

24-Hour Report

Curve Incident

Engine Entrapment

Angeles National Forest

On September 1st at approximately 1400 hours three engines (2 ANF and 1 SBF) had traveled on a one-way single lane dead-end road into the Bichota Recreation Tract of the north fork of San Gabriel River. They were assigned structure protection and evaluating the situation to see if they could protect the cabins. An engine crew was on the highway above the Recreation Tract attempting to tie the line into the toe of the slope.

As the three IA engines positioned near the cabins, they noticed a wall of flames traveling upriver toward them. The wind had shifted 180 degrees and blew the fire down the hill across the canyon and behind the engines. As the fire blew across the riparian area it became established on the north slope causing erratic fire behavior in the vicinity of the engines. As propane tanks began venting the engines moved further up the dead-end road to locate a safety zone. The engines were trapped, but positioned themselves in the safest place possible. All individuals stayed in their engines and although shelters were not deployed, two were used inside the cab of one engine to shield the heat. At least one engine crew used their SCBA because of excessive smoke in the cab.

There were no injuries, but the San Bernardino engine received heat damage- paint, melted lights and radio antenna. At least 6 cabins destroyed.

Crew personnel received Critical Incident Debriefing.

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