

From: Saenz, Cinthia - FS
Sent: 30 Jul 2020 14:40:24 +0000
To: Collins, Jason - FS
Cc: Saenz, Cinthia - FS;Brown, Patrick B -FS
Subject: Buffalo Fire FOIA Partial Response, Awaiting Exhibits
Attachments: BuffaloFire-Part1.pdf, BuffaloFire-Part2.pdf, BuffaloFire-Part3.pdf, BuffaloFire-Part4.pdf, BuffaloFire-Part5.pdf, BuffaloFire-Part6.pdf, BuffaloFire-Part7.pdf, BuffaloFire-Part8.pdf, BuffaloFire-Signature Page.pdf

Jason,

I am awaiting the exhibits from LEO Jill Wick.
They will be coming in 16 CDs with photos and video.

In the meantime, attached is the Report of Investigation (ROI) for your review and redacting as necessary.

I will get with you once I have the exhibits in hand.

(Order of ROI attachments: Signature page, part 1, part 2, part 3, etc.)

Thanks much,
Cinthia



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**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION**

(Reference FSH 5309.11)

Case/File Number

18-02-8970715**INTRODUCTION**

The USFS lands in the Buffalo Fire area are generally forested in Lodgepole pine which have been significantly affected by Bark Beetle infestations. The fire occurred in proximity to the Buffalo Cabin Trail used by wilderness hikers. The Buffalo Cabin Trail is located at the top of the Silverthorne subdivision of Wildernest. This neighborhood is located in immediate proximity to National Forest lands and the Eagles Nest Wilderness boundary is situated a mere 0.25 miles away.

DETAILS**Applicable Statutes – Not Limited to:**

Title 18 U.S.C. 1855-Timber Set A Fire

36 C.F.R. 261.52(f)-Possessing, Discharging Any Fireworks or Pyrotechnic Device

36 C.F.R. 261.5(d)-Leaving a Fire Without Completely Extinguishing It

DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION**INITIAL REPORT:**

The Buffalo Fire was first reported as a smoke sighting by Lake Dillon Fire Marshal Kim MC DONALD at 10:35 hours on June 12, 2018.

INITIAL INVESTIGATION:

On June 12, 2018 at about 1258 hours LEO Jill WICK was notified by phone of a wildland fire occurring near Buffalo Mountain, White River National Forest, Summit County, CO. WICK spoke with dispatch and determined that at about 1035 hours, smoke was reported in the Buffalo Mtn. area adjacent to the Wildernest subdivision of Silverthorne, CO. Firefighters who responded to the scene described the fire to be burning about 0.25 miles from the Buffalo Cabin trailhead. The area neighborhood of Wildernest was under evacuation orders by local authorities.

On June 13, 2018 WICK attended the morning briefing at the Silverthorne fire station. WICK examined a map and aerial photos taken of the burn area. While at the fire station, WICK saw a woman she knew to be Randi GROGGER across the street at the bus transfer station. WICK knew GROGGER, a retired firefighter, to have been illegally residing at the top of Wildernest about 30 yards from the Lily Pad trailhead and 150 yards from the Buffalo Cabin trailhead. WICK had not known GROGGER to use a campfire in the past but had issued her four summonses related to her illegal residing.

Previous to the Buffalo Fire, WICK had seen multiple burn marks on GROGGER's tent and bedding where she had slept too close to a propane heater. WICK contacted GROGGER and she stated that she had been evacuated along with the area residents. GROGGER asked WICK when she could return to her camp as there was something she needed to get out of it. WICK asked GROGGER what she needed and GROGGER responded vaguely that she need "toiletries". WICK denied GROGGER access to the camp within the fire closure area.

On June 14, 2018 the area around the fire origin was deemed safe enough to enter by the Incident Commander. WICK met with Lake Dillon Fire Marshal Kim MCDONALD, LEO Aaron HENRICHS and LEO Phillip STREHLE to conduct the cause and origin investigation. They drove up to the road closure and WICK spoke with Summit County Sgt. Mark WATSON. WATSON told WICK he had just contacted GROGGER and prevented her from illegally breaching the closure area to access her camp.

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WICK, MCDONALD, HENRICHS and STREHLE continued up to the Buffalo Fire. HENRICHS and STREHLE conducted a Fire Cause and Origin investigation (Exhibit 2) which included photographs of the fire indicators by MCDONALD and a sketch of the overall scene and recorded measurements by WICK. When finished, MC DONALD gave WICK a compact disc of photographs for evidence (Exhibit 3).

Shortly after, WICK located GROGGER's unoccupied camp, recognized by its contents from previous contacts. The camp location was about 600 yards from the suspected fire origin and approximately 50 yards from the edge of the burned area. WICK saw that GROGGER's possessions mostly consisting of soiled, torn bedding, toiletries and damaged camp gear. However, WICK found a single unburned 10-ball roman candle fireworks and seized it (Exhibit 4). WICK also saw that GROGGER had not had a campfire at her camp and there were no signs that the wild land fire had started from her camp.

On June 15, 2018 the evacuation order for the Wildernest subdivision was lifted by local authorities. The Forest Supervisor's Closure for the fire area remained in place. That afternoon WICK was told by fire staff maintaining the closure at the top of Ryan Gulch Road that a man (later identified as Paul CHESSIN) wearing yellow and green fire gear had tried to gain unauthorized access to the fire closure area. The fire crew told WICK that he had approached Crew Boss Christopher ZOLLER who denied him access.

ZOLLER had deployed to his home in South Dakota so WICK contacted him by phone. ZOLLER told WICK that CHESSIN had approached on foot from the west wearing fire gear and a ball cap with the Lake Dillon Fire District logo on it. CHESSIN had a camera and stated he was the HOA president and he wanted to access the area to take insurance photos. ZOLLER denied him access but CHESSIN returned about an hour later in non-fire clothing and was again denied access.

