



Lifeline to the Fireline

BOISE INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER



BIFC was established in 1965 to improve the coordination of fire-support activities among Federal and State firefighting agencies. That goal has remained constant, but the overall mission and operation of the national interagency fire center at Boise has evolved greatly over the first quarter century of its existence.



Center directors receive daily briefings on fire and weather conditions.



The Fire Center is staffed by fire management personnel from five federal land-resource agencies: the **Bureau of Land Management**, **Bureau of Indian Affairs**, **National Park Service**, and **Fish & Wildlife Service**, all of the U.S. Department of the Interior; and the **Forest Service**, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Idaho office of the **National Weather Service**, of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is the sixth agency making up the Interagency Fire Center. All of the Fire Center agencies except the National Weather Service are Washington Office-level fire management staffs of the agencies they represent. *Each Fire Center agency has its own individual mission and funding, but all cooperate in programs to improve the efficiency and economics of support to wildfire suppression efforts nationwide.*

BIFC is called upon to help during many types of emergencies: floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters, as well as in the fight against wildfire when local, state and regional resources are exhausted. The Center has been a pioneer in the development of fire suppression equipment, and its fire-training courses are used nationally and internationally.



Administration Building

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



The BLM is the host agency for the Fire Center; it owns and operates the 55-acre site. The other five agencies pay their fair share of the Operating expenses and share equally the responsibility of overseeing the Center's inter-agency programs.

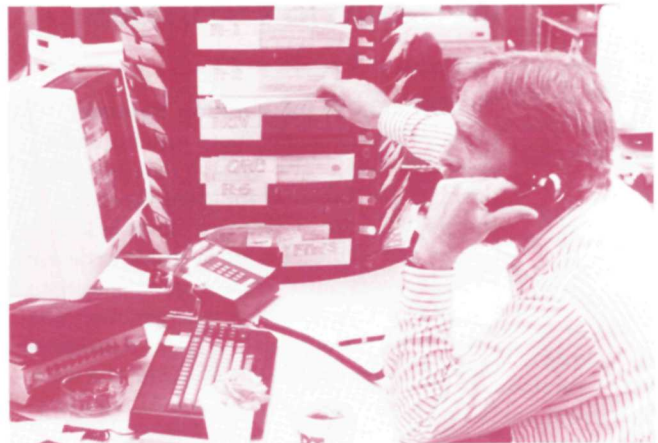
The four BLM divisions are:

- Management Services
- Fire Management
- Information Systems
- Training



MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The **Division of Management Services** operates the BIFC fire warehouse and all buildings and grounds at the Center. The **Branch of Supply** is responsible for the warehouse and aircraft-ramp activity. It is responsible for the procurement, warehousing, maintenance and speedy movement of fireline and personnel support items to fires and fire agencies whenever and wherever needed. *The Branch must be prepared to support about 8,000 firefighters at any given time.* The **Base Services Branch** does payrolls for emergency firefighters, provides ground transportation at BIFC and furnishes administrative support at fire camps. The Branch is also responsible for maintaining the buildings and grounds of the site.



Logistics coordinators dispatching resources to emergency incidents.



Firefighters being transported to fire.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

The **Division of Fire Management** and its four branches support BLM field units in program planning and implementation. **Field Operations** provides fire specialists to all agencies and oversees equipment standardization within the BLM. **Logistics Support** is a combined Interior and Forest Service operation, receiving and processing "fire resource" orders from across the U. S. and Canada. It is also responsible for the gathering, analysis and dissemination of fire intelligence. **Fire Science/Support** provides field assistance in fire planning, behavior, ecology, and systems. **Smokejumper Management** provides smokejumpers to the Alaska Fire Service, BLM field offices in the western states, and to cooperators.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The **Division of Information Systems** provides fire communications systems and a great deal more. The Division maintains and operates the **National Incident Radio Support Cache**. Communications unit leaders and technicians are available to design, install, and operate complete communications systems for fires and other emergencies. The Division also installs and maintains **Automatic Lightning Detection** units as part of a west-wide fire detection system. *The ALDS units can detect an air-to-ground lightning strike from up to 225 miles away — and pinpoint it within a mile at that distance.* They are used in conjunction with **Remote Automatic Weather Stations**, solar-powered devices that gather weather information and feed it up to a satellite passing overhead. A satellite dish at the Fire Center acquires this data from all the RAWS stations via the satellite and disseminates it through the AFFIRMS computer program to resource management agencies by land-line.



