McHugh

AK-MSS-601541

Incident Summary

July 20 – July 29, 2016

Alaska Type 2 Black IMT

Tom Kurth, Incident Commander

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Incident Overview

The Alaska Type 2 Black Incident Management Short Team was notified of a potential assignment for the McHugh Fire (541) on July 18, 2016 while still assigned to the Tok River Fire (470). Norm McDonald, FMO for the Anchorage Mat-Su area, indicated that initial attack forces were having persistent difficulties with a fire in Chugach State Park. Problems were related to the following:

- Steep terrain with heavy fallout on the Seward Highway,
- Rollout causing traffic stoppages and a spot fire across the road,
- Exhausted initial attack forces,
- Numerous cooperators and media interest,
- Established line not holding,
- High winds with drought stricken fuel bed,
- Long traffic delays.

The Short Team was 24 hours from completing objectives on the Tok River Fire and transferring command to a Type 3 organization. With a strong Type 3 organizational structure already in place the decision was made to accelerate the transfer schedule, move the short IMT to McHugh, and fill out the roster with additional personnel from the Black and Green Team standing rosters. A roster of 33 primaries and 4 trainees was quickly developed; however there was considerable delay in getting it moved through dispatch. Many people reported not receiving a resource order until travel was complete. Rostering a team under the given time constraints proved to be difficult given that most of the C&G had to complete the Tok River transfer of command to the Type 3 organization, drive from Tok to Anchorage, and re-engage in an in-briefing for the McHugh Fire. Better coordination among the IMT, Ma-Su Area, Tok Area, SLC, and AICC could have resulted in a more efficient mobilization and timely distribution of resource orders to local dispatch offices and individuals.

The in-briefing at the Anchorage Municipal Emergency Operations Center took place at 1900 hours, July 19th. Attendees included: Team members, Anchorage Fire Department, Homeland Security, Anchorage Fire Department, Anchorage School District, Alaska Command, National Guard, Department of Transportation, Alaska Railroad and the Division of Forestry.

For future in briefings it was identified that the following entities should be invited: Local utilities, Alaska State Troopers and Anchorage Office of Emergency Management.

Five Type 1 crews were ordered from the Lower 48 to supplement Alaskan Type 1 and Type 2IA crews assigned to the fire. Concerns about the use of L-48 Type 1 crews in lieu of Alaskan Type 2 crews were addressed by the Team. The steep, treacherous terrain throughout the fire area was unsuitable for Type 2 crew operations.

Initial incident objectives were developed based on the delegation of authority; and were directed towards:

- Provide for firefighter and public safety
- Protect values at risk to include: Rainbow subdivision to the east, Potter Valley and surrounding subdivisions, infrastructures along the Seward Highway corridor including powerline, railroad and out buildings.
- Implement tactics to limit spread to the west and east to protect values at risk.
- Minimize delays and disturbances on the Seward Highway and Alaska Railroad.
- Support initial attack as requested by agency.
- Prepare and disseminate public information.

On Friday, July 22, an additional value was added to include trailheads and related improvements on Rabbit Lake Trail, Turnagain Trail, and McHugh Creek Trail.

Objectives were amended on Sunday, July 24th, to include:

- Continue to mop-up and secure fire lines as needed to ensure late season drying trend would not compromise control objectives.
- Remove structure protection apparatus from Rainbow and Potter Valleys.
- Coordinate with State Parks to plan and initiate suppression repair activities.
- Due to the nature of the fuels and terrain, sections of the perimeter have used natural fuels breaks in lieu of traditional fire line to meet containment and confinement objectives. There will likely be areas of heat and smoke within and near the perimeter in these locations.
- Provide a final fire map indicating areas that have shown recent heat using a Palm IR.
- Prioritize areas of mop up and monitor after transition with the Type 4 IC.
- Identify areas in need of work and public use trails within the burn, which will need snagging of hazard trees for public and firefighter safety.

Structure Protection and Suppression Repair:

- Complete suppression repair on any and all fire lines created as part of the protection plan.
- Remove all pumps, hose and water handling equipment from both the Rainbow and Potter subdivisions. Remove all garbage from drop points and return equipment to ICP for return to warehouse.
- Pull any non-essential flagging.
- Provide structure protection plans and any known sites data to the Mat-Su/Southwest Area FMO.

Division A

- Complete mop up to 300 feet, or as needed to eliminate spotting potential.
- Remove all pumps, hose, and water handling equipment prior to transition.
- Remove all garbage, signage, and backhaul from drop points, helispots, and sling spots.
- Keep helispots open for medivac planning for incoming ICT4.

Division C

- Complete mop up of Palm IR identified spots to prevent future threats to Rainbow subdivision.
- Remove all pumps, hose and water handling equipment prior to transition.
- Snag hazard trees that have potential to impact firefighter or public safety.

Plans/Operations:

- Develop and disseminate a three day IAP for the incoming ICT4.
- Identify hazards, areas of concern, and a priority list of operational missions. Provide latest IR map as reference.
- Identify areas of the fire where confinement by use of natural barriers was used to limit exposure to firefighters.
- In conjunction with incoming IC, develop a resource needs list to assist Area with operational planning and resource ordering.

