

PRELIMINARY REPORT

MOUNT DESERT ISLAND FIRE
(October 17 - 31, 1947)

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Mount Desert Island Fire - October 1947General Statement

Fire danger conditions in the vicinity of Mount Desert Island had become increasingly critical for days prior to the start of the fire. Rainfall is said to have been less than during any of the past thirty years. Winds were strong, variable in direction and gusty. The duff and surface fuels were dry and fire hazards were intensified by the early fall of deciduous leaves. This condition prevailed generally over most of the Northeast.

Several large fires developed in widely scattered parts of New England, New Jersey and New York prior to the major blow-up of the Mount Desert Island fire on October 23. The situation became so explosive that the Governor of Maine declared a state of emergency, closing woods to use of fire, general travel, etc. After the 23rd the President declared a national emergency existed.

Sufficient fire fighting personnel to handle the situation were unobtainable from normal sources. The armed forces furnished large numbers of men, equipment and supplies. The Army Air Forces at Dow Field sent fire fighters, mess, communication equipment, transportation and supplies. The U. S. Navy sent two Destroyers and the Coast Guard two Destroyers. The University of Maine and Bangor Theological Seminary permitted upperclass students to volunteer for duty under faculty supervision. The liaison between these numerous forces, the Service, the town organizations and local volunteers was a tremendous job, particularly as the fire was controlled and evidence of need for intensive control action was less apparent to the layman.

The Mount Desert Island fire can be (at this early date) divided into four major phases. The fire started on the 17th and was corralled by the Town of Bar Harbor Fire Department with park cooperation. This was a town fire. On the 21st it broke out and progressively spread in all directions, entering park land at 4:00 p.m. A considerable area was burned on the 22nd, and Regional Office assistance was again requested. In response two foresters were dispatched by air. Intensive control work was continued and by the afternoon of the 23rd a control line was nearing completion. At about 3:30 p.m. the wind increased to 40 m.p.h. and the fire spread with great rapidity, entering the Town of Bar Harbor in the late afternoon. The wind diminished before morning and the fire spread slowed materially. Following the holocaust of the 23rd intensive control action was taken and despite variable and high winds to 25 m.p.h., continued lack of rain, the spread of the fire was halted on October 27 at 4:40 p.m. After that date only one small breakover has occurred to date. The job of mop-up has been one of the most difficult ever encountered in the

experience of any of the supervisors whose experience covers every forest fire type and condition in the country. Mop-up, however, is of vital importance in maintaining control. Several of the other large fires in the State are reported to have broken out again. A maximum of three hundred fifty fire fighters worked under National Park Service supervision during the height of the fire and an additional three hundred organized and volunteer municipal fire crews from adjacent towns on the mainland and Island, crews from two Destroyers and two Coast Guard Cutters, National Guard, State Police, local residents, the University of Maine, Bangor Theological Seminary and other schools provided forest fire fighters, but the major source was furnished by the Army Air Forces.

The Regional Director has been kept advised of all developments regularly by telephone from Park Headquarters, as requested by him. He, in turn, kept the Director's Office informed.

As of this date the fire is not out, and intensive control and mop-up efforts must be continued for some time.

(Sgd.) W. L. S.

Wilbur L. Savage,
Fire Boss.

MOUNT DESERT ISLAND FIRE - OCTOBER 1947October 17

Fire started adjacent to marsh at Fresh Meadow in northern portion of Mount Desert Island, presumably on or adjacent to a dump on private land, 2-3/4 miles air line north of the boundary of Acadia National Park. It was within territory under the protection of the Bar Harbor Fire Department.

First report of fire was made by telephone by a local resident to the Bar Harbor Fire Department at 4:05 P. M. and immediate action was taken. At the request of the Town Fire Chief, telephoned about 4:45 P. M., the park furnished pumper equipment and a crew to operate it, to work in conjunction with the Town Fire Department under their direction.

October 18

Fire brought under control in morning, after which it was mopped-up and patrolled up to time of the break on October 21.

October 21

Under a strong northwest wind, the fire flared up in early morning and spread rapidly, covering approximately 1,000 acres. It crossed the Eagle Lake Road and entered the park in late afternoon. About 5:00 P. M. Superintendent Hadley called Richmond and requested assistance. Air Corps furnished fire fighters from Dow Field at Bangor, Maine, on request of Chief Sleeper of Town of Bar Harbor.

October 22

Foresters Savage and Moore left Richmond, Virginia, 3:20 A. M., by plane and arrived at Bar Harbor about 2:00 P. M. Fire in park west of Eagle Lake was headed off, partly by burning out, and partly by direct attack.

At 10:20 P. M. Savage and Hadley reported to Richmond, Virginia, on status of fire and arrangements were made for four supervisors and Larry Cook to be dispatched to assist in direction of control and mop-up of the fire then estimated at 800 to 1,000 acres - inside the park.

A call was made to Regional Forester Arnold at 10:30 P. M. advising him of conditions and arrangements made.

October 23

Line was stabilized and mop-up begun on majority of held line. Wind was moderate southwest. Approximately seven hundred

foot of line remained for closure to Eagle Lake Road. Forces included approximately ninety Dow Field officers and men, six to eight University of Maine students, ten local and park forces directed by Savage and Moore from a Field Headquarters at road intersection near Gilmore Meadow. Tool cache was established at this point which contained all the hand and power equipment including a large tank truck unit and Bucksport Fire Company truck and equipment. Field telephone was available at this point to Park Headquarters. Liaison was established and was working effectively with Dow forces who were encamped at the old CCC camp at Eagle Lake. The fire was contained and was being held at this line. Scouts directed by Field Headquarters reported the line reasonably stabilized to the west, north and east flanks outside the park.

4:00 - 4:30 P. M.

Wind increased suddenly to strong forty-five m. p. h. from the west to northwest. Unofficial reports and rumors were received that the fire on the northeast sector outside the park was advancing through Lakewood section threatening Hulls Cove. Pressure was immediate and heavy from outside, flash fires along and near held lines threatened disaster. Crews were concentrated on holding the line, but breakovers on the flanks with rapidly advancing ground and crown fires threatened holding forces. Lines were held as long as possible without endangering the lives of fire crews. Savage called Superintendent Hadley at 4:00 P. M. advising him of critical fire condition and that he should be prepared for receipt of report of disastrous breakovers and loss of control of fire.

Ranger Paul Favour, directing forces on the extreme northwest flank of our lines near the Eagle Lake Road, reported at 4:08 P. M. that breakover fires to the north and west were out-flanking his line, crossing the Eagle Lake Road and threatening his men. He was instructed to arrange for the safe evacuation of his men. The approach of complete envelopment of the forces along our sectors finally required abandonment of lines and equipment and evacuation of the men.

The Hulls Cove threat was diverted with strong wind shift to northwest, sending the greatest fire head toward and partially enveloping Bar Harbor. From this time conflagration raged unchecked in two heads, one past Bar Harbor over Cadillac Mountain and down toward Otter Creek; the other, up Sargent Mountain toward Jordan Pond.

The fire raced along whipped by heavy forty-five to fifty miles per hour gales. The nature of the conflagration made it impossible to continue control action and retreat of forces under our direction was accomplished in as quick and orderly a manner as possible. There were no injuries to forces under our direction during this activity.

Spread and intensity of the fire is indicated in the increase in acreage at approximately 4:00 P. M., October 23, of 1,800 acres to over 15,000 acres at midnight of the same date. About dawn the velocity of the wind began to subside.

Assistant Chief Forester Cook and four rangers from Shenandoah arrived by Navy plane at Bar Harbor Airport at 2:30 P. M. A State Police car started them toward headquarters but due to fire blocked roads and evacuation confusion they did not arrive at Park Headquarters until 7:30 P. M.

During the night of October 23 the fire destroyed more than two hundred structures, including major hotels on the edges of Bar Harbor. Property damage, including several park structures, exceeded \$8,000,000.

Custodian Foster of Camden Hills Recreational Demonstration Area with Mechanic Robertson driving a fire truck loaded fully with fire equipment arrived at Bar Harbor at about 9:00 P. M. After a conference it was decided to return Foster to Camden Hills because of a threatening fire at that area, the inability to utilize his services or equipment during the night, and need to send messages to the Regional Office. Local telephone service was destroyed.

October 24

At daybreak on Friday a conference was held in the Superintendent's Office with Superintendent Hadley, Assistant Superintendent Howack, Foresters Cook, Savage, Moore, and Ranger Favour attending to reorganize forces and plan attack on the fire.

Forester Savage was designated as Fire Boss. A request was made to the Regional Office for twenty additional overhead. Savage designated Ranger Paul Favour to secure information and map the burn; Ralph Douglas to collect and inventory all equipment salvaged from the blow-up; Robert B. Moore as Liaison Officer with the Air Forces and Park Naturalist Wilbur Doudna to communications. Following this a conference was held in the office of Bar Harbor Fire Chief Sleeper for the purpose of determining preliminary organization. In attendance were Chief Sleeper, one or two members of his staff, Superintendent Hadley, Assistant Chief Forester Cook, Rangers Favour and Campbell and Forester Savage. It was agreed that the Town of Bar Harbor would handle the fire line north of Eagle Lake Road and east of State Route #198, and the National Park Service would handle all forest fire fighting actions south of the Eagle Lake Road.

Liaison Officer Moore contacted Dow Field immediately near Park Headquarters. Lieutenant Payne was designated by the Convoy Commander as Army Air Forces Liaison to work with Moore on coordination of park and Army Forces. Field bivouac site for Army personnel was established at Otter Creek at this time.

A ground survey of the boundary of the fire was hurriedly made, and an aerial survey via Army plane was made. The Army Air Forces, Navy, Coast Guard, and local volunteers provided personnel and equipment. Fire fighting tools and equipment were ordered through the Regional Office. Custodian Foster of the Camden Hills Recreational Demonstration Area returned bringing his equipment with him. A start was made on fire control with all available suppression personnel, equipment, and limited overhead.

Fire line construction, pumping, and other control activities were carried on continuously day and night on a twelve-hour shift on the line basis with replacement at 6:00 A. M. and 6:00 P. M. until the fire was corralled.

Activity on the twenty-fourth was concentrated on the Jordan Pond - Sargent Mountain sector and Cadillac Mountain - Otter Cove sector.

The Army Air Forces from Dow Field, Bangor, Maine, provided all available personnel, totalling over one hundred men at this time, mess, supply, and communication services which were invaluable.

A plan of action was formulated and suppression action was started with such tools and equipment as could be collected on the twenty-fourth at 1:25 P. M.

The large majority of equipment used in the Gilmore Meadow section, hand tools sufficient to equip over two hundred men, could not be located. Early action was started with equipment brought in from Camden Hills Recreational Demonstration Area.

Supplies and equipment requested began to flow through Dow Field and Bar Harbor Airport and were transported to Bar Harbor by Dow Field.

October 25

Much needed supervisory personnel began to arrive in large numbers. Nineteen National Park Service and nine U. S. Forest Service experienced leaders arrived and were immediately dispatched to the fire lines or held for night supervisory duties.

Several conferences were held with military and local personnel. Liaison Officer Moore was flown to Dow Field, Bangor, for conference with Colonel Stetson, Commanding Officer of the Field, concerning AAF participation on the fire. We were assured of two hundred thirty men for day and one hundred men for night details until the termination of emergency conditions. Additional AAF assistance would include mess facilities for feeding all personnel engaged in fire control, communication equipment, sup-

plies and personnel, transportation equipment and personnel, tool and equipment and supply services. Daily weather reports were radioed from Dow Field to the Fire Boss' Headquarters. Higher ranking officers were appointed to act as liaison and take command of Dow and Slocum forces active on the fire. Field Command Post for AAF was to be moved from Otter Creek to the ball park opposite Park Headquarters. Reconnaissance flights were arranged for air patrol and mapping of the fire. At midnight Major General Webster, Commander First Wing AAF Mitchell Field, New York, conferred with the Fire Boss and staff at Headquarters regarding military assistance on the fire.

