SKINNY'S ROAD FIRE
NARRATIVE SUMMARY
AND LESSONS LEARNED

Alaska Division of Forestry
Fairbanks Area Office

Oregon Department of Forestry
Incident Management Team #1 (Savage)

July 12, 2013
Overview
This report describes the key events and actions taken by ODF IMT 1 in managing the Skinny's Road Fire. It is organized into fire narrative, lessons learned and Team function critiques. It is hoped that this document can serve as an account of what happened and to provide some guidance for future IMT deployments to Alaska.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Narrative: Due to multiple active fires in the North Region of Alaska, AK DOF contacted ODF on June 27, 2013 and requested and ODF IMT. The team traveled to Alaska on June 28th, received the Team in-briefing on Skinny's Road Fire and the IC signed Delegation of Authority on June 29th. The Team managed the fire from June 30 until July 11th, when Team transitioned back to FAF IMT3 to administer Rehab Plan.

Lessons Learned:
This section is intended to document items that would prove valuable for both the State of Alaska and Oregon during future Team deployments. The Team noted items that went well and provided suggestions for improvement for future incidents. Communicating this to both Alaska and Oregon will ensure key successes are continued and current challenges are being addressed.

Things that went well:
- **Mobilization:** The timing, content and coordination of conference calls between AK-DOF and ODF were good, as was the timing of Initial Alaska fire briefing, and Agency Administrators in-briefing. ODF Salem Coordination Center did a good job of getting folks out as soon as possible. Having several of the ODF IMT #1 members already in the state assisted in the transition.
- **Transition:** Having folks from FAF - DOF available after the in-briefing for gathering more specific information than that provided in the general overview went well. The FAF - DOF staff, including the Type 3 IC spent an appreciable amount of time answering questions which helped prepare ODF Team 1 for taking over the fire the next morning. Ample time for Operations to get out and scout the fire to gather good intelligence.
- **Incident Administration:** FAF-DOF daily staff participation and availability was excellent; AK SLC support was excellent. Attendance at all planning meetings and availability in conjunction with the morning preposition meetings provided exceptional opportunities to communicate. Team expectations and processes were reviewed and worked well.
- **Safety:** Having Alaska Medics was beneficial. The section was well-staffed. Having EMT’s on the line was very beneficial.
- **Incident Management:** The AK Operations Laisson and AK Logistics Laisson were very valuable. Assistance from local FAF-DOF with GIS and Fire Behavior was appreciated. Clear Leaders Intent at briefing provided fire fighters with specific strategies and tactics each day. The IMT’s ability to support local I.A. needs went well. “Kill/Fill” unfilled resource orders and Resource Needs Projection glide down discussions started on Day 2 of fire. Strategy and tactics were successful in meeting objectives.
• **Demobilization:** Filling the Demob Specialist early helped tremendously. Draft Demob Plan review began early in the fire, Good Transition Plan and handoff. Expanded dispatch and the Mob Center were very helpful and good to work with.

• **Communications:** Use of DNR DOF’s “Rapid Com” was helpful. The ability to fill all Communication Unit positions that were requested was helpful. Having a radio cache at the DNR warehouse available for quick deployment was very helpful.

**Suggestions for improvement:**

• **Mobilization:** Bringing along the FBAN and GISS for future dispatches should be a priority, if these positions cannot be filled by AK DOF.

• **Transition:** Providing a written in-briefing packet with information for each section would provide for an expedited transition. It would be helpful if tools, cheat-sheets, ticklers, etc. were provided for specific AK subjects or ways of doing business... such as food boxes, commissary, equipment types, fuel types, need to plan 48 hours for demob (flights), specific forms (finance, rentals, etc.). Having a few vehicles immediately available for operations would facilitate early scouting and intelligence gathering which would assist in a smooth and orderly transition.

• **Incident Administration:** Tracking of resources that moved from previous incidents to Skinny's Road was difficult – better initial tracking would be beneficial.

• **Incident Management:** Initial objectives on IAP only showed the Team’s management objectives from the DOA. Control objectives were discussed at briefings, but did not appear on the 202 the first two shifts. The Team did not put the drop off points for crews on the 204s and this would have been a great place to show what spike camps they were located at, to help facilitate commissary deliveries.

