

Committee Name:

**Assembly Committee – Rural Affairs and Forestry
(AC-RAF)**

Appointments

99hr_AC-RAF_Appt_pt00

Committee Hearings

99hr_AC-RAF_CH_pt00

Committee Reports

99hr_AC-RAF_CR_pt00

Clearinghouse Rules

99hr_AC-RAF_CRule_99-

Executive Sessions

99hr_AC-RAF_ES_pt00

Hearing Records

99hr_ab0000

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Misc.

99hr_AC-RAF_Misc_Fire_pt01d

Record of Committee Proceedings

99hr_AC-RAF_RCP_pt00

**WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**BUREAU OF FORESTRY
SURVEY**

**THE INVOLVEMENT OF
WISCONSIN FIRE DEPARTMENTS
IN FOREST FIRE CONTROL**

AUGUST 1993

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Section 1

Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources sent out questionnaires to all state fire departments in late August of 1993. The questionnaires were then analyzed. This was done to study the local fire departments role and effectiveness in forest fire protection. This study will help to determine the future relationship the DNR will strive for with the fire departments in the state. The Department of Natural Resources would like to thank the fire departments for their participation. The results of the questions you will find on the following pages.

Defintion

The questionnaires are organized based on which DNR protection area the fire department is located in; intensive, extensive, and co-op. The following is a short description of the DNR protection areas.

In intensive areas, the DNR owns fire towers and a majority of their wildland fire fighting equipment located in this area. Burning permits are required, except for cooking food or warming the person, outside of incorporated villages and cities any time the ground is not snow covered. The initial response is the responsibility of the DNR. The fire departments assist where necessary. These areas have large areas of forests, and are the dangerous fuel types.

In extensive areas, the DNR has some of the wildland fire fighting equipment located in this area, the other equipment is maintained by fire departments. Burning permits are required, except for cooking food or warming the person, when the ground is not snow covered in the months of January, February, March, April, and May and other times when the DNR so orders. The initial response is the responsibility of both the fire departments and the DNR. The fire departments are compensated for any initial response reported to the DNR. These areas have less large expanses of forests and have more agricultural lands.

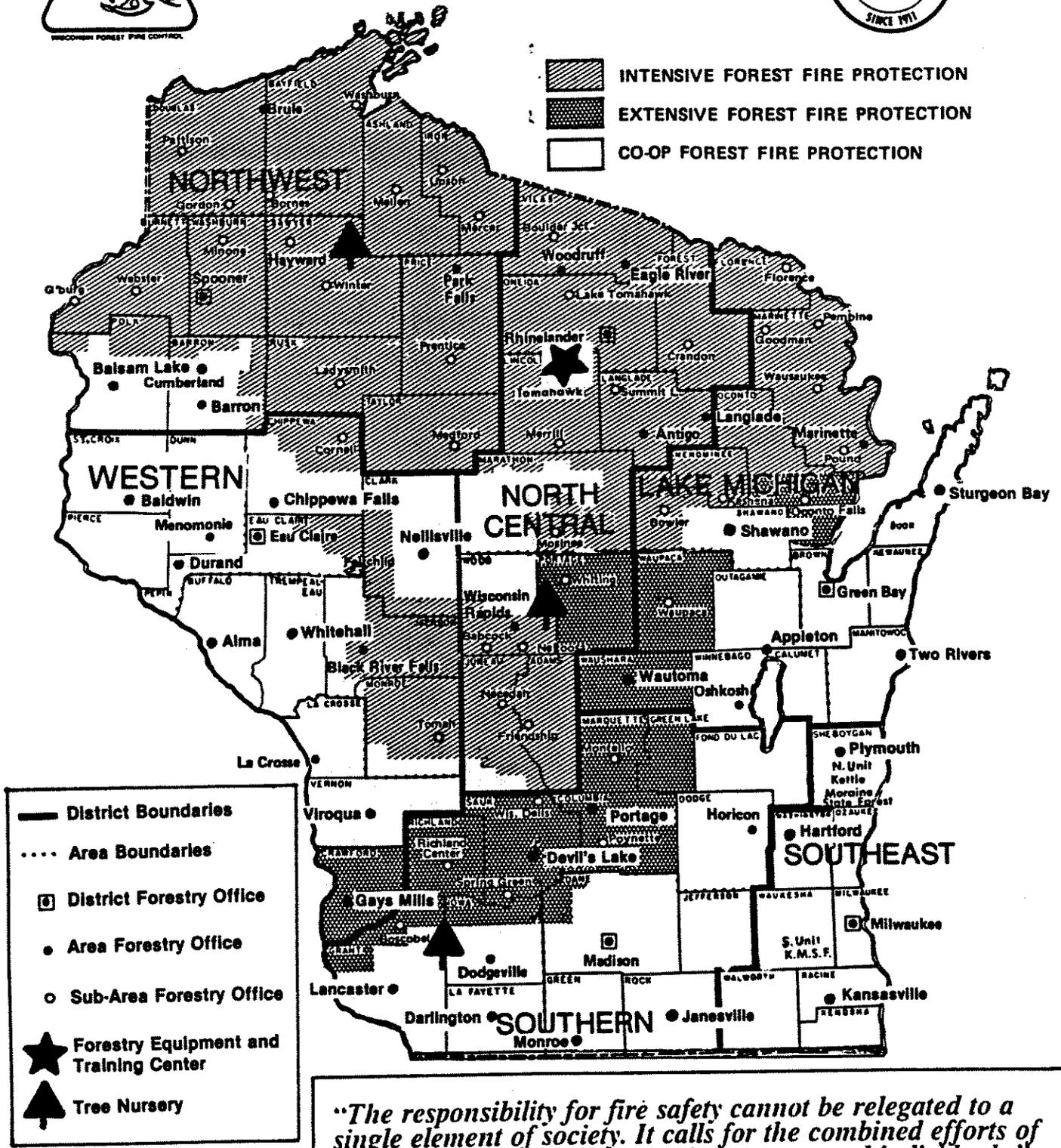
In co-op areas, there is little DNR owned wildland fire fighting equipment located in this area. The fire departments maintain the majority of the fire equipment. Burning permits are required, except for cooking food or warming the person, when the town board posts a requirement for permits. The forest fires are the responsibility of the fire departments. The DNR may be called when a minimum of \$3,000 is expended to suppress a forest fire. These areas are almost exclusively agricultural lands, with a few scattered forests.



Administrative Districts Forest Fire Control



-  INTENSIVE FOREST FIRE PROTECTION
-  EXTENSIVE FOREST FIRE PROTECTION
-  CO-OP FOREST FIRE PROTECTION



"The responsibility for fire safety cannot be relegated to a single element of society. It calls for the combined efforts of governmental agencies, the private sector and individuals."

Section 2

Intensive

Total surveys sent = 291
Total surveys received = 178 61%

SECTION I: EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION

Under this proposal local departments would routinely respond to wildland fires. The DNR would expand its efforts to acquire fire suppression engines, water tenders and trucks that could be modified. Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP) would be one source of such equipment.

Impending military base closings will free up quality fire fighting equipment.

1. Does your Department currently have government excess vehicles for fire fighting?

Yes 16%
No (Please go to question 4) . . . 84%

2. What type(s) of vehicles?

Engines 10%
Tankers 28%
6*6 21%
4*4 67%
Other equipment 07%

3. Did the vehicle(s) meet your needs?

Yes 88%
No 12%

4. Would you be interested in the chassis of a FEPP wildland fire unit if it were in good condition and free of charge? NOTE that your department would have to modify, outfit and insure it, as well as pay for upkeep, repairs, fuel, etc.

Yes 64%
No 15%
Unsure 20%

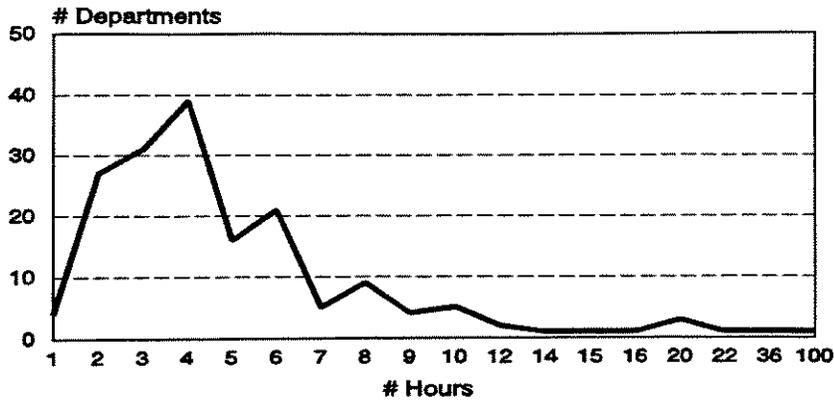
5. What additional types of vehicles and how many would you need to provide adequate initial attack on all forest fires?

