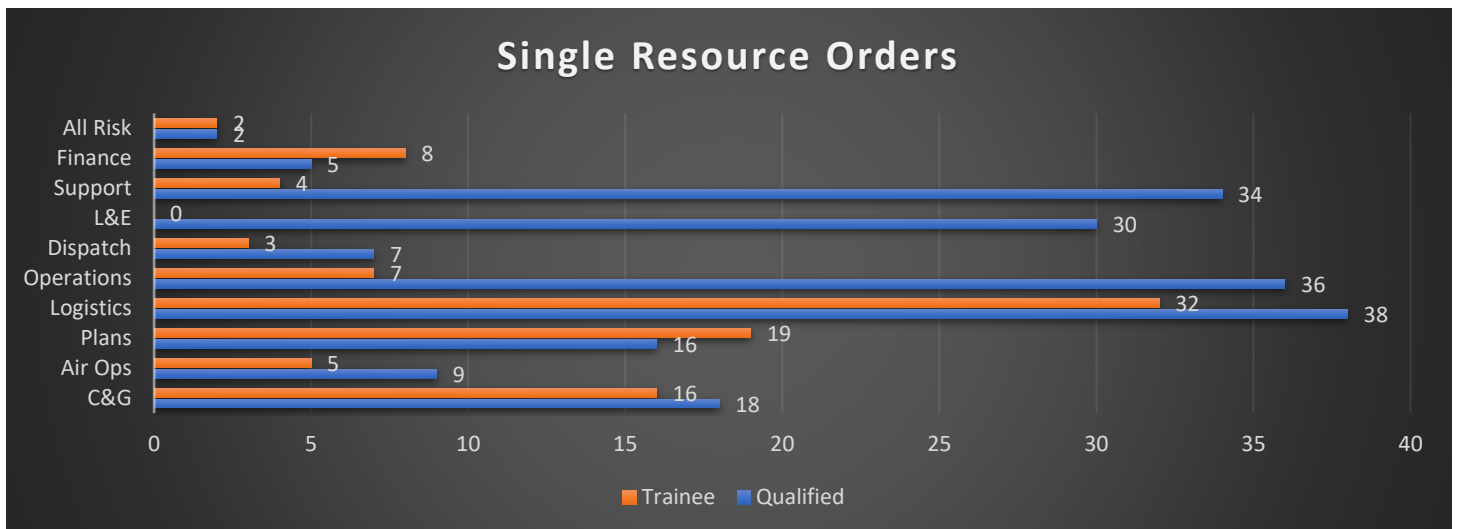
The above graph only includes NECC resources. As a note, NAF/R09 are for State and Private or Forest Service Research personnel located within our dispatch zone.



