Tactical Decision Games

Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

UTILIZING SITUATION AWARENESS – FIDDLE FIRE

INITIAL FACILITATOR INFORMATION—NOT TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

Author(s)

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Target Audience

Initial Attack ICs, ICT4

Training Objective

Given the following scenario, the players will develop, document, and communicate intent, objectives, and plan of action using the situation awareness developed from the sizeup TDG.

Resources Referenced

- **1 Type VI engine (Engine 6332)**
- 2 ATVs with 70 gallons of water (Ranger 3 and Ranger 5)
- 1 three-person short squad (River 1)

*Use of listed resources is optional based on facilitator and/or role player experience.

SCENARIO INFORMATION TO BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

Facilitator Briefing to Student(s)

It is 1300 hours on April 4th. You are an ICT4 assigned to the Eastern KS Fire Management District responding to a smoke reported by the local station's maintenance mechanic who is FFT2 qualified (he has several years of good experience in this fuel type and terrain). Information is somewhat limited so you respond to assess the current situation.

While en route to the scene you notice a developing column of white smoke coming from just south of the Maree River (on federally-owned lands). Upon arrival, you find a 15-acre fire running in mixed, tall grass prairie (fuel model 3) and upland hardwood forest timber litter (fuel model 9). The fire is burning downslope on a very gradual north facing slope towards bottomland hardwood forest (fuel model 8 and 9). This area of the refuge has not burned in at least 12 years creating a heavy fuel load and thick understory in the timber.

Current weather conditions: 60 degrees, 35 percent RH, steady SE winds 10-15. Skies are partly cloudy with a frontal passage expected around midnight which will bring strong NW winds and a chance of snow. *Suggested scale of the sand table is 1 mile x 1 mile.

Current fuel conditions: Fuel model 3 is just starting to show signs of green deep in the fuel bed and the upland timber litter, fuel model 9, has just slightly more advanced signs of green-up. Bottomland timber litter, fuel model 8 and 9, is very wet with much more advanced green-up.

Weather History: The preceding heavy winter snowfall and ice cover combined with the recent rainfall has contributed to wet, muddy conditions throughout the area. Only county gravel roads are available for engine travel with all off-road and two-track travel limited to ATVs and foot-traffic.

A thorough tour of the refuge and in-briefing from the Refuge Manager has given you a good feel for just how wet and soft the ground is. Also, you have been informed to use whatever tactics necessary to safely contain wildland fires on the refuge. He/she would also like minimum impact suppression tactics used as often as possible. You're also aware that biological staff would like fire kept out of reforestation sites and mine spoil piles since reforestation efforts would be severely set back from a wildland fire and vegetation on spoil piles are not fire tolerant.

You have radioed a sizeup to refuge dispatch and ordered one short squad, one Type 4 engine, and two ATVs (each with 70 gallons). You have also contacted the county dispatcher and informed them of the wildfire and you inform them there is no need for additional resources at this time.

In three minutes, assess the situation, prepare, and then communicate to contacts you think are necessary.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FACILITATOR ONLY

Facilitator "Murphy's Law" Suggestions

The "Murphy's Law" suggestions listed below can be added as what-ifs at any time during the scenario to raise the stress level of the leader.

- Engine drives off road and gets stuck
- ATVs operated off road get stuck in a seep
- County resources arrive on scene and take immediate action
- Engine or equipment failure
- Wind shift occurs much earlier than predicted

*The facilitator should utilize the Murphy's Laws to create barriers as needed.

Facilitator's Notes

This has been developed as a seminar-type TDG (single learning objective, "snapshot in time"), but may evolve into a simulation type as time progresses and the game develops.

The objective of this TDG is for the IC to utilize the given situation awareness to develop a plan of action, objectives, and intent then communicate that to on-scene and incoming resources.

*If possible, clearly discuss notes with role players (not including "hot seat" player) ahead of time to give all involved a good feel for conditions.

Items of note:

- Bottomland forest fuels will burn with extremely low intensity, if at all, in real wet conditions.
- Fire needs to be excluded from mine spoil piles and reforestation sites to the west
- Leaf blowers are utilized frequently in this fuel type with little need for handline when wet conditions exist.
- Burn out operations are frequently used in the local area as well.
- Seeps (areas of extremely wet soil) can cause ATVs to be stuck.
- Operation of large ATVs in hardwood timber that hasn't been burned for long periods of time can be tricky.
- The short squad needs to be the first on-scene and their rig is equipped with handtools, leaf blowers, drip torches, and torch fuel. The engine (staffed with two) and ATVs with operators arrive within 10-15 minutes of the squad. The two-track trail to the west ends approximately 100 yards short of the river. The two-track is an adequate line for holding if minor improvements are made, but there are no turn-around spots for engines along this two-track. No values that need critical protection other than the reforestation site and spoil piles to the northwest and west, respectively. Private property lies east of the federal lands, across a county road and north of the Maree River. A cabin exists on the private property north of the river.

