



Emergency Management Issues Special Interest Group Annual Meeting

EPI Lessons Learned from Jefferson Fire 2010: A Golden Opportunity for INL Emergency Public Information

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May 2-5, 2011 Charleston Marriott • Charleston, South Carolina



Our opportunity to shine, or not...

- On July 13, 2010, the largest wild land fire ever recorded in INL history, over 100,000 acres (approximately 170 square miles), began to burn
- This fast-moving wild land fire burned for three days stretching from the southern end of a 900-square-mile facility to the north end and beyond
- Operating facilities were nearby and the fire was moving fast. Fifty mph gusts pushed the fire more quickly than could be normally-contained and the local public and media was very interested, along with INL employees
- How did we handle the attention? What did we learn?



Channel 8 News Broadcast 6:00 pm.



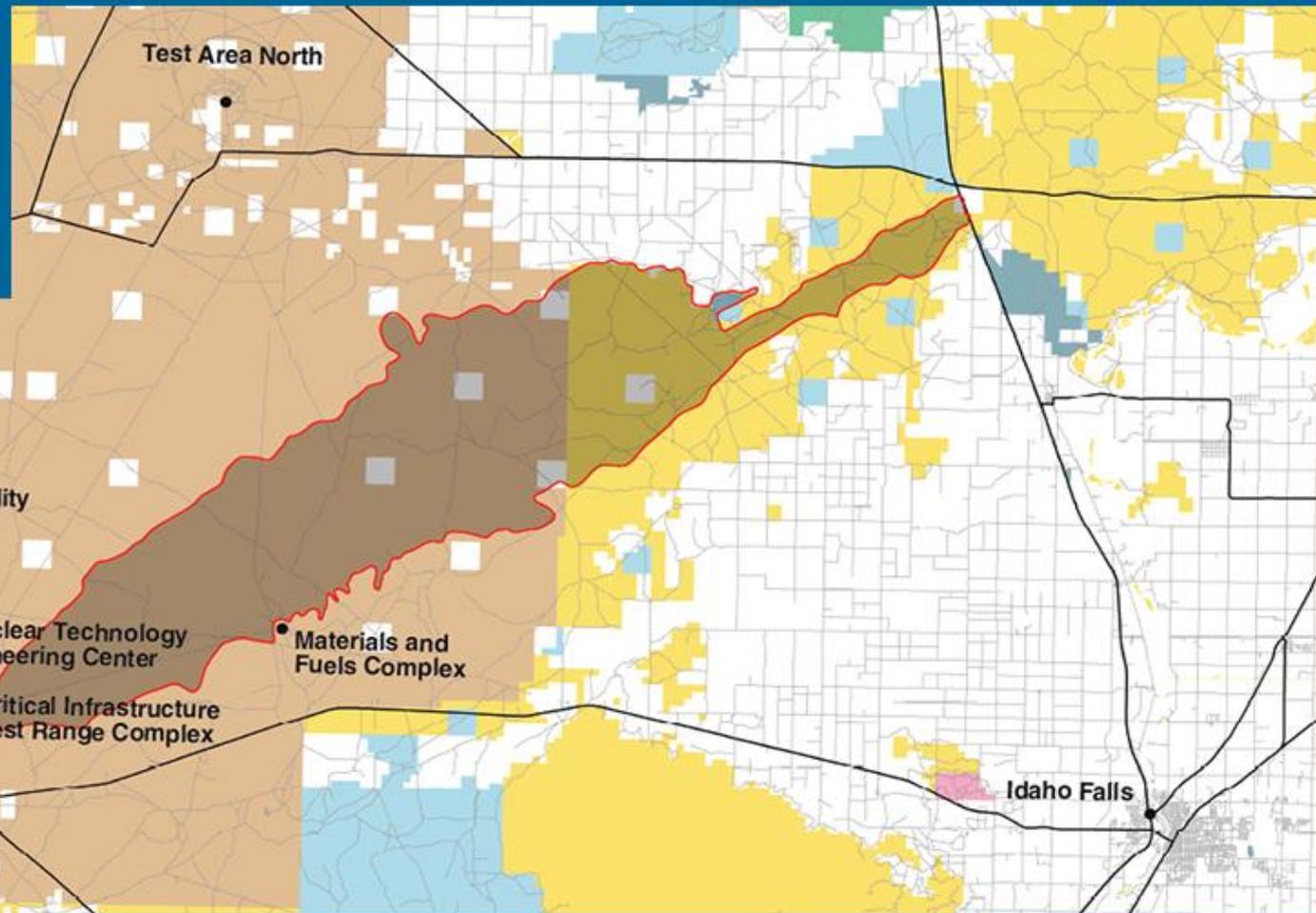
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Jefferson Fire 2010 – 7/14/10 1030

Jefferson Fire

Ownership	Acres
BLM	27,115
DOE	80,932
Private	419
State	1,001

Total 109,467



Event Timeline



- Joint Information Center operational at 3:00 p.m. (1500 hours)
- Unofficial fire citing: 2:56 p.m. (1456)
- Media on highway near scene by notification form #2 – approximately 3:20 p.m.
- First news release distributed at 3:22 p.m.
- News Release #3 – 5:06 p.m.
 - At 4:40 p.m. the fire was estimated to be at least 15,000 acres (more than 23 sq. mi.)

INL External Website

In the event of an emergency, INL posts an alert portlet, which directs people to a running chronology of the event.



Emergency Event



Wildfire event
Click here to get the most up-to-date news about the current wildfire event.

