

# 2023 BMIFC Annual Report

Ben Harrison Fire  
Photograph by Todd Pease



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**BLUE MOUNTAIN INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER**  
WALLOWA-WHITMAN NATIONAL FOREST  
UMATILLA NATIONAL FOREST  
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY  
UMATILLA AGENCY BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
SOUTHEAST REGION WASHINGTON DNR



# 2023 BMIFC Annual Report

## Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center

### “Our Mission Is Your Safety”

The 2023 season for Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center (BMIDC) arrived in the form of abundant out-of-GACC support in the first shoulder season. Our footprint steadily supported RX operations in both the Eastern and Southern Geographic Areas. One significant change from previous years was the commitment of resources to wildfires in Canada, including crews and overhead, which lasted into July.

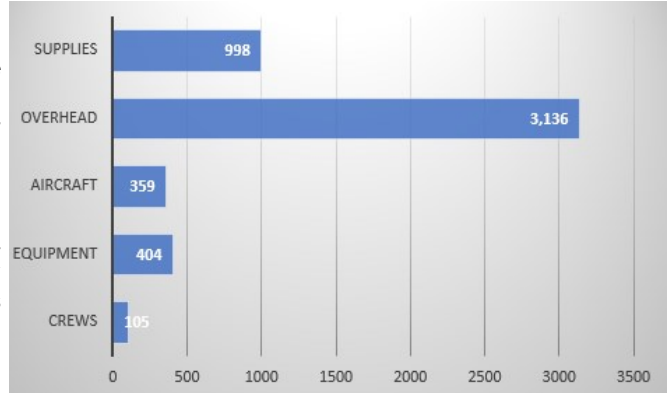
While the BMIDC footprint experienced a short burst of activity in late July and early August, we remained atypically slow for August, due to the influence of hurricane remnants and a monsoonal flow bringing abundant moisture. This lack of activity allowed for resources from the BMIDC footprint to assist on fires in western Oregon and Washington. Due to the lack of activity, Blue Mountain Dispatch was also able to assist numerous dispatch centers throughout both the region and nation.

While the need for expanded dispatch in 2023 was limited our commitment to safety continued as we offered virtual positions where possible in expanded. We've continued to see success with this strategy and retention of quality expanded staff.

Fire season officially ended September 30<sup>th</sup> and the BMIDC footprint experienced limited activity afterwards, including a small number of prescribed fires.

Special thanks to the BMIDC Ops group, Board of Directors, Line Officers and the Radio Group for your unwavering support.

As always, we continue to strive for exemplary service to all of our users. We look forward to a safe and effective 2024 field season where our mission will always be your safety!



Initial Attack	
Wildfire Incidents	207
Search & Rescue	15
Medical Aid	8
Law Enforcement	22
Prescribed Fire	41
Smoke Chases	150
Admin Tracking	
*groups signed out	4,186
*5/1-10/31	
Night Shifts	90

**Logistics**  
**IROC Incidents Created:** 241  
 (Supported 253 non local incidents)  
**Union IHC:** 7 Assignments  
**La Grande IHC:** 10 Assignments  
**Eagle Cap WFM:** 5 Assignments  
**Type II IA Crews:** WWF - 3, UMF - 4  
 UMF Vet Crew - 4  
**NEO Type 3 Team:** No deployments

