



McDonald Incident

CA NOD - 003688




	<p>NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TEAM 1 MCDONALD INCIDENT CA-NOD-003688 Bureau of Land Management Northern California District July 29-August 2, 2010</p>
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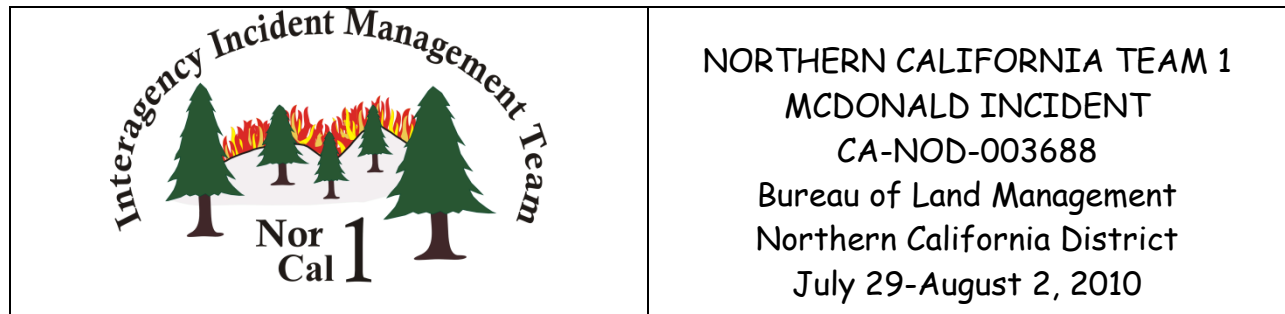
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INCIDENT NARRATIVE

The McDonald Fire occurred on the Alturas Field Office of the BLM in the Northern California District (NOD). It was one of 26 fires ignited by lightning between July 25th and 27th on the unit. The fire burned primarily on the south and eastern portion of McDonald Peak. This fire is believed to have been ignited on July 27th. The unit ordered a Type 2 Incident Management Team (IMT) at approximately 1500 hours on July 28th. Nor Cal Team 1 was committed to the Modoc Lightning Complex when the order was placed but was scheduled to transition that fire back to the Forest at 0900 on the following day. Based on the close proximity of the two incidents, Nor Cal Team 1 was assigned and an in-briefing time was established for 1700 on the 29th. Several members of the operations section were inserted early into the type 3 organization (at 0600 on the 29th) to assist with operational control and management of the resources assigned. Upon completion of the in-briefing, the IMT immediately assumed command of the complex (1800 hours). Nor Cal Team 1 established base camp at Juniper Ridge School on the 29th and produced and IAP for day shift July 30 and thereafter.

IMT TRANSITION

The transition from the local unit to the IMT occurred in conjunction with the Agency Administrator's in-briefing and was facilitated by Deputy District FMO, Mark Betterbide. Multiple essential members of the Field Office staff were present and adequate information was provided. The IC received a Delegation of Authority from Agency Administrator, Nancy Haug and the unit provided a detailed fire resource briefing document with local information upon conclusion of the briefing.

The IMT assumed command of the complex and went to work establishing the base camp right away. Essential components of the camp such as the caterer, showers, toilets and office space were operational by late afternoon on the 29th.

OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

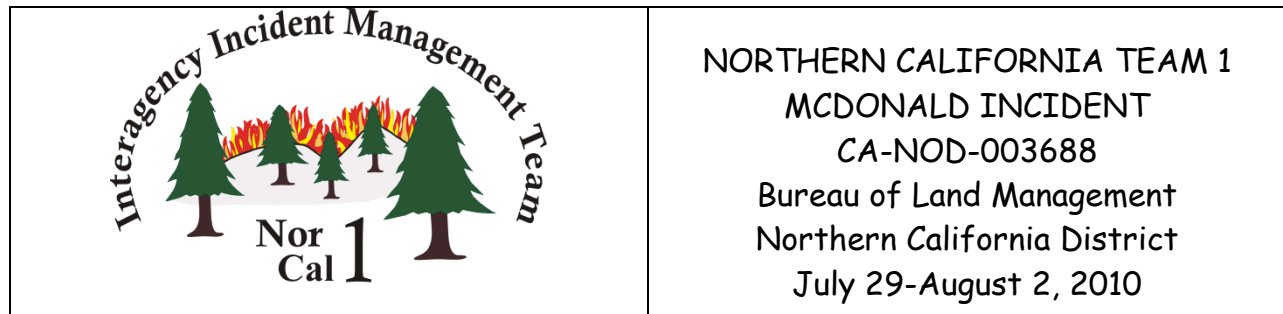
Due to the nature of the fuel type and the diligent work performed by the resources assigned, the fire moved through the stages of containment in a rapid manner. This situation prompted consideration for the development of incident ramp-down components such as the demob plan, the transition and suppression repair plans which were agreed to on July 30th. Reassignment of resources to other incidents within the GACC began to occur on the 31th as well.

