



2022 Annual Report

Minnesota Incident Command System

2022 MNICS Board of Directors

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2022 MNICS Task Force



William Glesener (Chair)	Wildfire Operations Supervisor Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Greg Carlson	Fire Management Officer Voyageurs National Park
Cory Berg	Fire Management Officer Bureau of Indian Affairs
Seth Grimm	West Zone Fire Management Officer U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Chase Marshall	Forest Fire Management Officer U.S. Forest Service
Jacob Beauregard	Mutual Aid and Logistics Coordinator Homeland Security Emergency Management

MNICS Mission

To provide coordination, education and implementation of the Incident Command System in Minnesota and support fire and all-risk incidents nationwide.

MNICS Goals

- Provide timely, safe, and cost-effective mobilization and demobilization of resources under the closest forces concept.
- Collect and disseminate intelligence data within specified local and national time frames.
- Assess capabilities within Minnesota to respond to critical emergency situation



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Message from the Chair

As 2022 comes to a close, there have been some notable changes in personnel, an increased return to the office environment post-pandemic, a marked change in the fire season from 2021, and a significant number of resources that mobilized out-of-state. With all of these events, MNICS firefighters and support personnel stepped up to the dynamic nature of the work. I think many of us can agree that changes seems like it is happening more frequently, even beyond the fire environment.

While change is a part of our daily lives, it is no less important for everyone to keep their skills sharp, especially during apparent slower seasons. Taking this valuable time to build the experience slide reel is becoming increasingly important as new boots on the ground walk the paths of those who are enjoying well-earned respite. The established relationships formed over 37 years ago continue to be honed to ensure the best outcomes for the citizens we serve (both in Minnesota and beyond).

These valuable relationships helped establish today's Minnesota Interagency Coordination Center on the second floor of the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center. They are also valuable relationships that allow all of the MNICS partnering agencies to participate on the Extended Attack Incident Management Teams, which successfully transitioned from Type 2 to the Type 3 (plus) organization only a few years ago. In particular, the recent deployment of Team Bravo to the Braun fire allowed us to "knock the rust off" during the only team deployment this season. Through these relationships, we can train as one, even when six member agencies are navigating their policies behind the scenes to make MNICS successful.

As I transition out of the Chair role and Greg Carlson from Voyageurs National Park takes the helm, continue to lean into issues with a critical eye and provide solutions that will keep MNICS successful as opportunities present themselves. Together, we will navigate through all the changes and strive to help each other to stay one step ahead of the many pitfalls that can impede a single agency. Finally, and most importantly, keep up the good work and remain vigilant because that next ridge top is only a few steps away.

*William Glesener (Minnesota DNR)
MNICS 2022 Task Force Chair*

2022 Wildfire Situation

On November 15, 2022, MNICS agencies reported 680 wildfires totaling 3,751 acres for the calendar year 2022 thus far.

Agency	Wildfires	Acres
BIA	122	261
FS	58	45
FWS	18	443
NPS	1	1
State	481	3,001
2022 Totals	680	3,751

2022 Prescribed Burning

Prescribed burning efforts for MNICS partners were limited this year by a late start to the spring season, spring flooding, and the U.S. Forest Service's decision to pause prescribed burning agency-wide for 90 days in June 2022.

Agency	Prescribed Burns	Acres
BIA	65	14,038
FS	26	808
FWS	156	18,338
NPS	3	15
State	439	38,825
2022 Totals	689	72,024

Fire Situation Review

The extreme dryness that held strong through the latter half of the 2021 summer months, gave way to wetter conditions throughout the fall and winter. The precipitation along with a lengthy cold spring contributed to flooding conditions in Northcentral and Northwest Minnesota and resulted in significantly lower spring wildfire activity compared to the 10-year average.

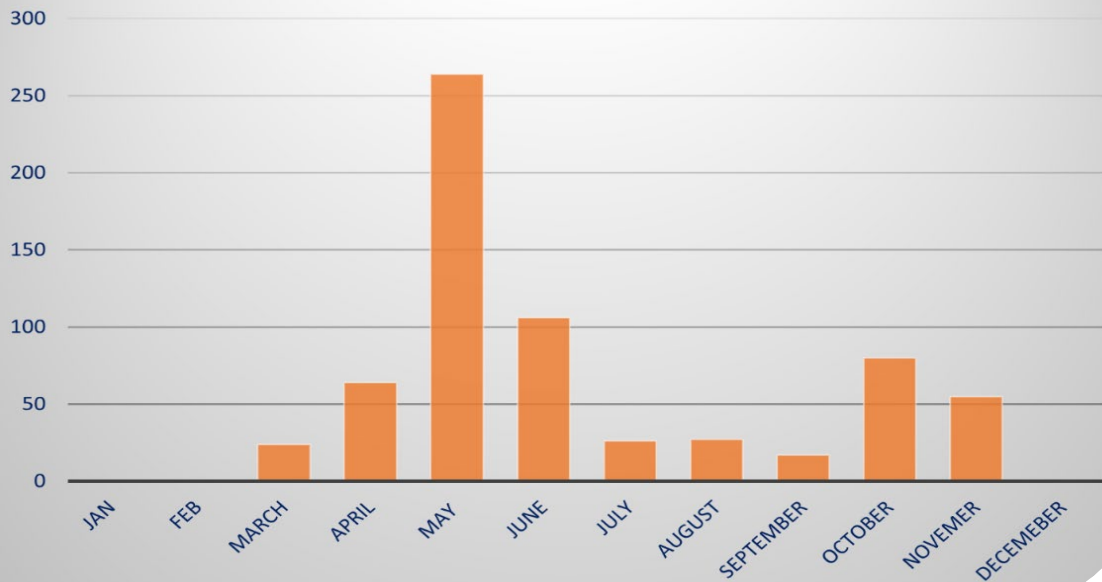
Dryer conditions that were more favorable to wildfire returned to the southern two-thirds of the state toward the latter half of the spring season. With abnormally dry conditions expanding in the central and southern portions of Minnesota, wildfire activity increased slightly above average for the month of June.

Wildfire occurrence was near or below average for the remainder of the summer season as fire conditions tapered off with timely storms events that brought precipitation to most of Minnesota, though dryness lingered in the central region.

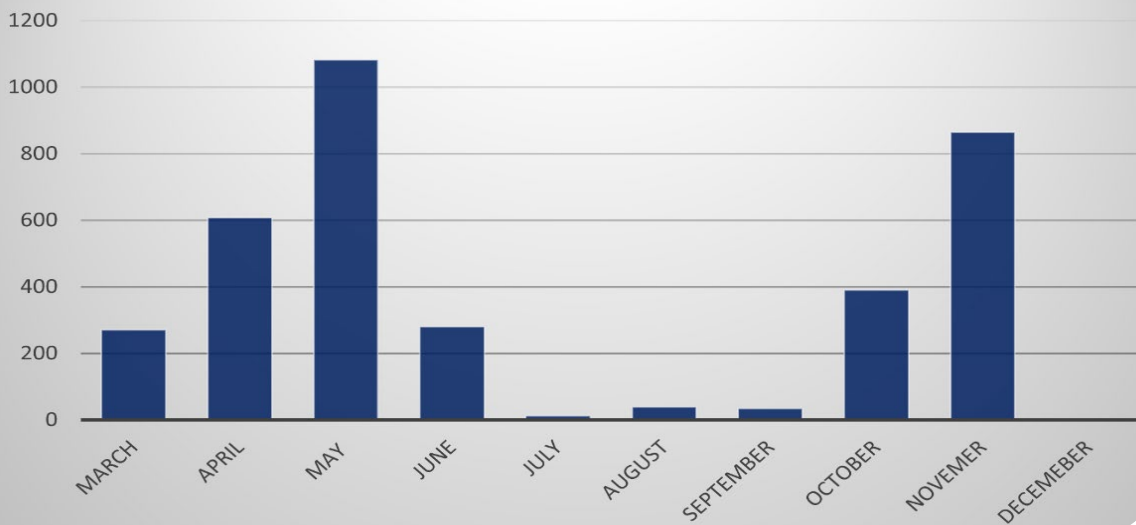
As fall approached, a sustained build-up contributed to an increase of wildfire occurrence throughout the end of summer. By late fall, fire weather conditions involving strong winds and low relative humidity amid the expanding drought conditions coincided with an increase of notable fire activity throughout Minnesota in early November.



