

Staff Ride

Resources



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

Thirtymile Fire – Facilitator’s Field Reference

Note to Facilitator: This is a suggested format. Do not feel limited by the identified stands or discussion items. It is provided as a word document so that users may adapt and revise to fit their specific audience and time demands.

Staff Ride Difficulty Ratings:

Physical

Easy – All walking segments are on a flat graveled road with good footing. Elevation for the area is approximately 3300 feet.

Logistics

Moderate – Site is a one-hour drive north of Winthrop, Washington. Area is accessible by all types of motor vehicles. However, due to limited parking space, it is recommended that bus or van transportation be utilized. Winthrop is a small resort community with ample overnight accommodations.

Hazards

Moderate – Normal wildland hazards (possible snakes, bees, etc.). The entire area has a large component of burned snags and the hazard increases during wind events.

Stand 1 – Point of Origin

Maps

- Travel Map
- Orthophoto
- Topo Map of Chewuch River

Travel Directions

- GPS Coordinates 48.47.485x120.04.261
- North Cascade Smokejumper Base to Stand 1.
- Travel north on Eastside Road to Winthrop, Washington 4.7 miles.
- Travel to Westside of Winthrop to West Chewuch Road.
- Travel 7.5 miles on West Chewuch Road, at this point the road designation will change to Forest Service Road # 51.
- Travel on Forest Service Road # 51 10.8 miles to Forest Service Road # 5160.
- Travel on Forest Service Road # 5160 5.5 miles to Forest Service Road # 250. (Paved road surface ends).
- Travel on Forest Service Road # 250 1.8 miles to Stand 1 location.

Terrain Orientation

- Origin Site Plaque
- Chewuck River
- Forest Service Road # 250
- Origin site located between Chewuck River and Forest Service Road # 250

Events to Describe

- Fire season severity
- Fuel conditions
- South Libby Fire (started previous day)
- Origin of fire
- Methow Valley District initial attack actions
- Entiat Hotshot Crew dispatch and initial attack actions
- Discussion Guide
- Thirtymile fire was first discovered by Canadian Bird Dog Aircraft returning from assignment on South Libby Fire. Fire was result of recreation cooking fire. Small hand crew and engine crew responded from Methow Valley Ranger District. Initial Attack Incident Commander did not feel qualified to manage incident. Decision was made to

assign Entiat Hot Shot Crew, who were bedded down in Twisp, after a day of travel from another incident.

- Entiat Hot Shot Superintendent took over as Incident Commander and released district initial attack resources including water handling equipment.
- Strategy was to go direct and handline as much of the fire (including spot fires) as possible during the early morning hours.
- Entiat Hot Shot Crew was successful in lining 2/3 of all active fire.
- Entiat Hot Shot Superintendent ordered 20 person crew, water handling equipment, and helicopter with bucket for day shift.
- Fire was located in riparian area.
- Forests were experiencing a prolonged period of drought like conditions.
- South Libby fire had Type 2 Incident Management Team assigned and was threatening structures.

Handout and conduct Tactical Discussion # 1 or Handout and Management Discussion # 1

Stand 2 – Log Crossing and Lunch Spot

Maps

- Entiat Hotshot Briefing Map
- Ortho Photo
- Chewuck River Topo Map

Travel Directions

- GPS Coordinates 48.47.618x120.03.934
- ¼ mile hike north of Stand 1

Terrain Orientation

- Log Crossing and Lunch Spot Site Plaque
- Chewuck River
- Forest Service Road # 250
- Log Crossing and Lunch Spot site located between Chewuck River and Forest Service Road # 250

Events to Describe

- Fire behavior.
- Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forest process in 2001 for forming Type 2 Crews.
- Formation and briefing of Northwest Regular Crew # 6.
- Arrival and actions of Northwest Regular Crew # 6.
- Communications between incident and Okanogan Dispatch.
- Shared air resource usage between Thirtymile Fire and South Libby Fire.
- Entiat Hotshot Crew actions.
- Arrival and actions of Methow Valley Initial Attack Resources.
- Road closers during ongoing incidents.

Discussion Guide

- Briefing of Northwest Regular Crew # 6 was given by Forest Fire Management Officer and District Fire Management Officer. Entiat Hotshot Crew overhead also participated in the briefing.
- Crew Boss of Northwest Regular Crew # 6 was acting as both Incident Commander and trainer.
- As the fire progressed during the morning hours Northwest Regular Crew # 6 experience problems with water handling equipment and hand tools.
- Fire continued to grow in size and intensity.

- Confusion over authority to use Chewuck River as helicopter dip site.
- Implementation of LCES.
- Command and control of resources after 1500 hours.

Handout and conduct Tactical Discussion # 2 or Handout and conduct Management Discussion # 2

Stand 3 – Spot Fires

Maps

- Thirtymile Fire Investigation Progression Map
- Ortho Photo
- Chewuck River Topo Map

Access

- NAD 27 GPS Coordinates 48.47.640x120.03.652
- ¼ mile hike north of Stand 2
- Terrain Orientation
- Spot Fires Site Plaque
- Chewuck River and Forest Service Road # 250 make sharp bend and are oriented east to west.

Events to Describe

- Fire Behavior.
- Spot fires suppression actions.
- Movement of Northwest Regular Crew squads from lunch spot.
- Actions of Methow Valley Initial Attack Resources on spot fires.
- Actions of Entiat Hotshot Crew overhead.
- Actions of Northwest Regular Crew after being cut off from escape route.

Discussion Guide

- At 1500 hours all members of the Northwest Regular Crew # 6 have disengaged from the fireline and are located with the Entiat Hot Shots in the lunch spot. At 1530 hours Methow Valley Initial Attack Resources arrive on the incident and check in with Incident Commander.
- Command and control of resources.
- Briefings that were provided incoming resources.
- Assessments made regarding re-engagement.

Handout and conduct Tactical Discussion # 3 or Handout and conduct Management Discussion # 3

Stand 4 – Deployment and Fatality Site

Maps

- Thirtymile Fire Investigation Progression Map
- Ortho Photo
- Chewuck River Topo Map

Travel Directions

- GPS Coordinates 48.48.035x120.02.601
- 1 mile hike north of Stand 3

Terrain Orientation

- Thirtymile Fire Memorial Site
- Large rock scree west of Forest Service Road # 250

Events to Describe

- Fire Behavior
- Movement of Northwest Regular Crew # 6 squads after being cut off from escape route.
- Air Group Supervisor actions.
- Northwest Regular Crew # 6 actions at deployment site.
- Selection of rock scree.
- Rescue operations.

Discussion Guide

Note to Facilitator: Conduct integration discussion at a location chosen by facilitator

- Interaction between air attack and Incident Commander in identifying an adequate safety zone.
- Command and control of resources in safety zones.
- Crew cohesion.
- Control of civilians in emergency situations.
- Leadership under stress.
- The importance of briefings when incident conditions change.

Handout and conduct Tactical Discussion # 4 or Handout and conduct Management Discussion # 4