WICK contacted Lake Dillon Fire (LDF) District Chief Jeff BERINO and gave him a description of the man. BERINO told WICK that he matched the description of Paul CHESSIN a former LDF volunteer who had been removed from service for misrepresenting himself. WICK contacted SA Travis LUNDERS in South Dakota who met with ZOLLER. ZOLLER described CHESSIN to LUNDERS, then was shown a photo of CHESSIN and made a positive ID of him as the man who had tried to enter the fire closure. WICK forwarded the information to Summit County for consideration of charging for impersonating a firefighter.

On Saturday, June 16, 2018, WICK met with SA Andrew PRYS and they went to GROGGER's campsite. They found GROGGER in her camp and PRYS interviewed her. GROGGER stated that she first found out about the fire when she got off the bus (later determined to be the 10:28 am bus) that morning in Silverthorne and saw smoke towards Buffalo Mtn. WICK later obtained video from the Summit Stage bus system and found that GROGGER had gotten off the bus at the time she stated (Exhibit 5). GROGGER claimed that she had not been in the area where the fire was determined to have been started.

WICK spoke with GROGGER at a later date and asked her about the roman candle found in her camp. GROGGER admitted to possessing it but stated that it had been given to her by her friend "Thomas" (later identified as Thomas E. HENRY) to hold onto for him. HENRY has also been known to illegally reside on USFS lands and has sometimes camped with or near GROGGER.

In early April, WICK had found GROGGER's prior camp site, located about 50 yards up the Buffalo Cabin trail, where WICK saw a luggage identification tag with Thomas HENRY's name hand-written on it. HENRY's whereabouts are unknown and he was not able to be interviewed.

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On Thursday, June 28, 2018 WICK returned to GROGGER's camp at the Lily Pad Lake TH and found that some of her gear was gone. About 2 feet from where GROGGER was known to sleep, WICK found a small pile of grass, kindling and flammable materials that had been lit on fire. WICK collected the materials as evidence (Exhibit 6). It was undetermined as to who or why this material had been ignited.

After obtaining new phone information for HENRY, WICK attempted to contact him but was unsuccessful as of June 12, 2019.

INTERVIEW of GROGGER

On June 16, 2018, WICK met with SA PRYS to interview Randi S. GROGGER at her camp. At about 0630 hours, they found GROGGER sleeping in her bedding on bare ground and woke her up. SA PRYS recorded the interview (Exhibit 7).

GROGGER stated that she had been in her camp the morning the fire started. She said she left her camp and took the 1030 bus into Silverthorne. GROGGER stated that she had never hiked up the trail towards the fire origin. When she was asked how she thought the fire started she responded "People". GROGGER is a retired firefighter from the Shelton, WA area. She stated that she had been living on USFS lands in Colorado since her house had burned down in late 2017 and she did not currently have a permanent residence.

GROGGER is a 65 year-old white female. In a previous contact she stated that she was eagerly awaiting her 65th birthday on (b)(7)(C) as it meant she could begin collecting Social Security. Coincidentally the Buffalo Fire started on GROGGER's 65th birthday.

COST TO GOVERNMENT:

The final cost report for the fire shows total fire suppression expenses to be \$2.15million (Exhibit 1).

SUBJECT OF INVESTIGATION

GROGGER, Randi Sue

DOB: (b)(7)(C)

DL: (CO) (b)(7)(C)

Weight: (b)(7)(C)

Eyes: (b)(7)(C)

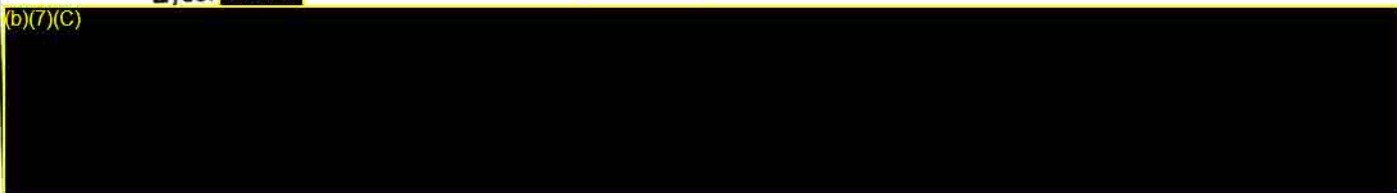
SSN: (b)(7)(C)

Height: (b)(7)(C)

Hair: (b)(7)(C)

Race: (b)(7)(C)

(b)(7)(C)



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REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

(Reference FSH 5309.11)

Case/File Number

18-02-8970715

HENRY, Thomas Elsworth

DOB: (b)(7)(C)

DL: (AZ) (b)(7)(C)

Weight: (b)(7)(C)

Eyes: (b)(7)(C)

SSN: (b)(7)(C)

Height: (b)(7)(C)

Hair: (b)(7)(C)

Race: (b)(7)(C)

HENRY has no known address. HENRY was not located for interviewing.

CHESSIN, Paul N.

DOB: (b)(7)(C)

DL: (CO) (b)(7)(C)

Weight: (b)(7)(C)

Eyes: (b)(7)(C)

SSN: (b)(7)(C)

Height: (b)(7)(C)

Hair: (b)(7)(C)

Race: (b)(7)(C)

DISPOSITION

Case closed, unsolved.

EXHIBITS

<u>Exhibit No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Page Introduced</u>
1	Cost to Government for Fire Suppression	1
2	Cause and Origin Report	1
3	Compact Disc of Buffalo Fire Cause and Origin photos by MCDONALD	3
4	10-Ball Roman candle from GROGGER camp	3
5	16 CD's of bus surveillance video	3
6	Kindling and materials partially burned	4
7	Audio recording of GROGGER interview	4

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Cost

Rocky Mountain Blue Team created the following resource numbers for COST tracking:


Aircraft	Equipment	Supplies
A-2000 through A-2013	E-9000 Overhead Rentals	S-1000 Elks Lodge. Paid by BT. Tracked on Spreadsheet
A-9001 through A-9004 VLAT drops		S-9000 Buying Team Members. 7 members
		S-9001 Buying Team Spreadsheet
		S-9110 Air Travel. On Oil Rental Spreadsheet
		S-9200 Cache use. Estimated from 209
		S-9400 Mob in/Mob out. Counted once upon check in
		S-9500 Waybills/Supplies


VLAT costs were tracked separately per drop, 4 total drops.


