RAWLINS INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER



2012 ANNUAL REPORT

**Introduction to the Center**

Rawlins Interagency Dispatch Center is hosted by Bureau of Land Management’s High Desert District. The center is located in Rawlins, WY. Rawlins is a town of 9,700 people located off Interstate 80 in the middle part of the lower half of Wyoming. We provide services for seven counties, four BLM Field Offices, Wyoming State Forestry, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service.

Our staff includes one Center Manager (which became vacant in August of this year), one Assistant Center Manager (filled in March of this year and now serving as the Acting Center Manager), one career-seasonal Initial Attack Dispatcher (hired in November after 5 month vacancy), and one career-seasonal Logistics Dispatcher (hired in October after a one year vacancy). During the summer months we hire 1 to 3 seasonal dispatchers. This year we had three seasonal dispatchers.

The dispatch zone covers approximately 21 million acres in the state of Wyoming. 48% of this land is owned by the Federal Government (approximately 10 million acres). A large percent of High Desert District is checkerboard due to the Union Pacific Railroad that runs through Southern Wyoming. This type of land ownership is cause for a multiple agency response to incidents throughout the District.

**Overview of the 2012 Year**

The 2012 year started out with only a Center Manager employed. Resource flight following was conducted in support of Sage Grouse monitoring and the first wildfire of the year was reported in January. Recruitment of an Assistant Center Manager was occurring as well as training with the military’s Modular Aerial Firefighting (MAFF’s) aircraft based in Cheyenne. The new Assistant Center Manager arrived the 1st week just of March as wildland and prescribed fire activity started in the zone. Late March also saw the first of 74 Red Flag Warning days in 2012.

May 21st was the start date for the seasonal firefighting resources. The IA dispatcher had given notice that she would be relocating in June and the Logistics dispatcher had taken a position in another state. RWC employed two seasonal dispatchers and one student (STEP) while the career-seasonal positions were being recruited. Eleven fires were reported during May, two of which occurred on the first day of seasonal employees’ employment. Additionally one prescribed fire for 20 acres was completed in the zone.

June saw the departure of the IA dispatcher, the only dispatcher with multiple seasons of experience in the zone. All aspects of the High Desert District’s fire program, including dispatch, participated in a BLM National Review. A few well-known problems were documented by the National Review Team and a clear plan for resolving back-up power and radio issues was created. A mock fire was not conducted as part of the national review, as all resources were dispatched to an actual fire where members of the review team were able to observe and participate in actual firefighting operations. Due to critical conditions in June, National Severity was requested and approved. Engines, hand-crews and aviation assets were staged in the zone either through High Desert District or Regional Severity funding. Thirty one fires were reported in June with large fires (Fontenelle, Arapaho and Squirrel Creek) occurring at the end of June.

July started with a decision to have RWC manage the Squirrel Creek incident on behalf of the Medicine Bow National Forest. Casper dispatch was already managing multiple large incidents and the aviation and logistical needs of the Squirrel Creek fire were best handled by RWC, the closer dispatch center. A T-1 IMT (Oplinger) was ordered, an Expanded Dispatch was established and an Aircraft Dispatcher was tasked with supporting the Squirrel Creek incident. Forty-six fires were reported in July including two large fires; the Seminoe fire (July 21st) and the Ferris fire (July 27th). Type-3 IMT’s were brought in to manage these incidents, which were ultimately complexed allowing for one IMT to manage both incidents. Expanded Dispatch was activated for another 30 days between the two incidents. The Ferris fire was the first incident to successfully deploy the Very Large Air Tanker (VLAT) in Wyoming. Severity funding and resources continued through the month of July.

August arrived with two large fires (Seminoe & Ferris) being managed in the zone. The Center Manager departed suddenly in Mid-August and the Assistant Center Manager assumed leadership on August 17th. One seasonal dispatcher left in August and attempts to fill the career seasonal IA and Logistics dispatcher positions were unsuccessful. Severity funding continued and several detailers extended their assignment or came back for second assignments in the center. Initial attack activity slowed with only 19 new fires reported in the month of August. However critical fire weather conditions continued with 14 of 31 days being identified as Red Flag days.

Early September continued with critical fire weather conditions; six of the first ten days met Red Flag criteria. Of the twenty-one new fires reported, only one exceeded 1,000 acres (Elk Butte). Severity funding and resources continued through the month.

October saw a slowing of fire activity and critical fire weather conditions. Only six days in October met the Red Flag criteria. Only three wildfires were reported in the month; the latest of which was on the 15th of the month. Severity was ended, and seasonal employees were laid off on the 19th of the month. Two fires in Colorado continued to burn and resources were sent to support those incidents. The Logistics Dispatcher position was filled and one seasonal firefighter was detailed into dispatch to maintain adequate staffing for the month.

