

PREPARING

Because a major wildfire outbreak will happen again, Oklahoma Forestry Services begins preparing for response before the current one is over.

Analyzing data provided by the National Weather Service and the National Interagency Fire Center, OFS personnel provide a daily overview of the fire weather conditions and expected wildfire behavior to improve fire manager's ability to control any fires which occurred and ensure firefighter safety. This information is also used by OFS, the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to plan and pre-position resources to better inform the public, improve response, and provide additional support to local fire departments.

Beginning in 2011, new data is now collected to aid in the analysis of wildland fire and its impacts on our state. An online fire reporting system (www.firereporting.ok.gov), developed by the Texas Forest Service and modified by OFS for use in Oklahoma provides all fire departments in the state the ability to track their wildland fire occurrence and suppression costs. Analysis of this data will allow for better determination of suppression needs and easier reimbursement for some fires through Federal Fire Management Assistance Grants.

When the 2012 wildfire season begins, OFS and its partners will be ready.

PARTNERSHIPS

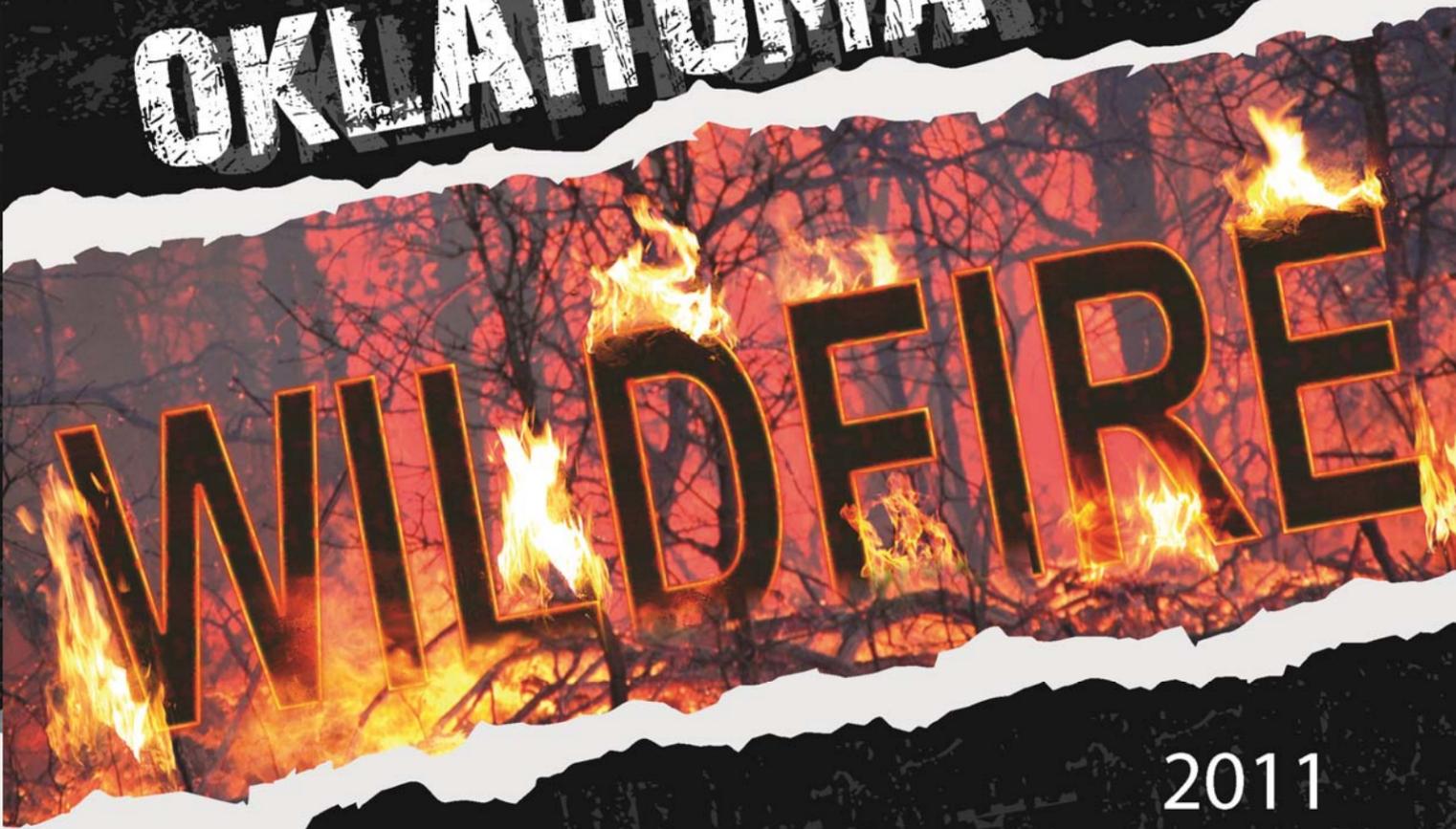


For more information contact Oklahoma Forestry Services at (405) 522-6158

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OKLAHOMA



2011

2011 Oklahoma experienced one of its worst droughts. 2011 Oklahoman's experienced some of the most significant wildfires in its history.



www.forestry.ok.gov

DROUGHT

2011 was the hottest Oklahoma summer on record according to the Oklahoma Climatological Survey obliterating the previous state record set in 1934. This unprecedented heat wave was made even worse by extreme drought that began in the fall of 2010. The wildland fuels (trees, grasses and other vegetation) were extraordinarily dry which resulted in numerous wildfires across the state.



At its worst in September of 2011, over 90% of the state was in extreme to exceptional drought.



WILDFIRE

The 2011 wildfire season began in January with numerous county burn bans in place, many of which continued through December. A Governor declared burn ban was implemented in July and remained in effect for much of the state through October.

