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**Route To:**

**Subject:** Staff Rides

**To:** Forest Supervisors and Directors

A staff ride is a planned learning event that has been used effectively by various branches of the U.S. military since the early 1900's. The common purpose shared by staff rides is to further the development of leaders. Region 5 has sponsored several individuals to accompany Marine Corps University officers on staff rides. They have proven to be an excellent resource for assistance in developing and planning staff rides in California.

Military staff rides typically discuss leadership, decision-making, tactics and strategy. Staff rides on wildland fires discuss the same issues in a different context. The systematic study of wildland fire sites can help wildland firefighters and managers see how leaders' decisions and followers' behaviors influence tactical outcomes on fires, how terrain and weather influence both fire and human behavior on fires, and how technology, tactics and organization interacts in a wildland fire setting at any complexity level. When these personal observations are combined with curiosity and diligence, the groundwork is laid for a lifetime of learning that produces leaders who are mentally prepared for wildland firefighting.

I fully support the development and use of staff rides as a leadership and knowledge development tool for leaders at all levels within the Forest Service. The staff ride concept has proven many times over, that leadership and decision making skills are enhanced through an in depth examination of the fire dynamics and human behavior.

If you wish to learn more about staff rides or want assistance in developing staff rides in your area please contact Shirley Sutliff of my staff at (916) 640-1058.

/s/ Ray Quintanar  
RAY QUINTANAR  
Director, Fire and Aviation Management

cc: Forest Fire Management Officers