Because of a Cost Share agreement, there were two separate complete COST boxes created.

Total Cost as of June 16, 2018 was \$2.15M

- Aircraft \$745,940
- Crews \$212,323
- Equipment \$248,258
- Direct Personnel \$1.28M
- Indirect Personnel \$878,085
- Camp Support \$726,727

 USDA Forest Service		Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Supplemental Incident Report (Reference FSH 5309.11, Chapter 20)				Incident Number 8970715							
						Incident Date 6-12-18							
LOCATION													
Fire Name		Dispatch #	Account Code	Region	Forest	District	State	County					
Buffalo		CO-WRF-147	(b)(7)(C)	2	15	Dillion	CO	Summit					
Origin Location: geographical landmarks, highways, roads, trails, etc.				Township	Range	Section	¼ Sec	Meridian/Datum					
Buffalo Cabin Trail, Buffalo Mountain, West of Silverthorne, CO				5S	78W	10	SESW	WGS84					
				Latitude (D - M' - S")		Longitude (D - M' - S")							
				39	37	23.8	-106	06 52.5					
JURISDICTION													
USFS Only		Identify Other Agency(s)		Lead Origin & Cause Investigator		Est. Suppression Cost	Injuries/Deaths						
No		Summit Fire/ Summit County		A. Henrichs			None						
EVENT SEQUENCE													
Estimated Time of Ignition			Time Fire Reported				Time Origin Protected		Time Origin Released				
Mo.	Day	Year	HHMM	Mo.	Day	Year	HHMM	Mo.	Day	Year	HHMM		
June	11	2018	2000	June	12	2018	1035						
Who			Henrichs	Who			K. McDonald	Who		A. Henrichs			
FIRE BEHAVIOR													
Estimated Acres		Fuel Type @ Ignition Area Material First Ignited			Weather Observer (On Scene)		Date	Time	Temp	RH	Wind Dir	Wind Speed	
91		Pine needles & duff											
Slope %		Aspect: N E S W		Elevation		Weather Station		Date	Time	Temp	RH	Wind Dir	Wind Speed
5		E				Soda Creek (SODC2)		6/12/18	0956	66.9	17	NE	3
CAUSE DETERMINATION CODE: (PS) = POSSIBLE, (PR) = PROBABLE, (EX) = EXCLUDED (EXPLAIN IN NARRATIVE)													
EX	Lightning	(Detection Method)											
No lightning was reported in the area or detected in the 48 hours prior to detection of the fire. No evidence of lightning strike located on site.													
EX	Equipment Use	(Exhaust, Brake Shoe, Mechanical, Friction, Aircraft, Vehicle Fire, Other)											
The area is not accessible to machinery or equipment. No evidence of equipment use located on the site.													
EX	Smoking	(Tobacco, Other)											
No evidence of smoking in the origin area.													
PR	Campfire	(Cooking, Warming, Ceremonial, Other)											
A campfire ring containing white ash and no unburned material was located within the general origin area.													
EX	Debris Burning	(Land, Slash, Refuse, Other)											
Not an area where debris burning would be conducted, no evidence of debris burning located on site.													
EX	Railroad	(Ignition Activities Associated with Railroad Companies)											
No railroads located near the area of the fire.													
PS	Incendiary	(Ignition Component / Material First Ignited)											
No evidence of incendiary device or activity located in area, however a hot set could not be ruled out.													
EX	Children	(Ignition Activities Associated with Children; 12- years and younger)											
Not an area where unsupervised children would be located, no evidence of children located.													
EX	Miscellaneous	(Blasting, Structure, Fireworks, Welding, Cutting, Grinding, Pest Control, Power Line, Glass, Target Shooting, Spontaneous Combustion, Other)											
No evidence of Miscellaneous activities located on remote site. No broken glass, evidence of target shooting, or fireworks found near origin.													
Cause Determined: State brief reason & explain in the narrative						Cause Undetermined: State brief reason & explain in the narrative							
An unattended campfire was determined to be the cause of the Buffalo fire.													
PREPARED BY		A. Henrichs		Date	6-22-18	Submitted to		J. Wick		Date	6-22-18		
ATTACHMENTS - IF INCLUDED		LE Incident Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supplemental Reports		<input type="checkbox"/>	Interviews		<input type="checkbox"/>	Statements		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Fire Stat Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sketches / Diagrams	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maps	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photographs		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	

 USDA Forest Service	Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Supplemental Incident Report (Reference FSH 5309.11, Chapter 20)				Incident Number	8970715		
					Incident Date	6-12-18		
(CODE: S – SUBJECT, W – WITNESS, V – VICTIM, RP – REPORTING PARTY, O – OTHER)								
Name (Last, First, Middle)		Alias	DOB	Race	Gender			
RP	McDonald, Kim	Fire Marshal						
Address (Home)		Phone (Home)	Hair Color	Eye Color	SSN			
Address (Business) (Tax Identification Number if Required)		Phone (Work)	Height	Weight	License / ID			
		970-262-5203						
Name (Last, First, Middle)		Alias	DOB	Race	Gender			
Address (Home)		Phone (Home)	Hair Color	Eye Color	SSN			
Address (Business) (Tax Identification Number if Required)		Phone (Work)	Height	Weight	License / ID			
Name (Last, First, Middle)		Alias	DOB	Race	Gender			
Address (Home)		Phone (Home)	Hair Color	Eye Color	SSN			
Address (Business) (Tax Identification Number if Required)		Phone (Work)	Height	Weight	License / ID			
VEHICLE INFORMATION (CODE: D – DAMAGED, E – EVIDENCE, I – IMPOUND, S – SUBJECT W – WITNESS, O – OTHER)								
	License Number	State	VIN	Year	Make	Style	Other Information	
	License Number	State	VIN	Year	Make	Style	Other Information	
	License Number	State	VIN	Year	Make	Style	Other Information	
	License Number	State	VIN	Year	Make	Style	Other Information	
INSURANCE INFORMATION (HOME, AUTO, LIABILITY, OTHER)								
Insurance Company		Policy Number	Insurance Agent	Address			Phone Number	