2022 Wildfires Reported by Month



2022 Wildfire Acres Burned by Month



National Weather Service



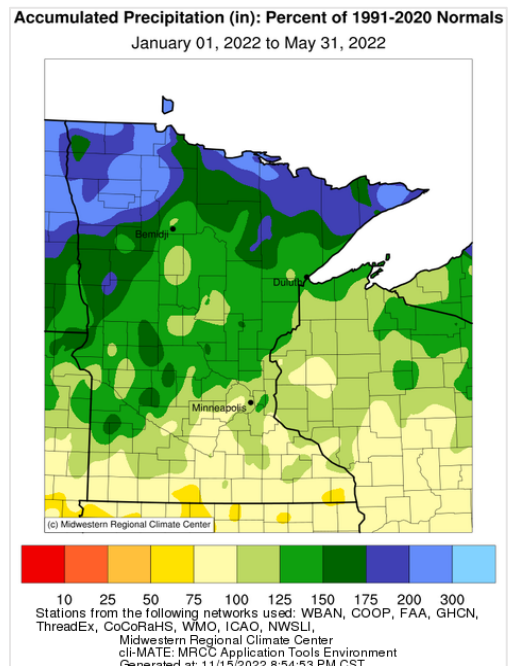
Rainfall in 2022 was defined by two separate camps – before and after June 1 (Figure 1). The year 2021 was characterized by one of the worst droughts Minnesota has seen since 1988, especially across the northern half of the state. However, a very snowy winter followed by a wet spring quickly flipped the script on the drought across the north. Many locations in the Northland went from one of the worst droughts ever observed to record flooding in a span of nine months as a wet winter gave way to frequent spring rains that produced a very quiet spring fire weather season for the region.

Upon the transition into summer, rainfall suddenly became scarce, with dryness extending into October. From June 1 to October 31, a strip of Minnesota extending from the Twin Cities southwest to Marshall experienced precipitation deficits of 10-12 inches. Conditions would have been worse, however, if not for the near-normal precipitation in August.

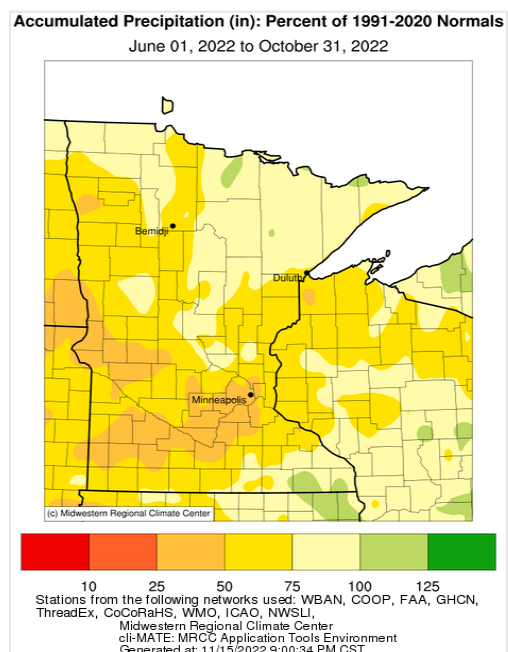
While the drought was intense for the southern region of Minnesota this year, it paled in comparison to the 2021 drought for Minnesota as a whole. At its peak in mid-August of 2021, 57% of the state was covered by D3 drought or worse, with that same number peaking at 7% in 2022. While June through October was a particularly dry stretch for the Twin Cities area, looking farther back in time, the beginnings of the current drought can be traced to July 2020. From July 2020 through October 2022, 23 out of 28 months featured below-normal precipitation in the Twin Cities (Figure 3). The dry summer in central and southern Minnesota resulted in a fall fire season that was more active than the spring, with the fall fire season peaking November 2, the busiest day for reported fall season wildfire starts since 2011.

Due in part to the lack of a significant spring fire season, the number of Red Flag Warnings issued in 2022 was quite low, with the majority occurring atop the Buffalo Ridge in Southwest Minnesota (Figure 1). This was one area that didn't hold a stable snowpack during the winter and had drier conditions during the spring, with this being an extension of the busy fire season seen this past spring across Nebraska and South Dakota.

Figure 1.



Percent normal precipitation for January 1 -May 31, 2022

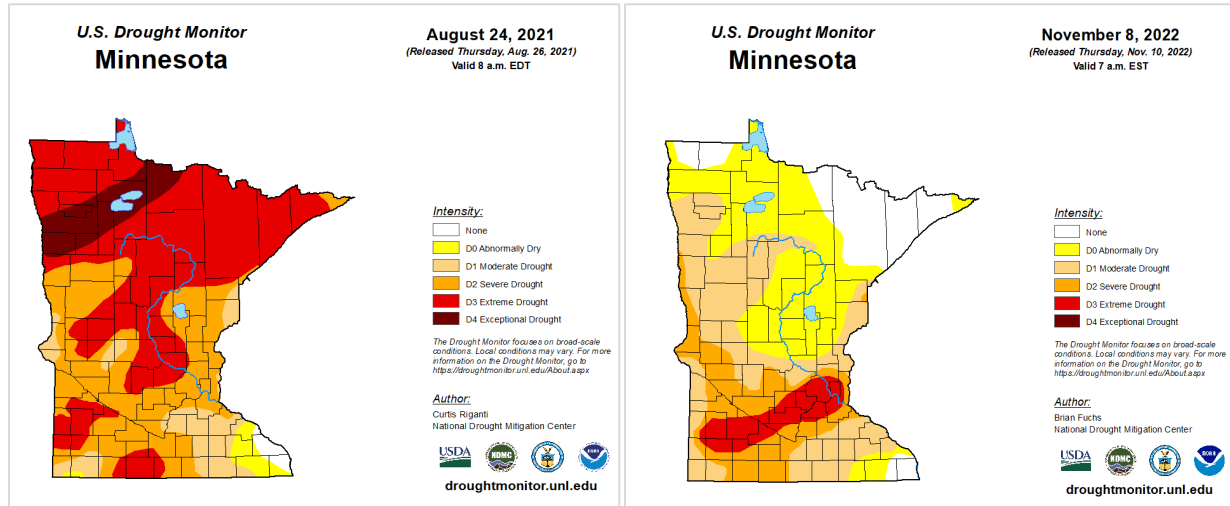


Percent normal precipitation for June 1 – October 31, 2022

National Weather Service



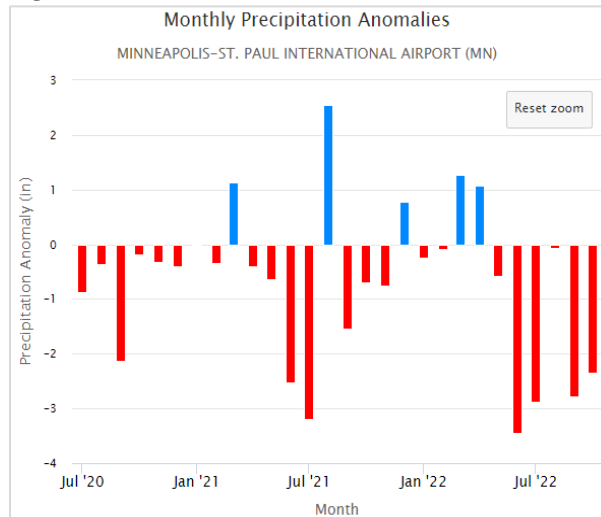
Figure 2.



Peak of 2021 drought - August 24, 2021.

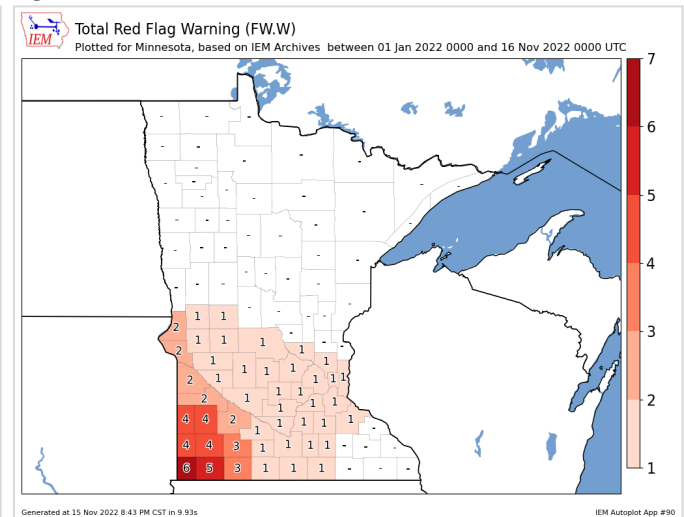
Peak of 2022 drought – November 8, 2022

Figure 3.