Fire Weather

Notable Successes

- The school's high-speed internet allowed for effective time management due to being able to examine large amounts of important model data in order to make accurate forecasts.

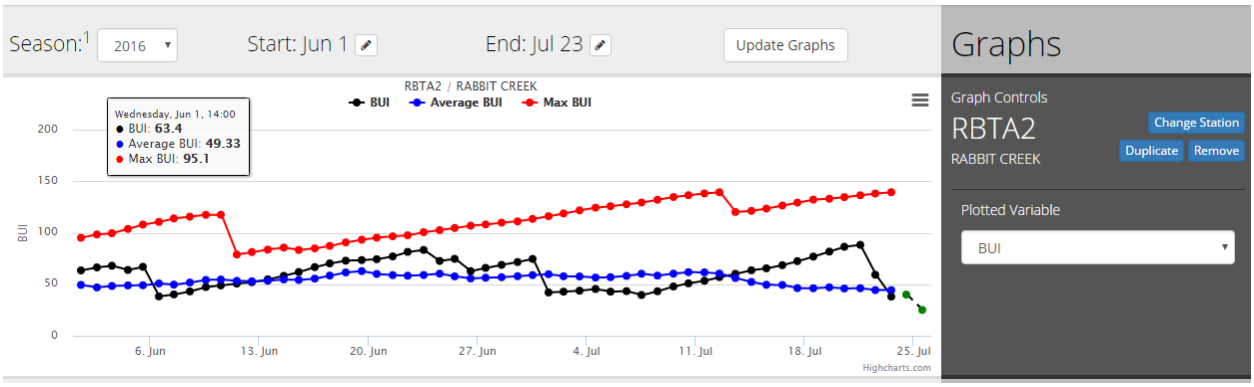
Fire Behavior

Notable Successes

- Suppression actions on July 18th and 19th limited fire spread to the McHugh Creek drainage and interior pockets of unburned fuel. White spruce stringers and deep duff continued to burn, producing a significant amount of smoke. Higher humidities and eventual precipitation continued to reduce fire behavior to negligible levels by July 22st.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- Warm, dry conditions preceded the McHugh fire ignition on July 16th. Fire weather indices were tracking above average values, but not extreme or of great concern. What was significant according to the incident meteorologist was the persistent warm weather and offshore flow over the McHugh creek drainage. This resulted in the McHugh creek area, especially the south aspects becoming extremely dry during this period. Observed fine fuels (lupine, grasses) were dry to the point of crumbling and live aspen trees had curled leaves, indicating severe desiccation. Fuels in the Potter Valley area and on South Point Ridge adjacent to the fire were still uncured and obviously moist.
- Control efforts on July 17th and 18th were hampered by strong northerly and up drainage winds. Active fire spread was observed in alder stands and bearberry/kinnikinnick mats, both very unusual and an indicator of extreme drying. Rates of spread in the kinnikinnick were observed up to 4 chains an hour with 4 foot flame lengths. Residual burn down of the root mats continued even with ½ inch of rain.



Command

Incident Commander

Key Decisions

- A media update was held after in-brief, leading to more accurate reporting in the early days of the incident.
- A public meeting was held the following day, helping to allay fears in the community and establish the IMT as the primary information source for the incident.
- The strategies implemented by the IMT employed a combination of direct and in-direct containment tactics; as well as confinement tactics in steep, inaccessible areas that posed little threat to values. This mix of strategies allowed the IMT to accomplish objectives without compromising firefighter safety.
- The IMT established a helibase at the BLM facility at Campbell Tract. It proved to be an ideal location, and support from BLM staff at the facility was excellent.
- The rapid response by the Alaska IMT allowed for instant relief of Initial Attack resources, and provided the Area with an incident management organization familiar with national and Alaska fire management policy and fire business management practices.
- The use of National Guard assets was invaluable for holding the fire perimeter in check in the early days of the incident.

Notable Successes

- Two public meetings and a public reception were held in order to address concerns of the public. As is often the case, evacuation was the primary interest. That includes the when, how, who, and where to. This needs to be a swift coordinated effort in conjunction with local officials. This should be prepared immediately even when timeframes are short.
- There was considerable success with the “Ready, Set, Go” initiative and simplicity as voiced by the public feedback. An additional public meeting was held two days later and followed up with a general open house/reception. See Information section for additional information.
- Components for the initial evacuation plan: list of contacts for emergency services, geographic location references (zones), management evacuations/action points, Locations for shelters,

consistent media message, Ready, Set, Go terminology and clarifications, Multi-Agency cooperation with evacuation planning.

- No serious Injuries/ illness.
- Managing the Seward Hwy with DOT.
- Structure protection plan.
- Building trust with homeowners association, home owners, and sub-division residents.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- Daily press briefings to alleviate individual briefings
- Use of local fire departments for structure protection on night shifts
- Release of Anchorage fire department engines to relieve state from expensive portal to portal payments
- Cooperator meetings for issue resolution on daily basis

Safety

Key Decisions

- Ordered additional safety officers for line.
- Risk analysis indicated use of Type 1 and Type 2IA crews due to terrain.
- Ordered bear awareness training through Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game.
- Provided bear spray deterrent to crews.
- Used flaggers to allow safe access for crews on Seward Highway.
- Used a robust risk analysis for daily tasks.
- When conditions indicated that advancing on the fire was not prudent, that decision was made and adhered to.
- IMT response to insect sting/allergic reaction was outstanding; all members followed the IMT Incident Emergency Plan and the patient arrived at advanced treatment in less than an hour.