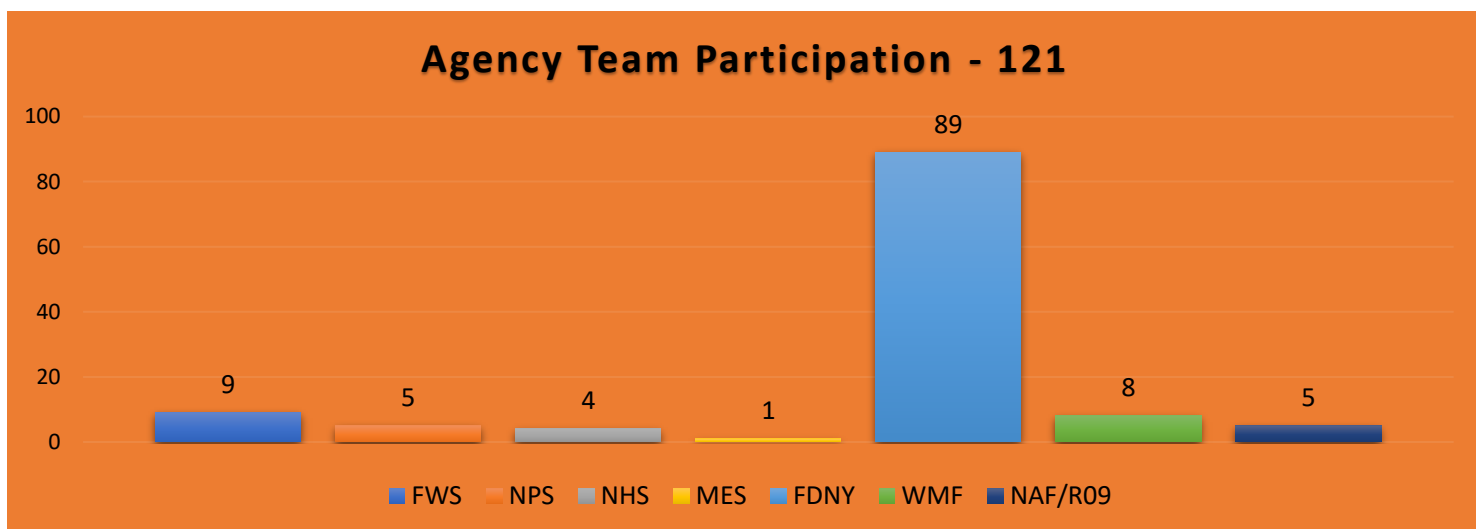
## Single Resource Orders

### Single Resource Orders by NWCG Position Does not include, Module, Engine, Team orders

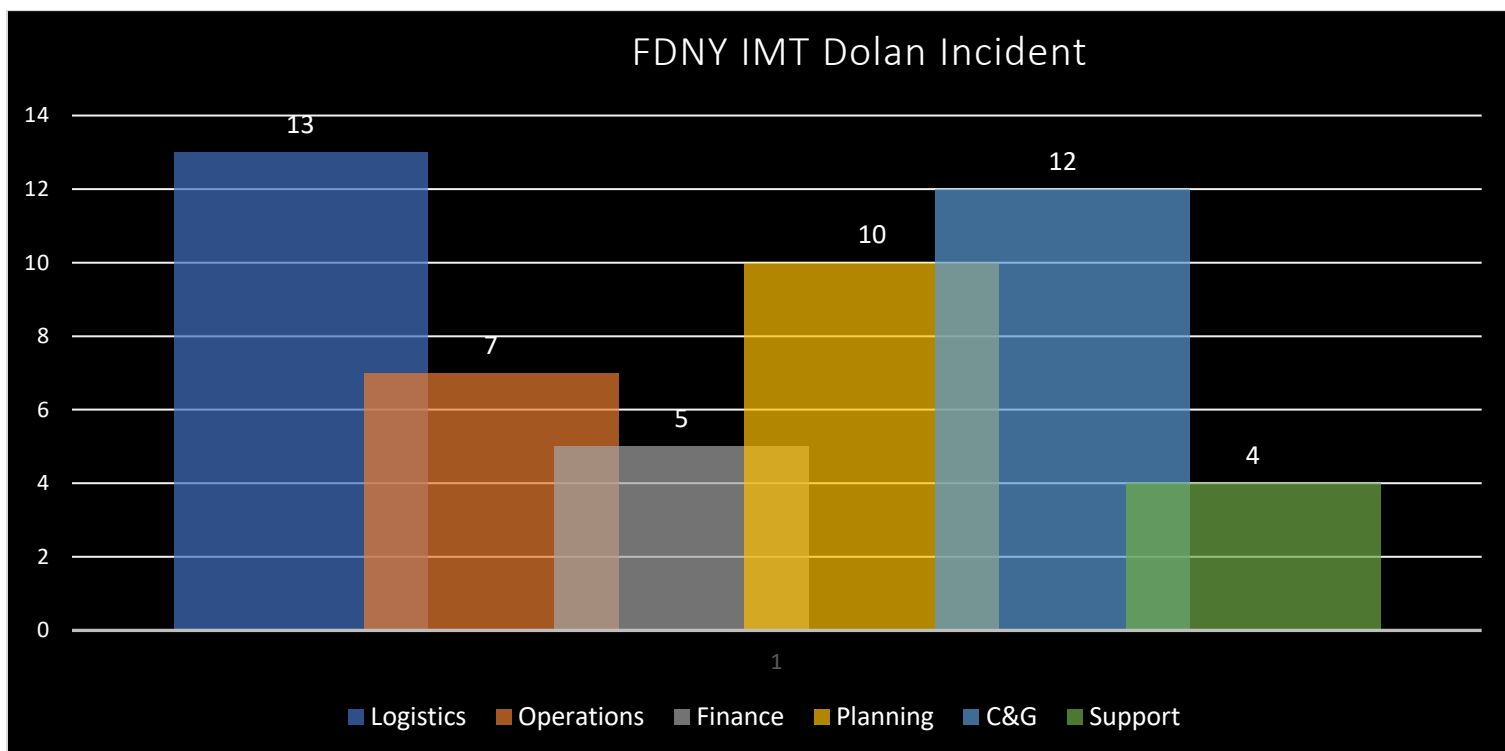
|      | Description                            | Q  | T |      | Description                            | Q | T |      | Description                    | Q  | T |
|------|--|----|---|------|--|---|---|------|--------------------------------|----|---|
| ABRO | Aircraft Base Radio Operator           | 1  |   | FIRB |  |   |   | PSC1 | Planning Section Chief Type 1  |    | 1 |
| AREP | Agency Representative                  | 1  |   | FOBS | Field Observer                         | 1 |   | PSC2 | Planning Section Chief Type 2  | 2  | 4 |
| ASCO | Airspace Coordinator                   | 1  |   | FSC2 | Finance Section Chief Type 2           | 3 |   | PTRC | Personnel Time Recorder        |    | 2 |
| ASGS | Air Support Group Supervisor           | 1  |   | GISS | GIS Specialist                         |   | 2 | RADO | Radio Operator                 | 6  | 6 |
| BCMG | Base Camp Manager                      |    | 2 | GSUL | Group Support Unit Leader              | 5 |   | RCDM | Receiving/Distribution Manager | 1  | 4 |
| BUYM | Buying Team Member                     | 2  | 2 | HEB1 | Helibase Manager Type 1                |   |   | READ | Resource Advisor               |    | 1 |
| COML | Communications Unit Leader             | 1  | 1 | HECM | Helicopter Crewmember                  | 5 | 5 | REAF | Resource Advisor Fireline      | 4  | 1 |
| COMP | Compensation Unit Leader               |    | 2 | HEQB | Heavy Equipment Boss, Single Resource  |   | 2 | RESL | Resource Unit Leader           | 1  | 7 |
| COMT | Incident Communications Technician     | 4  | 7 | HMGB | Helicopter Manager, Single Resource    | 1 |   | SCKN | Status Check-In Recorder       | 1  | 1 |
| COST | Cost Unit Leader                       |    | 1 | HRSP | Human Resource Specialist              |   | 1 | SEC1 | Security Specialist Level 1    | 12 |   |
| CRWB | Crew Boss Single Resource              | 2  |   | IADP | Initial Attack Dispatcher              |   |   | SEC2 | Security Specialist Level 2    | 18 |   |
| DIVS | Division/Group Supervisor              | 2  | 1 | IARR | Interagency Resource Rep.              | 3 | 1 | SECM | Security Manager               |    |   |
| DMOB | Demobilization Unit leader             | 2  | 1 | ICT2 | Incident Commander Type 2              |   | 2 | SITL | Situation Unit Leader          | 3  | 1 |
| DOCL | Documentation Unit Leader              | 3  |   | ICT3 | Incident Commander Type 3              | 1 |   | SOF1 | Safety Officer Type 1          | 3  |   |
| EDRC | Expanded Dispatch Recorder             |    |   | ICT4 | Incident Commander Type 4              | 1 |   | SOF2 | Safety Officer Type 2          | 1  | 1 |
| EDSD | Expanded Dispatch Support Dispatcher   | 7  | 3 | ICT5 | Incident Commander Type 5              | 2 |   | SOFR | Safety Officer, Line           |    |   |
| EDSP | Expanded Dispatch Supervisory          |    |   | IMET | Incident Meteorologist                 | 3 |   | SPUL | Supply Unit Leader             | 3  |   |
| EMPF | Paramedic, Fireline                    | 6  |   | INCM | Incident Communications Center manager |   | 1 | STCR | Strike Team Leader Crew        |    |   |
| EMTB | Emergency Medical Technician Basic     | 7  |   | INTS | Incident Support (Intel Disp)          |   |   | STEN | Strike Team Leader Engine      |    |   |
| EMTF | Emergency Medical Technician, Fireline | 6  |   | ITSS | Incident Tech Support Specialist       | 3 | 2 | TFLD | Task force Leader              | 5  | 3 |
| ENGB | Engine Boss, Single Resource           | 5  |   | LOFR | Liaison Officer                        |   | 1 | THSP | Technical Specialist           | 5  |   |
| ENOP | Engine Operator                        | 1  |   | LSC1 | Logistics Section Chief, Type 1        |   |   |      |                                |    |   |
| EQPM | Equipment Manager                      | 5  | 2 | LSC2 | Logistics Section Chief, Type 2        |   | 1 |      |                                |    |   |
| EQTR | Equipment Time Recorder                |    |   | OPBD | Operations Branch Director             |   |   |      |                                |    |   |
| ESFL | FEMA ESF #4, Primary Leader            | 2  | 2 | MEDL | Medical Unit Leader                    | 5 | 1 |      |                                |    |   |
| FACL | Facilities Unit Leader                 | 3  | 2 | ORDM | Ordering Manager                       | 1 | 3 |      |                                |    |   |
| FAL2 | Intermediate Faller                    | 3  |   | OSC1 | Operations Section Chief Type 1        | 2 |   |      |                                |    |   |
| FDUL | Food Unit leader                       | 4  | 1 | PIO1 | Public Information Officer Type 1      | 5 |   |      |                                |    |   |
| FELB | Felling Boss, Single Resource          | 1  | 1 | PIO2 | Public Information Officer Type 2      | 3 | 6 |      |                                |    |   |
| FEMO | Fire Effects Monitor                   |    |   | PIOF | Public Information Officer             | 1 | 7 |      |                                |    |   |
| FFT1 | Firefighter Type 1                     | 3  |   | PROC | Procurement Unit Leader                |   | 1 |      |                                |    |   |
| FFT2 | Firefighter Type 2                     | 12 |   | PTRC | Personnel Time Recorder                |   |   |      |                                |    |   |