Coordination and communication with the local unit and Agency Administrator was perceived by the IMT to be effective throughout the assignment.

Kent Swartzlander
Incident Commander

Paul Whitcome
Deputy Incident Commander

Mike Minton
Incident Commander (t)



OPERATIONS NARRATIVE

On the night of July 28, 2010, 6 members of the Nor Cal Team 1 Ops section arrived on scene of the McDonald Incident and briefed with the type 3 organization on the current situation. The type 3 organization continued to manage the incident during the July 28th night shift and into the day shift on July 29th. During day shift on July 29th team, Nor Cal Team 1 Ops staff, including 3 division supervisors, were inserted into the type 3 organization.

Active fire behavior continued during the July 29th day shift. Single tree and group torching occurred across the divisions and the fire continued to spread to north east. Late in the July 29th day shift, active fire spread resulted in a 50 acre slop over in division Y. A combination of dozer strike teams and type 1 crews completed line construction around the slop-over by the end of the July 29th night shift. By the conclusion of the July 30th day shift the entire fire perimeter had some combination of either completed line and cold trailing in place. Two days of strong winds followed with no additional growth to the fire perimeter. Crews engaged in aggressive mop-up during the following 2 shifts and a minimum of 100 feet of cold black was in place by the end of day shift on August 1st.

Nor Cal Team 1 staffed a total of 4 day shifts and 2 night shifts.

Rehab was completed on all hand lines by the end of shift on August 1st. Dozer line rehabilitation was initiated by the home unit and will continue following the transition to the type 3 organization. A single helispot was constructed in support of this incident. Rehab and back haul, from the helispot and drop points was completed on August 1st.

Incident resources to remain in place, in support of the type 3 organization, include a type 3 IC (t), 1 TFLD, 1 type 1 crew, 4 type 2 crews, 2 type 3 engines, and one water tender. A rehabilitation group, including a type 2 excavator, will also be included in the type 3 organization.

Demob of excess resources began of the afternoon of July 31, 2010. Remaining resources, not included in the type 3 organization, were demobed on August 2, 2010.

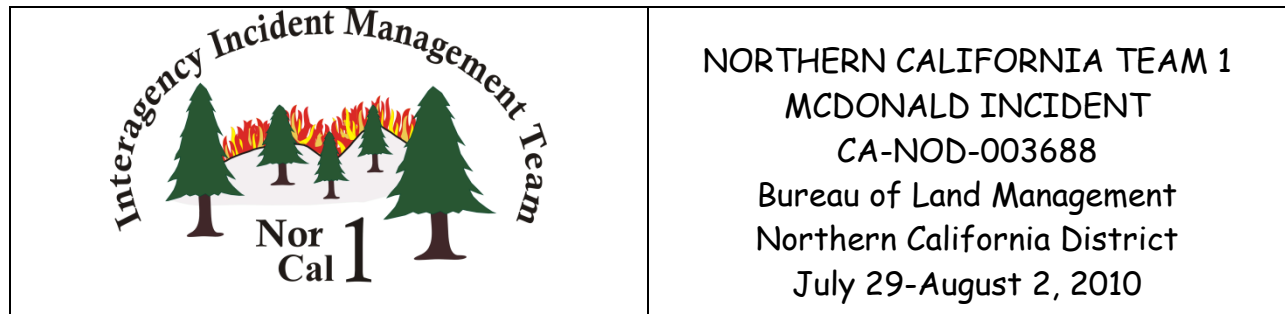
Pete Duncan
OSC2

Alec Lane
OSC2

Steve Burns
OSC2

Robin Wills
OSC2 (t)