 USDA Forest Service	Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Supplemental Incident Report (Reference FSH 5309.11, Chapter 20)	Incident Number	8970715
		Incident Date	6-12-18
SYNOPSIS (DATE, FIRE NAME, ESTIMATED ACRES, LOCATION, JURISDICTION); (ESTIMATED COST, DAMAGE; PROPERTY / RESOURCE); (CAUSE; DETERMINED / UNDETERMINED)			
The Buffalo Fire started at approximately 1035 hours on June 12, 2018 and burned approximately 91 acres, all on national forest. The fire was located west of the town of Silverthorne on Buffalo Mountain near the Buffalo Cabin Trail. No structures were damaged or destroyed.			
DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION: (INITIAL REPORT, INITIAL ATTACK, INITIAL INVESTIGATION, FIRE BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS, STATEMENTS, ORIGIN EXAMINATION, CAUSE DETERMINATION)			
<p>Initial Report: The first report of the Buffalo Fire came from Fire Marshal Kim McDonald and his crew conducting an inspection near the fire at approximately 1035 hours on June 12, 2018. Smoke could be seen drifting from the trees and quickly built into a column. Summit Fire began to conduct initial attack operations.</p> <p>Initial Attack: As Summit County began initial attack operations the U.S Forest Service fire dispatch center in Grand Junction was notified at 1052 hours. U.S. Forest Service Engine 607 arrived on scene at 1121 hours and reported smoke showing and structures threatened, estimated the fire to be 15-20 acres burning in timber with spotting out 500 feet. Members of the Crook Fire Protection District (E275P) were among the first units on scene and began operations from the Buffalo Cabin Trail trailhead. Firefighters reported rapidly evolving conditions as the fire grew very quickly burning in standing dead lodge pole pine timber with gusty winds pushing the fire towards the east. A number of homes and apartments were located to the east and south of the fire and numerous air resources were dispatched to protect the residential areas.</p> <p>Initial Investigation: On June 13, 2018 I, U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) Aaron Henrichs, was contacted by Special Agent Travis Lunders and asked to respond to investigate the origin and cause of the Buffalo Fire. Due to continued fire activity in the heal of the fire, it was agreed that the investigation would commence on June 14, 2018. For this reason as well, the suspected origin area was not known, nor protected. LEO Phil Strehle was assigned to assist with the investigation, as well as the LEO for the area, Jill Wick. That morning we checked into the fire camp and obtained several photographs of the fire outline. What appeared to be the fire heal was observed in the northwest corner of the fire. Later several photos taken by air attack on June 12, 2018 were provided and confirmed this belief. We assembled at and began hiking the Buffalo Cabin trail from the trailhead on the southwest side of the burn scar. I immediately noticed the large quantity of fire retardant that had been dropped on the flanks of the fire. We hiked along the trail which was used as fire line much of the way for approximately ½ miles. We ascended a ridgeline and near where the trail forked on the top of the ridge the fire line left the trail. A thick layer of fire retardant covered the fire line and the area into the burn scar for approximately 75 yards. We continued walking the fire line around the west and north side of the fire observing clear advancing fire indicators away from the fire line. We walked east along the north side of the fire for approximately 200 yards until it appeared we had left the heal area of the fire. We then circled back to the south observing fire indicators advancing from the west. We returned to the fire line on the west side of the fire. Walking a zig zag pattern across the heal of the fire back to the north, we observed more advancing fire</p>			

indicators. As we walked we identified a heavily damage "run" from west to east, but could not identify a change from advancing to backing indicators at the west end of the run.

Origin Examination: At this time Summit Fire Marshal Kim McDonald arrived and we discussed the detection of the fire and the fire suppression activities. We discussed finding primarily advancing indicators and a lack of backing indicators. I then reviewed some of the photos taken by the initial attack aircraft and noticed one photo in particular showed a section of burned area that was now completely covered with fire retardant. With this information we took a closer look at the pine needles and duff on the forest floor. By peeling back the pine needles now held together by fire retardant we were able to determine that the needles had been burned prior to being coated with retardant and that the needles were lightly burned, consistent with backing indicators. With this information in mind we began walking west until we reached a point where the retardant covered needles ceased to exist. From this point the needles on the forest floor had been totally consumed by hot advancing fire. Beyond this point to the east was the large run of hot advancing fire. We began to mark directional burn indicators with small colored flags. Red for advancing, blue for backing, and yellow for lateral or flanking burn indicators. We turned around and observed clear advancing indicators until we again reached the area of retardant covered pine duff and needles. As we examined this area of transition we found some areas of very light or no fire activity. Very near this area we located a campfire ring constructed of rocks. The area inside the campfire ring was filled with areas of white ash and no unconsumed fuel was located within the fire ring. Other campfires we had observed within the fire area had bits of unburnt pine cones or sticks. I identified this as the specific origin area. As Strehle and myself began taking measurements of burn direction indicators, Wick made a sketch of the scene and McDonald photographed each indicator. A visual search was conducted around and within the campfire for any specific source of ignition and McDonald searched the area with a magnet with no results.

Cause Determination:

Lightning Excluded

No evidence of a recent lightning strike was located in the general origin area. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management operates a lightning strike detection mapping webpage. Lightning detection records for the 48 hours prior to the reported fire were reviewed with no strikes being detected in the general area of the Buffalo fire.

Equipment Use Excluded

Equipment use fires are fires that have occurred from the operation of mechanical equipment, except railroads. The five main ignition mechanisms that cause most equipment related fires are exhaust particles, friction (heat generated by moving objects), Fuel/fluids, mechanical breakdown and heat transfer. Exhaust particles are usually ejected under conditions of a vehicle pulling a load, compression braking or downshifting and generally originate on cutbanks, slopes and tunnel portals. Friction is usually caused by a chain dragging from a vehicle on pavement, brakes, logging cables, and tracked equipment hitting rocks or slipping or saw blade friction. Heat transfer is usually caused by vegetation coming in contact with hot engine or exhaust surfaces. Due to the specific origin area being too far from the road, carbon particles and friction have been eliminated. It would be extremely difficult to maneuver a vehicle of any kind, due to down timber, into the specific origin area which eliminates heat transfer. There was no evidence of any other equipment in the area and equipment use can be eliminated as a cause of the Buffalo fire.