This graph breaks down the single resource orders, both trainee and qualified orders, into NWCG categories.

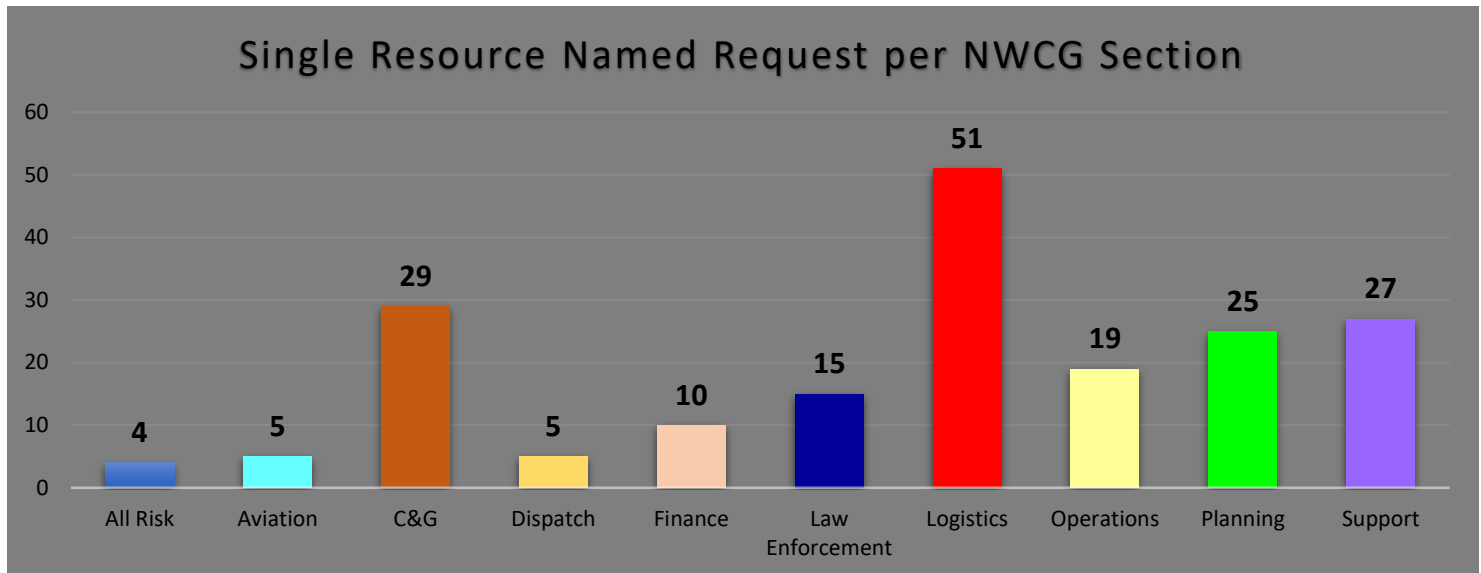


The above graph indicates Agency fills for IMT orders we received (we call dot orders - O-112.4 for example), while the graph below shows the NWCG Sectors which FNDY's IMT provided to the Dolan Incident. As a note: the first graph does not include the 51 FDNY personnel who participated on their IMT.

