1910 Fire – Facilitator’s Field Guide

**Note to Facilitators:** This is a suggested format. Do not feel limited by the identified stands or discussion items. This document may be adapted and revised to fit a specific audience, objectives, and time demands.

**Note on Use of Tactical Decision Games and Strategic Discussion Points**: The Tactical Decision Games are a method to generate group interaction if participants have fireline operations backgrounds.

The Strategic Discussion Points are a good method to use for generating group interaction if the participants have incident management or program management backgrounds.

A combination of these facilitation techniques may be appropriate to maximize discussion.

# Significant Lessons

* Generated public and congressional support of the Forest Service mission and defined the role of the Forest Service in fire suppression.
* Established a new culture of fire management within the Forest Service and American society that shaped fire policy for almost 100 years.
* Provides patterns and examples of leadership and decision-making that we can still learn from and that are in use to this day.

# Site Visit Considerations

## Physical

**Light to Moderate for all Stands —**Travel to most stands is predominately by vehicle. Stand 3 and 4 require a hike up an improved trail. Terrain is gently sloping with total distance from the trailhead to Stand 4 of 1.8 miles. Elevation gain is approximately 750 feet.

## Logistics

**Moderate —** Knowledge of road systems and access to all stands due to dispersed nature of sites. Refer to maps and directions. The parking area at the trailhead for Stand 3 is limited to five vehicles. Additional parking is located in a pullout approximately 300 yards down canyon for up to 10 plus vehicles. Everyone will be in vans and the drivers will need a radio and will be provided a briefing and maps.

* Travel to Stand 1 is along city streets. Travel to Stand 2 is on I-90. Travel to Stand 3 is by vehicle on narrow roads followed by hiking. The hiking trail to Stands 3 and 4 is located up the West Fork of Placer Creek just south of Wallace.
* Participants should bring food and water in a daypack to take lunch during the staff ride. Participants should also wear a sturdy pair of hiking boots for the Pulaski Trail and be prepared for changes in the weather with appropriate clothing.

## Hazards

### **Vehicles**

Travel is via interstate and local road system. Expect heavy traffic in and around all travel routes. Defensive driving practices and courtesy to local drivers should be followed.

### Terrain

Limited hazards due to terrain. The trail is improved with gentle grade and stable footing. It is recommended that if anyone has any hiking poles/aids they can bring them along. The last half mile is a 6 – 10% grade.

#### Other Users

Travel is via interstate and local road system. Expect heavy traffic in and around all travel routes.

### Weather

Weather conditions may rapidly change regardless of the season. Participants should be prepared for conditions ranging from hot and dry to cool and wet.

Note: The tactical decision games are a good method to generate group interaction if participants have predominately fireline operation backgrounds. The Strategic Discussion Points are a good method to use for generating group interaction if the participants have incident management or program management experience. A combination of these facilitation techniques may be appropriate to maximize discussion.

# Stand 1 – 1910 Overview

**Facilitator Notes:** Intent of this Stand is to; provide national background on Forest Service establishment and mission, regional effects of settlement, agency resource organization, and pre-season weather conditions.

## Map

1910 Overview Map (area burned in Idaho and Montana)

Coordinates (NAD 83) 47°40’22” x–116° 47’7”

## Description

Stand 1 is a flexible location based on the needs of the group. Several possible sites, including Cataldo Mission, the Coeur d’Alene city park, or the town of Wallace are available. Travel directions provided are for the Coeur d’Alene city park.

## Travel Directions

### From I-90 Eastbound

Take Northwest Blvd.

