

# Cody Interagency Dispatch Center

## 2020 Year End Report



Neiber  
Wind River/Bighorn Basin District BLM  
Worland, WY

### 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/)

## 2020 Narrative:

Cody Dispatch experienced an above average fire season. The first wildfire began March 18<sup>th</sup> and the last occurred on December 5<sup>th</sup>. A total of 19,752 acres burned across the dispatch area. The dispatch center supported two type 3 incident management teams. By the end of the year, Cody Dispatch had provided support to 306 local wildland fires. This is the second greatest number of wildland fires in our 37-year operating history. The 2020 fire season was only slightly beaten out by 2012, which recorded 333 wildland fires that year.

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. The Wind River Agency went into early fire restrictions beginning April 1. Fuels were curing out in early June and by 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 mid-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.

Cody Dispatch began mobilizing firefighting resources to support out of area incidents in January. We sent a total of 6 personnel consisting of BLM and FS to assist with Australia's fire suppression efforts. By February, the dispatch zone was regularly sending firefighters to the Southern Area for prescribed burning. Due to COVID, the support for non-local prescribed burning was shut down and resources returned home in early March. We began sending resources out of area again in late May to support suppression efforts in the Southwest, Great Basin, Northwest, Northern Rockies, California and Rocky Mountain areas.

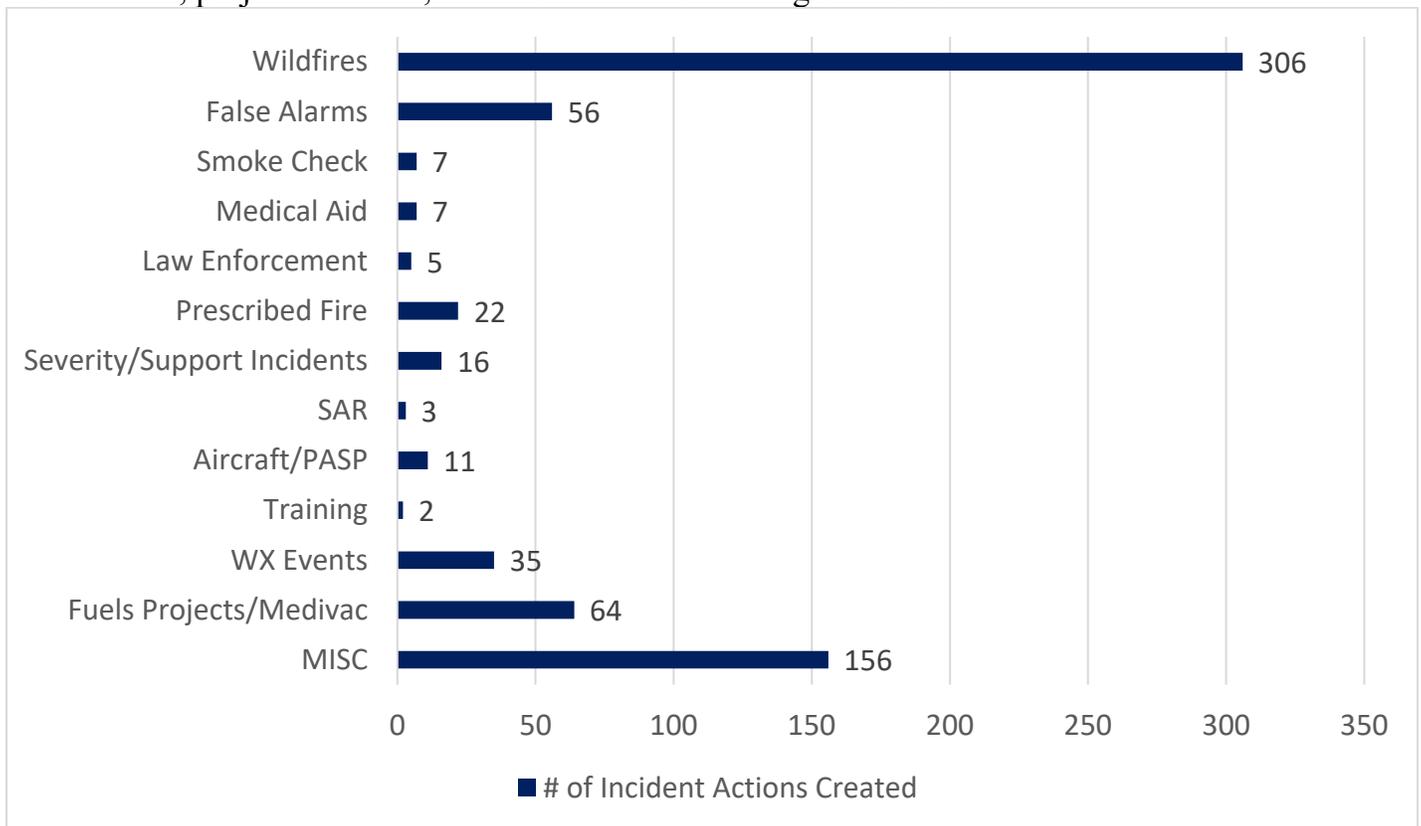
When COVID hit the US in early March, we saw firsthand the inconsistencies amongst the federal agencies regarding their initial responses. Some agencies continued work as normal and others immediately went full telework. As a mixed interagency staff, it was confusing as to which agency guidelines to follow. There was significant concern on dispatch staff testing positive for COVID and having to shut down the center. It took about a month before all the agencies could get on the same page with a somewhat consistent message. Cody Dispatch developed a staggered telework schedule for the month of April. By May, the dispatch staff returned to normal staffing as fire workload was increasing. To mitigate COVID exposure, the dispatch centers cleaning contract was increased to once a week, staff regularly wiped down/sanitized equipment throughout the day, only essential dispatch staff were allowed in the office, and an additional 1039 seasonal was added to the organizational chart with BLM COVID funding.

## 2020 Fire Statistics

- 306 wildfires
- 19,752 acres burned
- 690 incident actions
- 28 days expanded dispatch was staffed
- 1,854 resource requests
- 27 nights staffed providing 24-hour coverage
  - 2 of these nights were for Ft. Collins Dispatch (Cameron Peak/Williams Fork)
- 16 detailed dispatchers
- 63 days at PL 3
- 18 coordinating group calls between 3/15 – 9/29

## Incident Action Breakdown

Cody Dispatch created 690 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.