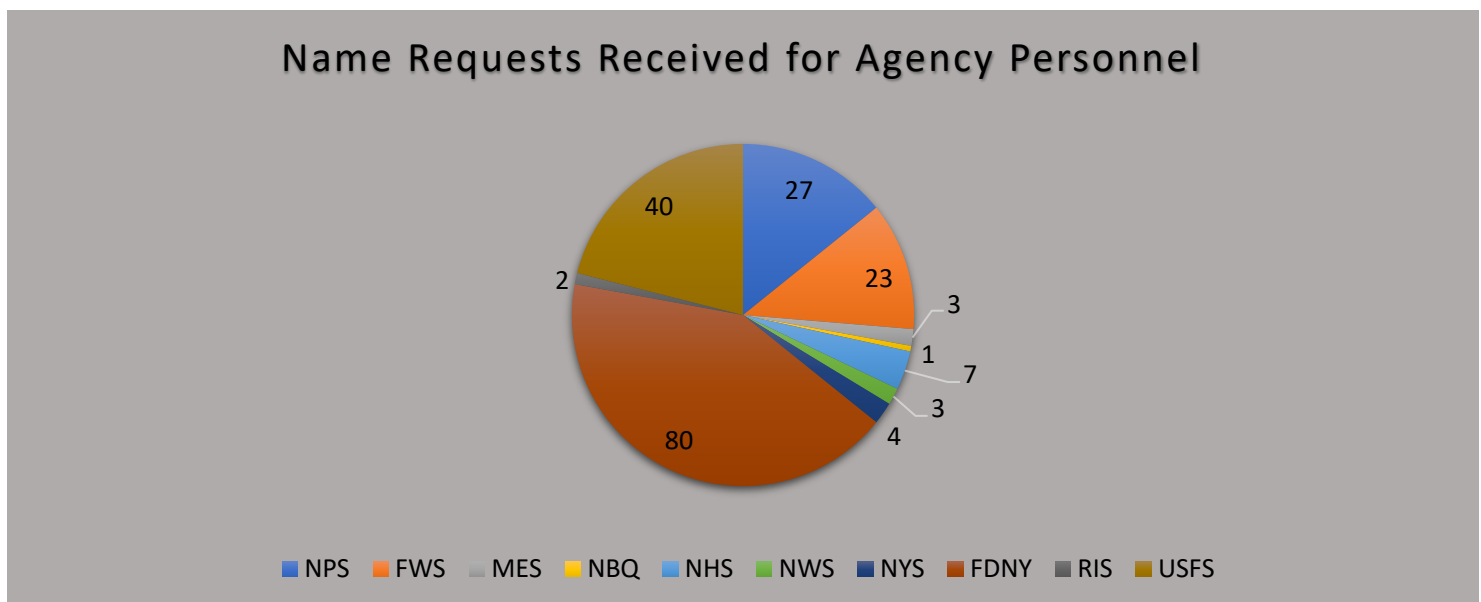


## *Name Requests*

I'm not a fan of name requests because it often by passes others who are trying to get out, however due to COVID, this year, more so than any year, name requests were the normal. NECC received 190 name requested orders in 2020. NECC continued to follow standard operating procedures that if a name request came into the center (as long as it was not a team request), and we had someone on the availability list for that position, especially if it was a trainee position and we had someone on the priority trainee list available, we would first try to fill the order with that person and if they could not fill, then we would go to the individual name requested.

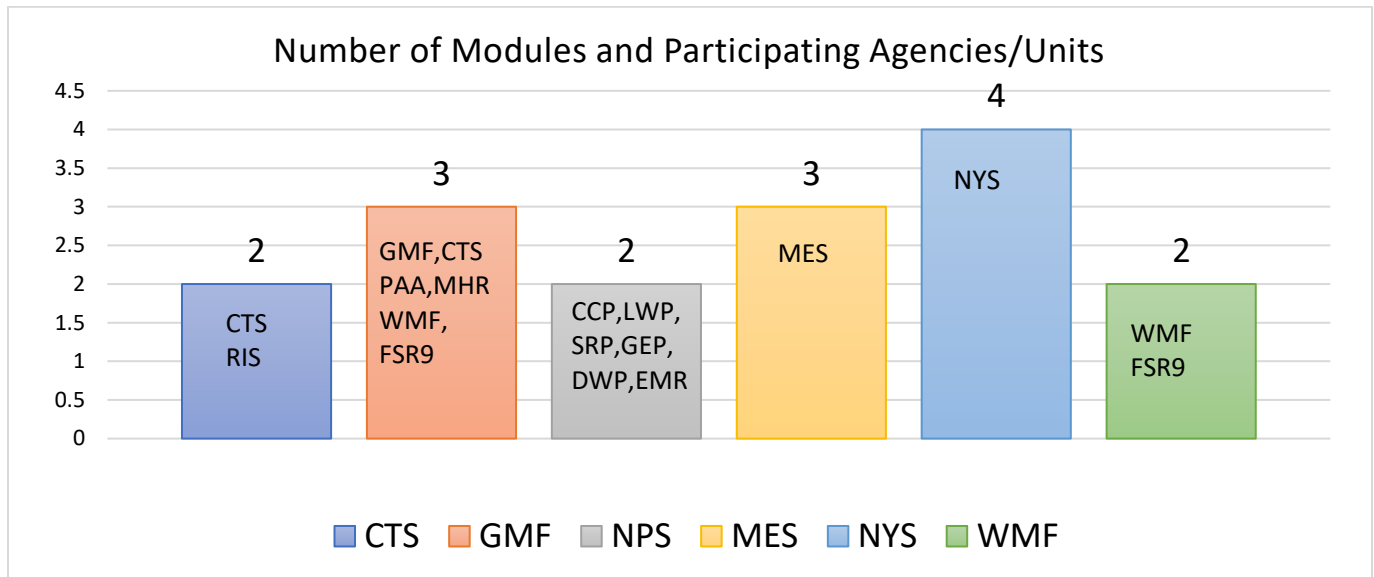


Many of the name requests we received were for individuals to fill vacancies on an IMT's. You can see below that FDNY had several names requests this year, and that is because they filled numerous positions on the EA Type 2 Incident Management Teams throughout the year. (Graphs do not include FDNY IMT personnel).