Bruce Wicks
AOBD

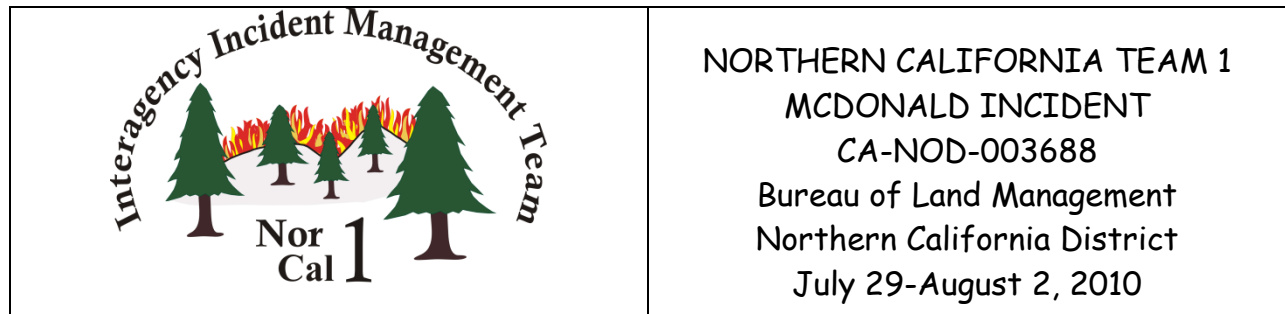


AIR OPERATIONS NARRATIVE

Prior to assuming command of this fire, the extended attack IC had placed orders for 8 helicopters. These were; 2 Type 1, 4 Type 2 and 2 Type 3 helicopters. The Type 1 helicopters were an S-61 (N612CK) and a BV-107 (N6674D). The 4 Type 2 helicopters were a Bell UH1H (N1206G), a Bell 205++ (N28HX), a Bell 212 (N144WA) and a Sikorsky S-58T (N58AH). The Type 3 helicopters were a Lama SA 315B (N1109) and a Bell L-4 (N988B).

Two dedicated air attack w/ platforms were assigned and filled with an Aero Commander 500B (N1165Z) and AA-06, also an Aero Commander 500B and were based in Susanville and Chester. Helibase was located on an airstrip near Ravendale. Resources attached to the Helibase included a Helibase trailer, two water tenders and a crash/rescue engine. The current situation appeared to indicate the fire was nearing containment within a day or two, and no further aviation resources would be needed. Two Type 2 and one Type 3 helicopters were released at end of shift on the 30th. Two Type 1's and one Type 2 helicopters were released at end of shift on the 31st along with the resources assigned to the Helibase. All remaining aviation resources were released end of shift on August 1. No Safecomms were filed.

Helicopter cost summery and Resource use tracking Summery					
MCDONALD FIRE					
	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	TOTAL
	29-July	30-July	31-July	01-Aug	
Helicopter Flight time	42.9	36.8	11.4	2.0	93.1
Daily cost	\$120,558	\$94,449	\$32,647	\$7513	\$255,167
Water dropped (gallons)	169,814	96,940	17,545	0	284,329
Pax	23	22	18	0	63
Cargo (lbs)	2700	2750	5140	0	10,590
Fixed wing(air attack) flight time					
AA 06	7.7	7.9	0	0	15.6
AA N2028W (CWN)	6.4	0	0	0	6.4
AA N1165Z(CWN)	0	5.4	4.5	5.5	15.4
Total Flight Hrs. (air attack)	14.1	13.3	4.5	5.5	37.4
Fixed wing cost (air attack)	\$5,454	\$4,386	\$3,655	4,467	\$17,962
Air Tanker Cost (Cumulative)	\$108,984	0	0	0	\$108,984
Retardant dropped (cumulative)	56,529	0	0	0	56,529
				Total	\$382,113



PLANS NARRATIVE

The Planning Section was fully staffed. The Section rapidly established check-in with the initial attack organization early on July 29. A Section Chief arrived at the new ICP mid-morning on July 29. Resources were tracked using I SUITE. A planning and briefing schedule was established and IAP's were produced on schedule.