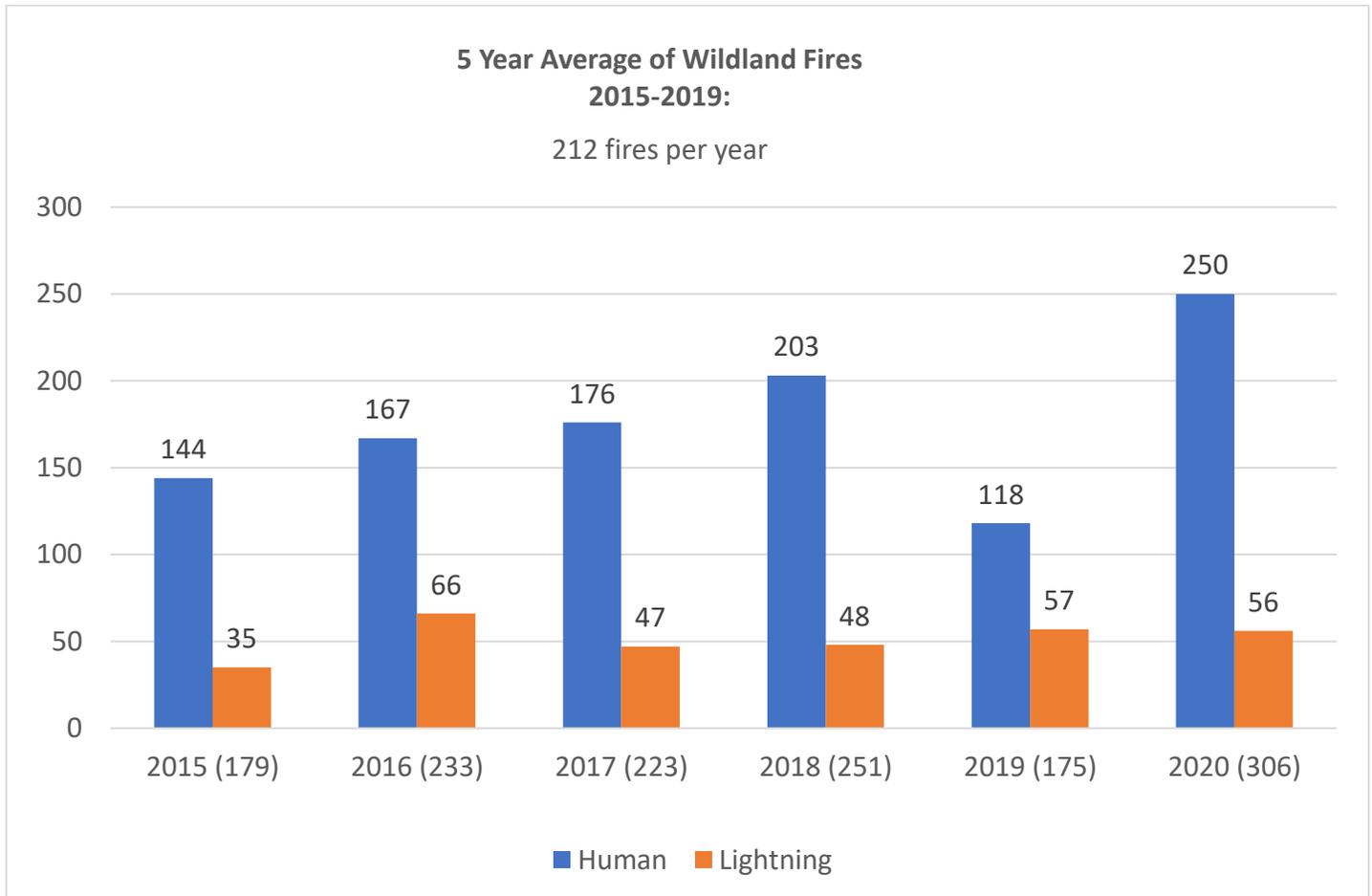
## Agency Wildfire Breakdown

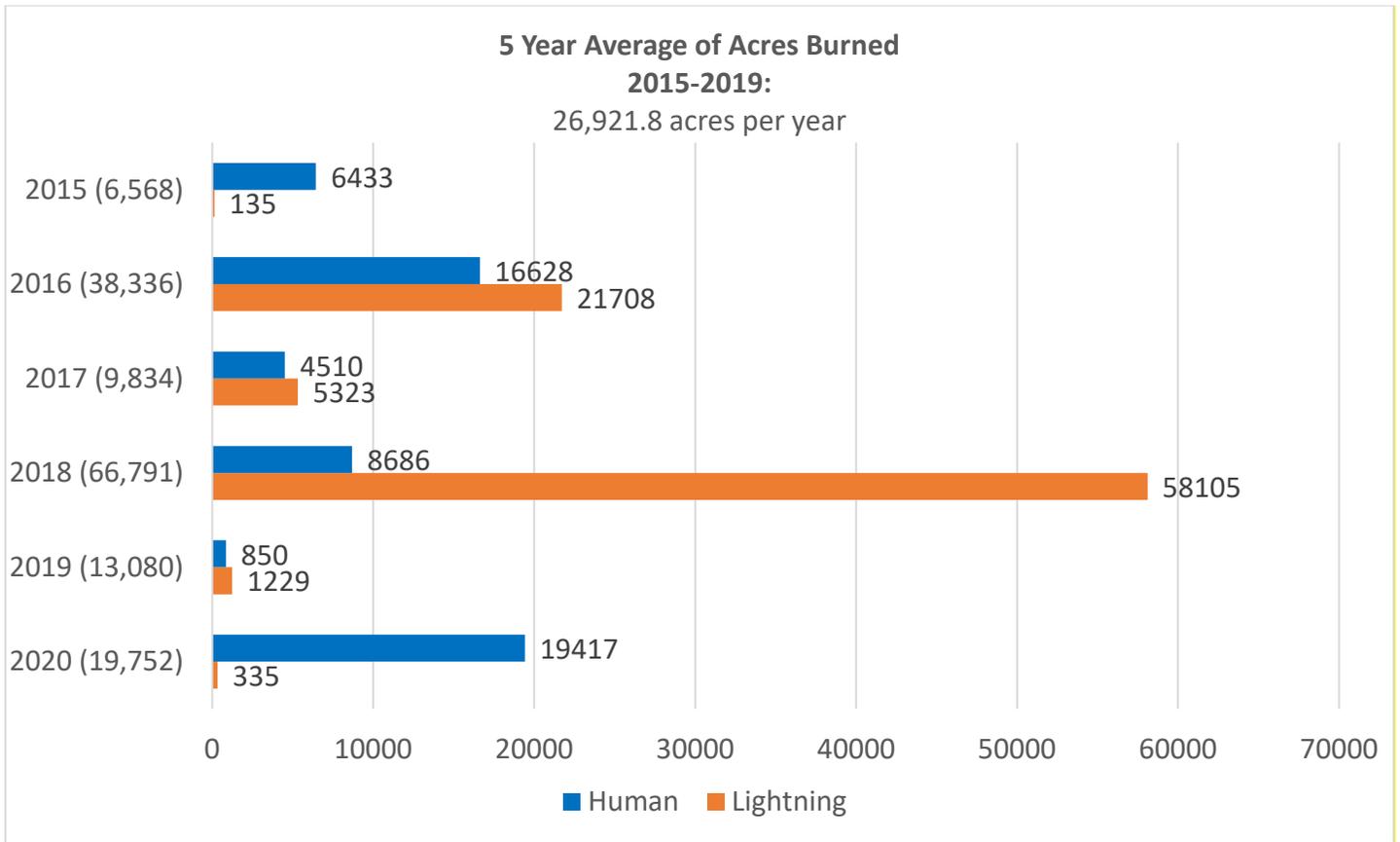
| UNIT  | HUMAN      |                  | LIGHTNING |               | TOTAL      |                  |
|---|------------|------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|------------------|
|   | Fires      | Acres            | Fires     | Acres         | Fires      | Acres            |
| BHF<br>Bighorn NF                           | 9          | .9               | 7         | 5.95          | 16         | 6.85             |
| BIP<br>Bighorn Canyon<br>National Rec. Area | 1          | 3.5              |           |               | 1          | 3.5              |
| SHF<br>Shoshone National<br>Forest          | 12         | 542.75           | 5         | 3.9           | 17         | 546.65           |
| WBD<br>Wind River/Bighorn<br>Basin District | 55         | 15,758.63        | 22        | 169.8         | 77         | 15,928.43        |
| WRA<br>Wind River Agency                    | 138        | 397.19           | 5         | 62.3          | 143        | 459.49           |
| WAAL<br>WY Bureau of<br>Reclamation         | 7          | 48.7             |           |               | 7          | 48.7             |
| CDS<br>Wyoming State<br>Forestry Division   | 1          | 1,048.6          | 3         | 19.2          | 4          | 1,067.8          |
| BHX<br>Big Horn County                      | 12         | 410.35           | 0         | 28            | 12         | 438.35           |
| FRX<br>Fremont County                       | 4          | 8.3              | 2         | 26.3          | 6          | 34.6             |
| HOX<br>Hot Springs County                   | 3          | 6.1              | 2         | .2            | 5          | 6.3              |
| JOX<br>Johnson County                       | 1          | .1               | 1         | 1             | 2          | 1.1              |
| NAX<br>Natrona County                       |            |                  | 2         | 1.7           | 2          | 1.7              |
| PAX<br>Park County                          | 2          | .9               | 3         | 15.4          | 5          | 16.3             |
| WAX<br>Washakie County                      | 5          | 1,191.1          | 4         | .8            | 9          | 1,191.9          |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                               | <b>250</b> | <b>19,417.12</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>334.55</b> | <b>306</b> | <b>19,751.67</b> |

## Large Fire/Extended Attack Summary

| Fire            | Start Date | Cause     | Final Acres | Unit                              | Complexity |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Lost Creek      | 6/13       | Human     | 541         | Shoshone NF                       | 3          |
| 1167 17 Mile Rd | 6/27       | Human     | 142         | Wind River Agency                 | 4          |
| Neiber          | 7/14       | Human     | 15,346      | Wind River/Bighorn Basin District | 3          |
| Beaver Creek    | 7/31       | Human     | 293         | Bighorn County                    | 4          |
| Freeze Out      | 8/19       | Lightning | 5           | Bighorn NF                        | 4          |