The seasonal firefighter ended his time in dispatch in November just before the arrival of the newly hired career-seasonal IA dispatcher. Both career-seasonal positions (IA & Logistics) were filled with the Assistant Center Manager continuing as the Acting Center manager. Very few incidents occurred in November. A few resources were sent to Colorado in late November in support of an on-going fire there. Three days of critical fire weather occurred during the month, but no new fires were reported.

Early December involved the continued support of incidents in Colorado. This included dispatching an IADP, engines and additional overhead to support their fire activity. All resources were back on their home unit by December 15th. The end of December involved the furlough of the career-seasonal Logistics dispatcher leaving the IA dispatcher and the Assistant Center Manager to manage the off-season workload. This workload is expected to include updating SOP’s and manuals, resource tracking, pile burning, flight following of resource flights and recruitment & hiring for next fire season.

**Fire Activity**

The 2012 fire season started off quickly. The first reported fire in the District was in Laramie County on January 17th. Otto road was reported as approximately 700 acres of grassland on privately owned property and no BLM response was needed. The first fire on BLM managed lands was the Tipton fire on March 16th. Between March 16 and March 31st, 8 fires were reported to RWC. March also saw the accomplishment of the Marking Pen Rx fire for 2,000 acres.

The 2012 fire season consisted of 147 wildfires for a total of 51,445.46 acres burned. This year’s total acres are 9.5 times higher than the 5 year average of 4093.73 acres. This year’s total fires are 33% higher than the 5 year average of 110 fires per year. The breakdown of fires is as follows: 61 lightning caused for 34,770.94 acres and 86 human caused for 16,674.52 acres. The center had also received 98 smoke checks which were determined to be previously reported fires, adjacent centers, or false alarms.

**Notable Fires:**

**Otto Road** was reported on 01/17/2012 in Laramie County. It burned 600 acres of grass east of Cheyenne. All private land and there was no request for BLM assistance.

**Creston** was reported on 05/21/2012 in Sweetwater County. Creston fire burned 323 acres of BLM and private property. Incident occurred on the first day of seasonal employee orientation.

**Fontenelle** was reported on 06/24/2012. The lightning caused fire was reported by smokejumpers en route to Rawlins. Fire started on Bridger-Teton National Forest but quickly spread onto BLM managed lands. Fire threatened largest helium production facility in the United States. Fire ultimately burned 12, 392 acres of BLM managed lands.

**Arapahoe** was reported on 06/30/2012. Human caused fire started on Medicine Bow National Forest and spread south and east on BLM managed lands. Fire consumed primary core sagegrouse habitat and burned 8,475 acres of BLM managed lands.

**Squirrel Creek** was reported on 06/30/2012 in Carbon County. Human caused fire started on Medicine Bow National Forest .Incident managed by Rawlins dispatch to support Casper Dispatch and the Medicine Bow National Forest. Type-1 IMT and Type-1 Buying Team brought in to manage incident. Expanded Dispatch (6 dispatchers) completed 14 day detail in managing the incident. Aviation assets managed through RWC Aircraft desk.

**Seminoe** was reported on 7/21/2012 in Carbon County. Lightning caused fire. Threatened Seminoe dam and the power infrastructure to Sinclair refinery. Type-3 IMT brought in to manage incident which started on BLM and burned 3,813 acres. Expanded Dispatch (16 dispatchers in total) established for 30 days to manage this and Ferris incident (see below). Fire was later complexed with Ferris under one IMT.

**Ferris** was reported on 07/27/2012 in Carbon County. Lightning caused fire. Type-3 IMT brought in to manage incident which started on BLM land and burned 12,645 acres. First use of Very Large Air Tanker so support operations and manage incident. Expanded Dispatch went from supporting Seminoe to supporting this incident as well.

**2012 FIRE STATISTICS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **UNIT** | **HUMAN** | | **LIGHTNING** | | **PRESCRIBED** | |
|  | **FIRES** | **ACRES** | **FIRES** | **ACRES** | **FIRES** | **ACRES** |
| **High Desert District** | 29 | 8862.52 | 35 | 30,285.3 | 3 | 2,870 |
| **HDD Counties** | 53 | 2,532.1 | 27 | 3,636.84 | 0 | 0 |
| **Mortensen Lake NWR** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| **Fossil Butte** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Cokeville** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Wyoming State Forestry** | 3 | 5,297.9 | 3 | 848.8 | 0 | 0 |
| **TOTALS** | 85 | 16,692.52 | 62 | 34,770.94 | 3 | 2,890 |
| **5 YEAR AVERAGE** | 57.6 | 1719.46 | 52.8 | 2374.27 | N/A | N/A |