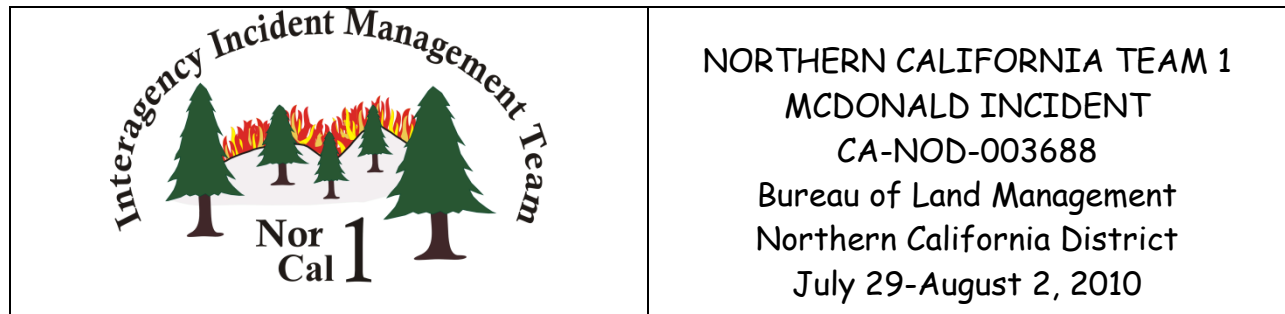
Demobilization of resources began on July 30 and was complete on August 2. State of California handcrews, engines and dozers were demobed and replaced with federal agency resources on July 30 and 31. The incident rapidly demobilized five federal agency handcrews for reassignment to a new fire on the Plumas National Forest on the evening of July 31.

Fire Behavior

The McDonald Incident started from a lightning ignition on July 26, 2010 at approximately 1600 hours. Fuels within the McDonald Fire consisted of Sagebrush, cheat grass, and Juniper. Heavy precipitation in the late spring contributed to relatively high live fuel moisture values for this time of year at around 120% in sagebrush. Cheat grass growth was abnormally heavy due to the high precipitation and was cured in most locations. The sagebrush fuels above 6000' on northern aspects were fairly continuous. On various aspects and elevation they became more discontinuous due to previous fuel treatment projects. There were scattered recently felled junipers to improve sage grouse habitat. This activity did not appear to cause a fire behavior issue. The cheat grass was the main carrier of the fire at lower windspeeds. As the eye-level winds rose to 10-17 miles per hour and the fuels/slope became into alignment, the sagebrush would consume. Personal observation of fire behavior on July 29, 2010 allowed me to conclude that under adverse wind conditions, the rate of spread was approximately 20 ch/hr, 1-14' flame lengths, with spotting up to 1000'. On July, 30 the National Weather Service issued a Red Flag Warning for strong southwest winds and low relative humidity. The Warning lasted through July, 31, 2010, and then expired at 2100 hours. Although the wind never reached the speeds as predicted, it could have caused control problem if containment lines were not complete or partially complete. The observed fire behavior throughout the wind event was group torching and large interior unburned islands burning out. Other than that, fire behavior has been minimal for the past two days and is expected to remain minimal.

Fire Weather

A thunderstorm was in the vicinity of McDonald Mountain on the morning of the 27th and produced a few dry lightning strikes. Later that afternoon and evening, local RAWS (Ravendale-14 mi SSE and Blue Door-10 mi NNE) reported Southeast winds gradually shifting Southwest with sustained speeds of 6-10 mph and peak gusts to 22 mph. Similar conditions prevailed the following two days (28th and 29th). Northwest downslope winds developed each night along the southeast aspects of McDonald Mountain as the atmosphere stabilized each night after sunset. The 30th and 31st brought gustier southwest to west winds as the southern end of an upper level trough and associated jet stream became established over the



incident location. A Red Flag Warning was issued by the Reno NWS office for the entire zone each day. Observed eye-level winds during peak heating were 10-15 mph with gusts to 25 mph. Winds on Sunday were lighter and around typical speeds for this area. Dry conditions prevailed throughout the entire incident with daytime temperatures in the 80s and minimum humidity between 6 and 14%. Shallow inversions developed each night resulting in poor humidity recovery on the mid-slopes and ridges. Maximum humidity was around 50% in the valleys and 25 to 30% on the mid-slopes and ridges. Continued dry conditions with typical afternoon and evening westerly winds are expected through Friday, the 6th. There is a very slight chance of a thunderstorm on Thursday, 8/5.

Situation Unit

The Situation Unit was staffed with 1 SITL, 1 SITL-T, 2 GISS, and 2 GISS-T. No FOBS were ordered. Trainees completed their documentation with the training specialist. A Tech Support trailer was ordered for map work and the ability to connect GIS computers to network and plotters. Work space and internet connection was required to complete the ICS 209 information, posting and retrieving information from the ftp website to provide information for the FS Pro run. Data was also sent via email to SITL from area resource advisors. LEK, ACEC and fuels data was received from the local BLM Field Office and maps were produced to for planning meetings and resource advisors. Fire perimeter, dozer lines, drop points were downloaded from GPS units and included onto maps. All maps were electronically saved and final hard copy maps were archived in the documentation unit.