Monthly precipitation anomalies for MSP International Airport from July 2020 through October 2022.

Figure 4.



Number of times a county was included in a Red Flag Warning in 2022

Minnesota Wildfire Academy Reconvenes in 2022

Minnesota wildland firefighters returned to the Grand Rapids area this past June for the 20th Minnesota Wildfire Academy after a two-year postponement due to the COVID pandemic.

The academy was hosted at the Minnesota North College, Itasca campus from June 6 through June 10, 2022. The week-long training sessions drew in more than 500 students who attended 23 courses involving wildland fire planning, operations, safety and leadership.

The Minnesota Wildfire Academy is one of the largest wildland fire training events held in Minnesota. Since 2001, the academy has become the primary training model for cultivating new talent. Students are exposed to knowledge, career opportunities, and a network of professionals who can offer valuable support toward their career goals.

"We recognize the increasing shortage of skilled wildland firefighters in today's workforce," said Todd Manley, wildfire training specialist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "As we prepare the next generation of wildland firefighters, we know recruitment begins with

exposure. The academy is one of the most powerful tools we have in Minnesota to publicize, recruit, train, and grow the skills necessary for today's highly sought after wildland firefighters."

Minnesota's success in wildland firefighting is rooted in collaboration between wildland fire response agencies. The Minnesota Wildfire Academy promotes development of firefighting skills and further develops these working relationships. Many of the instructors are associated with Minnesota Incident Command System's (MNICS) federal, state and tribal partners.

Coordination of the Minnesota Wildfire Academy is an extensive collaborative effort between the MNICS event organizers, the college and the community of Grand Rapids to assure a safe, quality learning experience for all participants. The logistical coordination of this year's academy was guided by an interagency incident management team (IMT), led by Incident Commander Mike Aultman. As is traditional, the Academy IMT was stationed onsite at the campus throughout the duration of the academy.



MNCC Season Review

Minnesota Interagency Coordination Center (MNCC) carried out another busy season that provided opportunities for change, challenge, growth and resiliency. Filling staffing shortages in a few of our critical dispatch roles continues to be an area of focus, though we are not alone in our efforts to fill these roles as many national coordination centers work through similar hiring constraints. We express sincere appreciation to all the dispatchers who stepped up this year and supported MNCC by accepting resource orders or short-term detail assignments to fill the voids. While hiring has been a slower process, we welcomed Jolene Soltis (Fire Intelligence) and Jake Serfling (Aviation) to our team. Efforts are underway to fill the vacant Assistant Center Manager for Operations, and three permanent lead dispatch positions, which we remain optimistic will be filled by the end of January 2023.

Many of the applications, tools, and services MNCC dispatchers utilize to support Federal, State and Local government agencies continue to be updated and improved. C-soft kiosks have been installed at the MNCC aviation desk. We are looking forward to the release of the new computer-aided dispatching software - WildCAD-enterprise. The program will modernize how we dispatch resources to an initial or emerging incident and share information between fire applications. It will also play an important role in the ongoing discussions between several agencies on what initial attack dispatching will look like in the coming years.

Mobilizations and Requests

The 2022 wildfire season resulted in a higher than average number of requests nationwide. At MNCC we mobilized a steady number of resources out-of-state to support fire suppression needs. Our resources mobilizing out-of-state filled over 1000 requests and supported 25 states with personnel, engines, modules, crews and aviation assets.

2022 MNCC Logistics

Resources supporting Minnesota Incidents

(Resources filled between Oct. 1, 2021 – Sept. 30, 2022)

Local resources supporting Minnesota Incidents

- Overhead - 173 resources filled 215 requests
- Equipment – 47 resources filled 59 requests

Non-local resources supporting Minnesota Incidents (26 States)

- Overhead – 93
- Type 6 Engines – 11
- Type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crew – 1

States included:

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| • Alaska | Arkansas | Arizona |
| • California | Colorado | Iowa |
| • Idaho | Illinois | Indiana |
| • Louisiana | Michigan | Missouri |
| • Montana | N. Carolina | New Hampshire |
| • Nevada | Ohio | Oregon |
| • S. Dakota | Tennessee | Texas |
| • Virginia | Washington | Wisconsin |
| • West | Virginia | Wyoming |

Minnesota resources Supporting Non-Local Incidents (25 States)

(Resources filled between Oct. 1, 2021 – Sept. 30, 2022)

- Overhead – 369 resources filled 840 requests
- Equipment – 82 resources filled 189 requests
- Crew – 3 resources filled 10 requests

States supported by Minnesota Resources

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| • Alaska | Arkansas | Arizona |
| • California | Colorado | Florida |
| • Idaho | Illinois | Indiana |
| • Michigan | Mississippi | Missouri |
| • Montana | Nevada | New Mexico |
| • N. Carolina | Oregon | Pennsylvania |
| • S. Dakota | Texas | Utah |
| • Virginia | Washington | Wisconsin |
| • Wyoming | | |

2022 MNICS Type 2 IA Crews

MNICS rostered a Type 2 Interagency (IA) Crew this season after a two-year pause through the COVID Pandemic. MNCC continues to support the crew mobilizations.



Type 2 IA Crew members working on the Arrastra Fire in Montana.

MNICS Type 3 IMT Mobilizations

MNICS Team B mobilized to the Braun fire near Delano, Minnesota on November 6, 2022.

2022 MNCC Aviation

(Reported dates: April 9 – Nov. 5, 2022)

- 71 aircraft requests on 31 fires
- First fixed wing mission flown on April 11
- Last fixed wing mission flown September 8
- Fixed Wing Air Tankers responded to
 - 9 – DNR fires
 - 1 – U.S. Forest Service fire
 - 1 – National Park Service fire – Isle Royal
- Air attack responded to 9 – DNR fires.
- DNR completed 332 hours of flight time on 16 detection routes
- U.S. Forest Service used 3 – Beaver aircraft to complete detection route flights on the Superior and Chippewa National Forests

Fixed Wing Aircraft

Agency	SEAT EU	SEAT CWN	Fire Boss EU	Fire Boss CWN
BIA	1	-	1	2
DNR	-	-	-	1
Forestry				
USFS	-	-	-	-
DNR Enfr.	-	-	-	-
	1	-	1	3

* EU - exclusive use, CWN - call when needed

* Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT)

Agency	LAT	CL-215/ CL-415	ATGS	Lt F/W
BIA	-	-		
DNR	-	-	2	15
Forestry				
USFS	-	-		3
DNR	-	-		
Enfr.				
	-	-	2	18

* EU - exclusive use, CWN - call when needed

* Large Air Tanker (LAT), Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS), Detection flights including Beavers (Lt F/W)

Helicopters

Agency	T3 EU	T3 CWN	T2 CWN	T1 EU	T1 CWN
BIA	1	-	-	-	-
DNR					
Forestry	8	-	-	-	-
USFS	1	1	-	-	-
Total	10	1	-	-	-

* EU - exclusive use, CWN - call when needed

Accomplishments

Interagency Meetings & Training Events

- S-372 Helicopter Manager (MNICS, led by USFS)
- A-219 courses in MO, OH and three courses in MN. (MN courses - 3 USFS led, 1 MN DNR led)
- N9016 Plastic Sphere Dispenser Operator training three sessions held for 14 operators and 5 contract pilots (USFS)
- S-271 Helicopter Crewmember – Ely, MN and Concord, NH (USFS)
- Annual MN Aviation Workshop was held virtually over Teams and the Wildfire Learning Portal
- Ran an interagency emergency simulation with a downed aircraft with real communications to be as close to real world situation as possible

Minnesota Wildfire Academy – *Minnesota North College Itasca Campus*

- S-270 Basic Air Operations
- S-271 Helicopter Crewmember

Project Work

- Aerial Seeding completed on 2,994 acres on state and county land this spring, 1,000 acres this fall
- Aerial photos for wetland monitoring were completed for entire state
- Tree seedlings brought into remote sites by sling load
- Helitorch ignition 3500 acres at Mille Lacs WMA

Assistance to Minnesota

(Jan 1—Sep 7, 2022)

Assistance received with the following positions:

- ATBM (2), SEMG (1), RAMP (3), MXMS (1), HMGB (2), HECM (3), ACDP (6)

Alaska and Nevada supported the Aviation desk by sending aircraft dispatchers.

