

Wildland Fire Officer, Terry Raley
Ventura County Fire Dept.

Terry

This is a post burn review and some suggestions relating to the Shepherds Flat prescribed burn done on January 14th 1999.

The perimeter of the project was located for a weather pattern that included the normal wind directional shift that occurs in this area. Having never done burning during the month of January, it was unknown how reliable the forecasting was in the winter months. It turned out that the wind did not rotate and because of that fact the burning out plan had to be modified and that was not as sure as it was planned. I had prepared an escape analysis for the event the wind remained out of the north and had handed it out in the morning briefing to the general staff conducting the operation. On that escape analysis, was delineated the points most likely for fire to cross the line and the area threatened by those expansion points. Also on the map the points where the fire would slow down and give suppression resources the best chance of holding the escape, were shown in light blue lines,

To reduce the flak of this kind of "escape" I suggest that we include the escape area in the plan as a secondary line. This way the fire does not escape until it goes beyond the secondary perimeter and it can be referred to as "moving to the secondary. "

To reduce the start from scratch feeling when this kind of event occurs we might have the division supervisors develop their own tactical action plan in the event of this happening. This can be done during the planning meeting and a Division Assignment sheet prepared in advance. The PIO Sandy Wells was interested in having the escape analysis for her use.

We learned that this 17-year-old brush is resistant to ignition unless it is at a higher fuel temperature that we did not record on this burn. The adjustment of the prescriptive window could have been to accept a very low humidity and a stronger wind. This wind rotation from E to S to W, would not happen in a strong pressure gradient regime such as we had on the 14th. This region is best burned in the fall when there is a better fire behavior/intensity window.

We are learning to trust the fuel temperature differential as an indicator of how well the fire will consume the brush. More testing is needed in the future. We should add this feature to the prescription window for future burns.

I have gathered the weather records and send them along with this report.

Sincerely,

DOUG CAMPBELL

Fire Behavior Analyst