	Needed		Number Needed	
Engines	No	Yes ---->	31%	62
Water Tankers	No	Yes ---->	46%	98
Dozers	No	Yes ---->	27%	49
4*4's	No	Yes ---->	67%	164
6*6's	No	Yes ---->	21%	40

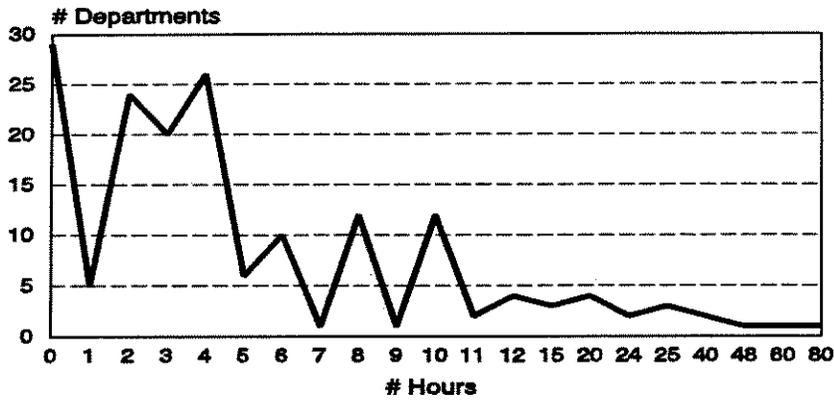
Section II: Expanded DNR Training Assistance for Fire Departments

Under this proposal the DNR would provide local departments with additional training in tactics, techniques, safety, organization and fire suppression.

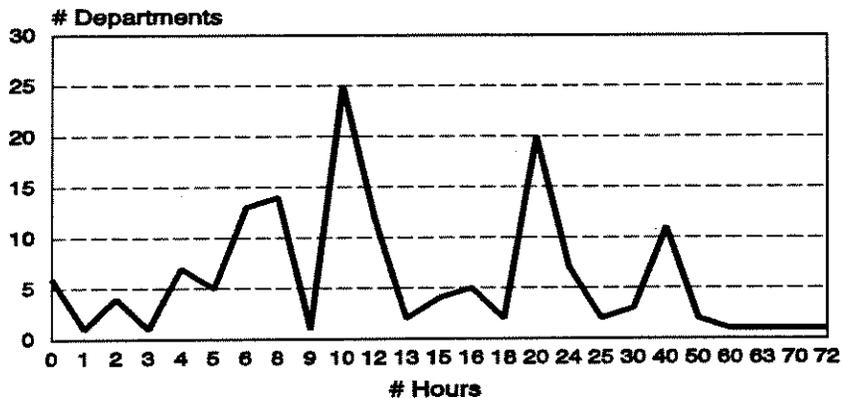
1. About how many hours per month does your fire department currently spend on all training? Just give us your best guess.



2. About how many hours per year are spent in wildland fire training. Again, just give us your best guess.

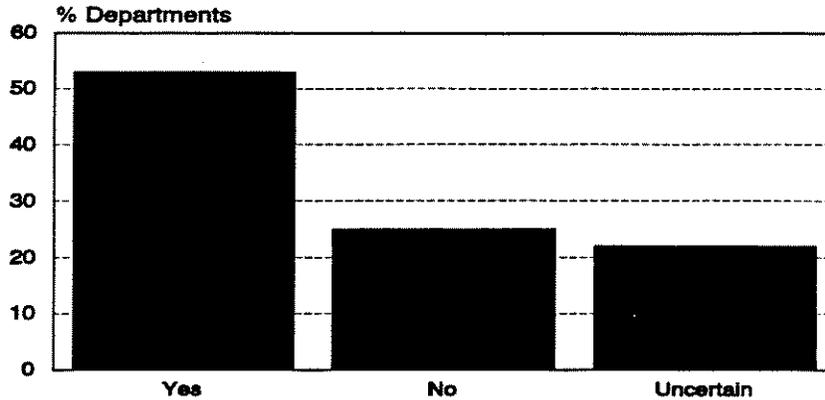


3. In your opinion, about how many more hours of training would your department need if it assumed the responsibility of making the initial attack on all wildland fires? Just give your best estimate.



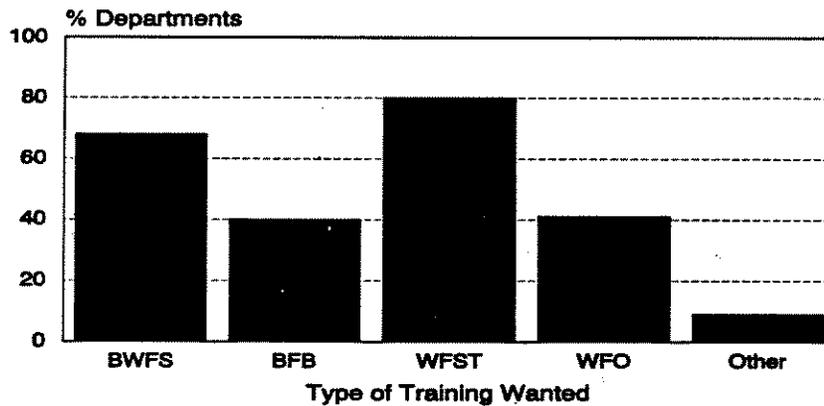
4. Does your fire department have time for this additional training?

Yes 53%
 No 25%
 Not sure 22%



5. What wildland fire training courses would you like to see offered?

Basic Wildland Fire Suppression . 68%
 Basic Fire Behavior 40%
 Wildland Fire Suppression Tactics 80%
 Wildland Fire Organization . . . 41%
 Other _____ . . . 9%

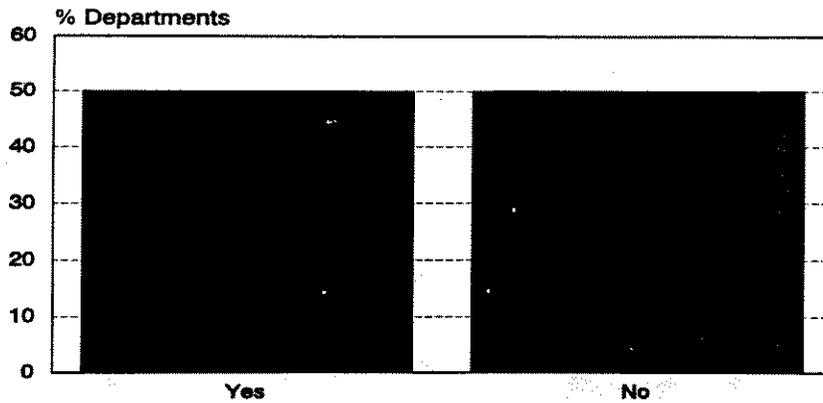


Section III: Expanding Fire Department's Role in Wildland Fire Prevention

1. Conducting 'fire prone property inspections' is a part of the fire prevention program. These inspections involve meeting with landowners in wildland/urban interface areas (usually pine areas) to evaluate the likelihood of saving their structures in the event of fire. The inspector makes suggestions regarding driveway access, clearing trees and brush, etc.

Would your department be willing to take on this part of the wildland fire prevention program if the DNR provided training and materials?

Yes 50%
No 50%

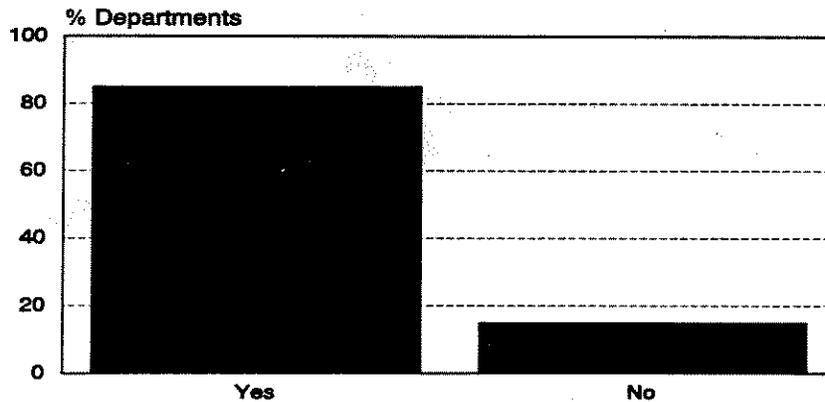


2. Do you believe that such inspections would increase the effectiveness of the overall wildland fire prevention program now in place in your area?

Yes 76%
No 24%

3. Would these prevention duties constitute a significant additional workload for your fire department?

Yes 85%
No 15%



Section IV: Compensation, Reporting and Enforcement

It was suggested the DNR pay fire departments for providing initial attack on all wildland fires. This is currently done in the extensive area. Refer to the map on page 2. DNR would encourage public reporting of fires to the central dispatcher or to 911. Again, this is currently done in the extensive and co-op areas. The implication is that the DNR could then reduce the need

for detection by fire towers or airplanes in some parts of the state, and depend more on citizen reporting.