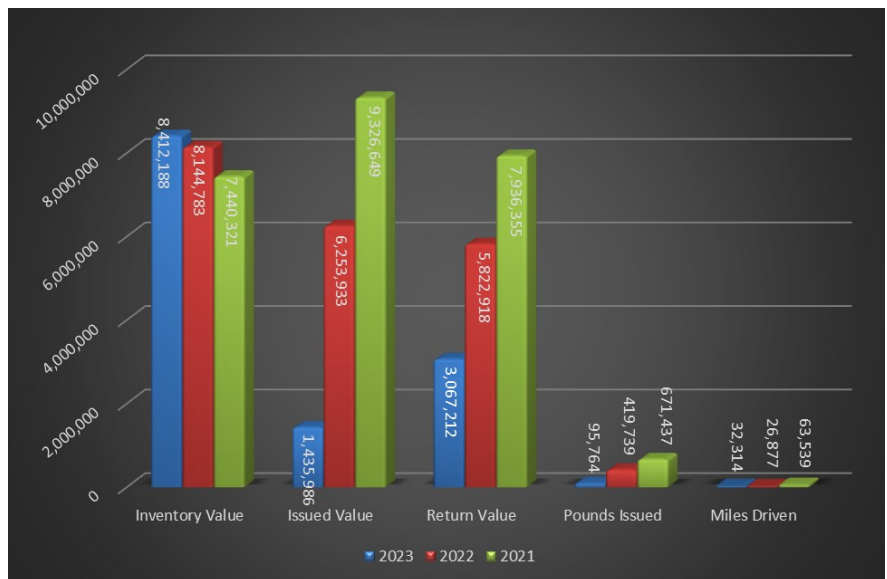
## La Grande Fire Interagency Support Cache

The 2023 season at the La Grande Fire Cache got its kick start in May. Annual kit updates and routine preparation for the 2023 season were the primary focus of the crew. 2023 was a pretty slow season in regard to local support, but the Cache provided crucial refurbishment operations to the National Cache system, to help keep inventory in the system.

This year we welcomed 2 new 1039 employees to the cache, Jayden Wiggins, and Daniel Gossler. The La Grande Fire Cache employed a total of 9 Administratively Determined (AD) employees, to increase our workforce. AD salaries paid in support of the La Grande Fire Cache totaled approximately \$107,173 helping boost the local economy. The La Grande Fire Cache was also able to provide support to other National Caches by sending a total of 5 of our folks out on fire assignments to the following National Caches, located in London, KY, Boise, ID, and Ontario, CA.

During the 2023 season the La Grande Cache provided \$2,773,434 in support to both Regional and National Caches by shipping and delivering supplies items in support of ongoing incidents. The Cache also provided local support to 1-Type II, and 1-Type III incidents on the Wallowa-Whitman NF, Umatilla NF, Malheur NF, as well as to the Oregon Department of Forestry. In addition, resource requests for small initial attack incidents kept the crew busy. Cache personnel also assisted with the Region 6 Rappel Academy as well local unit needs for the Oregon Department of Forestry, Washington DNR, local BIA and BLM units.

Our overall inventory value for 2023 totaled \$8,412,188. The dollar amount issued directly out to incident support for the 2023 fire season was \$1,435,986. Total dollar amount returned from incidents was \$3,067,212. Total miles driven this year in support of incidents, accident free, was 32,314.