October 26

Lieutenant Colonels Smith and Levans, Army Air Forces, Dow Field, Maine, were detailed to correlate military with park fire control efforts. Two hundred ninety-five soldiers were detailed to day shift and one hundred for night duty from Dow Field and Fort Slocum (New York).

Material progress was made on stopping the spread of the fire on all sectors.

A total of one hundred eighty Army Air Force fire fighters were utilized.

During the night detail, fourteen University of Maine students appeared on Section B, south section of Cadillac Mountain. This was the first unified force of students to appear on our lines.

Mr. Gerald O'Day, representing Seal Harbor, began effective coordination of local forces from that town. Local fire crews were woven into the fire organization and proved of real assistance on adjoining sectors.

October 27

Fire was quiet most of the day and progress continued on line construction. At 4:40 p.m. the fire was corralled, a total of more than 24 miles of line having been constructed or held by hand tools and water.

At 6:00 p.m. Chief Forester Coffman and Regional Director Allen arrived at Park Headquarters. At about the same time Major General Van Fleet, First Army Commander, Brigadier General Thorson and Colonel Ferris arrived with Major Pooler of the Maine National Guard. All were briefed on fire situation needs and plans.

Liaison Officer Moore made another contact at Dow Field, Bangor, with Colonel Stetson. He was requested by the Dow Commander to reduce the Dow Field and Fort Slocom contingents as soon as possible. Commitments were made by Dow Field at our request to retain present strength of Army forces until midweek.

Additional University of Maine students, totalling one hundred fifty, under the supervision of Mr. Randall, arrived at Bar Harbor and were put into the Cadillac Mountain area. Preliminary contacts were made to arrange radio contact with University at Orono for continued supply.

Fire fighters on line included one hundred ninety Army Air Force men during the day and one hundred during the night.

Weather - partly cloudy, wind - 15 m. p. h., south in afternoon.

October 23

The fire forces under the National Park Service consisted of one hundred fifty University of Maine, eighty Army Air Forces and forty Bangor Seminary students during the day and sixty-seven Army Air Forces at night.

A small breakover of seven chains occurred near Eagle Lake - the only piece of lost line to occur since October 23 and 24 - and was quickly corralled.

The Otter Point section had previously been written off in order to concentrate on the other active edges. With corral on the 27th aggressive action was directed on Otter Point to save the remaining picturesque stands of evergreen along the Ocean Drive.

Radio contact was made with the President of the University of Maine requesting a steady flow of men. Agreement was reached at one hundred by day and fifty by night for sectors handled by Park Headquarters. Liaison was arranged with a Mr. Orcutt directing Jonesville section and it was agreed that an additional one hundred men would be rounded up for use on the Jonesville sector under Orcutt's supervision. A liaison officer, Mr. Giddings, was appointed by the University of Maine to coordinate action of all University forces on the fire.

Contact was also made with Bangor Theological Seminary to secure and maintain a flow of forces up to forty boys for use in control and mop-up. We were assured of assistance to the week-end or until the termination of the emergency.

The three supervisors assigned by the Fire Boss to coordination of University of Maine forces under Mr. Orcutt and local forces on lines west and north of the park reported the fire corralled, with no advance in the fire front, but plenty of hot line requiring continued mop-up.

October 29

Fire control forces under National Park Service direction consisted of one hundred ninety men in the day shift and eighty at night.

Mop-up work was intensively pressed and pumping continued, using all available pumping equipment.

Supervisor Renshaw, U. S. Forest Service, whose observations of fires in various parts of the country date back to the 1910 Idaho fire stated "In all my years of fire fighting I have never seen a harder mop-up job."

A steady flow of relief crews were maintained from forces available from Bow Field, University of Maine and Bangor Seminary. Local forces were gradually increased.

October 30

Fire control forces consisted of fifty Army Air Forces, ten Seminary and fifty University of Maine students during the day and forty-four Army Air Forces during the night.

Conference with Professor Giddings, University of Maine, re student assistance on fire. Apparently satisfactory agreement reached.

Bangor Seminary required the return of last contingent of students at the end of the day shift, none to be returned.

October 31

Conferences with faculty representatives of University of Maine student volunteers failed to obtain further approval for retention of students. Army Air Forces and U. S. Navy also anxious to withdraw personnel as soon as possible.

Conference called by Superintendent Hadley with key representatives of surrounding communities to discuss situation with respect to the fire in an effort to increase and coordinate dependable local manpower to combat it. Selectmen, Town Managers, Fire Chiefs and Mr. LeFevre, Supt. of Mr. Rockefeller's estate, attended. A very satisfactory decision and agreement reached. Towns will arrange to furnish us with required personnel for day shifts, to be paid 65¢ to 75¢ per hour and work under Park supervision. Rate of pay dependent upon rate established by towns for payment of their crews. Colonel Levans will maintain night fire fighting, mess, communication and transportation services.

Fire fighting forces during the day included one hundred Army Air Forces and University of Maine students and forty-five Army Air Forces at night.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
Bar Harbor, Maine

October 26, 1947

MOUNT DESERT ISLAND FIRE

Approximate Area of Fire: 29 square miles or 18,560 acres

Park Area Burned: 16 square miles or 10,240 acres

Length of Fire Line, 10-26-47, 9:00 pm

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Length of Line</u>	<u>Division Length</u>
E	2	$3\frac{1}{4}$ miles	II = $5\frac{3}{4}$ miles
A	2	$2\frac{1}{2}$ miles	
D	1	$3\frac{1}{2}$ miles	I = 7
B	1	$3\frac{1}{2}$ miles	
C	3	$11\frac{1}{2}$ miles	III = $11\frac{1}{2}$ (Hulls Cove - Richardson Creek)

By map measure
LFC:JMC

FIRE ORGANIZATION
(Typical Day)

FIRE BOSS	-	W. L. SAVAGE
	-	L. P. COOK, Relief
ARMY LIAISON	-	R. MOORE
PROGRESS	-	ARNOLD, COOPER
EQUIPMENT	-	BLACK REYNOLDS (Day)
CAMP COORDINATOR	-	HADLEY
SCOUT	-	FAVOUR
TRANSPORTATION	-	DOUGLAS

DIVISION I

BOSS

NEWCOMB

DAYNIGHT

SECTOR B

ELLSWORTHGIBBS

SALISBURY

PRICE

BENTON

WIMMER

R. SULLIVAN

P. JOHNSON

HALL

SECTOR D

FRYMANLYES

DOUGLAS

VAN WEELDEN

MCKEOWN

MACNAUGHTON

R. JOHNSON

DIVISION II

BOSS

-

SPRING

DAYNIGHTSECTOR A - FOSTERCAMPBELL

SCHREIBER

LUCK

ROBERTSON

PRENTICE

SANDERS

SECTOR E - RUFFBERG

DOHN

PILMER

WRIGHT

STEUER

DIVISION IIISECTOR C - RENSHAW

SMITH

THOMPSON

October 29, 1947.

MOP-UP INSTRUCTIONS MOUNT DESERT ISLAND FIRE

1. Continue maximum use of all power pumps, particularly in daytime. This operation is priority No. 1 throughout mop-up period.
2. No sector to be left unattended during daytime throughout mop-up operations.
3. "Black Out" progressively widening strip to 100 feet.
4. Cut all branches overhanging the line, up to a height of six feet.
5. Dig a trench 12 inches wide to mineral soil or bare rock with mattocks or Pulaski tools immediately on edge of burned area. Cut all dead roots to same width. To avoid chance of scattering smoldering peat, pull the peat into the fire. Green rocks may be rolled outside, or in, whichever is more convenient. Some places will have boulders too large to move by hand and where fire has been between such boulders, attempt to scratch peat out with a stick or other object. Any exception to the trenching requirement must be approved by the Fire Boss upon specific recommendation by the Division Boss.
6. After the line is dug, cut all green coniferous branches within one foot of the ground progressively back for a distance of 25 feet from the line. These branches to be scattered (not piled) beyond the 25 foot strip.
7. Cut and remove all down limbs or logs that extend across line. These cuts are to be made outside of the burn, and the burned portion placed (not piled) at least 25 feet inside the line.
8. Following completion of above operations, fell burning snags of 5 feet or more height progressively back inside line to a distance of 300 feet.
9. Fire trucks will patrol all hard surfaced roads along the fire line and inside the burned area, mopping up smokes within 300 feet of road.
10. Night operations will be reduced gradually as conditions safely permit, making maximum use of manpower in the daytime for more effective operation.
11. Do not forget to feel for heat.

(Sgd) Wilbur L. Savage
Fire Boss.



**Sequence of Events Relating to the Mount
Desert Island Fire of - October 17, 1947.**

During the day, Friday, October 17, 1947, a fire broke out on the Fresh Meadow in the northern part of the Island. The point of origin was approximately 1-3/4 miles west of the Lakewood section of the park and approximately 8-3/4 miles north of the nearest park boundary on the Eagle Lake Road.

At about 4:45 p.m. Fire Chief David Sleeper of the Bar Harbor Fire Department telephoned to park headquarters to ask if he could have assistance on the fire in the form of a portable pump, hose and a few men. The assistance was granted, and left for the fire at about 5:45 p.m. The assistance comprised the park's Chevrolet fire truck loaded with 2 1/2 and 1 1/2 inch hose and two Pacific portable pumps, a 1 1/2 ton dump truck and five men.

On arriving at the fire our crew found approximately twenty town men. Forces were joined and an attack made. The park men and equipment worked on the fire until about noon on Saturday, October 18, when they were relieved. Ranger Favour visited the fire later in the day to observe conditions.

From that time until early in the morning of October 21, the fire was handled under the direction of Chief Sleeper with no assistance from park forces.

During the night of October 20, probably after midnight, the wind backed on briskly from the northwest. Early in the morning, Chief Sleeper made an inspection of the fire line and found conditions unfavorable for full control, the fire being fanned into life and threatening to get out of hand. He had a general alarm sounded shortly before 8:00 a.m. and telephoned to the Bow Field Air Base for manpower assistance.

Soon after 9:30 a.m. the fire had escaped its original line and made a run in a southeasterly direction of about a half a mile and had widened to a breadth of two to three hundred yards. Efforts of the fire fighters were concentrated on saving buildings on the west side of the Navy District Road and, if possible, to keep the fire from crossing to the east side of the road.

Sometime between 9:30 and 11:00 the fire crossed the road, burned a barn and milk house belonging to Hugh E. Kelly, crossed a field into the woods and was on its way to the Norway Drive and the valley of the Old Mill Brook, a section filled with coniferous slash accumulated over a period of seven or eight years.

About 1:30 p.m. an observation from near the Wellington Salisbury house in the Young's District, a mile and a half west of Eagle Lake, disclosed that the fire was advancing in two prongs, the first southward through the valley of the Old Mill Brook and along the west slope of Young's Mountain, the second advancing southward towards Long Beach and Junken Beach west of the Norway Drive.

From 2:00 p.m. until 4:30 the fire was under constant observation from vantage points on the Cadillac Mountain Road. Its advance was rapid under the influence of the northwest wind, so rapid in fact that it crossed the Eagle Lake Road into the park at about 4:00 p.m. The point of crossing was three-fourths of a mile west of Eagle Lake.