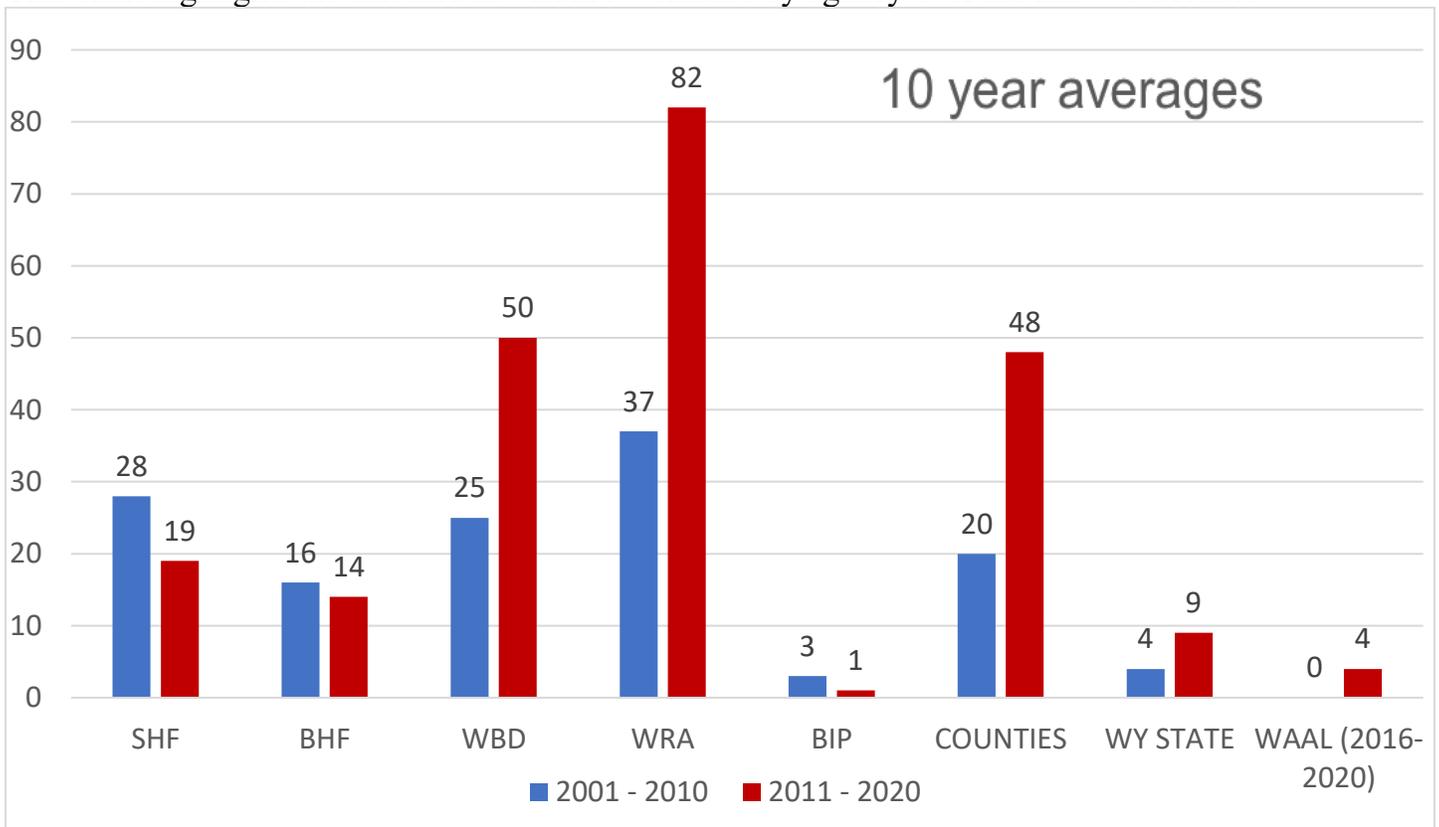
## 5 Year Averages





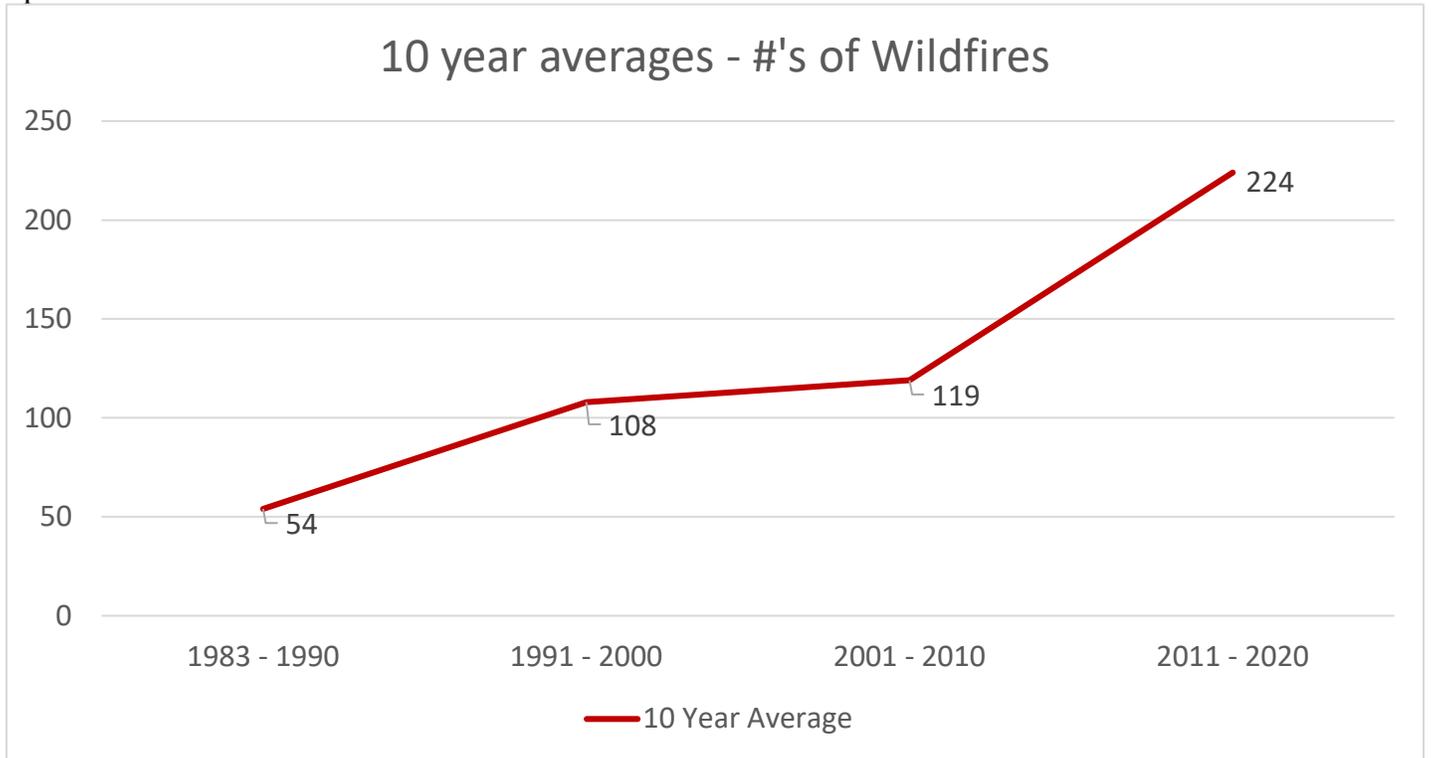
### Agency Specific Wildland Fire Breakdown

This chart highlights the increase in wildfire workload by agency over the last two decades.



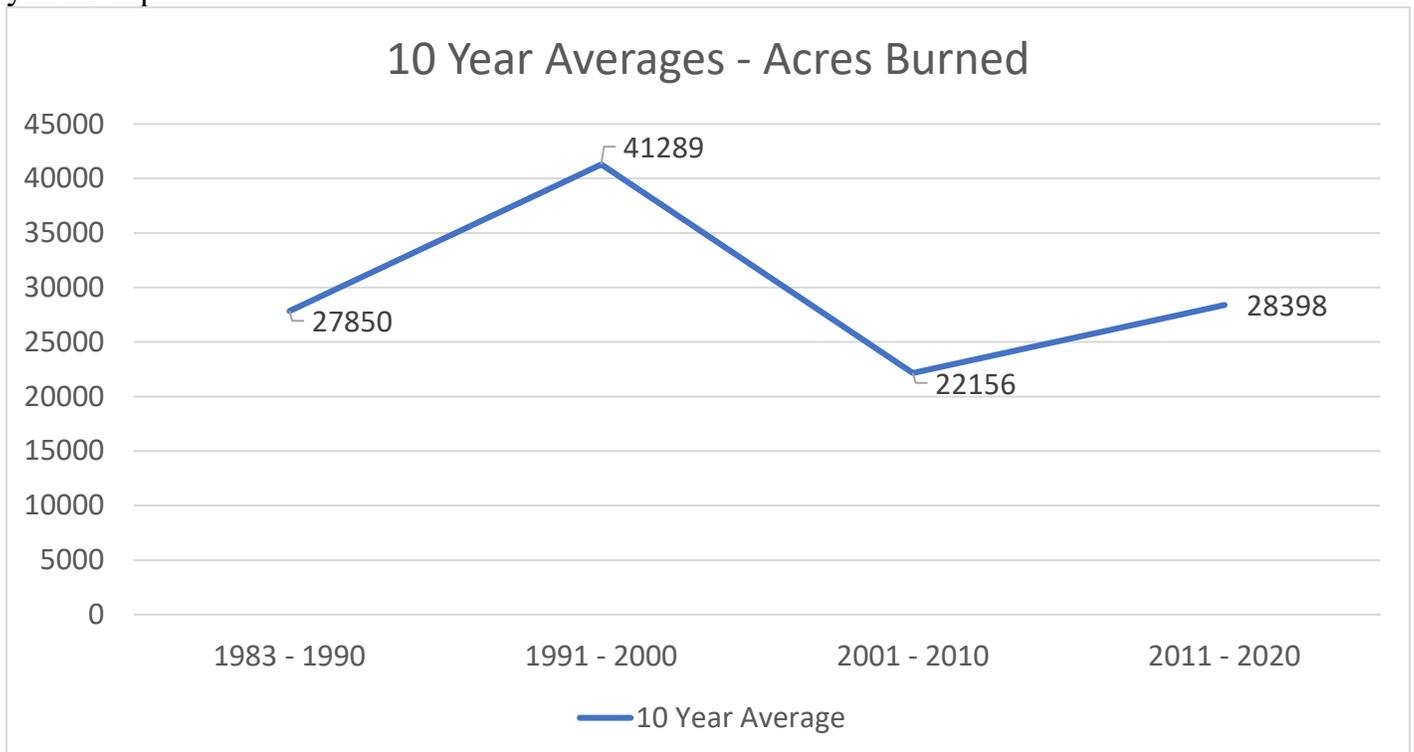
### Frequency of Wildfires

This chart showcases the increase in wildfire workload at Cody Dispatch over the last 37 years in operation.

