



# Southern Area Type 2 Incident Management Team



## **PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Civil Air Patrol Lends Assistance**

**Great Dismal Swamp (June 20, 2008)** – Help comes from a variety of places on a wildland fire assignment. This fire has many people and organizations providing assistance. The latest addition is the Civil Air Patrol.

Thanks to Communications Unit Leader Byron Van Alstein, his ability to reach far and wide has resulted in the addition of four aircraft and many man-hours to support the South One Fire. The Southern Area Incident Management Team was having trouble communicating by radio with crews on the fire. Byron had a cost-saving solution.

A quick phone call to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for help triggered some phone calls to the Civil Air Patrol National Operations Center. Now the South One Fire has an airborne radio repeater in Civil Air Patrol aircraft flying “high bird” over the fire provided by the Virginia Wing of the Patrol.

Maj. Mike Portanova is the Incident Commander for the CAP contingent. Major Portanova is an electrical Inspector with the City of Hampton. He and a small staff are working out of an RV at the Suffolk Airport. The CAP is flying Cessna-182s on three hour shifts from early morning to dusk.

This is the first time the Virginia Wing has supported wildland fire operations. Tony Wilder, Incident Commander for the South One Fire said that “these additional assets will provide a valuable safety link to the crews. The aerial repeater platforms are just one more layer of protection for my firefighters.”

The CAP unit is scheduled to fly missions through July 1<sup>st</sup> if needed.

###