USDA Weekly Fire Update- September 18, 2017

Current Situation: The United States is at day 39 of National Preparedness Level 5, the highest possible state of resource commitment to wildfire. There are currently 17,700 personnel engaged in firefighting activities, supported by 852 engines, 166 helicopters and 22 airtankers. Year to date, there have been 49,669 fires covering 8.5 million acres across all jurisdictions 2.3 million of which are on national forests. To supplement interagency resources, 245 soldiers from the 23rd Brigade Engineer Battalion and 1-23 Infantry Battalion based out of Fort Lewis, Washington are deployed in support of the Umpqua North Complex.

Current Spending: As of September 18, 2017, the Forest Service has spent $2.080 billion on wildland fire suppression operations. The Agency expended its appropriated dollars for fire suppression and is transferring funding from non-suppression accounts. Of the initial $300 million Fire Transfer Strategy, there is a balance of about $60 million. The Forest Service has now implemented a revised Fire Transfer Strategy, which includes an additional $300 million – Tranche 3 is $190 million; Tranche 4 is $110 million.

Media Highlights: Secretary Perdue has been interviewed in several media outlets over the past week highlighting the need to find a permanent solution to funding wildfire including:

- US Wildfire Costs Exceed $2 Billion, A Record Amid A Year Of Extremes
- Perdue Calls for Change In Way Forest Service is Funded
- Perdue: Congress needs to treat major fires like other disasters
- Sonny Perdue vows to solve ‘fire borrowing’ to fight wildfires
- Daines, Tester Make Separate Calls for Forest Management Reform

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Weather Outlook: A large, cold low pressure system will move into the Pacific Northwest, Northern California, and the Northern Rockies bringing widespread rain and mountain snow along with breezy winds. To the south, across the southern half of the Great Basin and California, a windy southwesterly flow will develop and will create pockets of critical fire weather conditions. Meanwhile off the East Coast, Jose will continue to spin a few hundred miles off the Jersey Shore.

National Interagency Fire Center National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for September.