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## Aviation - Fixed Wing



### La Grande Exclusive Use ATGS

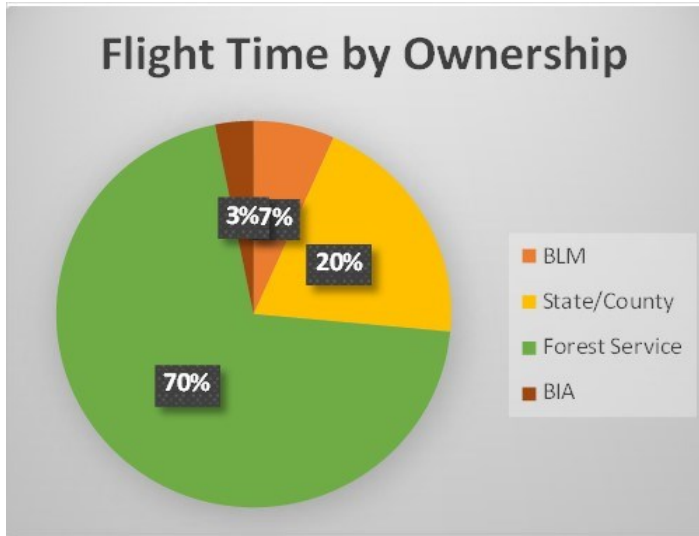
#### Air Attack 616 N78NA AC690b

La Grande Air Attack AA 616 (8NA) began the season stationed in R3 from April 13th, 2023 to July 3rd, 2023. From July 3rd, 2023 to September 30th, 2023 AA616 was back in R6. AA616 finished up the fire season at the end of September. 8NA flew 250 hours, and had 5 Air Attack trainees for 88 days of training and 145 hours of trainee flight time.

### ODF Aircraft

#### Detection Plane N60018

018 had a good season with a total of 70.39 flight hours on the BMIDC footprint.



**Total Hours Flown: 250**



Flight Stats	T-822	T-869	Totals
<b>Flight Time</b>	<b>46.34</b> 28.63 ODF 17.71 Federal	<b>45.74</b> 27.99 ODF 17.75 Federal	<b>92.08</b>
<b>Total Number of Fires</b>	13 ODF 6 Federal	13 ODF 6 Federal	<b>19</b>
<b>Total Gallons of Retardant</b>	<b>33,307</b> 20,564 ODF 12,743 Federal	<b>32,401</b> 19,763 ODF 12,638 Federal	<b>65,708</b>

### La Grande Air Tanker Base

Cost to Incident	
Retardant Cost	\$692,723.31
Flight Time Cost	\$368,209.70
Landing Fees	\$11,474.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$1,072,474.00</b>

The La Grande Airtanker Base provided retardant services and support personnel for safe, fast and efficient loading. ODF funded the SEATS and provided a SEMG. This is a very successful partnership for all agencies within the BMIDC footprint. The tanker base opened for fire support on June 1st, 2023. The tanker base hosts two (ODF) contract SEATS. T869 and T822 were hosted on a 60-day contract. On July 15th the first loads of the season left La Grande in support of suppression activities on Cayuse fire in Oregon. The busiest stretch of the season was August 10th through August 12th with 33,823 gallons on Snipe Creek and Ben Harrison fires. Last loads of the season were sent to Trout Creek fire in Oregon on September 17th, 2023. In total 112 missions were flown from the La Grande Airtanker Base. Visiting aircraft, 6 Large Airtankers and 5 SEATS. The tanker base pumped 200,038 total gallons of retardant, costing incidents \$692,723.31 in 2023. The tanker base is a force account, one of few left in the nation that doesn't require a retardant contracted tank farm. This was La Grande Airtanker Base's 32nd season without an accident or incident with Large Air Tankers.

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## Aviation – Rotor Wing

### Type 1 Helicopters

The Grande Ronde Rappellers managed 2 different Type 1 Helicopters this past summer. Helitanker (HT)-8AC, a Bellings Aircraft S-64 Sky Crane. HT-8AC was managed for 23 days on a CWN contract starting July 7th, 2023, supporting local IA for the tri-forest area and some off forest large fire support. HT-8AC flew for 67.8 hours, responded to 6 initial attack fires, 4 extended attack fires, and dropped 459,098 gallons of water. The second Type 1 Helicopter was HT-2HT, this helicopter never made it to the BMIDC footprint. HT-2HT is a Helicopter Transport Services S-64 Sky Crane, that the Grande Ronde Rappellers took over management of on July 28th, 2023 while it was assigned to the Flat Fire in SW Oregon. HT-2HT flew 140.8 hours, responded to 5 initial attack fires, 6 extended attack fires, dropped 1,053,822 gallons of water, and was assigned to large fire support for 49 days.

### ODF Aircraft

3NP's season ran from July 12th - September 24th, with a total of 57.9 hours flown in the 2023 season. This flight time occurred on 15 incidents. Totals for the season were 24.8 hours on ODF fires and 15.8 hours on federal incidents. The other flight hours were spent supporting OSFM, WADNR and training. 3NP delivered 738 buckets for 295,200 gallons of water.