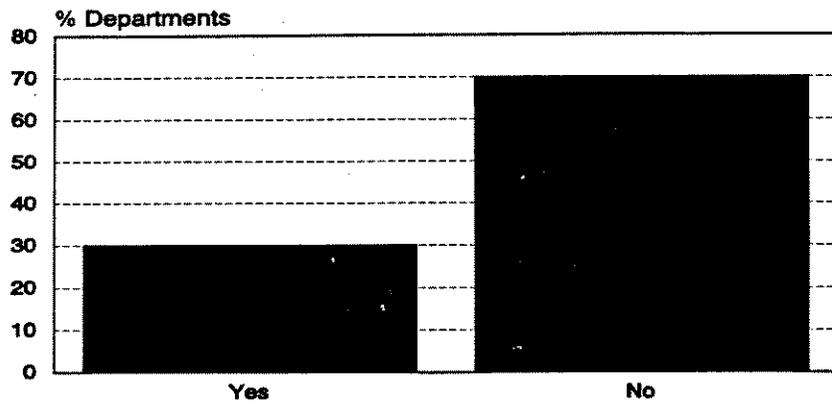
The fire departments in extensive areas are currently paid for providing initial attack on wildfires. They are not paid for 'non-reportable' runs, i.e., controlled burns, false alarms etc.

The current rates are:

- \$25/hr per engine used on the fire
- \$.60 mile driven
- \$ 4.25 per man hour used on the fire

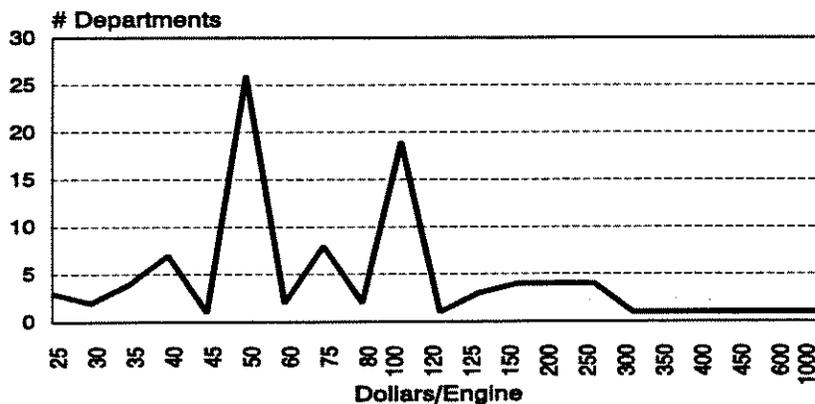
1. Do you feel that these rates would be sufficient compensation for your department for responding as the initial attack agency on wildland fire calls?

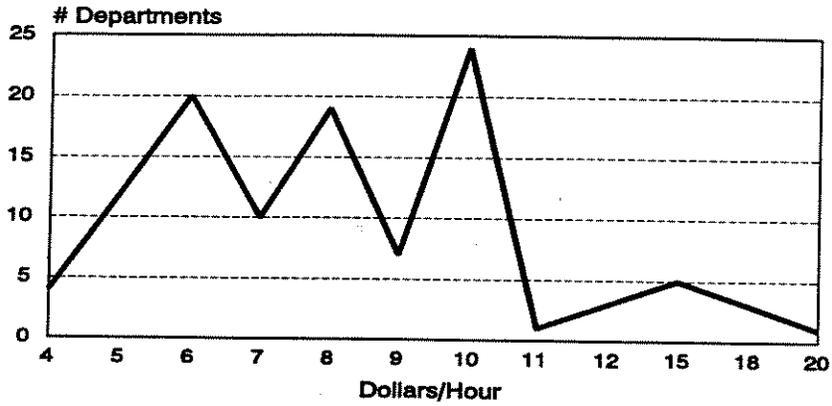
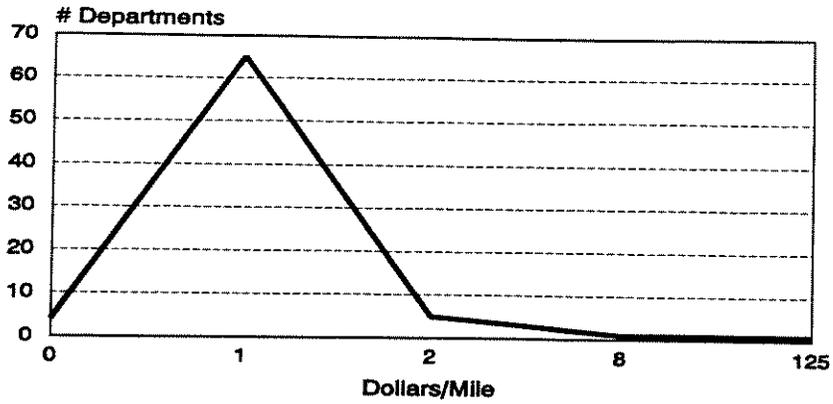
Yes (Please go to question 3) . . . 30%
 No 70%



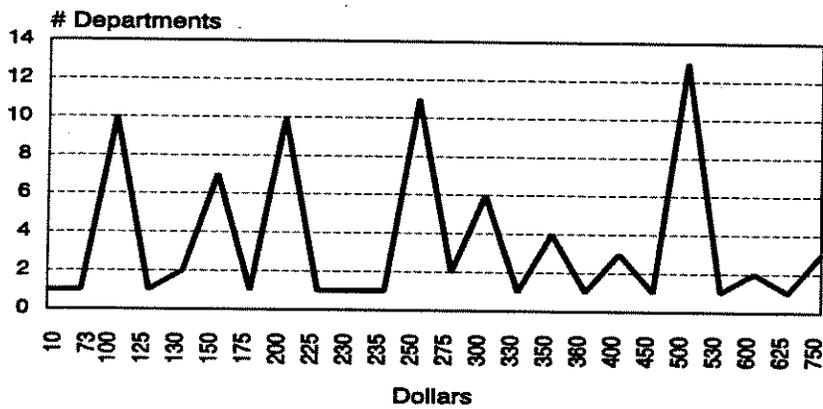
2. If no, what would be appropriate compensation for these activities?

- \$ _____ per engine used on fire
- \$ _____ mileage
- \$ _____ per man hour used on the fire

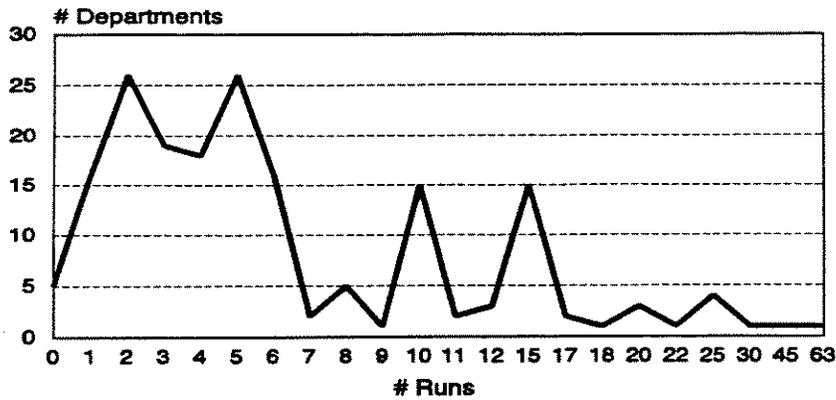




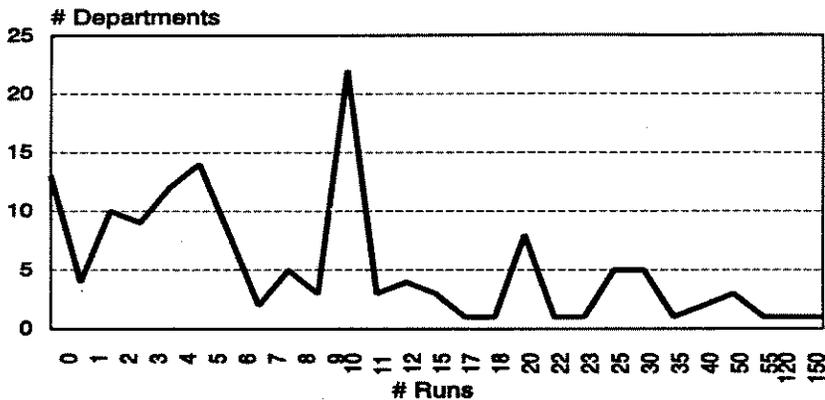
3. Another alternative would be to pay a flat rate per fire run. If this alternative were adopted, what do you think would be an appropriate charge?



