

# SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

## Annual Fire Report 2003

### Introduction:

2003 was a challenging year on the Salmon Challis. The Cramer fire which claimed the lives of Jeff Allen and Shane Heath on July 22<sup>nd</sup> dominated the activities on the Forest for the year. Overall the 68,638 acres burned represent the 4<sup>th</sup> highest acreage burned recorded on the forest. The three years with larger acreages totals were; 2000 with 417,260 acres, 1988 with 108,354 and 1979 with 80,862 acres reported.

The Salmon Challis Forest took action on its first fire on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June and the last fire for the season was on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November. The Forest reported 110 fires for 68,638 acres; there were 86 lightning caused fires for 35,524 acres and 24 human caused fires for 33,114 acres. Of the 110 fires 31 were in the Frank Church Wilderness of which burned 33,305 acres, 13 of those were managed as Wildland Fire Use for 5,645 acres. There were also 75 smoke checks where a response was made..

<b>2003</b>	<b>LIGHTNING</b>	<b>HUMAN</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>FIRES</b>	86	24	110
<b>ACRES</b>	35,524	33,114	68,638

The table below lists some statistics comparing the average annual acres burned and median acres burned over several periods. The number of fires has decreased slightly since peaking in the mid 90's. The median acres reported annual has continued to climb throughout most selected periods. Recent periods are heavily influenced by the 2000 fire season.

	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>Average FIRES</b>	<b>Median Annual Acres</b>	<b>Average Annual Acres</b>
5 year	1999-2003	106	16,707	106,600
10 year	1994-2003	125	7,614	59,628
20 year	1984-2003	124	7,959	39,671
30 year	1974-2003	113	5,319	29,487
72-79	1970's	92	199	10,570
	1980's	133	2,393	18,948
	1990's	119	7,614	9,483
00-03	2000's	109	46,452	129,479

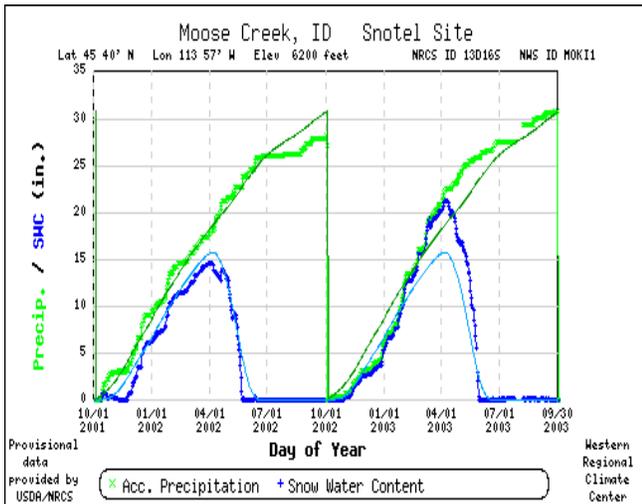
### **Fires by Statistical Cause**

Lightning	Equipment	Smoking	Campfire	Debris	Railroad	Arson	Children	Misc/UNK
86	0	1	12	0	0	7	0	5
78%		1%	11%			6%		4%

