



Forest
Service

Bitterroot National Forest

1801 N. First
Hamilton, MT 59840
406 363-7100

File Code: 1230/5130

Date: July 31, 2013

Route To:

Subject: Delegation of Authority for the Gold Pan Fire Complex and Leader's Intent

To: Greg Poncin, Incident Commander (NR Type 1 IMT)

We welcome you and your team to the Gold Pan Fire Complex Incident and wish you a safe and successful assignment.

The Gold Pan Fire was detected on July 16th. At that time, it was decided, based on its location deep inside the wilderness and surrounded by numerous fire scars, to manage it as a resource benefit fire. The fire stayed inactive for several days, but on July 21st, it made a significant run up onto Buck Knob. Since that time, the fire has steadily worked its way almost 8 miles to the east, and has moved into a position where it could make a major push to the wilderness boundary and on towards private land in the West Fork of the Bitterroot River. Because this fire continues to increase in size (almost 14,000 acres) and complexity, we have ordered your team to take over management of this fire.

The Goat Fire, discovered on July 24 a few miles to the south of the Gold Pan Fire has remained inactive to date but I am combining it in with the Gold Pan Fire fire and making them a complex for you to manage. Due to its low potential, we ask that you continue to monitor this fire, and before any future action is initiated, carefully weigh the risk and exposure to firefighters and aviators to any benefits appropriately.

Diane's team has not completed the long term plan for this fire and I believe there is an opportunity for both teams to join together, utilizing your unique skills to successfully manage this fire into the future. To this end, I hereby delegate the authority for management of the Gold Pan Fire Complex to you as the Incident Commander. This delegation carries the responsibility for management of all the assigned firefighting resources, aviation assets, equipment, costs and the rehabilitation of suppression impacts directly related to this wildfire as a result of your tactical actions. Your team will shadow Diane's team on July 30th and you and your team will be responsible for management of the fire starting at 0600, July 31st.

I have attached my Leader's Intent and several other documents that will provide you with information to review with your team for this incident. Other important contacts that you and your team need to work with will include: Dave Campbell, West Fork District Ranger, Shane Olpin, West Fork District FMO; Tod Mckay, BRF Public Affairs Officer, Kayla Jaquith and Don Polanski, BRF LEOs; Charles Scripps, Yonder (Krueger) Ranch owner and Painted Rocks RFD Chief; Gary Kubat, West Fork RFD Chief, and Chris Hoffman, Ravalli County Sheriff.

To help keep us on track, I would like to schedule a 'During Action Review' with you in 3 days, and every couple of days thereafter as you and I deem necessary. This is a time for us to meet



face to face to assess progress and expectations for the next several days, and make any adjustments needed to maintain our alignment and performance.

I may have trainees that I would like to assign to the incident so that they can complete tasks within their PTBs. Please coordinate their ordering with Hamilton Expanded Dispatch.

I look forward to working with you and your team and expect us to be active partners in terms of any strategic discussions and/or adjustments.



JULIE K. KING
Forest Supervisor
Bitterroot National Forest



GREG PONCIN
Incident Commander
NR Type 1 IMT

Enclosures: Leader's Intent, Incident In-briefing Package

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S INTENT
For
Gold Pan Fire Complex – Bitterroot National Forest

Objectives for the Teams

- Make firefighter and public safety your highest priority by identifying known hazards and clearly communicating the acceptable level of risk.
- Implement, as needed, a long term plan being developed by Diane's team to manage existing wilderness trail closures; to manage the protection of outfitter/guide and Forest Service values; and to minimize damage to private property and private residences in the Nez Perce Creek drainage and West Fork valley. This plan may incorporate activities on both private and national forest lands to prevent additional impacts to the Bitterroot Valley. For this, it will be critical to maintain a close working relationship with the Painted Rocks and West Fork Rural Fire Chiefs. Depending on the circumstances, it may be prudent to utilize a Local Agency Response Incident Action Team (LARIAT). A plan that describes how LARIAT is to be deployed is attached. Please work closely with the Ravalli County Fire Warden, Brad Mohn (406-360-4379) to insure this plan is effectively implemented if the need should arise.
- Explore the feasibility of slowing or stopping the fire's movement east, keeping it inside the wilderness boundary by using roads as control boundaries. Carefully weigh risk versus gain, probability of success, exposure, cost, and impacts to wilderness values in implementing any activities to accomplish this.
- Ensure timely and accurate information is distributed to interested parties. Keep me informed of public meetings and media contacts. Maintain contact with Forest Public Affairs Officer Tod McKay (406) 531-1130 to ensure you can build on existing relationships, contacts and key messages.
- Incorporate sustainable operations in all incident management activities to minimize environmental, social, and fiscal impacts without compromising firefighter and public safety or impeding incident operations.

Expectations of the Teams:

- Safety is your number one priority and safety will be a foremost consideration in all decisions and actions. No resource is worth a human life.
 - Using LCES, ensure that all personnel comply with the Standard Fire Orders and mitigate the 18 Situations and incorporate this direction in all planning processes and suppression efforts. I would like this to be documented with the 215A.
 - Follow the policy for national work/rest guidelines for all incident personnel. Shift lengths shall conform to national policy, with exceptions documented with copies submitted to the IBA.
 - Closely monitor duty time and driving time limitations for all incident personnel.
 - I do not place any constraint on night tactical operations provided you follow the risk assessment process to manage the risk and weigh the benefits of conducting two operational periods per day.