Smoking Excluded

The range of environmental conditions that must be present for a cigarette to successfully ignite a wildland fire are very narrow. Temperatures, relative humidity, wind speed and direction and fuel moistures must all fall within specific limited parameters as defined by extensive research.

Additionally, the physical placement of the cigarette and the condition of the host fuelbed must meet certain criteria. Weather conditions were not within the defined criteria for cigarette ignition at the time of this fire. The air temperature was too low and relative humidity was too high to support an ignition from smoking. Relative Humidity levels became low enough to support ignition very near the time the fire was reported, but not when materials first ignited prior to fire detection. No smoking materials were found in origin area.

Campfire Probable

Campfire caused fires are generally associated with cooking, warming, light, religious or ceremonial purpose. This type of activity will normally leave physical evidence that includes food items or packaging, rock rings, signs of human occupancy, remains of collected wood, or damaged and discarded portable stoves, flammable liquids, or barbeque briquettes. A campfire will have clear evidence of precautions taken to maintain control of the fire. Several rock campfire rings were located during the investigation of the Buffalo fire indicating that this is a common area for campfires. A rock campfire ring was located in the general origin area and the ring contained hot white ash and no unconsumed material, such as sticks or pinecones that fall from the trees above into the unused campfire rings. A large log was placed along the south edge of the campfire ring indicating a place where humans sit around the fire. No camping gear was located near the fire ring. A single metal alcohol bottle cap was located near the fire ring.

Debris Burning Excluded

This category includes trash burning, slash piles, incinerators, burn barrels, or other types of controlled burns. These activities are normally associated with human residences or commercial activities. Physical evidence is generally found at the origin of debris burning fires. No evidence to indicate or support debris burning in the origin area was discovered.

Railroad Excluded

Railroad fires include any railroad operations, personnel, or rolling stock. Ignition mechanisms include the exhaust carbon, brakeshoe particles, track maintenance, right of way burning, dynamic grid failure, torpedoes, flares and journal box failure (hotbox). These fires are located along active railroad lines and usually have multiple starts. There are no railroad track in the general origin area to support an ignition from railroad.

Incendiary Possible


Incendiary fires are often set in more than one location in areas that are frequently traveled and generally will have matches, cigarette lighters, fireworks, and/or other ignition devices located near the origin area. It is difficult to identify a fire started by a hot set. Hot sets are usually started in an easily accessible area with cover and few obstructions. This allows the person starting the fire to hide and be able to start the fire and leave the scene as quickly as possible to avoid detection. Due to the distance from the road, a hot set is very unlikely to be the cause of the Buffalo fire, although a hot set by a subject very near, and participating in activities at the campfire cannot be ruled out. Due to lack of incendiary type evidence at the origin area, incendiary has been partially excluded.

Children Excluded

Children caused fires are generally associated with children playing and their curiosity with fire. These fires are generally found near residential area, playgrounds, schools, and campgrounds. Children caused fires will normally contain evidence of children playing in the immediate area. While located within approximately one half mile of homes, this is a remote area, very near a wilderness boundary. There are no houses in direct proximity to the general origin area. Due to lack of evidence and location, children have been excluded.

Miscellaneous Excluded

This category includes power lines, fireworks, cutting, welding, grinding, firearms use, blasting, structures, glass refraction/magnification, spontaneous combustion, and flare stack/pit fires. There were no signs of cutting, welding, grinding, blasting, fireworks use, or glass in the origin area. No power lines existed in the area and the area, with thick tree cover was not conducive to firearms use, nor were any spent shell casings or target material located in the general origin. Spontaneous combustion requires the presence of certain chemicals or an unusual and specific combination of combustible material, arrangement, and moisture. These factors were not found in the origin area.

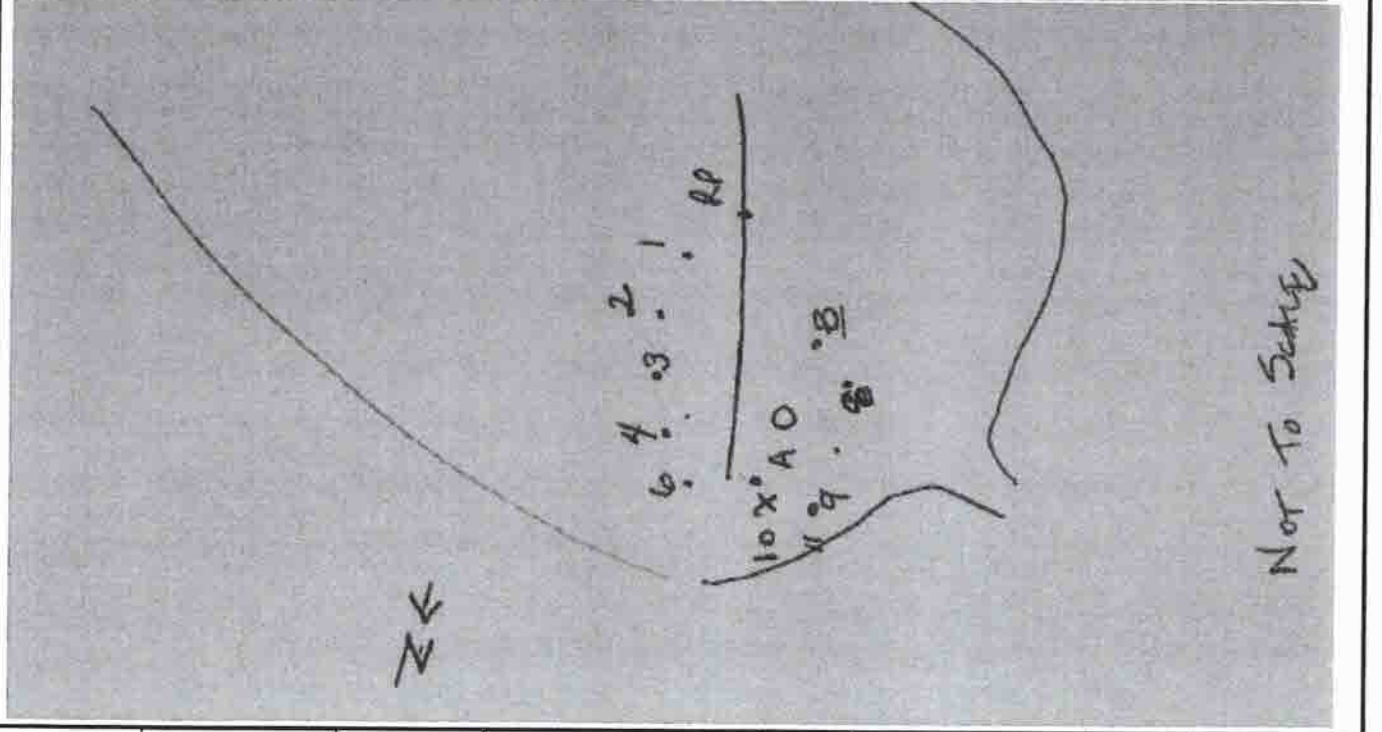
 USDA Forest Service	Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Supplemental Incident Report (Reference FSH 5309.11, Chapter 20)				Incident Number	8970715
					Incident Date	6-12-18