4. How many runs, on the average, does your department make on wildland fires each year.



5. Suppose your department provided initial attack on all reported wildlife fires. How many additional runs would your department have to make. We realize this is difficult to estimate so just give your best guess.



6. Is your department currently dispatched through 911?

Yes 58%
 No 42%
 Not sure 0%

7. The DNR is responsible for investigating...fires within both the intensive and extensive zones and for providing follow-up law enforcement if a violation of state statute occurred. While many departments report fires in a timely fashion there are some that do not. One proposal for encouraging prompt reporting is to tie payments for fire runs to timely reporting. Departments that fail to report immediately would not be paid.

Would you favor or oppose this idea?

Favor 71%
 Oppose 29%

8. Do you currently submit National Fire Incident Reports (NFIRs) to the state?

Yes 67%
No 33%

Section V: DNR Assistance With Recruiting

A number of fire departments are having a problem maintaining their volunteer membership because of training requirements, aging populations, the migration of potential volunteers to urban areas, and the need to spend time with their families.

1. Is your department having difficulty retaining current volunteers?

Yes 47%
No 53%

2. Is your department having difficulty recruiting new members?

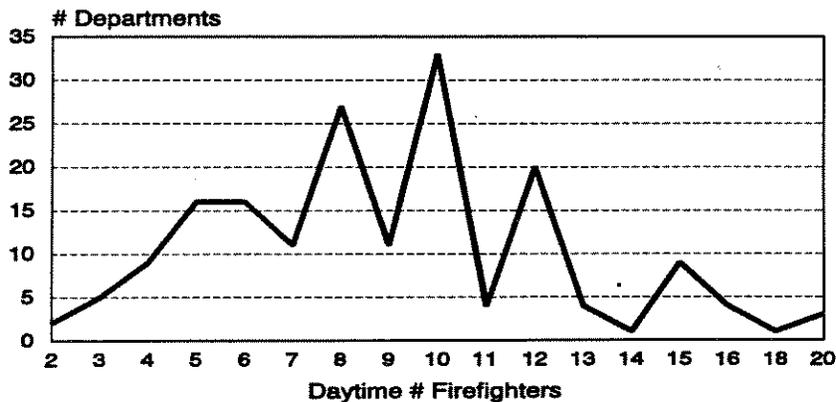
Yes 64%
No 36%

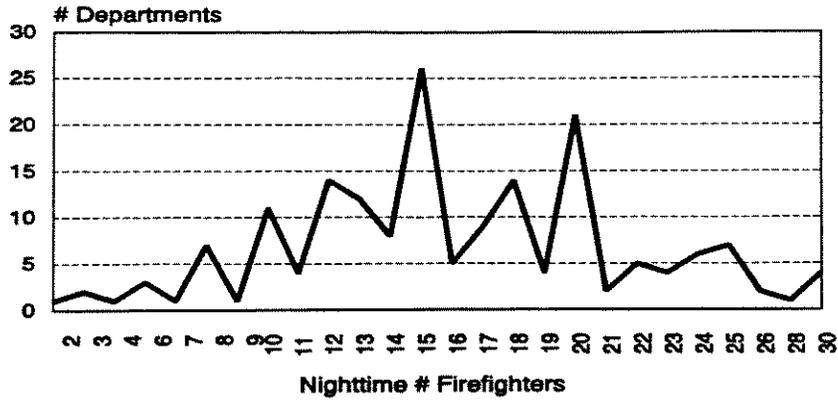
3. The highest percentage of wildfires occur between 10 AM and 6 PM. does your department currently experience a problem with daytime response?

Yes 58%
No 42%

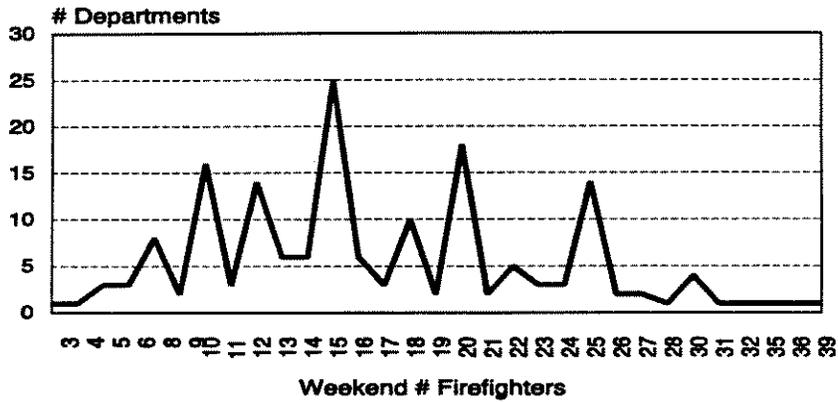
4. What is the typical number of fire fighters responding to calls during the following time periods?

Daytime (8 AM to 5 PM) _____
Nighttime (6 PM to 8 AM) _____





5. How many fire fighters are available to respond to calls on weekends?



Section VI: Rural Community Fire Protection (RCFP) Grants

It has been suggested that the DNR use RCFP grant monies to increase the effectiveness of fire departments in responding to wildland fires in the intensive areas.

Changing grant priorities and making bulk purchases could facilitate this objective.

1. Should priority for RCFP grants be given to requests for wildland fire equipment, training, etc?

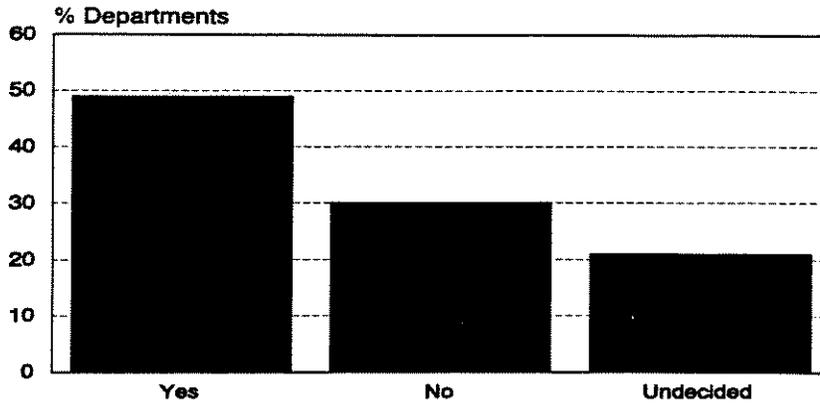
Yes	49%
No	25%
Not sure	26%

2. Should priority to RCFP grants go to fire departments in intensive and extensive fire control areas?

Yes	72%
No	15%
Not sure	13%

3. Should DNR use RCFP grant money to develop wildland fire training courses for fire departments?

Yes 49%
 No 30%
 Not sure 21%

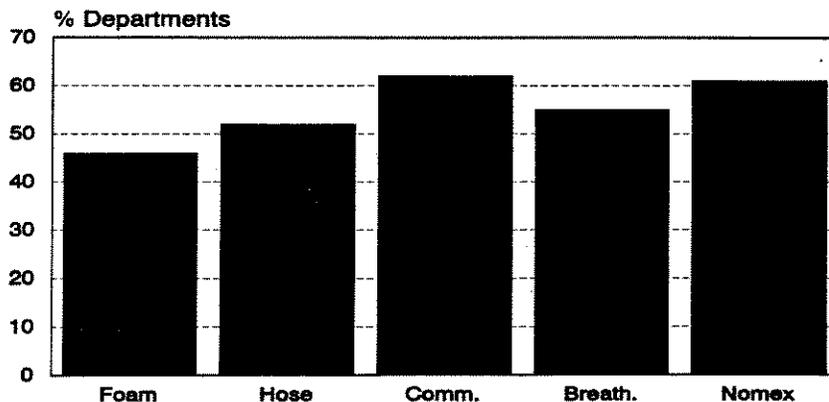


4. Personal protective gear is currently the number one request on RCFP grants. Should the DNR set aside RCFP grant money for one large purchase of turnout coats and bunker pants which could then be purchased by fire departments at a group rate?

Yes 52%
 No 27%
 Not sure 21%

5. Would you like to see RCFP money used for similar purchases as described above for any of the following equipment?

Foam 46%
 Hose 52%
 Communication equipment 62%
 Breathing apparatus 55%
 Wildland fire protection gear (Nomex) 61%



Conclusion:

If this change in policy were implemented, the funding to acquire equipment, provide training, and compensation to the fire departments must come from the existing DNR forestry budget. This means the department may have to reduce the current number of fire control tractor/plow units and/or fire towers to support this change.

1. Do you feel the proposal to decrease DNR/tractor/plow units and increase the fire department role in wildland suppression will negatively affect your department's ability to protect structures?