Notable Successes

- Good risk management decisions were made and implemented by field-going personnel.
- Only three medical transports; two were heat-related transports that were prior to team's arrival and one was allergic reaction while IMT was in place.
- The use of experienced Type 2IA and Type 1 crews minimized injuries.
- No serious bear encounters in a high density bear area. Coordinated with Alaska Dept. of Fish and game to provide bear awareness training to crews.
- Coordinated with DOT to monitor Seward Highway due to rocks on roadway from fire. Used flaggers with DOT to allow crews safe access to fire across Seward Highway.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- Steep rocky terrain was a challenge for the crews. This resulted in a dedicated risk assessment that indicated the use of Type 2IA or Type 1 was the prudent decision.
- Crews were working in a high density bear area.

- Multiple interactions with hornets.
- Weather was a challenge from a safety standpoint, heat and low humidity led to dehydration, while consecutive days of rain and minimal progress makes for a challenge for the crews which can lead to an increase in unintended injuries from horseplay and boredom. This was kept to a minimum with no reported injuries.

Liaison

Key Decisions

- A Cooperators Meeting was held initially, and almost daily for the duration of the incident. This developed camaraderie with cooperators, shared information, solved issues, improved efficiency and fire fighter and public safety**.**
- The issues requiring attention from a LOFR were not very time consuming. Having a Deputy IC that could cover the LOFR position and complete these tasks is a great asset. Combining these two positions improved cost efficiency.

Notable Successes

- The Cooperators Meeting helped build rapport with cooperators. This brought up issues and concerns that were addressed in a timely fashion as well as tracking of the issues. These are included in the notes from the meeting filed in the documentation package for the incident.
- There were personal contacts, emails and phone calls with Anchorage Fire Department, Anchorage Police Department, local Fire Chiefs, local residents, local School District, Alaska Department of Forestry, FEMA, Chugach State Park, Alaska National Guard, Department of Defense, Alaska Department of Homeland Security State EOC, Department of Transportation and the Alaska Railroad This has improved relationships, improved efficiency on the fire and helps enhance fire fighter and public safety, and engenders support for the fire management program in the State of Alaska.
- Issues that were brought forward included updates on fire information, road restrictions on Seward Highway, safety Issues , evacuation planning, burning closures, State Park and trail closures and use of State Park facilities.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- Pre-season planning meetings with local emergency responders and Public Service organizations would be helpful in the future and would also help local cooperators, external partners, and grass root groups understand incident management policy and become part of the solution.
- A dynamic list of important cooperators to be given to IMTs at in-brief. This would certainly improve IMT Liaison efforts on future incidents. See Documentation Package for list of Cooperators and Issues Log, rosters from Cooperator Meetings, notes from Cooperators meetings.

Human Resources

Key Decisions

- There was no Human Resource Specialist assigned to the fire. The Deputy IC assumed the role and this was clearly stated at the morning briefing. There were no human resource issues that were brought to the attention of the Deputy IC.

Notable Successes

- Fire fighters received many compliments from the public on their professional behavior and demeanor.
- The Deputy IC was contacted by Margaret Griffo, from the Anchorage Chapter of the National Crisis Response Canines. This organization provides comfort dogs for emergency responders and citizens affected by the incident. They were kind enough to visit prior to morning briefing and a couple hours after. They came with 5 well trained dogs and handlers. This brought many smiles to the faces of the firefighters and was an excellent morale booster for the firefighters and Incident Management Team members. The Deputy IC intends to use this morale boosting resource in the future.

Information

Key Decisons

- Many PIOs in the team pool were either assigned to other incidents or not available to mobilize. Of those available, some PIOs could only work a limited number of days. These available PIOs provided a "bridge" of info coverage, through the surge of initial attack activities and pending arrival of other PIO resources. The lead PIO2 assembled a cadre of 3 PIO2s and 2 PIO2 (t)'s to cover projected incident needs.
- How best to inform our audience: directly-affected residents, agencies and organizations that were involved or directly affected, the greater Anchorage area, and nationally. AK IMT Info developed a communication plan with these objectives:
    - Gather and distribute accurate and timely information to the key audience.
    - Ensure information staff has clear understanding of the incident, planned action, and that messages are delivered consistently.
    - Media representatives have safe and timely fire access, and receive correct information. Media broadcasts information accurately.
- From the outset of the incident, there was consistently high media interest from the Anchorage area, and public interest, particularly from the Potter, Indian Valley and Rainbow Valley neighborhoods.
- During the incident, firefighters received many expressions of community support in terms of donated food, services, and support. The team graciously accepted some of these offerings while promoting the message that the agency takes care of all firefighter needs. Those with interest in contributing were encouraged to consider making a donation to the Wildland Firefighter Foundation.

