



CANADA REPORT 2015

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Preamble

The 2015 Fire Season can be categorized as one of the most challenging for the CIFFC organization but also as one of the most successful due to implementation of new and novel approaches to resource sharing. International assistance was a key element and occurred at unprecedented levels in 2015.



In addition to coordinating resource sharing, mutual aid, and information sharing, CIFFC also serves as a collective focus and facilitator of wildland fire cooperation. Over the fall and winter of 2014/15 changes were made to the CIFFC governance model, there was an internal reorganization and work continued on the Canadian Wildland Fire Preparedness and Response Plan.

As part of the internal reorganization at CIFFC, a Strategic Planning Unit was developed and discussions took place with the Government of Canada, through the Canadian Forest Service, on how Canada could access international resources where no formal bilateral year average for the end of May of 1,884 fires burning more than 110,000 hectares. Significant numbers of personnel resources, aircraft and equipment were mobilized in May to deal with the developing fire situation. agreements existed. As the 2015 season developed this initial work was leveraged resulting in access to human resources that had not been available previously.

Fire Season

The first CIFFC Situation Report was issued on April 22 and noted the persistence of late spring conditions in much of eastern Canada. Fire activity was reported to be low across the country. CIFFC continued to monitor the fire situation through the spring period as wildland fire management agencies across the country were busy with annual fire season preparedness.

By the end of the first week of May, fire activity across much of the country, with the exception of Alberta, was relatively low. Fire agencies were operating at Preparedness Levels 1 and 2. The total number of fires reported across the country was 943 which did exceed the ten year average of 881 fires. Three hundred and six of the fires had occurred in Alberta. This was more than 100 fires above Alberta's average number for that time of year. The higher than average number of spring fires was the first real indicator that there was potential for an early and above normal fire season in portions of western Canada. A second strong indicator was early expanded attack fire activity in British Columbia with one fire reaching to 2,500 hectares by May 11 and required the deployment of an Incident Management Team. By May 14, British Columbia was reporting that unusually dry spring conditions resulted in several challenging fires.



The first 100 plus fire day in the country occurred on May 19. Eighty five of the new fires occurred in Alberta alone. On May 21, CIFFC moved to National Preparedness Level 2. On May 22 the first significant deployment of resources took place with more than 100 firefighters and overhead staff being deployed from Ontario to Alberta. By May 25, CIFFC had reached National Preparedness Level 3 and British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan were managing several large fires. CIFFC processed 23 Resource Orders in May and coordinated the mobilization of 400 firefighters and overhead personnel. 2,503 fires, consuming more than 239,000 hectares had been reported across Canada compared to the 10.

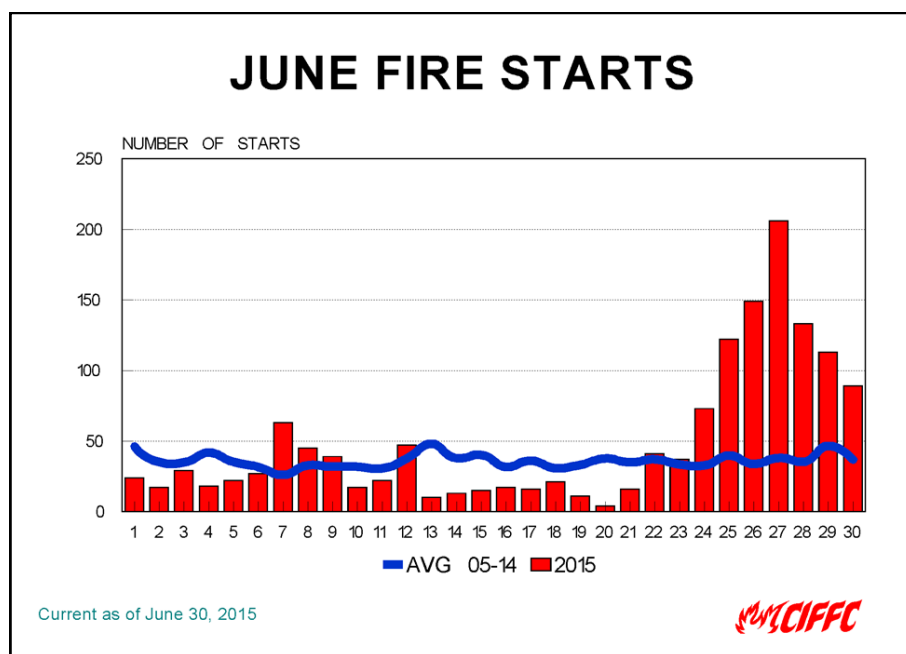
There was a reduction in new fire activity during the first few weeks of June which resulted in CIFFC reducing the National Preparedness Level to 2 and finally to Level 1 by June 19. The situation stabilized enough to enable a period of personnel recycling in early June. Agencies began to get a handle on their fire situation although the western agencies were still managing several large fires requiring resources from their CIFFC partners. By the third week of June, the fire hazard in western Canada was climbing again. From June 25 to June 28, more than 550 new fires were reported in the country, with the majority occurring in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories and Yukon.