At about 4:30 p.m. flames appeared on the crest of McFarland Mountain at the south end. Knowing from this that the park was threatened if not already invaded, and that the situation was constantly worsening, a call was made to Region One Office to report conditions and to request help. Shortly after completing the call Forester Savage called back to say that he would leave Richmond by plane early next morning, arriving Bangor, Maine, about noon.

The advance of the fire to the south end of McFarland Mountain threatened several stands of fern buildings and fire fighting efforts were concentrated on saving them. During the night of the 21st the fire worked around the south end of McFarland Mountain, through the woods between the north end of Eagle Lake and the Eagle Lake Road eastward as far as Duck Brook and for a short distance across it. It also crossed the Eagle Lake Road to the north side, along the north end of Brewer's Mountain and worked northward and eastward to Duck Brook and New Mill Meadow.

Wednesday, October 22, 1947

At daybreak the fire situation was as described in the preceding paragraph. The day broke clear, with the wind from the northwest, moderate velocity. As the day wore on the wind freshened, fanning the fire into activity on all fronts. Efforts were directed towards cutting the fire off at Aunt Betty Pond on the south and on a line running westerly from the head of New Mill Meadow to Half Moon Pond and the Breakneck Road.

At 2:00 p.m. Foresters Savage and Moore arrived in Bar Harbor. They went into conference with Superintendent Hadley, Assistant Superintendent Kowack, Ranger Campbell and David A. Sleeper, Chief of the Bar Harbor Fire Department. It was decided that park forces, augmented by such volunteer or other help as could be procured, should attempt to hold the fire in the Aunt Betty Pond - Southwest Valley section of the park. Accordingly, Mr. Savage, Mr. Moore and Ranger Favour, who had come in from the fire and joined them, went to the fire in the Southwest Valley.

Meanwhile the wind had freshened northwest. The fire advanced rapidly northward, forcing the crew at Aunt Betty Pond to withdraw with their pumping equipment to Bubble Pond. Mr. Savage, on arriving at Bubble Pond, told the crew to stand by while he and the others went to the fire to observe its condition and plan an attack.

Observing the fire, Mr. Savage decided that backfiring was indicated. Backfires were set along the Carriage Road from near the south end of Eagle Lake to the intersection at Gilmore Meadows. The backfiring was successful in halting the advance of the fire so that early in the evening it was possible to return to Aunt Betty Pond and resume pumping.

Forester Savage called Richmond Office shortly after 9:00 p.m. He requested that four supervisors be assembled from eastern areas and flown to Bar Harbor. Manpower to fight the fire was ample, but supervision was lacking. He also requested that Assistant Chief Forester Cook be flown in to help in perfecting the organization.

Mr. Savage and Mr. Moore, with about fifty men, worked all night on the fire line.

Thursday, October 23, 1947

Mr. Savage and Mr. Moore, with a crew, worked through the day on the fire line. At noon they felt that the entire line from near the head of Eagle Lake northwesterly to the Eagle Lake Road could be held. The wind, moderate to brisk southeasterly, was favorable for holding the line. The park area burned up until this time was between five hundred and eight hundred acres.

During the forenoon and early afternoon the southwest wind drove the fire across the line established the day before at the north end. Shortly after noon it became apparent that the Village of Hulls Cove was seriously threatened. Consequently all efforts of the local fire department were directed towards saving the houses in that community.

Soon after three o'clock in the afternoon a change in wind conditions occurred. Without diminishing in velocity the wind began to veer from southwest to west and, with increasing velocity, swung into the northwest. By four o'clock the wind reached gale velocity and the fire became a raging tornado of flame bent apparently on destroying the whole eastern half of Mount Desert Island. The fire advanced with great rapidity from Hulls Cove towards Bar Harbor, entered the western section of the village, consuming nearly three hundred dwellings, swept over the eastern flank of Cadillac Mountain, and the whole of Barr and Chaplain Mountains, reaching the shore at Sol's Cliff, and then racing along the shore to beyond the Thunder Hole.

When the wind changed the crew in the Aunt Betty Pond sector withdrew as soon as possible. Their progress to get out was slow due to smoke and flame and it wasn't until late in the evening that all were finally accounted for. No one was injured and no vehicles were lost.

The rate of spread of the fire following the wind change can best be illustrated by saying that prior thereto the total acreage burned was approximately 1,800 and by midnight over 18,000 acres had been burned.

B. L. Hadley,
Superintendent.

cc: Director
Regional Director
Park Supt.
Fire boss



ROCKY DESERT ISLAND FIRE

Statement of Paul G. Sawyer, Jr.

Saturday, October 19

I was in Bar Harbor Saturday afternoon, October 19, 1947. I stopped in the Town fire house and inquired about the condition of the fire at Fresh Meadow. Apparently things were all right. While I was getting a haircut the fire whistle blew because a report had come in that part of the fire had broken across the line. I reported to the fire house and waited for about twenty minutes. During that time only about eight responded to the call. I offered to take men out to the fire and was given two boys to take to the north side of the marsh where the break-over was supposed to have occurred. As it turned out, the break-over was inaccurately reported because the fire in the marsh grass burned to the edge of the stream and died down.

I then went around to the other side of the fire in the Hairy District and left the two boys there. In attempting to find park laborer Roy Salisbury, the only park man I knew was there at the time, I found he had gone up-stream with a portable pump.

The entire eastern side of the fire appeared to be well in hand. I talked with Oliver Spear, a boy who said he had been completely around the fire. Spear stated that the fire was corralled. There was considerable activity in the vicinity with the town trailer pump pumping out of the stream at the edge of the meadow. I talked with the men at the pumps but they could give no little information and I did not find anyone in charge, although I did not go all the way around the fire as I depended upon the boy's statement that the fire was corralled; he is about fifteen (15) years of age and I had seen him as a fire fighter on a number of other fires. It was dark when I left the fire.

I did not go back to the fire until I was ordered to report Tuesday morning, October 21, when the break occurred. Judging by what I saw at that time, there were about twenty acres burned in the marsh. I did not know how far it had burned up and over the adjoining hill.

Tuesday, October 21

Received call at 8:00 A. M. to report at Fresh Meadow fire which was progressing rapidly under a brisk northwest wind and rolling up heavy clouds of smoke. Approached fire along Crooked Road, going east, but was advised not to continue through fire due to heat. Went around to north to Whitney's Store. Located our fire truck to south at farmhouse diagonally opposite Hairy District school house.

Confusion reigned. All efforts seemed to be directed toward saving the houses along the Norway Drive south of Whitney's Store. Failing to find any of the park men who were working together as a unit, I finally located the park fire truck. Manned by Ralph Douglas and one or two other park men, it was parked nearby a well for the purpose of protecting the adjacent house (across the road from the Emery District school house). The well proved to be dry. Not long afterward (it might have been 10:00 o'clock), a contingent of Army men in 10 (more or less) vehicles arrived. Receiving a report from a local resident that the eastern flank of the fire north of the school house was working out of the woods to threaten a point of pine and spruce woods and hay-covered blueberry clearing, I scouted the situation, returned to the school house and picked up a crew of fourteen enlisted men with shovels and axes. A line was located, cut out and trenched with the additional help of Vernon Lust, former CCC foreman and seasonal ranger. The completed line was lost, however, when exceptionally strong winds fanned the fire into the crooks. Efforts were then bent to keep the fire out of the blueberry field. During this time, a burning ember caught the large barn, across the road from the school house, on fire and it burned down in a very short space of time. Where from the barn set the adjacent woods ablaze and the fire roared on. Leaving the Army men with Lust, I proceeded to the junction of the Old Norway Drive and "new" Norway Drive, and assisted the Northeast Harbor Fire Chief and several others in making preparations to protect a house from the oncoming fire front. Backfiring and wetting down methods were employed. Our efforts were successful. The group then worked to establish the Old Norway Drive as the defense line. A pump and chains were located by a beaver dam on the Old Mill Brook and hose lines were laid and put into operation. Again the line was held until the wind increased greatly. Hot fires across the road were soon too numerous to be successfully handled, and the fire was again racing to the southeast.

The fire was proceeding along two main fronts - one along the Old Mill Brook valley; the other, in the section immediately to the west of the Emery District school house and generally north of the wood road running southwest from the Emery District school house.

I drove south on the Norway Drive to the Eagle Lake Road and made an attempt to make myself useful in preparing to save a set of farm buildings in The Young's District (west southwest of McFarland Mountain) which were in the path of the oncoming fire. Seeing sufficient assistance there, I withdrew to Eagle Lake to help run a 2 1/2 inch hose line from the lake to the top of the hill to protect the McFarland buildings opposite the former CCC camp area. The fire reached and crossed the Eagle Lake road, entering the park 1/4 mile east of The Young's District at 4:00 o'clock or shortly after, having traveled very rapidly under the impetus of the strong northwest wind from the crossing at the Old Norway Drive. Our observer stated that

a spot fire occurred a half mile in advance of the main fire and quickly spread to another crossing front. At 4:55 P. M. I left the scene of activity to report to Superintendent Hadley my impression of the fire's extreme threat to the whole park and the need for regional assistance. Mr. Hadley telephoned to Richmond, then set up his home at Storm Beach Cottage as park headquarters and had me act as liaison between there and the scene of park activities which were located between Eagle Lake and the former CCC camp area in the supplying of food and coffee, relaying information, etc. This I did.

During the evening Linwood Mayo, park clerk, joined me, and after midnight, our efforts were put into an effort to control the fire which had reached the area adjoining the Eagle Lake Road between the carriage road entrance and the New Eagle Lake Road by helping to lay 1½ inch hose. During the early morning hours the fire crossed across the Eagle Lake Road from north to south 500 feet west of Duck Brook, but made little progress after this crossing.

About 3:00 A. M. we returned to our homes with the fire having slowed down to a creep just west of the New Eagle Lake Road.

Wednesday, October 22

Sometime during 9:00 and 9:30 A. M. (I think) I was appointed sector boss of the fire south of the Eagle Lake Road between the CCC camp area and the Young's District by Bar Harbor Fire Department Chief David Sleeper and Park Ranger William Campbell who was working closely with Sleeper. Previous to that time I had scouted the fire, loaded up with hand tools at park headquarters and had started action in the sector with a few citizens headed by Loren Kimball of Northeast Harbor. In addition, Superintendent Robert Devereux of the Rockefeller estate and 10 men were working at the fire's edge. By 10:30 A. M. forty enlisted men and officers, the park fire truck and operating crew, and some ten others were in action. The advance of the fire at that time was roughly parallel and approximately a quarter mile south of the Eagle Lake Road north of the Aunt Betty Pond vicinity. The army men were split in half, twenty constructing a line with hand tools to the west of the carriage road leading north from Aunt Betty Pond under the leadership of Vernon Hunt (experienced fire fighting foreman) who arrived with the Army, and the other twenty constructing a line to the east of the carriage road under my supervision (no other foreman was present.) Two and one-half inch hose was laid on the carriage road to the fire's edge from the pond, then 1½ to 1½ inch. However, the park fire truck failed to function. Water was eventually supplied by a portable; then later in greater force by the Bucksport unit which came in to replace the park unit. About noon, I observed a large head of fire from the Young's District headed rapidly our way under

a strong northeasterly wind. I ordered a complete withdrawal of men and equipment from the lines to the pond. The withdrawal was made as rapidly as possible, but a few lengths of 2 1/2 inch hose had to be abandoned as the last of men, hose and vehicles pulled out with flames over their heads. All forces and equipment concentrated at the pond until the head of the fire had passed on.