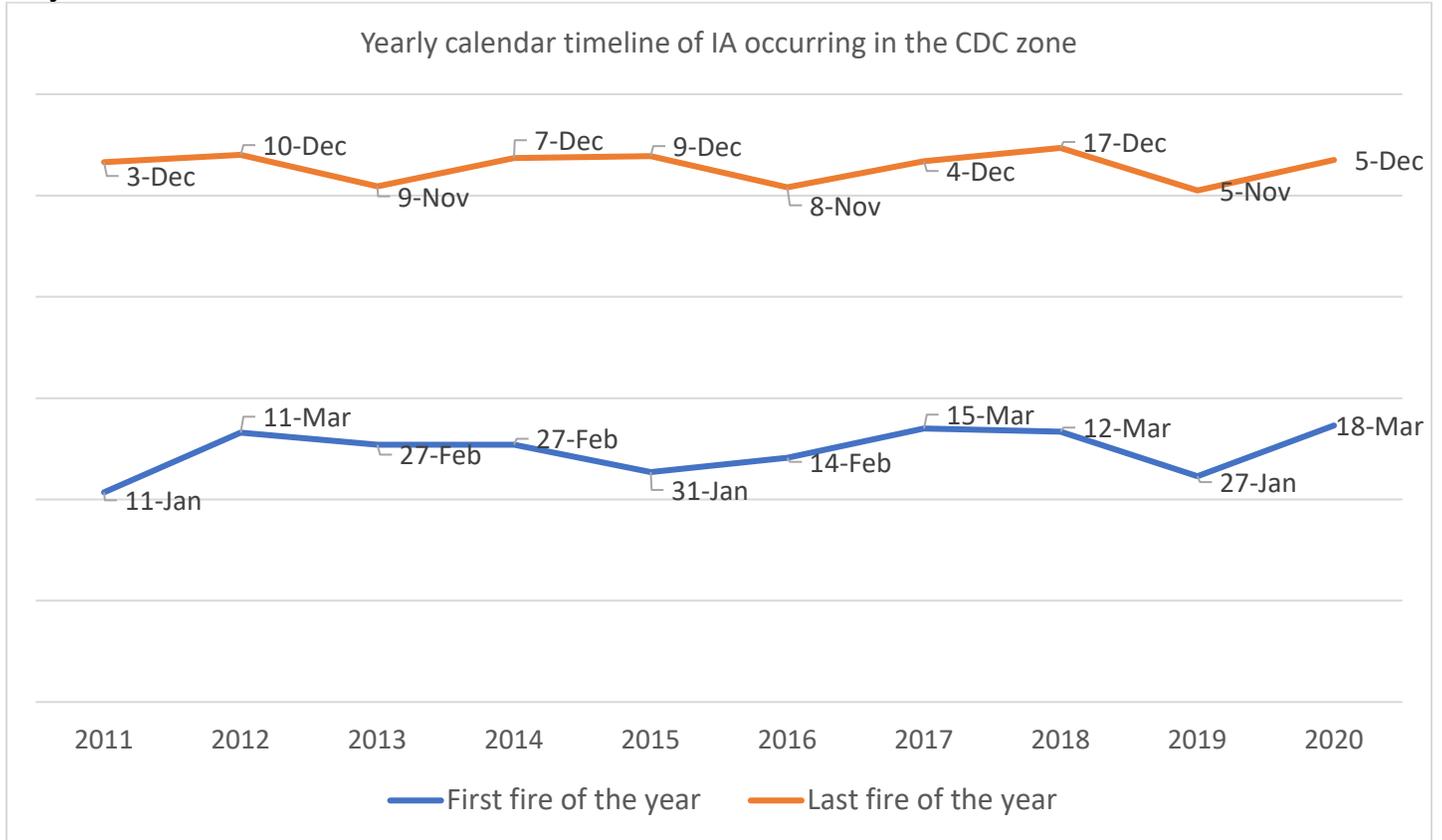


### Frequency of Acres Burned

This chart depicts the 10-year averages on acres burned in the Cody Dispatch zone over the last 37 years in operation.

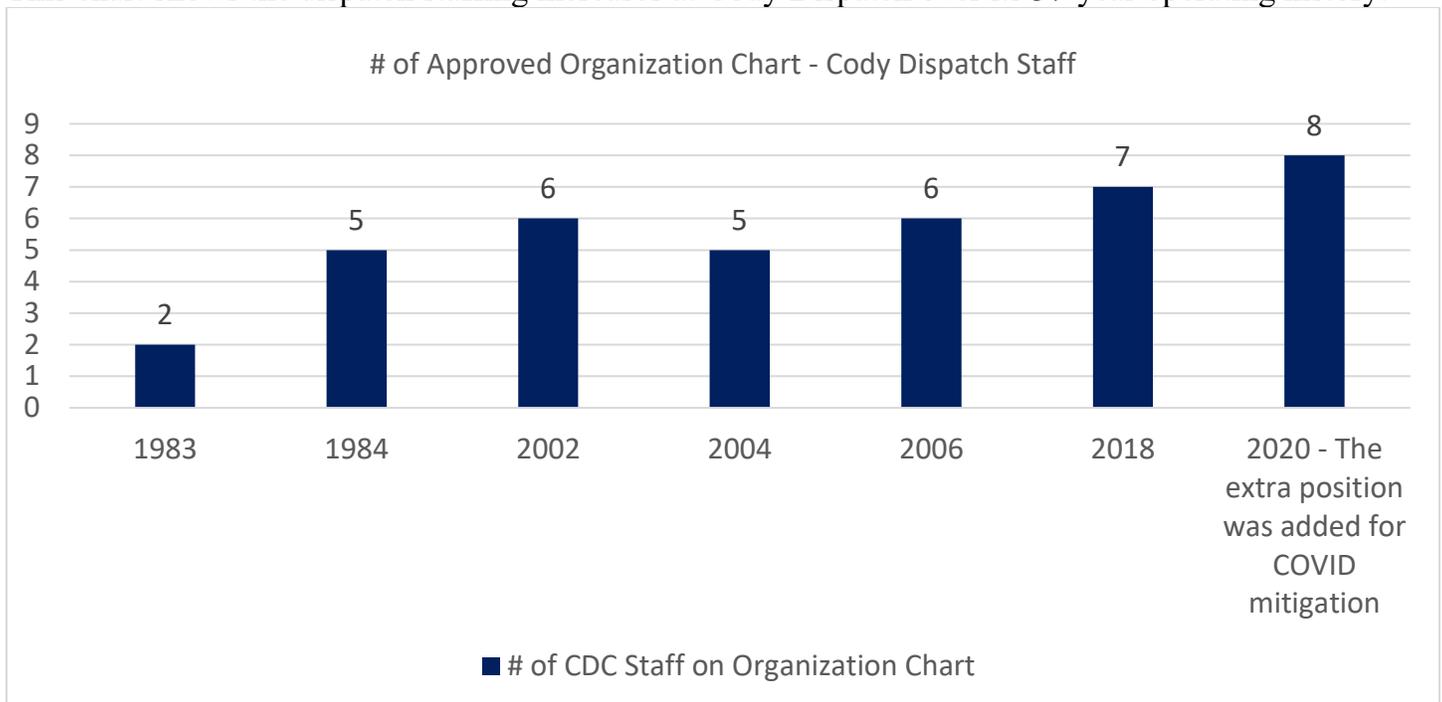


**The term “Fire Season” does not accurately depict the wildfire workload at the local dispatch level.** Calendar timeline of initial attack activity occurring in the Cody Dispatch zone based on the last 10 years.



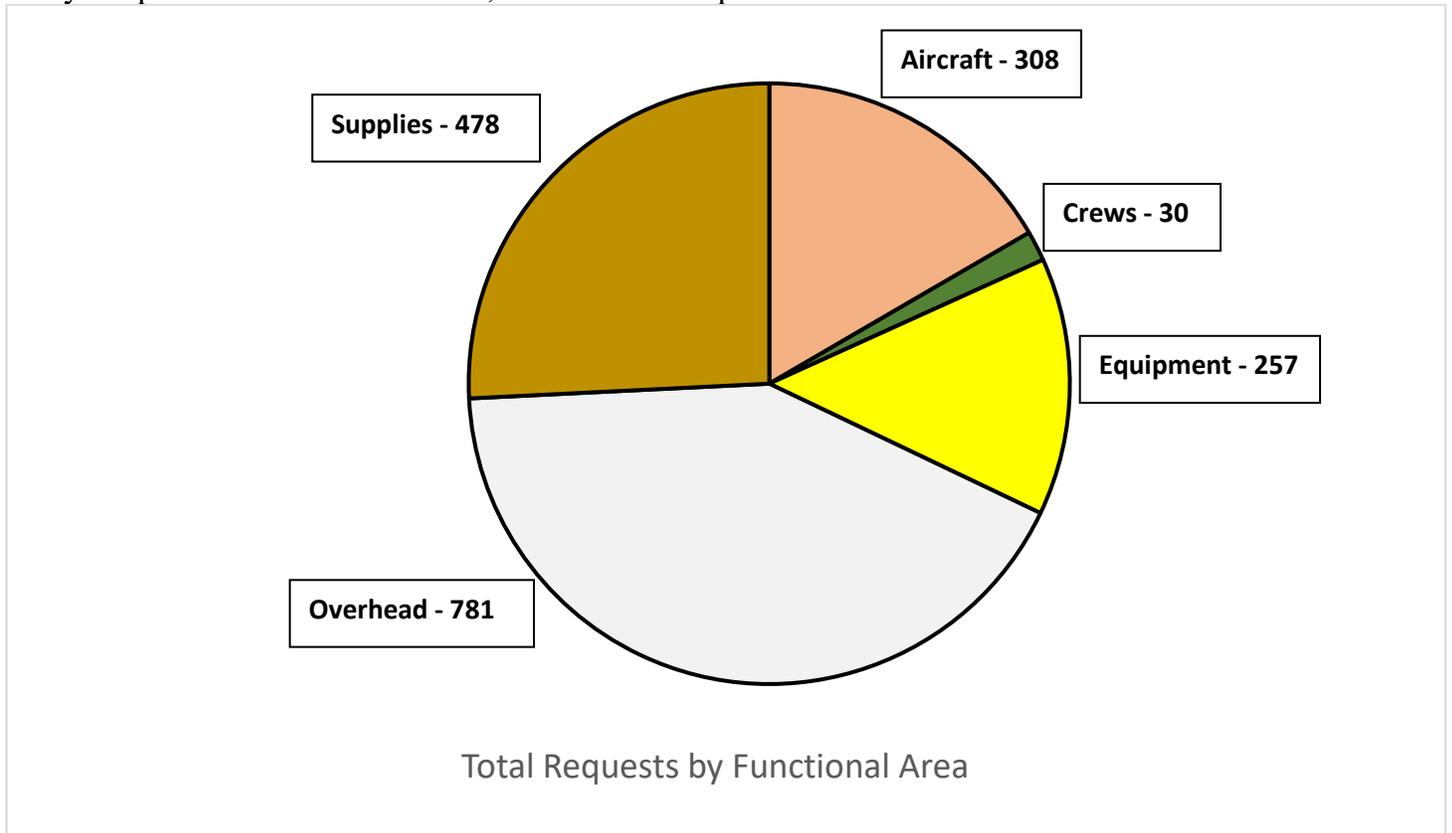
**Staffing changes over the years at Cody Dispatch**