Fire Name	Buffalo						
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Latitude	39	37	23.8	Longitude	106	06	52.5	Datum	WGS 84
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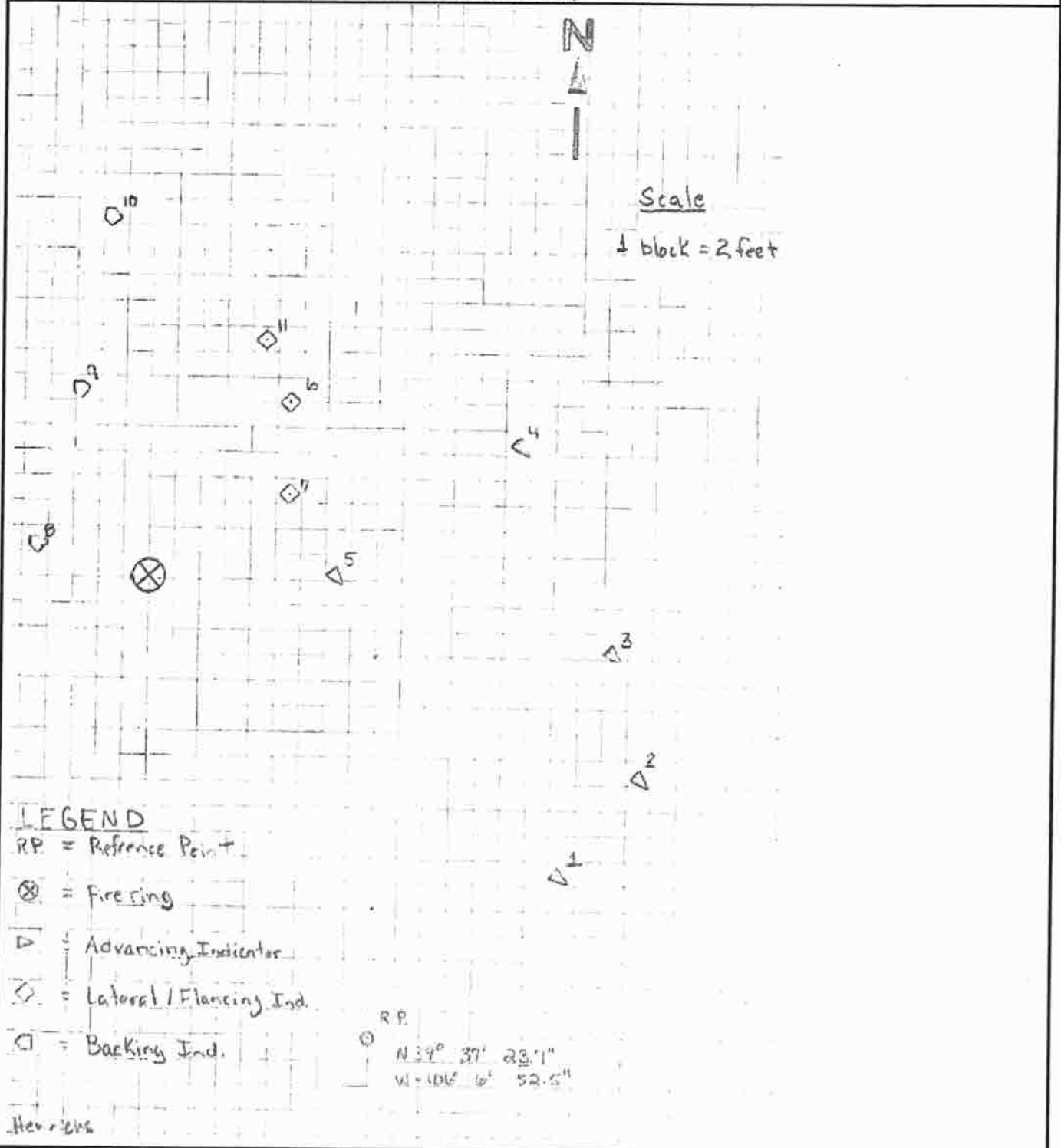
FIRE SCENE SKETCH (INCLUDE SCALE, TITLE, AUTHOR, NORTH ARROW, DATE AND TIME)

06/14/18 Buffalo fire
 RP = 39° 34' 23.7" 106° 6' 52.5"
 A = FIRE PIT
 1 = 12' 0" N x 14' 8" E ADV
 2 = 26' 5" N x 21' 8" E ADV
 3 = 30' 6" N x 18' 5" E ADV
 4 = 47' 2" N x 11' 1" E ADV
 5 = 34' 2" N x 3' 9" W ADV
 6 = 50' 5" N x 7' 2" E LAT
 7 = 42' 10" N x 7' 2" W LAT
 8 = 38' 2" N x 26' 5" W BAC
 9 = 50' 4" x 23' 6" W BAC
 10 = 64' 3" N x 21' 10" W BAC
 11 = 54' 8" N x 8' 10" W LAT
 A = 36' 3" N x 18' 1" W
 B = BOTTLE CAP