Training

The training specialist for Northern California Team 1 arrived at the McDonald Fire on July 29, 2010. The incident was in transition between NorCal Team 1 and the local type three organization. The training unit was fully operational and productive shortly after the team assumed command.

Contact was made with the USFS Regional Training Officer Sharon Allen Brick. A list of priority trainees was emailed to the training specialist shortly thereafter. Three trainees were ordered from the priority list, however only one was available and assigned to the McDonald Fire. A dialogue was established with the local BLM officials Mark Betterbide and Ken Hood and the offer to host any trainees from the local unit was made. Three BLM trainees worked on the McDonald Fire.

The training specialist was co located with Check In and Demob. This is an ideal location to provide efficient service to the trainees and trainers. The training office was highly visible and accessible within the Incident Command Post. This provided a comfortable, semi private workspace that permitted productive interactions with trainees and their evaluators.

Throughout the incident, the command and general staff provided support for the training process and training specialist. The training specialist participated in briefings and meetings and engaged dialogue with all units and personnel. Training messages were incorporated in incident action plans and emphasized during operational briefings.

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In summary, Northern California IMT 1 was able to facilitate a total of 32 trainees between July 29 and August 2. Trainees were from Montana, Arizona, Oregon and California. The agencies represented were the USFS, BLM, and local government fire departments.

	Command	Operations	Plans	Logistics	Air Ops	Total
USFS	1	15	3	6	2	27
BLM	0	2	1	0	0	3
Local Govt	1	0	0	1	0	2
Total	2	17	4	7	2	32

Valery Lambeth
PSC2

Dave Sinclair
PSC2

Lance Noxon
PSC2(t)

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FINANCE NARRATIVE

Land Use Agreements

- 1 - Juniper Ridge School for ICP
- 2 - Cal Trans for mechanics, fuel truck and ground support
- 3 - Lassen County Dept of Public Works for helibase
- 4 - Cleatus Hoyer for Termo store parking lot for staging
- 5 - Thomas Traphagan for water sources

Personnel and Equipment Time

All demobed equipment invoices and AD payments were submitted to ASC for payment. Unresolved issues were given to James Newman, FSC3, for follow-up. Remaining resources and the computer database were also given to him for continuation. One Platypus computer and printer remained behind for continuation of the database. All other Platypus computers and printers were returned to the Modoc NF Supervisor's Office. The equipment and AD payments will be audited with the complete finance package delivered to Leona Parker, IBA the following day after demob.

The report for 16 hour shifts was completed. Excessive shifts were justified and mitigation measures documented by the IC.

Compensation for Injury

One reportable injury of a rattlesnake bite and one documentation only for sprained ankle.

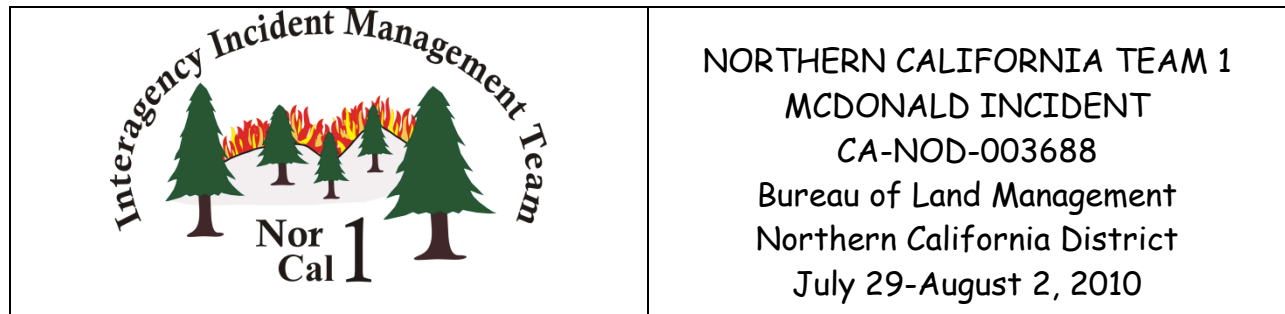
Claims

One broken camera, parts for CDF dozer, one broken windshield.