Yes	47%
No	41%
Not sure	12%

2. Do you support this proposal for suggested change in policy in principal?

Yes	44%
No	31%
Not sure	25%

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Section 3

Total surveys sent = 94
Total surveys received = 56 59%

SECTION I: EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION

Under this proposal local departments would continue to respond to wildland fires. The DNR would expand its efforts to acquire fire suppression engines, water tenders, and trucks that could be modified. Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP) would be one source of such equipment.

Impending military base closings will free up quality fire fighting equipment.

1. Does your Department currently have government excess vehicles for fire fighting?

Yes 28%
No (Please go to question 4) . . . 72%

2. What type(s) of vehicles?

Engines 0%
Tankers 18%
6*6 50%
4*4 50%
Other equipment 25%

3. Did the vehicle(s) meet your needs?

Yes 93%
No 7%

4. Would you be interested in the chassis of a FEPP wildland fire unit if it were in good condition and free of charge? NOTE that your department would have to modify, outfit and insure it, as well as pay for upkeep, repairs, fuel, etc.

Yes 60%
No 13%
Unsure 27%

5. What additional types of vehicles and how many would you need to provide adequate initial attack on all forest fires?

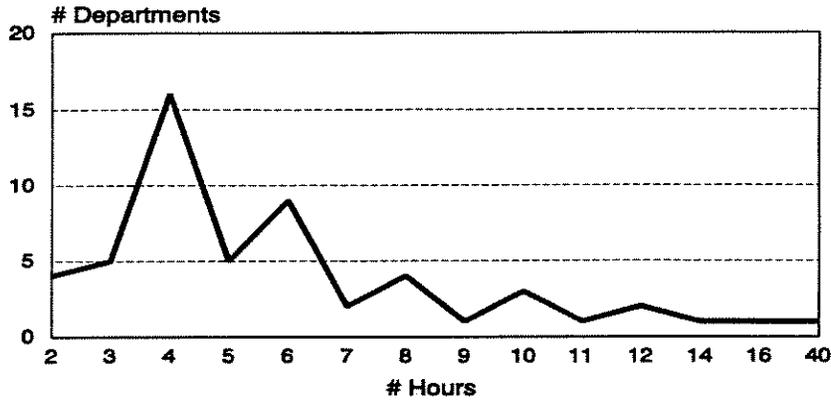
	Needed		Number Needed	
Engines	No	Yes ---->	19%	12
Water Tankers	No	Yes ---->	30%	19
Dozers	No	Yes ---->	10%	6
4*4's	No	Yes ---->	50%	32
6*6's	No	Yes ---->	16%	1

Section II: Expanded DNR Training Assistance for Fire Departments

Under this proposal the DNR would provide local departments with additional training in tactics, techniques, safety, organization and fire suppression.

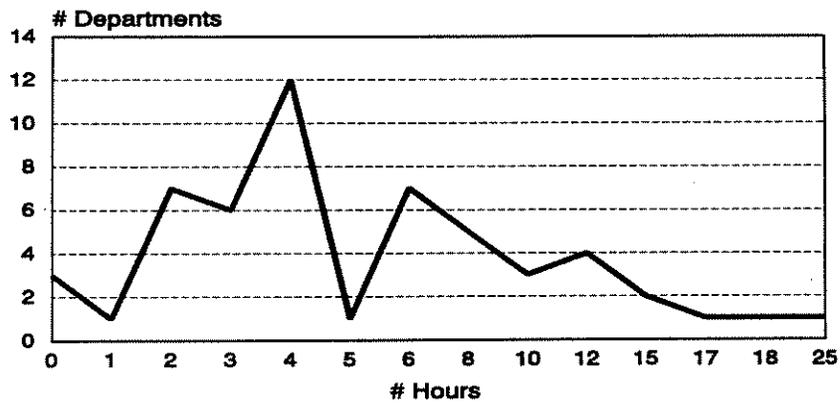
1. About how many hours per month does your fire department currently spend on all training? Just give us your best guess.

Hours per month spent on training



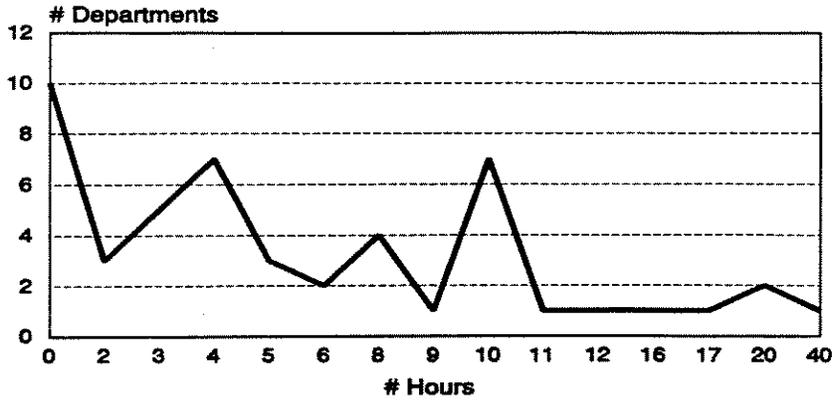
2. About how many hours per year are spent in wildland fire training. Again, just give us your best guess.

Hours per year



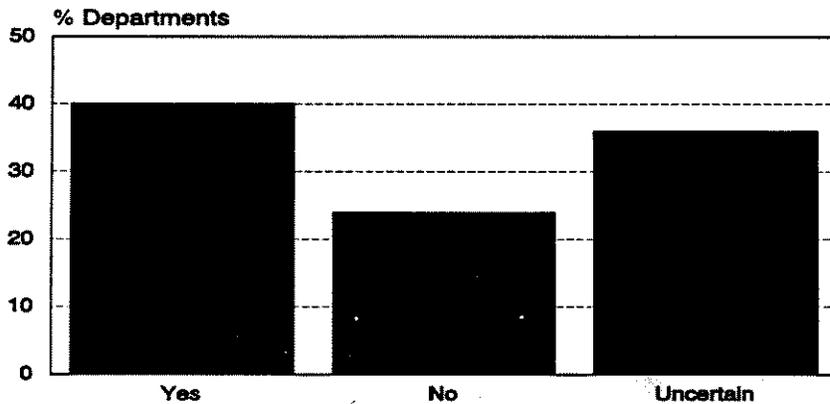
3. In your opinion, about how many more hours of training does your department need to continue the responsibility of making the initial attack on all wildland fires? Just give your best estimate.

Additional hours of training needed each year.



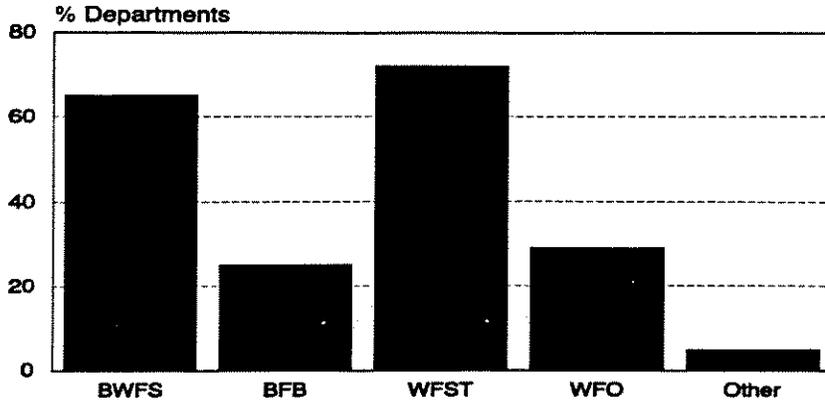
4. Does your fire department have time for this additional training?

Yes	40%
No	24%
Not sure	36%



5. What wildland fire training courses would you like to see offered?

Basic Wildland Fire Suppression . . .	65%
Basic Fire Behavior	25%
Wildland Fire Suppression Tactics . . .	72%
Wildland Fire Organization	29%
Other _____	5%

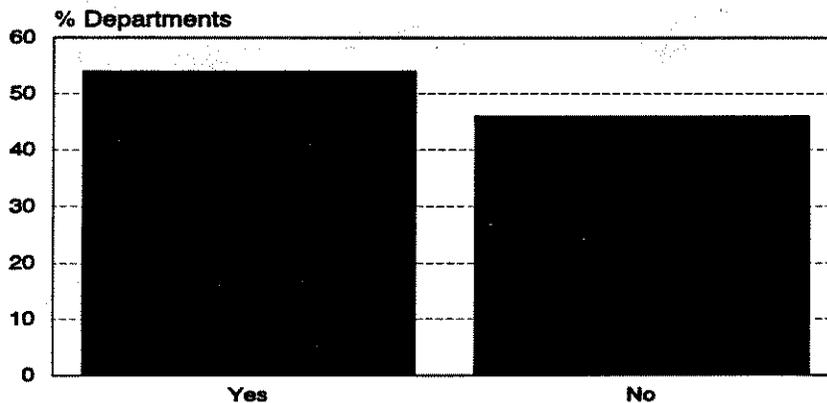


Section III: Expanding Fire Department's Role in Wildland Fire Prevention

1. Conducting 'fire prone property inspections' is a part of the fire prevention program. These inspections involve meeting with landowners in wildland/urban interface areas (usually pine areas) to evaluate the likelihood of saving their structures in the event of fire. The inspector makes suggestions regarding driveway access, clearing trees and brush, etc.

