

Notes from Grant Ingram July 14, 2023

- The Grizzly Flat Fire Safe Council (FSC) began in 2006 and over its history, \$2 million in grant money was spent for fuel treatment (2006-2021) Fire Safe Council Funding Sources include community events to grant funding from State and Federal sources. This is a semi-governmental agency with its own board of directors and by-laws. It represents the citizens of Grizzly Flats regardless of home or property ownership
- The USFS met on many occasions with the community FSC to plan for the potential of fires occurring in the National Forest or GF community. Grizzly Flats was identified in the Federal Register as a Community at Risk and is the location of one of seven Healthy Forest Initiative Environmental Assessment Demonstration Projects in the United States.
- The USFS conducted a fire severity study in the grizzly flats area. This completed study was published in March 2017 and proposed several alternatives. The study concluded that the community of Grizzly Flats was at extreme risk from wildfires.
- The Trestle Forest Health Project - The Eldorado National Forest prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposal to modify vegetation on approximately 7,000 acres of National Forest System land. The project area is located southeast of the community of Grizzly Flat, including the area surrounding Leoni Meadows, west of Caldor, and north of Big Mountain.
- FUELS AND FIRE ANALYSIS - TRESTLE FOREST HEALTH PROJECT

“Alternative 2 would be the most effective at reducing fuel loading on the greatest area of the Trestle project, therefore, reducing the likelihood of high severity fire across the landscape and adjacent to the community of Grizzly Flat. Fuel reduction treatments would be connected to each other and to treatments from previous projects. Connected mechanical fuel treatments on ridgetops provide excellent locations from which to fight a wildland fire and for implementation of prescribed burns. Fuel treatments mid-slope and lower slope positions help to reduce the rate of fire spread and flame lengths before the fire reaches the ridge tops allowing firefighters more time to plan and implement suppression strategies.”

“Alternative 5 is also effective at changing the threat and severity of a wildland fire on the landscape. However, under Alternative 5, fewer acres would be treated therefore the effectiveness is less than that of Alternative 2. Some mechanical fuel treatments are not connected to past treatments while others are located mid-slope. More time would be required to prepare ridge-tops and roads to contain or hold a fire during either a wildland fire scenario or prescribed burning.”

- The USFS approved "Alternative 5" despite the community and private forest requests for "Alternative 2"
(Trestle Forest Health Project Appendix D - Final Environmental Impact Statement Response to Comments)
- The USFS and Grizzly Flat FSC signed an agreement that the work would be completed by 2021.
- GFFSC Defensible Space Program – Approximately 625 defensible space evaluations were performed on developed properties. Defensible space evaluations mirror CALFIRE 4291 inspections. Additional evaluations were performed on 620 undeveloped parcels.
- Between 2006-2021 Grizzly Flats FSC completed 1559 acres of fuel treatment with projects costs of \$1,900,172, with an additional 1,368 acres planned
- During the same period (2006-2021), the USFS completed less than 1000 acres of fuel reduction.
- 08/14/2021 @ 18:54 the CALFIRE Emergency Command Center in Camino received the fire report. Fire engines, crews, aircraft, and bulldozers were sent to the location. The first arriving aircraft completed two retardant drops and gave the GPS location of the fire. The weather conditions were hot and dry with little air movement and smokey conditions due to the Dixie Fire currently burning. The initial photos of fire behavior show a single tree burning next to the river on flat ground. A common place name for access was given to the ground units responding. (Berries Crossing on the South Side of the Middle Fork Consumnes River)