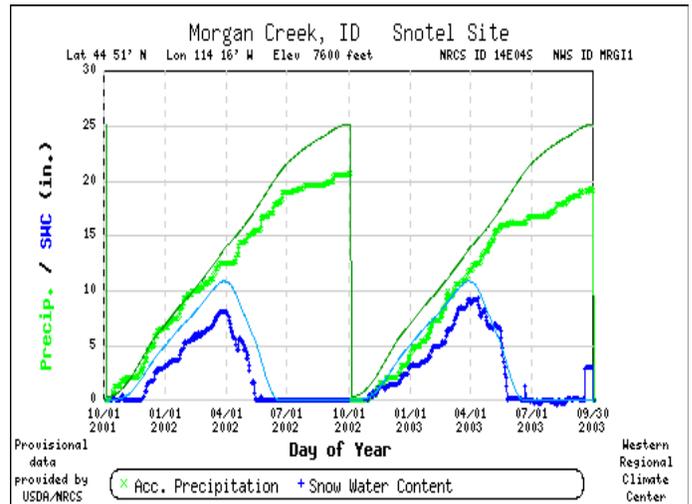
### Seasonal weather and severity

Central Idaho went into the 2003 fire season with continuing drought conditions as a result of a below normal snow pack for 2001-2003. The water year from October 2002 through September 2003 provided an average amount of precipitation at most sites. The Moose Creek and Morgan SNOTEL sites are represented below. Snowpack was slightly above average, but record high temperatures in May caused a sudden loss of snow cover. The 96 degrees recorded in Salmon on May 29 was the all time high for the month of May. Precipitation amounts from about the first week in May and through the rest of the season continued to remain below average.

There were periods that we did receive above average precipitation associated with the lightning storms that developed over our protection area, this aided firefighters in controlling many of our lightning fires before they escaped Initial attack.