By the end of June Incident Management Teams had been deployed in Alberta and Saskatchewan was dealing with several community evacuations. Resource availability across the country was getting tight, prompting CIFFC and the fire agencies to set priorities for resource distribution amongst the most active western provinces. CIFFC was considering escalating to National Preparedness Level 5. CIFFC also began to make inquiries with the United States and France for aircraft resources and New Zealand, Australia and Mexico for personnel resources.

4,076 fires, consuming more than 1,352,383 hectares had been reported across Canada compared to the 10 year average for the end of June of 2,982 fires consuming more than 794,438 hectares.

CIFFC processed 34 Resource Orders during the month of June involving the movement of more than 480 firefighters and overhead.



The fire situation continued to build through the month of July. The long range weather outlook indicated that there was the potential for an extended period of fire activity in western Canada. The 30 day outlook indicated that British Columbia would become a primary area of concern along with Alberta and Saskatchewan.

By the first week of July, CIFFC reached National Preparedness Level 5 and increased its focus on strategic planning. As the fire situation escalated, the Government of Canada was helpful and responsive. With many large fires to manage, more than 12,000 people evacuated from northern communities and large shortages of overhead staff and firefighters, Saskatchewan requested assistance from the Canadian military. More than eight hundred military personnel were deployed to assist with the Saskatchewan fire situation. CIFFC staff worked with agency staff and the military to develop training that would enable military resources to work safely on fires in a Type 3 firefighter capacity.

CIFFC staff were experiencing difficulties obtaining resources to meet the projected needs of the western provinces and therefore continued to investigate the acquisition of international resources. During the first week of July, CIFFC staff were working to finalize an operations plan with Mexico and making arrangements to receive international Interagency Resource Representatives (IARRs). Arrangements were also underway to receive IARRs from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. IARRs were able to work with CIFFC and agency staff to review training standards, qualifications and experience to ensure that firefighters and overhead would be utilized in a safe, efficient and effective manner.



By the second week of July, a South Africa cooperative arrangement had been signed, Operations Plans with Mexico and South Africa were nearing completion and the training of military staff was taking place in Manitoba and Quebec. By the middle of July there were 102 Australian personnel in Canada, a New Zealand Incident Management Team in Alberta, two 23 person South African crews in Alberta as well as 5/20p Sustained Action crews and 30 overhead from the United States spread between Alberta and Saskatchewan.



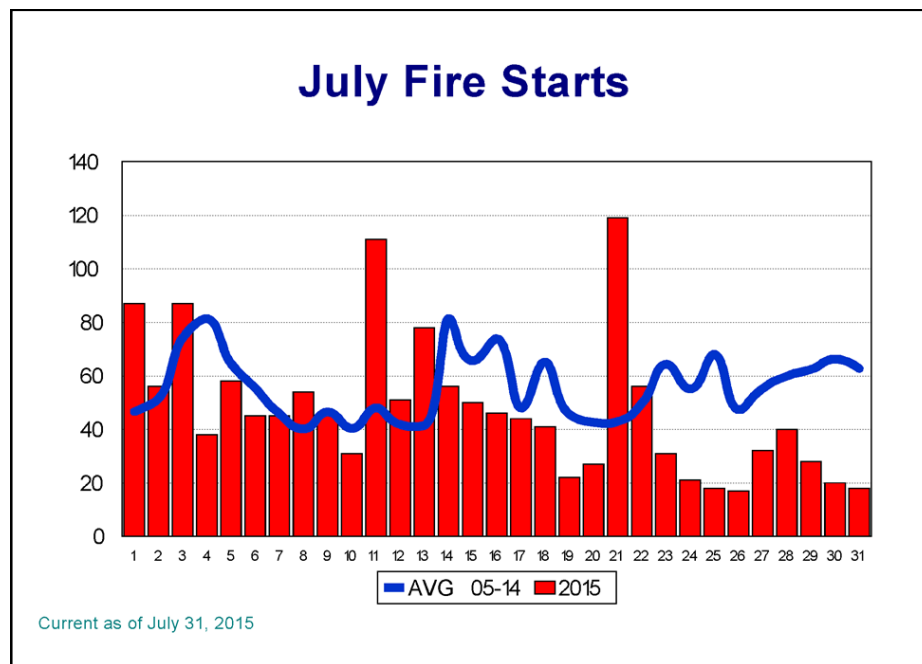
With the large numbers of personnel being mobilized from fire agencies across Canada it became necessary to coordinate aircraft charters at a national level to ensure efficient and cost effective utilization of aircraft. A "CIFFC" charter aircraft was acquired with Ontario taking the lead and deploying two flight coordinators to CIFFC to work with fire agencies to coordinate personnel transport. The coordination of flights at the national level proved to be cost effective and efficient and the contract was extended several times through to mid August.