N679H (Bell 205A1++) was on 120 day contract and extended for 9 days. H-79H was assigned to Salmon, ID for Re-certification rappel training and National Rookie Rappel Academy. Then was prepositioned to Taos, NM in late June and then moved back to Region 6 in early July supporting the Rogue Siskyou NF and Flat fire in SW Oregon and then COFMS for most of the fire season.

Statistics	79H	89H
<b>Total Flight Time - Home Unit / Off Forest/</b>	<b>184.7</b>	<b>136.9</b>
<b>Initial Attack Responses</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Extended Attack Response</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Operational Rappels</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Rappel Fires:</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Helitack Fires:</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Internal/External Pounds Delivered</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>17,342</b>
<b>Gallons of Water Delivered:</b>	<b>76,133</b>	<b>74,574</b>

N689H (Bell 205A1++) was on 120 day contract and did not extend. H-89H arrived in La Grande on June 8th, 2023 and remained in the Tri-forest area as the only rappel ship for most of the season. H-89H responded to multiple incidents in Region 1 from its host base in La Grande. The helicopter was assigned to Packwood, WA and the Gifford Pinchot NF on August 25th, 2023 to support multiple lightning fires that had started and remained in the area for the rest of the season.



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## Washington Department of Natural Resources

### Southeast Region - Washington DNR Snake River Unit

2023 Fires	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	5	84
Human	11	28
<b>Totals</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>112</b>

Incidents	Ignition Date	Acres	Cause
Cummings Creeks	9/8/2023	84.00	L
Grouse Flat	7/9/2023	20.50	H
North Touchet	8/28/2023	3.00	H
Bowman Road	9/18/2023	1.50	H
Grouse Flat	7/30/2023	1.20	H
Tucannon	6/5/2023	1.17	H
Fountain	6/17/2023	.11	L

## Umatilla Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs

2023 Fires	Number of Fires	Acres Burned
Lightning	1	0.10
Human	18	986
<b>Totals</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>986</b>



Incident	Ignition Date	Acres	Cause
Bensel Road Mutual Aid	9/3/2023	645.00	H
North Cayuse	7/24/2023	199.26	H
Cayuse	7/15/2023	109.90	H
Goad Road	3/17/2023	15.00	H
Motanic	7/24/2023	7.50	H
Shenandoah	6/22/2023	3.00	H

Incident	Ignition Date	Acres	Cause
Short Mile	8/2/2023	2.00	H
Best Road	7/14/2023	1.06	H
Wanneket	6/22/2023	1.00	H
Creek	6/26/2023	1.00	H
Johnley	8/2/2023	0.50	H
Spring Creek	7/24/2023	0.25	H

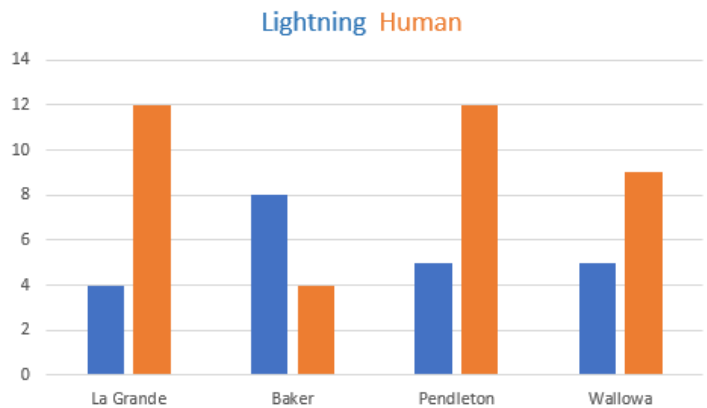
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## Oregon Department of Forestry