We then planned to move all men and equipment to Bubble Pond and work out the next line of defense. It was necessary for all heavy vehicles to proceed there the long way via carriage road and around by Northeast Harbor because of narrow bridges on the direct route. I arrived at Bubble Pond about 1:45 P. M. via direct carriage road. As none of the vehicles had arrived by 2:05 P. M., I decided to report directly to Forester Wilbur Savage, whom I knew was due in Bar Harbor about that time, and report the complete picture to him. I found Mr. Savage, Forester Robert Moore, and Assistant Superintendent Howack at the Holey Cottage at 2:15, reported the situation, and requested that Mr. Savage consider taking over the job of fire boss for Acadia.

(SOS) Paul G. Favour, Jr.

Paul G. Favour, Jr.
Park Ranger

November 1, 1947.

CC: Director
Regional Director
Park Supt.
Fire Boss



MOUNT DESERT ISLAND FIRE

Statement of Ralph C. Douglas

On Friday, October 17, shortly before 5:00 p.m. a call came from Fire Chief Sleeper of the Bar Harbor Fire Department asking for men and equipment to fight a fire at Dilliver's dam at Fresh Meadow.

Willis Perry was sent with the park fire truck, and a 1½ ton dump truck, with about 3500' of extra hose and two Pacific pumps, and four men, left Park Headquarters about 5:00 p.m. driven by Samuel Gray.

The park crew with Pacific pumps remained Friday night and Saturday, pumping fourteen hours. The park fire truck returned to the park garage at noon Saturday, October 18, to be reloaded with hose, and was not called out again until Tuesday, October 21, at about 7:45 a.m. A. E. Grindle remained on watch Saturday, October 18, until 8:00 p.m. Willis Perry stood watch with fire truck at park garage, with all park crew on call, on Sunday, October 19. Sunday and Sunday night, October 19, two park men, Roy Salisbury and Martin Hodgkins, stood by at Fresh Meadow to man park Pacific pumps. Monday, October 20, the Town Fire Chief released the park Pacific pumps and extra truck and replaced them with the town's Chrysler trailer pump. At the time the park equipment was released hose had been extended all the way around the fire.

On October 21 as I started to work about 7:15 a.m. I observed smoke in the direction of the Fresh Meadow fire. At the time there was a high north wind and I hurried to the park garage and ordered all men to get the fire fighting equipment ready for immediate use as the wind was blowing directly from the fire towards the park boundaries. About 7:45 the Chief of the Fire Department called and wanted all park men and equipment possible, as the fire had crossed the so-called "Crooked Road", and was raging towards several farm buildings. I sent the trailer pump with a truck load of hose and two Pacific pumps and proceeded to Whitney's Store where I told them to stand by for orders from the Bar Harbor Chief. I ran the park fire truck and went directly to Kelly's dairy farm, in which direction the fire was travelling fast. I set up the pump with the help of two park men and several volunteers. We soon had water from a spring and were wetting down the farm buildings, the school house across the road and a small house. After about forty or forty-five minutes the water supply became exhausted and I moved the pump up in front of the buildings and put a ladder on the roof where I stationed a man with two back pumps and the hose from a 150 gallon booster tank and stayed there for about half or three-quarters of an hour. The head of the fire had burned up to the buildings on the opposite side of the road and passed on in the direction of the Paul Russell place. Shortly the Ellsworth Fire Department arrived and came to where I was stationed and inquired what they could do to help. I informed

Then I had no authority but suggested that if they could run a line from Whitney's Store where there was a large brook I could set in our booster pump to give them water all along that road, as I felt the safety of the park depended wholly on keeping the fire from crossing theERRY District road. After some delay the hose line was laid and I cut the fire truck in the line. Shortly after I had set up I got word that the water supply was getting low. Then I located Willis Perry and several volunteers and sent them to what is known as "Hamilton Lake", tore out a dam to let the water down to Whitney's Store, where the Ellsworth pumper was stationed. I remained with the fire truck until around noontime when I turned it over to Martin Hodgkins, pump operator, and came to Bar Harbor for a conference with Superintendent Hadley. Returning to the fire truck I found our Chrysler trailer pump was not in use. I substituted that in place of the park fire truck. With that and some civilian volunteers I picked up some hose and fittings that were not in use and returned to the McFarland Hill area at the point of the old CCC Camp. At the time of arrival on the Eagle Lake Road I found that the fire line extended from the Brewer ice house to beyond the Pearl McFarland farm and had already crossed the road and entered the park property and was raging fiercely down back of and on both sides of the CCC carpenter shop. I commandeered two civilian trucks and with one park rack truck moved all of the carpenter shop machinery and contents from there to the park garage. At that time the smoke was so dense the men could scarcely stand it. After unloading the trucks I returned to Eagle Lake to assist the Bar Harbor Fire Department in whatever capacity I could.

Wednesday morning Ranger Campbell requested a Pacific pumper and operator to go to a point on New Eagle Lake Road. I dispatched A. E. Grindle with a pickup truck and one man where he was to meet fifty soldiers from Bow Field. I again contacted Mr. Hadley, Superintendent, and he ordered me to assemble all park equipment that I could find and meet Ranger Ravour at Aunt Betty Pond where he would have fifty soldiers who would fight the fire with Vernon Lunt acting as Foreman. I dispatched the fire truck with the Pacific pumper with Martin Hodgkins as operator. I then proceeded to the New Eagle Lake Road, the place where A. E. Grindle with one man had been sent at Campbell's request to meet the fifty soldiers from Bow Field. Upon arrival I found Grindle still standing by and the soldiers had not appeared. I could see no great need of the pump at that point so ordered Grindle with his helper to Aunt Betty Pond where I proceeded myself. Upon arriving there I found they had the Pacific pumper set up and were pumping water. The fire truck was having some difficulty in picking up the water. The water would come for a time and then it would lose its pressure. Realizing that little time could be wasted I drove to Bar Harbor Fire Department and contacted Fire Chief Sleeper, requesting assistance in getting a pumper, as our Chrysler pumper was stationed at the head of Eagle Lake pumping water through two lines of hose protecting the New Eagle Lake Road. Chief Sleeper immediately dispatched the Bucksport fire pump with four men. We arrived just before two Army trucks with fifty men appeared. We immediately set up and started to pump in a line of hose that had already been laid by

Favour. He had pumped but a few minutes when the fire came roaring down on the pump and men in the form of a crown fire. He protected the tracks and men with hose from one of the Pacific pumps. Shortly after the fire had passed beyond Favour ordered the men and equipment out by way of the Jordan Pond House through the Carriage Roads. They all assembled at Bubble Pond to await further instructions. I, in company with Howard Warren, went in on the Carriage Road at the south end of Eagle Lake planning on making a stand at that point but found that the fire had already crossed ahead of us. On my way back to where I left the men I met Foresters Savage and Moore and Ranger Paul Favour. After briefly discussing the situation with them I awaited orders from Mr. Savage. He set up a Pacific pump at the head of Eagle Lake and dug a trench on the Carriage Road to where the pump was set up. At this time Park Fire Chief Campbell arrived and took over operations. I returned to Bar Harbor to get some food which there had been no time to get before.

Ralph C. Douglas,
General Maintenance Foreman.

November 1, 1947

(Sgd) Ralph C. Douglas

Original and 1 cc: Director
1 cc: Regional Director, Region One
1 cc: Fire Boss
1 cc: Acadia Files



STATEMENT OF LINWOOD E. MAYO

On Friday, October 17, 1947, a little before 3:00 p.m., Fire Chief David Sleeper of the Bar Harbor Fire Department, called Acadia National Park headquarters to inquire if he could obtain from the park a fire truck, Pacific portable pumper and hose and crew to assist in the control of a fire adjacent to Fresh Pond. He talked with General Foreman Ralph Douglas, who arranged for Willie Perry to drive the Chevrolet fire truck, Sam Gray to drive a 1 1/2 ton dump truck, and Edward Gray, Fairfield Gray and myself to accompany them to assist on the fire. We left park headquarters at 3:45 p.m. and arrived at the fire about 6:45 p.m. Carleton Macquinn and Leslie Hamor (Superintendent of Roads, Town of Bar Harbor) were there in charge and about 20 volunteers from town.

We drove the Chevrolet fire truck and dump truck to the scene of the fire, across Shea's pasture. At that point we awaited orders from the Town Fire Department. The fire extended from Holliver's dump easterly toward Shea's farm, about 6 acres I should judge, partly in the meadow and partly on the wooded hillside. The fire was running on the ground, not crowning. The Town firemen ordered us to another point and we went to the back yard of Tom Ryan to find a road to the marsh to get a suitable pumper set-up spot. There was no road to the marsh at that point, so we returned to our former location. Then the 1 1/2 ton dump truck followed Leslie Hamor's pickup truck through the fire line to the water supply in the marsh, but we never did get to the water because a town fireman ordered us back because he thought the heat of the fire was too great. Then we waited around at least half an hour because nobody seemed to know what to do. There was confusion and misdirection on the part of the Town Fire Department in charge. We considered Carleton Macquinn or John Higgins of the Town Fire Department as in charge. Mr. Hamor got through to water with the highway truck and with a EFS Pacific pumper and hose and set up the pump, at least two hours after our arrival. The pump was operated by Fairfield Gray. There was no hose line laid for some time except right around the pump to protect it. Finally the hose line was extended over the top of the hill after a strip had been made safe to lay the hose, about three-quarters of an hour after they had installed the pumper. Then they got the water on to the fire.

The fire began to pick up when it reached the top of the slope as there was more leaf litter there on the ground. At that point I left the Chevrolet truck and helped with the hose and was on the nozzle pretty much of the time after that. Another pump was put in as a booster at the top of the slope. The fire was spreading both in the marsh and up the slope and over the top, which was about one-quarter mile from the marsh. From then on until morning I was helping with the hose and also using a back-pack pump. Sam Gray was hauling hose in the dump truck; the other two Gray boys were operating the two EFS Pacific pumps, and Perry was standing by with the Chevrolet truck. Some of the Town firemen were there all night and were in charge. Fire Chief Sleeper was on the fire at least three hours during the night and may have been on the other part of the fire for a further period. Leslie Hamor had left the fire during the night but he sent in his road crew, and one of them

relieved us after he had eaten lunch and I left the fire about 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 18. The fire was then under control. When I reached the main road near Whitney's Store the HPS fire truck and a HPS pickup truck were returning to the fire, the fire truck having been reloaded with hose.

In the following days I offered my services a couple of times to the Town Fire House but no one seemed much concerned about the fire and I did not return until it broke out of control on October 21.

Linwood E. Mayo

cc: Director
Regional Director
Park Supt.
Fire Boss



October 23, 1947.

Report on Acadia Forest Fire

At 9:50 A. M. I talked with Associate Regional Director Albert Cox, and he said that he had talked with Superintendent Hadley about 9 A. M., and that Mr. Hadley stated the wind was now from the southwest and fairly favorable, but that the Weather Bureau officials expected the wind to change to northeast this afternoon, which does not look so good. The fire is north of Sargent Mountain, and from 500 to 800 acres of the burn are within the park, and Mr. Savage estimated that a minimum of about 200 more acres probably would be burned within the park before the fire could be brought under complete control. The bulk of the burn is outside the park. Mr. Hadley stated that Savage and Bob Moore had done some backfiring yesterday, which had helped the situation immeasurably. One front of the fire on the west of Eagle Lake was headed off. With the wind prospects forecast for today, there is a possible threat to Lakeside.

