



AVIATION STRATEGY KEEPS WILDFIRES SMALL, FIRE PROGRAM COSTS DOWN IN WASHINGTON STATE

How adjusting its initial attack strategy by rapidly deploying more Fire Boss aircraft helped avoid complex fires

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages over 13 million acres of state-owned land that includes forest, range, commercial, agricultural and aquatic lands. Fire prevention and suppression, as well as overseeing forest practices, are two of the department's largest and most important state-wide resource protection responsibilities.

In 2016, facing a fire season with a large amount of potential wildfire fuel on the ground due to heavy rainfall, the DNR made critical adjustments to the aviation portion of its firefighting strategy. The department doubled the number of Fire Boss aircraft on contract and briefed local dispatchers on available aerial firefighting options, then began consistently launching 2-3 amphibious water scooping Fire Bosses, a helicopter and an Air Attack each time a wildland fire was reported. This key change enabled the DNR to minimize the damage and size of fires during the 2016 season and keep costs well within budget.





Key benefits of adjusting Washington DNR's air attack strategy in 2016 included:

- **Curbing Complex Fires:** Quickly deploying Fire Bosses, a helicopter and an Air Attack helped keep blazes under 10 acres and avoided costly complex fires (just two complex fires that year could have used up the entire season's fire aviation budget).
- **Extending Reach:** With many remote areas in Washington state not easily accessible by firefighters on the ground, the additional Fire Bosses enabled the DNR to more widely disperse aerial resources throughout fire-prone regions.
- **Minimizing Turnaround Time:** The Fire Boss can deploy in 6-8 minutes, and when near a water source, can perform continuous scoops and drops on a fire for multiple hours – without needing to return to a base. This efficiency combined with the aircraft's 800-gallon capacity has been critical during initial attack.

Dauntless Air continues to assist Washington in protecting people, land and property from the devastation of wildfires. We have been a proud supporter in this effort since 2009 when Dauntless was first deployed in the state by the Bureau of Land Management.

