

NLOT Conference Call Notes

Friday, August 21st

0900 Pacific/1000 Mountain/1100 Central/1200 Eastern

Number: 888-844-9904, Access Code: 5873422#

WELCOME & ROLL CALL

Attendance: Carol Hatfield, Ralph Rau, Paul Crespin, Thomas Osen, Cecilia Seesholtz, Dale Deiter, Jon Regelbrugge, Tom Montoya, Lisa Northrop, Ed Hunter, Sherry Tune, Tawnya Brummett, Becki Heath, Dana Reid, Tom Harbour, Deana Wall (notes)

AGENDA TOPICS

PL5 Situation - Tom Harbour

- August 21st was the height for the big push of fires in 1910; 87 fatalities and 3 million acres burned. Then in 1937, we lost 15 people in Black Water Canyon fire of Wyoming.
- The situation in 2015 includes fires in Idaho, Washington, Oregon and California, landslides of Alaska, hurricane in the Atlantic, typhoon in Hawaii/Pacific and incidents in Mississippi this spring, Ruhl, Hallenbeck and Engine 462.
- Reflecting on all that's going on, pausing to be grateful for millions of hours of good work that occur every day for thousands of really good people within and outside our agency, privilege to work with all involved.
- Now it's August 21st and we are in for the long haul in terms of fire situation of PNW, no foreseen season ending event in the near term.
- It's important today as we look at the situation report and see 27k people engaged in large fire activity, our previous high for large fire engagement was 25k which included 6 battalions of military. I'm grateful for all that has been done on forests and districts to move people to the West. Thank you for what you've done.
- There's no more important time to reflect on all we had a hand in, developing Chief's letter of intent for fire management (January 28th letter); keep that letter close to you, it embodies the Chief's intent how we engage on fire and aviation.
- Success is safely achieving reasonable objectives with the least firefighter exposure while engaging stakeholders.
- Key role of line: Reasonable objectives
- I urge you to think about your objectives, the 5 Rs, and your role as line officers is key.
- We must see all the things that make us proud of what we can and must do at a time like this.
- There is a significant amount of focus on the west.
- The President is preparing Gov. Inslee's request for Declaration for Washington and I assume Brown and Bullock are close behind considering the fire situation.
- The Secretary is engaged, the Chief has been out West and the situation has the attention of the President now.
- The important thing right now is keeping people safe.
- It's been a herculean effort of moving people, civilian neighbors, and firefighters out of the way of free-burning fires, the most important thing we can do. We can go back in when we can and be effective when we can.
- The Chief reviewed and sent to RFs a set of key messages.
- Be mindful that we don't need to talk about funding right now; we don't need to talk about spending \$150 million/week or more which is secondary to lives and natural resources that we are impacting.
- The Chief would say thanks for what you are doing and that nothing is more important than applying the "risk management doctrine". Pause and reflect on things that are

really important and then remind ourselves that work is enduring, public service is of benefit to all those that work inside and outside agency.

- I talk to the fire director's group every evening and am constantly amazed at individuals heading from East to West on multiple assignments.

Questions/Comments for Tom

Becki - The Chief had a previous planned trip scheduled for this week to visit 4 complexes which had lost structures, and then fatalities happened. RF, Becki and the Chief happened to be in Wenatchee at the time of the fatalities. Becki would like to ensure that extra risk hasn't been taken on behalf of personal emotions associated with protecting local communities and resources.

Sherry - Appreciate words of reflection and strength. She just left the Modoc to support the Forest Supervisor and firefighters want to talk transfer of risk; they need engagement between line and fire, getting to boots on the ground and allow them to tell their story; any words of wisdom for a group of folks for coaching?

- Tom suggests talking about Risk Management Doctrine, what does risk mean? What does sharing risk mean? Consequences of failure? Consequences of success?
 - Assertion was that while we are better at sharing risk and understanding risk, we don't share the consequences very well, whether its successes or failures, we need to do a better job for everyone, just what we do with those consequences. Provided seed of thought for what could be done to not just recite doctrine but to improve behaviors surrounding sharing conceptual pieces AND consequences

Paul - How is the agency going to solve funding dilemma?

- Tom - Intellectual basis of argument combined with impacts across West, on Senate side, recognition of tipping point, maybe beyond. Senator Cantwell brought up issue, appears bi-partisan group of senators at least to get through Senate, House is a different set of challenges.
 - 150 million dollars last week, a bit more in weeks ahead, mid-September transfer situation, \$200 million if we get rain, \$400-500 million if burning conditions continue.
 - This is why we like serving with Chief Tidwell, with a national audience, he says now is not the time to talk about it.

Lisa - Relay conversations from fire staff on Mt. Hood, need to talk about empowerment and decision space that each employee has as firefighter or high risk ops, not to detract from overall organization but to ensure that whatever individuals are thinking is out on table, real place of power in recent conversations.

- Tom - Continue to urge those conversations with individual employees, 14k people charging to a P-code last PP, well over half the agency, directly or indirectly involved. Conversations of individual empowerment are critical. Heads have to be in the game, got to be putting best thinking forward, "That's great for large fire, but what about initial attack? "Failed in communicating that 'doctrine is doctrine', no separate doctrine for IA or extended.

Dale - On the IC call this morning, there was a discussion about movement of resources and Line Officers were asked to consider the tradeoff of resources to protect communities. Any leaders' intent surrounding that topic?

- Tom - Lots of moving parts, trying to move more engines, combing for more aircraft, more we are doing tactically, key message here: Go back to doctrine, 'reasonable objectives.' Given situation over last few days and will continue to have today/

tomorrow remember that we aren't going to put folks in front of these free-burning fires, historic runs, historic activity, variety of communities evacuated, Tonasket, Twisp, people/power lines/facilities, nothing more important than making sure we get through these next couple days, then go back and consider those reasonable objectives. These are difficult times.

- Help our partners secure communities, we know that by doing so, we will be giving up acres. We at the higher level will deal with priorities, ask DR to make decisions and their impacts, what an opportunity to exert leadership, be prepared to be here, what a time for leadership, think about the potential for influence now and into the future of the next 10-20 years.

Sherry - Shared consequences, critical thinking that has to happen up front, trade-offs and sharing with communities and stake-holders.

- Tom - Refer to the Chief's Letter dated January 28th regarding Risk Management Doctrine; 3rd paragraph gives a very clear definition of success.

Tom Montoya - Wonderful experience with R6 team, in connection with leaders' intent and objectives down to firefighter so they know why they are doing what they are doing.

Closing Comments - Becki

- Appreciate the offers of help in R6; peer-support is very important, shadow's become peer-support and add capacity.
- Stay in communication with each other, if you have people available, it helps when your region can organize those efforts and helpful to come with own coach.

NEXT CONFERENCE CALL

- September 18th, 0900 Pacific