This chart shows the dispatch staffing increases at Cody Dispatch over its 37-year operating history.



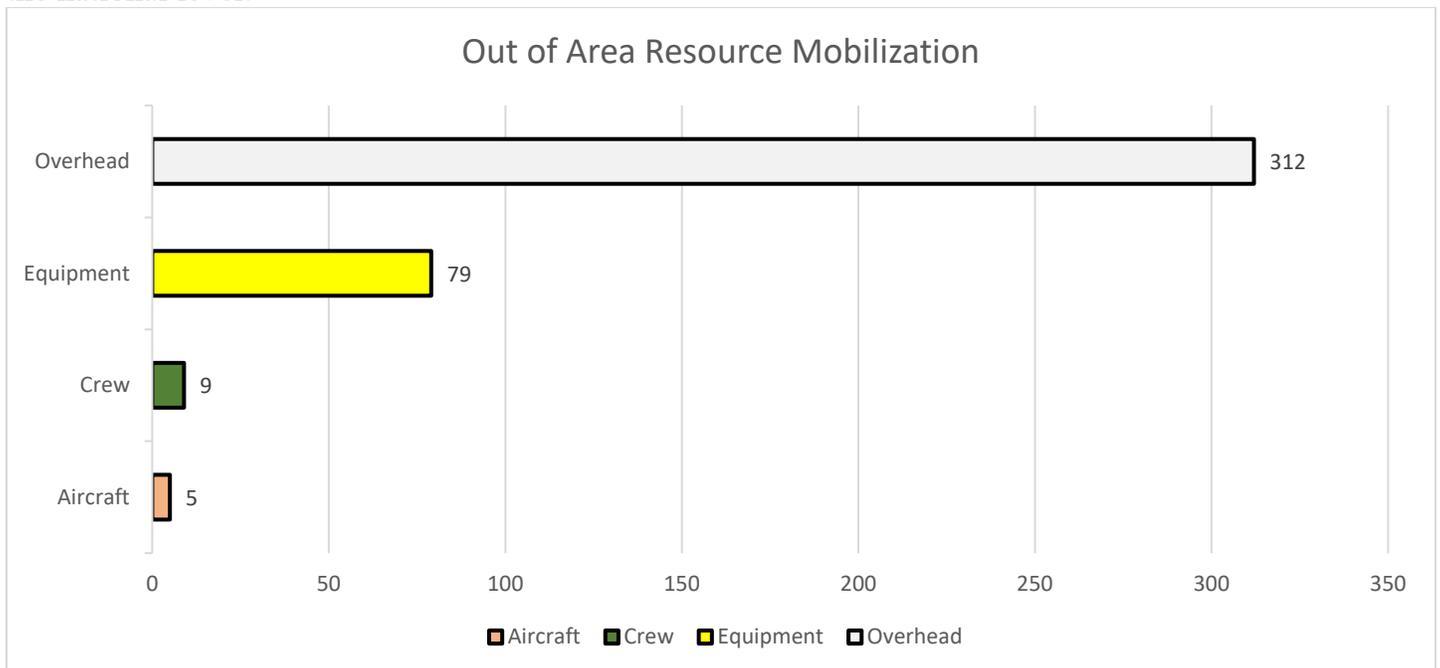
## Resource Order Statistics

Cody Dispatch handled a total of 1,854 resource requests in 2020.

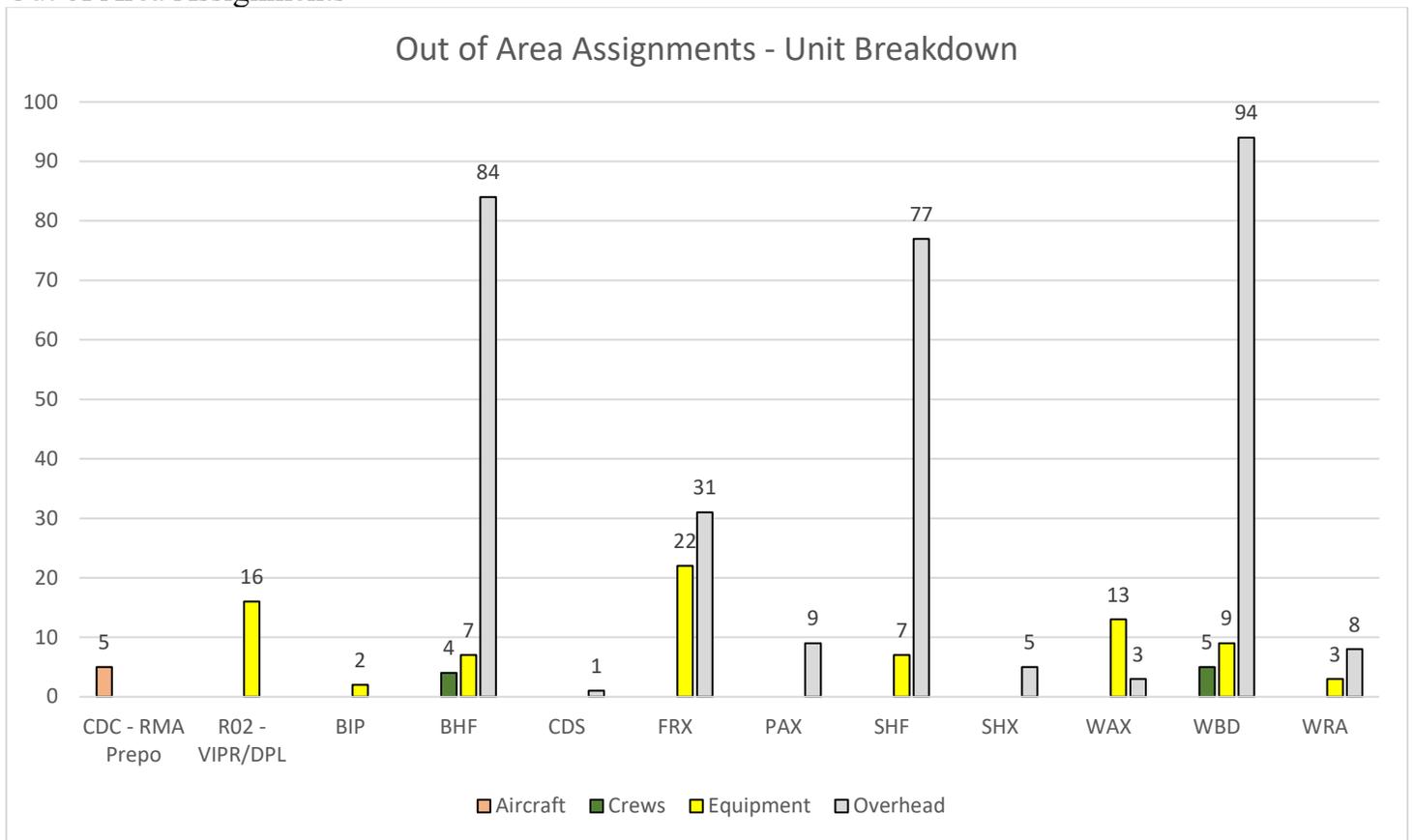


## Out of Area Assignments

We mobilized 405 resources for out of area fire assignments to support efforts within the RMA and at the national level.