SCALE	NOT TO SCALE	AUTHOR	J. WICK	DATE	6-14-18	TIME	1130
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FIRE SCENE SKETCH (INCLUDE SCALE, TITLE, AUTHOR, NORTH ARROW, DATE AND TIME)



SCALE	2 BLOCKS = 1'	AUTHOR	HENRICHS	DATE	6-22-18	TIME	1800
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LOCATION		PHOTOGRAPHER	
Attachment to: (Incident Name)		Name:	
Buffalo Fire		K. McDonald	
Location: (Geographical landmarks, highways, campground, trails, etc.)		I.D. Number:	
Buffalo Hill		Summit Fire	

CAMERA INFORMATION

Type: Digital 35 mm -- Roll # Video Other (describe)

Photo Number	Evidence Number	Description of Photograph	Other Information
18		Area of general origin, looking NW	
19		Area of general origin, looking W	
20		Area of general origin, looking SW	
21		Area of general origin, mid-range view, looking NW	
22		Area of general origin, mid-range view, looking W	
23		Area of general origin, mid-range view, looking SW	
24		Area of general origin, close view, looking NW	
25		Area of general origin, close view, looking W	
26		Area of general origin, close view, looking SW	
27		Area of general origin, mid-range view, looking SE	
28		Area of general origin, mid-range view, looking E	
29		Area of general origin, mid-range view, looking NE	
30		Area of general origin, close view, looking SE	
31		Area of general origin, close view, looking E	
32		Area of general origin, close view, looking NE	
33	1	Advancing fire indicator, sooting	
34	2	Advancing fire indicator, degree of damage	
35	3	Advancing fire indicator, sooting	
36	4	Advancing fire indicator, sooting/ degree of damage	
37	6	Lateral fire indicator, degree of damage	

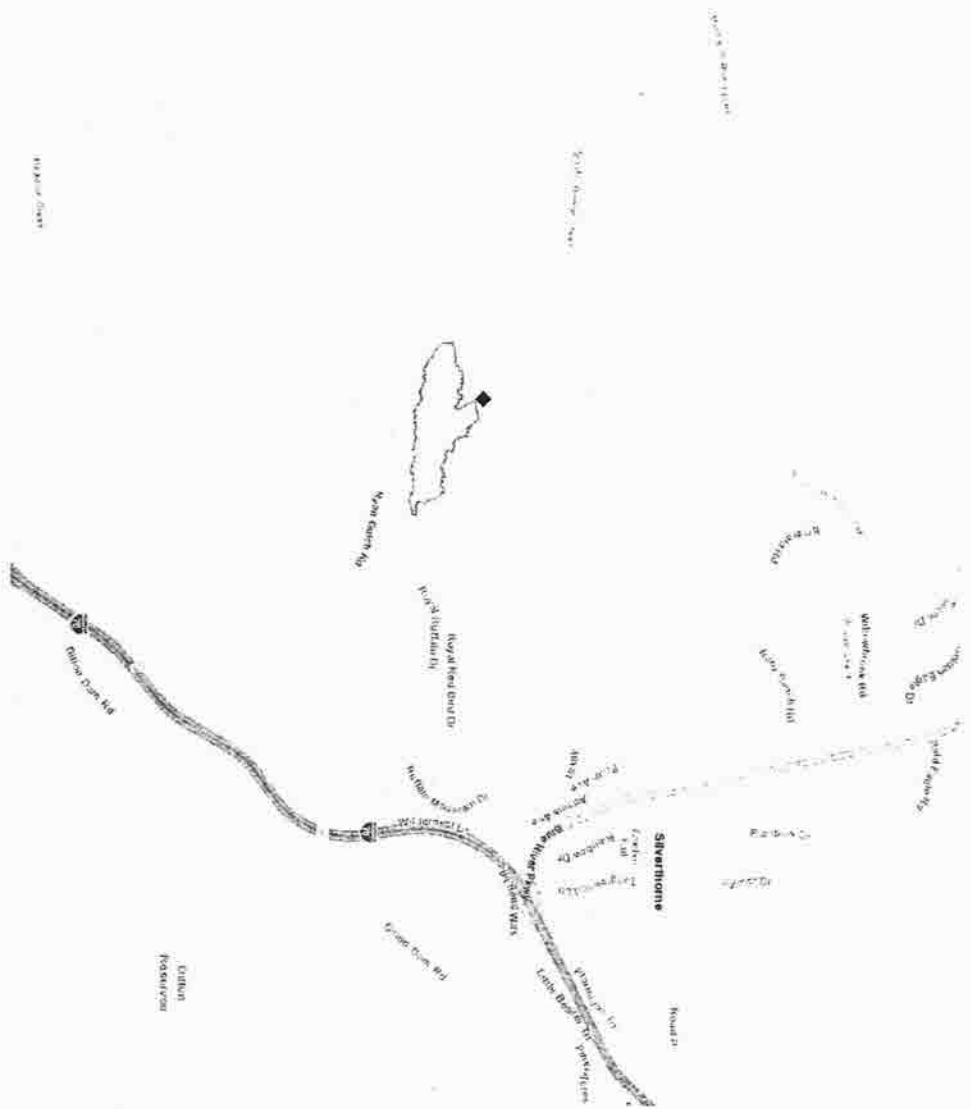


Photo Number	Evidence Number	Description of Photograph	Other Information
38	6	Lateral fire indicator, degree of damage	
39	5	Advancing fire indicator, sooting/ degree of damage	
40	7	Lateral fire indicator, degree of damage	
41	7	Lateral fire indicator, degree of damage	
42	8	Backing fire indicator, degree of damage	
43	8	Backing fire indicator, degree of damage	
44	9	Backing fire indicator, degree of damage	
45	11	Lateral fire indicator, degree of damage	
46	10	Backing fire indicator, degree of damage	
47	11	Lateral fire indicator, degree of damage	
48	11	Lateral fire indicator, degree of damage	
49		Specific origin, looking E to W	
50		Specific origin, looking N to S	
51		Specific origin, looking W to E	
52		Specific origin, looking S to N	
53		Specific origin close up, E to W	
54		Specific origin close up, E to W	
55		Starting point tree for measurements	
56		Starting point tree for measurements	

NOTE: USE A SEPARATE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD FOR EACH ROLL OF FILM TAKEN. IF MORE THAN ONE DIGITAL MEMORY CARD IS USED, PREPARE A SEPARATE SHEET FOR EACH CARD. THIS FORM MAY BE COMPLETED FOR VIDEOGRAPHY – RECORD ALL TAPES ON ONE FORM.