• **Demobilization:** The inability to demob more than three crews in a day caused delays in demobing resources in a timely fashion. Tracking of buses used for crew transportation was an issue particularly for vehicles on the fire before the team arrived. Need to insure that crew transport vehicles are attached to crew on check in sheets and information provided to IMT. Many pieces of equipment, crews and overhead were moved to the incident from previous fires, which resulted in confusion and delays related to resource numbers.

**Communications:** Communication from the fire back to ICP was troublesome initially. A better orientation on the use and operation of the unit would have helped. The “Rapid Com” had bugs to work out and took a couple of days to get everything working smoothly.

**FIRE NARRATIVE:**

**Situation:**
The June 27, 2013 Alaska Situation Report Update stated that current activities in Alaska included 20 new starts over the last 24 hours, 116 active fires and 26 fully staffed fires across the state the numbers have jumped up to almost 600,000 acres burned this year. Most of these fires have been started by lightning but a couple of them were started by humans which
is alarming with the current weather situation. With continuing Record heat and dry fuels for much of Alaska producing record-setting fire spread potential and rapidly rising resistance to suppression efforts across boreal spruce and tussock tundra fuels. The new starts over the last 24 hours range in size from very small to 5,000 acres.

**Activation:**
A conference call occurred on June 27, 2013 at 1500 hours Pacific Daylight Time between the Fire Operations Forester from the Alaska Division of Forestry Northern Region, ODF-Salem Fire Operations, ODF Area Directors and the Incident Commander of ODF-IMT 1. Alaska DOF requested an Incident Management Team (IMT) from ODF. The conference call was ended and reconvened after ½ hour, in order for the agencies to conduct internal discussions regarding their abilities to meet each other’s needs. Items of discussion included status of fires in Alaska, ordering under the NW Compact, the need for an IMT, the configuration of the IMT, key positions recommended for managing an incident in Alaska, and in-briefing and travel arrangements.

**NW Compact Team Deployment Conference Calls:**
On June 28, 2013, a conference call was convened at 0900 Oregon time for the ODF IMT #1 Command and General Staff with the Alaska Division of Forestry Operations Manager (Note: Several team members were already in Alaska from previous resource requests and some were able to call in). The IMT was formally ordered for the Moon Lake Complex and current fire conditions were discussed. The In-briefing date and time for the team was established for 1600 hours on June 29, 2013. Following fire status update and discussion, Team members’ flight information was shared and all team members completed regular duties and made plans to travel to airports.

**State of Alaska Initial Briefing:**
On June 29, 2013 at 0800 on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus, the ODF IMT attended the Alaska Orientation video for all new Alaskan fire fighters. At 0915, an initial briefing was provided by AK Fire Support Forester. This briefing confirmed that the team would be assigned to the Skinny’s Road fire about half way between Fairbanks and Nenana, instead of the Moon Lake Complex near Tok. The agency administrator briefing was set for 1600 on June 29 at the Fairbanks Area Forestry office in Fairbanks. The team spent the remainder of the day going through the Alaska fire fighter in-briefing, and organizing for takeover of the fire at 0600 the following morning.

**Fairbanks Area Forestry Agency Administrators Briefing:**
On June 29, 2013 at approximately 1600 hours at the Fairbanks Area Forestry Operations Center, the team received the Agency Administrators Briefing. As of the June 28, 2013 ICS209, the Skinny’s Road Fire was reported to be 1,400 acres and 40% contained. There were 130 people assigned to the fire. The fire started on June 25, 2013, by equipment. Included in the briefing was current incident status, areas of concern, resource ordering summary, IAP, local contacts, maps of the fire, locations of structures, evacuation potential and policy, tactical resource information, and environment and structure protection.
Briefing topics included:

- Delegation of Authority
- Financial considerations through the compact order
- Ordering process and Expanded Dispatch
- Availability of suppression resource support
- Logistical Support and camp layout

It was agreed the ICP would be established at the Fairbanks Regional Fire Training Center and areas around the incident would be used for spike camps, helibase, and tactical and supply support for the incident. The official Transfer of Command was agreed upon to occur at 0600 on June 30, 2013.