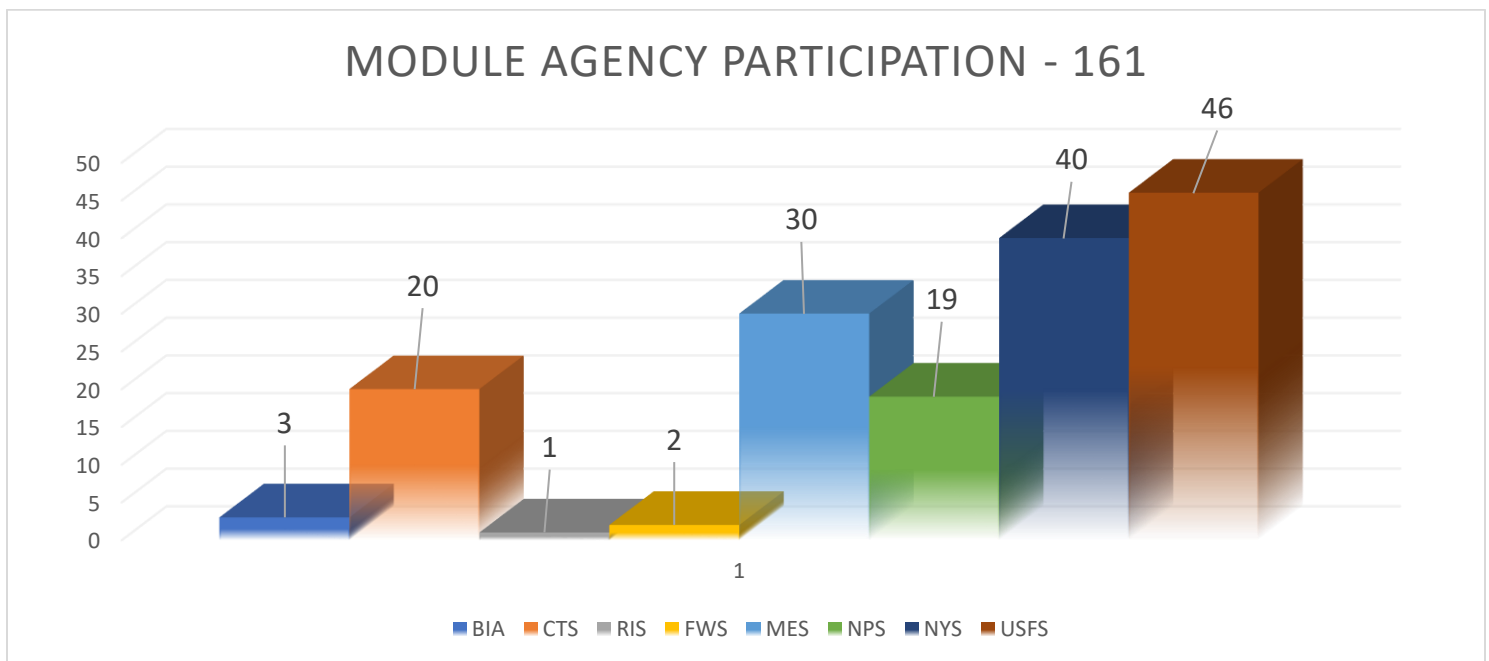


## Modules

Modules played an important role in the 2020 season. NECC mobilized 16 modules this year. Most of the agencies drove the first module units out to their respective incidents and then we rotated crew personnel after their 14-day assignment. The only modules that we flew and then obtained NERV vehicles upon arriving were the Cape Cod Modules. The total number of personnel we got out on a module is the same as if we would have mobilized 8 – 20 person hand crews. As a side note, it is much easier obtaining 10 airline flights than it is 20.

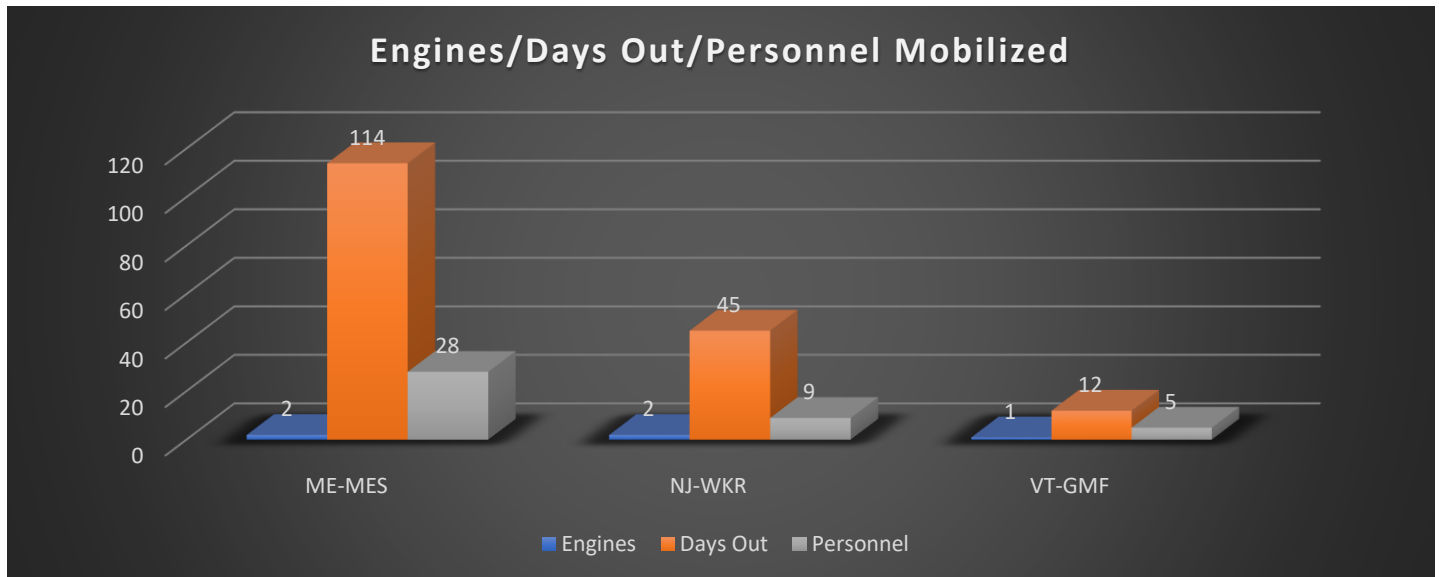


All modules were filled as an Agency resource even though some of the rotations were multi-agency. If use of modules continues in 2021, which I think they will, we may investigate naming the interagency modules as NorEast modules, just like we do interagency crews.