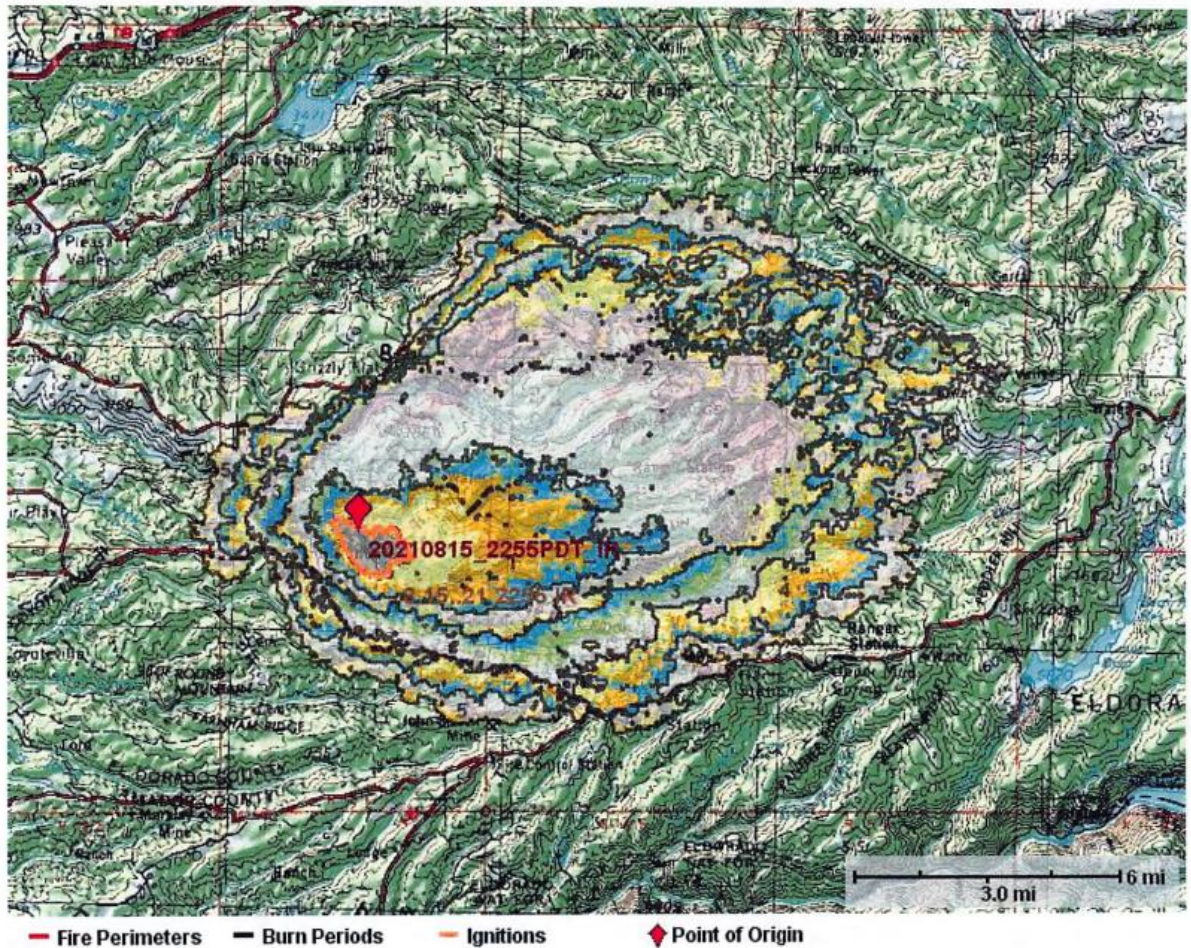
- Yet to be explained by the USFS is why the responding engine and crews were not familiar with the location. The USFS has claimed it did project work for nearly 20 years (Trestle) in the very area identified by the FSC and USFS as a high-fire severity area. Yet when the fire occurs the USFS crews and command staff are unable to access the location due to downed trees, washed-out roads, and no current maps of the area. The private timber company SPI had to guide some of the crews into the National Forest roads. (Audio Files)