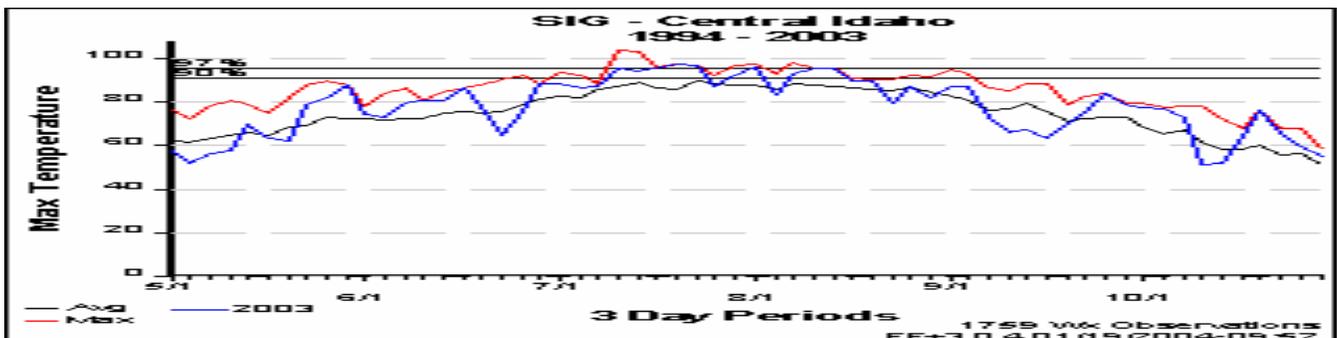


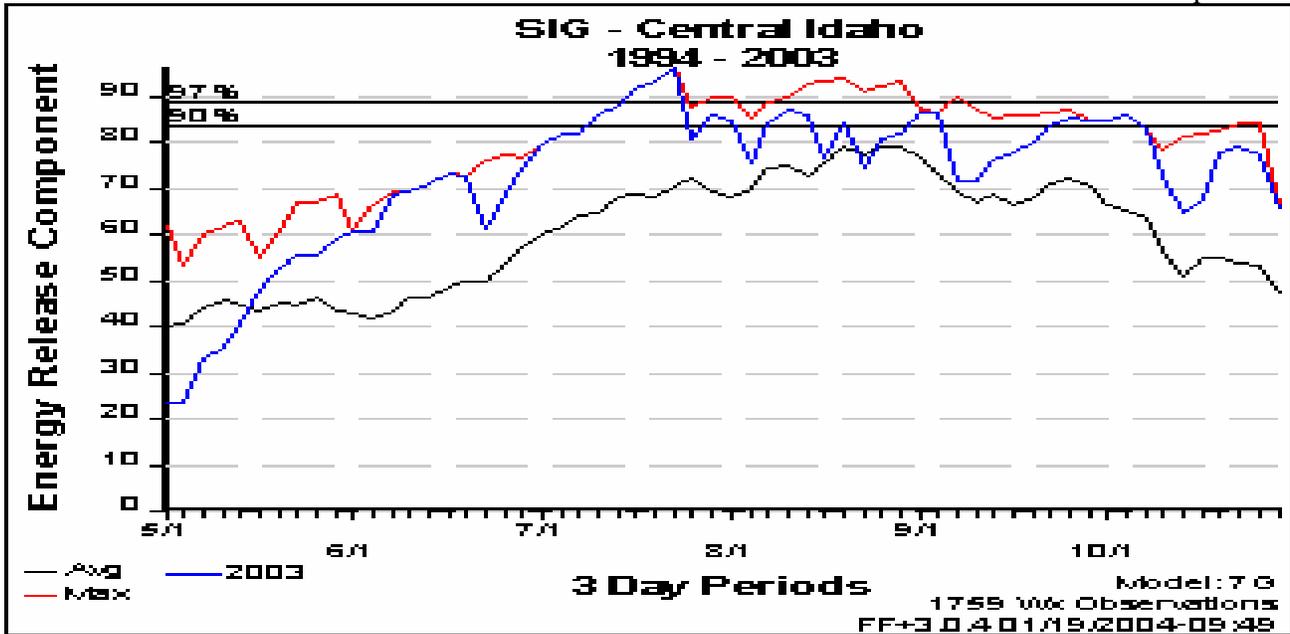
Moose Creek SNOTEL 10/01 to 10/03



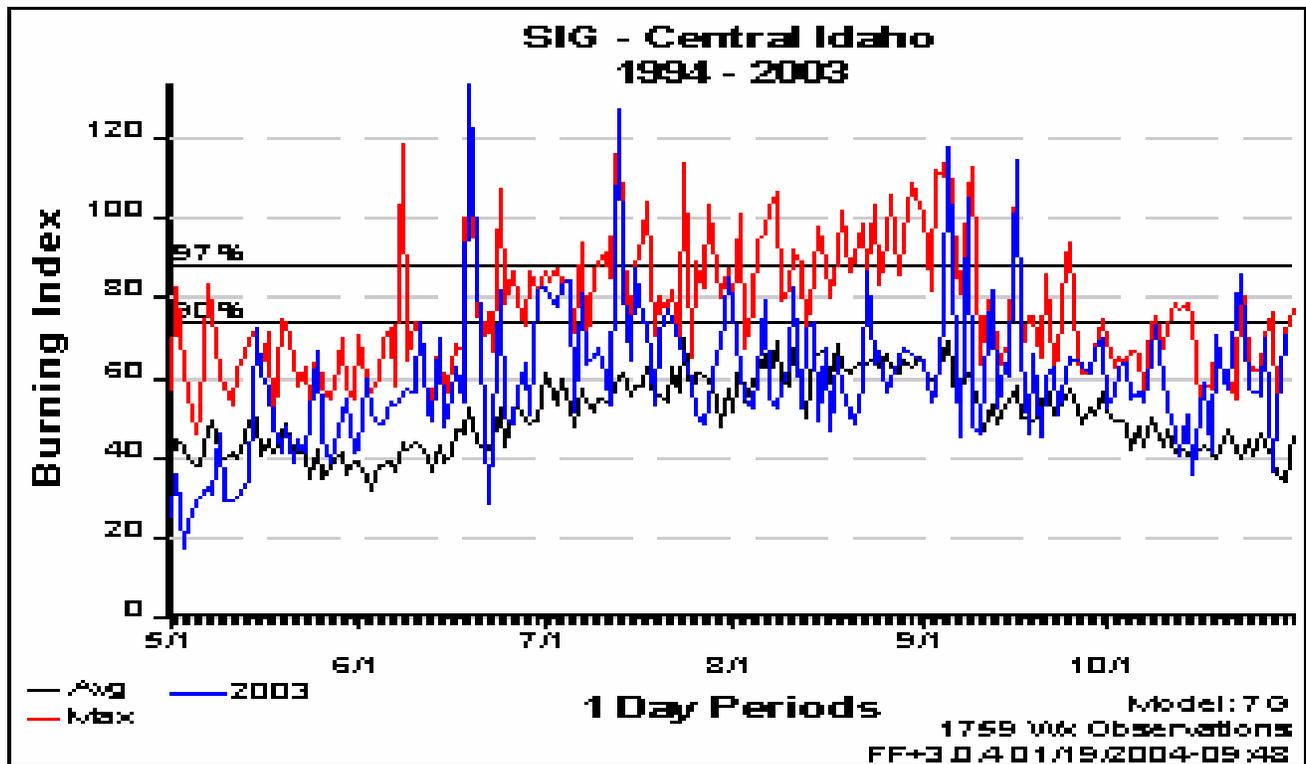
Morgan Creek Summit SNOTEL 10/01 to 10/03