Delegation of Authority

Following the briefing, the IC and Deputy IC reviewed the Delegation of Authority and signed document. Key Incident Objectives were:

1. Provide for the safety of fire fighters and the public.
2. Protect the following resources by keeping the fire within existing control lines:
   a). Nenana View Subdivision located to the west of the fire
   b). Private property
   c). Local businesses
   d). Infrastructure, i.e. fiber optic cable, power lines,
   e). Timber and other resource values
3. Support and coordinate with Fairbanks Area Forestry on initial attack responsibilities.
4. Protect native allotments with the priority on structure protection.
5. Minimize travel delays and restrictions along the Parks Highway. This highway is a critical travel link in the state.
6. Prepare and disseminate public information for media, Toghotthele Native Corporation, affiliated agencies, and local residents. Keep surrounding communities advised of smoke conditions and potential impacts.
7. Consider air quality impacts when implementing suppression strategies.

Incident Management:

Severe fire weather and fuel condition, which were reflected by record high indices, contributed to extreme fire behavior and rapid fire growth for several days prior to ODF Team 1’s arrival, and was contributing to control challenges as the Team took operational control. The Fairbanks area had seen record high temperatures for a number of days, as well as red flag warnings on successive days for high winds and low relative humidity. The fire was initially contained at less than 100 acres before winds caused spotting over the control lines on the south side of the fire. The fire then made a hard significant run to the southeast, towards the Parks Highway. The existing resources on the fire were forced to pull off the fire during this
run. The Parks Highway was temporarily closed, and the control actions were then re-engaged doing line construction with dozers along the flanks of the fire, and conducting a burnout operation with IHC’s along the Parks Highway.

As the IMT took over the fire, the Operations Section made a decision to continue to construct direct line on the west flank while improving and securing other established control lines on the fire. Structural protection had already been initiated by the Type 3 team, including deploying fold-a-tanks, pumps, and sprinkler systems.

The Team organized operations into five divisions. Division A consisted of the original fire perimeter that was established on June 25 during initial attack operations. Division B and Division C were located along the western flank of the fire and were tasked with perimeter control working to the south from the established anchor. In addition, Division T was established along most of the northern perimeter of the fire, with Division P primarily along the Parks Highway. The day shift operational period ran from 0700 – 2300. Night operations were discussed but not staffed due to a lack of resources and other limitations. Virtually all of the existing Type 3 operational resources were incorporated into the plan, with the exception of the ICT3 Trainee.

On 6/30/13 fire behavior increased with some spotting started to occur along DIV T and Division B across the fire line. Type 1 crews were able to control the spotting and additional air resources were ordered. Operations had a tough time getting additional air resources initially, but were able to obtain two air tankers (3 loads of retardant) and two CL-215 “ducks” which delivered approximately 75,600 gallons of water during the operation period. Some Type 1 crews worked extended shifts into the night to ensure containment. Lines were re-established and held with minimal fire growth.

From this point on, the fire remained within the current containment lines. Additional control lines were constructed along with minor burn out operations to tighten control lines to the black. The weather conditions moderated and crews were able to officially contain the fire at the end of shift on 7/5. Objectives shifted to mop up operations, conducting an inventory of all firefighting equipment and assisting in the beginning stages of rehabilitation efforts. All inventoried equipment was removed from the fire line and adjacent structures and returned to the Fairbanks Area fire cache. Crews persisted until the fire was declared controlled at the end of shift on 7/10/13.

The fire was transitioned back to a Fairbanks Area Forestry Type 3 organization (Soliday) on 7/11/2013. All control and mop-up objectives had been met. Rehab had been initiated and comprised the final remaining objective to be completed. The final acreage for the Skinny’s Road fire was 1,806 acres which burned on State, Native Corporation and Private Lands.
TEAM CRITIQUE SUMMARY

Command Section Report
Brief assessment of the ODF IMT 1 C&GS, AK DOF and ODF Fire Operations:
- PLANS - Always need to start with Team’s planning processes.
- OPERATIONS - Excellent firefighting, mop-up, and safety record.
- LOGISTICS - Rose to every occasion in a challenging situation.
- SAFETY - Excellent safety record for the entire duration of the incident.
- FINANCE - Tina did a great job as FSC especially considering the large learning curve needed to understand the Alaskan way.
- INFORMATION - Brian worked well with FAF and JIC IIOs to keep public informed of Skinny’s Road fire story.
- AREA- Great support from AK DOF staff. Appreciate Mark Eliot, K.T. Pyne, Ed Sanford and staff’s participation throughout incident.
- ODF Salem Fire Operations - Daily calls worked well for the Team to keep ODF Fire Operations updated on Team’s status.

