

National Elk Refuge News – August 29, 2013

Teton Interagency Fire Personnel Assist in Idaho



Above: Pictured left to right: Chip Collins, National Park Service / Grand Teton National Park; Mike Bentley, US Forest Service / Bridger-Teton National Forest; Lori Iverson, US Fish & Wildlife Service / National Elk Refuge; Tobin Kelley, US Forest Service / Bridger-Teton National Forest; and Traci Weaver, National Park Service / Grand Teton National Park. Below: The view from fire camp.

The Teton Interagency Fire program was well represented at the Beaver Creek Fire near Hailey, Idaho earlier this month, a large wildfire that received national media attention. The fire, which began on August 7, quickly grew in size and required the oversight of a Type 1 Incident Management Team.

When the lightning-caused fire began, the National Interagency Fire Center had issued a preparedness level of 5 for the Eastern Great Basin Geographic Area, which includes, among other areas, western Wyoming and the southern half of Idaho. Ranging from 1 to 5, Preparedness levels refer to the number of incident management teams and crews

already committed to fires. The higher the number, the greater the demand and competition for resources. Shortly after the Beaver Creek Fire began, the national preparedness level also jumped to 5, the highest level on

the scale. Personnel, crews, and equipment were scarce due to the increased fire activity, including multiple large fires in Idaho. However, the Beaver Creek Fire became the top priority fire in the nation, outcompeting other



incidents for needed personnel.

Teton Interagency Fire program staff assisted with management of the wildfire by filling Fire Behavior Analyst, Resource Unit Leader, and Fire Information Officer positions. Though over 1,000 people were eventually assigned to the incident, the five from the Teton Interagency Fire program worked closely together at the Incident Command Post and attributed their close working relationship to some of the successes in their respective roles. “It’s always helpful to have people from your home area on an incident with you,” explained Chip Collins, who serves on the Great Basin National Incident Management Team that responded to the fire. “You know each other’s strengths, you already have cohesion, and you have the support of one another when you need it, both on the incident and when you’re back at home.”

A sixth member of the Teton Interagency Fire program was assigned to the incident when fire activity and progression slowed and the fire transitioned to a Type 2 management level earlier this week. Elizabeth Watson from Jackson Hole Fire/EMS is currently serving as a Medical Unit Leader, completing participation in the incident by all the organizations within the Teton Interagency Fire program.



Additional photos of the Beaver Creek Fire can be viewed on the Great Basin National Incident Management Team #1's Flickr site at www.flickr.com/photos/100460143@N08/