Temperatures for the last part of June and into the middle of July were 10-20 degrees above normal. Several cold fronts moved through the zone the remainder of the season causing temperatures to drop as much as 10 degrees below normal. Starting around the first part of August the Thousand hour fuels were 2 to 4 % below the ten-year average and this continued until September 1<sup>st</sup> at which time we received a period of rain, then they resumed dropping until the true end of season in October. Through most of July the Thousand Hour Time Lag Fuels and correspondingly the ERC's were at record high levels for the date. The ERC's peaked in the last week of July but continued to hover around the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for periods in August. Burning Index stayed about average through most of the season with periods in August and a short time in September that they were above the 90<sup>th</sup> and 97<sup>th</sup> percentile.





Central Idaho Energy Release Component 2003



Central Idaho Burning Index 2003

## Large Fires (100+ acres)

There were several large fires on the forest in 2003. The first fire to escape initial attack was the human caused Tobias fire on Leadore Ranger District. This fire was discovered on July 12 and a Type 2 team was ordered. This fire involved Forest Service, BLM, and private lands. All agencies in the area including the rural fire departments and county emergency management cooperated on this incident.

The Blackwall Fire also started on the Salmon Challis, North Fork Ranger District, on July 12 and burned mainly on the Beaverhead-DeerLodge National Forest's in the Northern Region. A type 2 team was ordered for this fire on July 13. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> another fire the Frog Pond started on the Bitterroot National Forest, but burned primarily on the Salmon Challis. Because of the ongoing activities on the Forest and involvement of several R1 Forests these fires were managed together as the Black Frog Complex. With management of the fires assigned to the Bitterroot. This complex was on three forests and in two regions, cooperation between these three forests was excellent.

The Crystal fire was reported on the morning of July 20<sup>th</sup>. This fire was just inside the southern edge of the Frank Church River if No Return wilderness (FC-RONR) on the Middle Fork District. By the time initial attack forces arrived they were unable to safely initiate any attack on the fire. Muir's Type 2 team was ordered later that day.

Later that day, July 20<sup>th</sup>, a fire was reported in the Cramer Creek drainage just north of the confluence of the Middle Fork and Main Salmon Rivers on the North Fork District. Smokejumpers were unable to initial attack the fire due to winds. A Type 3 IC was assigned. On the afternoon of July 22<sup>nd</sup> extreme fire behavior overran two firefighters working on a helispot on the fire. Two Indianola Helitack Crewmen, Jeff Allen and Shane Heath died in this turnover. A Type 1 Incident Management Team was ordered that evening.

The Falconberry fire was in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness on the Middle Fork Ranger District. This human caused fire started on August 10<sup>th</sup> and eventually burned 25,000 acres and destroyed the Falconberry Ranch site. This fire was started by an unattended campfire during a period of fire restrictions. The people who started the fire were identified and have been fined and billed for the fire. On August 11<sup>th</sup> a local type III team had been mobilized and the fire had grown to roughly 500 acres. The Falconberry Fire was eventually included in the Middle Fork Complex. This Complex consisted of several fires in the FC-RONR, this would include Falconberry, Trapper, Prospect, and Rush, Teapot, Marble, Cougar, Filly, Nest, Nest 2 and Elk Horn. A national Fire Use team was ordered to manage these fires. The Lost Packer Complex consisted of the Upper West Horse and Horse fires and was also later managed as part of the in the Middle Fork Complex. . The North Stoddard fire and the Wolfgang WFU were included in the Frank Church WFU complex managed by the Payette Forest, then later as part of the Middle Fork Complex.

