

Staff Ride

Resources



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

Mack Creek Fire- Tactical Decision Games

Tactical Decision Scenario

You are the burn boss on the May 5, 1980 Crane Lake prescribed fire. You have just been informed the 125 gallon engine is disabled for the second time and is being imminently threatened by the prescribed fire. While you are directing the tractor plow to go help pull the engine out of danger, a seventh spot fire ignites at the northeast corner of the unit near you and the tractor plow. The 125 gallon engine is out of water and cannot protect itself. Your 1000 gallon engine has 500 gallons remaining. The engine operator is unsure if they can handle the spot fire alone, without the assistance of the tractor plow.

What are your priorities as the burn boss at this time?

- What human factors might negatively affect your decision making in this situation?
- What options do you have to address both problems?
- If this burn were being conducted today would you request contingency resources?
- Have you reached the threshold of an escaped prescribed fire by current standards?

Strategic Discussion Points

You are the District Ranger for the Mio Ranger District. It is May 5, 1980 @0945 and you are currently in a staff meeting at the district office. You are interrupted in order to answer a radio call. The district fire crew is requesting your clearance to initiate a prescribed burn. You know that hot, dry, and windy weather is forecast for the day although you have not had a detailed discussion or briefing with fire management that day. The burn boss explains the weather is within prescription and the small 28 acre unit can easily be completed before conditions are out of prescription. The target for creating habitat for the endangered Kirtland's warbler is the Forests' top priority and this project has already been delayed a year.

Using the Human Factors Analysis and Classification System (HFACS), or more commonly called the Swiss Cheese Model, what holes do you see that could line up to cause an accident?

- What questions would you ask the burn boss, before making a decision?

- Compare this scenario, from the Line Officer perspective, with the actual Mack Lake fire were the Line Officer was on-scene. What Human Factors are involved between the two situations?

- How would you manage target/production pressure, versus proper risk management and safety considerations in this situation?