Out-State Assistance (Mar 21—September)

Minnesota DNR

- Supported the Wyoming BLM and Wyoming State Forestry in Casper, WY at the SEAT base with
 - 1 – ATBM
 - 7 – FWPT
 - 3 – MXMS
 - 5 – RAMP
 - 5 – RTCM
 - 6 – SEMG
- ATGS supported incidents in AZ, ID, NV, TX and UT
- ABRO and ACDP supported incidents in AK, AZ, NM and WA
- HMGB supported incidents in AK, ID, MT, SD and WA
- HECM supported incidents in AK, CA, ID, MT and WA

U.S. Forest Service

- HECM supported incidents in AK, ID, OR, WA, MT and MO



Northeast Interagency Support Cache



The 2022 fire season was a slow one for the Eastern Region and most of the rest of the country. The cache supported two Type 3 incidents, and these occurred late in the fall. The Northeast Support Cache (NEK) processed and shipped 3,240 line items of supplies totaling over \$1.6 million. We processed 1,422 line items of returns totaling \$1.2 million. The National Cache System was utilized with bringing in \$1.1 million from other caches to support fires in Minnesota.

NEK supported the National Cache System by shipping over \$1.3 million of supplies to caches in several states, including California, Colorado, Montana, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona, Kentucky, and Alaska. NEK also supported the National System by refurbishing pumps for the Southern Area and Rocky Mountain Caches.

In additions to supplying eight contract helibases and four tanker bases, the Cache provided supplies and equipment of more than \$317,000 for the following trainings:

- Itasca Community College's Natural Resources Program
- S-130/S-190 Basic Firefighter Course
- Vermillion Community College's S-211 Pumps class
- MN DNR's S-212 Chainsaw Course
- MN DNR's S-130/190 Class
- Lake Superior College's S-211 Class
- Minnesota Wildfire Academy

NEK staff supported the western fire season by assisting in the following positions: Assistant Cache Manager, Supply Technician, Materials Handler, and Equipment Manager, and completed a total of five fire assignments.

National Symbols Program

The National Symbols Cache processed 1,752 orders for over \$821,000 in sales in fiscal year 2022. Due to the pandemic, sales are still down from our average of approximately \$1 million annually. However, we are seeing an uptick in orders and hope to get back to our normal sales next year. We currently stock 94 products, plus 45 downloadable digital products. New products this past year for Smokey Bear included sticker sheets, jar opener, rain gauge, crayons, magnets, and a paw stamp. New Woodsy products included sticker sheets, a whistle/compass/thermometer, 12 inch ruler, pencils, and a signature stamp. These products, along with our standard product offerings, can be viewed and ordered on the website at www.symbols.gov.



Staffing Updates

Bill Lauer and Don Green, two of our material handlers, retired this last year. We welcome their replacements, Jason Hanks and Adam Fremling. Long-time Assistant Cache Manager Tom Staydohar passed away September 29. Tom had worked here since the NEK and MIFC opened their doors in 1991. Please read the article about Tom located in this Annual Report.

Bureau of Indian Affairs



The MNICS partnerships are part of the foundation that allows for safe and effective wildland fire operations in Minnesota and throughout the United States. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Tribal Fire Programs of Minnesota Agency and Red Lake are proud to serve their communities and assist our interagency partners.

Season Review

This year was a very busy season for Minnesota Agency and Red Lake even though local fire numbers and acres burned were significantly lower than average. The lower fire occurrence at home allowed for many BIA and Tribal firefighters to accept multiple assignments in Oklahoma last winter. The BIA's Eastern Oklahoma Region has been in a state of severe drought for the last year and Minnesota resources were able to make a significant difference in fire response and management. Resources returned to Minnesota just as our spring season started in April. Many then left shortly after our spring fire season to support tribes in Arizona and New Mexico. By mid-summer, many resources had returned to support Eastern Oklahoma again. BIA and Tribal resources also supported suppression efforts in Alaska, Montana, Washington, Wyoming, Alabama, California, and Oregon.



Engine Operator Qualifications

New in 2022, the BIA is utilizing the Engine Operator (ENOP) qualification. The Midwest Region hosted two ENOP Academies in September 2022. The first academy was held at the new Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Community Center, and the second at Bay Mills, Michigan. Local BIA and Tribal firefighters joined the National Bureau of Land Management (BLM) ENOP cadre and carried out two great courses.

One of the more exciting prescribed fire projects to initiate in 2022 was the partnership between Fond du Lac and the University of Minnesota's Cloquet Forestry Center (CFC). The Fond du Lac Band and CFC have shared objectives to reintroduce fire as an ecological and cultural process in the pine stands at the Forestry Center, which is within the Fond du Lac Reservation boundary. The burns were part of a Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) project the BIA is supporting.

Personnel Changes

The Bureau is pleased to add Mike Mansson to the Minnesota Agency staff as the Fire Operations Specialist. Other changes in staffing include Missy Gregerson who accepted a position with the BIA Midwest Region as a Fire and Forestry Budget Analyst.

Bureau of Indian Affairs



Reservation	Wildfires	Acres	Prescribed Fires	Acres
Red Lake	86	184	20	13,103
White Earth	27	69	37	807
Fond du Lac	1	1	5	103
Mille Lacs	5	6	-	-
Bois Forte	0	0	-	-
Grand Portage	3	1	3	25
Leech Lake*	N/A	N/A	-	-
Total	122	261	65	14,038



Cooperative Fire Response

Fire response throughout the 2022 spring wildfire season resulted in lower-than-average wildfire activity. The lower response needs throughout Minnesota have allowed available resources to support out-of-state fire needs. More than 350 resources from Minnesota DNR mobilized to 17 states this year, with the highest level of support provided to Texas, Montana, Alaska and Wyoming. In addition, the MNICS Type 2 Initial Attack (IA) hand crew mobilized to Colorado to support severity needs. A 20-person Type 2 IA hand crew supported with Minnesota DNR employees mobilized to Montana to support the Hop Creek, Busman Road, and Deep Draw fires.

MNICS partners periodically review and revise shared protection agreements to ensure the closest resources are prepared and ready to respond within the first 24 hours. This year, MNICS partners are collaborating to review and revise the shared protection agreements for State, National Forests and Tribal managed land. In addition to shared protection response on the ground, shared protection benefits from a standardized dispatch infrastructure and software systems. MNICS partners are working on upgrading a system-wide dispatching infrastructure to the WildCAD-e system.

Incident Management Teams

The most recent MNICS Type 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) request occurred in early November 2022 to manage the Braun Fire near Delano, Minn. The value and contributions of the MNICS Type 3 IMTs are well recognized among the MNICS partners, who continue contributing their agency personnel to fill the rosters for the MNICS Type 3 and Eastern Area (EA) Type 2 IMTs. Due to no large fire incidents within the state this year, no Eastern Area Type 2 IMT was requested for in-state wildfire response this fire season.

Aviation

Minnesota DNR acquired a new Daher Kodiak airplane and was delivered in mid-November. It will be primarily used for air attack, aerial photography and transportation.

A hanger located at the Grand Rapids/Itasca County airport was purchased to provide a secure facility for the division of forestry and enforcement aircraft. The hanger also provides additional infrastructure for helibase operations, and as a result, the Hill City helibase was relocated to Grand Rapids.



Due to a nationwide shortfall of qualified air tanker base personnel and the growing wildfire concerns in Wyoming that developed in early June 2022, a training and partnership opportunity grew between Minnesota DNR and the State of Wyoming Forestry Division. The shortfall allowed Minnesota's Air Tanker Base staff to extend their training season while supporting a critical need out west.

Minnesota DNR's air tanker base personnel conducted several 14-day assignments with small teams of four to five people. The teams staffed the Bureau of Land Management's Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) base in Casper, Wyoming, from mid-June to mid-September. Multiple trainees participated in the assignments and gained valuable hands-on experience operating the equipment and loading water and fire retardant into aircraft.

Fire Prevention

The Fire Prevention team contributed to the development, testing and release of the Northeast Wildfire Risk Assessment portal. The interactive site was released to the public earlier this year.

Wildfire prevention programs are progressively transitioning to in-person audience attendance. The annual Wildfire Prevention Week was hosted the third week of April this year. During the 12-days of the Minnesota State Fair, thousands of visitors interacted with Minnesota DNR fire prevention staff during the Governor's Fire Prevention Day and at the fire tower and prevention building.