## Engines

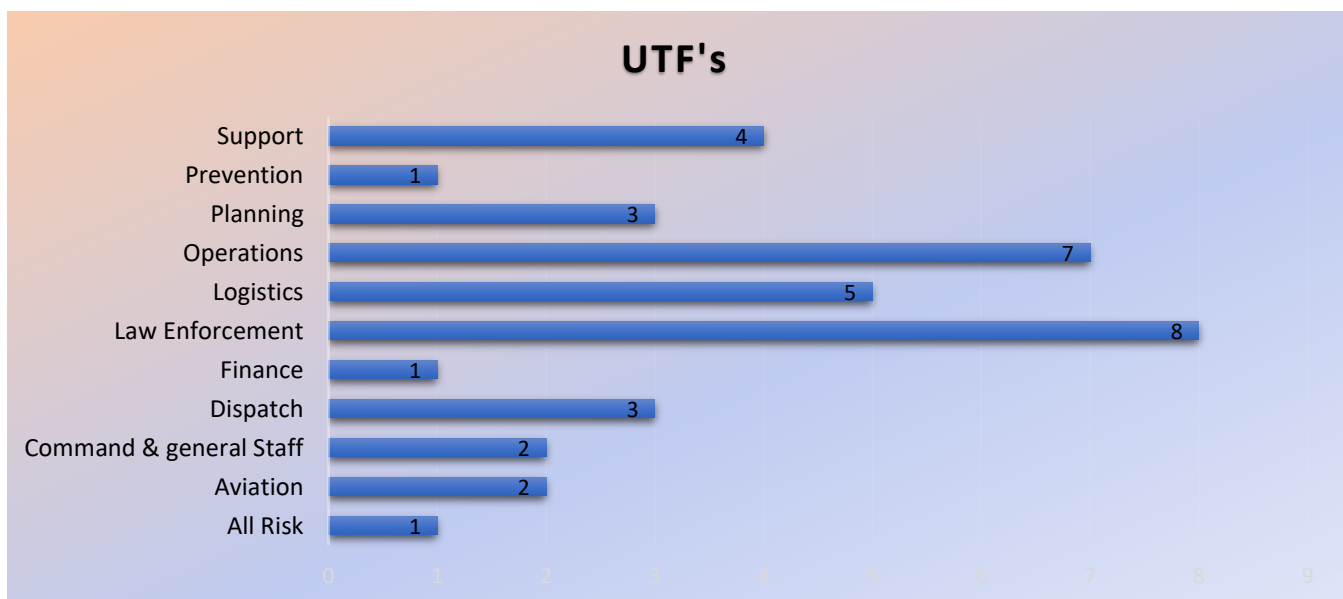
NECC mobilized 4 (stand-alone orders) Engines nationally in 2020, however MES utilized one of their Type 6 Engines for a module vehicle and when the module was going to get released, they were able to keep the engine out as a single resource, so all in all there were 5 Engines that NECC manifested. NJ-WRK assisted New Jersey State on a fire, but that was not counted in the numbers below (NJ went direct to FWS, no resource order generated).

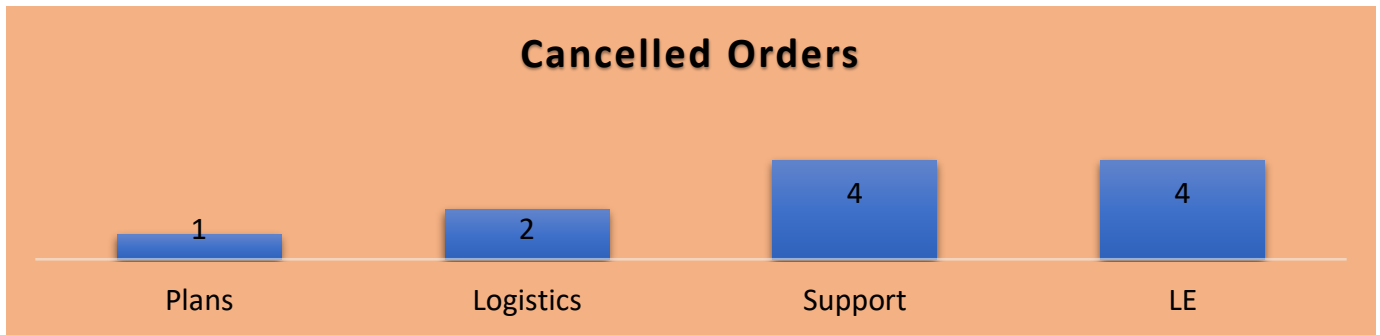


California and Colorado received all but one of the Engines mobilized, GMF mobilized to Michigan.

## UTF/Cancelled Orders

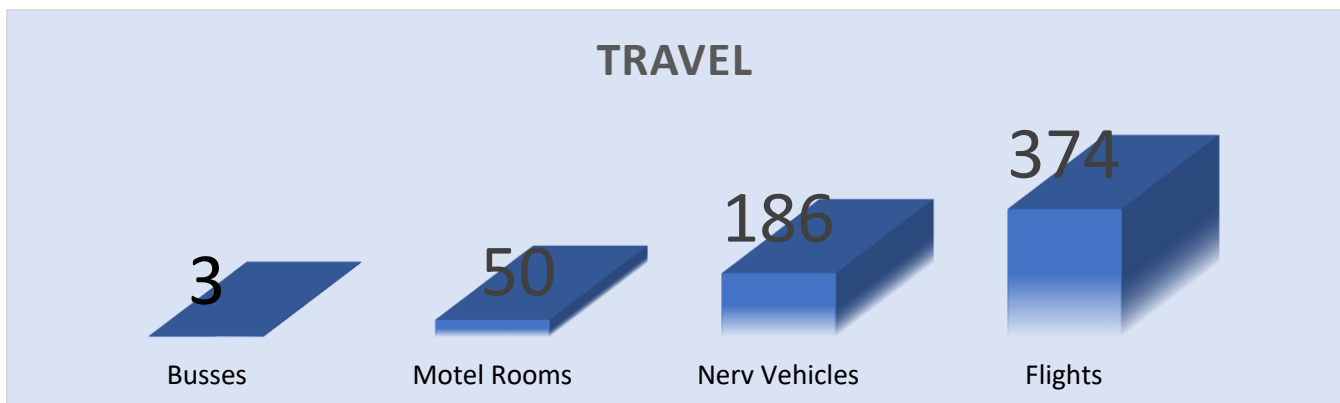
Unable to Fill orders were numerous this year because of the impact COVID had on availability of resources. Cancellations were generally due to a team's over ordering of resources and realizing after the fact. Several of our resources were already assigned and travel made before the cancellation came into NECC.



