



## National Fire Plan

### **Alaska Team Responds to Hurricane Area**

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in 2005, the expertise of an Alaska fire team was needed to help with the situation in Mississippi.

The 33-member Alaska Type 1 Interagency Incident Management Team was dispatched to the hurricane area on September 3. The team is comprised of state and federal agencies in Alaska, including Mary Kwart, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Region Fuels Specialist. The Alaska team specializes in wildfire and natural disaster relief, but also has been called upon for incidents such as the World Trade Center catastrophe on September 11, 2001.

During the Katrina assignment, the team assisted the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in receiving and distributing trailers and mobile homes for evacuees. Based in Selma, Alabama, the team set up five outlying sites from Baton Rouge, Louisiana to Cumberland, Maryland. During their two-week assignment the team distributed more than 9,700 trailers.

On September 21, 2005 FEMA asked the team to assist the state of Mississippi in augmenting its wildland firefighting capabilities. Hurricane winds toppled 40-60 percent of all trees in southern Mississippi, creating extreme fire danger because fire season in the south doesn't end until after November. The team wrote a fire hazard mitigation plan and implemented it by immediately dispatching fire personnel, engines and bulldozers from around the country. The hazard teams removed fallen trees from roads and stood ready to suppress fires in ten counties adjacent to Mississippi's Gulf Coast.

The Alaska team returned home on October 3, 2005.

Contact: Chuck Young,  
907-786-3909

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The 33-member Alaska Interagency Incident Management Team was dispatched to Mississippi to aid victims of Hurricane Katrina. (USFWS)