Lightning History - 2-7 days old (from 17:00 on 6/11 until 17:00 on 6/16)

The screenshot shows a map application interface. At the top, there is a 'Layers' panel with the following items: 'AIRSPACE', 'RAIL', 'ROADS', 'ROAD', 'AIRPORT', 'TOPO', 'LIGHT', 'DARK', and 'OSM'. Below this, there are several map controls including a search icon, a zoom in/out icon, a compass, and a settings gear. The main map area is mostly blank, suggesting the map data is not yet loaded or is obscured by the interface elements.



STATION: SODC2
 # STATION NAME: SODA CREEK
 # LATITUDE: 39.560000
 # LONGITUDE: -105.985556
 # ELEVATION [ft]: 9578
 # STATE: CO

Station_ID	Date/time	air_temp_	relative	humidity	wind_speed	wind	direction	D	wind	gust	peak	wind
		F			MPH			MPH	MPH	MPH		
SODC2	6/12/2018 0:56	43		32	2.01		138	4.99		4.99		4.99
SODC2	6/12/2018 1:56	41		32	2.01		133	4		4		4
SODC2	6/12/2018 2:56	41		31	4		122	8.99		8.99		8.99
SODC2	6/12/2018 3:56	41		29	1.01		21	5.99		5.99		5.99
SODC2	6/12/2018 4:56	41		28	2.01		32	4		4		4
SODC2	6/12/2018 5:56	39		34	2.01		42	5.99		5.99		5.99
SODC2	6/12/2018 6:56	39.99		41	3		132	4		4		4
SODC2	6/12/2018 7:56	48		38	1.01		39	4		4		4
SODC2	6/12/2018 8:56	61		22	3		283	3		3		3
SODC2	6/12/2018 9:56	66.99		17	3		51	10		10		10
SODC2	6/12/2018 10:56	68		18	7		310	18.99		18.99		18.99
SODC2	6/12/2018 11:56	68		17	12.01		320	20		20		20
SODC2	6/12/2018 12:56	71.01		18	8.99		304	21		21		21
SODC2	6/12/2018 13:56	71.01		18	8.99		309	18.01		18.01		18.01
SODC2	06/12/2018 14:56	73		17	10		329	20		20		20
SODC2	06/12/2018 15:56	70		16	8.01		317	23		23		23
SODC2	06/12/2018 16:56	72		16	7		325	15.99		15.99		15.99
SODC2	06/12/2018 17:56	73		16	7		325	18.01		18.01		18.01
SODC2	06/12/2018 18:56	73		16	7		302	14.99		14.99		14.99
SODC2	06/12/2018 19:56	66.99		24	7		136	14.99		14.99		14.99
SODC2	06/12/2018 20:56	61		30	5.99		108	13		13		13
SODC2	06/12/2018 21:56	57.99		35	4.99		123	8.99		8.99		8.99
SODC2	06/12/2018 22:56	55		40	3		100	8.01		8.01		8.01
SODC2	06/12/2018 23:56	50		48	1.01		69	5.99		5.99		5.99

EXHIBIT #3

1-Compact Disc of buffalo Fire Cause and Origin photos by MCDONALD

Stored in USFS Dillon RD Law Enforcement Buffalo Fire original case file

EXHIBIT #4

1-10 Ball Roman Candle fireworks found in GROGGER camp, unburnt

Stored in USFS, Dillon RD Law Enforcement evidence safe

EXHIBIT #5

16-Compact Discs of Summit Stage bus video showing activity at trailhead

Stored in USFS Dillon RD Law Enforcement Buffalo Fire original case file

EXHIBIT #6

Multiple pieces of kindling and other fire starting materials, partially burnt, found near GROGGER camp and placed several days after the Buffalo Fire.


Stored in USFS Dillon RD Law Enforcement evidence safe

EXHIBIT #7

Audio recording of GROGGER interview, with photos

Stored in USFS Dillon RD Law Enforcement Buffalo Fire original case file

Previous Editions are Obsolete

 REPORT OF INVESTIGATION (Reference FSH 5309.11)		Case/File Number 18-02-8970715
Controlling Office R2-Law Enforcement & Investigation	Investigating Office LE&I-White River National Forest	
Case Type Fire	Investigative Period From: 06/12/2018 To 06/12/2019	
Case Status Closed-Unsolved	Report Type Final	
Case Name Buffalo Fire	Investigated By LEO J. Wick, #1743	
SYNOPSIS		
<p>On June 12, 2018 a wildland fire started in the area of Buffalo Mountain, Dillon Ranger District, White River National Forest. The fire burned approximately 91 acres of USFS lands in the urban-interface of the Silverthorne, Colorado area. The adjacent populated subdivision of Wildernest was partially evacuated, leaving about 1500 residents displaced. The total cost of the fire suppression reached approximately \$2.15 million (Exhibit 1). A fire Cause and Origin investigation conducted by LEO HENRICHS indicated the fire was likely human caused (Exhibit 2). Case closed, unsolved pending further investigative leads.</p>		
Distribution LEI, WO _____ LEI, Region <u>02</u> <u>1</u> LEI, Region _____ US Attorney _____ Other <u>SA Prys</u> <u>1</u> Other <u>LEO Wick</u> <u>1</u>	Prepared By: <u><i>[Signature]</i></u> _____ Reviewed By: <u><i>[Signature]</i></u> <u>Andrew Prys</u> _____ Approved By: KENNETH PEARSON _____ <small>Digitally signed by KENNETH PEARSON Date: 2020.07.27 15:13:39 -06'00'</small>	_____ <u>05/14/2020</u> _____ <u>5/15/20</u> _____
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