EXIT 11 toward city center

Turn RIGHT onto Northwest Blvd 1.9 miles

Turn RIGHT onto W. Mullan Road 1/10th miles

City Park is at 420 W. Mullan Road

### From I-90 Westbound

Take Sherman Ave., EXIT 15 toward city center

Turn LEFT onto E. Sherman Ave/I-90 BR. 1.8 miles

Turn LEFT onto W. Mullan Road for 1 mile

City Park is at 420 W. Mullan Road

# Stand 1 Background Information

* 1905: Management of the public forest reserves (National Forests) is given to the newly created Forest Service. There was much dissension over this as many viewed the creation of the National Forest as a means to curtail the prolific extraction of natural resources that was underway.
* 1905-1909: Initial doctrine of controlling all wildfire on National Forests promoted. In 1907 Gifford Pinchot provides leaders intent in a speech stating, “In the early days of forest fires, they were considered solely an act of god, against which any opposition was hopeless. Today we understand that forest fires are wholly within the control of man.” Pinchot elaborates in 1908 with this statement, “The one secret of fighting fires is to discover your fire as soon as possible and fight it as hard as you can and refuse to leave it until the last ember is dead.”
* 1908: Local districts hire well-respected locals such as Ed Pulaski to assist with public perception of the Forest Service in their community.
* 1908: The Forest Service gains suppression experience during a heavy wildfire season across the United States. Rangers develop basic firefighting tactics, but no formal training or risk management practices exist. They are the only ‘professional’ firefighters and knowledge is gained on the job. The bulk of the firefighting force consists of as-needed labor provided from miners, loggers, vagrants, and new immigrants, many of whom do not speak English.
* 1909: President Taft opens the Coeur d’Alene Indian reservation to settlement resulting in a large influx of settlers and speculators. The task of proving the validity of new land claims falls to the Forest Service rangers. Many of the rangers feel this is a land grab by private interests attempting to profit from public lands. A 160-acre ‘claim’ of timber could be sold for as much as $8,000.
* Fire crews generally consisted of 12-20 people with a foreman, supervised by a ranger or forest guard. Cross cut saws, shovels, and double bit axes were the main tools. A ‘good’ crew in 1910 could produce one mile of fireline per shift. Based on a 14-hour shift, crews could produce 4-5 chains per hour in fuel models 8/10. Current production rate in these fuel models are similar for Type 2 crews with slightly higher rates for Type 1 crews.
* 1909: Forest Service leadership asserts that unwanted wildfire could be prevented through adequate prevention and control. This concept is adopted into the Forest Service Use Book, “Forest officers have no more important duty than protecting the reserves (National Forest) from forest fires.”
* Winter of 1909: Much of Region 1 of the USFS (Montana/Idaho) receives heavy snow.
* 1909: Regional Forester William Greely is invited to join the Western Forestry and Conservation Association (WFCA), an organization that would draft uniform fire laws, organize cooperative fire protection districts, propose cost share agreements for fire suppression, and standardize policy on agreements with private associations for fire protection. In March of 1910, the first formal cooperative agreement between the Northern Pacific Railway Co. and the Secretary of Agriculture for control of wildfires on or near railroad right-of-ways in National Forests is signed.
* Region 1’s fire budget is $30,000 for 1910, in current dollars about $3,846,000.
* March – July 1910: The Region experiences a very dry spring. April and May are at a 20% deficit with the Coeur d’Alene NF reporting the first wildfire in April. June broke all previous records for lack of precipitation with July at only 50% normal rainfall.
* The recent completion of a rail system along the Coeur d’Alene and St. Joe rivers makes new land available for logging, mining, and settlement with an increase in human caused fires. Of 128 class A fires that started through mid-August, 102 are along the railroad right-of-way. However much of the land between these river basins is still difficult to access. Reaching backcountry fires often took days and all supplies are hauled in by pack animal or on foot.
* The telephone and telegraph are the primary means of distance communication.

**Handout and Facilitate Strategic Discussion Points #1 or Tactical Decision Game #1.**

# Stand 2 – Town of Wallace

**Facilitator Notes:** Bring focus to the Coeur d’Alene National Forest and the activities from July 1 to August 19. Discuss fire conditions and events leading up to the evacuation of Wallace. Facilitators should point out narrow topography surrounding Wallace.

## Map

1910 Overview Map

Coordinates (NAD 83) 47°28'41" X -115°55'59"

## Description

Stand 2 is located at the Wallace welcome center. This area provides adequate parking, restrooms, and room to facilitate the Stand. A new memorial dedicated to the firefighters of 1910 was established at this site the summer of 2010. This is a good site to break for lunch as further opportunities are limited.

