

SAFETY BULLETIN : Muddy Creek Near Miss Incident 72 Hour Expanded Report

**United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Oregon/Washington State Office
333 SW First Ave
Portland, Oregon 97204**

**Muddy Creek Near Miss Incident
72 Hour Expanded Report**

August 7, 2009

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO
CHANGE**

LOCATION: Prineville District - mixed ownership lands with private and BLM

DATE OF OCCURRENCE: August 3, 2009

INCIDENT TIME: approximately 1630

RESOURCES INVOLVED: 1 AFMO, 1 T4 engine, 2 T6 Engines, 2 Land Owners

ACTIVITY: Fire Suppression

NUMBER OF INJURIES: 0

NUMBER OF FATALITIES: 0

PROPERTY DAMAGE: None

NARRATIVE:

The Muddy Creek Fire was started by lightning on August 1, 2009. The fire was located on private lands outside of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) fire protection.

On August 2, the Prineville District staff began monitoring the fire to assess threats against BLM protected lands. On August 3, 2009, BLM staff made a decision to engage the fire on a limited basis with three engines and leadership. Tactics included using indirect line to burn out and hold along Robinson Ridge. During this initial burning period, fire behavior increased to the point that the primary escape routes became compromised and the advancing fire front threatened the location of the engines and command vehicle. This occurred as the engines and the command vehicle were moving down the line (out of the fire area using one of two escape routes). In addition, there were two landowner representatives on ATVs moving with the BLM group.

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The fire front crossed the escape route as the lead engine was moving through it. This engine found good black and parked. The remaining two engines, command vehicle and ATVs were cut off and moved in the opposite direction to an area that had been previously identified as a potential safety zone. At this point, leadership has recognized that the second escape route has been compromised and the fire front was advancing on their location.

The decision to burn out the safety zone was made and implemented. A black safety zone of at least one acre was produced and the vehicles were parked in it. The main fire front passed around the group and moved past their location. No injuries to personnel or damage to equipment was experienced.

On August 5, 2009, a three person facilitative team performed a Lessons Learned Review with the primary principles involved. A final report will be ready for dissemination through the fire community for intent of organizational learning in the next two weeks.