- Community meetings were held on July 20 and July 22. Helpful information was disseminated, and the public had an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers. However, both community meetings incurred challenges. See *Significant Challenges and Resolutions*, below. An open house was held on July 28 at ICP. This was an opportunity for firefighters, IMT members, cooperators, and community stakeholders to mingle, receive the latest incident update, see exclusive pictures and video footage of incident operations, and attain a sense of closure.
- As of this writing, the team anticipates a press release from Division of Forestry regarding the fire investigation. When this occurs, the primary spokesperson will be Norm MacDonald, Fire Management Officer for Mat-Su Area, Division of Forestry.

Notable Successes

- Fire updates and press releases reached a broad audience through a concerted social media push, proactive media interactions, public information outreach, and cooperating agencies' networks. The lead PIO2 coordinated with the local Emergency Operations Center, providing them with a daily update to keep their recorded message relevant and available 24/7 for concerned citizens. The PIO group encouraged public cooperation with Alaska Department of Transportation's traffic management efforts along Seward Hwy corridor, closure of roadside pull-outs, and periodic rock-removal.
- One PIO was on-scene for initial attack, and then merged with the AK IMT for the duration of the incident. This provided excellent continuity for the rest of the PIOs, who arrived 72 hours+ after ignition. The PIO group often consulted her on early incident events.
- During this incident, it worked well to designate a media-dedicated PIO, with primary focus on TV, print, and radio demands of the day. This PIO fielded requests and scheduled media escorts. He gathered some of his own photo and video footage, available for media use. This worked exceedingly well when media individuals lacked the line qualifications or gear to safely enter the fire area. They were quite satisfied with this arrangement – gathering the footage they could, then supplementing with PIO-provided fireline and aerial material.
- The selected ICP worked well for PIO functions. The office layout was more than adequate, and high-speed internet was a huge benefit. This ICP had ample space to conduct press conferences, make and receive phone calls, and accommodate tours and walk-in visits from community stakeholders.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- The most critical challenge encountered was a 24 hour+ delay in ordering PIOs early in the incident, which resulted in an even longer delay in their arrivals. Orders were submitted through proper channels, after an attempt at ordering through local and state dispatch centers. The delay persisted for far too long, particularly in light of the high-volume Anchorage media market, community stakeholders, and Seward-Highway tourists grasping for real-time information. This situation will be discussed during the Team AAR, and potential resolutions identified.

- Though perceived as relatively seamless to the average attendee, both community meetings were fraught with logistical, technical, and facilitation challenges from the administrative standpoint. The PIO group held a meeting-management AAR to highlight issues and address each one by one. See the information section of the *Incident AAR* for specifics.
- Three different Gmail addresses established by the PIO group were flagged by Google as "Spammers" and disabled. The PIOs grappled for a work-around, so as to maintain seamless delivery of daily updates without confusing stakeholders. The issue was resolved, when the lead PIO2 reinstated a paid AK IMT info Gmail account, which was used successfully for the duration of the Team's time on incident.

Operations

Key Decisions

- Remaining in a defensive mode through the first operational shift by monitoring fire growth, refocusing on structure protection, and using aerial assets to keep the fire in check to prevent further spread to both Potters Valley and Rainbow Valley subdivisions.
- Ordering a Structure Protection Specialist proved critical for coordination, and creation of a strategic structure protection plan.
- Use of IHC crews, due to the fire behavior and steep terrain, enabled us to make significant progress on both flanks in a timely manner to reduce fire threat towards both subdivisions.
- Using natural barriers and aerial assets. The decision was made to confine spread on the northern perimeter, mitigating exposure and risk to the firefighter.
- Reopening of trail closures in Chugach State Park after identifying hazards and mitigating them.

Notable Successes

- Taking advantage of moderating weather conditions on July 23, 2016, direct sawline construction began along the NW flank of Div. A.
- In Div. C crews were able to anchor off of the Turnagain Arm Trail just above the Beluga pull out, constructing indirect saw line, picking up the fires edge and begin direct line construction.
- Mutual Aid response from cooperating agencies was critical to the first two operational periods until additional resources arrived on scene.
- The structure protection plan was created for the Rainbow subdivision and a copy was made available for Anchorage Fire Department and the local community.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- Steep terrain, active fire behavior, and warm weather hampered initial operational efforts.
- The use of IHC and Type 2IA crews, in conjunction with aerial assets proved critical to confining and containing any further fire growth in both Divisions.
- The Seward highway has a high volume of traffic and with rollout of debris from the fire and the hillside, proved hazardous to firefighter and public safety:
- Coordination with Alaska Dept. of Transportation, Alaska State Parks, Alaska State Troopers, Anchorage Police Department, and the Alaska Railroad proved critical to safety of the public and firefighters.

Air Operations

Key Decisions

The Alaska Type 2 Black Team transitioned into command of the McHugh Fire with five helicopters: two Type 1 Black Hawks, two Type 2, and one Type 3 helicopters, plus two Air Attack Platforms. Additionally, there was a TFR in place when the team arrived. Private property in Indian was being used as a helispot for fueling and aviation missions.