By the third week of July, although there were a high number of priority fires, agencies were beginning to get a handle on the fire situation and the number of new resource orders at CIFFC was declining. The fire situation was beginning to stabilize. However the continuing need for crew re-cycling necessitated one additional lift of international personnel with 5/20p SA crews from the United States deployed to Alberta on July 19.

On July 20, CIFFC moved to National Preparedness Level 4. By July 27 CIFFC was not expecting any more international resource orders, western provinces were able to demobilize some resources and CIFFC moved to National Preparedness Level 3.

5,766 fires, consuming more than 3,889,644 hectares had been reported across Canada compared to the 10 year average for the end of July of 4,712 fires consuming more than 1,753,315 hectares.

CIFFC processed close to 90 Resource Orders during the month of July and coordinated the deployment of more than 1,000 firefighters and overhead personnel.



During early August, the fire hazard began to climb in western Canada again but a new, heavy fire load did not materialize. Western fire agencies continued to carry out sustained action on large fires. During the second and third weeks of August, western provinces continued to release resources.

Although the situation was moderating somewhat in Canada, the western United States was experiencing significant fire activity. Airtankers from Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario were mobilized to the United States through the Canada US Reciprocal Firefighting arrangement along with sustained action crews and overhead from Ontario and overhead from Alberta. The last Canadian resources deployed to the United States returned home during the second week of September. This season exemplified the true reciprocal nature of the agreement, with mobilizations of crews and aircraft occurring both to Canada from the United States and vice versa.

Through late August British Columbia was still experiencing challenging fires that necessitated the mobilization of overhead and aircraft from Alberta to provide assistance.

By August 26, the CIFFC Situation Report was reporting reduced fire activity across the country and that CIFFC was operating at National Preparedness Level 1.

The number of resource orders declined in August with just over 25 requests for personnel, aircraft and equipment. Two hundred and twenty five personnel were deployed through CIFFC in August, mostly to the United States.

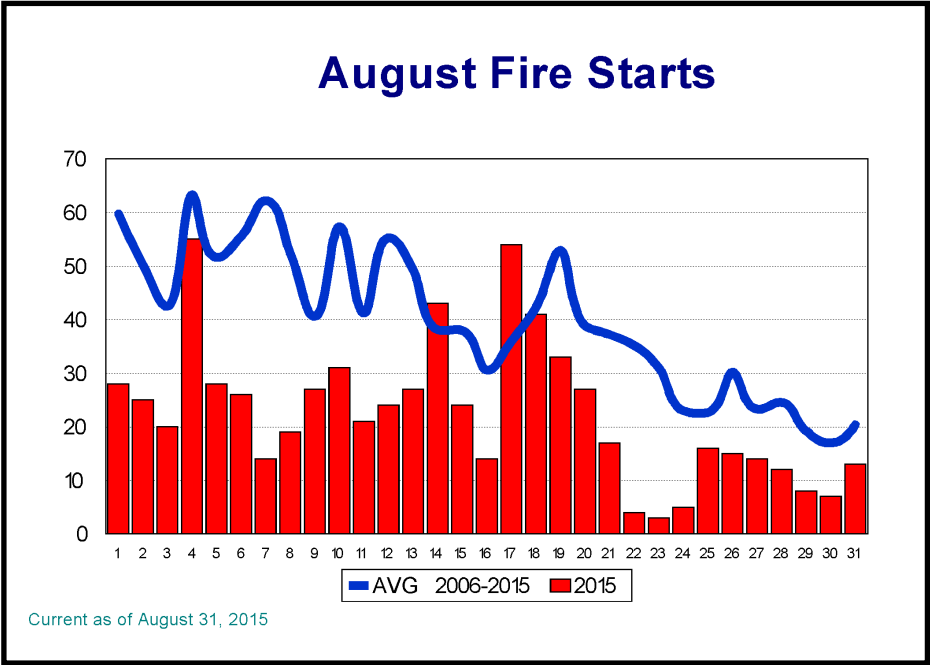
Though much of the fire activity had been reduced by September, a significant workload remained. CIFFC and fire agencies across the country had large quantities of fire equipment that required transport, recycling, repair and replacement. Invoices and payment for resource sharing under the MARS Guidelines would take months to complete. Fire agencies had After Action Reviews, debriefings and lessons learned sessions to carry out with operational and support staff.