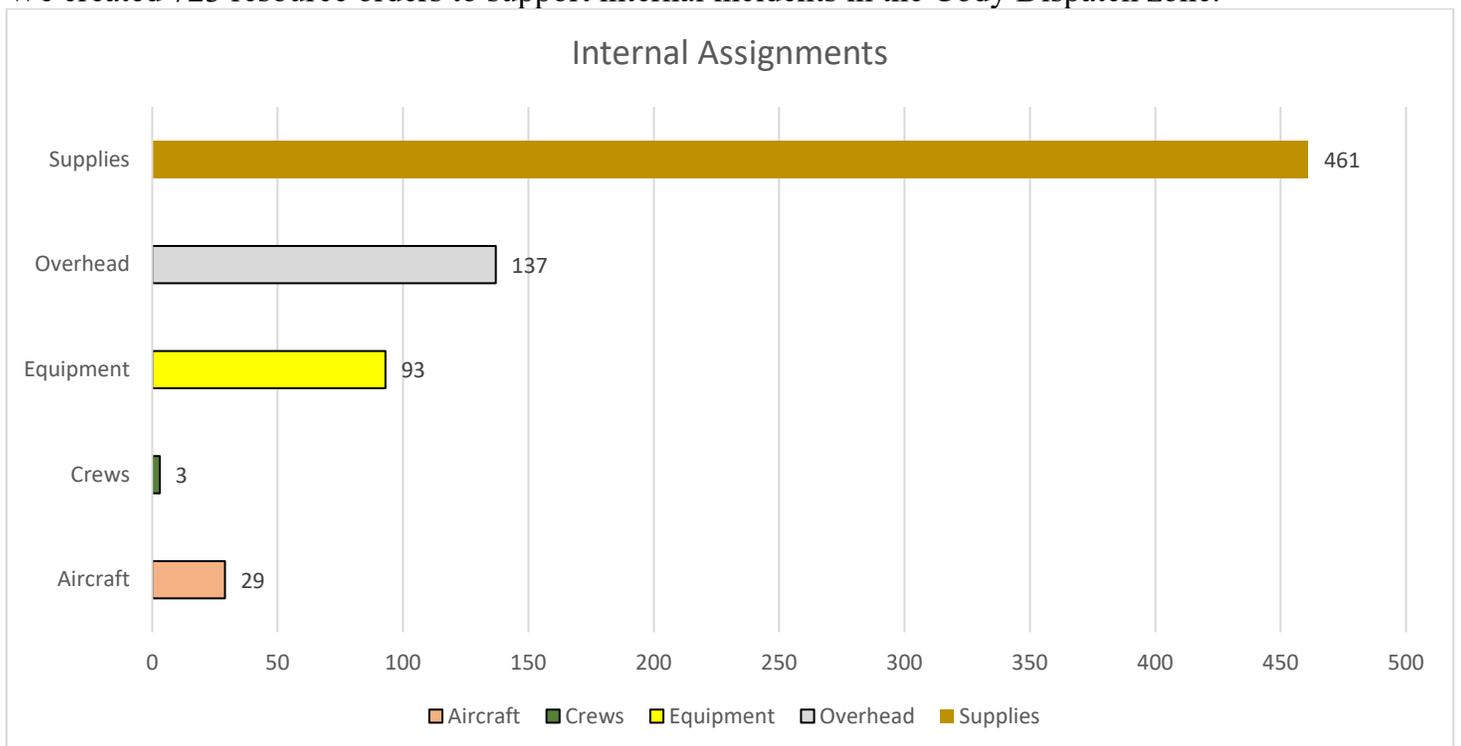


## Out of Area Assignments

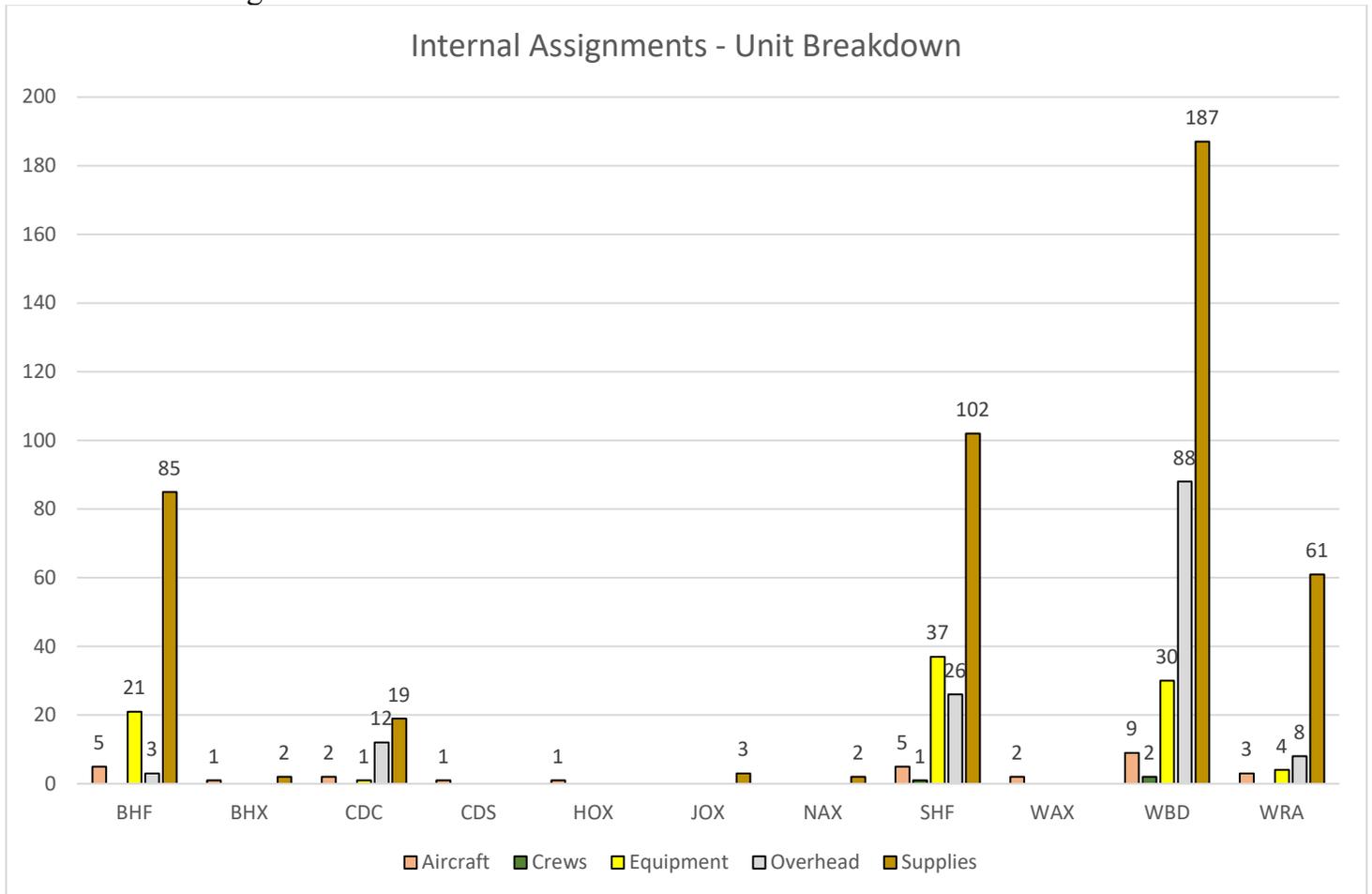


## Internal CDC Assignments

We created 723 resource orders to support internal incidents in the Cody Dispatch zone.