Because of the drought and heat most wildfires which started exhibited unpredictable and extreme behavior causing firefighters to struggle for control. Across the state major fires in areas of mixed forests, grasslands, homes and businesses (known as the wildland urban interface) put many Oklahoma citizens in harms way and resulted in loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars in structure and personal property. In the southeastern portion of the state thousands of acres of valuable commercial timberlands were lost.

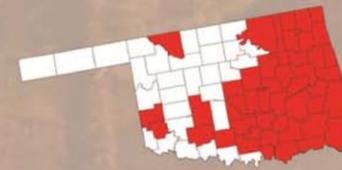


RESPONSE

Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry, is the lead agency for wildland fire response in Oklahoma. OFS provides initial on more than 6.5 million acres and extended attack on another 15.7 million acres of forest, cropland and rural homes in eastern Oklahoma as well as responding to requests from local fire departments, counties and emergency managers across the state for additional resources.



OFS initial Attack and Extended Attack, Protection Areas



Counties Provided OFS Suppression Support, 2011

By the end of 2010, OFS responded to over 1740 fires which burned roughly 130,000 acres in its initial attack (protection) area and provided suppression assistance on an additional 170 fires outside of the protection area in the form of aircraft, wildland fire crews and tactical assistance.

RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

RFDs respond to hundreds of wildfires across Oklahoma and they do it with very limited finances and personnel. OFS works to build local fire suppression through our Rural Fire Defense Program. This program provides grants, vehicles equipment and training to over 800 fire departments. In 2011, Federal Excess Property valued at \$7.4 million was distributed. Since the program began over 4,000 pieces of equipment and vehicles valued at \$127 million have been placed with departments across the state.

In 2011 Governor Mary Fallin and the Oklahoma legislature appropriated \$3.7 million to be distributed by OFS to fire departments as operational grants to assist with such items as fuel purchases, repairs, etc. In addition to the operational grants \$400,000 in 80/20 cost-share grants were made available.

AVIATION RESOURCES

OFS coordinates aviation support utilized by fire departments statewide. Aircraft from the Oklahoma National Guard and the US Forest Service were used numerous times during the 2011 fire season providing for quicker and safer control and saved numerous structures that were in the path of the fires. In addition to coordination OFS provides both the equipment and maintenance of the "BAMBI" buckets used by Oklahoma National Guard helicopters and radio equipment to allow aircraft crews to communicate with fire department personnel on the ground.