Season Summary

The number of fires and hectares burned in 2015 exceeded ten year averages. The early start to the fire season in western Canada and prolonged period of fire activity challenged fire managers at provincial, territorial and CIFFC levels.



During the 2015 Fire Season CIFFC processed 191 Resource Orders resulting in the mobilization of 2193 personnel, 635 pumps and 31,509 lengths of hose along with 6 land based airtankers and 28 skimmer airtankers. Although not a record breaking year in terms of resource mobilization the number of Canadian agencies experiencing escalated fire activity simultaneously in late June and July necessitated unprecedented international support and mutual aid cooperation.



Wildfire Related Fatalities																														
Year	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15
Fatalities	6	3	3	0	3	4	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	2	0	3	3	2	1	5	4	0	1	0	2

Statistics

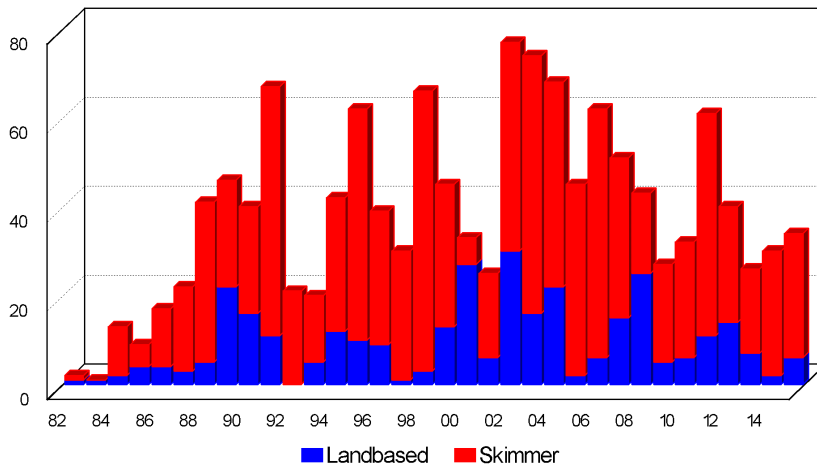
As of December 31, 2015 Canadian Fire Management Agencies recorded 7,068 fires with an area consumed of 3,903,276 hectares.

	WILDLAND FIRE STATISTICS - 2015 AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015												
	FIRES								HECTARES			PRESCRIBED FIRE	
	Full		Modified		Total		Total		Full	Modified	Total		
	Ltg	Human	Ltg	Human	Ltg	Human						Fires	Ha
BC	1124	567	111	34	1235	601	1836	121056	159389	280445	0	0	
YT	25	19	136	4	161	23	184	64827	105014	169841			
AB	771	1079	-	-	771	1079	1850	492536	-	492536	31	2157.47	
NT	73	19	143	10	216	29	245	287087	359868	646955	0	0	
SK	237	296	142	48	379	344	723	708999	1049376	1758376	3	169	
MB	217	156	71	10	288	166	454	31937	15421	47358	0	0	
ON	229	344	90	5	319	349	668	3760	35551	39311	3	3416	
QC	34	331	12	7	46	338	384	400	4980	5380	0	0	
NL	4	88	15	21	19	109	128	845.7	3112.4	3958.1	0	0	
NB	3	219	-	-	3	219	222	262.2	-	262.2	0	0	
NS	0	247	-	-	0	247	247	516.8	-	516.8	0	0	
PE	0	5	-	-	0	5	5	2.5	-	2.5	0	0	
PC	20	35	60	7	80	42	122	1189.91	457145.6	458335.51	28	7238.9	
Tot.	2737	3405	780	136	3517	3551	7068	1713419	2189857	3903276	65	12981	