## Travel Directions

### From I-90 Eastbound

Take first Wallace, EXIT 61

Turn RIGHT onto 2nd street

Turn RIGHT after one block into rest area/welcome center before the Stop sign

### From I-90 Westbound

Take second Wallace exit, EXIT 61

Turn LEFT under the freeway

Turn RIGHT after one block into rest area/welcome center before the Stop sign

# Stand 2 Background Information

* July 4th: Ranger Morris and a crew respond to a large fire in Murray ID threatening mines in the area. He works the fire for three days and upon his return to Wallace he writes, “We are having very dry weather and expect fires every day.”
* July 11th: Dry lightning is reported throughout the Region in conjunction with a wind event that causes multiple fires to ignite and spread.
* Mid-July: Washington, western Montana and northern Idaho have reports of many fires, some very large, with 3600 men already on the lines. Half a dozen logging towns are burned over and several people are killed in British Columbia, OR, and WA.
* July 16th: James Wilson, the Secretary of Agriculture, visits Region One and approves additional emergency firefighting funds bringing the forest fire fund into operation. An old timer tells Ranger Morris that things will be fine as long as they do not get a ‘palouser’ (a strong, dry, warm wind originating from the Palouse Region).
* July 23rd – 27th: Strong winds increase the size of existing fires and hundreds of new fires start by lightening across the Region. Regional Forester William Greely issues orders to “Retain a strong guard. Keep on hand a strong force of experienced firefighters…” Many resources have been working for at least 10 days straight.
* August 5th: The Western Forestry Association telegraphs President Taft asking for military assistance; he grants it on the 7th or 8th. Two regiments (8 companies) from the 25th Infantry are assigned fire duty from Ft George Wright and Ft Missoula.
* By the first week of August, Wallace receives ash fall out and heavy smoke obscures visibility and makes breathing difficult. As concern steadily mounts, the 3,000 citizens question if the Forest Service has a plan for protecting the town. Supervisor Weigle formulates a defense and evacuation plan with the Mayor, Chief of Police and Fire Chief over the next two weeks. They hold a town meeting to organize the defense of Wallace but do not reach a consensus. Weigle is left in charge of how to defend the town and when to evacuate.
* August 10th is windy with large fire growth over the entire Region. New starts are discovered from Steven’s Peak to the Lolo Pass around the Bullion Mine and the towns of Grand Forks and Taft. Suppression objectives focus on putting out all new starts, many of which are near homesteads and assumed to be human caused. The rangers respond to fewer backcountry fires are as a result.
* August 13th – 14th: Wallace insurance agents are busy writing policies for citizens. Fallout as “large as a man’s hand” sets three separate awnings on fire in town. The closest fire is six miles away in Placer Creek.
* By mid-August, there are 5000 men fighting fires in Region 1.
* August 15th: Company I and G of the 25th Infantry arrive in Wallace. Company G continues to Avery the next day. Company I starts work constructing trails to two fires, one in Placer Creek and one along the St. Joe road.
* August 19th: Weigle reports that the suppression effort is going well and there are 1800 men, including the army engaged on the Coeur d’Alene NF. Ranger Morris reports in a letter to his mother “Don’t worry about me as there is no danger to speak of at the present and the newspapers exaggerate things.” There are approximately 3700 fires burning in Region 1. The winds are calm.
* Evening, August 19th: I Company of the 25th INF regiment is recalled to Wallace. They are responsible for evacuating the women and children upon receiving word from Weigle. All able bodied men are to help in the defense of the town working under the command of the Mayor and Weigle. The exact timing of the evacuation is to be Weigles decision.
* August 20th, around noon: The Palouse winds hit the Coeur d’Alene area. All existing fires begin to spread rapidly and new fires quickly spring up from heavy fallout.
* Late afternoon: Weigle leaves Wallace and rides up Placer Creek to gather information for his decision on when to evacuate. He issues no advice to the Mayor about when he is planning the evacuation. Heavy timber blown across the trail by strong winds stops him about three miles in. He continues two miles further up canyon on foot and sees a large flame front coming down the ridge. Upon attempting retreat to Wallace, he finds that he is cut-off and he starts to receive burns to his face and hands; he takes shelter in a mine tunnel he spotted earlier.
* Around 1800: Unable to locate Supervisor Weigle, the Mayor implements the evacuation of the remaining citizens in Wallace.
* Around 2100: Fallout ignites open buckets of solvent outside the Wallace Times News. Winds were estimated at 40-60+ miles hour. The fire department tries to stop the main fire burning through town but there is too much heat and wind for them to have any effect. The fire quickly spreads, burning approximately 100 buildings on the east side of town. They adjust tactics to suppress new starts within the town and save what they can. Rail workers for the Northern Pacific use a tank car to draw water from the river to help control new flare-ups within the town.
* Much of the town’s population begins to panic while attempting to flee and board the trains out of town. At 2200, the Northern Pacific leaves loaded with women, children, and those men disregarding the order to stay and protect the town. Company I of the 25th Infantry proves invaluable in controlling the panic and assisting in a somewhat orderly evacuation. They receive commendations from William Greely and the Secretary of Agriculture after the fires.
* August 21st, approximately 0200: Weigle reaches town with burns to his face, neck and hands.