[More](#)



The screenshot shows the INL website interface. The top navigation bar includes "Home", "Newsroom", "About INL", and "Careers". The main content area features a "Wildfire event" alert portlet, which is circled in orange. Below the alert, there is a "Radiation Monitoring Info" section. The bottom of the page displays a "News Release" for the "Jefferson Fire 100 percent contained, firefighters monitor hot spots", dated July 13, 2010, at 6:45 p.m.

Event Timeline, cont.



- News release #3 has links to INL weather cameras provided by NOAA so that the fire can be viewed by media and public
- News release #4 (6:31 p.m.) reports that power has been turned off to utility lines that feed the MFC and that the TREAT (Transient Reactor Test Facility – used only for storage and training activities) is within 300 yards of the fire.
- At this point, local media are still reporting from the highway and the road leading to Materials and Fuels Complex

Event Timeline, cont.



- News release #5 (9:34 p.m.) provides work status information for employees of MFC
 - Employees at the Materials & Fuels Complex will be on curtailment on July 14, 2010
 - Essential employees only (define “essential”)
 - Essential employees will receive direct notification from their management to report to work
 - Bus information included on news release
- Fire has now burned an estimated 30,000 acres (47 sq. mi.)

Event Timeline, July 14 – A New Day



- News release #6 (9:10 a.m., July 14)
 - Firefighters from INL & BLM and other agencies continue to fight fire
 - Fire observers are flying over the area this morning to assess conditions
 - An update to the size of the fire and extent of containment
 - Several INL power lines are down and MFC & CITRC are closed today

Event Timeline, Day 2, cont.



- News release #7 (12:00 p.m.)
- Announcing afternoon news conference – 2:30 p.m. in EROB (town facility)
 - Scramble ensues
 - However, preparation for the conference is well-thought out
 - News conference is considered successful
- Fire crews focusing mainly on north front (off INL site) and west front (still on INL property)
- Fire has now burned approx. 109,000 acres (approximately 170 sq. mi.)

Event Timeline, Day 2, cont.



- Cause of fire still unknown
- List of resources being used to fight the fire
- Continued information for employees
 - MFC still on curtailment
 - Essential workers to be notified by direct management regarding reporting to work
 - Other workers who can reasonably perform duties from other than MFC will be notified by direct management
 - Quick! Lose your cell phone!

Event Timeline, Day 2, cont.



- News release #8 (5:25 p.m.)
 - The fire has been named Jefferson Fire because it started near the site's Jefferson Boulevard
- Fire is 40% contained
- One injury – firefighter with sprained back
- Map posted to INL's website
- MFC non-essential employees continue curtailment



Day 2 – Channel 6 5:00 p.m.



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Event Timeline, Day 2, cont.



- News release #9 (9:20 p.m.)
 - Fire is 60% contained
 - Some fire crews are being sent to rest
 - Repair work on power lines will begin tomorrow
 - INL employee (MFC) information
 - Bus information
 - MFC on restricted access
 - Next update will occur on Thursday morning (next day)

Event Timeline, July 15 - Day 3



- News release #10 (8:40 a.m.)
 - Crews return to fight fire at 8:00 a.m.
 - Fire lines have been completed on the fire's east side and all but about five miles of its west side
 - Fire still at 60% containment
 - Definition of “containment” included in news release
 - Power restoration continues at MFC
 - MFC employee information included

Event Timeline, Day 3, cont.



- News release #11 (4:00 p.m.)
 - Fire fighters are closing in on containing Jefferson Fire
 - Size of fire remains at 109,000 acres
 - No cause of fire determined; investigation as to cause of fire being conducted
 - Sampling for airborne radioactivity was conducted, and conditions were normal

Event Timeline, Day 3, cont.



- News release #12 (6:45 p.m.) Final
 - Jefferson Fire 100 percent contained, firefighters monitor hot spots
 - Commercial power was restored to office buildings at MFC
 - Mandatory all hands safety meeting planned for Monday morning at MFC
 - Investigation for cause continues

Day 3 – Today Show 10:00 a.m.



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Event Timeline – The End



- Best news of all: INL's JIC is now closed for purposes of responding to calls about this fire. If the need arises for the center to reopen, a news release to that effect will be distributed

What did we do well?

- Canned wild fire information available for JIC personnel, media – created during 2008 fire season
- News releases were timely and provided good information
- Photos of the fire were approved for release and posted on external web site
- News conference built confidence
- Employee bulletins and news broadcasts kept employees up-to-date and aware of work schedule/bus issues

What did we do well?, cont.

- Pre-fire season meeting with BLM public information officers
- Pre-fire season meeting regarding emergency public information and expectations & coordination with senior management and Emergency Directors very helpful
- Pre-season media day/tour during drill
- Post-fire media tour of burned area
- Burn map was very useful for news conferences, interviews

Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

- Need a fourth JIC team rotation
- Emergency Directors are hesitant to do media interviews and conferences; but the pre-season meeting to discuss lab director's expectations was very motivational and helped to get them ready
- Visuals are very helpful but difficult or slow to be developed when preparing for news conferences
- Feeding the JIC Teams was challenging – EOC forgot we were there - new system (feed ourselves) was developed

Scenes from the Jefferson Fire

Many thanks to the INL Fire Department, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Shelley Fire Department for the roles they played in putting out the largest wildland fire in INL history.

Jefferson Blvd

Wilson Blvd



3461

ID-IFD-E3461



INL
Idaho National Laboratory

FIRE DEPARTMENT





WILDLAND FIRE
UNIT NO.1















WILDLAND FIRE
UNIT NO. 1

ES 1245



Power Management turns it on

Power poles and lines were damaged by the fury of the Jefferson Fire. INL Power Management responded quickly, repairing and replacing damaged infrastructure and turning the lights back on at MFC.















Questions?