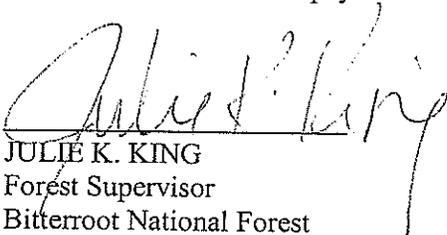
- Work in coordination with the two local rural fire district chiefs and Montana Department of Natural Resources to prepare evacuation plans if needed; develop cost share agreements/decisions; and in the development of operational plans where private lands may be involved.
- Work closely with the assigned Resource Advisors Mary Williams, Forest Archeologist (406) 363-7183, Ed Snook, Forest Hydrologist (406) 363-7103, Andrea Shortsleeve, S. Zone Biologist (406) 777-7426, Marty Almquist (406) 821-1222, wilderness outfitter permit administrator, and Mike Jakober, S. Zone Fisheries (406) 777-7425, to ensure fire suppression impacts to natural and cultural resources are kept to a minimum (a primary Resource Advisor will be assigned to work with your team for the duration.). This includes retardant avoidance areas, noxious weed best management practices and potential impacts of aquatic invasive species on threatened and endangered fish.
- The Bitterroot National Forest has an Environmental Policy and Environmental Management System (EMS) system in place to reduce the impacts of potential weed invasion and spread in burned areas. The two necessary procedures and responsibilities required of your IMT are outlined in the briefing packet you received.
- Within the wilderness, Minimum Impact Management Tactics (MIMT) will be used as much as possible to reduce suppression impacts. All questions concerning potential resource impacts related to strategic or tactical operation will be handled through the assigned Resource Advisor. Please review the attached letter from the Forest Supervisor authorizing the use of mechanical equipment in the wilderness.
- Work closely with PIO Tod McKay to disseminate information to internal staff, external partners, and interested public in the following communities:
 - The Nez Perce Road and lower West Fork Road residences
- **Cost Management:** Work closely with the IBA to monitor incident costs and evaluate during Periodic Assessments; and evaluate all management actions on a cost-vs-benefit basis.
- **WFDSS:** The key tool used in development and tracking of both incident and operational objectives is the Wildland Fire Decision Support System. I expect you to work with me to document any key decisions within the WFDSS program that would have significant impacts to cost, socio-political ramifications, or require out of the ordinary resources to accomplish. I expect any changes to the strategic direction for this fire to be relayed to me so this direction can be documented within the WFDSS program.
- **Structure Protection:** I want to re-iterate the Northern Rockies direction (2008 Northern Rockies Coordination Group Community and Structure Fire Protection Guidelines attached) that your primary responsibility and objective for structure protection **is to prevent the wildfire from reaching private land and structures, and to assist local fire agencies in protecting communities and structures from the advancing wildfire.** This will involve the use of standard wildland protection tactics, control methods, and equipment, including fire control lines and the extinguishment of spot fires near or on the structures. I expect you to ensure that safe, appropriate, cost effective, and reasonable tactical actions for which wildland fire fighters are trained and equipped are taken. Decisions to invest in protecting property and landscapes must weigh an estimate of values at risk, probability of occurrence, and probability of protection

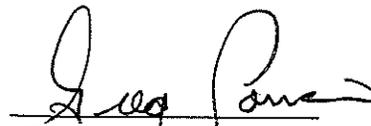
against the cost of implementing the protection strategy. Use of tactics such as gelling, wrapping, extensive hazardous fuels modification, setting up sprinkler systems around individual homes, and utilization of specialized structure firefighting resources are expected to be rare exceptions, and I expect to be consulted prior to implementation.

- **Utilization of Aviation Resources:** Prior to using aviation resources, make sure that a specific, achievable objective has been identified for their use and that they are being effective.
- **Unified Command:** While the fire stays contained to National Forest lands, I expect you to keep the local fire agencies informed of progress being made on the wildfire. I encourage you to order up liaison(s) from these local agencies as part of your team in order to keep them effectively informed of progress made on the wildfire and to utilize their local knowledge and experience with wildfires in this area. As needed, work with them to develop structure protection and population protection plans that focus primarily on preventing the wildfire from reaching private land and structures. Should the wildfire pose an eminent threat to private property and/or structures, I expect you to enter into Unified Command with the local fire agency's chief or their representative, in order to coordinate structure protection/suppression activities. Once the eminent threat no longer exists, disengage from unified command and continue to work through the liaisons as needed.
- **Initial Attack Responsibility:** The Bitterroot National Forest will maintain control of all Forest IA operations until such time as the IMT can provide effective initial attack within the TFR. Until then, your operations folks will need to work with Hamilton Dispatch to establish operating protocols so that Forest IA activities do not conflict with your operations.

End State:

The Gold Pan Fire Complex Incident will have been safely, efficiently and mindfully managed until all of the incident objectives were successfully obtained. Exposure to firefighters and the public was minor, with identified values at risk successfully protected by using the appropriate resources to implement tactics in locations with reasonable probabilities for success. After the incident management team leaves, there will have been no serious accidents or injuries, there will have been favorable results to the land and natural resources, relationships with all of our partners will have been maintained or improved, and we will have made a wise investment of taxpayer assets.


JULIE K. KING
Forest Supervisor
Bitterroot National Forest


GREG PONCIN
Incident Commander
NR Type 1 IMT