**Handout and Facilitate Strategic Discussion Points #2 or Tactical Decision Game #2.**

# Stand 3 – Pulaski Trail

**Note to Facilitator:** Provide situation leading up to and including the various fire crews’ escape. Walk up the trail for facilitation - discuss entrapment avoidance. Point out location of the War Eagle mine on hike up for later reference.

Several interpretive signs are located at the trailhead and along the trail. The facilitator(s) should allow time for participants to read these when they return down the trail at the close of Stand 4.

Reference points used in the background information relate to the Pulaski Decision Sequence map.

## Maps

Pulaski Decision Sequence Map

Crew Location Map

Coordinates (NAD 83) 47°27'32" X -115°56'01"

Alternate Stand 3 site - 47°26'58" X -115°57'17"

## Description

Stand 3 is located at the trailhead parking area for the Pulaski trail. This site is limited to five parking spots. Additional parking is located down canyon approximately 300 yards for up to 10 vehicles. Due to the restricted space at the trailhead and background noise from Placer Creek, it is recommended that facilitation either take place at the trailhead parking area or approximately 1.25 miles up the Pulaski trail. The alternate Stand 3 location on the Pulaski trail is next to an interpretive sign with a map of Pulaski’s probable escape route to the Nicholson Adit.

## Travel Directions

### From Stand 2 in Wallace

Take a RIGHT out of the parking lot and go to stop sign.

Take a LEFT toward the Best Western Motel on River Street.

Just after the motel, take a RIGHT on Second Street.

Go three blocks, take a RIGHT on Bank Street.

Take next LEFT on First Street.

Take next RIGHT on High Street.

Take next LEFT on King Street and follow to trail head.