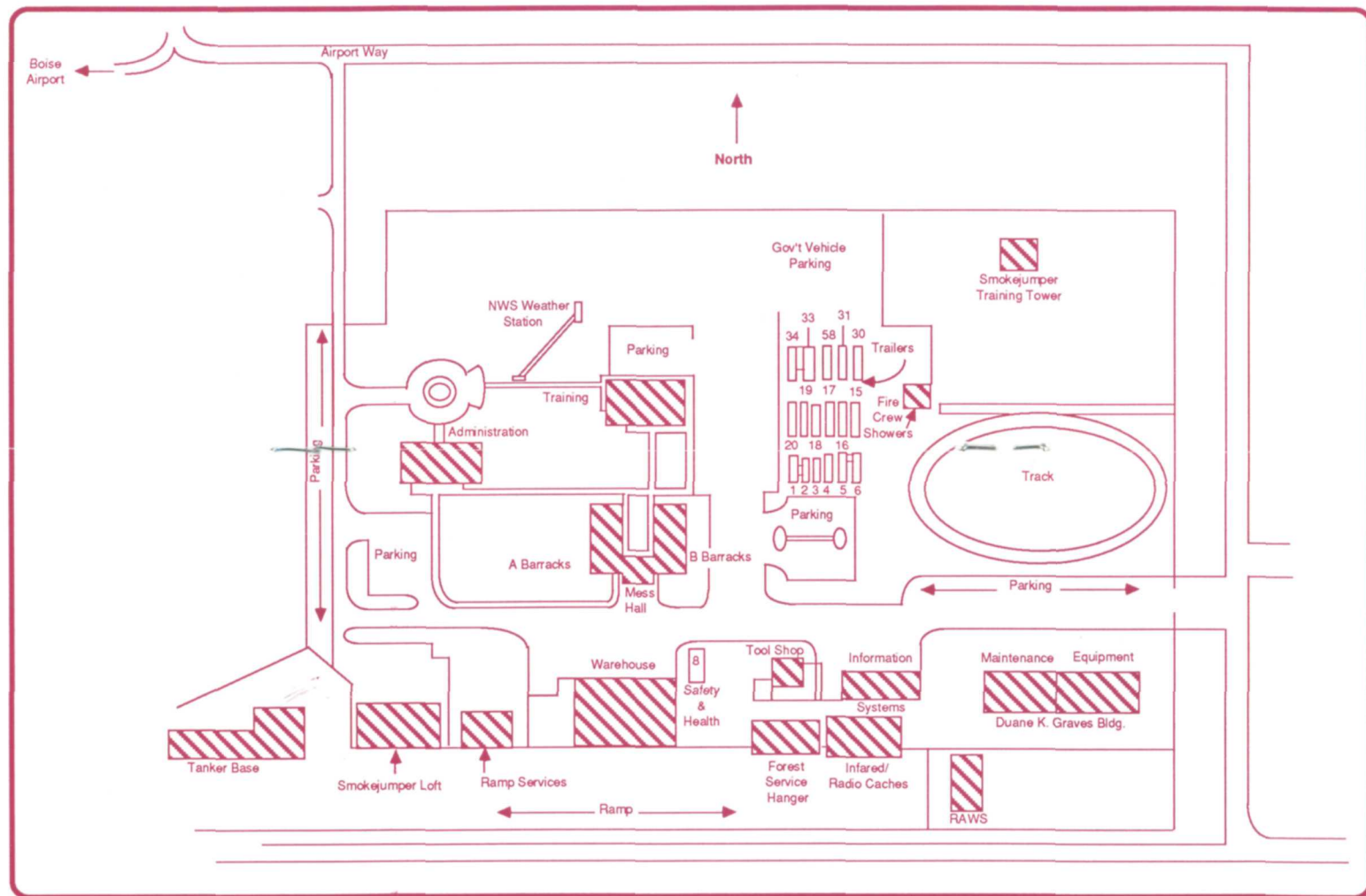
ALDS and RAWS information is combined with observed data from several other sources, utilizing computer-based data manipulation and display techniques, into the **Initial Attack Management System**. IAMS provides BLM fire suppression managers with a totally integrated information package that allows faster response time when making initial decisions.

TRAINING

The **Division of Training** develops fire training and conducts courses for the BLM and cooperating agencies. Courses include basic through advanced training in fire suppression, prevention, prescribed fire, and related subjects. *Courses and materials support performance and qualification requirements for over 70 fire positions ranging from Basic Firefighter to Incident Commander.* Training is developed centrally by participating agencies and taught by the lowest practical organizational level. Assistance and materials are also provided to state and local agencies, universities, and foreign countries.