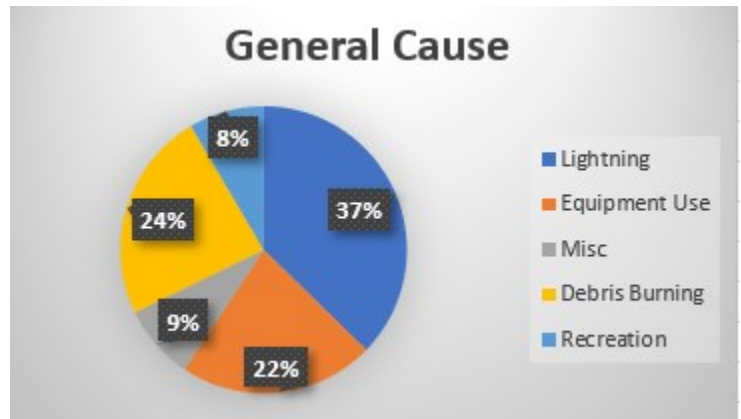
- 2023 was below average for both number of stat fires and acreage burnt for the season.
- 86% of all fires were caught at 10 acres or less.
- H-3NP supported 15 incidents, 61% of 40.6 hours of flight time were on ODF ground.
- N60018 Recon Plane had 70.39 hours of flight time.
- T-822 and T-869 dropped 65,708 gallons of retardant. Both SEATs flew for a total of 92.08 hours of flight time.

FIRES BY CAUSE



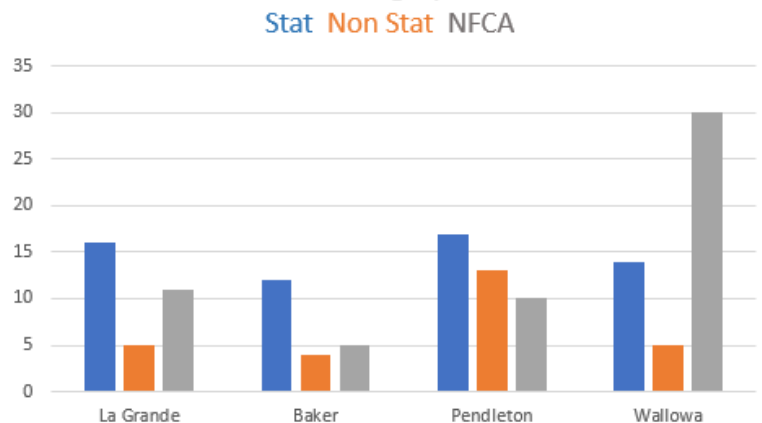
Fire	Ignition Date	Acres	Cause
39 Road	7/17	5	H
Jones Butte	7/27	115	H
Grossman	7/31	153	H
Thompson	8/3	8	H
Snipe Creek	8/10	38	L
Pearson	8/10	11	L

General Cause



Year	# Of Fires	Acreage
2023	59	513
2022	56	11,190
2021	68	18,170
2020	76	337
2019	75	486
2018	78	1,466
2017	59	636
2016	44	874
2015	85	53,780
2014	106	1,038
<b>Average</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>8,849</b>

Category



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## Umatilla National Forest

Unit	Fires	Acres
Heppner	5	0.70
Pomeroy	10	1.50
N.F. John Day	11	62.50
Walla Walla	9	41.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>66.85</b>