Costs

The estimated cost for this incident is approximately \$3.5 to date. Accrual transmission and database transmittal to the repository were completed daily. The cost containment measures report was entered into a table to capture savings and uploaded to the repository.

Lois Charlton
FSC2



LOGISTICS NARRATIVE

With the invaluable help of Ken Hood (BLM), logistics began setting up the base camp on July 29th and by the end of the day on July 30th the camp was fully functional. The use of the Juniper School and the reduced “base camp contract” allowed us to maximize the space available and provide a cost savings to the incident. Verizon provided a Repeater on Trailer (RAT), cell phones and wireless connections for computers. These were provided free for our use on the incident.

Ground Support

Ground Support was located at the CalTrans cinder yard on Grasshopper Road in Termo. The facility was ideal. Most challenging was dust abatement. Leona Parker was very instrumental in making dust abatement on roads a success.

Communications

The Command Repeater was installed by 7/29 2000, located on McDonald Mtn. A change in the assigned Air to Ground frequency was required on 7/30 due to an error by the NIFC CDO; a similar change was required on the air-to-air FM frequency.

Supply


Upon arrival the expanded dispatch supervisor was contacted by the teams Supply Unit Leader and processes we’ve developed for ordering and receiving personnel, equipment and supplies. Contact was made with incident IBA to grant authorization for fire replacement. All procedures worked well for the incident. Expanded dispatch, the Buying Team, and North Zone cache worked extremely well with the supply unit. Overall, orders were received in a timely manner that successfully supported our operations.

Facilities

Jeff Huhtala, Facilities Unit Leader for the team arrived at the base camp on the afternoon of July 29th and began working with Ken Hood and Leona Parker to begin the establishment of the camp. Their background knowledge of the facility and the establishment of the “Land Use Agreements” made our jobs much easier. There was sufficient room to house and feed the some 650 personnel that were assigned to stay at the base camp. Jim Hayworth, custodian for the school was a great source of information regarding use of the facilities. He also kept the floors and bathrooms clean for our use.

Security

There were no security problems on this incident.

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Food

Stewart's Catering provided meals for the incident. The most meals served at this incident was 633 dinners on July 30. The caterer provided a quality product and was easy to work with.

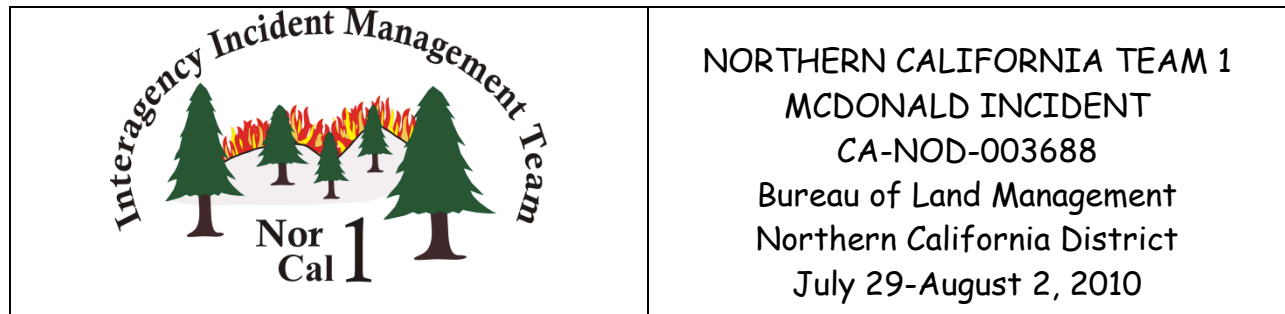
Medical

On the evening of July 30th, a firefighter was bitten by a rattlesnake while sleeping in an area approximately 3/8 of a mile from the base camp. He was transported to Reno by helicopter for treatment. There were no other notable injuries associated with the incident.

Paul Montgomery
Logistics Sec. Chief

Mike Jellison
Logistics Sec. Chief

Brett Shur
Logistics Sec. Chief



SAFETY NARRATIVE

Personnel

Three Safety Officers (SOF2) responded with the team. The three line safety officers (SOFR) from the pre-order arrived early in the incident and were assigned to support fireline operations.

Risks and Hazards

The major risks and hazards included moderately steep but very rugged terrain, long transportation times via poor roads in the immediate fire area, extended travel for emergency medical care and two days of “Red Flag” warnings. An Incident Action Plan was developed using the LC.E.S. Safety Analysis, identified hazards were mitigated to provide a safe working environment for all employees.