Would your department be willing to take on this part of the wildland fire prevention program if the DNR provided training and materials?

Yes	54%
No	46%

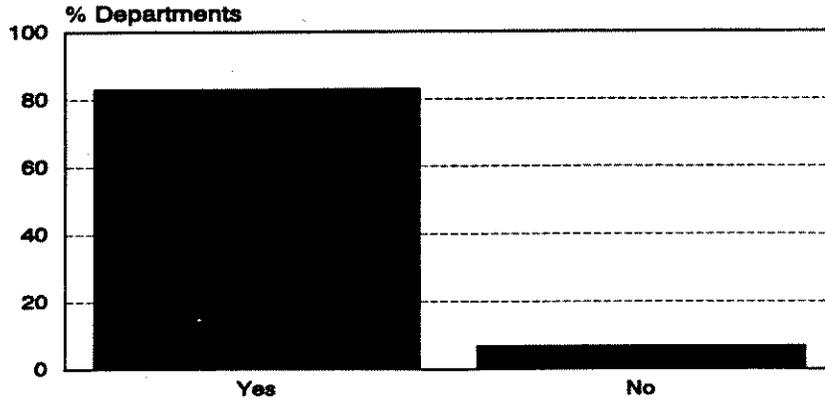


2. Do you believe that such inspections would increase the effectiveness of the overall wildland fire prevention program now in place in your area?

Yes 77%
No 23%

3. Would these prevention duties constitute a significant additional workload for your fire department?

Yes 83%
No 7%



Section IV: Compensation and Reporting and Enforcement

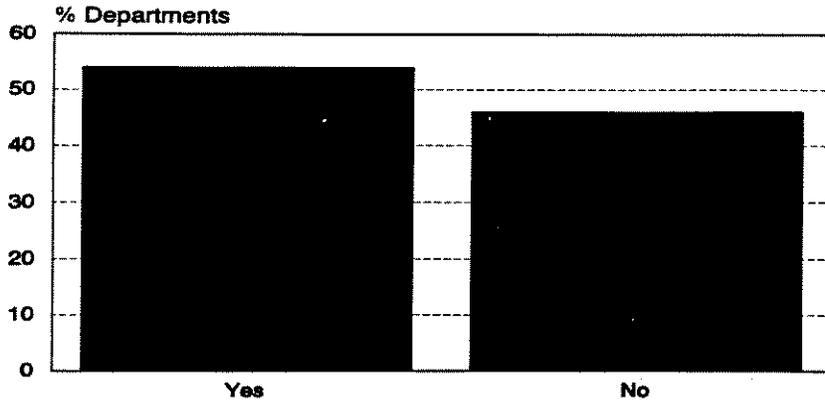
The fire departments in the extensive areas are currently paid for providing initial attack on wildfires. They are not paid for 'non-reportable' runs, i.e., controlled burns, false alarms etc.

The current rates are:

- \$25/hr per engine used on the fire
- \$.60 mile driven
- \$ 4.25 per man hour used on the fire

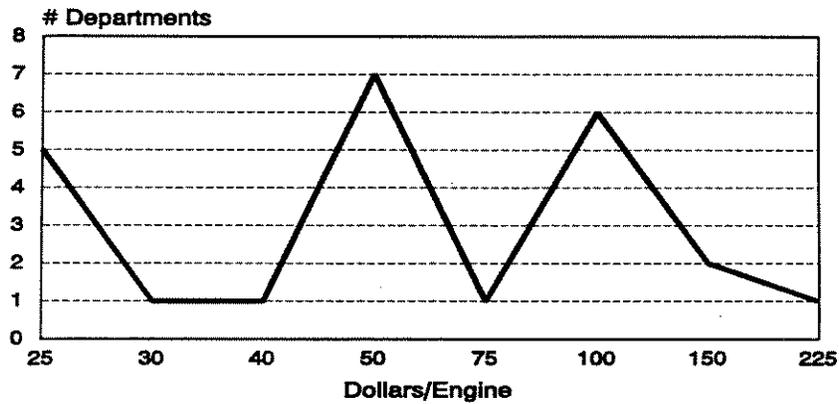
1. Do you feel that these rates would be sufficient compensation for your department for responding as the initial attack agency on wildland fire calls?

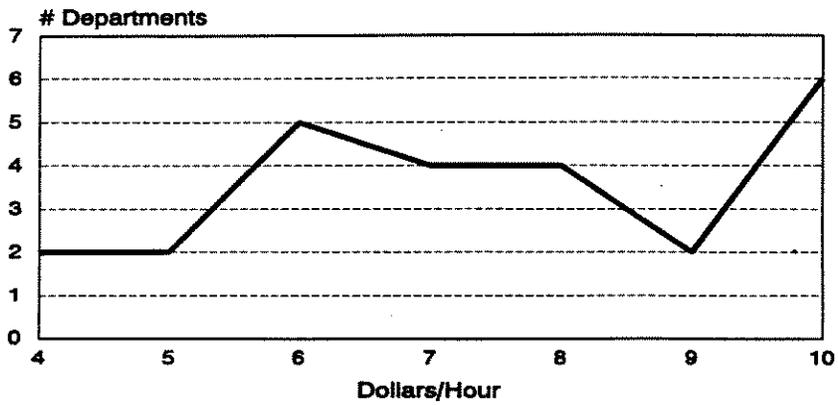
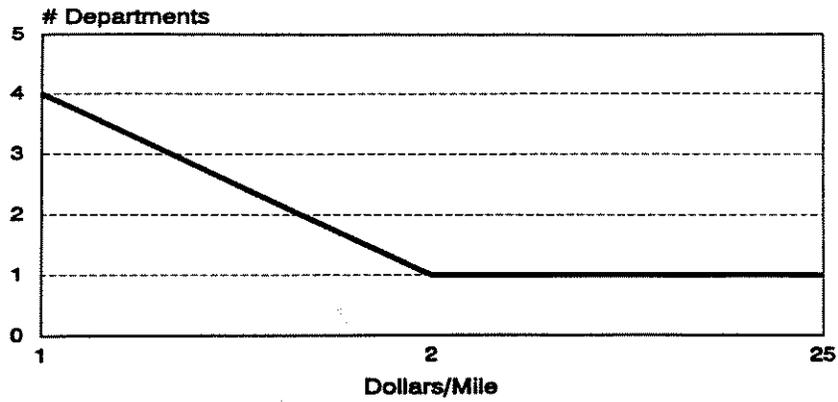
Yes (Please go to question 3) . . . 54%
 No 46%



2. If no, what would be appropriate compensation for these activities?

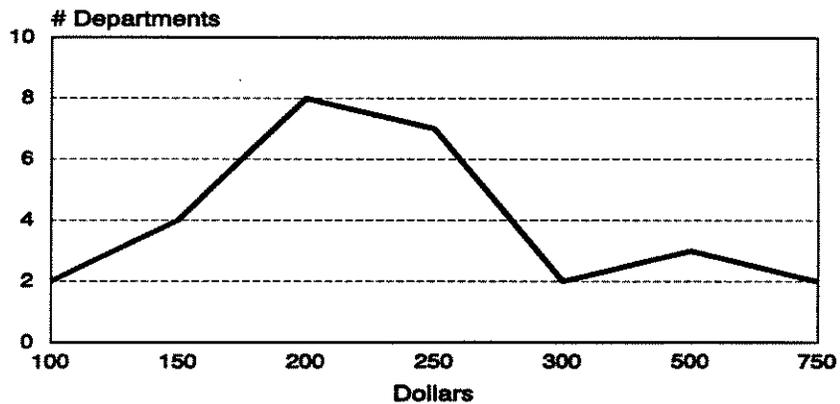
\$ _____ per engine used on fire
 \$ _____ mileage
 \$ _____ per man hour used on the fire





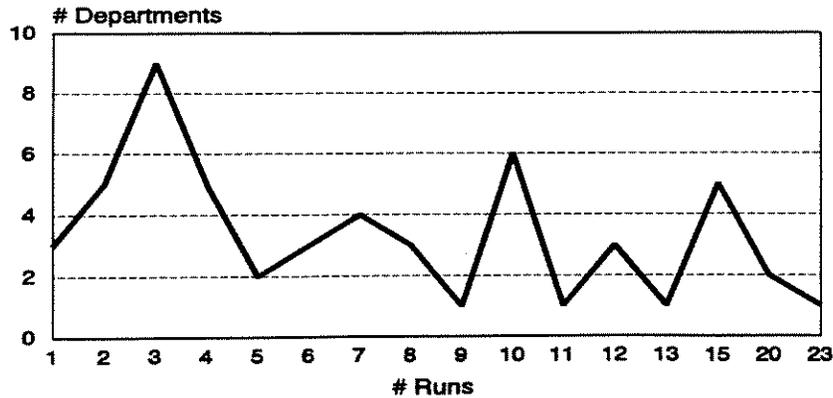
3. Another alternative would be to pay a flat rate per fire run. If this alternative were adopted, what do you think would be an appropriate charge?