Planning Section Report

Summary:
The incident planning schedule included an operational briefing at 0800 at Helispot 1 (radio briefing at 0830), a pre-planning meeting at 1530, a planning meeting at 1600, C&GS meeting at 1645 and additional adhoc C&GS meetings as needed during the incident. This schedule worked well for the incident.

The team Planning Section consisted of a PSC, PSC (t), RESL, RESL (t), SITL, SITL (t), and a (DMOB) that was ordered early in the incident. This level of staffing worked well for this incident but if the fire would have been running and growing a larger section would have been required. Two SCKN, two FOBS, a GISS, FBAN and ITSS all fully assigned to the team would have been needed. The team received good GISS, FBAN and ITSS support from Fairbanks Area Forestry and Alaska Fire Service but with a running fire the team would have needed them full time. Planning recommends that ODF consider attaching these three positions to the team upon deployment. Situation did a good job completing and submitting the 209 each day on a timely basis and Resources did a good job as well in producing the IAP each day and having it available for the morning briefing. The team received excellent support from the Division of Forestry, Alaska Fire Service, the Mob Center and Expanded Dispatch throughout the incident.

Lessons Learned:
- Consider attaching GISS, FBAN and ITSS to team upon deployment.
- Order good quality copy machine or copy service to be located at ICP.
- Co-locate Situation with GIS (preferably a bit removed from other Units at ICP).
- Order DMOB early.
• Coordinate closely with local mob center and Division of Forestry for format of planning documents (i.e., Demob and Transition Plans, other documents, etc.).
• Bring your own computer – anticipate delays in computer system set up.
• Purchase local pre-paid cell phones if needed for line/ICP communication.
• Insure crew transport vehicles are checked in and associated with their crews.
• You will receive excellent support from the local Division of Forestry office, Alaska Fire Service, Mob center and Expanded Dispatch. Establish early face to face contact with counterparts if possible.

Resources Unit
The Resources Unit was staffed by a Resource Unit Leader (RSUL) and a RSUL trainee. The unit used I-Suite for tracking resources and developing the Incident Action Plan (IAP). However, for the first few shifts the IAP had to be done in Excel because of computer issues which caused I-Suite to crash. The first IAP was developed on the evening of June 29 for the operational period of June 30 and the last one for July 11 for the transition organization. Hard copies of all the IAPs are contained in the documentation package and an electronic copy in the electronic documentation package, as well as the I-Suite data base. Making IAP copies was a challenge during the first few days as they had to be copied at the Fairbanks Area Forestry office. Because communications with the line were inconsistent the first few shifts of IAP’s had numerous edits. To insure IAPs are correct, resources recommends purchasing prepaid cell phones with local coverage for Ops communication back to ICP if radio communications are delayed or regular team cell phones do not have coverage.

Demobilization Unit
A Demobilization Unit Leader was ordered early in the incident. Because of air travel for crews and overhead, an experienced Demob Unit Leader was essential. The Demobilization Unit Leader was very beneficial for his knowledge of I-Suite, in booking flights and acting as Status Check-in Recorder when demobilization was not occurring.

There was excellent communications and support from Expanded Dispatch throughout the incident. The Crew Desk and Overhead Desk were especially helpful. Their willingness to use email for virtually all document transfer between expanded dispatch and the incident resulted in a much more efficient operation. In addition, their willingness to use standard I-Suite reports for Actual Demobs instead of asking us to fax over individual checkout sheets also resulted in a much more efficient process.

The biggest challenge was the large number of pieces of equipment that were reassigned on short notice at the start of the incident without resource order numbers. Considerable effort was required to match up equipment with their proper resource orders. For example, a number of crews had support vehicles (buses and chase vehicles) that were not associated with the crews in the ROSS system, making it more difficult to determine which E-numbers went with which crews.
Overview and Summary:
The Situation Unit provided mapping and reporting services for the incident as well as fire weather information. Mike Kroon was the Situation Unit Leader (SITL) and Mike Shaw was the (SITL) trainee for the Skinny’s Road Fire. Mike and Mike managed the production of mapping and reporting for the fire and worked with a local Fire Behavior Analyst to provide spot weather forecasts and Fire Behavior Forecasts.