Mr. Hadley said that there was plenty of manpower, approximately 1,000 men available, but that he was in need of additional experienced overhead. Mr. Cox accordingly called Saratoga, hoping that Custodian Ellsworth would be available to go to Acadia, but Mr. Ellsworth thought this dangerous on account of the fire situation adjacent to the Saratoga area. Mr. Cox also called Camden Hills, and arranged to have Mr. Foster report to Acadia. There is fire in the vicinity of Camden Hills, but Mr. Foster thought that the caretaker could probably handle the situation in his absence.

Mr. Cox also wired Superintendent Freeland, asking him to furnish any available overhead that could be spared from Shenandoah National Park, and four men left Shenandoah at 9:15 A. M. this morning, and are expected to report at the Director's Office about 10:15 A. M.

Assistant Chief Forester Cook has been ready to leave for Acadia since yesterday afternoon while awaiting further word as to the situation there.

Superintendent Freeland talked with Mr. Wirth by telephone early this morning, advising him that he was sending this overhead from Shenandoah, and asking that arrangements be made for airplane transportation to Acadia. Through his personal contacts with the Navy Department, Mr. Wirth fortunately was able to arrange with Captain L. Cook for a Navy plane to take these five men (Mr. Cook and the four men from Shenandoah) by Navy plane, as a national emergency measure, from the Anacostia Airport to Bar Harbor. They plan to leave Anacostia Airport about 11:15 A. M., and the flight to Bar Harbor is estimated at three hours.

Mr. Cox has promised to keep us advised promptly as additional information is received from Acadia.

J. D. Coffman
Chief Forester.

cc: Regional Director, Region One
Supt. Acadia



ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
Bar Harbor, Maine

Mount Desert Island Fire-October 1947.

As nearly as can be determined, this fire originated in or adjacent to a dump on William Dooliver's private land, at the edge of Fresh Meadow. Various persons pay the owner of this dump for the privilege of disposing of their rubbish there. The burnable material is disposed of by burning, but for a number of days prior to the report of this fire the Town Fire Chief had forbidden any burning. There had been no recent electrical storms, so the fire was undoubtedly of man-caused origin, but just how it started has not been definitely determined. It has been surmised that there might have been some fire or hot ashes at the dump, although the owner of the dump assured the Town Fire Chief, David Sleeper, that there had been no burning at the dump that would account for the fire. Fire Chief Sleeper advised me that he had cruised the adjacent area by automobile an hour previous and had seen no evidence of fire.

According to Fire Chief Sleeper of the Bar Harbor Town Fire Department, the first report of the fire was telephoned into the Town Fire Department at 4:05 p.m. Friday, October 17, 1947, by a woman who reported that the fire was spreading toward a farm. A second report was received by the Town Fire Department at 4:00 p.m. The Town Fire Department immediately sent a forest fire truck and a portable pump and crew, but Fire Chief Sleeper was unable to tell us the number of men.

Shortly before 6:00 p.m. Fire Chief Sleeper telephoned Acadia National Park headquarters to request assistance with some park pumping equipment and a crew to operate the park equipment. Superintendent Hadley received the call and then turned it over to General Maintenance Foreman Ralph C. Douglas, who was Acting Fire Chief for the park during the absence of Park Ranger Mr. B. Campbell, the Park Fire Chief, who had gone on annual leave October 8, away from Mount Desert Island, and was not due back on duty until October 20. Assistance by park personnel and equipment was provided as recited in the accompanying statements of Mr. Douglas and Linwood E. Mayo.

There has been excellent cooperation between the Bar Harbor Fire Department and the Acadia National Park protection organization in helping each other on all forest fires. Superintendent Hadley states that the park protection zone was bounded as follows: The Brookneck Road from Halls Cove south to the Eagle Lake Road constitutes the northwest protection zone boundary, with the exception of a small fringe around the Lake Wood detached area of the park. The Eagle Lake Road forms the north boundary of the protection zone on the east side of Mount Desert Island, and otherwise the coast line forms the protection zone boundary for this portion of the park, except for the town and immediate environs of Bar Harbor. Fires outside that protection zone within the Bar Harbor Township are under the supervision of the Bar Harbor Town Fire

Department, but receive assistance from the park protection organization whenever requested or necessary.

The fire which originated at Fresh Head was located 2-3/4 miles air line north of the boundary of Acadia National Park, and 1-3/4 miles west of the Lake Umbagog detached portion of the park, and was therefore under the direction of the Town Fire Department.

Fire Chief Mosper stated that the fire was brought under control during the morning of Saturday, October 18, and after that it was apparently just a case of mopping-up and patrol. At that time most of the men on the Island were busily employed and it was difficult for him to get volunteer fire fighters, even though they were to be paid, and also difficult to get them to work diligently at trenching and mopping-up when the fire was not running. He says quite a few men were left on patrol and there were men on duty at all times, but the crew was reduced in number as the extent of smouldering fire in the marsh and duff decreased.

The statements prepared by Superintendent Badley and Fire Boss H. L. Savage reports the rest of the story of the fire as it affects the Acadia National Park.

John D. Coffman,
Chief Forester.

cc: Director
Regional Director
Park Supt.
Fire Boss



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

COPY

~~MEMORANDUM~~
~~TO THE DIRECTOR~~
~~FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT~~
ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
Bar Harbor, Maine

November 1, 1947.

MEMORANDUM for the Director.

Briefly stated the history of the forest fire on Mount Desert Island, Maine, and in Acadia National Park, follows:

A grass fire at Fresh Meadow was reported to the Town of Bar Harbor authorities during the late afternoon Friday, October 17, 1947. Fresh Meadow is a highly-grassed marsh area 3-1/2 miles directly north of Jones Sound and 4 miles northwest of the north shore of Eagle Lake, a point on the boundary of the main body of Acadia National Park. Delliwer's dump (a semi-public operation) is located on the southeast edge of Fresh Meadow. The fire obviously started at the dump, set fire to the grass of Fresh Meadow, and spread to a wooded ridge north and east of the marsh.

Bar Harbor Fire Chief David Sleeper gathered his men and some local residents to attack the fire. He called for assistance, in the form of a water pumper and operating crew, from Superintendent Hadley of Acadia National Park and received it.

By noon of Saturday, October 18, Fire Chief Sleeper and his men considered the fire under control. His emergency help apparently left him for their own personal activities. Chief Sleeper states a patrol crew was left to mop-up.

On the morning of Tuesday, October 21, 1947, the fire revived and aided by a northwest wind swept south and east from Fresh Meadow. Superintendent Hadley investigated following the new alarm and when the fresh fire showed signs of being out of control phoned the Regional Office of the National Park Service in Richmond, Virginia, that same afternoon. Foresters W. L. Savage and E. B. Moore were dispatched by air and arrived at the fire Wednesday afternoon, October 22. By then the fire was in the Acadia National Park west of Eagle Lake and north of Jordan Pond. It was also spreading in another advance on lands lying well north of the park and spreading easterly toward Lakewood and the Village of Hulls Cove. Forester Savage took charge of the fire within the National Park and with the help of Park Service employees, plus soldiers called from Dow Field at Bangor, brought his fire of about 800 acres under control but not out by four in the afternoon.

At about that same time a strong wind came up and rapidly increased to gale strength of 12-15 miles per hour. All fires both in the Park and those being fought by Team forces were swept out of control. There was no possible way to handle them. Park Service men were forced to abandon their lines to save their own lives and those of their crews. The same was true of Team forces. The fire swept uncontrollably into Bar Harbor and adjacent settlements, south along the East coast of the Island, further into Acadia National Park, and south from the original point of origin to Jones Beach and toward Somerville. Scores of buildings both in the towns and in and adjacent to Acadia National Park were completely destroyed. The heat was intense. It is remarkable that no lives were lost.

Additional supervisory help and equipment was rushed to the area by the National Park Service and U. S. Forest Service, Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Red Cross, University of Maine and others all rushed help. Gradually it became organized under National Park Service leadership on Mount Desert Island. Forester W. L. Savage continued untiringly and efficiently as Fire Boss in charge of all operations. He and all his assistants merit high praise.

The fire was considered under control on the Island at 4:40 p.m. October 27, 1947. It is still not all out but is being carefully watched by the cooperating organization of all forces under Fire Boss Savage.

Thomas J. Allen,
Regional Director.

cc: Region One
Mr. Savage
Mr. Hailley

COPY



COPY

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Acadia National Park
Bar Harbor, Maine

November 17, 1947

MEMORANDUM for the Regional Director, Region One.

I enclose five copies of my narrative of events relating to the fire which started on Mt. Desert Island on October 17 and which later entered and swept over nearly a half of the park area.

(Sgd) H. L. Hadley

H. L. Hadley,
Superintendent.

In duplicate.

Enclosure.

Sequence of Events Relating to the Mount
Desert Island Fire of October 17, 1947.

During the day, Friday, October 17, 1947, a fire broke out on the Fresh Meadow in the northern part of the Island. The point of origin was approximately 1-3/4 miles west of the Lakewood section of the park and approximately 2-3/4 miles north of the nearest park boundary on the Eagle Lake Road.

At about 4:45 p.m. Fire Chief David Sleeper of the Bar Harbor Fire Department telephoned to park headquarters to ask if he could have assistance on the fire in the form of a portable pump, hose and a few men. The assistance was granted, and left for the fire at about 5:45 p.m. The assistance comprised the park's Chevrolet fire truck loaded with 2 1/2 and 1 1/2 inch hose and two Pacific portable pumps, a 1 1/2 ton dump truck and five men.

On arriving at the fire our crew found approximately twenty team men. Forces were joined and an attack made. The park men and equipment worked on the fire until Monday morning, October 20. The fire then being considered under control, park men and equipment were withdrawn, and mop up and watching left to the direction of Chief Sleeper.

During the night of October 20, probably after midnight, the wind breezed on briskly from the north west. Early in the morning, Chief Sleeper made an inspection of the fire line and found conditions unfavorable for full control, the fire being fanned into life and threatening to get out of hand. He had a general alarm sounded shortly before 8:00 a.m. and telephoned to the Dow Field Air Base for manpower assistance.

Soon after 9:30 a.m. the fire had escaped its original line and made a run in a southeasterly direction of about a half a mile and had widened to a breadth of two to three hundred yards. Efforts of the fire fighters were concentrated on saving buildings on the west side of the Merry District Road and to keep the fire from crossing to the east side of the road.

Sometime between 9:30 and 11:00 the fire crossed the road, burned a barn and milk house belonging to Hugh E. Kelley, crossed a field into the woods and was on its way to the Norway Drive and the valley of the Old Mill Brook, a section filled with coniferous slash accumulated over a period of seven or eight years.

About 1:30 p.m. an observation from near the Wellington Calisebury house in the Young's District, a mile and a half west of Eagle Lake, disclosed that the fire was advancing in two prongs, the first southward through the valley of the Old Mill Brook and along the west slope of Young's Mountain, the second advancing southward towards Long Heath and Ashen Heath west of the Norway Drive.

From 2:00 p.m. until 4:30 the fire was under constant observation from vantage points on the Cadillac Mountain Road. Its advance was rapid under the influence of the northwest wind, so rapid in fact that it crossed the Eagle Lake Road into the park at about 4:00 p.m. The point of crossing was three-fourths of a mile west of Eagle Lake.

At about 4:30 p.m. flames appeared on the crest of McFarland Mountain at the south end.

Knowing from this that the park was threatened if not already invaded, and that the situation was constantly worsening, a call was made to Region One Office to report conditions and to request help. Shortly after completing the call Forester Savage called back to say that he would leave Richmond by plane early next morning, arriving Bangor, Maine, about noon.