Appropriate flat charge



4. How many runs, on the average, does your department make on wildland fires each year.

Average runs



5. Is your department currently dispatched through 911?

Yes 30%
 No 46%
 Not sure 0%

6. The DNR is responsible for investigating...fires within both the intensive and extensive zones and for providing follow-up law enforcement if a violation of state statute occurred. While many departments report fires in a timely fashion there are some that do not. One proposal for encouraging prompt reporting is to tie payments for fire runs to timely reporting. Departments that fail to report immediately would not be paid.

Would you favor or oppose this idea?

Favor 92%
 Oppose 8%

7. Do you currently submit National Fire Incident Reports (NFIRs) to the state?

Yes 70%
 No 30%

Section V: DNR Assistance With Recruiting

A number of fire departments are having a problem maintaining their volunteer membership because of training requirements, aging populations, the migration of potential volunteers to urban areas, and the need to spend time with their families.

1. Is your department having difficulty retaining current volunteers?

Yes 50%
No 50%

2. Is your department having difficulty recruiting new members?

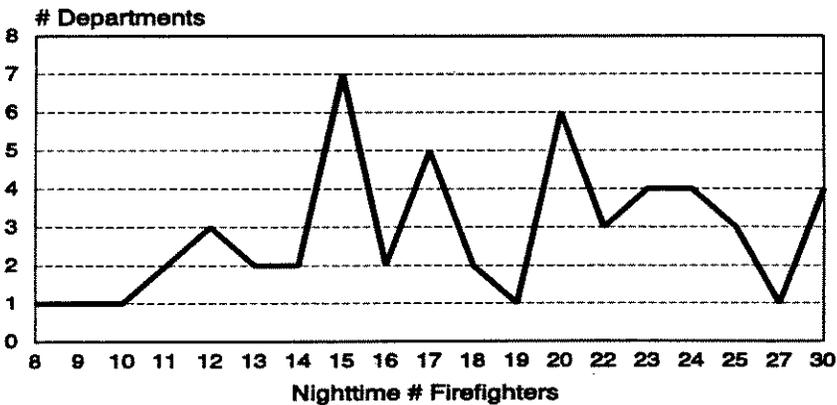
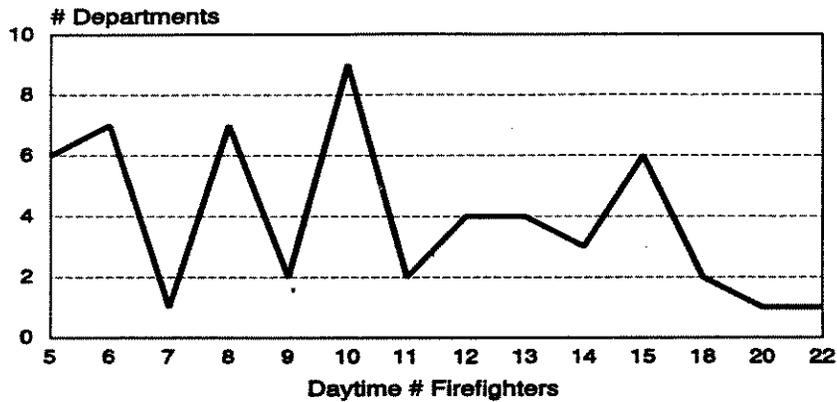
Yes 62%
No 38%

3. The highest percentage of wildfires occur between 10 AM and 6 PM. does your department currently experience a problem with daytime response?

Yes 64%
No 36%

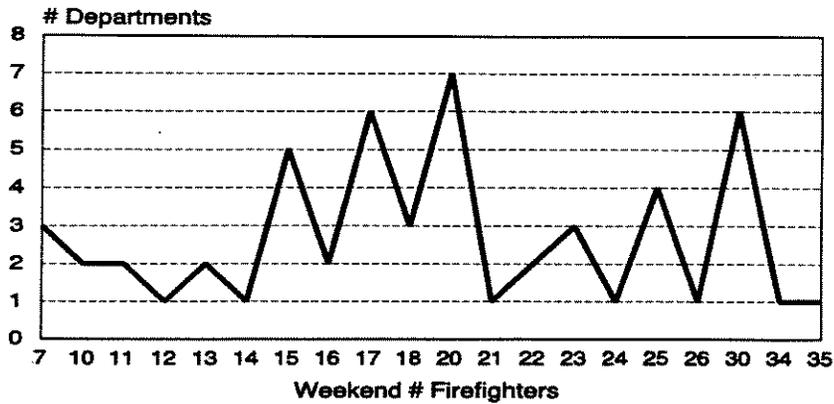
4. What is the typical number of fire fighters responding to calls during the following time periods?

Daytime (8 AM to 5 PM) _____
Nighttime (6 PM to 8 AM) _____



5. How many fire fighters are available to respond to calls on weekends?

Number available for weekends



Section VI: Rural Community Fire Protection (RCFP) Grants

It has been suggested that the DNR use RCFP grant monies to increase the effectiveness of fire departments in responding to wildland fires in the extensive areas.

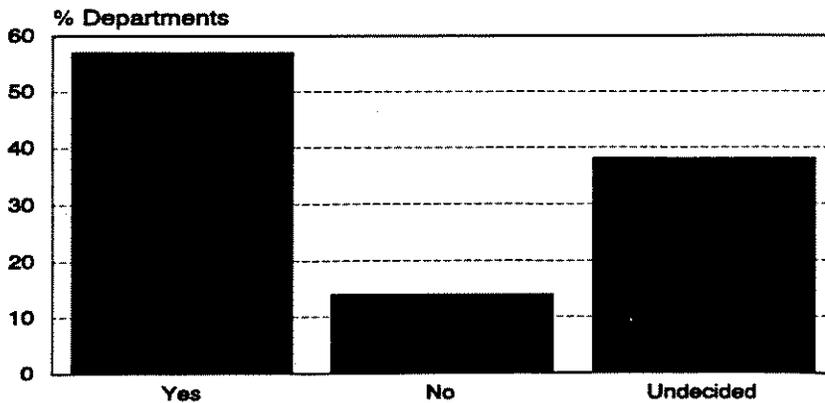
Changing grant priorities and making bulk purchases could facilitate this objective.

1. Should priority for RCFP grants be given to requests for wildland fire equipment, training, etc?

- Yes 48%
- No 14%
- Not sure 38%

2. Should DNR use RCFP grant money to develop wildland fire training courses for fire departments?

Yes 57%
 No 14%
 Not sure 38%

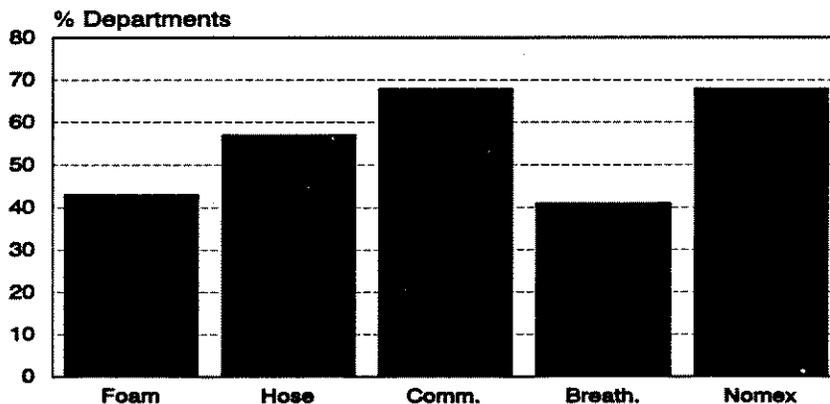


3. Personal protective gear is currently the number one request on RCFP grants. Should the DNR set aside RCFP grant money for one large purchase of turnout coats and bunker pants which could then be purchased by fire departments at a group rate?

Yes 53%
 No 25%
 Not sure 22%

4. Would you like to see RCFP money used for similar purchases as described above for any of the following equipment?

Foam 43%
 Hose 57%
 Communication equipment 68%
 Breathing apparatus 41%
 Wildland fire protective gear (Nomex) 68%
 Anything else? _____



Conclusion:

If this change were implemented, the funding to acquire equipment, provide training, and compensation to the fire departments must come from the existing DNR forestry budget. This means the DNR may have to reduce the current number of fire control tractor/plow units to support this change.