Firewise Minnesota continues to support community wildfire resilience with technical and financial assistance. The USDA Forest Service grants have supported five new community contracts and the continuation of the Firewise in the Classroom project that provides a wildfire and GIS distance-learning curriculum for high school students. Firewise staff are also assisting with the Forest Service's new Community Wildfire Defense Grant program, which provides one billion dollars annually toward the Community Wildfire Protection Plan development and implementation.

Training

Minnesota wildland firefighters returned to the Grand Rapids area for the 20th Minnesota Wildfire Academy after a two-year postponement due to the COVID pandemic. The academy is one

of the largest wildland fire training events held in Minnesota. It drew in 521 participants who attended the 23-course offerings this year, including several local fire departments and State Fire Marshall's Office staff.

Minnesota IQS Web

Planning and coordination efforts will continue in 2023 to bring Minnesota IQS Web (IQS Web) to local and state government fire departments. IQS Web software will allow local fire departments to track and produce Incident Qualification cards (Red Cards) for the wildland fire qualifications their firefighters earn.

The program and server for IQS Web is hosted by the Minnesota DNR's division of forestry, and links wildfire qualifications to the national Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) system.

Rural Fire Program

The division of forestry's rural fire program continues to be highly utilized throughout Minnesota. The program saw another busy year servicing the Firefighter Property and State Surplus programs. The Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) program awarded 152 grants providing more than \$504,000 to Minnesota's rural fire departments this year.

In addition to assisting local fire departments with supplementing their vital programs with equipment and supplies through the excess property programs, the Rural Fire Program was instrumental in locating an office trailer that will be retrofitted for the MNICS Type 3 Incident Management Teams.



National Qualification System

As a key component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the [National Qualification System \(NQS\)](#) provides a foundational guideline on the typing of personnel resources within the NIMS framework. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) will be working to implement a process within Minnesota over a three-year period. The goal is to better align with federal standards and guidelines allowing first responders, from multiple disciplines, to become qualified and credentialed under the NQS system. The first step in that process has been to recruit and hire a NQS Coordinator to lead the project, with HSEM completing the first round of interviews as of October 2022. We look forward to working with the MNICS partners as this project moves forward.



MNNG helicopter lifts pump into place

Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Missions

In April, the Minnesota National Guard deployed a Chinook helicopter, with crew, to North Dakota to conduct heavy lift operations by emplacing large pumps atop a dam, relieving hydraulic pressure and preventing failure.

In September and October, two Class-A Surface Water Treatment Operators, one from the City of Minneapolis and the other from the City of Eden Prairie, were deployed in support of the “Jackson, MS Water Crisis.” Both individuals were instrumental in getting systems back online and producing clean drinking water for the residents.

Also in October, the Minnesota All-Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT) deployed to Florida in response to Hurricane Ian. The team was assigned to DeSoto County, which is 50 miles inland from the Gulf Coast. The area became flooded after Ian made landfall and storm surge caused the Peace River to run over its banks. During their deployment, the AHIMT planned and executed daily response and recovery actions, set up a base camp for emergency personnel, managed donations, and established points of distribution.



Figure 1: Members of the AHIMT with Director of Florida Division of Emergency Management. New SEOC Project

HSEM continues planning and preparation work on the new State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) facility. It will be a much larger, standalone building situated on a 10-acre parcel of land north of St. Paul. The project is in the design phase with a firm drawing up final plans for the facility. Construction will start in early 2023. It is set to open in fall of 2024.

2022 State and Federal Disaster Declarations

As of October 2022, Gov. Walz authorized the use of the State Disaster Contingency Account for nine incidents so far this year. President Biden has also declared three federal disasters making Public Assistance (PA) available to state, tribal and local governments throughout Minnesota. HSEM recovery specialists will work with the counties to reimburse them for repair and recovery costs related to those incidents



Mudslide - Winona County



Flooding - Rainy Lake

Homeland Security and Emergency Management



State Disaster Number	Incident Period	Incident Type	Counties Included in Declaration
SD-060 (state)	April 12	Severe thunderstorms and tornadoes	Fillmore, Mower, Rice and Winona
SD-061 (state)	May 19	Heavy rain and flash flooding	Winona
SD-062 (state)	May 8-13	Severe thunderstorms with heavy rains, flash flooding, damaging winds, large hail and tornadoes	Benton, Lyon, McLeod and Murray
SD-063 (state)	June 13	Severe thunderstorm with heavy rains and flash flooding	Cottonwood
SD-064 (state)	July 5	Severe thunderstorms with heavy rains and flooding	Cottonwood, Freeborn and Rock
SD-065 (state)	April 22 – June 15	Straight-line winds and flooding	Becker
SD-066 (state)	June 20-24	Severe thunderstorms with damaging winds, heavy rains and flooding	Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, Itasca, Lac qui Parle, Morrison, Norman, St. Louis and Todd
SD-067 (state)	July 23	Severe thunderstorms with damaging winds, tornadoes, heavy rains and flooding	Houston and Renville
SD-068 (state)	August 24	Heavy rains and flooding	Houston
DR-4658 (federal)	May 8-13	Straight-line winds, tornadoes and flooding	Aitkin, Big Stone, Cass, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Douglas, Grant, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Morrison, Noble, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Stearns, Stevens, Swift, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin and Yellow Medicine
DR-4659 (federal)	April 22 - June 15	Straight-line winds and flooding	Bois Forte (Nett Lake), Leech Lake, Red Lake and the White Earth Tribal Nations Beltrami, Clearwater, Cook, Kittson, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau and St. Louis
DR-4666 (federal)	May 29 - 30	Straight-line winds, tornadoes and flooding	Aitkin, Big Stone, Cass, Chippewa, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Itasca, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Pine, Pope, Renville, Rock, Stevens, Swift, Todd, Traverse, Wadena and Yellow Medicine



Wildland Fire Response

Both Chippewa and Superior National Forests noted significant declines in the number of fires and acres burned compared to their totals last year.

- The Chippewa National Forest's fire season began April 12 with the Brush fire and had a combined total of 35 fires that burned 39 acres for the season.
 - Scoffner Fire, on the Walker District, was the Chippewa National Forest's largest fire this season. It burned 18 acres in leaf and pine litter.
- The Superior National Forest began fire season on April 27 with the Gopher fire and had a combined total of 24 fires that burned 14 acres.
 - Lake Three was the largest fire reported on the Superior National Forest. It started on September 7 and burned a total of nine acres in light to moderate timber.

Prescribed Fire

Prior to the USDA Forest Service Chief's implementation of a nationwide prescribed fire operations pause in May, the Chippewa National Forest completed six prescribed burn projects for 207 acres, and the Superior National Forest completed 13 prescribed burn projects for a combined total of 372 acres.

Wilderness Crews

The MNCC Operations dispatch continued dispatching for Superior National Forest's Wilderness Program, assisting with the tracking and movement of wilderness rangers in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The program ensures continuity for wilderness crews across the East and West zones. A total of 119 wilderness missions were tracked.

Search & Rescue

The Superior National Forest welcomed a new USDA Forest Service pilot, Jeremy Harmon, this summer. The program now maintains three full-time pilots out of the Ely Seaplane base.

MNCC assisted with 32 Search and Rescue, Medical Assistance, and Public Assistance incidents, at the time of reporting. Our aviation staff was flexible in their approach to providing excellent public assistance while cooperating with emergency services partners, and still providing for responder safety.

Personnel Changes

- Rob Heavirland retired as the Forest Aviation Officer for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests
- Connie Cummins retired from her role at the Superior National Forest Supervisor
- Patrick Johnson accepted the East Zone Fire Management Officer position on the Superior National Forest
- Tom Hall accepted the Forest Supervisor position Superior National

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Season Review

In complete contrast to the 2021 fire season, the 2022 season offered many unique opportunities. Spring was wet and cold, and led to significant impacts on prescribed fire and wildfire operations. Multiple large fuels projects kick started following the passage of two major pieces of legislation signed into law this year.

- 2022 Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

Large fuel breaks were started at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. Zone-wide detailer support was also funded to increase local capacity. Fiscal year 2023 BIL projects are at various stages of implementation at all locations in the zone. Projects range from large interagency prescribed fires, increase of pile burning to landscape level fuels mastication and fuel breaks. Critical specialty equipment has been purchased to aid in FWS employees performing the work in addition to contracting of fuels reduction work. The opportunity to get ahead on large fuel reduction projects is an investment that will pay dividends for years to come. Work is expected to continue through Fiscal Year 2026.

