



Washington State Wildfires
August 2015
ESF #11 After Action Report (AAR)



Incident Summary

On August 21, 2015, The President approved an Emergency Disaster Declaration (FEMA-3372- EM) for the State of Washington, as a result of ongoing wildfires throughout the state. The declaration authorizes emergency protective measures (Category B), limited to direct federal assistance, under the Public Assistance program for the Counties of Asotin, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Klickitat, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Skamania, Spokane, Stevens, and Yakima and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Spokane Tribe of Indians, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. The WA State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was fully activated August 16th and as of August 28th there were 14 large uncontained fires throughout the State that have burned approximately 825,096 acres. The RX (Region 10) Emergency Support Function 11 (ESF #11) Coordinator monitored the WA fire response via WebEOC and participated in WA State Emergency Board, Mass Care (Feeding) and Pets/ Livestock Task Force calls. USDA was activated via FEMA RX mission assignment August 25th and deployed to the WA State EOC at Camp Murray WA that day to support the state. ESF #11 coordinated with State ESF #11, FEMA RX Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT), FEMA ESF 6, State ESF 8, Western Region FNS, Red Cross, animal response non-governmental organizations, WA FSA, and WA State Distributing Agencies on Feeding Task Force and Pets/Animal Task Force meetings. ESF #11 coordinated USDA support to the state for several issues including determining the Canadian-US border requirements associated with the potential evacuation of animals to Canada, and reports of wildlife threatening the safety of firefighters on fire lines. No unmet needs were identified for other components of ESF #11 to include food safety, animal and plant diseases/pests, natural/cultural resources or historic properties. An ESF #11 Desk Officer with APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) was requested through APHIS Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) Dispatch and reported to the State EOC August 31st. ESF #11 demobilized at the end of August 31, 2015 shift. As of September 15, FEMA RX and WA State are carrying out preliminary damage assessments and the State, counties and USDA agencies are determining impacts to agricultural producers.

Lessons Learned

Successful

- Strong support from PPQ employee and supervisor providing an ESF #11 Desk Officer for deployment to State EOC.
- Benefits associated with deployment to the WA State EOC were in person coordination with State agency partners, daily use of WebEOC, and improved understanding of WA State EOC operations during response.
- Timely response and good coordination with USDA FNS and APHIS Veterinary Services and Wildlife Services.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

- First RX deployment for wildfire and first deployment to a State EOC.
- County level preparations and planning for animal emergency response are needed.
- Prepare additional RX ESF #11 Desk Officers for possible deployment to state EOC's.