# Stand 3 Background Information

* August is the driest month on record since 1894. Fire crews are engaged on numerous lightening caused fires in the backcountry between the St. Joe and Coeur d’Alene rivers.
* Ranger Ed Pulaski is in charge of close to 200 men assisted by three forest guards. They are fighting numerous small fires along the ridge and drainages separating Wallace and Avery over a distance of about 10 miles. John Bell and Lee Hollingshead have approximately 50 to 60 men each in the Big Creek area on the St. Joe side. D.H. Lewis is working 50 plus men to the north in the Big Creek area of the Coeur d’Alene.
* August 19th, mid-afternoon: Pulaski leaves the Lake Elsie spike camp for Wallace to re-supply his crews. It is 6-7 miles as the crow flies. Upon arrival, he briefs Weigle on the situation and goes home for dinner. He realizes that Wallace is at risk and discusses an evacuation plan with his wife. Instead of leaving by train, he tells her to go to the mine tailings at the town reservoir where there is a large area of bare rock.
* August 20th, early morning: Pulaski meets with Weigle again and then rides to the mouth of Placer Creek with his wife and daughter where he is meeting with his packers.
* Mid-morning: Pulaski rides to Lake Elsie spike camp to tie in with crews. The winds have been calm. Some reports state that Ranger Bell leaves his crew to get supplies in Avery around this time.
* The Palouse winds hit suddenly in the afternoon. All fires begin aggressively breaking out of their lines and threatening the crews. Pulaski rides up and down the ridge some 8-10 miles where the crews have been working trying to restore order. As he gathers information, he focuses on those groups that he thinks are in the most danger, eventually rounding up 45-50 men who are becoming panicky and seeking direction.
* Some of the crewmembers suggest Lake Elsie as a place to take shelter. Pulaski decides that visibility is so poor from heavy smoke they would get hurt trying to make their way down the steep, rocky slopes to find and use it. He orders an evacuation to Wallace 6-7 miles to the northeast (Decision Point 1).
* Mid-afternoon: Pulaski leads the group down the ridge from Striped Peak toward the West Fork of Placer Creek. They make good time ahead of the fire as this area was relatively open from a burn in 1889. At some point, Pulaski realizes they are not going to reach Wallace. He decides to make for the War Eagle mine located on a rough trail about a mile from the Placer Creek trailhead (Decision Point 2).
* Pulaski knew this area well prior to joining the Forest Service in 1908. He had prospected in Placer Creek and named Lake Elsie for his daughter.
* Upon reaching the old Nicholson cabin in Placer Creek, he stages his men there and scouts ahead down the creek. Fire now blocks the trail down Placer Creek and he finds they are cut-off from Wallace and the War Eagle mine. He retreats up canyon and looks for the Nicholson Adit, which is 3/4 of a mile away from the crew and their last resort (Decision Point 3).
* While retreating up Placer Creek they reach a small shaft. Many of the men wish to use this adit instead of continuing. Pulaski decides to continue on to the Nicholson Adit due to its greater length (Decision Point 4). He posts men along the route to help guide the crew through the heavy smoke and frequent spot fires they are encountering.
* Bells crew of 50 takes off for the Beauchamp homestead when the winds blow their fire out of control. The majority of them take shelter in a shallow creek but several make a break for a small root cellar when large trees start falling in the creek.
* Lee Hollingshead leads 40 firefighters into an old burn, but 19 of his crew either lose the main group or split off on their own and make their way to the Dittman cabin instead, a site they had been using to cache supplies.
* Reports are unclear on D.H. Lewis and his 50 men. It is assumed they evacuated out of the way to the north down Big Creek toward Kellogg.
* Other crews in the area are also attempting escape from the blowup around this time. Forest Guard Danielson is on Stevens Peaks with 18 firefighters. He realizes he does not have time to leave the area and reach safety. He lights an escape fire in an open area of bear grass and leads his men into the black with their blankets.
* Evening of the 20th: Ranger Taylor and Ranger Roy Phillips have been working separate lines on the Bullion Mine fire. Upon seeing the advancing flame front, Taylor realizes they are surrounded and leads his 60 men into the mine. One of the crewmembers who had helped construct the mine leads them to a mineshaft with fresh air. Eight men are separated and stay in the main tunnel.
* At midnight, the night cook awakens Phillips. Fire is burning on the horizon at a great intensity and rapidly approaching their position. He gathers his approximately 150 men, including soldiers from the 25th Infantry, for a stand at their camp. They dig line around their camp and begin to backfire.
* Fire behavior reports state the Palouse winds blew at gale (45mph) to hurricane (75 mph) force. Estimates for rate of spread were 8 miles per hour with spotting from two to five miles. As the winds hit, entire trees were pulled out of the ground and stands were leveled, many displaying a circular pattern from the severe vortices produced.
* As the crews tried to escape, many ran through or between ground fires caused by extensive spotting. Light and visibility were greatly reduced by the heavy smoke with some individuals reporting their way was lit by the tremendous glow of the fire. Many reported being hit by a blast of super heated air that took their breath away and that the fire was so loud they had to yell in each other’s ear to be heard.

**Handout and Facilitate Strategic Discussion Points #3 or Tactical Decision Game #3.**

# Stand 4 – Nicholson Adit

**Facilitator Notes:** Emphasize decision-making. Use Pulaski Decision Sequence Map as facilitative tool to assist in discussion.