Looking back to January, the Service started the new year by supporting a Service IMT that was mobilized to work on an Unusual Mortality Event (UME) of manatees in south Florida, mobilizing resources to assist with Air Force fire operations and providing the National Prescribed Fire

Training Center with a module leader and a RXB2-T participant. In early spring, resources from Minnesota traveled to Iowa, Illinois, and Texas to assist with fuels projects and prescribed fire implementation. The cold, wet and windy spring had significant impact on prescribed fire and wildfire numbers. Despite the challenges, USFWS field stations were able to conduct 156 prescribed burns for a total of 18,338 acres. There were also 18 wildfires for 443 acres on Service land.

Mobilizations

The fire season proved to be very busy this year with 90 personnel being dispatched off district in Operations, Logistics, Finance, Plans, Information, LE and command positions across 12 states.

Personnel Changes

- Krishna Parthasarathy joined the West Zone as the first Region 3 apprentice position and is stationed at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
- Jacob Johnson accepted the Prescribed Fire and Fuels Technician located at Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge.
- Pete Beam accepted the Forestry Technician (Fire) located at Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge.
- Zac Doffin accepted the Prescribed Fire and Fuels Technician located at Fergus Falls Wetland Management District.
- David Blatz was hired as a Prescribed Fire/Fuels Technician at Litchfield Wetland Management District.
- Eric Earhart left fire management for a position with Realty.

We are in process of hiring five GS-5 Career Seasonal positions and a GS-8/9 Fire Operations Specialist position in the zone to complete filling positions authorized from the Department of Interior's 2021 Workforce Transformation.

Special thanks to MNCC and all partners for a safe and productive 2022 season!

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Wildfire and Prescribed Burn Statistics as of November 2, 2022

Station	Wildfires	Wildfire Acres	Prescribed Burns	Prescribed Burn Acres
Agassiz NWR	0	0	0	0
Big Stone NWR	0	0	6	1,249
Crane Meadows NWR	4	1.3	7	211
Detroit Lakes WMD	1	230	14	1,642
Fergus Falls WMD	1	2	17	2,183
Glacial Ridge NWR	2	1	10	3,448
Hamden Slough NWR	0	0	3	308
Litchfield WMD	3	18	24	2,365
MN Valley NWR	1	.3	7	984
Morris WMD	3	57	39	4,474
Rydell NWR	0	0	1	1
Sherburne NWR	0	0	3	23
Tamarac NWR	1	.1	5	67
Winona DIST	1	.1	4	199
Windom WMD	0	0	1	2
Zone Totals	18	443	156	18,338



National Park Service



The 2022 fire season began in April with Voyageurs National Park completing several acres of invasive cattail prescribed burns as part of a wetland restoration project. The burning and mechanical treatments will likely be used over the next several years to produce the desired outcome.

In May of 2022, rapid thaw of the heavy winter snowpack combined with spring rain events brought on record flooding at Voyageurs National Park and surrounding communities, and fire management staff assisted with the emergency flood response well into the month of June.

Voyageurs National Park continued to receive adequate rainfall throughout the summer, which resulted in a fire season that was almost nonexistent. One fire, less than a tenth of an acre, was suppressed.

Isle Royal National Park did have a 6-acre fire which was reported on August 13th. Firefighters and aircraft from Minnesota and Michigan responded to and suppressed the Mount Franklin fire within a few days. A big thank you to the Minnesota Coordination Center staff for all the support and coordination of that response.

An extensive pile burning operation was conducted at Isle Royal in late October. Piles that were created as a result of structure protection efforts during the Horne Fire of 2021 were consumed.

The western portion of the Border Park Zone consisting of the North Dakota Parks also experienced a slow fire season due to rainfall at regular intervals keeping the grass fuel types green well into August.

Personnel Changes

Kurt Fogelberg retired in late July with more than 30 years of service with Voyageurs National Park, wearing hats as a supervisory forestry technician and acting Fire Management Officer. Kurt will be missed, but he expects to be back in some function in the coming years. Progress is being made with filling Kurt's vacant position, and we hope to have someone in that role by the spring of 2023.



MNICS partners conduct air to ground wildfire communication simulation in Meeker County

Meeker County Fire Departments participated in a live wildland fire simulation involving water-dropping aircraft and active-controlled fire Saturday, May 7, 2022. The training exercise, coordinated jointly between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was conducted at the Litchfield Wetland Management District (WMD) headquarters in Litchfield, Minn.

Volunteer firefighters from Cosmos, Dassel, Eden Valley, Grove City, Litchfield and Watkins attended the four-hour live simulation. In addition, Litchfield WMD staff incorporated the aviation training simulation into one of their pre-planned prescribed burns. The active fire from the prescribed burn provided realistic fire conditions for the local fire departments who requested aircraft through the Meeker County Emergency Management dispatch during the simulation. The request then followed an established communication chain that relays through the Minnesota State Duty Officer to the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center in Grand Rapids, Minn., where all wildland fire response is coordinated. Within 30 minutes of the initial call, aircraft, pre-positioned at the air tanker base in Princeton, Minn., arrived on the scene.

Two Fire Boss single-engine air tankers and a helicopter with an attached bucket delivered the water drops onto the active flames. The local fire departments communicated with the pilots through the third fixed-wing aircraft that provided air traffic control above the airspace over the fire.

Minnesota experienced a prolonged and active fire season from mid-March well into November 2021, amid extensive drought conditions. The Minnesota Interagency Fire Center recorded more than 2,000 wildfires that burned nearly 70,000 acres state-wide, and approximately 900 aircraft missions flew on 300 of these wildfires. While the DNR is the leading wildland fire response agency for state and private land, the timely response could not have happened without interagency partnerships between local volunteer fire departments and federal wildland fire management agencies who contribute to the coordinated wildfire response.

“As communities continue to expand further into wildland areas, the concern for threats from uncontrolled wildfires increases,” said Taylor Schenk, Fire Specialist with Minnesota DNR. “Preparedness is key to protecting life and property, and timely response both on the ground and in the air helps wildland firefighters keep wildfires smaller and more manageable.”

The training simulation brought together all of the local, state, and federal partners who respond to wildland fires in Meeker County. “When you think about the complexity involved to request, coordinate and communicate with aircraft and ground resources during a wildfire, the situational awareness each participant gained from this simulation was truly invaluable,” said Schenk.

Each aircraft completed two water drops and departed as the simulation concluded. Litchfield WMD staff carried out the final activities to complete the prescribed burn while the simulation coordinators reviewed the training events with the local fire departments.



MNICS Working Team Updates

Air Operations Working Team

MNICS Air Operations Working Team proceeded with several tasks in 2022 including:

- Large-scale mishap simulation with MNCC Aviation Desk and multiple role players from MNICS agencies.
- Defined role of the Aviation Duty Officer to assist MNCC Aviation Desk with aircraft prioritization of incidents.
- Aviation training during the RT-130 revisited decision making and fire behavior.
- Outreach efforts focused on keeping UAS (drones) five miles away from wildfire smoke. The efforts this year focused on educators drone programs or technology instructors considering a drone program.

Darren Neuman, Working Team Rep.

Communications Working Team

MNICS utilized one communication trailer this year during the Minnesota Wildfire Academy and during a DNR law enforcement training – it performed flawlessly. MNICS acquired a used trailer that will be upfitted next year. The search for a second trailer of similar capability continues. The trailers will be equipped with new BKR-5000 radios and two rechargeable batteries available to sign out at an incident.

The 100 ft portable tower was replaced. The local amateur/HAM radio group used the 50 ft portable tower during a group gathering.

MNICS COMTs practiced with the new communications equipment available through National Interagency Incident Communications Division during out-state assignments.

MNCC Aviation Desk upgraded the consoles to CSOFT, which matches the IA Dispatch. IA dispatch is currently dispatching for Chippewa and Superior National Forests, Minnesota DNR - Two Harbors area, and the BIA - Red Lake and Grand Portage.