Notable Successes

- Campbell Air Strip needs to be developed for future incidents. It is an ideal location filling almost every need of an aviation operation short of a communications trailer. That need was filled with a contract communication trailer. The BLM at Campbell was eager to help the incident and requested no fee for land use. In fact they provided Port-a-potties and a fuel truck for our use. The fuel truck having no fee and only wages for the operator saved the fire $1,900.00 a day. Ideally agreements and guidelines for the use of that facility should be put in place for future use.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- There was 1 SAFECOM filed during the incident while being managed by the Team when a moose attempted to cross the runway as N909AK was landing Palmer.

Planning

Notable Successes

- The Golden View School ICP provided excellent facilities for the Planning Section.
- The IMT instituted a daily 24/48/72 Projections Meeting in conjunction with noon C&G. The meeting is an excellent tool for development and communication of strategies and milestones.

Situation Unit

Key Decisions

- The Unit was staffed with two fully qualified GISS and one trainee. This led to a very quick ramp up of the unit and no delay in producing map products. The GISS trainee from the Mat-Su Borough brought non-fire experience to the group and was able to take lessons learned on the incident back to the Borough.
- The lead GISS was in Fairbanks for the first shift of the fire and produced all the map products remotely. The second GISS traveled to Anchorage and set up the GISS section. This allowed for seamless map production while both GISS's and trainee assembled at ICP.

Notable Successes

- The ESRI app Collector was used to gather structure assessment data. This was the first time the app was used on a team fire in Alaska. Tanana Zone from Alaska Fire Service has been beta testing the app this summer on smaller fires in Tanana Zone. The opportunity to use Collector on a larger incident with a potentially large urban interface environment proved useful in fixing

small bugs. Overall, Collector was easy to use and was liked by field going personal as well as members of the Situation Unit. The data collected is available to anyone with a NIFC ArcGIS Online account in the AK Mobile Editing Group.

- A portable RAWS was made available by the FWS Regional Office and was deployed on the incident by the FBAN.
- Two plotters were ordered and both arrived—fully stocked with ink and paper—and were set up and ready to print before the lead GISS arrived. The other GISS brought the AFS plotter with him when he traveled to the incident, and the state plotter was ordered from the Palmer warehouse. Supply orders were also timely, so there were no issues with running out of paper or ink, as seems to be the case at so many fires. The Palmer HP 1100 plotter continues to be a workhorse for the IMT.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- The AFS HP 1055 Plotter is well beyond its useful life. A FWS purchase request was submitted for replacement of both AFS HP1055 plotters, using end-of-year money.

Resources Unit

Notable Successes

- The ability of the team to travel with a computer specialist, computer and printers allowed producing and printing an Incident Action Plan for the first operational period.
- The use of the School's large copy machines cut the production time down for IAP's allowing the Resource Unit much needed rest at the end of the day.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- The most significant challenge for the resource unit was the delay in getting e-ISuite and IMT ROSS access. See computer specialist section for details on the e-ISuite issue. This delay caused a significant back-log for the Resource Unit, Cost Unit and Time Unit for a day and a half until all Resources could be checked into e-ISuite. Resolution: A copy of the ROSS orders should be included with in-briefing package. Continue to make sure at least one member of the Resource Unit has IMT privileges in ROSS prior to mobilization which also mitigated the issue.
- Rostering of crews and engines were not consistent as some were rostered as subordinates with equipment or crews while others were ordered separate from the parent resource. This caused an additional work load on ordering, plans, ground support and dispatch, as we had to initiate and complete new order requests before resources could be fully check-in. Resolution: Resources should be rostered under their E or C numbers. If a Task Force is going to be mobilized as a task force it should be rostered as a Task Force or sent individually with crew rostered under the E#.
- Tracking Aircraft resources in e-ISuite was problematic for the Resource Unit. The cost unit checked in and demobed aircraft to capture costs. Therefore the daily totals did not correspond to the type, agency and kind of aircraft on the fire daily for the ICS 209. The numbers were tallied daily with the Air Support Group Support and Resource Unit Leader. The challenge was

that other members of the Plans unit can run the 209 report and give inaccurate information out. Resolution: Only the Resource Unit will check in and demob. Aircraft. Air Operations will send to the resource unit the daily tracking of resources at the heli-base. Check in and demob. will control the resource status. The Cost Unit can continue to create A numbers to capture cost but will keep the resource in the Demob. status when not running reports. If costs figures need to be updated for resources that have already demobed, the Cost Unit will put the resource in Pending, update the cost and return the status to demob.

Demobilization Unit

Key Decisions

- Air travel was arranged through Mat-Su dispatch using email. Reporting of actual demob. was electronically transmitted daily at the end of shift. The Demob. Plan was completed and signed with concurrence from dispatch on 7/23.

Notable Successes

- A rapid shift in strategy leading to disbanding of Alaska taskforces resulted in needs for air travel on less than 24 hour notification. Dispatch was able to provide air travel as requested in spite of the short turnaround time. Doing all communications through expanded electronically reduced the chances of error.

Documentation Unit

Notable Successes

- Since this fire was only on State of Alaska land only one set of documentation was needed for the incident and the national standard was used.
- Production of the IAP was smooth and made easy with the use of the two high capacity photocopiers at the school.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- Besides a delay in getting supplies to assemble documentation boxes in the beginning, there were no significant challenges.