TOTAL NUMBER OF FIRES: 147 TOTAL NUMBER OF ACRES: 51,445.46

NOT ALL COUNTIES REPORT THEIR FIRES, COUNTY NUMBERS MAY NOT BE ACCURATE

**OTHER INCIDENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **INCIDENT TYPE** | **NUMBER** |
| Aircraft | 73 |
| Miscellaneous | 18 |
| Prescribed Fire | 9 |
| Resource Order | 72 |
| SAR | 1 |
| Smoke Check | 98 |
| Structure Fire | 2 |
| Traffic Collision | 5 |
| Vehicle Fire | 3 |
| Wildfire | 147 |
| **Total** | **428** |

**2012 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**Resources Ordered**

**Aircraft:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TYPE OF AIRCRAFT** | **HOW MANY ORDERED (2011)** |
| I.A. Smokejumper Loads | 3 (0) |
| Type 1 or 2 Airtanker | 25 (2) |
| Type 3 Airtanker | 2 (0) |
| SEAT’s | 56 (7) |
| Aerial supervision Module | 7 (0) |
| Air Tactical | 29 (10) |
| Lead Plane | 7 (1) |
| Type 1 Helicopter | 23 (1) |
| Type 2 Helicopter | 8 (0) |
| Type 3 Helicopter | 16 (3) |
| IR Flight | 21 (2) |
| Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) | 5 (1) |
| Air to Air Frequency | 5 (0) |
| Air to Ground Frequency | 4 (0) |

**Total: 213 (27)**

**Crews:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TYPE OF CREW** | **HOW MANY ORDERED** |
| Type 1 | 4 (2) |
| Type 1 or Type 2 IA | 17 (1) |
| Type 2 or 2-IA | 19 (5) |
| Crew Misc. | 2 (0) |

**Total: 40 (8)**

**Equipment:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dozers | 6 (0) |
| Engines | 81 (46) |
| Caterer’s | 2 (0) |
| Water Trucks/ Tenders | 10 (1) |
| Miscellaneous Equipment | 9 (1) |
| Trailers (Commo, Helicopter etc.) | 3 (0) |
| Transportation (trucks, ATV’s etc.) | 18 (0) |
| Mobile Shower Units | 1 (0) |

**Total: 126 (48)**

Rawlins Dispatch also placed 1,356 Overhead orders with the Rocky Mountain Coordination Center.

**Resource Commitments**

In 2012 Rawlins Dispatch supported the following resource commitments:

* Two dispatches for the Green River T2 IA crew
* 34 dispatchers brought in to RWC to support operations
* 12 Severity engines, some requiring multiple crew swaps
* 8 Hand crews (Type 1 and Type-2)
* 4 SEAT Managers
* 2 HDD engines sent off district
* 4 HDD Overhead sent off district
* 18 County engines sent off unit
* 8 County Overhead sent off unit
* Rawlins SEAT base open for 37 days total

Rawlins Dispatch filled 1,381 Overhead orders. This number includes filling local resources to both local and out of area incidents; as well as the reassignment of non-local resources.

**BLM Contracted Type 3 Helicopter**

N173BH began its contract on June 14th. It was scheduled for a 90 day assignment, but due to late season activity on the High Desert District and elsewhere, it was extended for an additional 21 days.

During this time, 3BH flew over 200 hours and participated in 30 assignments outside of the zone.

**WEATHER**

In 2012 there were 74 Fire Weather Watch/Warnings days issued for zones within RWC. The first of these was issued March 28th and the last was issued November 28th. This is a substantial increase from the 17 total days issued in 2011.



**RAWS STATIONS REPORTS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Precipitation in Inches** | **April** | **May** | **June** | **July** | **August** | **September** | **October** |
| **Snow Spring Creek (Sweetwater County)** | .27 | .50 | .01 | .91 | .33 | .08 | .59 |
| **Dodge Creek (Albany County)** | .92 | .54 | .01 | .7 | .56 | 1.21 | .37 |
| **Muddy Creek (Uinta County)** | .33 | .24 | .00 | .34 | .03 | .65 | .83 |
| **Anderson Ridge (Sublette County)** | .24 | .57 | .01 | .25 | .45 | .63 | 1.1 |
| **Cow Creek (Carbon County)** | .27 | .51 | .02 | .89 | .58 | .55 | .15 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Average Monthly Temperatures (Degrees Fahrenheit)** | **April** | **May** | **June** | **July** | **August** | **September** | **October** |
| **Snow Spring Creek (Sweetwater County)** | 51.2 | 59.6 | 74.1 | 78 | 78.8 | 68 | 51.2 |
| **Dodge Creek (Albany County)** | 53.1 | 59.5 | 76 | 80.3 | 78.4 | 67.9 | 48.4 |
| **Muddy Creek (Uinta County)** | 56.8 | 64.2 | 77.1 | 81.7 | 81.7 | 72.9 | 55.8 |
| **Anderson Ridge (Sublette County)** | 48.9 | 56.3 | 70.8 | 78.8 | 76.1 | 66.1 | 47.2 |
| **Cow Creek (Carbon County)** | 54 | 63.1 | 78.3 | 82 | 79.8 | 70.1 | 52 |