HISTORY

The Wallowa Fire Zone consists of 3 districts encompassing 1.3 million acres. Eagle Cap Ranger District, Wallowa Valley Ranger District and Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. Within these three districts is the largest wilderness in Oregon, the Eagle Cap Wilderness, Hells Canyon Wilderness (in Oregon and Idaho) and the Seven Devils wilderness in Idaho. The mighty Snake River divides Oregon and Idaho in the deepest river gorge in North America. This area is very unique with a rich natural and geologic history. The diverse terrain includes the Wallowa Mountains, with 20 peaks above 9,000’ to elevations below 1,000’ in Hells Canyon. Varying ecosystems include sub-alpine/montane in the higher country to native bunchgrasses in the canyon grasslands.

FIRE CREWS

The Wallowa Fire Zone is home to 3- Type 6 engine modules, 2- 5 person Initial Attack squads and a 10 person I.A. Crew/Wildland Fire Module (pending certification). The engine module configuration is Supervisor Fire Engine Operator, Fire Engine Operator and Assistant Fire Engine Operator and 2 crew members for a total of 5 personnel. The 5-person squads consist of Supervisor, Squad Leader and 3 crew members. The 10 person I.A. crew configuration is Supervisor, Assistant, Squad Leader, Senior Firefighter and 6 crew members.
DAILY OPERATIONS

Fire crews begin the day with vehicle checks followed with zone operational briefing. Next is an hour of PT (physical training). Then it is off to the woods for project work. This may include forest stand improvement work; prescribed burn preparation, thinning small diameter trees with chainsaws to reduce hazardous fuels, timber sale and thinning layout. Facilities maintenance projects including historic lookouts and guard stations. Our fire prevention program, includes Smokey the Bear and Sparky the Fire Dog. Then it is back to the fire warehouse for equipment maintenance and debrief.

FIRE SEASON

Fire season typically starts the beginning of July, peaks in mid-August and ends sometime early October. June is a busy month of preparedness training. The Wallowa Fire Zone averages around 35 initial attack fires with several large fires (greater than 100 acres in timber and 300 acres in grasslands) per season. The Fire Zone helps support large fires in Region 6 (WA, OR) and nationally with our Forest 20 person Type 2 I.A. crew or engine modules. During fire season we could work up to 7 days a week and extended staffing up to 16 hrs. Fire assignments can last up to 14 days, not including travel. So be prepared to be gone for several weeks.

CONTACT

For more information contact Jason Lyman, Wallowa Fire Zone AFMO 541-426-5549 lyman.jason@usda.gov, or the front desk 541-426-4978 and ask to speak with someone from the fire shop. Government housing is available.