Computer Technical Specialist

Notable Successes

- A notable success for the ITSS section was the working partnership that was formed with the ASD (Anchorage School District) IT Staff. The ASD IT Staff was very helpful and willing to assist the team with whatever IT needs arose.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- A significant challenge was procuring two POTS telephone lines for information and one analog fax line for ordering. The schools telephone infrastructure was integrated with the intercom systems, and it also had a required pin code to dial long distance numbers. The resolution was

to make a request to the ASD staff to patch through those lines to the appropriate classrooms for us. That request was honored within one working day.

- One event that had the most notable impact was attempting to start out the database on e-ISuite Enterprise. In order for us to gain access to the existing incident, Mat-Su dispatch had to add the ITSS admins to the enterprise database. Due to the issue that exists in enterprise version, we did not get access to the incident until later in the day. This event delayed the startup with the e-ISuite database. After confirming the issue with the IIA helpdesk, we decided to start the database in site mode.
- One key decision that greatly affected our section was deciding to try and sustain the e-ISuite Enterprise platform that Mat-Su Area had started up for the McHugh incident. The Area grouped McHugh with numerous other incidents in the database leading to permissions issues for IMT users. Due to existing problems with e-ISuite Enterprise, we were not able sustain that option. E-ISuite Enterprise option was abandoned, and we setup E-ISuite site. The problem has been submitted to the eISuite developers for eventual resolution; however, in the meantime best practices need to be developed in Alaska dispatch offices to avoid the issue.

Training Specialist

Notable Successes

- A member of the planning section was also qualified as TNSP and volunteered to do training. A total of 17 training packets were completed.

Logistics

Key Decisions

- The caterer was invaluable as the area of the fire was in a bear density impact area. Using fresh food boxes would not have been a good choice for this incident.
- The school made for an excellent ICP for the size of this incident. The school district was more than accommodating to our needs. The school's copy machines and phone lines on site aided in getting the team operational quickly. I would recommend this facility again for future use. However if the incident had grown considerably there would have been a shortage of parking spaces.
- UAA mobilization center was a great asset to use for briefing incoming crews and for sleeping and feeding crews returning to the lower 48.

Communications Unit

Notable Successes

- Ordering of adequate and appropriate radio frequencies, equipment and personnel.
- Location of repeaters and links
- Communications plan including IA interoperability

- The Communications Unit Leader and Incident Communications Technician arrived with the incoming Type 2 Team, attended the agency in-briefing and established the Communications Center at the ICP on July 20.
- The following evening the Command Repeater and Air Link were installed across the inlet from the fire and brought on-line: the Team communications plan was first implemented for the day and night operational period of July 22.
- On July 26, the unit was directed to develop a transition plan for communications back to the incoming team which was expected to include removal and release of all team communications equipment, frequencies, and personnel following transfer of command to the incoming team
- Orders had been placed and were filled in a timely manner for an NFES#4390 Starter System, a secondary NFES#4312 Command Repeater, a kit of AFS #4382 KNG FM Tactical radios and for two radio operators: a local trainee radio operator was subsequently ordered to support development of agency resource capability.
- Demob. at transition.

Supply Unit

Notable Successes

- Supply unit ordered NFES and local supplies direct to the Palmer Supply Facility provided for quick and efficient delivery of supplies. The school hockey area provided a secure area to keep supplies without having to order additional security personnel.
- Warehouse trucks were loaded at the staging area and backhaul of line equipment went direct to the warehouse. This saved personnel from having to handle backhaul line equipment multiple times.
- The Matsu Area provided a supply crew that was initially their IA squad. These personnel were a great asset to supply as they already had a good understanding of ICS, fire supplies and the local area.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- There were not any significant challenges the Palmer warehouse was only two hours away and provided quick and efficient delivery of all supplies.

Medical Unit

Notable Successes

- Appropriate facility was selected for location of Medical Unit.
- Early order of Fire Medic kits.
- Order of R6 Incident Medical Specialist module w/ ALS personnel.
- Four significant injuries/illnesses occurred (2 heat illnesses, 1 insect sting reaction, 1 skin infection boil). One heat illness patient which was a lost time case (as of 7/26).
- 95 Medical Unit visits.
- Taskbook completion for AK MEDL-t.

- Taskbook progress for four AK Fire Medic trainees.
- Cross training between AK Fire Medic personnel and Region 6 Incident Medical Specialist module.

Facilities Unit

Notable Successes

- ICP was established at Golden View Middle School in south Anchorage. The school was an excellent location for ICP because of the overall footprint of the school and school grounds. The school had large open outdoor areas for overhead and crew camping, men's and women's showers were available within the school and there were plenty of classrooms available for the different offices.
- The biggest success was that the Facilities unit was able to meet with the school principal at about 8:30 pm on the first evening and assign all the offices before end of shift, which allowed most of the sections to be up and running before the end of the first full day. The school provided all the janitorial services inside the building which was also a huge help to the Facilities unit.
- The Palmer warehouse provided the supplies ordered, whether in the cache or locally purchased, in a timely manner which also contributed to the success of the camp.
- The Facilities Unit Leader mobilized early allowing them to attend the in-briefing. After the in-brief the FACL meet with the key Anchorage School District Officials to coordinate the use of the Golden View Middle School for ICP. That same evening the team was were able to go to the Golden View Middle School and select which rooms would be used for the ICP. The school is a very large school and the team certainly did not need to use the entire school. Many times the Facilities Unit does not arrive at the incident until these types of decisions have already been made.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- The main challenge faced by the section is that when the initial land use agreement was set up it only included large rooms within the school i.e., the gym, the band room, the cafeteria and the upper gym, which included an indoor running track, and no classrooms. Since no classrooms were included it was necessary to modify the land use agreement the following day. It would have been beneficial to have a land use agreement template with necessary requirements for a good functioning ICP available to the contracting officer. The school administrator was extremely flexible and accommodated all our needs.
- Due to the rainy weather that occurred during the incident many tents and personnel gear got wet. The Facilities unit was able to provide a place for people to dry out their tent and gear and also provide a dry place for them to sleep inside the school if necessary.

