

New up-to-the-minute maps for fire fighters

COLLABORATION between CALMfire, Information Management Branch (IMB) and the forest regions over the past 12 months has resulted in up-to-the-minute map products for forest management.

Known as operational graphics, they contain essential information for fire management, timber harvesting, recreation development and other CALM activities.

The need for the new series was first identified by CALMfire and IMB because districts and regions were using 1:50000 scale maps up to 15 years old.

CALMfire's Kevin White said that considerable land use changes had occurred in that time, particularly with the establishment of jarrah and karri regeneration programs, bluegum plantations on public and private lands, and the construction of new

by Drew Haswell

roads.

"Changing landuse patterns, and the capacity to represent them readily on paper, is the key to successful operational mapping," Kevin said.

"It's imperative that fire-fighters know where these changes have occurred, so they can quickly detect fires and ensure their rapid suppression."

Meetings were quickly convened between CALMfire and IMB and essential data sets identified.

IMB then compiled digital base maps from existing data which were subsequently updated and validated by CALM forest regions and districts, and by satellite Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS).

IMB project leader Craig Thurley said digital mapping provided a flexible means of producing maps

because the data was stored in computer files, could be kept up-to-date, instantly retrieved and quickly printed.

"Field operations need the latest maps, and we want accurate digital land information for the generation of various map products, including the publicly available Land Management Series."

Kevin said the maps were particularly useful when CALM was liaising with private property owners and volunteer fire brigades.

"Here, current information is vital for planning fire suppression, so that combined firefighting resources can give priority to protecting their own and each other's interests," he said.

The new operational graphics data base is also being used to produce aerial surveillance maps, and to update office co-ordination boards at Pemberton, Kirup, Collie and Dwellingup.



Kevin White (centre) and Craig Thurley about to check one of the maps produced by operational graphics. With them is cartographic officer Femina Metcalfe, who was heavily involved in the project. Femina said she found it a great challenge, and was encouraged to see the new system meeting so many of CALM's operational needs. "In my dealings with regional and district staff I found them buzzing with excitement and highly appreciative of the new system," she said. Photo by Verna Costello

The latter should be in place by April, with the remainder of the forest regions being serviced before the 1996-67 fire season.

CALMfire, Forest Management Branch and IMB have recently funded the purchase of two new plotters located at Kelmscott and

Bunbury that will allow the printing of operational graphics by the regions.

Kevin said that feedback from districts and regions

was encouraging.

"Staff feel vastly reassured to have a reliable, current information base to work with," he said.

Job No 286/1



Cliff GILLAM
New H R Mgr

Jenny Moss
New Mgr Corp Info

Front-counter
staff past-
D/uo visit

CALMfine staff
(Mapping story)

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