Reports: The ICS-209 was completed and submitted for the Skinny’s Road Fire on the FAMWEB site by 2200 Alaska each day. All of the 209’s for the Skinny’s Road Fire are included in the documentation package submitted to the Fairbanks Division of Forestry. All 209’s were submitted on FAMWEB after approval from the IC or DPIC.

Maps (location, shape files, software, platform, etc.): The primary maps created for the incident include Operations Map, IAP Maps, Transportation Map, Ownership Map and Rehab Maps. Other maps were produced on an as needed basis. All maps were produced in ARCMap 10.0 and have been saved to a CD that is part of the documentation package submitted to the Fairbanks Division of Forestry.

Training Specialist
Several people were assigned as trainees and gained valuable experience from this incident. There were a total of 30 trainees who worked on the incident while under ODF command. The ODF Team brought 9 trainees who were dispatched with the initial Team order. Many key tasks were signed off for all personnel as well as task books being completed for multiple key positions. A couple examples include Joe Hessel (ICT2 completed), Teresa Vonn (PSC2 completed) and Jim Schwarber (AK PIO).

Operations Section Report

Summary:
ODF IMT 1 assumed command of the Skinny’s Road Fire at 0600 on the 30th of June, 2013. The fire was uncontrolled, and was approximately 1,400 acres when ODF Team 1 assumed command. The Type 3 organization (Soliday) that was in place had constructed dozer lines on the north, east and a portion of the west sides of the fire. A burnout operation had also been conducted along the Parks Highway on the south side of the fire.

Objectives were to keep the fire within current containment lines and continue to strengthen and build fire line. Temperatures and winds moderated some which aided in progress on the line. Crews were able to get a lot of work done and felt more comfortable with containment lines. Seven additional Type 2 crews were ordered for the incident.

Air resources were one Type 3 helicopter and two Type 2 helicopters. In addition to these, two UH-60 “Blackhawk” helicopters from the National Guard were ordered in coordination with the
Division of Forestry and used on the fire. Air Ops transitioned H-1 from a helispot to a Helibase.

To assist in communications, AT&T cell phones were ordered for distribution to Operations Section overhead on the line. All radios on the line were reprogrammed to add frequencies to meet IA objectives.

Lessons Learned:

Operations:
- Alaska Department of Forestry Liaison assigned to the Team was key to the success of the fire. Tim Soliday was tied in with the Team and briefed on tactical decisions. He also provided his perspective on what tactics he thought were appropriate.
- Cooperative and involved landowners worked well. Both the AK-DOF and Toghotthele were responsive and involved, ex. Toghotthele letting us use their water sources.
- Resource Unit Leader’s interaction with operations and ability to get out to the line and connect with operations. This helped with the challenge of a remote ICP.
- Being unfamiliar with the fuel type in the Fairbanks area proved to be a challenge.
- Equipment typing was also a minor challenge, working with equipment we are not as familiar with, ex. Nodwell, Thiokol.
- Medics being available on scene proved to be very valuable.
- Wet roads proved to be a challenge with ingress and egress and created safety issues. Crews were moved to mitigate the issue.
- Scott West (Line Safety Officer) worked very well with the Team and resources assigned to the fire. Very beneficial to have a line officer that understands ODF and our Team structure.
- At one point it appeared that there may have been more line medics than needed for the personnel assigned to the fire.
- Worked to meet Fairbanks area needs and provide resources quickly from the line for initial attack. This process seemed to work well.