## Maps

Pulaski Decision Sequence Map

Crew Location Map

Coordinates (NAD 83) 47°26'46" X -115°57'34"

## Description

Stand 4 is located at the Nicholson Adit overlook. The entrance to the tunnel has been reconstructed to reflect post-fire conditions. Erosion has moved the tunnel opening several feet back from the streambed since 1910.

The trail makes a small loop at the overlook. Placed around the loop are several interpretative displays. Space is available for two groups to facilitate discussion and take turns viewing the Nicholson Adit.

## Travel Directions

### From Pulaski Trailhead

Hike trail for approximately 2 miles

### From Alternate Stand 3 Site:

Continue hiking approximately ¾ mile

# Stand 4 Background Information

* Several of the men that were working above Wallace on or near Pulaski’s crew as of August 20th had been working straight through for 16 days averaging 14-18 hours per day as indicated by the rangers time books. Rangers were also working long duration tours of up to 30 days. By this date, it is reported there were more fires than overhead and men available to respond to them.
* Evening of August 20th: Pulaski finds the Nicholson Adit. He stages men along the route to help guide the crew as visibility has become very limited due to heavy smoke and numerous spot fires around them. Once inside he orders the men to lie down. They use water from a small stream in the tunnel to wet themselves and blankets that they hang across the opening.
* The fire front reaches them in full force shortly after getting inside. Pulaski tries to keep the mine timbers at the mouth of the tunnel from burning and collapsing by using wet blankets. One man panics and tries to leave but Pulaski draws his pistol and orders the men to stay as it is their only chance of survival.
* The effects of carbon monoxide and extreme heat cause most of them to lose consciousness. Late in the night, one man recovers and makes his way to Wallace. He believes he is the only survivor. By early morning of the 21st, the rest of the group regains consciousness including Pulaski. Five men have died, most likely due to suffocation, during the night.
* Out of Pulaski’s group, all have some burns or injuries and many have the soles of their shoes burned off. They are extremely dehydrated but the West Fork of Placer Creek has become undrinkable due to ash. Pulaski has lost most of his vision from heat damage but attempts to lead them toward Wallace, which is 2-3 miles away. A heavy obstruction of fallen trees blocks the trail.
* The men from Ranger Bells crew who fled to the Beauchamp homestead use a shallow creek for protection, staying half-submerged with their heads covered by wet cloth. The force of the wind levels trees in the area killing three of the men. Seven flee the creek and squeeze into a small root cellar, including Beauchamp, but are killed by the fire.
* Out of the 19 firefighters from Hollingshead’s crew that fled to the Dittman cabin, 18 are killed and one lives though badly burned.
* Although they suffer injuries from heat and smoke, Danielson’s quick decision to light an escape fire and his ability to maintain control of his crew saves all but one of the crew.
* An apparent break in communication results in 8 of the 60 men becoming separated from Taylor’s crew as they enter the Bullion Mine, these eight suffocate in the main tunnel as a result.
* The timely backfire operation organized by Ranger Phillips around their camp is successful and all 150 personnel survive with varying degrees of injury from smoke inhalation and burns.
* Ranger Fern successfully evacuates several thousand people from Avery with help from G Company of the 25th INF and the Milwaukee Rail Road. That evening the town of Mullen, ID, mounts a successful backfire that saves the town. On the Lolo side, the towns of Taft, Haugan and Deborgia are evacuated and then burn. The town of Saltese is saved by a backfire organized by Ranger Haun.
* The fires burn into Montana some 60 miles before rain on the 23rd stops their progress.
* Many considered the effort the Forest Service put forward a dismal failure. Others looked to the personnel involved for inspiration and as excellent examples of leadership. Elers Koch, the Lolo Supervisor, was very mobile that summer providing support and help where needed. Supervisor Weigle was also typical of the many great leaders at this time. He stated that there was no such thing as good generalship from the rear. Joe Halm, who considered Ed Pulaski to be a true hero, had this to say about some of the other rangers in his 1940 report:
* “Ranger Danielson who so courageously led his little crew into an open mining cut on a mountain side, will bear the horrible, purple scars on hand and neck to his grave, as will all those who were with him. Rangers Phillips, Watson, Vandyke, Rock, Bell and many others saved the lives of hundreds by their cool and timely judgment”.
* In 1934, the Selway and Clearwater burned out of control like the fires of 1910. Elers Koch, the Forest Supervisor, stated that control of fire in the backcountry was “a practical impossibility” and that “if the Forest Service had never expended a dollar … there would be no appreciable difference in the area burned over.” Professional and public controversy over the degree of fire control again grew but was effectively shut-down when the 10 AM Policy was implemented in late 1934. This policy would guide federal fire protection for the next 35 years until the Park Service amended its policy in 1968 to allow for limited ‘natural’ fire.

