



JDSF Staff Travel to Southern California to Assist in Historic Wildfire Containment and Recovery Efforts

During the Palisades and Eaton wildfires many JDSF staff went down to the Los Angeles area to use their natural resources skills to help with pre, during, and post wildfire effects. Here's a quick rundown of their assigned duties while at the incidents.

Fey Egan was assigned to the Palisades Fire as a Forester on the Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT). [WERT](#) works with the California Geological Survey to go throughout the fire footprint and find post-fire risks to life and property due to debris flow, rock fall, and other environmental hazards.

After they identify potential hazards to the community, the WERT team will communicate their findings to the public and give advice for potential risk reduction measures. Not all fires are assigned a WERT team but, given the severity of debris flow/flooding hazards and the high populations in the Eaton and Palisades fire areas, both fires received a WERT.

Julie Rhoads is JDSF's new Forester II in the Research Department. She is rostered on Incident Management Team 4 and was pre-positioned in Riverside as a Resources Unit Leader. Resources Unit Leaders are responsible for tracking the status and location of resources assigned to an incident. When the Border 2 fire broke out in San Diego County, Team 4 took over managing this fire and Julie kept track of all resources accounted for on this incident.



Figure 1 The WERT Team Assessing a waterway.

Forester II Jason Serna went out as a Field Observer on the Palisades. Field Observers collect information like fire perimeter location, weather, smoke conditions, fire behavior, fuel conditions, and fire effects. This is typically done by driving around the dozer line or walking along handline and dropping points on using the GPS on your phone.



Figure 2 Ridgetop fuel breaks formed an essential part of containment lines on both the Eaton and Palisades Incident



Figure 3 The GIS (Geographical Information Systems) Team on an incident is responsible for mapping and printing maps of the fire perimeter.

Peter Rowland is a JDSF Senior Environmental Scientist who took a cover assignment as GIS Lead on the Palisades Fire. He typically does this role- staying up late to make maps for the next day's operations- on Incident

Management Team 5 but was covering for JDSF's Fred Postler on Team 2. Field Observers like Jason collect data points for Peter to add to the maps. Some nights Peter makes up to 15 different maps- ranging from Air Operations to Transportation maps.

Forester I Jeremiah Steuterman was on the Palisades Incident doing Fire Suppression Repair. This task usually involves heavy machinery used to minimize impacts resulting from fire suppression activities. For example, rehabilitating streams, installing water bars on roads, or using debris to minimize erosion on areas that are now bare soil, like dozer or handline. It can also include manual activities like rebuilding fences or adding erosion preventative measures by hand.

And lastly, **Joshua Theofanides, a Forestry Assistant II** on the forest, was stationed on the Palisades as a Heavy Equipment Boss. He directed heavy equipment to suppress, repair and rehabilitate wildland fires.

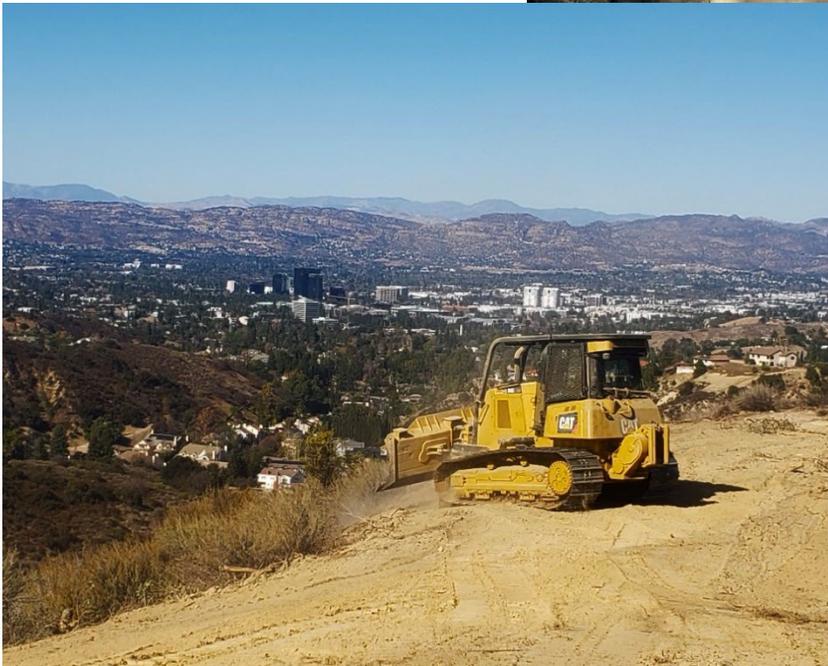


Figure 4 Fire suppression repair is an essential part of any wildfire firefighting operation helping to reduce environmental damage and erosion.