

# Staff Ride

## Resources



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

## Blackwater Fire – Strategic Discussion Points

### Strategic Discussion #1

What influence did the east / west canyon of the North Fork of the Shoshone River have on your initial reaction to this fire? Does it remind you of any similar fatality fires?

On August 21<sup>st</sup> 1937 this area was a stand of mature trees with a fire backing downhill. How do you think the fuel conditions of 1937 might be different today in regards to fire behavior? How significant was the 1930's "Dust-bowl" era compared to the current drought situation? How is our knowledge of fire behavior and fuels better today than in 1937?

### Strategic Discussion #2

Do you think the men on this fire were aware of the typical weather patterns in this area? Do your firefighters know how to recognize a frontal passage approaching? If you had posted a lookout, how would they have noticed the frontal passage coming? If they did, would they have alerted you soon enough?

What do you think of the timing for the transition of command between Fifield and Clayton?

How do response times affect the outcome of our fires?

### Strategic Discussion #3

Why was the spot fire in the bottom of Clayton Gulch never noticed earlier by the aerial reconnaissance? Was it a spot fire, or could it have been a separate lightning struck tree that went undetected until the winds increased?

Notice the location, imagine the fuels, visualize the fire behavior...is this someplace to get caught? In today's environment, what should we be doing differently to prevent getting caught in this situation?

In a life or death situation, would you be able to exhibit the kind of command and control that Post, Tyrrell, Sullivan displayed?

What makes a wildland firefighter a hero? How well do we recognize our heroes in the wildland fire service?

### Strategic Discussion #4

What were the organizational strengths and weaknesses in 1937?

What are the organizational strengths and weaknesses of today?

What has changed in 60 years? Is it possible to blend the best of two worlds to arrive at a superior fire organization?