The Division's **Technical Development Branch** develops courses and materials, conducts national courses, and assists field offices with regional and local training programs. The **Branch of Training Support** provides audio-visual production, facilities and related services. The **Training Standards Office** provides instructional systems technology and assists in program evaluation. A member of the division is also assigned as Assistant Director of the National Advanced Resource Technology Center at Marana, Arizona. *In an average year, the division develops eight new training products and 12 audio-visual productions. It conducts or directly supports over 60 courses throughout the United States and trains approximately 2,000 personnel.*





Air tanker dropping retardant to stop forward motion of fire.

FOREST SERVICE



The Forest Service jointly operates the **Logistic Support Office** with the BLM to support incidents — whether wildfires or other emergencies. In addition, the needs and capabilities of the 50 State Forestry organizations are also integrated. Staff personnel also oversee the FIREBASE and AFFIRMS computer systems for fire data.

The **National Aviation Contracting Officers** at BIFC contract for air tankers, medium helicopters and transport aircraft. That staff also contracts catering and shower services for firecamp use.

The **National Aviation Operations Officer** and his staff provide aviation expertise for the Forest Service. They conduct inspections on air tankers, transport aircraft and helicopters. They set inspection standards and inspector qualifications and conduct national instrument refresher training for all Forest Service pilots. In cooperation with the Interior Department's **Office of Aircraft Services**, they conduct helicopter pilot training. They also maintain two aircraft for use in national infrared mapping services.

The **Infrared Operations and Maintenance** staff at BIFC uses infrared remote sensing equipment and techniques on wildfires in the United States. They also assist Canada when requested to do so.



Setting up portable showers in the field.



Forest Service Technician running check on radio.

The **National Incident Radio Support Cache** is a combined operation of the Forest Service and Interior agencies. The NIRSC staff is responsible for maintenance, packaging, and shipping of all Forest Service and Interior communications systems and service nets used on all large incidents throughout the United States.

U. S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE



The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) maintains its headquarters office fire management staff at BIFC. The staff provides interagency coordination with the other agencies located at BIFC and provides technical guidance, program review, coordination and leadership for the fire management program within the National Wildlife Refuge Systems. The FWS staff stationed at BIFC coordinates, on a national level, an interagency cooperative concept that had previously been handled by the individual field stations. Such coordination includes training-course identification, development, and presentations; fire-equipment specifications, purchase, and inventory; and fire-suppression team support and fire reporting services to the seven regions of the FWS.



Hotshot crews on way to fireline.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



The National Park Service Washington Office, Branch of Fire Management, is located at BIFC. It exercises both a policy formulation role as well as direct technical support to all the regions and the parks on the full range of wildland fire activities, from prevention to and including prescribed fire. Two **Interagency Hotshot Crews** are also managed by this office with duty stations in parks. The co-location at BIFC with the other land-management agencies facilitates interagency efficiency in coordination with those partners.



BIA radio technician testing equipment.

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS



The Bureau of Indian Affairs office at the Boise Interagency Fire Center provides technical direction and coordination for Bureau-wide fire management activities, including but not limited to fire planning, fire training, fire prevention, fire suppression, fire suppression, and use of prescribed fire. The Office serves as Bureau liaison and coordinator for interagency fire management activities carried out at the center. The focal point for information and coordination of the **Bureau-wide Aviation Management Program** is also located here.



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE



The National Weather Service Forecast Office in Idaho is part of the Fire Center, and is responsible for ten programs;

- Public Weather
- Aviation Weather
- Fire Weather
- Agriculture Forecasts
- Hydrologic Forecasts
- Surface and Upper Air Observations
- Weather Wire
- Weather Radio
- Pilot Weather Briefings

The fire weather forecast staff gives daily in-depth briefings to BIFC, interagency training course development, and meteorological expertise on both national and international levels.

Regionally, the staff provides daily fire weather forecasts for an area that extends from southeastern Oregon across central and southern Idaho and into western Wyoming. *Site-specific forecasts are prepared for wildfires, prescribed burns, tree planting, and herbicide spraying.* Three air-transportable modular weather units are available for dispatch with an accompanying meteorologist for on-site weather forecasts and warnings. The staff also coordinates the dispatch of additional NWS mobile units throughout the Western States. ALDS (Automatic Lightning Detection System) data is collected at the Office and computer processed for distribution to NWS offices throughout the western and central United States.

☆ GPO 693-702





3905 Vista Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

Lifeline to the Fireline



3905 Vista Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705