Starting on July 28, 2010 and continuing through August 1, 2010 extensive briefings were conducted at the beginning of each operational period. The briefing consisted of operational objectives and assignments, fire weather, fire behavior, communications, logistical orientation and a detailed discussion of the “Incident within the Incident” protocol as well as safety hazards associated with the fire area. All overhead and supervisors attended the operational briefing that in turn briefed their subordinates. “Tailgate Safety Sessions” that focused on risk management, hydration and decision making were included in the Incident Action Plans.

Team Safety Officers conducted training with the Communications Unit radio operators that included a functional review of managing an Incident within an Incident, using the Incident Communications Protocol and concluded with multiple scenarios involving fireline and in camp emergencies.

Illness/ Injury and Accidents

From team transition July 28, 2010 through August 1, 2010 a total of 41,440 hours of work were completed. There was 1 lost time and 1 recordable injury accident as of August 1, 2010 @ 1200.

The Bureau of Labor Standards has established a formula for calculating the number of injuries of per 200,000 hours worked. OSHA recommends an average high frequency rate of 13.5 for all recordable accidents (the McDonald rate was 4.83) and an average high frequency rate average of 7.6 for lost time accidents (the McDonald rate was 4.83). Simply stated, the Incident experienced a lower accident/injury frequency rate than the comparable California Firefighter workforce. There were no SAFENETS or SAFECOMS filed on the incident.

Rich Rubin
SOF2

Michele Tanzi
SOF2

Dave Kirste
SOF2

Bill Dekker
SOF2(t)

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INFORMATION NARRATIVE

On July 29, 2010 Public Information Officers (PIO2) Phyllis Swanson and Jim Mackensen were briefed by Jeff Fontana, BLM Public Affairs Officer in Susanville. Daily updates were produced and emailed to the media list that was provided. The Sacramento Bee did a phone interview and published an article. Yubanet.com requested an incident map and that was emailed. Unfortunately our request for access to Inciweb was not fulfilled. A trapline was established that included Ravendale, Termo, Madeline and Likely. There was minimal public interest.

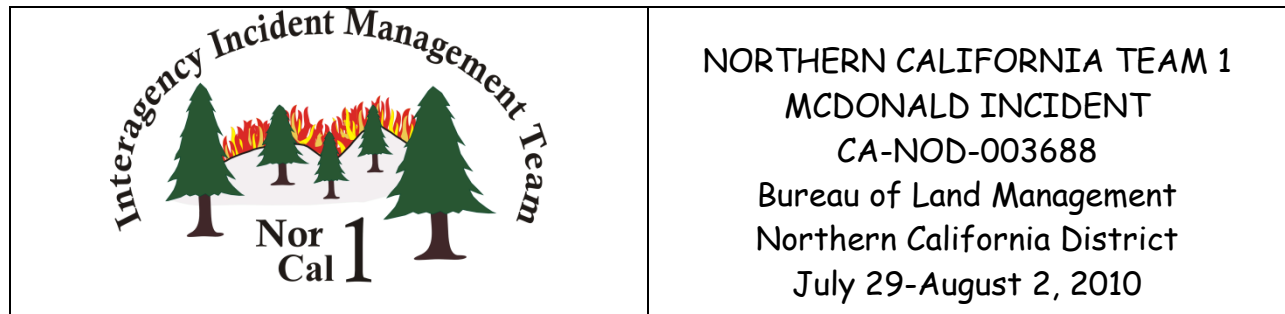
Phyllis Swanson
PIO2

Jim Mackensen
PIO2

Yvonne Jones
PIO2

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APPENDIX



LIST OF PREPARERS

Kent Swartzlander	ICT
Mike Minton	ICT2(t)
Steve Burns	OSC
Bruce Wicks	AOBD
Dave Sinclear	PSC
Dominic Panno	TNSP
Melissa Hennessey	SITL(t)
Lois Charlton	FSC
Mike Jellison	LSC
Jim Mackenson	IOF
Rich Ruben	SOF
Bob Patton	FBAN
John Bonk	IMET

Documentation of IMT Cost Containment Measures/Fire Management Efficiencies
On Large Forest Service Fire Incidents - 2008
Upload to I-Suite Data Repository
File Name: CA-NOD-003688 Cost Containment

IMT Name: Nor Cal Team 1 (Swartzlander)

Incident Name and Number: McDonald Incident CA-NOD-003688

Location: Termo, California

Fire Management Efficiencies – In order to enhance our ability to efficiently manage suppression costs, please respond to the following questions that focus on sound decision-making and ensure prudent choices are made for suppression spending on large fire incidents.

