

Table Top Wildfire Evacuation – Friday, April 10, 2015

Incident Scenario

Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Time: 1915 hours

Weather: 90 degrees, 8% humidity. Temperatures have been in the mid-90’s for six days. There has not been any measurable precipitation since April 30 and the area is experiencing its fourth year of drought.

Winds: Steady 28 m.p.h. from the southwest, with gusts up to 40 m.p.h.

Fire Origin: Middle Fork of the Cosumnes River, Latitude N 38 ̊ 35’ 51.87”, Longitude: W 120 ̊ 34’ 42.46”. Elevation 2350’ and extremely steep terrain.

At 1915 hours, while completing grounds maintenance, the Pioneer Firefighters staffing Station 31 on Grizzly Flat Road see a fast growing fire in the steep canyon of the middle fork of the Cosumnes River and call it in to Camino Fire Dispatch. Dispatch also sees a large loom-up coming from the same location. EDSO and USFS law enforcement had been dispatched 20 minutes early and were already enroute to investigate a complaint of an illegal campfire by the river.

A “high level” response is dispatched, but due to the sunset at 1935 hours, aircraft could not be used. Due to the lack of roads to access the fire and poor overnight humidity recovery, it grows exponentially overnight.

Sunrise is at 0642 hours on Wednesday, September 9. Shortly thereafter, reconnaissance aircraft reports the fire has grown to approximately 1260 acres and is rapidly approaching the community of Grizzly Flats.

Without accurate information on the fire, Walt Tyler Elementary School did start its day as usual.

Leoni Meadows Campground is full to capacity with 500 campers and 100 staff members.

With Labor Day being September 7, there are still many “weekender” residents still at their homes in Grizzly Flats. Many of the working full-time residents have already “headed down the hill” to go to work for the day.

The time is now 0700 hours and you have just arrived at the command post for the incident, located at Pioneer Fire Protection District Station 31 located at 7960 Grizzly Flat Road. The staging area is located at Saluti Cellars winery; 7505 Grizzly Flat Road.