The advance of the fire to the south end of McFarland Mountain threatened several stands of farm buildings and fire-fighting efforts were concentrated on saving them. During the night of the 21st the fire worked around the south end of McFarland Mountain, through the woods between the north end of Eagle Lake and the Eagle Lake Road eastward as far as Duck Brook and for a short distance across it. It also crossed the Eagle Lake Road to the north side, swung around the south end of Brewer's Mountain and worked northward and eastward to Duck Brook and New Eagle Lake Road.

Wednesday, October 22, 1967

At daybreak the fire situation was as described in the preceding paragraph. The day broke clear, with the wind from the northwest, moderate velocity. As the day wore on the wind freshened, fanning the fire into activity on all fronts. Efforts were directed towards cutting the fire off at Aunt Betty Pond on the south and on a line running westerly from the head of New Mill Pond to Half Moon Pond and the Breakneck Road.

At 2:00 p.m. Foresters Savage and Moore arrived in Bar Harbor. They went into conference with Superintendent Hadley, Assistant Superintendent Howack, Ranger Campbell and David A. Sleeper, Chief of the Bar Harbor Fire Department. It was decided that park forces, augmented by such volunteer or other help as could be procured, should attempt to hold the fire in the Aunt Betty Pond - Southwest Valley section of the park. Accordingly, Mr. Savage, Mr. Moore and Ranger Favour, who had come in from the fire and joined them, went to the fire in the Southwest Valley.

Meanwhile the wind had freshened northwest. The fire advanced rapidly southward, forcing the crew at Aunt Betty Pond to withdraw with their pumping equipment to Bubble Pond. Mr. Savage, on arriving at Bubble Pond, told the crew to stand by while he and the others went to the fire to observe its condition and plan an attack.

After observing the fire and holding a consultation, it was decided that a line should be established on which its advance could be held. A line was constructed south of Conners Bubble connecting Eagle Lake with a carriage road. This line was successfully burned out on the head of the fire and the carriage road was successfully burned out on its flank to the intersection at Gilmore Meadow. The operation halted the fire and made it possible to return to Aunt Betty Pond and resume pumping.

Forester Savage called Richmond Office shortly after 5:00 p.m. He requested that four supervisors be assembled from eastern areas and flown to Bar Harbor. Manpower to fight the fire was ample, but supervision was lacking. He also requested that Assistant Chief Forester Cook be flown in to help perfecting the organization.

Mr. Savage and Mr. Moore, with a crew of about fifty including park men and soldiers worked all night on the fire line.

Thursday, October 23, 1947

Mr. Savage and Mr. Moore, with a crew, worked throughout the day on the fire line. At noon they felt that the entire line from near the head of Eagle Lake northwesterly to the Eagle Lake Road could be held. The wind, moderate to brisk southwest, was favorable for holding the line. The park area burned until this time was between five hundred and eight hundred acres.

During the forenoon and early afternoon the southwest wind drove the fire across the line established the day before at the north end. Shortly after noon it became apparent that the Village of Hulls Cove was seriously threatened. Consequently all efforts of the local fire department were directed towards saving the houses in that community.

Soon after three o'clock in the afternoon a change in wind conditions occurred. Without diminishing in velocity the wind began to veer from southwest to west and, with increasing velocity, swung into the northwest. By four o'clock the wind reached gale velocity and the fire became a raging tornado of flame bent apparently on destroying the whole eastern half of Mount Desert Island. The fire advanced with great rapidity from Hulls Cove towards Bar Harbor, entered the western section of the village, consuming nearly three hundred dwellings, swept over the eastern flank of Cadillac Mountain, and the whole of Dorr and Chaplain Mountains, reached the shore at Sol's Cliff, and then raced along the shore to beyond the Thunder Hole.

When the wind changed the crew in the Aunt Betty Pond sector were obliged to withdraw. Their progress to get out was slow due to smoke and flame and it wasn't until late in the evening that all were finally accounted for. No one was injured and no vehicles were lost.

The change of wind resulted in disaster. All the work which had previously been done was lost; nearly one-half of the park area was burned over; over three hundred houses were destroyed causing a loss in taxable property value of over \$1,200,000, and a monetary loss to the owners of possibly ten times that amount, and required a complete reorganization of plans for combatting the fire. Before it was finally checked it burned 13,550 acres, 10,240 of which were in the park.

(Sgd) B. L. Hadley

B. L. Hadley,
Superintendent.

COPY

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

November 13, 1947.

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Secretary.

FROM: The Director, National Park Service.

SUBJECT: The Mount Desert Island Fire.

The Mount Desert Island fire, which started October 17 and later resulted in disaster for the Bar Harbor community and for Acadia National Park, was officially declared out on November 14.

Attached for your information is a resume of this fire prepared by Chief Forester John D. Coffman. Accompanying the report is a topographic map of Acadia National Park and vicinity on which have been outlined the boundaries of the burn. On the smaller map of Mount Desert Island the run of the fire by days or periods has been indicated.

Enclosed also is a set of photographs taken by Regional Director Thomas J. Allen showing the unfortunate results of the burn.

(SND) Weston B. Pray

Director.

Enclosures

cc: Region One

REPORT OF MOUNT DESERT ISLAND FIRE

Date fire started: October 17, 1947.

Fire controlled in Park: 4:40 PM October 27, 1947.

Fire pronounced out at 4:00 PM November 14 by Acadia Fire Boss and Bar Harbor Fire Chief.

Location of fire at start: Fresh Meadow, 2-3/4 miles north of north boundary of Acadia National Park, on private land in area under fire control jurisdiction of Bar Harbor Town Fire Department.

Total area burned: Approximately 20 square miles or 13,560 acres.

Area burned within Acadia National Park: Approximately 16 square miles or 10,240 acres.

Damage: Destruction of buildings and other improvements variously estimated at \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000, mostly outside the Park. Damage to forest varied greatly, from slight to 100 per cent kill, depending on character of stand (coniferous or hardwood), character of fire (crown or ground fire), and velocity of wind at time of burn. Total damage to forest will not be evident until hardwoods leaf out next spring; it is variously estimated at 35 to 80% of the forest stand, including that outside the Park.

Costs within Acadia National Park: The costs of fire suppression within the Park and of reconstruction of Park improvements burned, clean-up and essential reforestation, are estimated as follows:

Fighting forest fire	\$ 50,000
Repairs and reconstruction	95,000
Clean-up and fire hazard reduction	44,000
Reforestation	50,000
Total:	\$239,000

An estimate of the above needs, together with an additional \$50,000 for other fire suppression expenses and reconstruction elsewhere in the National Park System, has been submitted to the Bureau of the Budget justifying a request for a deficiency appropriation.

Brief history of action on fire: Drought conditions prevailed on Mount Desert Island and in Maine beginning in August. Precipitation amounting to 1.01 inches on September 2 and 3 was the only material rainfall experienced on Mount Desert Island until after the control and mop-up of this fire.

As nearly as can be determined, this fire originated in or adjacent to a dump on private land at the edge of a marsh in the northern part of Mount Desert Island at Fresh Meadow. Various persons pay the owner of this land for the privilege of disposing of their rubbish there. The burnable material is disposed of by burning.

Prior to the occurrence of this fire the Governor had issued a proclamation declaring a state of emergency and forbidding any open fires because of the high fire hazard existing at the time. The Bar Harbor Fire Chief had also prohibited any burning operations. As there had been no recent electrical storms, the fire was undoubtedly of man-caused origin. It has been surmised there may have been some fire or smoldering ashes at the dump, although the owner of the dump assured the town Fire Chief that there had been no burning at the dump that would account for the fire.

The first report of the fire was received by the Bar Harbor Fire Department at 4:05 PM Friday, October 17. The town Fire Department immediately sent a fire truck and a portable pump and crew, and called upon Acadia National Park for assistance with additional pump equipment and crew to operate it. This was furnished and the Park crew remained Friday night and Saturday, pumping fourteen hours, until the fire was thoroughly under control Saturday morning. The park portable pumps remained on the fire, with park personnel on call to operate them if needed, until the morning of October 20, when they were released by the town Fire Chief. At the time the park equipment was released, hose had been extended all the way around the burn.

On October 21, under a strong northwest wind, the fire flared up in the early morning and spread rapidly, covering approximately 1,000 acres that day. When the blow-up occurred, the Bar Harbor Fire Chief called the Army Air Force Commandant at Bow Field, Bangor, Maine, and requested assistance. This was promptly supplied with officers, men and equipment from the Army Air Force, and they continued to be the mainstay for fire fighting forces until the fire was under control and well along in the mop-up stage.

The fire crossed the Eagle Lake road and entered Acadia National Park in the late afternoon of October 21. Superintendent Sadley called the Region One Office in Richmond and requested assistance. Regional Forester Arnold was attending a fire control training meeting at Mammoth Cave, but Foresters R. L. Savage and R. E. Moore, attached to the Region One Office, were dispatched to the fire by plane, leaving Richmond at 5:20 AM October 22 and arriving at Bar Harbor about 2:00 PM. Forester Savage took over as Fire Boss for the Park, and that night request was telephoned for additional overhead assistance. Assistant Chief Forester L. F. Cook of the Director's Office and four experienced park officers from Shenandoah National Park left Washington by Navy plane the morning of October 23. Following this, 18 additional experienced park officers were brought from various eastern areas of the National Park System, and 10 experienced forest officers from the Southeast Region of the Forest Service, and all dispatched by Army planes to Bar Harbor Airport.

Sufficient fire fighting personnel to handle the situation were obtainable from normal sources because of the numerous bad fires

burning in Maine. The armed forces furnished large numbers of men, equipment and supplies. The Army Air Force at Dow Field sent fire fighters, hose, communication equipment, transportation and supplies. The U. S. Navy sent two destroyers and the Coast Guard two cutters. The University of Maine and Bangor Theological Seminary permitted upperclass students to volunteer for duty under faculty supervision. The liaison between these numerous forces, the Service, the town organizations and local volunteers was a tremendous job, particularly when the fire was controlled and evidence of need for intensive mop-up action was less apparent to the layman.

A maximum of 350 fire fighters worked under the National Park Service supervision during the height of the fire, and an additional 300 organized and volunteer municipal fire crews from adjacent towns on the mainland and Island worked on that portion of the fire outside the national park. There were 24 miles of fire line around the perimeter of the burn, and the Communications Division of the Army Air Force gave invaluable assistance by laying emergency wires and providing telephone communication with the important stations around the fire lines.

The overhead provided by the National Park Service and the Forest Service included men who had had experience in fighting forest fires in all parts of this country, and many of them agreed that the job of mopping-up on this fire was the most difficult they had ever encountered because of the rocky character of the area which made efficient trenching impossible in many places. Water was therefore invaluable for mop-up purposes, and fortunately Acadia is blessed with an abundance of lakes and ponds, and sea water was likewise used. Many portable pumps and miles of hose lines were employed in this work.

Plans for rehabilitation: A large amount of the killed forest growth along the roads will have to be removed because of its menace to travel. Several requests have already been received from lumber companies who wish to obtain such killed timber as will be merchantable for lumber. Steps are now being taken by the Service to utilize timber sales and free use as a partial means for hazard reduction and clean-up.

November 18, 1947

(SND) J. B. COFFMAN

Chief Forester.



LOG OF MOUNT DESERT ISLAND FIRE

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
(October 23 - 30, 1947)

OCTOBER 23, 1947 (Notes by Coffman)

Forester Ralph E. Smith reported by telephone from Richmond at 3:15 p.m. October 23 that Forester E. L. Savage had called from Acadia at noon to report the present situation relating to the forest fire.