**Handout and Facilitate Strategic Discussion Points #4 or Tactical Decision Game #4.**

# Optional Integration Site – Pulaski Trailhead

Upon completion of Stand 4 Facilitation, return to Pulaski trailhead for Integration Phase of staff ride. Allow participants time to informally reflect and discuss with each other on what they may have learned on the way back. This is a participant driven activity in which participants and facilitators may “bring all the parts together and reflect on the impressions and lessons learned.”

The following discussion questions and answers are examples to assist with facilitating the Integration Phase and should not limit the wide range of discussion topics that different groups may produce.

How does organizational policy effect on the ground operations?

* Directs fire management guidance, i.e. AMR
* Standardization of tools, training, equipment

What were some of the influences of the 1910 fires on National Fire Policy and how does this affect us today?

* Dedicated budget to Forest Service for fighting fires
* Establishment of inter-agency and NGO partnerships, e.g. Weeks Act
* Reinforced public perception that all fires were destructive and that the primary job of the USFS was to protect the forest from fire
* Emphasis on fire prevention which eventually led to the Smokey Bear campaign

What are some of the important insights you may have gained as a result of participating in this staff ride?

* Continue to communicate upward to identify real-time issues and provide efficient problem solving
* Affirmed importance of LCES and need to constantly evaluate and update
* Develop good command and control, delegate to those you can trust
* Trust is critical in high stress situations to maintain control and execute difficult decisions/maintain safety of personnel
* Listen to your instincts - when in doubt, get out

How will you use these lessons to affect positive change at your home unit and/or within your organization?

* Focus on instilling the basics through quality training and trainee assignments.
* Pre-season preparation and planning with partners not only prepares the organization for routine and high-tempo events, but it is critical to building trust between partners prior to an event.

# Attachment A: Organization and Personnel of Region 1 and the Coeur d’Alene National Forest in 1910

The following information provides a synopsis of personnel directly involved or referenced with this staff ride to assist with understanding of organization and chain-of-command.

## Organization

Region 1 was divided into 22 National Forests in 1910. The Coeur d’Alene NF included the areas drained by the St. Joe and Coeur d’Alene rivers. It is unclear whether defined districts existed at that time, however rangers were assigned specific areas. Each Ranger had an average patrol area of 670 square miles with possibly one assistant ranger and seasonally hired forest guards to assist in detection and suppression.

## Personnel

William B. Greeley (Region 1 Regional Forester). Headquarters in Missoula, MT. Graduated from the Yale School of Forestry under Gifford Pinchot. In 1910, he is 29 years old. He firmly believes in Pinchot’s mission to eradicate wildfire from the National Forest.

Ferdinand A. Silcox (Deputy District Forester). At age 28, he is another ‘little GP’ (little Gifford Pinchot). He is credited as being the quartermaster and organizer for the R-1 firefighting effort. He coins the term “smoke chasers”.

**Coeur d’Alene National Forest Staff**

William G. Weigle (Coeur d’Alene National Forest Supervisor). Supervisors Office in Wallace, Idaho. Educated at Pennsylvania State, age 44, Weigle joined the Forest Service in 1905.

Roscoe Haines (Deputy Forest Supervisor). Supported Ed Pulaski’s work to establish a suitable memorial for the fallen firefighters and provide compensation for his injuries following the 1910 fires.

Ralph N. Debitt, (District Ranger, age 35). He coordinates the recovery efforts at Avery, ID. Fiscal irregularities surface after the fires and within one month he resigns and leaves the area.