**THE FOREST ASSEMBLED**  
**2 TYPE II IA CREWS & 2 TYPE II CREWS FOR A**  
**TOTAL OF 4 CREWS**

**UMF#1** - Simnasho (OR-WSA), Jones Butte (OR-971S), Grossman (OR-974S) & Thompson (OR-972S)

**UMF#2** - Salmon (OR-WIF) & Bedrock (OR-WIF)

**UMF#3** - Cowlitz Complex (WA-GPF)

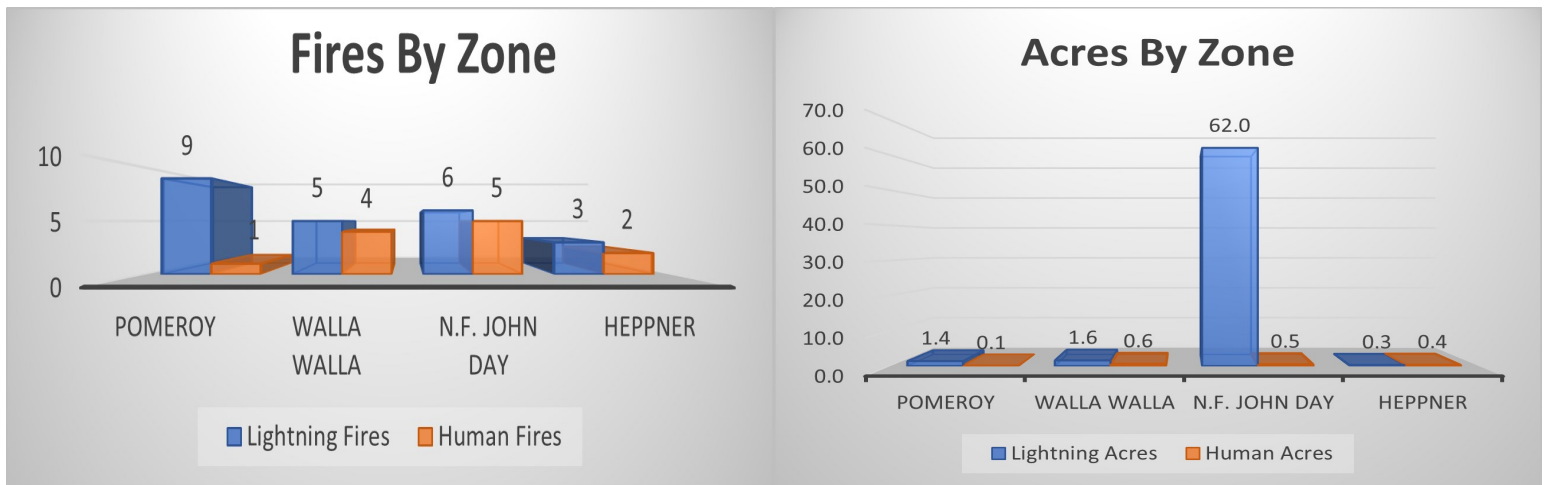
**UMF#4** - Smith River Complex (CA-SRF), Ben Harrison (OR-UMF)

**Umatilla Veteran Crew** - 4 Assignments

Fuels Program	
Jackpot/Landscape	628 Acres
Pile Burning	1,047 Acres
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,675 Acres</b>

**SIGNIFICANT OR LARGE INCIDENTS:**

Ben Harrison	8/11/2023
Camas Creek	8/9/2023
Tiger	8/29/2023
Howard Creek	6/7/2023
Third Creek	7/25/2023



Year	Number of Lightning Starts	Lightning Acres	Number of Human Starts	Human Acres	Total Number of Starts	Total Number Of Acres
2014	75	7,231	7	1	82	7,232
2015	83	71,623	16	2,265	99	73,888
2016	12	205	10	48	22	253
2017	49	134	16	185	65	319
2018	29	1,056	13	414	42	1,470
2019	68	6,190	17	164	85	6,354
2020	79	1,039	7	39	75	1,078
2021	47	98,202	11	58	58	104,401
2022	45	766	10	1	55	767
2023	23	65	12	2	35	67
<b>10 yr. avg.</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18,651</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>19,583</b>

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## Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Unit	Fires	Acres
Burnt Powder Fire Zone	19	8.90
Wallowa Fire Zone	17	415.20
Grande Ronde Fire Zone	15	71.40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>495.50</b>

### THE FOREST ASSEMBLED 3 TYPE II IA CREWS:

**WWF#1** - Wawawai (WA-WFS), Flat (OR-RSF)  
**WWF#2** - Ben Harrison (OR-UMF), Oregon (WA-NES)  
**WWF#3** - Jones Creek (OR-WWF), Camp Creek (OR-MHF)