1. Did IMT operate with a clear understanding of Appropriate Management Response as articulated by the Agency Administrator and in the 2005 update of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy? Explain.

The IMT operated with a clear understanding of the strategy desired, i.e., direct as possible, protecting natural resource values and private inholdings.

2. Steps taken to more effectively manage high cost aviation assets.

Action	Estimated Cost Savings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Released aircraft with a daily availability charge at the earliest opportunity. For a savings of: 	\$4,250.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demobilized helibase trailer at earliest opportunity when it became apparent the need for the trailer could be filled with an Agency helitack support truck. For a savings of \$1200 per day @ 1 day. 	\$1,200.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located Lassen County property for helibase operation and negotiated a \$1 per day rental charged as opposed to a private property owner. Savings: Unknown but would have been significantly higher than the \$5 dollar rental paid to Lassen County. 	

3. Actions taken to effectively manage resources.

Action	Estimated Cost Savings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilized a cold trail on approximately 50% of fires edge resulting in an approximate 25% savings of total daily costs for 3 days. (.25 x 1,226,038 x 3) 	\$919,528.50
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additionally, the direct attack strategy used opposed to a much larger Big Box indirect attack of prepping and burning saved approximately an additional 10 days of incident duration. (10 x 594,571). 	\$5,945,710
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization of Closest Resource – In a collaborative effort the Modoc Expanded Dispatch and the Susanville IFC assisted NorCal Team 1 in the reassignment of critical resources from CA-MDF to CA-NOD which greatly reduced the need for our to GACC and Out of State resources with an estimated cost savings of; 	\$8,000.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base Office Support – “Camp in a Sack” was utilized to provide office facilities, generators and general support as opposed to ordering individual resources to build the Base Camp facilities. This resulted in a savings of approximately \$2,300 per day x 4 = \$9,200 over the full Camp in a Box (Type 1). 	\$9,200.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications: Utilized Verizon Wireless Crisis Response Team to establish clear communication at McDonald Base Camp. This service provided 30 internet access cards and 30 cell phones for the incident. This is a free service to support disasters. Estimated cost savings of \$200 per day x 4 = \$800 when compared to rental equipment. 	\$800.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shower Unit: The shower unit was released at 2200 hrs on 8/1/2010 which allowed for an estimated savings of; 	\$1,500.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleeper Unit: The fire utilized two sleeper units to provide a climate controlled sleeping environment. The Logistics section conducted a daily assessment of this resource and demob of these two resources occurred on 7/31/2010. This assessment provided an estimated savings to the fire of; 	\$1,000.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply: The team managed all cache and buying team purchases to reduce loss tolerance. All accountable property was returned to the fire cache. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistics: All personnel and resources working within the logistics section were assessed on a continual basis. An excess resources list was maintained and excess resources were immediately made available for reassignment or release. 	

4. Considerations for resources used and cost benefit to incident.

Action	Estimated Cost Savings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earliest release of Cal Fire resources at a daily cost of \$128,334 per day for 3 days. 	\$385,002.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of contract water tenders with agency tenders for 2 days. (\$2,800 x 2 -500 x 2). 	\$4,600.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of contract Dozers with Agency Dozers and transports for 3 days. (\$4,300 x 3 -1000 x 3) 	\$9,900.00

5. Other cost containment measures/actions/considerations.

Action	Estimated Cost Savings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilized NorCal 1 medical & office equipment rather than renting it. This included 1 backboard (\$10/day x 3 days), 1 stokes basket (\$20/day x 3 days), 1 laptop (1/4 month = \$50) and 1 combo printer (1/4 month = \$50). Savings: 	\$190.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demobilization of Frontline Medical 8/1/10 to travel back to home unit by 2200 hours and avoid an additional day of expense. Includes the two additional paramedics. Savings: 	\$3,500.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilized Frontline medical to treat patients that would have otherwise needed a hospital visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. I.V. re-hydration x 1 B. Cornea abrasion x 3 	\$2,500.00 \$1,800.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilized 2 Frontline paramedics as line medics when paramedic orders came back UTF (\$1,000 per day x 3 days). Savings: 	\$3,000.00

Total

\$7,301,680.5