

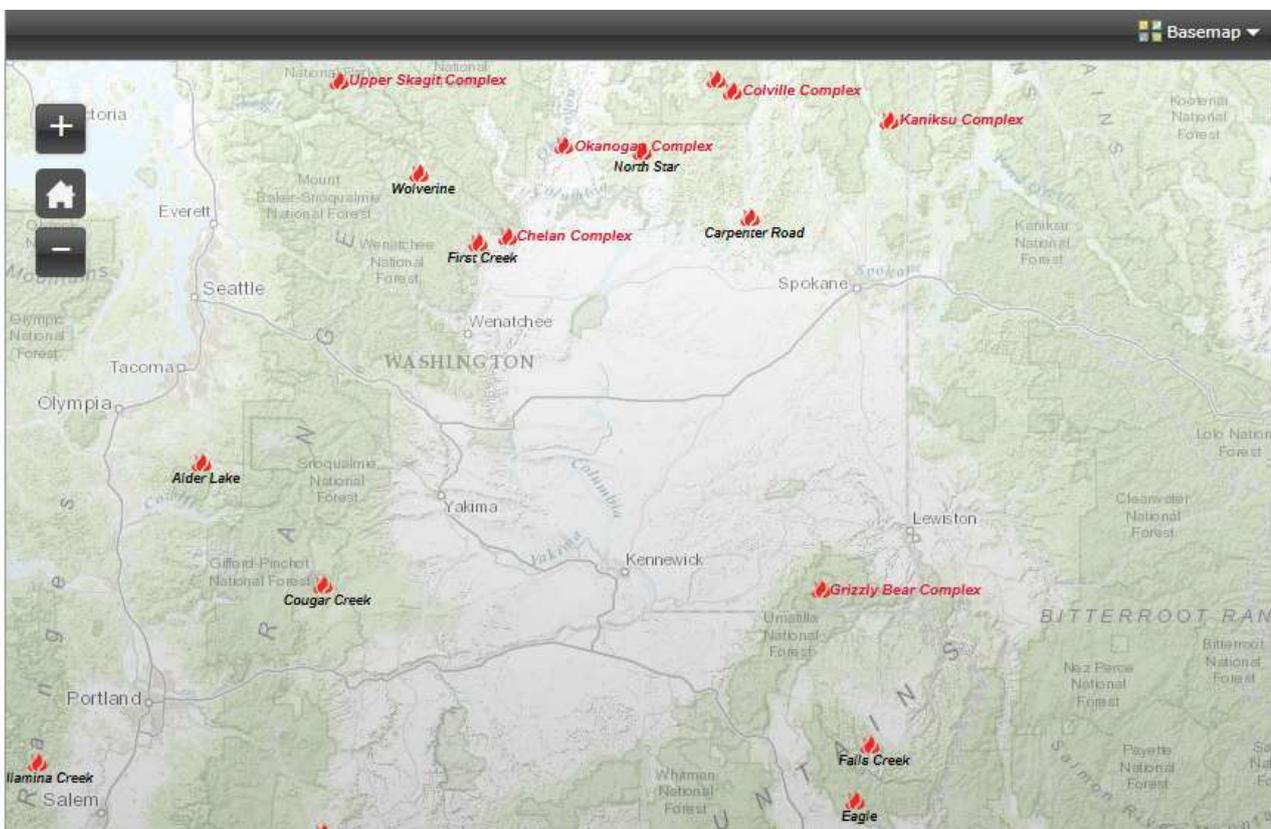


## New Zealand, Australia Contingent to USA 2015 “WE WORK AS ONE”

### Update # 3 28 August 2015

Today (Friday 28 August) the Aircraft Managers who were based at Redmond for their additional training day on aircraft operations will be driving to their assigned fires.

Those ground-based personnel who travelled yesterday to their assigned fires will today begin their first day on the fire line.



Map: Showing location of fires NZ crews are working on (Okanogan, Chelan, North Star, Eagle, and Grizzly Bear).

Everyone was issued with a classic American pickup for the travel to the fire grounds; most had a 6 – 8 hour drive to get to their fires, with many commenting it was a good opportunity to see a bit of the country side.



*Photo: Redmond, vehicles given to NZ personnel.*



*Photo: Flight to Redmond John Day fire.*

On the flight to Redmond the pilot apparently did a good job of pointing out the various fires along the way, he then did an even better job keeping the plane in the air when everyone moved to one side to take a look at them!

### **Situation Update North West**

Friday 28 August: 94 new fire starts, 8 of them large incidents.

Temperatures during the day have been between 36 and 32 degrees with overnight lows (if you can call them that) of between 15 and 22 degrees. Relative humidity doesn't change that much, generally ranging between 10 and 20% day and night.

There's been some good progress toward containment of a number of fires with just the burnout of a few areas to tidy up containment lines.

A number of fires are still proving to be problematic. On the Chelan Complex fire yesterday there was a seven-mile fire run and on the Carpenter Creek fire they were getting spot fires six miles ahead of the main fire.

The Okanogan fire complex is now the largest fire in Washington state history, covering 307,000 acres (124,238 hectares) – twice the size of Lake Taupo.

Of concern is the weather forecast for today and over weekend that will bring a wind shift to the Southwest. These winds are likely to become very strong (80 to 100 km/hr) on Saturday into Sunday afternoon, and it's possible with these winds that containment lines may not hold.

Rain was expected to accompany the change but this is now likely to be more showers rather than rain.

A number of evacuation orders are in place in preparation of the strong winds coming and risk that containment lines may not hold.



Photo: Some of the information in the aircraft course



Photo: Bruce, Paul, Jonathan, Philip at Boise airport

### Interesting Fact

So far this season 26 million feet of fire hose has been issued by the NIFC fire store. That is enough hose to stretch from one side of America to the other and most the way back again.

### Useful links

Please note that the guys are now working in locations where there is not a lot mobile phone reception, and therefore calls to home may be limited. The liaisons in the field have a communications strategy for ensuring all personnel are contacted regularly to confirm all is well.

We've set up a Facebook site for friends and family to access photos plus regular updates on what is happening. The site is called "USA Wildfires 2015 – Australia/NZ Deployment". (It's a closed site, so you'll need to register to join.)

Another useful site giving up-to-date USA Situation reports is:

<https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/index.htm> (click on the situation report tab left side menu).

For more detailed information about the fires in the Northwest where the Kiwi crews are deployed: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/>

You may also find the Friends and Family webpage useful we have setup this page for those who don't have access to facebook <http://files.portal.em.vic.gov.au/refdocs/SCC-IILU.htm?v=3>

If you have any messages you want to get to someone on the deployment you can post them on the Facebook site or send them to me (via [tim.mitchell@fire.org.nz](mailto:tim.mitchell@fire.org.nz)) and I will do my best to pass them on.

Don't forget to use the Facebook and website to stay up-to-date on what's happening.

I'll send more news soon to keep you all up-to-date.

Cheers,

Tim

(On behalf of the Kiwi team)