Aviation:
- Aviation facility locations
  1. One Helibase was VERY crowded. Avoid using Helibase as the ICP/briefing area/parking area if at all possible.
  2. 4 dip sites used, no factor, naturally re-filled.
- Operational successes/challenges included:
  1. FAST team inspection/visit seemed to go well.
  2. Transition of AM frequency to update a TFR needed to go a little smoother with dispatch.
  3. Difficult to communicate with the outside world initially.
  4. Dust and dust abatement was a constant challenge.
  5. Great local assets and resources were key to the success of the operation.
- National Guard integration at the request of the local area seemed to go o.k.
Safety Section Report
Overall, safety on the Skinny's Road incident was very good. Crews and overhead managed the risk and mitigated hazards on the fire line, at staging, and in the spike camps. There was one Safety Officer on the line when the Team took over the fire and an additional Safety Officer was ordered and filled. It was a great asset to have two SOF2 assigned to the fire. Both SOFR2 spiked with the crews and overhead. The Medical Unit was located at H-1. It was staffed with a Lead Medic, a Lead Medic Trainee and a Fire Medic Trainee. Staffing was provided through the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Medic Program. Having EMTs on the line provided quick response to any medical emergency and provided basic care to the crews by treating minor illnesses and injuries before getting worse.

We had one medical transport and nine by non-medical ground transportation. The crews, EMTs and line overhead followed the team's Incident within an Incident Plan and the ICS206 medical plan.

Major Hazards and Risks
Overhead and crews identified, managed and mitigated the hazards to provide a safe working environment on the fire. Below is a list of the major hazards and risks that were faced on the fire.

- Hazardous materials
- Air operations with multiple aircraft – bucket and retardant drops
- Environmental concerns – big game
- Shallow rooted trees – concern with wind and helicopter operations.
- Changes in weather from hot and dry to cool and wet
- Dehydration
- Uneven & unstable ground
- Vehicles travel on unimproved forest roads.
- Parks Highway

Illness and Injuries
See Medical Unit Section Report.

Lessons Learned – Safety:
All medical incidents need to be reported to the comp claims specialist with the DNR.
Logistics Section Report

Summary: ICP was located at the Fairbanks Fire Department Training Center, about 30 miles from the fire. Fire cache was initially located at the heli-spot, but due to traffic and dust, was moved to an area across the Parks Highway from the fire. Non Operations overhead were lodged at the University of Alaska Fairbanks dorms and were fed at the cafeteria. Fire line overhead and crews were spiked at various drop points at the fire and were fed with MRE’s and fresh food boxes. The State Logistics Center provided ground support, fire cache supplies, a buying team and other logistical support. Janet Ladd, a DNR DOF logistics liaison was assigned to the team to help orient us to the local procedures. Radio communications from fire line to ICP were interfaced through the state’s “Rapid Com” trailer.

Lessons Learned - Logistics:
• There is a reason that the local protocol is to keep the EFF crews spiked on the fire line until immediately before flying them home. When we varied from it, one crew got out of hand, involving damage to the dorms, injury and intervention by local police. If the decision is made to overnight crews in town before sending home, extra security should be planned for.
• Order a good quality copy machine from the start to save time for the Planning Unit in producing the IAP.
• Fresh food box orders are confusing if you’ve never dealt with them. Develop an ordering process that both the food unit and division sups can understand.
• Expect communications link between ICP and fire to be difficult. Work closely with the local communication techs from the very start in setting up the relay system.
• Ask local logistic personnel for their logistical procedures and forms concerning commissary orders, rental vehicle tracking and ordering processes.
• Order a computer technician dedicated to installing and maintaining the ICP computer systems.

General:
Things that Went Well:
• Good in-briefing, followed by a logistics orientation at the DNR office.
• Janet Ladd, the DNR DOF logistic liaison, was an excellent resource. She was also able to use her agency credit card to help out in a pinch with things like emergency order lunches and airport parking fees.
• Martin Maricle and other logistics staff at the State Mob center were very accommodating and responsive to our requests for information and help. They were also very flexible in working with our needs.

Suggestions for improvement:
• Pre-loaded package of Agency forms, rental agreements and written instructions for the various Logistical functions would be helpful. Examples: Commissary order form,
procedures for getting vehicles from the SLC, equipment inspection forms, supply ordering processes.

- A pre-loaded, simple map of Fairbanks showing key areas (airport, ICP, dorm, cafeteria) would be helpful.

Service Branch:

Facilities:

Things that Went Well:
- ICP was appropriate size and configuration for the scale of the operation. Nice to have separate meeting room. Could have expanded into the back lot if needed.
- Easy access to ICP and from ICP to fire.
- ICP landlord (Fairbanks Fire Department) was very accommodating.
- Lodging was good. Nice to have a bed, toilet, showers all available. Easier to sleep during the constant daylight, sanctuary from the mosquitoes. Cost was reasonable.
- State Logistics Center support for showering, feeding and transporting EFF crews was a huge help.