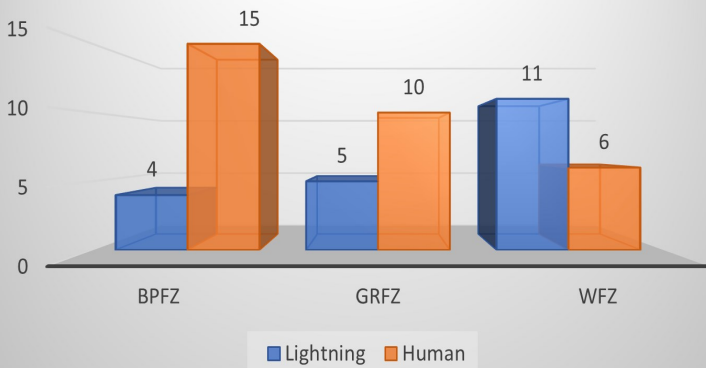
Fuels Program	
Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Acres
RX Fire	1570
Pile Burning	1837
Fire for Resource Benefit	68

### SIGNIFICANT OR LARGE INCIDENTS:

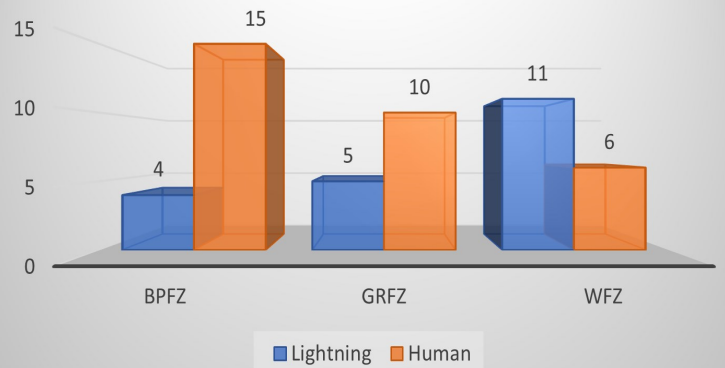
High Range 8/6/2024  
 Temperance 8/5/2024  
 Corral 8/10/2024  
 Kirby Creek 7/17/2024  
 Swamp Creek 7/1/2024  
 China Cap 9/10/2024  
 24/7 8/3/2024  
 Goose 8/5/2024  
 Sawmill 10/19/2024

**LA GRANDE IHC** - 6 ASSIGNMENTS  
**UNION IHC** - 7 ASSIGNMENTS  
**EAGLE CAP WFM** - 5 ASSIGNMENTS

### Fires by Zone



### Fires by Zone

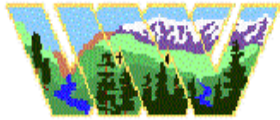


Year	Number of Lightning Starts	Lightning Acres	Number of Human Starts	Human Acres	Total Number of Starts	Total Number Of Acres
2014	99	55,575	15	339	114	55,914
2015	63	42,687	23	7,561	86	50,248
2016	33	30	29	28,584	62	28,614
2017	91	4,317	20	182	111	4,498
2018	26	17	13	5	39	22
2019	67	5,706	26	27	93	5,733
2020	60	21	23	12	83	33
2021	44	1,780	25	83	69	1,863
2022	60	197,933	11	1,868	71	199,802
2023	20	481	29	13	49	494
<b>10 yr. avg.</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>30,855</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3,867</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>34,722</b>



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## Interagency Hotshot Crews



# LA GRANDE HOTSHOTS



La Grande IHC started the 2023 fire season April 10th with ten days of training. The crews' first assignment was to WA for some prescribed burning. Their next assignment was to southern OR in May for a wildfire. In June the crew travelled to the Eastern Area GACC in support of IA and Severity. July, the crew had returned to the PNW bouncing between WA and OR, with a detour to ID in R1. For the remainder of the fire season the crew stayed in the PNW supporting wild-fires there. Finishing their season on October 8th, having been together for 181 days.

