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Date: October 15, 2001
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Route To: Okanogan and Wenatchee N.Fs Fire Staff, Partnership Council and Files

Subject: Okanogan Dispatch Reply to the Thirthymile Fire Investigation Report

To: Maureen Hanson, Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests Administrative Officer

Listed below are corrections and clarifications to inaccurate accounts found in the Thirthymile Fire Investigation Report, September 26, 2001.

Page and reference numbers will be used to assist the reviewer.

Item 1. Pg. 5, Reference 20, The NWR #6 crew was ordered for Action #103, Thirthymile Fire, WA-OKF-049 C-2, they never were ordered for the Libby South Fire.

Item 2. Pg. 7, The weather forecast issued by the National Weather Service-Spokane and was broadcast at 1045 on both the Methow and Okanogan channels on July 10, 2001.

Item 3. Pg. 7, Reference 34, There was no 20-person crew staged at Tonasket, WA. Two additional crews orders were placed and filled from the Colville National Forest with ETA 2000 July 10, 2001.

Item 4. Pg. 9, Reference 44, there is no reference in the dispatch log regarding the statement; The fireline construction was difficult with a lot of roots.

Item 5. Pg. 13, Reference 69 and 73, At 1427 Air Attack requested a couple of engines; Okanogan Dispatch dispatched E-704 and E-701. There were no specific tactical strategies relayed to either engine from Okanogan Dispatch. Okanogan Dispatch participated in a radio relay to the engines; try to keep the fire from crossing the road. Okanogan Dispatch did not and does not direct suppression tactics. At 1558 Okanogan Dispatch was advised; pulled crews to road – trying to keep from (fire) crossing road...

Item 6. Pg. 23-7, The afternoon forecast is broadcast at 1600 daily. On July 10, 2001 at 1558 it was announced that the crews were pulled back to the road, a TFR was requested at 1603, 6 aerial resources were currently working the fire, at 1618 L-66 asked if he could use the heavy (air tankers) on South Libby? Again at 1634 Air Attack advises; crew moving down road. The radio traffic had been nonstop on Action #103, Thirthymile Fire, on the afternoon of July 10 and the 1600 weather forecast was not read on the Methow channel.

Item 7. Pg. 35-5, Okanogan Dispatch contacted the District Duty Officer at 2129 on July 9, 2001 regarding Action #103 and was kept informed and/or was copying the radio traffic from the district office. Reference the dispatch log for contact times.

Item 8. Pg. 40-3, Reference Item 6 above.



Item 9. Pg. 49, Sally Estes, Dispatch Coordinator, was asked to clarify the dispatch log and interpret the handwriting and was not what I would call interviewed. Gary Reed, Assistant Dispatcher, was not the Methow Valley Ranger District Duty Officer.

Item 10. Pg. 54, The 0830 weather forecast was broadcast at 1045 on both the Methow and Okanogan channels. Reference Item 2 above.

Item 11. Pg. 81, Reference Item 7. The District Duty Officer was advised at 2129 regarding Action # 103 and was kept informed either by radio or by phone. Reference the dispatch log for contact times.

The following was omitted from the Thirthemile Fire Investigation Report;
Okanogan Dispatch log July 10, 2001 Thirtymile Fire

1246, OKF Dispatch - SEAT available at OMK

IC - no need for SEAT at this time

1252, OKF Dispatch - SEAT available

IC - will wait and see if Air Attack thinks after he looks at fire, no need for SEAT at this time

1315, Air Attack - requested SEAT

1338, Air Attack - needs additional air support, soon

We feel the investigation team by not interviewing the initial attack dispatchers that were on duty during Action 103, Thirthemile Fire, did not permit an accurate account of the events of July 10, 2001 resulting in inaccurate report.

/s/ Sally A. Estes
SALLY A. ESTES
Dispatch Coordinator