- 08/14/2021 @ 21:34 The local fire chief makes it to the fire and states it's 2 acres. (2 hours and 40 minutes have elapsed)
- 08/14/2021 @ 22:29 The fire is now 3-5 acres and USFS is in control of all resource ordering.
- 8/14/2021 USFS Incident Command (IC) releases several local government fire engines (audio files)
- 8/14/2021 USFS Engines 366 and 365 returned to their home stations and later recalled back to the incident (Audio Files)
- 8/15/2021 @ 00:48 Incident command on the radio states the fire will be a significant event (Audio Files)
- 8/15/2021 @ 00:59 Incident command is informed of a second larger fire well away from the main fire. The incident command doesn't see how the fire could have spotted so far from the main fire and decides to let the fires burn together due to lack of resources. (Audio Files)
- 8/15/2021 @ 11:34 USFS releases CALFIRE engines, hand crews, and dozer from the incident (Audio Files)
- 8/15/2021 the Incident command team completed ICS 209. This document outlines suppression needs and potential for fire growth, it's then used for priority resource ordering. The command team clearly knows that Grizzly Flats will be impacted by the fire within 72 hours yet no fire resources are sent to the community.

36. Projected Incident Activity, Potential, Movement, Escalation, or Spread and influencing factors during the next operational period and in 12-, 24-, 48-, and 72-hour time frames:	
12 hours:	Significant fire activity was observed on the fire over the previous night ,including active crown fire. Similar fire behavior is expected if the inversion currently over the fire lifts. A 100 acre spot fire has been detected on the other side of the river.
24 hours:	Previous burn periods have demonstrated slope and wind driven dependent crown fire runs. Forecast wind would be in alignment with Middle Fork Cosumnes River and enhance fire spread to the east. Moderate range spotting is probable. However: Inversions have significantly reduced spread and intensity.
48 hours:	Significant winds will impact the fire area. Constant winds of 10 and gusts of 20 are predicted. Weather of his of this magnitude have been associated with large fire growth in the fire area.
72 hours:	Winds are expected to increase throughout the week. Significant fire behavior and long range runs are predicted in the absence of an inversion.
Anticipated after 72 hours:	Leoni Meadows, Grizzly Flats and Omo Ranch have a high probability of being impacted by fire in the next 7 days.
37. Strategic Objectives (define planned end-state for incident):	
Provide public safety and protect forest resources Protect communities from wildfire and prevent the loss of life and property .Keep fire East Omo Ranch RD, North Barney Ridge, South Dogtown Creek. West North/South RD	

- 8/16/2021 The Command team utilized the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) that shows where the fire will impact under current conditions, Grizzly Flat is in the target area shown.

[Near Term Analysis '8.16.21 5 day S/R 11hr burn period'](#)



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Decision for 'CALDOR'

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1.7. Course of Action

Course of Action

Active	Inactive	Action Item
08/16/2021		Full suppression strategy using direct attack with the intent; of defending life and property, protecting local communities of Omo Ranch and Grizzly Flats as well as other private property and protecting other critical values at risk while maximizing the probability of success and with an emphasis of managing risk to responded. Full suppression strategy includes ground resources and air resources when conditions allow.

- Despite the Trestle Fuel and Fire Behavior Study, the WFDSS, evacuation plans, and local knowledge of the fire threat, NO resources are dispatched for structure protection in Grizzly Flat until midnight of the 16th / early morning on the 17th. This gave the responding resources no time to prepare the community for the fire front. (Audio Files)
- 8/17/21 By early morning on the 17th the fire conditions were so dangerous that a frontal assault on the main fire would be impossible.
- The USFS failed to order structure protection resources within the first days (based on their own fire behavior analysis showing the potential for large fire growth)
- The USFS should not have let any resources be released during the initial attack and should have ordered the closest resources immediate need to the initial attack of the fire.
- The USFS wanted only USFS equipment and went to a national ordering system to try and get those resources from its own agency. When that failed, they went back to CALFIRE and Local Government departments for help, but it was too late.
- Several reports of USFS conducting “Firing Operations” without sufficient holding resources, would contribute to excessive fire spread. Burn patterns around Leoni Meadows indicate these fires were intentionally set by firefighters without any established plan.

Grant Ingram