Food Unit

Notable Successes

- The caterer Chocolate Gypsy was ordered on 7/20. They were on site and served their first meal, breakfast on 7/21. The FDUL also ordered a refrigerated truck to store the sack lunches and ice. All the crews were fed at the school by the caterer, reducing the need for fresh food boxes which would have been a detriment due to the high bear concentration in the fire area.
- The ICP kitchen and dining area provided the caterer with a very sanitary environment to serve food. The school was gracious enough to allow the caterer to use their kitchen area to prepare and serve food.
- The Chocolate Gypsy caterer quickly responded and was flexible with the fire's needs. The owner Debbie is pleasant and strives to please the customer.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- The caterer took several days to achieve all the requirements of the contract.

Ground Support Unit

Notable Successes

- The ground support functioned very well with a fully staffed organization.
- Ordered one fully qualified equipment manager and one trainee to capture and inspect incoming equipment.
- One dedicated EQPM to checkout rentals and keep track of equipment inventory.
- One EQPM for general transportation requests.
- The credit cards provided by the area failed on three or four occasions at the gas stations providing fuel for vehicles and equipment. Ground support received calls from incoming overhead and on one occasion Coastal Dispatch for immediate airport pickup. There was no prior knowledge of airport transportation needed to the fire. Two busses suffered mechanical problems and were resolved with minimal impact to the incident.
- McHugh fire ground support experienced a good working relationship with Fairbanks, Palmer and Soldotna Ground Support in mobilizing and demobilizing incident rentals.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- There were four area dispatches ordering or involved in the fire that caused confusion and duplications of effort. The blue equipment rental envelope directions and objectives are not working. There were conflicting directions on how the envelopes were to be processed, affecting finance and the cost unit. Without clear directions for all involved - ground support, finance and the operator - it was difficult determine what ground support responsibility was.

Finance

Key Decisions

- The only significant event was the immediate demob of IA resources during the team mobilization. The finance section was impacted because the eIsuite database hadn't been established, and because the resources assigned under mutual aid and cooperator agreements lacked documentation paperwork. This combination resulted in a delay of equipment releases that were carried out over the following days.

Notable Successes

- Finance section had 3 trainees on incident, including one from the local area.
- The willingness to assist the Finance Section with any issues or questions through a positive relationship with the IBA and the Agency Administrator provided for efficiency and a more successful finance section.
- Collaboration with State Logistics Center to test Selkirk's Aviation Management System (AMS) software on a State of Alaska fire during the current season's beta period.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- Cooperators were on the initial attack without having RO numbers. It was a challenge to complete the finance packages and get all agreements in a timely manner. With help of dispatch records the task was completed.
- It was difficult to contact some landowners to complete agreements. With the help of Operations success was achieved in creating them.
- There was discussion about the cost documentation process. It was decided that the current e-Isuite database would be used to track cost; this section of the AIBMH could be clarified, especially for out of state resources. A cost methodology narrative should be provided to any incoming IMT to summarize the prior cost calculation process.
- The IBA noted that personal emails were not to be used for official documentation. It was decided that next year the team will be provided with official email. All personal incident-related emails were moved to the finance.alaskaimt.com account for documentation.

Time Unit

Notable Successes

- e-ISuite was used instead of the intended Enterprise because Enterprise had technical limitations and increased the potential for posting errors.
- A local PTRC(t) spent 2 days working with the IMT to gain team experience.
- After the usual IA rush, the assignment went very well.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- The Alaska PTRCs didn't have much experience with posting Forest Service AD's travel expenses. This assignment provided them a good opportunity to get that experience and complete those OF-288s.

Cost Unit

Notable Successes

- Working together with other functions to decide to use the Site version of e-ISuite.
- Made initial efforts to reconcile e-ISuite flight cost data with Alaska State IFM/AMS data sources.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- There was some discussion as to which cost reporting format, various state forms vs. e-ISuite, as well as to which version of e-ISuite to utilize. The decision to stay with our normal procedure using e-Isuite cost reporting worked well.