After Action Review

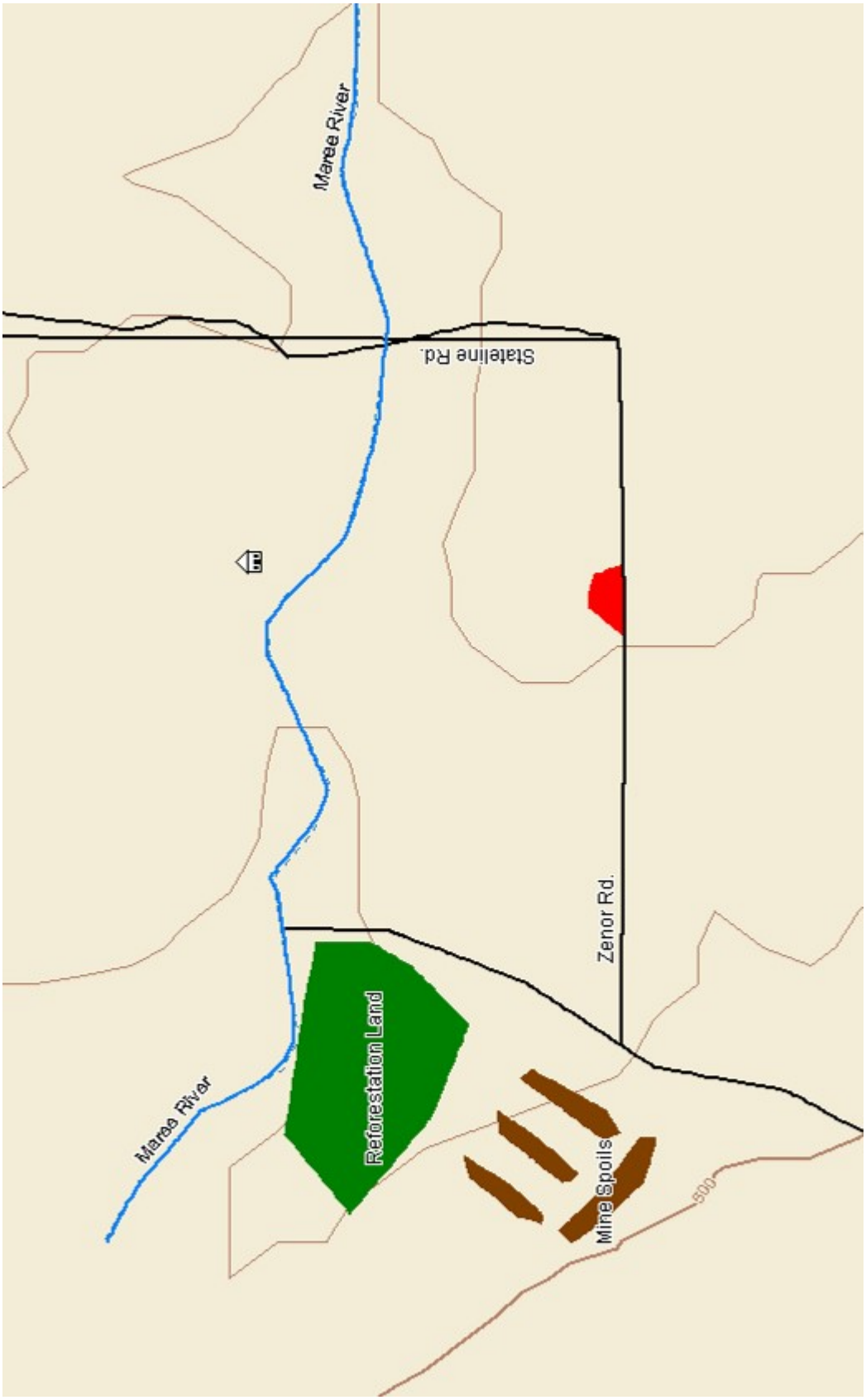
Conduct an AAR with focus on the training objective, using the AAR format found in the *Incident Response Pocket Guide* to facilitate the AAR. There are four basic questions in the AAR.

1. What was planned?
2. What actually happened?
3. Why did it happen?
4. What can we do next time?

TDGS shouldn't have a single solution, keep the focus of the AAR on what was done and why.

(Upland hardwood (Fuel Model 9))

(Fuel Model 3 Fire Behavior on scene.)


Maree River
Stateline Rd.
Zenor Rd.
Reforestation Land
Maree River
Mine Spoils
500