The Withington fire on the Salmon Cobalt Ranger District was started by lightning on August 11<sup>th</sup>. The local Type 3 team and later a Great Basin Type 2 team managed this fire. This fire began to threaten the Sunset Heights subdivision on August 15<sup>th</sup> necessitating its evacuation. All agencies again cooperated fully in the suppression of this fire with no loss of structures.

## Salmon Challis Large Fires 2003

NAME	IMT	ICS TYPE	FINAL SIZE	START
Tobias	Rodgers	3	13,843 ac	7/12
	Van Bruggen	2		
Blackwall	Rose	3	5,157 ac	
	Kechter	2		7/12
* Black Frog Complex	Frye	1		
Cramer	Martin	1	5,614 ac	7/20
Crystal	Morrow	3	1,440 ac	7/20
	Muir	2		
Horse	McChensney	3	800 ac	
* Lost Packer Complex	Hawkins	3		7/30
North Stoddard	Bonefeld	FUMT	1,829 ac	
* Frank Church WFU				8/5
Falconberry	Tucker	3	25,007 ac	
	Muir	2		8/10
* Middle Fork Complex	Clark	FUMT		
Withington	Tucker	3	10,567 ac	8/11
	Muir	2		
Trapper	Clark	FUMT	407 ac	
* Middle Fork Complex				8/19
Prospect	Clark	FUMT	2,800 ac	8/20
Rush	Clark	FUMT	940 ac	
* Middle Fork Complex				8/24

## Wildland Fire Use

The Salmon / Challis Forest managed 13 Wildland Fire Use (WFU) fires in the Frank Church Wilderness that involved a total of 5,645 acres managed for resource benefit.

NAME	START DATE	ACRES
Goat	6/18	.10
Wolf Fang	8/3	.25
North Stoddard	8/5	1,829
Cougar	8/20	.10
Marble	8/20	.10
Mahoney	8/20	.10
Teapot	8/20	.10
Nest 2	8/20	.30
Filly	8/20	.30
Prospect	8/20	2,800
Nest	8/20	75
Rush	8/24	940
Elkhorn	9/6	.10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5,645.35</b>

## Prescribed Fire accomplishment

The Forest treated 3,375 acres with management-ignited burns in 2003.

BURN NAME	BURN TYPE	DATE BURNED	ACRES BURNED	DISTRICT
Silver I	Understory	5/7—5/18	225	Salmon Cobalt
Silver II	Understory		1,200	Salmon Cobalt
Basin Creek	Broadcast	5/20	1,803	Yankee Fork
Annie's Gyg	Broadcast	5/14	30	Challis
Mosquito Slash	Hand Piles	10/30—11/6	90	Challis
Phi Kappa	Jackpot	11/3—11/10	150	Lost River
Challis Brush Disposal	Hand Piles	11/3—11/6	90	Challis

## Contract Crews And Equipment

The forest hosted two type 2 contract crews during the 2003 season. National Crew contract items 19A and 19B, filled with Ferguson crews. These crews were assigned locally and to other units when requested. We also hosted 2 type 3 engines, Greyback Engine 26 had a total of 5 assignments for 15 days and all of these assignments were on both local large fires and initial attack. Engine 26 assisted the BLM with one of their prescribed burns.

## Aviation

The Salmon- Challis experienced an increase in aircraft use in 2003. The Forest processed 763 flight invoices in 2003. The Central Idaho Fire Center was the scheduling office for 391 flights. A total of 2,683 hours were flown in accomplishing all mission on the unit. This compares to 1,676 total flight hours in 2002.

### Rotor-Wing:

The Salmon Challis contracted 3 exclusive-use Type 3 helicopters, and hosted 1 national Type 2 helicopter. 67 of 110 fires were initial attacked with helicopters. 17 of these fires used more than 1 helicopter during initial attack. The Forest helicopters assisted with initial attack on the Caribou-Targhee and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests, and the Shoshone BLM. All three contract ships filled off unit resource orders.