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS LEVEL DAYS					
Levels	1	2	3	4	5
No. of days	32	39	23	11	14

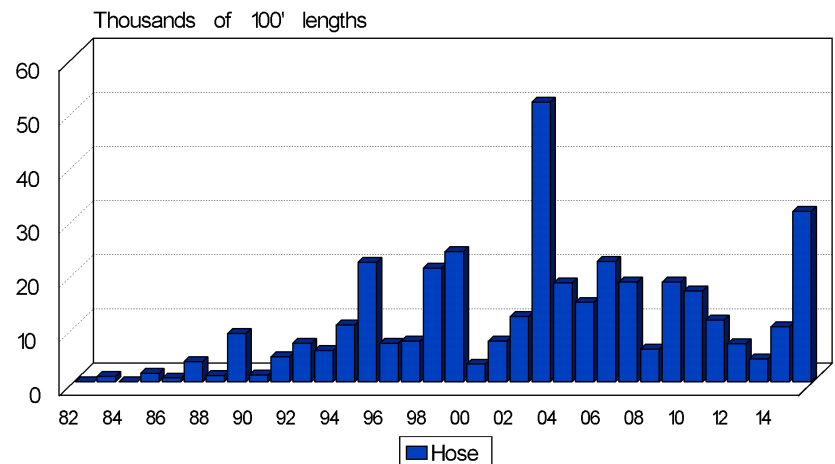
Fires by Month	May	June	July	August
	1621	1456	1472	695