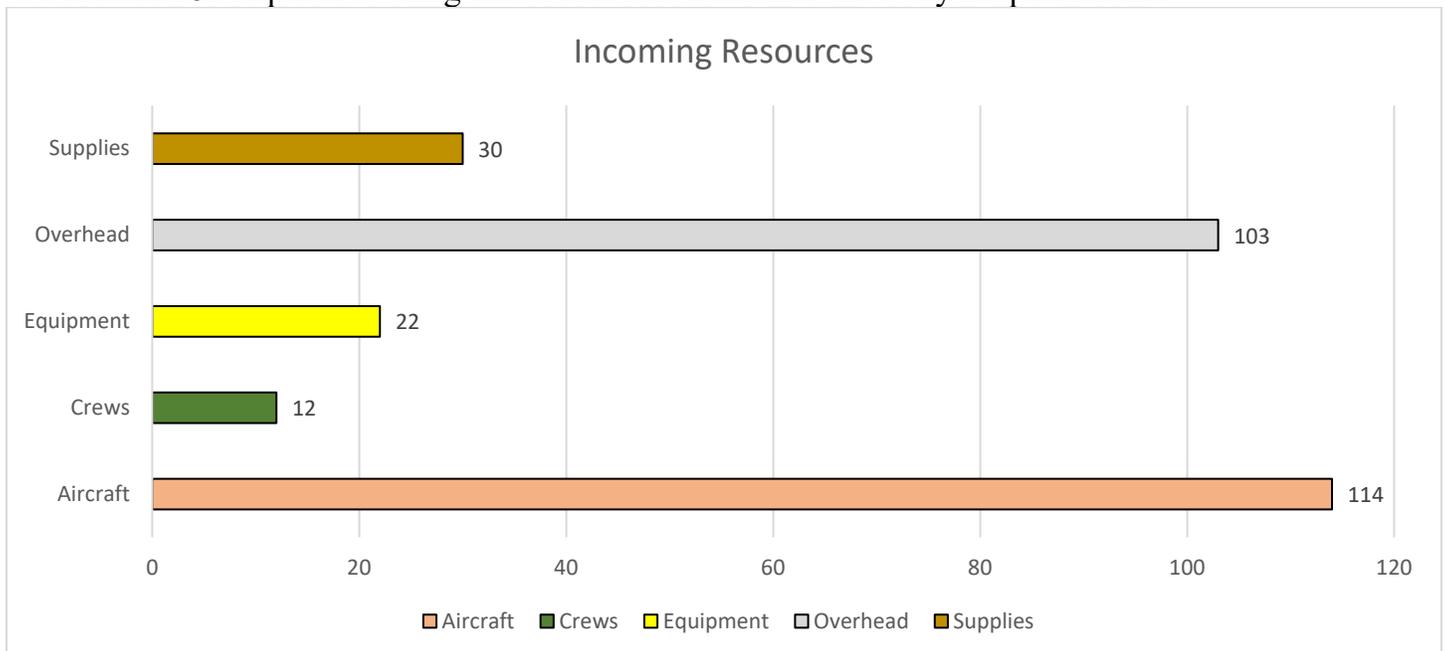


## Internal CDC Assignments

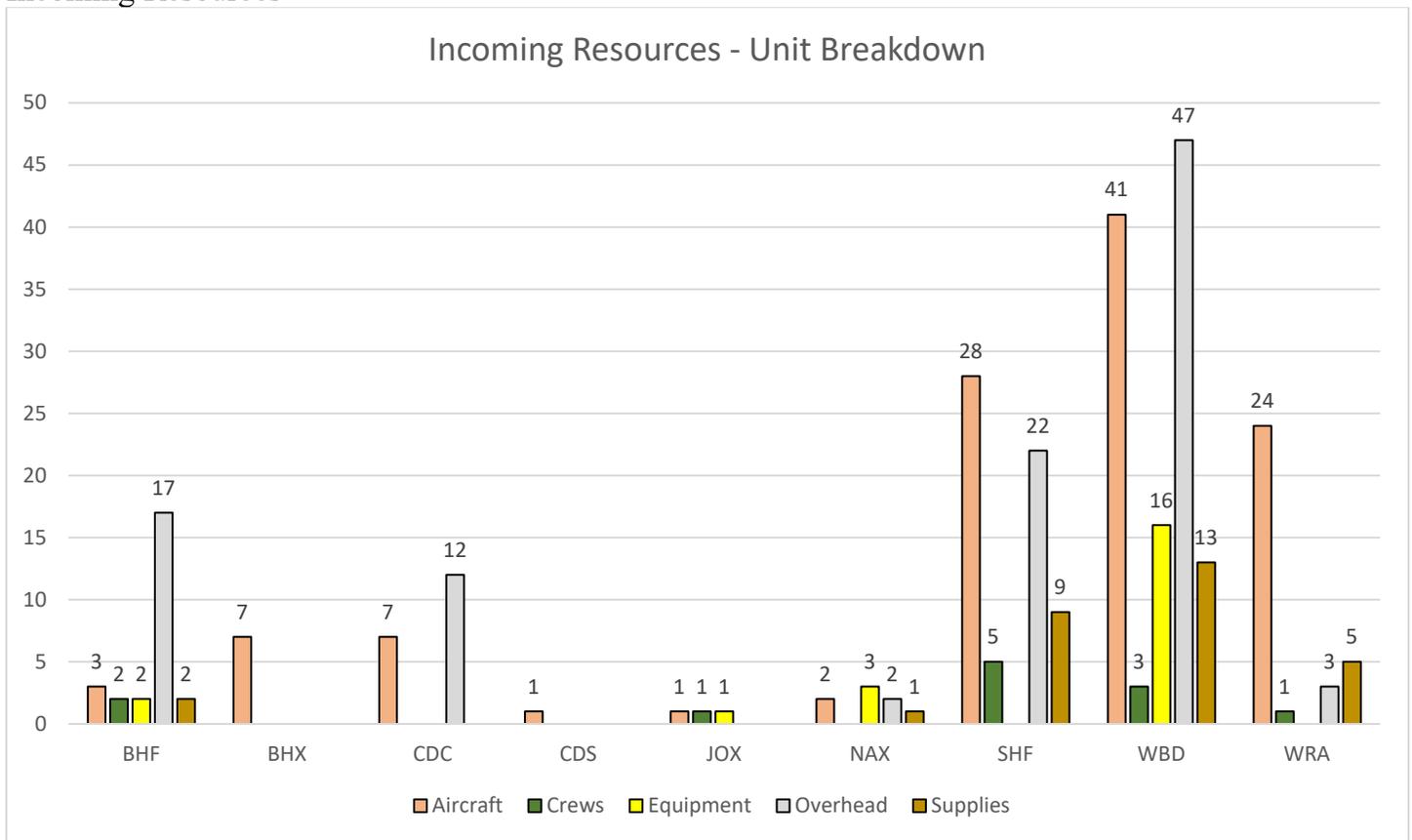


## Incoming Resources

We created 281 requests to bring out of area resources into the Cody Dispatch zone.

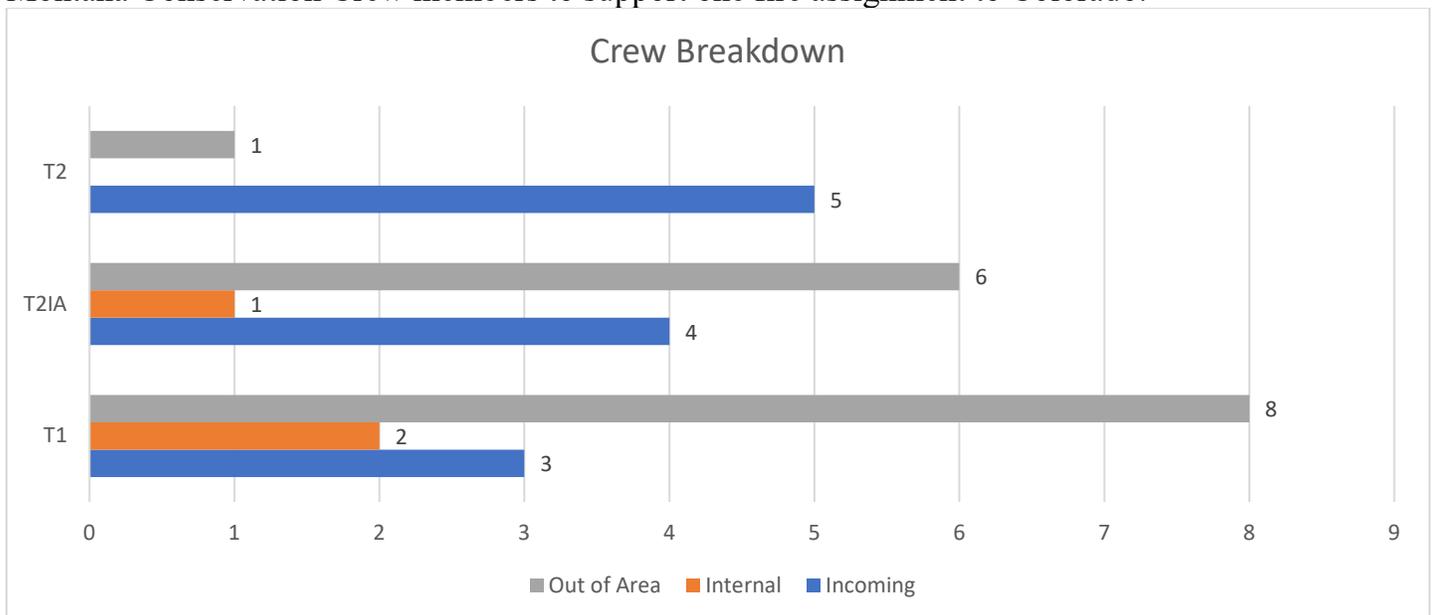


## Incoming Resources



## Crews Statistics

Due to COVID, the Bighorn Basin type 2IA and the Wind River Agency camp crews were not available. Therefore, Wyoming IHC and Devils Canyon supported fires throughout the Rocky Mountain Area and California. We coordinated a type 2 crew comprised of WBD leadership and Montana Conservation Crew members to support one fire assignment to Colorado.