Suggestions for Improvement:
- Staging camp and ICP together saves time and effort in transport.
- Began by relying on ICP landlord’s existing copy machine, should have ordered another better quality, newer machine at the start.

Food:

Things that Went Well:
- Cafeteria food was good full of variety, nice change from standard Fire Cache Kitchen fare.
- Having someone based at fire line supply to assist with food box distribution.
- Having a refrigerated truck at fire cache to hold food boxes.

Suggestions for Improvement:
- Time traveling back and forth from ICP to cafeteria was about 1 hour/day.
- Would be good to have sack lunches to take with to ICP.
- Cafeteria occasionally ran out of food when large number of students wiped out the supply.
- Difficult to figure out the fresh food box cycle for crews already on the fire when team arrived. Getting everyone onto the same ordering cycle was key to success.
- Working with fire line overhead to get fresh food box orders in at right time, establish an “ordering schedule” to place in IAP would be helpful.

Medical Unit
The medical unit was managed out of H-1. From there, an average of three medical unit personnel was assigned to different drop points throughout the fire. Any major medical would be transported by helicopter to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. The nearest ambulance
was approximately 30 miles away. Fairbanks Memorial was the nearest hospital and it was approximately 30 minutes by ground and 15 minutes by air.

Minor (includes allergies, colds, sore throats, blisters, lacerations, abrasions, sprains, strains contusions, constipation etc...): 246
Serious (requiring transport via ground): 9

Support Branch:

Ground Support
Things that Went Well:
• Supply of rental vehicles was good.
• ATV’s available for operations use.

Suggestions for Improvement:
• Including the SLC Ground Support in the initial briefing would be valuable.
• Tracking of rental vehicles. Updated E#’s were not on windshields, but rather E#’s from previous fires.
• Quite a few equipment rentals were not in ROSS.

Supply:
Things that Went Well:
• Both the SLC ordering staff and the Fire Cache Warehouse staff were knowledgeable, accessible and responsive to our needs.
• Connectivity (internet and phone) was good at the ICP. This helped bridge that distance between the SLC and the ICP.
• ROSS – stable, reliable. Helpful to be able to track other incident’s resources.

Suggestions for Improvement:
• The separation of ordering and cache made things more challenging.
• Allow fire ordering staff to place supply orders directly to ROSS to make the ordering process go quicker. Otherwise, specify the protocols needed.
• Don’t co-locate cache and heli-spot when space is tight.

Communications:
Things that Went Well:
• Use of DNR DOF’s “Rapid Com”.
• Were able to fill all Comm Unit positions that were requested.
• Having a radio cache at the DNR warehouse available for quick deployment.
• Quick phone system set-up and lines will be left for future use.
• Local DNR DOF Comm tech (Jordan) was helpful and made himself available at all hours to help with Rapid Com, computer support and phone install.
Suggestions for Improvement:
- The “Rapid Com” had bugs to work out and took a couple of days to get everything working smoothly. Even after 2 days, had some issues with fueling. A better orientation on the use and operation of the unit would have helped. We wasted a couple of days trying to get a repeater in use instead.
- Repeater batteries were out-of-date.
- Anticipate poor cell phone reception and have a pre-order in for the appropriate phones.
- Order a computer tech for maintenance of computer systems.

Rapid Com Recommendations:
- When using the Rapid Com trailer with a NIFC VHF repeater, use cross-band repeat, i.e. use a UHF frequency as the link to and from the repeater. By using these frequencies there will be the least amount of frequency interference with the ALMR system.
- If VHF frequencies are used solely, make sure that the Rapid Com trailer is set up to minimize frequency interference.
- Using frequency adjustable filters will give good isolation between the radios but is slow because the filters need to be tuned.

Finance Section Report
- Mobilization/Briefing – Two finance members of Team 1 were dispatched on June 27, one day prior to the team arriving. Alaska Department of Forestry Administration provided an Incident Business Management Handbook and reviewed it with us. It was beneficial to the finance section to review the handbook with the Administrative staff prior to the start of our assignment with the team.