Airtankers



2015

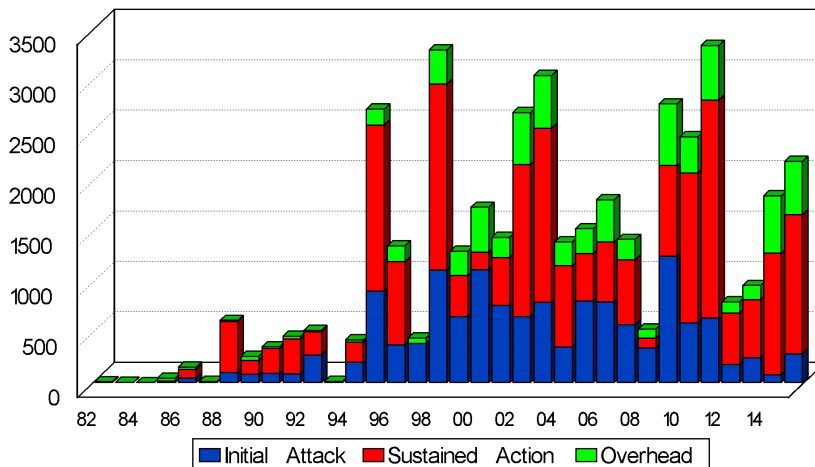
Hose



2015

CIFFC

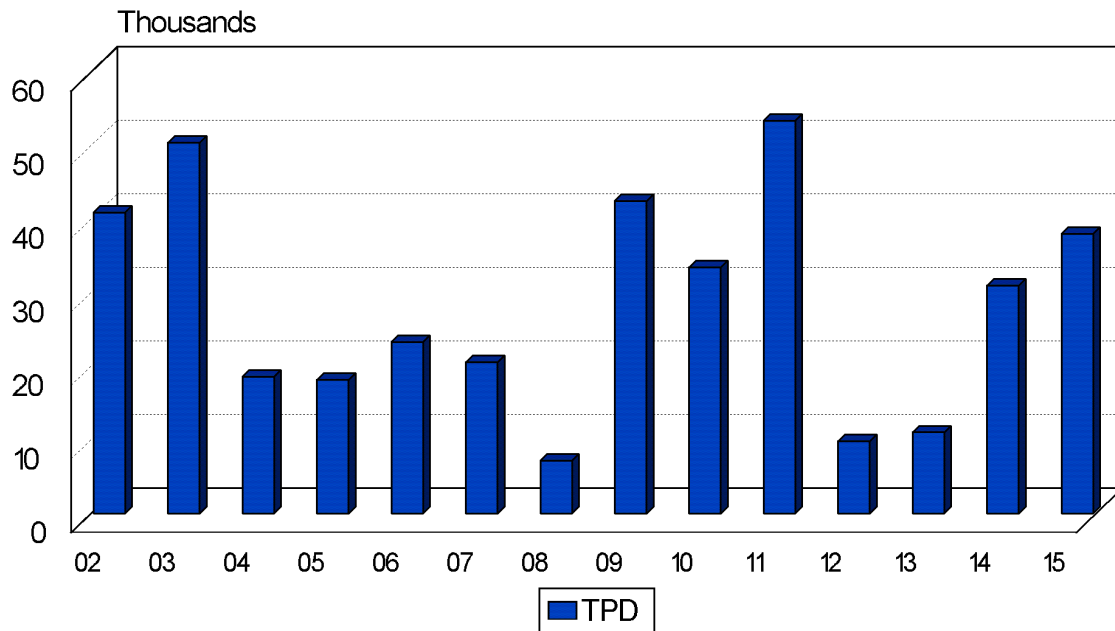
Personnel Mobilized



2015

CIFFC

Total Person Days

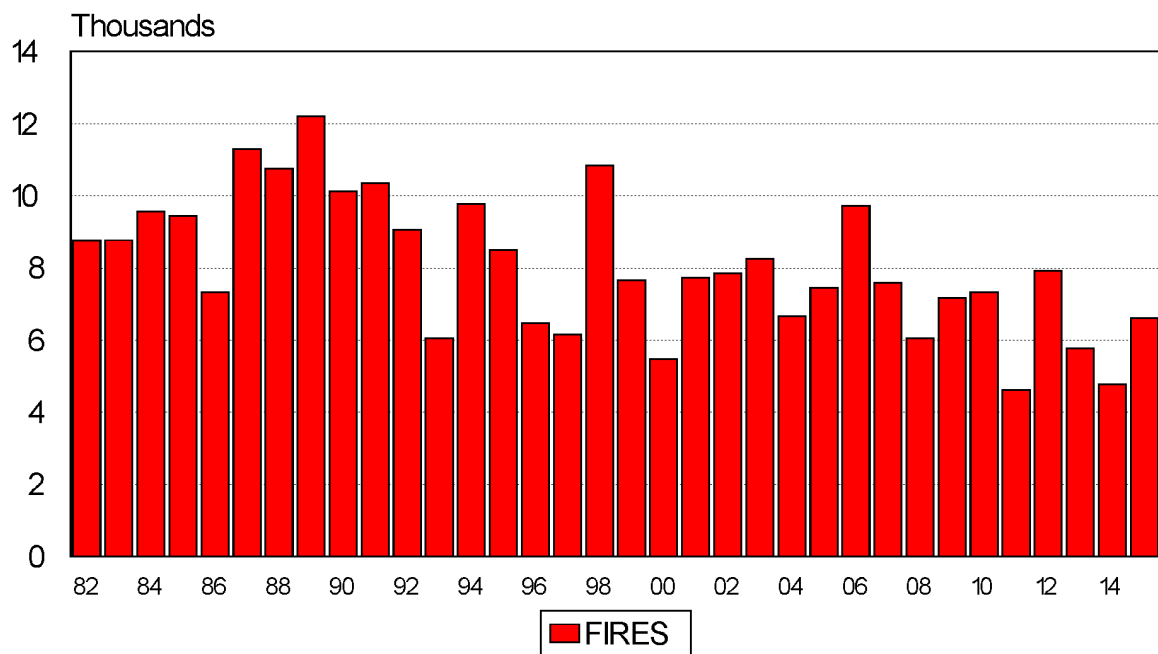


The graph shows Total Person Days for Type 1 personnel mobilized from 2002 to 2015.



WILDLAND FIRE STARTS												
TOTAL NUMBERS OF FIRES (LIGHTNING AND HUMAN CAUSED)												
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Avg.	2015
BC	970	2,751	1,437	1,817	3,084	1,678	646	1,642	1,854	1,455	1,733	1,836
YT	83	80	110	67	118	88	56	126	177	34	94	184
AB	1,359	1,938	1,164	1,695	1,655	1,837	1,097	1,555	1,214	1,451	1,496	1850
NT	261	166	1,353	241	42	224	207	279	248	385	340	245
SK	322	501	370	599	511	571	303	409	429	403	442	723
MB	246	682	364	397	184	583	315	497	494	245	401	454
ON	1,961	2,281	1,015	338	385	931	1,334	1,615	582	303	1,074	668
QC	1,374	683	935	222	483	737	329	795	515	292	636	384
NL	145	96	87	139	176	61	53	198	101	124	118	128
NB	305	310	282	168	192	179	81	344	356	178	240	222
NS	304	234	392	247	193	313	116	352	171	171	249	247
PE	13	36	8	3	8	4	4	8	9	4	10	5
PC	95	135	64	103	136	113	67	87	96	81	98	122
TOTAL	7,438	9,893	7,581	6,036	7,167	7,319	4,608	7,907	6,246	5,126	6,931	7,068