Helicopter		Personnel Transported	Cargo Transported (LB)	Water Dropped (Gal.)	Flight Hours	Flight Cost	Total Cost
<b>H-193 Indianola</b>	Local	458	120,649	22,349	110.8	63,252	\$ 382,091
	All	785	165,037	38,694	197.7	111,916	451,092
<b>H-166 Moyer</b>	Local	675	32,255	52,336	164.1	91,896	429,864
	All	771	68,312	41,925	234.1	131,096	491,310
<b>H-354 Challis</b>	Local	756	152,688	112,378	163.8	94,676	401,548
	All	808	156,133	131,108	190.5	110,109	421,831
<b>Totals</b>	Local	1889	305,592	187,063	438.7	249,824	1,213,503
	Grand Total	2364	389,482	211,727	622.3	352,121	1,364,233

### Fixed-Wing

Used for fire and non-fire missions on the forest. This included all fixed wing aircraft such as air tankers, air attacks, lead planes, etc ordered from outside the Salmon-Challis National Forest.

User	Crew & Pax	Cargo (LB)	Flight Hours	Flight Cost	Total Cost
Fire	811	27,164	1019.1	\$339,758	\$ 381,065
Administrative	389	64,975	224.7	\$ 57,465	\$ 60,067
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>92,139</b>	<b>1,242.8</b>	<b>\$397,223</b>	<b>\$441,131</b>

### Off Unit Assignments

Because of the heavy local fire season the Central Idaho Dispatch Center (CIC) was able to fill only 155 orders requested by the Eastern Great Basin Coordination Center. The CIC placed 1,555 orders with the Eastern Great Basin CC. Most of the assignments CIC filled were early season, starting with Columbia Response and late season to assist other units with burs and BAER projects.

**Noteworthy instances of cooperation with other Federal agencies, States, industrial concerns, groups or individuals.**

The Central Idaho Coordination Center is an interagency dispatch providing support to both the Bureau of land management and the Forest Service. The BLM and FS worked together in the spring of 2003 to form local type 3 teams that would make for a safe and efficient transition from type 4 to type 3 incidents.

The center also works with the Idaho Fish & Game to provide flight following for annual game counts; the center provided this service for about 40 days in 2003.

This was the first year of the Central Idaho Training Academy. The cooperation between local Forest and BLM personnel made this course a success.

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Personnel Employed on Wildfire Pre Suppression and Suppression Activities	Unit: Salmon -Challis Calendar Year 2003	
	Subtotal	Total
1. Regular appointed personnel	15	
a. Full time fire management (20 pay periods or more)		
B. Part time fire management	33	
C. Others used on pre suppression sometime during the year	0	
D. Others used in suppression (excluding a, b, and c)	50	
E. Total (a + b + c + d)		98
2. Seasonal or short term personnel	39	
A. Regular fire control (crews, patrol, lookouts, etc..)		
B. Others (BD, KV, BR, R&T, etc.) Some time on fire work	30	
C. Emergency firefighters (exclude those under a or b)	180	
D. Total (a + b + c)		249
3. Total number of casuals employed on fire suppression (each reemployment counts as an employment)		219
4. Number of casuals (included in item 3) employed for the first time (an Estimate is adequate)	56	
5. Grand Total (1e + 2d + 3)		566

Salmon Challis NF Annual Fire Report 2003

11. Form FS-5100-9, Land Ownership Protection Report

USDA-FOREST SERVICE						Calendar Year 2003			
LAND OWNERSHIP PROTECTION REPORT (Summary of acres by states)						Region R-4 Salmon Challis NF			
STATE	INSIDE FOREST SERVICE PROTECTION BOUNDARIES							S&P LAND PROTECTED  by STATE and FS	National Forest Land Protected Others
	PROTECTED BY THE FOREST SERVICE								
	State and Private Land				Other Federal	N F Land	Total		
	Fee Basis	Offset Basis	Reimburse Suppression	Without Reimburse ment					
IDL			21,719		1,132,480	4,400,000	5,554,199		
Salmon/Challis NF									
Total			21,719		398,411	2,155,858	5,554,199		