David Jalonen, Working Team Chair

Dispatch Working Team

2022 - MNICS Dispatch Working Team began planning for future trainings, meetings and workshops. This plan began with identifying additional locations throughout the state where we can offer these courses. The DWT has identified 3 locations in addition to the MIFC Training room to host courses as we move forward to in person training. We also continued our annual assignments including the revision of the annual Single Resource FAQ sheet that is distributed to those mobilizing on off unit assignments, hosting IROC (Incident Resource Order Capability) training for IMT and Finance, MNICS MOB Guide review, and continuing to plan for the bi-annual dispatch workshop.

2023 - MNICS Dispatch Working Team will partner with the Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team to host a virtual Dispatch Workshop. Plans are underway. A survey was distributed earlier this summer to learn more about what topics are most important to the dispatch community. Watch for an email announcement early 2023 with registration information.

Training remains a big challenge with dispatch courses no longer required to become a qualified dispatcher. The dispatch community is in favor of continuing to offer courses, as they provide a more well-rounded foundation for anyone interested in beginning down this career path. The MNICS Dispatch Working Team will be hosting dispatch courses in 2023.

- D-110, Expanded Dispatch Recorder is currently being planned for the first quarter of 2023.
- D-310, Support Dispatcher is tentatively being planned for mid to late June 2023 at a Minnesota location to be determined.

The Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team sponsored the annual IROC (Incident Resource Ordering Capability) practice trainings sessions again this past spring. This Geographic Area effort provides general orientation and an opportunity to get into IROC and check out updates and changes. The Minnesota Interagency Coordination

MNICS Working Team Updates

Center served as the host dispatch center for two of the 6 practice sessions in 2022. Many of our dispatchers took advantage of this opportunity and gained a better understanding of IROC. These practice sessions will continue in 2023 and dates will be announced in early 2023.

Nationally, there is a critical shortage of qualified and trainee dispatchers. MNCC mobilized fourteen dispatchers filling 23 out-of-state requests in 2022. Our dispatchers mobilized to support fires in twelve states, providing much-needed assistance to busy centers and expanded dispatch locations including:

- 11 – EDSD, Support Dispatcher
- 6 – IADP, Initial Attack Dispatcher
- 5 – ACDP, Aircraft Dispatcher
- 1 – EDRC, Expanded Dispatch Recorder

Six of these requests were filled with trainees who gained valuable experience on western assignments. The shortage of dispatchers continues to be a nation-wide concern. Anyone interested in becoming a dispatcher is highly encouraged to talk with a member of the MNICS Dispatch Working Team for more information.

Ginger Humphrey, Working Team Chair

Finance Working Team

The Finance Working Team met last December and continued discussing issues of administrative management on emergency incidents.

We looked forward to offering a finance class at the Academy this year; however, the course didn't make the list. The last finance class offered at the academy was in 2018, and we hope to offer a class in 2023. The finance refresher meeting was held in March, and focused on the topics of IROC for Finance, e-ISuite tips, Electronic Doc Box and Inbox, Reading Contracts, T3 teams. and out-of-state resources in Minnesota.

The Incident Management Remote Response finance calls have been invaluable to our team members and draws the entire national Finance community (regardless of agency) to a consistent meeting space and time. In addition, several team members participated in out-state assignments.

Donna Edelman, Working Team Chair

Information Working Team

MNICS Information Working Team members stayed busy despite Minnesota's slower fire season. Several priority tasks on our list were accomplished, including delivering a virtual PIO Workshop, assisting with the Fire Academy, updating Local Incident Organizers, and staying current with incident communication platforms (InciWeb, FireNet). Throughout the fire season, team members shared schedules and prepared for local assignments while continuing to assist with out-of-state incidents.

We had a great turnout at the MNICS-wide information officers virtual PIO Workshop, held March 15-16. We even welcomed a few new folks interested in the work we do. The Task Force Chair, Incident Commanders from the MNICS Type 3 Teams and MIFC/MNCC staff shared updates and expectations for the season. Topics covered during the workshop included:

- agency updates and fire weather outlook
- Use of InciWeb for DNR managed fires
- New PIOT position
- digital and social media 508 compliance
- lessons learned from the 2021 fire season

MNICS PIOs once again supported the Type 3 Incident Management Team that formed for the 2022 Wildfire Academy. The academy is always a great training opportunity for developing PIOs to work with the media, write daily updates, and work with the fantastic instructors and students.

Training opportunities beyond academy were limited this year due to postponed prescribed burn plans and the overall low fire occurrence this spring and summer. PIOs who had the interest and flexibility picked up great experiences during out-of-state fire assignments.

As we say so long to some great PIO team members who took on new jobs or ventured into other opportunities, we offer a BIG THANK YOU. We wish you all well on your next adventures. DYK someone who would be great in the PIO role? We want to meet them! Send them our way.

Peg Robertsen, Working Team Chair

MNICS Working Team Updates

ITSS-GISS Working Team

The work of the ITWT has revolved around the following areas:

- Ongoing infrastructure updates to maintain the MNICS website. Software updates and patches were applied to keep the site running, and to improve security.
- Managing and configuring the equipment purchased by the NWCG for EACC team use. This includes laptops, tablets, networking gear, FirstNet phones, and printers.
- Work was completed to interface with Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) to recruit additional depth for GISS and ITSS support both in-state and nationally. The recruitment effort is revolving around getting folks in the pipeline to attend free national ITSS training the week of February 27, 2023.

Jonathan Lord, Working Team Rep

Logistics Working Team

Last year, the Logistics Working Team acquired two fully enclosed trailers through the Federal Excess Property Program. The 22 foot trailer will be dedicated to communications, and the 44 foot trailer will provide general office space. Each trailer is equipped with power, air, and heat. Work is in progress to retrofit the interior of the trailers into usable workspace and bids for the upgrade work are expected to go out this winter. The 100 foot antenna trailer was repaired and rolled out for the 2022 fire season.

The push pallets were available by request for the incident management teams. Filling the pallets was a collaborative effort between finance and plans sections from the MNICS Type 3 Teams and implemented by logistics. The pallets were used late this fall when the MNICS Team was called up to manage the Braun Fire. Several minor technical issues were encountered and resolved.

Discussions on recruitment for the Logistics Working Team to gain stronger membership from other agencies are ongoing. Currently, team membership is made up of Minnesota DNR and U.S. Forest Service members.

Joe Weflen, Working Team Chair

Operations Working Team

The Operations Working Team focused rostering two MNICS Type 2 IA crews after the two-year COVID response pause. Many alternates applied, but very few applicants applied for the primary crew boss or squad boss positions. As a result, only one primary crew, with Zach Saumer as the CRWB and Bill Alleman as a second qualified CRWB, was rostered. Having two qualified CRWB members on the roster allowed for more flexibility and training opportunities. The crew went on one assignment to the Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest in Colorado and worked a couple of fires and project work.

In 2023, efforts will be made to make modifications the MNICS Type 2IA Crew program and deliberately focus on recruiting more primary applicants.

A special note of congratulations is extended to Kurt Fogelberg and Greg Vollhaber on their retirements and a special note of thanks for all of the years they invested in the Operations Working Team. Welcome and thank you to Greg Carlson and John Furr as their agency voting replacements.

Adam Cook, Working Team Chair

Prescribed Fire and Fuels Working Team

For 2022, the majority of the work the group handled was delegated to individuals or sub-groups within the team, and routine recurring tasks.

- Continuing to monitor the Fire Danger Operating Plan for edits that may be needed.
- Coordinated with National Weather Service on the Fire Weather Operating Plan.
- Coordinated between agencies to prioritize burn opportunities and aviation needs for prescribed burning.
- Coordinated response needs for the EPA Fire Emissions Inventory.

MNICS Working Team Updates

Fire Needs Assessment

The fire need assessment is a long-term project aimed at helping to identify areas of Minnesota that are in the greatest ecological fire need. Work continues, led by Mike Lynch, Forest Stewards Guild, and agency representatives who are providing information and assistance as needed. When completed, the information from the project will help land management agencies prioritize fire treatment on the land.

Brian Jenkins, Working Team Rep

Prevention Working Team

The Prevention Working Team has reorganized with new membership, and re-establishing interpersonal relationships, goals, and duties after two years of absence due to the pandemic. The U.S. Forest Service's Nicole Selmer accepted the chair role, and the Minnesota DNR's Linda Gormanson accepted the vice chair role. Prevention has met several times since this spring and accomplished:

- Review and approval of the Prevention Working Team Charter
- Transitioning the burning restrictions information currently in the MNICS MOB Guide to the Minnesota Fire Danger Operating Plan as an appendix.
- Developing the Prevention Working Team FireNet Channel to facilitate collaboration and communication among all Prevention Working Team members.
- Developed a timeline calendar for annual MNICS-wide fire prevention messaging.