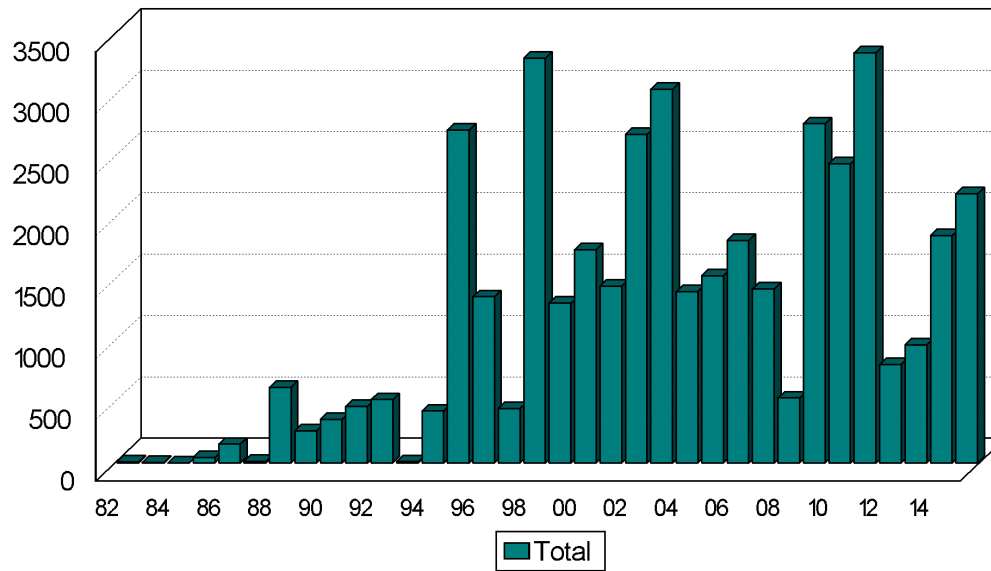
Fires



Current as of December 31, 2015



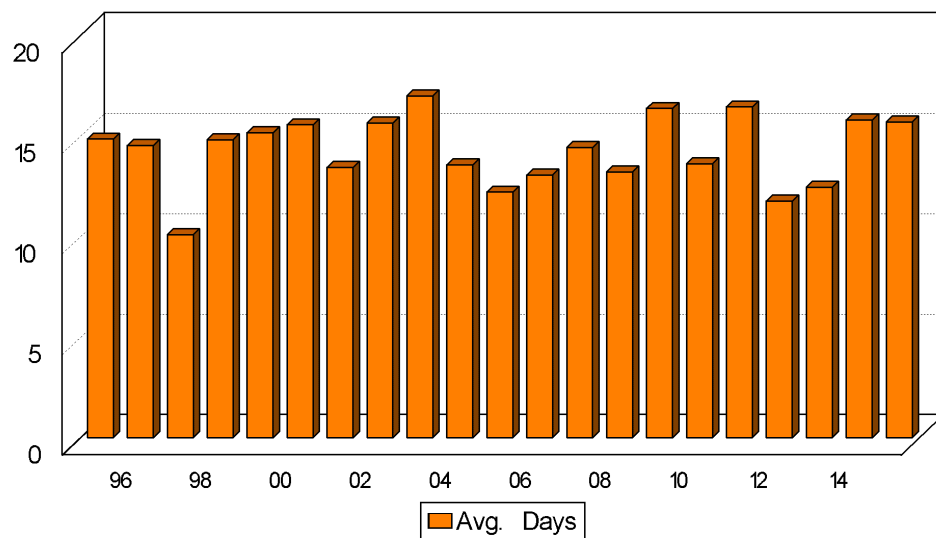
Total Personnel Mobilized



CIFFC

The graph shows Total personnel mobilized from 1982 to 2015.