Joe Halm (District Ranger, late20s). Graduate of Washington State College with one year on the job. Very popular and considered a natural leader, he has 16 men (one account puts 20 prisoners and 1civilian there too) up Bean Creek on the St Joe River. He retreats to a sand bar in the St Joe River and all survive.

William W. Morris (District Ranger, age 29, Wallace, ID). Educated at University of Michigan, receives appointment in 1909. He leads crews for the entire summer.

Ranger Fern. Stationed at Avery, ID with 30 men and elements of the 25th Infantry. Assist in evacuation of Avery and setting backfire to protect town.

Ed Pulaski (Assistant Ranger, age 43, Wallace, ID). Supervised approximately 150 men during the Big Blowup. During the fire event of August 20th, he was working southwest of Wallace between Placer Creek and Big Creek when overtaken. He had two years fighting fires; he had spent 25 years in the area working a variety of trades and was considered a competent and reliable man.

S.M. Taylor (Assistant Ranger, age 40). He is in charge of 60 men on the Bullion fire east of Mullan, ID near the Idaho and Montana border. They retreat to the Bullion Mine during the blowup.

John W. Bell (Forest Guard, age 35). He leads approximately 50 men from Pulaski’s crew. A veteran of the 1908 fires, they retreat south into Big Creek during the fire run.

William Rock (Forest Guard, age 25). Known as being capable despite only two years of firefighting experience, he is In charge of 70 men by Avery, ID in Seltzer Creek. They retreat into the black with all surviving except one man who commits suicide.

D.H.Lewis (Forest Guard, mid 20s). Working 50 men up near Big Creek and Trout Creek with Ed Pulaski’s large force.

Ed Hollingshead (Forest Guard, age 22). Two years’ experience, he leads a crew of 60 working in the West Fork of Big Creek for Ed Pulaski.

James Danielson (Forest Guard, age 22). A local and a student at WSU, he is in charge of 18 men working five miles south of Mullan, ID.

Ranger Thaddeus Roe (Forester, Avery ID). From all accounts this is a fictional composite and this person did not exist except in legend.

# Acknowledgement

The development team would like to thank the Idaho Panhandle National Forest. A number of the eyewitness accounts, news articles, and official reports referenced for this staff ride were obtained on the Region 1 USFS 1910 Fire Commemoration Information site at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r1/learning/history-culture/?cid=stelprdb5122866>. This site provided an extensive compilation of written and photographic material and was immensely helpful in reducing research time into this subject. Articles and reports referenced include:

Supervisor W.G. Weigle’s Report on the 1910 Fires, Wallace, ID, June 24, 1911”

*Mountains of Fire*, The Missoulian, Sherry Devlin 2000

*The Big Fire*, Joe B. Halm, USDA Forest Service

*Fire Report on the Coeur d’Alene National Fores*t, November 9, 1910, Haines, Roscoe, Acting Forest Supervisor

*A History of the1910 Fires in Idaho and Montana*, Elers Koch,1942

*Pulaski, Two Days in August 1910*, Cultural Resource Inventory, Wallace Ranger District, IPNF, FS, USDA

## Additional Sources

Pyne, Stephen J., *Year of the Fires: The Story of the Great Fires of 1910*. New York: Viking Penguin; 2001.

Egan, Timothy, *The Big Burn*. New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt; 2009.

Koch, Elers, *Forty Years a Forester*. Montana: Mountain Press; 1998.

Pulaski Tunnel Trail, [https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/ipnf/recarea/?recid=80120](%20https:/www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/ipnf/recarea/?recid=80120)

The Idaho Forest Products Commission, [https://idahoforests.org](https://idahoforests.org/)

The Pulaski Project, <https://idahoforests.org/content-item/the-pulaski-project>

Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program, Staff Rides: <https://www.fireleadership.gov/toolbox/staffride/main_about_staff_rides.html>

1905 Use Book, The Forest History Society, <https://foresthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ManagingMultipleUsesOnNationalForests.pdf>

Due to a number of factors, including conflicting accounts and limited official documentation, this staff ride is the development team’s best interpretation of events based on available resources. It is not a comprehensive review of the fires or actions taken during the times discussed and should be used solely for its intended purpose.