1. Do you feel the proposal to decrease DNR/tractor/plow units and increase funding to fire departments will negatively affect your department's ability to protect structures?

Yes	35%
No	47%
Not sure	12%

2. Do you support this proposal for suggested change in policy in principal?

Yes	45%
No	25%
Not sure	30%

Thank you for your time in preparing this response.

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Section 4

Total surveys sent = 458
Total surveys received = 287 62%

SECTION I: EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION

The DNR could expand its efforts to acquire fire suppression engines, water tenders and trucks suitable for modification. Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP) would be one source of such equipment.

Impending military base closings will free up quality fire fighting equipment.

1. Does your Department currently have government excess vehicles for fire fighting?

Yes 12%
No (Please go to question 4) . . . 88%

2. What type(s) of vehicles?

Engines 10%
Tankers 16%
6*6 8%
4*4 81%
Other equipment 10%

3. Did the vehicle(s) meet your needs?

Yes 91%
No 9%

4. Would you be interested in the chassis of a FEPP wildland fire unit if it were in good condition and free of charge? NOTE that your department would have to modify, outfit and insure it, as well as pay for upkeep, repairs, fuel, etc.

Yes 59%
No 14%
Unsure 21%

5. What additional types of vehicles and how many would you need to provide adequate initial attack on all forest fires?

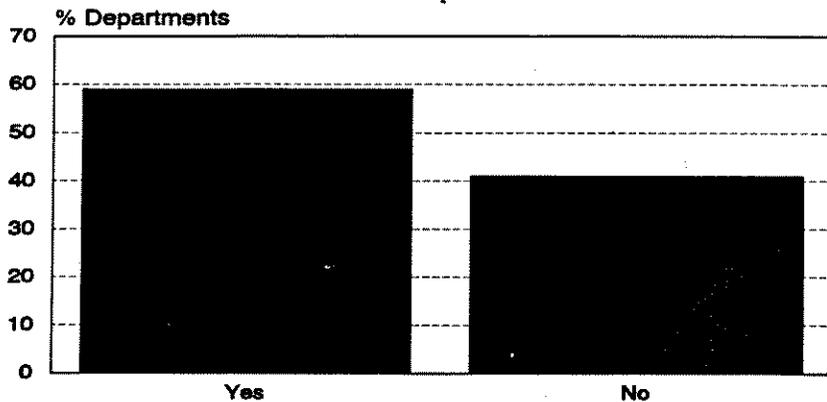
	Needed		Number Needed	
Engines	No	Yes ---->	22%	60
Water Tankers	No	Yes ---->	35%	111
Dozers	No	Yes ---->	6%	17
4*4's	No	Yes ---->	8%	25
6*6's	No	Yes ---->	51%	153

Section III: Expanding Fire Department's Role in Wildland Fire Prevention

1. Conducting 'fire prone property inspections' is a part of the fire prevention program. These inspections involve meeting with landowners in wildland/urban interface areas (usually pine areas) to evaluate the likelihood of saving their structures in the event of fire. The inspector makes suggestions regarding driveway access, clearing trees and brush, etc.

Would your department be willing to take on this part of the wildland fire prevention program if the DNR provided training and materials?

Yes 59%
 No 41%



2. Do you believe that such inspections would increase the effectiveness of the overall wildland fire prevention program now in place in your area?

Yes 63%
 No 57%

3. Would these prevention duties constitute a significant additional workload for your fire department?

Yes 68%
 No 32%

Section IV: Reporting Wildfires

1. Is your department currently dispatched through 911?

Yes 75%
 No 25%
 Not sure 0%

2. Do you currently report a summary of wildfires that occur in your area of protection to the DNR Coop Officer at the end of each year?

Yes 70%
 No 23%
 Don't know 7%

3. Do you currently submit National Fire Incident Reports (NFIRs) to the state?

Yes 77%
 No 23%

Section VI: Rural Community Fire Protection (RCFP) Grants

It has been suggested that the DNR use RCFP grant monies to increase the effectiveness of fire departments in responding to wildland fires in the coop areas.

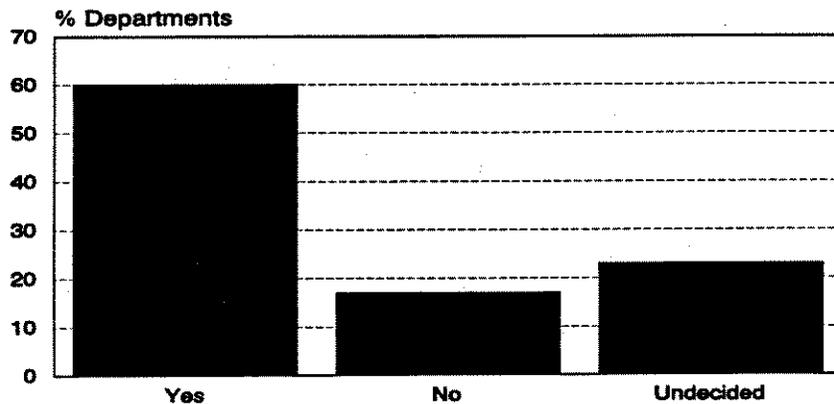
Changing grant priorities and making bulk purchases could facilitate this objective.

1. Should priority for RCFP grants be given to requests for wildland fire equipment, training, etc?

Yes 51%
 No 13%
 Not sure 36%

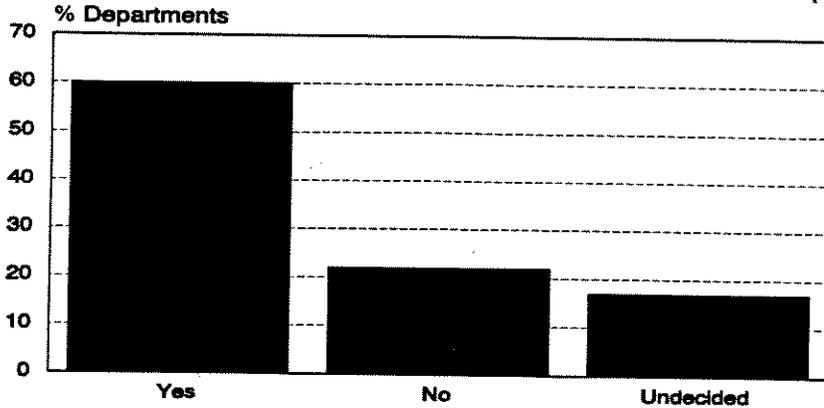
2. Should DNR use RCFP grant money to develop wildland fire training courses for fire departments?

Yes 60%
 No 17%
 Not sure 23%



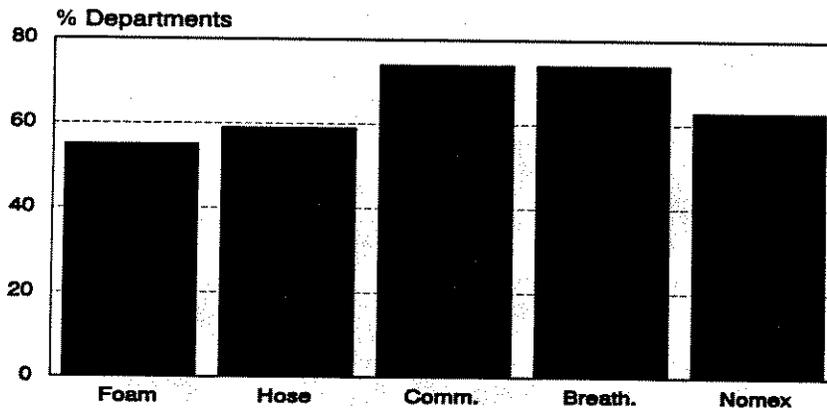
3. Personal protective gear is currently the number one request on RCFP grants. Should the DNR set aside RCFP grant money for one large purchase of turnout coats and bunker pants which could then be purchased by fire departments at a group rate?

Yes 60%
 No 22%
 Not sure 17%



4. Would you like to see RCFP money used for similar purchases as described above for any of the following equipment?

Foam 55%
 Hose 59%
 Communication equipment 74%
 Breathing apparatus 74%
 Wildland fire protection gear (Nomex) 63%



Thank you for your time in preparing this response.

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OUR MISSION:

To protect and enhance our Natural Resources —
our air, land and water;
our wildlife, fish and forests.

To provide a clean environment
and a full range of outdoor opportunities.

To insure the right of all Wisconsin citizens
to use and enjoy these resources in
their work and leisure.

And in cooperation with all our citizens
to consider the future
and those who will follow us.

