



## OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

### HISTORY OF THE INTERAGENCY FIREFIGHTING CREW AGREEMENT

July 31, 2009

- The state of Oregon experienced a very severe fire season in 1987.
- At that time, several ODF districts had local agreements with private companies for twenty person hand crews. Questions were raised concerning liability for the private firefighters.
- In 1988, ODF created the original crew agreement to provide fire crews for dispatch within Oregon. This agreement provided for contractors to carry their own insurance, thereby relieving the department of potential liability.
- In 1989, the U.S. Forest Service began using the crews from the agreement.
- In 1990, the Interagency Firefighting Crew Agreement was formed, which included provisions allowing private companies to invoice federal agencies.
- During the late 1990's, there was unprecedented growth in the private firefighting industry. This expansion was primarily caused by two factors; an increase in the number and severity of wildfires in the region, and a significant decrease in the availability of traditional, timber industry resources used to fight fires.
- The 2003 fire season was the peak year for the number of IFCA crews available at 298.
- During 2003, the ODF Protection Contracting Services Unit was formed to manage the agreement and provide the necessary monitoring to provide accountability for the private companies. Funding for the unit was provided by a, per crew day user fee, paid for by the agencies using the IFCA crews.
- In 2006 the IFCA changed from an Invitation to Bid, using a "closest cheapest" dispatch methodology to a Request for Proposal, "Best Value" solicitation.
- To ensure adequate communication and safety considerations, a Language Skill Assessment became a requirement in 2007.
- The 2009 IFCA was awarded in July and has approximately 217 crews available if needed. This is a one year agreement with the potential of two, one year extensions.