

# **NIFC – A Place A Mission**

## **In the Beginning**

NIFC got its start in the mid-1960s, when the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and Department of Commerce's Weather Bureau (now the National Weather Service) pooled their fire resources to form the Boise Interagency Fire Center, or BIFC. Subsequently, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service joined the Center. Today, the National Association of State Foresters and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also have representation at NIFC. In 1993, the name was changed from BIFC to the National Interagency Fire Center, to reflect the center's national mission. NIFC is still located in Boise, Idaho, where the partner agencies employ about 600 people.

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is the nation's logistical and support center for wildland fire and, sometimes, national emergencies. NIFC is the place where state, federal and tribal agencies work together to get fire personnel, aircraft, supplies, and equipment from anywhere in the country to where they are needed the most.

NIFC doesn't fight fires. That work is the responsibility of local, federal, state, tribal, and community agencies. NIFC's primary mission is to provide cooperative leadership, technical expertise, people and equipment for national and international wildland fire management and emergency assistance.

NIFC, then, is a place with a mission -- to ensure that wildland firefighters everywhere have the support and information they need to be safe, effective and efficient.

## **When Fires Burn**

Wildfire suppression is built on a three-tiered system of support – the local area, one of the 11 geographic areas (see map at left), and finally, the national level. When a fire is reported, the local agency and its firefighting partners respond. If the fire continues to grow, the agency can ask for help from its geographic area. When a geographic area has exhausted all its resources, it can turn to NIFC's National Interagency Coordination Center for help in locating what is needed, from air tankers to radios to firefighting crews to incident management teams.

## **ALSO AT NIFC**

Other services and programs include:

Infrared mapping services

National Interagency Coordination Center

Remote Automatic Weather Station headquarters

Fire meteorology and predictive services

Radio and communication cache

Fire intelligence and information

Joint Fire Science Program

Equipment development

Training development

BLM Boise smokejumper base

Great Basin fire cache

Boise National Forest air tanker base

#### **NATIONAL MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION GROUP**

When the national fire situation becomes severe, the National Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC) is activated. It identifies national needs and issues, and sets priorities for allocation of resources. NMAC is composed of the fire directors of each agency, representatives from FEMA and the states, plus technical specialists as needed.

#### **NIFC – ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AROUND THE WORLD**

The agencies at NIFC do more than respond to wildfire. Often, they are asked to support natural disasters and emergencies in conjunction with FEMA. Through the US Department of State's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, and international agreements, NIFC can help with incidents in other countries as well.

#### **WILDLAND FIRE – A NATURAL PROCESS**

In simplest terms, fire is a chemical reaction among oxygen, heat and fuel. Fire has shaped much of the landscape as it is today and will continue to do so in the future. NIFC will be a part of wildland fire's future, helping to manage and better understand this vital, primitive force.

#### **LIKE TO LEARN MORE?**

Visit NIFC's website at [www.nifc.gov](http://www.nifc.gov)

You may also get information by writing to:

National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 S. Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705