Personnel Average Deployment Days



CIFFC

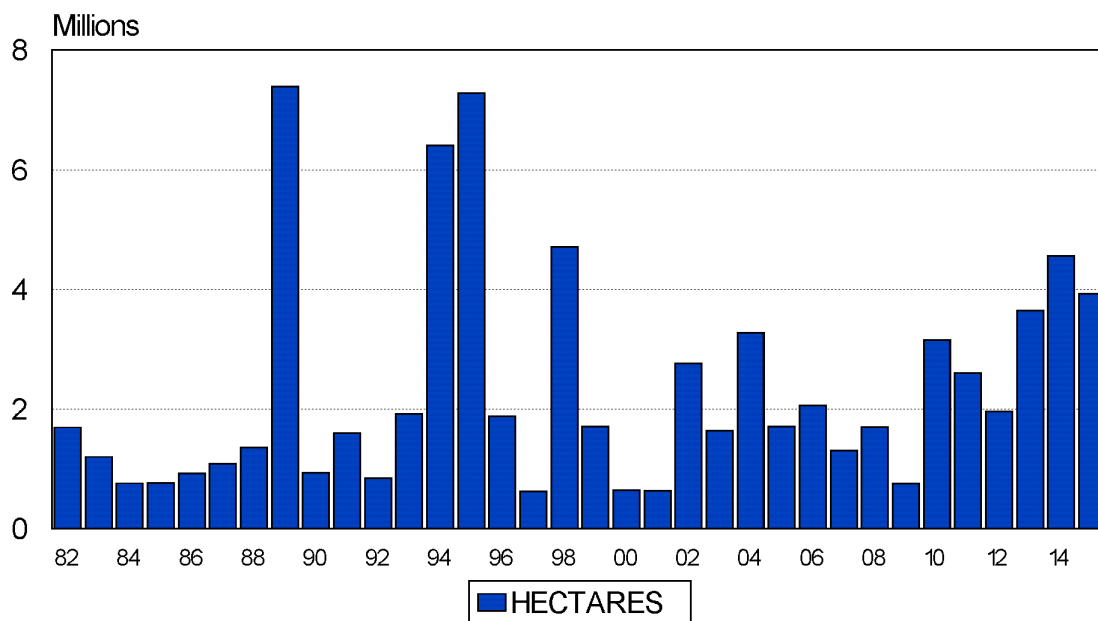
The graph shows Personnel Average Deployment Days for Type 1 staff mobilized from 1995 to 2015.

WILDLAND FIRE HECTARES

TOTAL AREA CONSUMED (HECTARES)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Avg.	2015
BC	35,091	135,634	28,704	11,939	229,566	331,508	12,357	102,042	17,990	368,785	127,362	280,445
YT	170,691	95,033	41,288	18,845	227,057	146,957	39,091	58,280	179,510	3,160	97,991	169,841
AB	60,602	118,782	105,321	20,644	66,826	83,643	940,596	337,000	21,890	23,120	177,842	492,536
NT	224,632	53,398	439,886	353,852	2,057	333,435	406,693	297,618	537,912	3,416,291	606,577	646,955
SK	213,524	1,203,722	212,907	1,130,179	37,559	1,734,799	343,720	227,512	312,194	343,430	575,954	1,758,376
MB	72,680	166,050	206,924	150,673	2,872	187,494	126,844	216,888	1,115,412	40,333	228,617	47,358
ON	42,308	149,518	40,591	1,314	20,656	14,824	635,373	151,564	43,422	5,386	110,496	39,311
QC	831,022	124,176	342,682	1,481	93,972	314,884	12,726	70,086	1,872,842	63,721	338,525	5,380
NL	22,834	3437	10,892	5,140	35,267	1,020	594	225,524	43,076	16,816	36,400	3,958
NB	355	507	446	143	249	156	45	362	886	112	326	262
NS	517	1,576	692	2,719	892	463	136	817	301	564	868	517
PE	50	51	20	8	3.09	5	6	12	55	4	21	2
PC	32,142	2,768	222,134	4,439	38,429	5,912	85,653	273,037	58,377	282,125	100,502	458,336
TOTAL	1,706,448	2,054,652	1,310,148	1,701,376	755,405	3,155,100	2,603,833	1,960,742	4,203,867	4,563,847	2,401,481	3,903,277

Hectares



Current as of December 31, 2015





All photos supplied by CIFFC member agencies and their staff.