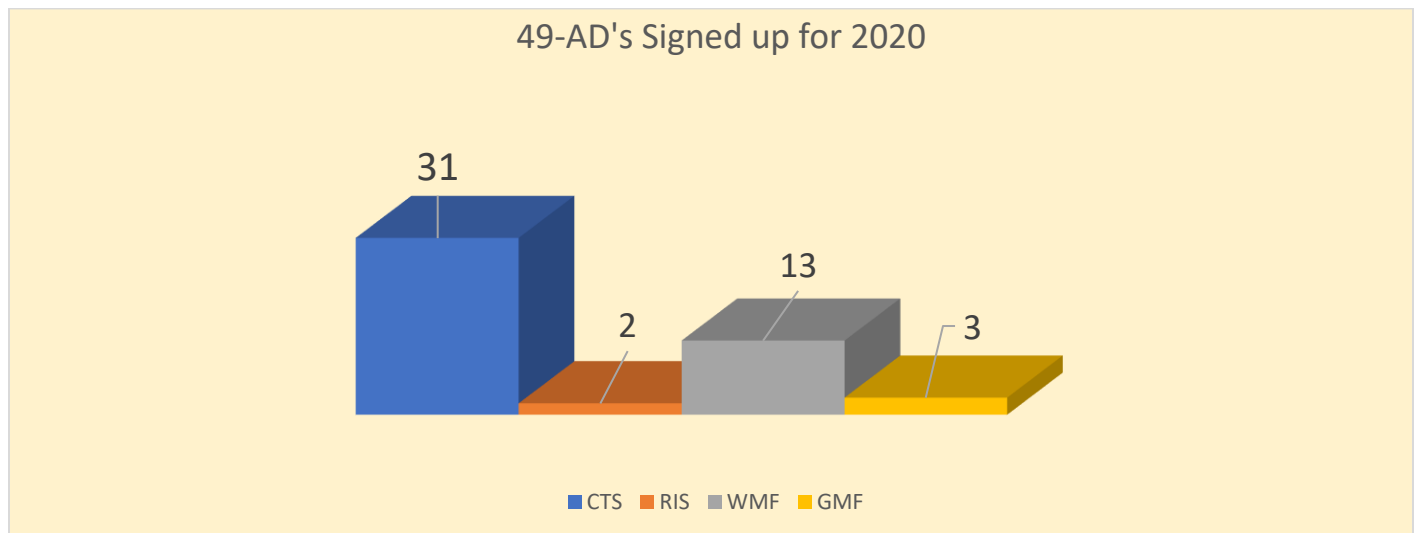


### Support

Providing support to the resources we mobilize is a large part of what we do every day. Making travel arrangements from flight reservations to securing busses, motel rooms and vehicles takes a lot of time. In 2020, NECC utilized the NERV program more than any other year and mostly due to COVID. Not many large incidents had ground support available, so in order to get our resources to the fire, a vehicle had to be secured. The NERV vehicles we obtained were for resources who needed Heavy Duty Vehicles, or they did not have an agency travel card.

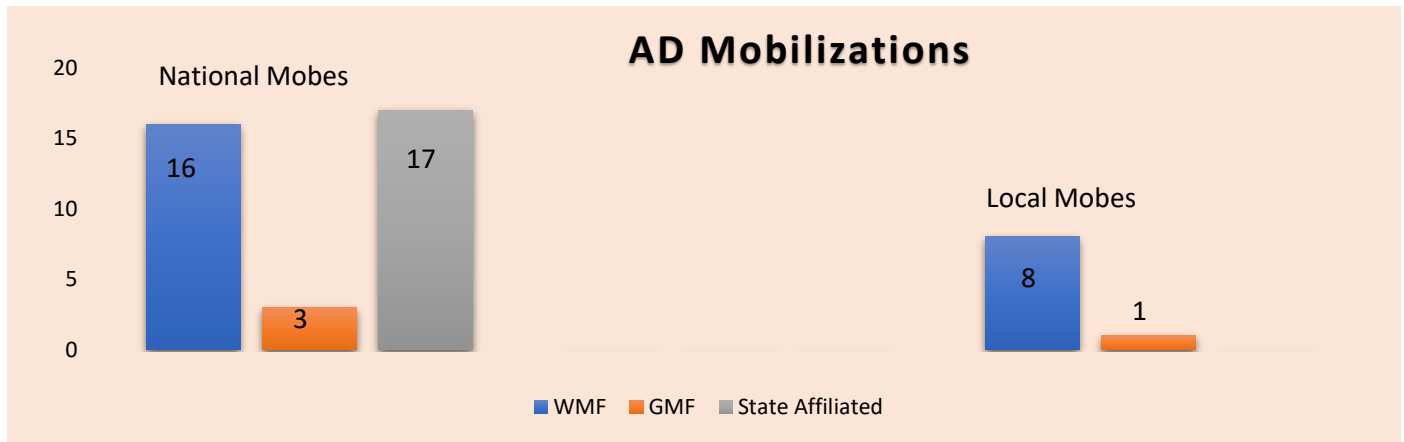


Due to COVID, we had less AD's sign up this year than any previous year, which is understandable. With that said, the AD's which we did mobilize did create a large workload from start to finish (hiring paperwork, through mobilization to processing time and travel).