Total days crew was assembled	182
Start Date	4/10
End Date	10/8
Total number of days assigned to incidents (Includes travel)	127
How many days were in official travel status	23
How many 14 day tours were completed during total number of days assigned	6
Number of days on project work while assigned (list specific type: e.g.. Trails, fuels etc.)	16
Total number of days off	21
Days off in pay status	15
Days off in non- pay status	6
Number of days in training	10



# Union Hotshots

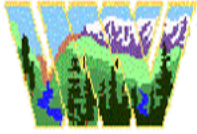


Union IHC started their season on April 24th, with mandatory training. Their first assignment was to NV in support of RX burning in May. Next assignment was north of the border in Canada at the beginning of June. Upon returning from Canada the crew spent July in R6, towards the start of August the crew found its self-up north again, this time in AK. The crew spent the remainder of the season back in PNW, finishing up the season on 9/27 after being assembled for 156 days.

Total days crew was assembled	168
Start Date	4/24
End Date	9/27
Total number of days assigned to incidents (Includes travel)	108
How many days were in official travel status	18
How many 14 day tours were completed during total number of	7
Number of days on project work while assigned (list specific type: e.g.. Trails, fuels etc.)	0
Total number of days off	28
Days off in pay status	15
Days off in non- pay status	13
Number of days in training	8

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## Wildland Fire Module



### Eagle Cap Wildland Fuel Module



The Wildland Fire Module started out the season supporting R8 RX. We sent 3 mods of 4-6 in March through April, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and Virginia. Critical Training was completed with the core group and 1039's that were available May 20. The modules first wildland fire assignment was to the Siuslaw NF severity, Jones Butte and Grossman ODF fires later July, High Range and the Corral Fire in early August, Lookout Fire on the Willamette in August and finished the season on the 3 Buttes fire on the Siuslaw. The module went on 5 large fire assignments and responded to 6 wildland fire incidents locally.

Total days crew was assembled	210
Start Date	5/8
End Date	12/15
Total number of days assigned to incidents (Includes travel)	98
How many days were in official travel status	16
How many 14 day tours were completed during total number of days assigned	5
Number of days on project work while assigned (list specific type: e.g.. Trails, fuels etc.)	66
Total number of days off	46
Days off in pay status	4
Days off in non- pay status	42
Number of days in training	20



## Type 2 IA Crew

### UMATILLA VETERAN CREW



The Umatilla Veteran Crew's season began April 17th, 2023. The first 8 weeks were dedicated to veterans transitioning into the civilian work force after completion of their military service. After our rookies graduated from their internship, U.V.C. spent the first 14-day assignment out of region in Colorado and Utah, on the Chris Mt. Fire and I-70 Mile Marker 217 fire, respectfully. Afterward, the crew spent the rest of the season in region between Willamette N.F. in Southwestern Oregon (Lookout fire) up as far North as the Northern Cascades near Diablo, WA (Sourdough fire). U.V.C. finished the year with local broadcast burning and pile burning on our home district and concluded our season 11/17/2023. UVC also supported R8 and R9 in the off-season by sending a module out on 5 Rx assignments. This was the last year of the Mt. Adam Institute/AmeriCorps partnership and UVC will fully transition to implementing a new org chart with 17 permanent employees and 8 1039 employees.

Total days crew was assembled	215
Start Date	4/17/23
End Date	11/17/23
Total number of days assigned to incidents (Includes travel)	76
How many days were in official travel status	8
How many 14 day tours were completed during total number of days assigned	4
Number of days on project work while assigned (list specific type: e.g.. Trails, fuels etc.)	0
Total number of days off	68
Days off in pay status	12
Days off in non- pay status	56
Number of days in training	28