As the team continues to coordinate prevention efforts, they are working with the Minnesota DNR's efforts to update the USDA Forest Service's Community Wildfire Protection Plan updates and development for the upcoming Community Wildfire Defense Grant. The team is also working to identify needs for communication wildfire occurrence, and risk throughout Minnesota.

MNICS teams or agencies that have a project involving prevention costs are asked to submit a copy of an itemized Project Request Form or Letter to request financial support via email.

Nicole Selmer, Working Team Chair

Training Working Team

The MNICS agencies resumed in person instructor-led fire training starting in 2022. Prior to that most in-person instructor led fire training had been suspended in accordance with COVID-19 safety guidance.

The MNICS organization recognizes the importance of maintaining a broad base of firefighters trained to respond to incidents as they arise. To help us with long term strategy MNICS puts out a Training Needs Assessment annually in August. The assessment is sent to all MNICS agency staff. The results are used to help the MNICS Training Working Team for training in 2023 and 2024. With the cooperation of MNICS and GLFFC, the DNR offered more than 45 courses in FY22 to member agencies, fire department and affiliates. Courses range from basic firefighting to advanced leadership.

- S-231 Engine Boss
- S-234 Ignition Operations
- S-270 Basic Air Operations
- S-290 Intermediate Fire Behavior
- L-280 Followership to Leadership
- EVOC Emergency Vehicle Operations
- S-211 Wildland Fire Pumps
- S-261 Applied Business Management
- RT-130 Annual Fire Safety Refresher

Additional courses to be determined. Visit the [Fire Training Calendar](#) for updates.

Preparations and plans began early in 2022 for the Minnesota Wildland fire Academy, which was held June 6th – 10th ,2022 at Minnesota North College, Itasca Campus. This was the 20th Annual Wildland Fire Academy. The weeklong training event featured over 20 nationally certified courses related to basic wildland firefighting wildland fire planning, operations, and leadership. A total of 521 students were registered for 23 courses in 2022. In addition, nearly 50 instructors were involved in the Fire Academy. In addition to the student and instructors, the Wildfire Academy is supported by a MNICS Incident Management Team. The IMT supports all aspects of the academy including serving as a training opportunity for

MNICS Working Team Updates

overhead team member trainees. Those who took previous NWCG training and are working toward national certifications could request participation as team trainees for the week. Trainees gain real-world experience while being mentored by certified Team members. Over 15 trainees worked with the Incident Management Team at this year's Academy

Eastern Area Priority Trainee Program: Each year members of the TWT collect names for the Eastern Area priority trainee program. This has proven to be a very good tool in getting MNICS staff the opportunity to gain experience as well as get task books signed off.

MNICS Training Needs Assessment: The annual training needs assessment was sent out in August with results to be posted on the MNICS website for all to view. This tool helps the Training Working Team select and plan future training for the next two years. The results will also be shared with the eastern area Training Working Team so they are aware of the higher-level training needs MNICS agencies may have that we are not able to meet locally.

The MNICS Training Working Team is busy setting up training for calendar year 2023 and planning for 2024. The following courses are scheduled:

MNICS Sponsored Wildland Fire Courses '23

- M-410, Feb. 6-10, 2023
- RX-410, Feb. 27-March 2, 2023
- S-390 Fire behavior, March 13-17, 2023
- S-131 ADV Fire Fighter, Feb. 8-9, 2023
- RT-130 Instructor Handoff, Feb. 7, 2023

Wildland Fire Academy

Mark your calendars - 2023 Minnesota Wildfire Academy, June 5-9, 2023, at Minnesota North College – Itasca Campus, Grand Rapids, Minn.

Tentative Course Listing

- ICS- 300
- S-130/190 L-180 Basic Firefighter
- S-131 Advanced Firefighter
- S-200 Initial Attack IC
- S-211 Pumps
- S-212 Wildfire Power Saws
- S-230 Crew Boss

Todd Manley, Working Team Rep

MNICS Type 3 Incident Management Working Team

What a difference a year makes. After a banner year for team assignments in 2021, only one team was ordered late season in 2022. However, there were still a number of items that kept the Working Team busy.

Tasks completed by the Working Team this past year included rostering the three MNICS T3 teams, reviewing and updating the MNICS T3 Standard Operating Guide, planning and facilitating the spring MNICS Team meeting.

Planning for the spring annual MNICS Team meeting started at the winter MNICS meeting. With the change in COVID protocols a hybrid meeting was held in March with primary team members invited to attend in person as well as a virtual option available for alternates. It was beneficial to meet in person. The meeting was well attended.

As the season winds down, the Working Team has been soliciting applications for the 2023 season rosters. We are also leading the task to get a process in place prior to next season to facilitate ability to list a Team as available for GACC and/or National availability. More to come at the winter and spring MNICS meetings as we get a process in place.

The Teams continue to look for additional opportunities to be utilized in the future and there are many opportunities to become involved and contribute to the MNICS interagency organization and efforts. We continue to seek a diverse membership and for anyone interested in providing their expertise to the Type 3 Teams please contact a Working Team member for more information.

Primary MNICS Type 3 IMT Working Team Representatives:

- MNCC-Natasha Woodwick
- BIA-Terry O'Conner
- DNR-Brian Leitinger
- USFWS-Dan Paulson
- USFS-Nick Petrack
- NPS-Greg Carlson

Aaron Mielke, Working Team Chair

In Memory



Tom Staydohar 1954 – 2022

Tom Staydohar made a lasting impression on the wildland fire community throughout his 35-year career with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). He joined the DNR in 1987 as a smoke chaser, picking up supplies from DNR's two fire supply warehouses in Grand Rapids and St. Paul, then delivering them to firefighters in the field.

After a few hectic wildfire seasons as a smoke chaser, Tom accepted a full-time job as a DNR general maintenance worker for the Northeast Region headquarters in Grand Rapids. Even with his full-time job responsibilities, Tom enjoyed supporting the firefighters and would pick up extra shifts during his off hours to help deliver fire supplies to the field.

In the early 1990s, Tom was part of a unique interagency DNR and U.S. Forest Service team tasked with locating a large warehouse facility capable of storing each agencies' cache supplies and equipment in one central location. The successful mission led them to today's Minnesota Interagency Fire Center (MIFC), a former Anheuser-Busch wild rice processing plant and warehouse. From Tom's perspective, the location couldn't have been a better fit with its ample warehouse space and ideal location near the United Parcel Service (UPS) distribution site in Grand Rapids, Minn., and interstate access to U.S. Highways 2 and 169.

After the Northeast Interagency Support Cache (NEK) formalized, Tom accepted the assistant fire cache manager role and moved to the MIFC location. He would spend the remainder of his career in this role, working alongside his cache team building the robust warehouse inventory (worth more than \$6.5 million today) outfitting the wildland fire community with supplies and equipment.

Tom rarely turned down an opportunity to meet with wildland firefighters or support staff for their spring meetings, assist MNICS Interagency Type 2 Initial Attack Hand Crews and Incident Management Teams gearing up supplies for in and out-of-state mobilizations, and guiding tours through the NEK cache for a variety of interagency visitors. His expansive knowledge of warehouse distribution and the internal NEK working operations, along with his impressive understanding of how the cache team could seamlessly transition their focus supporting the national support cache system during periods of high-fire needs, left many visitors in awe.

Tom was a dear friend, who'll be remembered for his tireless contribution to the wildland fire community, and his role in an important chapter of Minnesota's wildland firefighting history.

2022 MNICS Awards Recipients

Legacy Award

TOM STAYDOHAR

Leadership Award

ROBERT "BJ" GOTCHIE JR.

Retirement Award

MIKE BEAULIEU

KURT FOGELBERG

DON GREEN

ROB HEAVIRLAND

BILL LAUER

TODD VOGELGESANG



Thank you to Bill Aleman, Keith Flood, Todd Lewis, Phil Millette, Lane Johnson, Leanne Langeberg, Greg Carlson, Amber Schindeldecker, Jeff Jackson, Taylor Schenck, Craig Ferguson, and any others we missed, who contributed photos toward the MNICS Annual Report. Your support helps share the story about the incredible work we do.



WILDFIRE ON ICE

January 13 & 14, 2023

Walker, Minnesota

Visit www.wildfireonice.com to learn more