The handbook was very informative and processes for the most part were similar to how we do business Oregon. Some differences include:

1. Assignment of pay rates to an EFF (State) and AD (Federal) type 2 crews
2. Contracted equipment with or without operator with start/end times for compensation based on the time of pre and post inspection
3. Forms and processes

- Incident Administration – Objectives were clear for the Finance Section – we were to provide an accurate accounting package for the Area audit and payment of resources.
- Safety – The unit worked within the work/rest ratio. Our work space was organized to provide a safe flow of work.
- Incident Management – what went well
  1. An Incident Business Advisor was assigned as a liaison for the Finance Section, she assisted with cost reporting
  2. The Area sent an auditor to assist with record audits once we started to demob resources
3. A Demobilization Specialist with specialized ISuite knowledge was very helpful
4. A local timekeeper was assigned to the incident
5. A Handbook was provided that explained Alaska finance rules

- Incident Management - Suggestions for Improvement:
  1. Computer access and ISuite networking was challenging the first few days of the incident
  2. Multiple resources came to this incident from another without new resource order numbers
  3. Cost estimates produced from actual costs were difficult in the beginning due to inability to obtain information and data entry into ISuite
  4. For the majority of the incident, the Finance Section consisted of Oregon employees using recent knowledge of Alaska finance rules, it would have been good to have a local resource assigned to the Time Unit
  5. Lack of a check-in process proved to be challenging when trying to verify what resources were on the incident
  6. Lack of correct resource order numbers or operator identifiers on the IAPs proved to be a problem for the finance section
  7. Communication between the buying team and the IMT could have been better, I received very little cost information from them
  8. Communication to the line that released resources needed to be post inspected before starting the demobilization process
  9. The finance kit that was ordered by the section was delivered to the mob center, delaying our delivery of supplies and a printer/scanner/fax.

Information Section Report
Things that went well: Prior to the Oregon IMT#1 assuming command of this incident, James Schwarber was in place as a PIO with the DNR/DOF Fairbanks. Upon arrival of the team, Mr. Schwarber advised the team information officer about the affected community near to the Skinny’s Road Fire, and provided contact information for residents in the area. Mr. Schwarber also said the Fairbanks Daily News Miner newspaper had been following the fire closely, and advised the incoming information officer to make contact with its reporters. Mr. Schwarber had also established a trap line of “fire information” boards at the Gold Hill store, the Parks Monument wayside, and Skinny’s Halfway Inn, and he recommended that the team information officer continue to use these boards. To ensure a continuous flow of information, Mr. Schwarber provided the team’s information officer with contact names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources staff, cooperators, and landowners. Similar contact information was also provided by Maggie Rogers, public information officer, DNR.

The ICP had land-line telephones, good cell phone coverage and Internet access. The ICP incident information land-line and the information officer’s cell phone number were published in news releases and the incident’s InciWeb page. The Joint Information Center’s (JIC) phone number was also published in both places.
The IMT public information officer performed the primary functions of:
1) Providing timely fire information that was distributed by e-mail (news media, agencies and stakeholders) and posted on the trap line fire information boards;
2) Responding to media and other telephone requests;
3) Providing internal information at the ICP and Base Camp;
4) Providing timely updates to Inciweb, the interagency incident information website.

Media Relations

Media interest was moderate, mostly due to the roadblock/pilot car system in place to guide Parks Highway travelers past the fire area. This interruption in traffic generated complaints that were transferred to the information officer. As a response, explanations were given as to why it was necessary to take this measure to protect public and firefighter safety. The news media carried information provided by the IMT and the IMT shortened the area affected by the roadblock/pilot car system; this was to shorten wait time for travelers, and reduce traffic speed through the fire area. The fire’s progress was covered nearly daily in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner and aired on local radio stations. Once the Skinny’s Road Fire was contained, the Stuart Creek 2 Fire was increasing in intensity and posing a threat to homes; news media interest in the Skinny’s Road Fire sharply declined.

This concludes the Skinny’s Road narrative summary. It was an excellent learning experience for Team 1. We would like to thank the Alaska Division of Forestry for their hospitality, guidance and assistance throughout the assignment. We hope we have met the Division’s expectations and objectives for this assignment and we look forward to working with you again in the future.

-Oregon Department of Forestry, Incident Management Team 1