

National Fire Plan

Fire Preparedness Improvements in Northeastern California Making a Difference in the West California 2002



The National Fire Plan provided the Modoc National Forest in rural northeastern California with preparedness funds to increase firefighting capability to prevent, detect and conduct successful initial attack on wildland fires. Beginning in FY 2001 and continuing throughout this fiscal year, the Forest has added an engine crew, hotshot crew, watertender, lookout and fire management officer, and upgraded three engines and a prevention unit to larger equipment.

The new fire engine crew, stationed in Alturas, responded to 24 incidents by the end of September 2002, including two assignments in Arizona and one in New Mexico. Cooperating firefighting agencies requested the engine for four assignments to assist with initial attack of wildland fires within the wildland urban interface. This additional engine allows the Forest the capability to send a five-engine strike team without hitting draw down levels, independent of other forests or cooperators. This additional engine also allows for improved strategic placement of suppression resources during lightning storms. The new engine leadership enhances the Forest Type 4 Incident Commander capabilities.

The Modoc Interregional Hotshot Crew was funded for 130 days with 104 of those days spent on wildland fire assignments and with the remaining 26 days dedicated to training and to Forest project work. The crew responded to 11 large fires in California and Colorado, as of October 1, 2002. The crew constructed fireline for the Willow Springs Hayden Hill prescribed fire projects. The crew provided instructors for forest-level fire courses, such as fire behavior, driving for the fire service and chainsaw safety, which have been difficult to provide due to instructor shortages in these areas. The crew supported the National Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship program by providing details for two Region 5 and two Region 6 Apprentices. Fifteen additional engine personnel, including two employees from the National Park Service, completed wildland fire assignments with the crew.