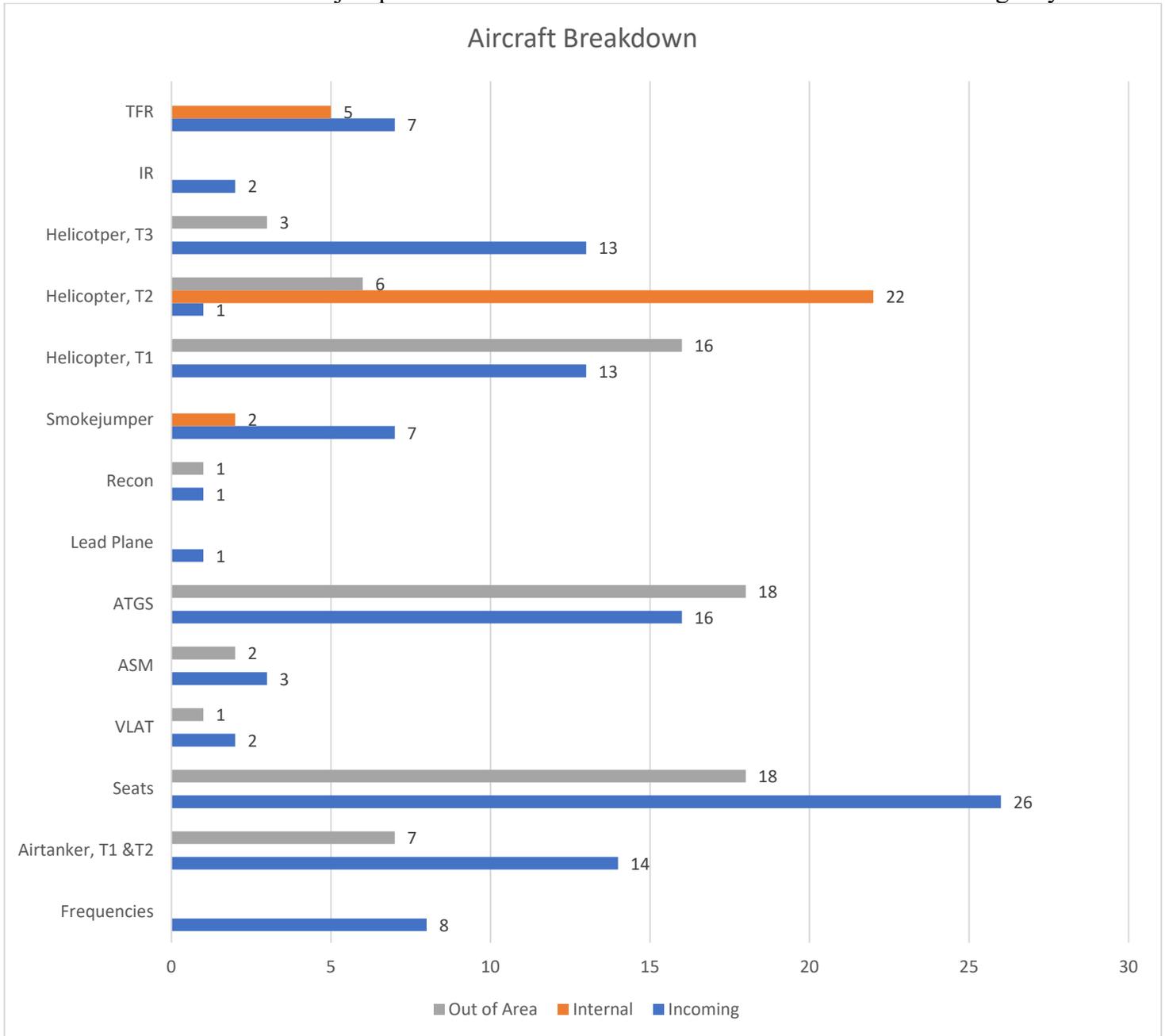


## Aviation Statistics

The Riverton and Greybull seat bases were available for use in early June. By July, Riverton seat base was staffed with two BLM national contracted seats and Greybull was utilized as a reload base. A total of 70,994 gallons of LC95A (Riverton 36,629 and Greybull 34,365) was utilized to support local and neighboring dispatch zone incidents.

The dispatch zone sponsored a FS type 2 surge helicopter for a 130-day exclusive use contract. The helicopter flew 220 hours and was a huge asset to the area. The helicopter supported local initial attack incidents and large fire support within the RMA and throughout California.

August through September, 8 Boise Smokejumpers were relocated to their satellite base in Lander, WY. We mobilized the smokejumpers to incidents on the Shoshone NF and Wind River Agency.



## Challenges

- The time it takes to recruit and fill vacancies for federal agencies is exhausting. Applicants are expected to apply a year in advance, are becoming frustrated with the lack of communication on application status, GS wages are not keeping up with the increases in complexities/job demands, and there is a disconnect between human resources and fire personnel on what qualifies as specialized experience.
- We have two federal agencies networks (BLM and FS) wired into the dispatch center. Critical issues occur when network updates are pushed out by these agencies. Often the updates change radio program settings, computer profiles become disabled, phone lines go down during active fire suppression operations, and critical dispatch software is removed. It seems these updates are at random times and rarely are dispatch centers given a heads up. These updates often take down our radio systems and phone lines during critical emergency operations.
- There is a major shortage in qualified dispatchers nationwide. Every year, the dispatch community struggles to find aircraft, initial attack, expanded support and supervisory dispatchers. COVID made the struggle that much worse when AD's and militia dispatchers decided not to participate in the 2020 fire season. The lack of help put more stress on the local dispatch centers to maintain normal operations.
- IROC should not have been rolled out in March, as the program had not been field tested enough to be implemented. The early programming errors caused delays in filling requests, caused uncertainty in how reliable the program was, and when one problem was fixed another two would pop up. The IROC SME's were overwhelmed with help desk tickets and program developers were not always available to make improvements in a timely manner.
- The RMA preposition of resources at the local level is not always transparent. Resources are placed in the local zone but are not to be utilized without asking for permission from the FOO first. Additionally, visiting RMA prepositioned resources get confused as to who they are tracking with as they are receiving calls from the GACC, Tac group, local dispatch center, local duty officers, and local agency reps. A recommendation for the communication chain is GACC/Tac group should be coordinating with the local dispatch center. The local dispatch center will communicate with the local rep on the RMA prepositioned resource status. This way there is one consistent message being passed and all are in the loop.

## Successes

- In March, Hal Bromley, Assistant Center Manager, was awarded the 2019 Rocky Mountain Area Dispatcher of the Year for his strong leadership, excellent customer service, and his willingness to help dispatch centers across the nation on dispatch technology enhancements.
- The BLM provided COVID mitigation funds to create an extra 1039 seasonal. With this extra position, Cody Dispatch was staffed with 8 regular personnel for the summer. This significantly boosted staff morale and gave more flexibility in the event of COVID exposure at the dispatch facility.
- With C-Soft network radios and WildCAD remote cloud access, Cody Dispatch was able to establish COOP back up capabilities with Ft. Collins and Great Plains Dispatch Centers early this year. This back up capability came in handy when Cody Dispatch provided virtual night

dispatching for 2 shifts on the Cameron Peak and Williams Fork fires. The virtual night dispatching was considered a success and will be utilized in the future.

- 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.

## 2021 Outlook

- Cody Dispatch will be fully staffed with 8 personnel for the upcoming fire season. Currently, all regular staff plan to return.
- The BLM National Dispatch Review will occur next June, in Cody.
- 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.

## 2020 Pictures



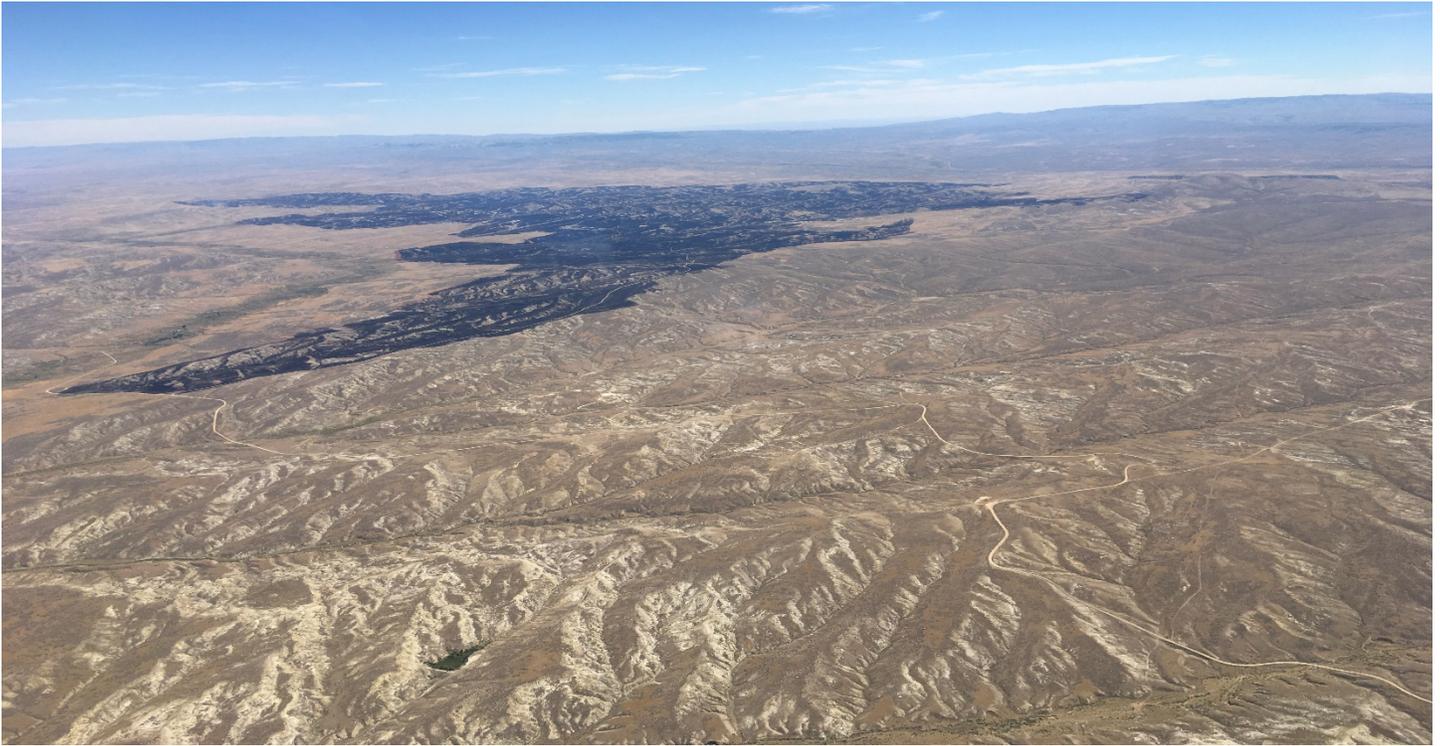
Forest Service Employees  
Australia  
January



Forest Service hand crew comprised of California and Wyoming firefighters  
Australia  
January



Yellowtail RX  
Wind River/Bighorn Basin District BLM  
March



Neiber  
Wind River/Bighorn Basin District BLM  
July



Bull Lake  
Wind River Agency  
August



Lonesome  
Shoshone NF  
August



Painter  
Shoshone NF  
August



South Zone Piles RX  
Shoshone NF  
December