Procurement Unit

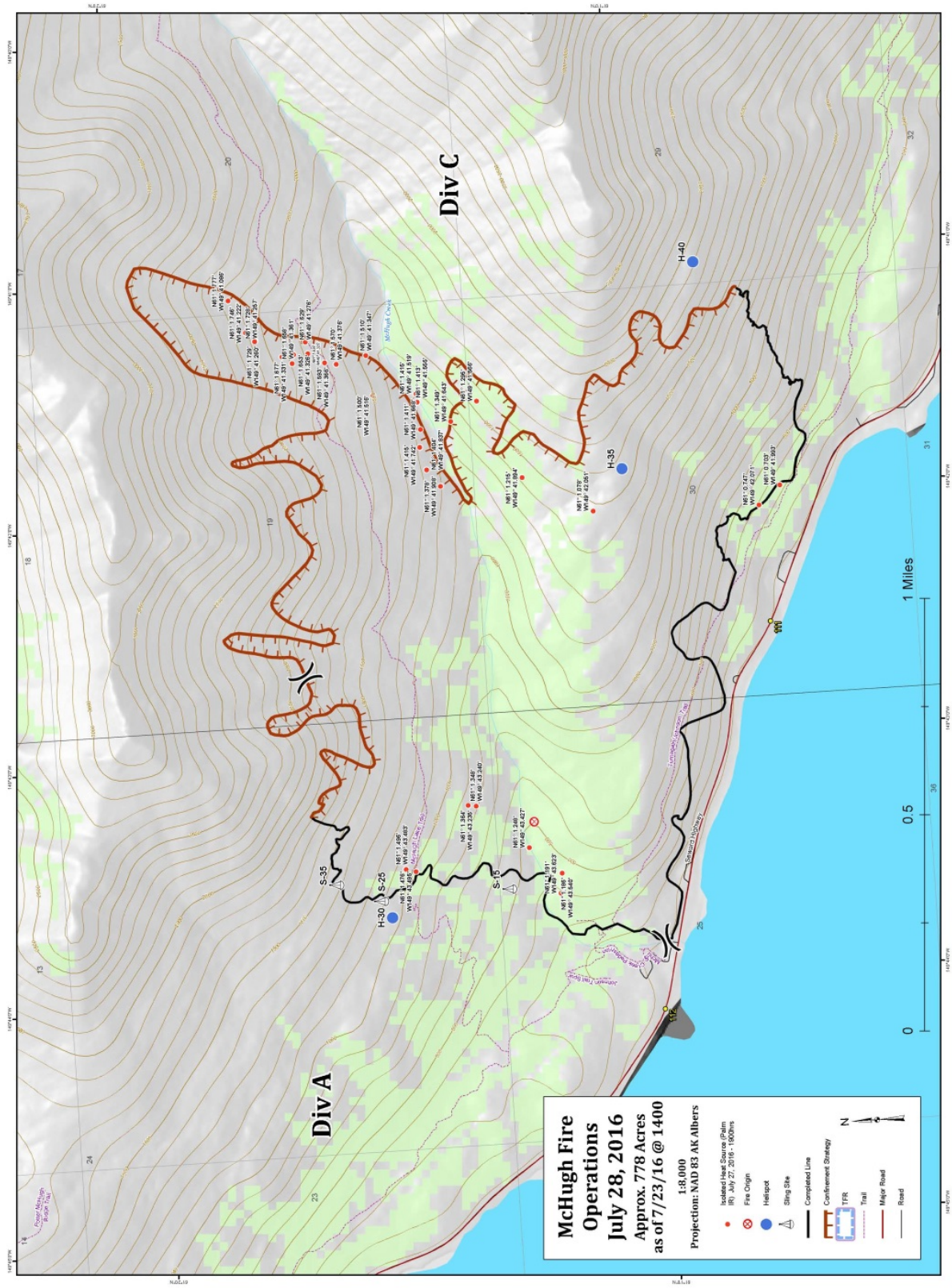
Notable Successes

- The TIME, and the TIME(t) both have extensive equipment experience, which was valuable for the single EQTR, in both auditing and general day-to-day interactions. Having qualified people on the Equipment side allowed for an Alaska based EQTR to work on a TIME (t) taskbook.
- Two-thirds of the contracted equipment on the fire was rental vehicles with the "blue envelopes". This was a success for Equipment, since OF-286 invoices did not need to be produced by the fire. There were, however, a lot of questions from Ground Support and COST as to how costs for each vehicle would be collected. A good start, but the blue envelopes need a process paper included in the package.
- No tracking of State DOF equipment was necessary per the local Admin.
- Having adequate staffing in Finance, to audit equipment packets, allowed for invoices to be sent for payment to meet the excellence of the local area standards and to be sent in promptly after the resource was demobed.
- All but one of the contracted tactical resources arrived with correct OLAS agreements. Two private fuel tenders were replaced with an Agency tender, for great cost savings to the incident. Pre-Inspections were all completed when equipment was checked in. There was very positive interaction between Equipment and Ground Support on any questions.

Significant Challenges and Resolutions

- Several cooperators worked on the IA of the fire. Obtaining the correct Agreements and rates was a great challenge. All cooperator time was completed; however, some of it was completed after the resources returned to their local home units. Two pieces of equipment arrived at the fire without paperwork. After some inquiry, it was discovered that they would be commercial invoice payments billed to the local Forestry office. Having signed delivery orders (for the refrigerated trailer, and the forklift) would have minimized the time in the inquiry and resolution of this issue.

Appendix A: Operations Map



Appendix B: Progression Map