The fire started outside the park to the northwest of Aunt Betty Pond and the Eagle Lake region. A northwest wind drove the fire toward Eagle Lake and into the park. From a point about 2,000 feet north of the south end of Eagle Lake on the west side, they utilized a carriage road for backfiring and carried that around to Gilmore Meadow, and from there north to Aunt Betty Pond. They now have 70 men mopping up on that sector.

A force of 40 men were making a direct attack on the fire to the west of Aunt Betty Pond. The wind had shifted from northwest to southwest, and that was helping them on that sector, making it possible to flank the fire.

The Bar Harbor townspeople and a large number of other firefighters were out fighting the fire which was burning toward Halls Cove. There is a probability that the park land in the Lake Umbagog area will be burned over.

All told, Savage estimated that 500 to 600 acres of national park land had been burned and that there may be 100-200 acres more.

Harold Foster from Camden Hills is assisting on the Acadia fire but plans to return to Camden Hills as soon as there is sufficient overhead on the Acadia fire, since there is a fire burning about a mile from Camden Hills.

Savage thought that with the overhead sent from here this morning by Navy plane there would be sufficient overhead, and there appears to be plenty of manpower for firefighters, including Army and Navy personnel.

Smith plans to remain in Richmond until Regional Forester Arnold returns from Mammoth Cave fire school tomorrow or Saturday, and will probably report to Washington Monday morning if everything goes well.

OCTOBER 24, 1947

Shortly after 9:00 a.m., a call was placed for the Region One Office and Mr. Drury and Mr. Coffman talked with Regional Director Allen, Associate Regional Director Cox and Forester Ralph Smith. They reported that Mr. Foster of Camden Hills had called at 1:00 a.m. while enroute from Acadia to Camden Hills and reported that he was returning from Acadia to Camden Hills, to look after fire protection at Camden Hills where a fire was burning near by, and that Mr. Savage had asked him to advise the Regional Office of the situation and would report as soon as their needs could be determined. The fire had spread disastrously during the night under a high gale and the picture was very confused. Fires were burning in the Town of Bar Harbor, as reported on the radio.

Later in the morning the Regional Office called after hearing from Superintendent Hadley, and transmitted his report as to the approximate outline of the fire, which he estimated had burned over nearly half of the park land on the eastern portion of Mount Desert Island. He stated that the Army Air Force would furnish manpower but that 20 additional experienced men were needed for overhead. They also needed the following equipment: 10 portable pumps; 6 power saws; 100 back-pack pumps; electric headlights, and 20 miles of 1 1/2 inch hose.

Mr. Wirth immediately initiated contacts with the Navy and the U.S. Air Force in an endeavor to obtain plane transportation for the men and equipment.

Mr. Coffman called the Fire Control Office of the Forest Service to see if they could offer any assistance in locating the needed equipment and if they could spare any overhead from the White Mountain National Forest or elsewhere. Mr. A. A. Brown, Chief of Fire Control, was enroute to Michigan. His Assistant, Mr. Gustafson, formerly a forest supervisor in California, had just reported for duty in this new position about a week ago.

Inquiries were made by Mr. Gustafson as to the availability of any Forest Service personnel in the Northeast, and he advised that the situation was too critical to permit of the loan of men from national forests in that region, but that he was able to obtain 10 experienced men forest officers from the South, who were to report tonight for transportation at the airfield at Atlanta. Mr. Wirth arranged with the Air Force to have a plane pick these men up at 1:30 tomorrow morning (October 25).

The attached list shows Region One personnel sent to Washington to be flown to Bangor, Maine, by the Air Force.

The plane coming from Atlanta, Georgia, with the Forest Service personnel will stop at Washington to pick up as many as possible of these men to make a plane load of 20, and any surplus will either go with a plane which is to take cargo or else in an additional plane.

Mr. Gustafson of the Forest Service located 6 Pacific Marine Type Y pumps and 10,000 feet of new 1½ inch hose at Waters West, Michigan, and Mr. Wirth made arrangements with the Air Force for a plane to pick up the pumps at noon tomorrow at the airport at Earl Oakes to fly it through to Acadia. It should arrive there by 8:00 p.m. Saturday.

Mr. Francis E. Carr of this Service, and Messrs. Bergh and Anderson of National Capital Parks assisted in the location of equipment. They located 114,000 feet of 1½ inch c.i.p.l. hose at the War Assets Administration at the Port of Newark Naval Depot. Mr. Wirth arranged with Major Ruote to have this transported by plane and the Major arranged to have four B-47 planes report to the Newark Airport at 8:30 p.m. this evening to transport this hose to Dow Field at Bangor, Maine, tonight.

The Region One Office located one used and 4 new W.A.S. power saws and had these brought by truck to Washington to be loaded on the cargo plane. These will go out early tomorrow morning.

One hundred 5-gallon pumps were located at Schenectady, New York, through W.A.S., and arrangements were made with the U.S. Air Force to fly these to Bangor, Maine. The plane was ready to take off at 8:30 p.m. Mr. Ted Smith arranged this with Col. Thompson, of the First Army Headquarters, G-4, Governors Island, New York.

Mr. Gustafson of the Forest Service arranged for a plane carrying Forest Service equipment to pick up 200 electric headlights and batteries at Missoula, Montana, and transport these to Concord, New Hampshire. They should arrive there before noon tomorrow, and contact should be made with the Forest Service at Laconia, New Hampshire, in regard to their transportation to Bar Harbor.

The sequence of contacts in making arrangements, mainly for transportation, was as follows: On the 23rd, contact was made with Capt. Fitzhugh Lee, in Assistant Secretary of the Navy Sullivan's Office, and he immediately put us in touch with Capt. L. Conn who made arrangements for a Navy plane to fly a party of 8 from Chamundosh to Acadia. On the 24th, when further transportation was needed, we got in touch with both Capt. Lee and Capt. Conn, and they told us that the amount of transportation we needed was more than they could handle, and that we should get in touch with Col. Long, their opposite in the Air Force. Col. Long was very cooperative, and told us to get in touch with him further when we had more definite information and told us to contact a Major Ruote. When we knew exactly what we wanted, we got in touch with Major Ruote. He was most helpful, and immediately took care of all of our requests as fast as we gave them to him.

In talking to Capt. Conn, information was requested of him as to possible radio communication through the Navy communication lines, and he suggested calling Lt. Comdr. (Mrs.) Young. She also was very helpful in giving information about the proper persons to contact. She named a Commander Barnard, who arranged alerted Navy radio communication with Bar Harbor and made it available to us at any time we wanted it.

When we were looking for surplus equipment this afternoon, we called Mr. Howard Greenberg of the War Assets Administration (an ex-N.P.C. employee) who immediately got in touch with Mr. Scott Donaldson, and they called back to give us telephone numbers of their Regional Directors in New York and Boston, and told us that if we had any trouble getting the equipment cleared to have them call Mr. Donaldson direct and he would clear it over the telephone. We got in touch with Mr. Bushholz, W.A.A., New York City, and it was through him that we got clearance for 114,000 feet of hose.

Everyone we contacted in the U.S. Air Force, the Navy, and the War Assets Administration was very cooperative and couldn't do enough for us. Major Suets was especially cooperative, and all it took was a telephone call to him to have planes dispatched wherever we needed them, in order to pick up equipment and men. Letters to the proper authorities should be written, thanking them for the services of the above men.

Late in the evening Regional Director Allen telephoned that he had just heard from Superintendent Hadley and gave us some changes in the boundaries of the burn. The wind had lessened and it was hoped the fire could be held from such further spread if the wind stayed down. Mr. Allen was advised of the action taken by this Office regarding equipment, transportation, etc., and promised to relay the information on to the park.

Later in the evening, after Mr. Wirth made arrangements for radio communication, a radio message was sent to Superintendent Hadley, advising him of the arrangements made. The message is as follows:

10:55 p.m.

Superintendent Hadley,
Acadia National Park,
Bar Harbor, Maine.

57,000 feet of hose arriving Army plane about 1:00 A.M. Saturday.

10 Forest Service men and 17 park men arriving about 9:30 A. M. in two planes together with limited fire equipment and five power saws.

100 back-pack pumps should arrive by midnight. 6 Pacific pumps will arrive from Wisconsin about 3:00 P.M. Saturday.

Radio via Navy whether in morning any additional needs and general conditions of fire.

Coffman.

OCTOBER 24, 1947 (Notes by F. Z. Carr)

100 back-pack pumps will be flown by the U. S. Army Air Corps to Bangor, Maine. The plane was ready to take off at 6:30 p.m., Washington time; Mr. Ted Smith arranged this with Col. Thompson of First Army Headquarters, G-4, Governors Island, New York.

Mr. Wirth is arranging for the pick-up of 114,000 feet of 1½-inch cotton fire hose from War Assets Administration, New York City, with Mr. Brennan and Mr. Bushholz. Mr. Wirth has the information on this.

Material was located at Port Newark Naval Supply Depot (fire hose above).

200 electric lanterns, plus 1000 battery replacements, were requested delivered to the fire area, the call being made by Mr. Carr. These were to be sent by U.S.N. trucks from the Navy Yard, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Lt. Cmdr. Halley, U.S.N., Extension 8141, handled the matter. This order was placed verbally by Carr and 1 hour and 15 minutes later was canceled by direction of Mr. Coffman because electric lanterns were not cap-type. Lt. Cmdr. Halley was called, and order canceled. However, the Commander did not know whether he could stop the truck, believing that it had already been dispatched to the fire area.

Mr. Coffman requested Carr to get information as to where 6 power saws could be obtained. In cooperation with Mr. Bergh and Mr. Anderson, Procurement Officers respectively, of National Capital Parks, an order was placed at approximately 3:25 p.m., Washington time, with the James Supply Company, P.O., Box 120, Kane, Pennsylvania, Phone 480-J, with Mr. William R. James. After Mr. Bergh had placed this order for 6 power saws with the James Supply Company, Carr informed Mr. Coffman of this fact. During the interim, however, Mr. Coffman had received word from Region One at Richmond to the effect that that area had 6 saws available, and requested Carr to cancel the order for the 6 saws. Cancellation was made approximately one hour later.

A Mr. Howard James, whose address Carr did not know since Mr. Coffman spoke with the gentleman, called this Office about an hour and a half after the order mentioned above was canceled, expressing regret at this cancellation. Mr. Howard James stated that, at 10 o'clock this morning, October 24, his organization--the Henry Diston & Sons Co., Inc.--had organized a crew of 10 to 20 men, fully equipped with 10 of their power saws; had engaged a chartered airplane; and was preparing to fly the crew and equipment, at no expense to the Government, to the fire area. Evidently the cancellation of our order for 6 power saws was confused by Mr. James with this expedition, which is one that may

have been organized by the Governor of Maine, with the result that he (Mr. Jones) disbanded the crew and canceled the chartered plane. Through no fault of Mr. Coffman or the Department of the Interior was this noteworthy expedition canceled.

OCTOBER 25, 1947

List of National Park Service personnel being flown from Washington, D. C., to Bangor, Maine, in connection with Acadia National Park fire;

From Colonial National Historical Park, Yorktown, Virginia:

Ernest L. Wright, Jr.

From Shenandoah National Park, Luray, Virginia:

Robert F. Gibbs, Chief Park Ranger.

Roy C. Sullivan.

James W. Van Woelden.

Victor R. Stenver.

From Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

J. Melvin Price.

Fred A. Wingers.

Comodore C. Dunn.

From Blue Ridge Parkway, 625 First Street, S.W., Roanoke 16, Virginia.

Bernard T. Campbell, Chief Ranger.