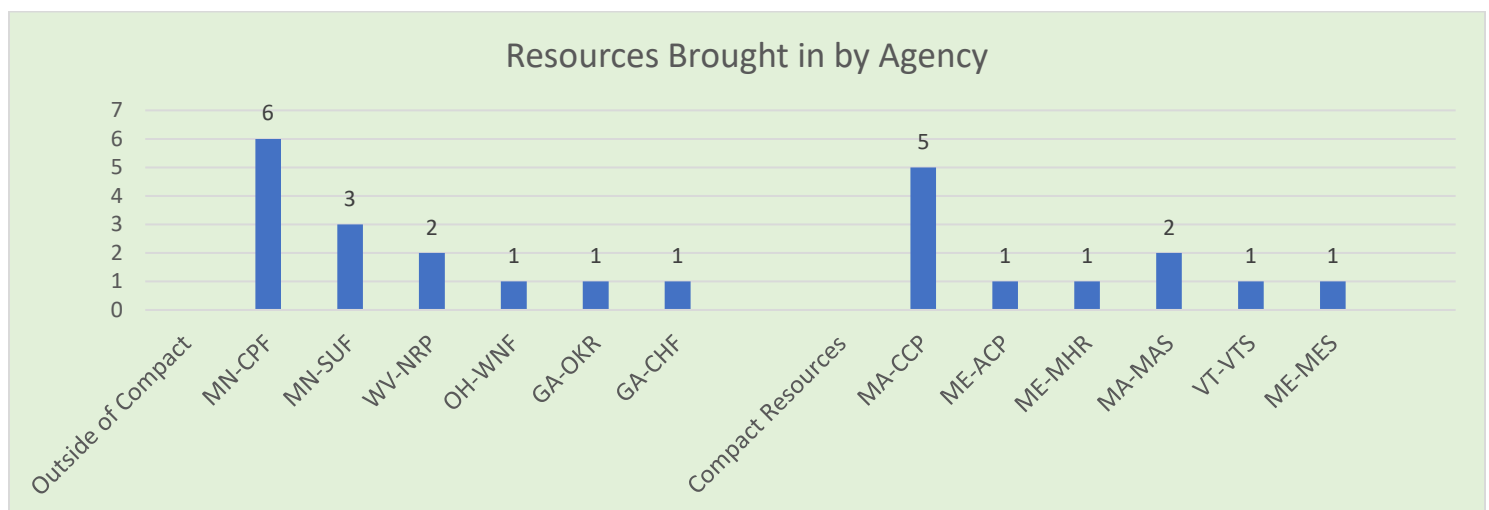
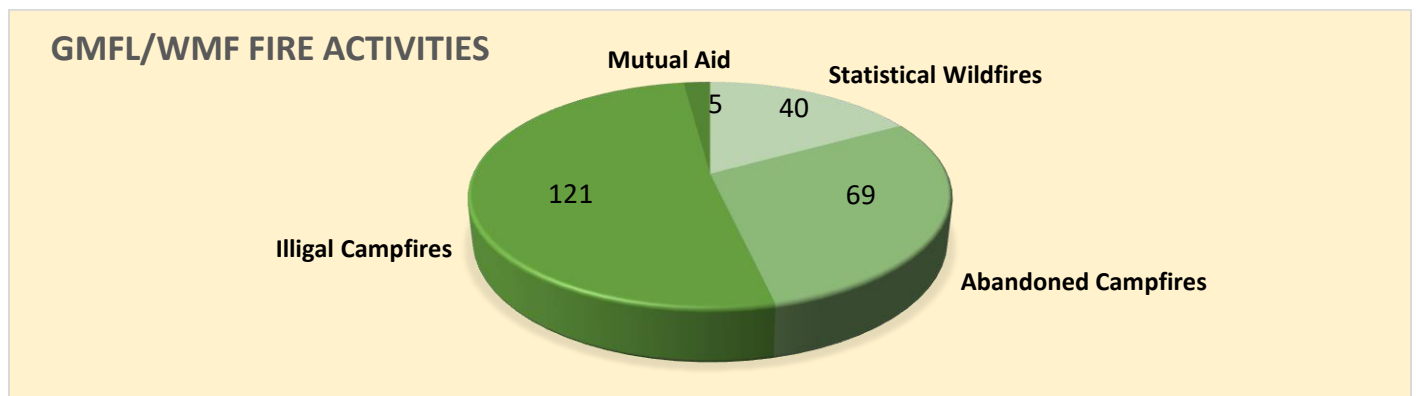


These Graphs are only AD's which the Forest Service Sponsors but NECC manages (hiring paperwork, time and travel submissions etc.)

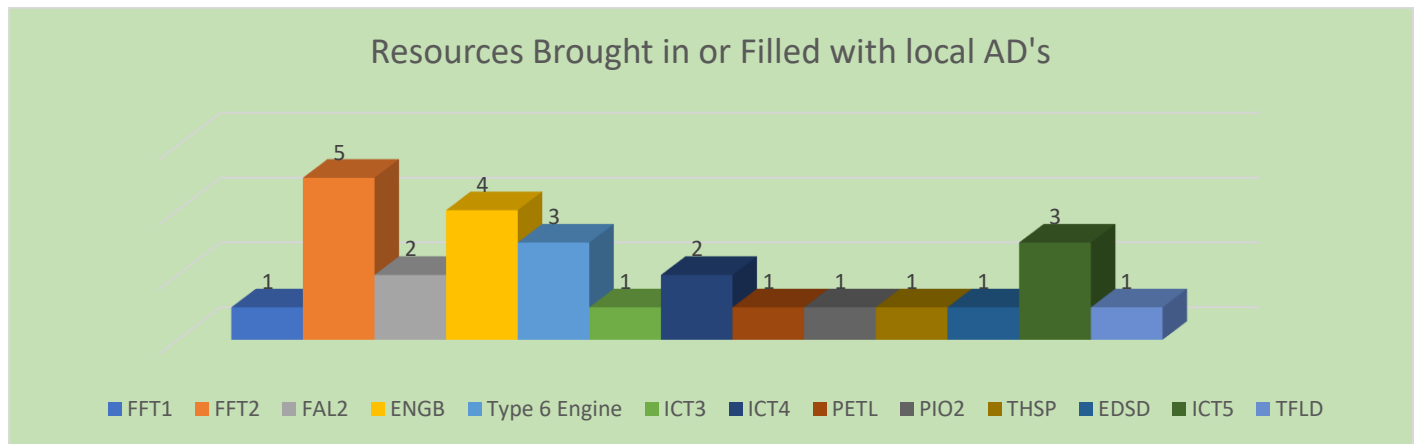


## Local Activities

2020 was a busy year for local wildland fire activities for all NECC partners. Since NECC provides initial attack radio communications for both Green Mountain Finger Lakes and White Mountain National Forest, their fire activities kept us busier than usual. Due to COVID, the Forests had an influx of visitors, which created a large problem with campfires, therefore the need for additional resources.



Engines and various positions were needed to help the Forest's with their fire activities. The below graph includes outside and local resources such as AD's that were utilized and what positions NECC ordered them in to fill. This graph does not include any local agency personnel or resources utilized.



Overall personnel mobilized in 2020 was above average (514), and the 6<sup>th</sup> busiest year since 2002

