

SAMPLE HARD NEWS STORY

*A **hard news piece** is a news story that gives the facts—who, what, when, where, why, and how. It is written in a form that allows a reader to get a quick summary in the first, or lead paragraph.*

Wildlifes Scorch West

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Wildfire damage hit a 10 year high this season. More than 6 million acres of U.S. forests have gone up in smoke so far this year. That's nearly double the area that burns in an average year, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

Emergency resources have been pushed to the limit as firefighters have worked to combat serious blazes throughout the country. “We’ve been pretty busy this fire season,” fire information officer Russ Rivera told WR News.

Stretched Thin

National fire officials responded to the spike in wildfires by going to level 5, the highest level. “When we go to level 5, we're basically saying there are 500 fire crews working nationally,” says Rivera.

Each crew comprises 16 to 21 firefighters, making the total active force about 10,000 firefighters—and still they needed reinforcements. Canada, New Zealand, and Australia deployed, or sent out, military units and firefighters to the United States to help extinguish the blazes.

Western states, including Oregon, California, Nevada, Montana, and Wyoming, have been most affected. Firefighters have battled a tough blaze in Washington state. Ignited by lightning, the fire has scorched more than 80,000 acres at the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Officials don't expect the fire to be brought under control until early October.

Too Hot to Handle

Wildfire season typically begins in June and lasts into November. This year's season, however, heated up early with a series of grass fires that blazed through Oklahoma and Texas in January. Those fires were tough to slow down. “You're talking about really fast-moving fires,” Rivera says. “Faster than you can run.”

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