



DATE: January 2, 2024

TO: City Councilmembers

FROM: Jay Hagen, Fire Chief, 452-6895
Bellevue Fire Department

SUBJECT: Bellevue Fire 2023 Wildland Season and Program

The Bellevue Fire Department restarted its Wildland Program in 2023. Given staff attrition within the Bellevue Fire Department and contractual challenges with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the department has not been able to deploy our wildland resources for the past several wildland fire seasons.

In 2022, the City of Bellevue signed a new contract with DNR and successfully partnered with the Bellevue Fire Foundation to deliver a new wildland fire apparatus and relaunch our wildland program.

Last spring, the department was able to purchase and deploy new equipment for the apparatus, train crews on the new vehicle, and put the vehicle into service in early June. During last year's wildfire season, Bellevue Fire Department participated in eight mobilizations across the state of Washington and Oregon. Our partnerships with the Department of Natural Resources, neighboring fire departments, Fleet, and Risk were all critical in getting this new resource put into service in a short amount of time. We have learned that it takes a substantive amount of time to reinvest in staff training, and develop the infrastructure needed to support this new resource.

Bellevue Fire will be ready to launch annual refresher classes, increase our various certifications, and on-board new staff and program leads to prepare for the 2024 wildland fire season.