Carl P. Schreiber.

James W. Luck.

From Mammoth Cave National Park.

Granville B. Liles, Chief Ranger.

Raymond D. McKeown.

Leslie E. Reynolds.

Gilbert L. Sanders.

Joe T. Hall.

From Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York. NOT IN THIS GROUP

Ivan J. Ellsworth.

GOING DIRECT TO
FIRE AREA

From Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial National Monument, Put-in-Bay, Ohio.

Joseph E. Prantico.

From Region One Office, National Park Service, Richmond, Virginia.

Fred H. Arnold, Regional Forester.

OCTOBER 25 (Notes by Chief Forester Coffman October 25-26, 1947)

- 10:16 a.m. Gustafson of WPS called to inquire about flight of F. S. gun from Atlanta and arrangements for picking up pumpers and hose in Wisconsin; also conditions in Acadia.
- 10:25 a.m. Put in call for Tom Allen, Richmond and talked with him and Smith 9:30-9:44.
- 10:47 a.m. Major Vanderwolf talked with Ted Smith re back-pack pumps.
- 10:50 a.m. Called Mr. Drury and reported information up to now.
- 11:03 a.m. Called Mrs. Moulding's home; left word that Mr. Atwell's house probably burned.
- 11:10 a.m. Mr. Tolson came in and was given fire news to date.
- 11:45 a.m. to 12:00 Tom Allen and Ralph Smith reported.
- 12:06 p.m. Called Capt. Rogers to tell him that Acadia wants the remainder of the hose from Newark.
- 12:15 p.m. Tried to get Mr. Drury, but no answer.
- 12:20 p.m. Called Mrs. Moulding and advised that Jess Atwell's house had not burned.
- 12:45 p.m. Capt. Rogers called and reported he could not locate hose at Newark.
- 12:50 p.m. Called Wirth and gave him report of situation.
- 1:00-1:15 p.m. Tried to get MAA, Scott Donaldson at home, and Peirce of F. S. to see if I could raise anyone with MAA, but no response.
- 1:25 p.m. Called Tolson at Cosmos Club and gave him latest report.
- 1:50 p.m. Called Mr. Drury and gave him latest information.
- 2:00 p.m. Capt. Rogers called and said he had located the balance of the hose at Bayonne, N. J., and would ship from Newark airport at 3:00 p.m. to New Field, Bangor.
- 2:25 p.m. Ted Smith phoned radio messages to C. G. New Field and Supt. Hadley re hose delivery.
- 2:50 p.m. Closed shop for afternoon.
- 3:15 p.m. Capt. Rogers called to report delay in delivery of pumpers and hose from Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin.
- 9:20 p.m. J.P.C. called Allen residence in Richmond but no answer, so he called Ralph Smith and obtained evening report from him. All quiet on WPS fire lines.
- 9:30-9:50 p.m. Called Mr. Drury, Mr. Demaray and Mr. Tolson and gave the evening report to each of them.

OCTOBER 26, 1947

- 2:27 p.m. Coffman placed call for Regional Director Allen at his home. to
- 3:55 p.m.

OCTOBER 27, 1947 (Notes by Forester Walker)

- 8:15 a.m. Chief Forester Coffman left Interior Building enroute to Acadia National Park via Army plane from Bolling Field. Same plane will pick up Regional Director Allen at Richmond, VA.
- 9:50 a.m. Richmond called and reported that last shipment of hose and pumpers had not arrived in Acadia.

- 9:15 a.m. Wirth called Major Suote and told him that last load of hose and pumps had not arrived. Suote said he would check on this.
- 9:30 a.m. Ralph Smith from Richmond called in regard to the hose and pumps. I told him that we were checking on this and would call them as soon as we had any information.
- 10:15 a.m. Called Major Suote about lost hose and pumps. He said that hose and pumps were delivered to Low Field, Bangor, Maine. Pumps arrived about 5:00 p.m. 10/24/47 and the hose on 10/25/47.
- 10:45 a.m. Called Richmond Office and gave them information about arrival of hose and pumps at Bow Field.
- 12:30 p.m. Richmond Office called and ordered 100 copies of the Acadia topographic maps; 1,000 flashlight batteries and 500 Pulaski tools. Wirth took the call.
- 1:15 p.m. Called Mr. Walley, Forest Service, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, about obtaining 500 Pulaski tools. They had 60 and I told Mr. Walley I would try to get the 500 at one place.
- 1:30 p.m. Called Major Suote in regard to possibility of picking up Pulaski tools at Missoula, Montana. He said that the necessary arrangements could be made.
- 2:00 p.m. Called Mr. Crocker, Forest Service, Missoula, Montana and made necessary arrangements to have Army plane pick up the 500 Pulaski tools at Spokane, Washington.
- 2:10 p.m. Called Major Suote and asked him to have plane pick up the Pulaski tools at the Spokane, Washington, airport and told him to advise the Forest Service at Missoula, Montana when the plane would pick up the tools. Arrangements satisfactory to Major Suote. Also made arrangements for Army plane to take maps and flashlight batteries to Bow Field, Bangor, Maine.
- 2:55 p.m. Called Richmond Office and told them to notify Acadia National Park that maps and flashlight batteries would arrive Bow Field about 9:30 p.m. and that Pulaski tools will arrive Bow Field October 26, sometime in the evening.
- 4:40 p.m. Richmond Office called Wirth and reported Acadia fire under control. Total area burned 13,550 acres. Total area burned in park 10,240 acres. Wirth advised the Director and Under Secretary Chapman that the fire was under control.

OCTOBER 26, 1947

- 9:00 a.m. Mr. Wirth received a call from the Richmond Office to the effect that they were going to alert 3 men in Great Smoky Mountains National Park and requested this office to call Region Two to alert ten men from that Region that could go to Acadia if needed. These men may be needed as relief fire foremen. Richmond Office also requested 3 pickup and 1 dump truck for use on the fire. Wirth told them that this office would try to get the trucks but they should make arrangements for drivers. Mr. Rittase will procure the trucks.

9:30 a.m. Mr. Wirth called Regional Director Merriam, Omaha, Nebraska and requested him to alert ten men for possible fire control duty at Acadia. Men will probably come from Glacier and Yellowstone. Wirth told Merriam that we would call them if the men were needed and wire them if they were not needed.

11:00 a.m. Mr. Wirth called the Richmond Office and told them that the pickup and dump trucks could probably be obtained at Somerville, Mass., and that they should devote their efforts to getting men to drive them from that point to Acadia National Park.

OCTOBER 29, 1947

5:10 p.m. Regional Director Allen and Chief Forester Coffman called from Acadia. Coffman reported that Pulaski tools had not arrived. He also reported cause and location of start of fire and that there were 130 men on the fire. Coffman talked with Mr. Neilson on arrangements for paying student fire fighters. Neilson gave his okay. Director Wray came in the office and he talked with Mr. Allen.

8:45 p.m. Called Major Duote in regard to the lost Pulaski tools. He will check on this and let me know.

OCTOBER 30, 1947

Major Duote called and said the Pulaski tools were taken to the wrong airfield in Spokane, Washington but this was straightened out and that as far as he could find out, the tools were delivered to Bow Field, Bangor, Maine.

Telegram from Allen, Coffman and Hadley requesting our assistance in urging War Department to retain troops on fire. Prepared telegrams to War Department requesting retention of troops on fire.

Mr. Gustafson, Forest Service, Washington, D.C. called in regard to releasing some of the Forest Service men from the fire. I told him to get in touch with Chief Forester Coffman or Assistant Chief Forester Cook at Bar Harbor on this matter.

SUPERVISION ON MOUNT DESERT ISLAND FIRE OCT. 22 - NOV. 6, 1947

Date of Arrival

Local Area Personnel

- 10/17 Superintendent Hadley Fire Chief Sleeper NHPD
 Assistant Superintendent Harash, Clerk L. Hays
 Rangers Favour, Thompson, Campbell
 Mechanics Douglas, Gray, Gray, Williamson
 Maintenancemen
- 10/22 Forester W. L. Savage (Fire Boss) Region I
 Forester R. B. Moore (Liaison) Region I
- 10/23 Assistant Chief Forester L. P. Cook (Relief Fire Boss) Director's Office
 Park Ranger L. Y. Berg (Sector Boss) Shenandoah National Park
 Fire Control Aid J. R. Johnson (Foreman) Shenandoah National Park
 Park Warden Benton (Foreman) Shenandoah National Park
 Park Ranger P. H. Johnson (Foreman) Shenandoah National Park
 Custodian Foster (Sector Boss) Camden Hills, MEA
 Mechanic R. Robertson (Foreman) Camden Hills, MEA
- 10/25 Regional Forester F. H. Arnold (Progress) Region I
 Ranger E. L. Wright, Jr. (Foreman) Colonial NHP
 Chief Ranger B. P. Gibbs (Div. Boss) Shenandoah National Park
 Ranger R. S. Sullivan (Foreman) Shenandoah National Park
 Ranger J. W. Van Weelden (Foreman) Shenandoah National Park
 Ranger V. R. Steuwer (Foreman) Shenandoah National Park
 Warden J. M. Price (Foreman) Great Smoky Mountain National Park
 Warden F. A. Wingalar (Foreman) Great Smoky Mountain National Park
 Warden C. C. Dunn (Foreman) Great Smoky Mountain National Park
 Chief Ranger B. T. Campbell (Sector Boss) Blue Ridge Parkway
 Ranger C. P. Schreiber (Foreman) Blue Ridge Parkway
 Ranger J. W. Luck (Foreman) Blue Ridge Parkway
 Chief Ranger G. B. Liles (Sector Boss-Special) Mammoth Cave NP
 Ranger E. D. McKeown (Foreman) Mammoth Cave NP
 Wardenhouseman L. E. Reynolds (Equipment) Mammoth Cave NP
 Ranger G. L. Sanders (Foreman) Mammoth Cave NP
 Ranger J. T. Hall (Foreman) Mammoth Cave NP
 Custodian I. J. Ellsworth (Sector Boss) Saratoga NHP
 Custodian J. H. Prentiss (Foreman) Perry's Victory NHP
- Asst. Chief of Fire Control J. W. Cooper, USFS, Region 8,
 Atlanta, Ga. (Div. Boss-Progress)
- Asst. Supervisor (Chattahoochee) John B. Spring, USFS, Region 8,
 Gainesville, Ga. (Div. Boss-Progress)
- Fred Huff, USFS, Region 8, Atlanta, Ga. (Sector Boss)
- Forester (Farm Forestry) H. E. Pilmer, USFS, Region 8, Atlanta,
 Ga., (Foreman)
- Asst. Supervisor (Texas Nat. For.) E. Ranshaw, USFS, Region 8,
 Atlanta, Ga., (Div. Boss)

Forester (Coop. Fire Control) A. D. Smith, USFS, Region 8,
 Atlanta, Georgia (Sector Boss)
 Supervisor of Equipment J. E. Black, USFS, Region 8, Atlanta,
 Georgia, (Equipment)
 L. Howarth, USFS, Region 8, Valdosta, Georgia (Div. Boss)
 Asst. Supervisor (Charleston NF) J. Prykman, USFS, Cleveland,
 Tennessee (Sector Boss)

10/26 MacLaughlin, USFS, Region 8, Centerville, Alabama

10/27 Regional Director T. J. Allen (observer) Region 1
 Chief Forester J. C. Coffman (observer) Director's Office

10/28 Forester A. A. Wimer, USFS, Region 8, Millametta, Oregon
 (Foreman)
 M. T. Connery, Laconia, New Hampshire (Pump Mechanic)