

NARRATIVE STATEMENT

Wild Bill Fire

At 2355 on October 6, 1973, the Coconino County Sheriff's Office reported a small fire southeast of Kendrick Park. This location is approximately 25 miles north of Flagstaff on U.S. Highway 180 (legal description T21N, R6E, Section 11, center of NW $\frac{1}{4}$). The main District fire force is located in Flagstaff.

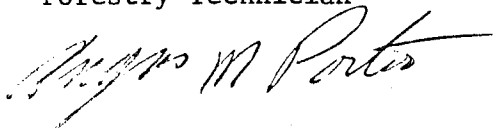
Immediately upon receiving the report of the fire, a 50-gallon ground tanker was dispatched. First attack was made at 0130 by the 50-gallon tanker. At this time, it was reported that the fire was five acres in high grass and "doghair" and "crowning". Wind speed was in excess of 30 MPH with gusts to 50 MPH. Additional forces were immediately dispatched. These included a Model 70 tanker, JD-350 tractor, and the Assistant District FCO. These additional forces arrived at the scene at approximately 0230. Backfiring attempts began at this time. The first attempt to backfire was made along the road that encircles Walker Lake to the north. The second attempt was made along Forest Road 514, approximately one-half mile north of the first attempt. Both attempts proved futile. Long distance spotting occurred due to extreme winds and extremely dry fuels (both heavy and light).

Dozers and manpower began arriving between 0500 and 0700. They were dispatched to the line from a staging area set up on Forest Road 151 which later became fire camp. This proved to be a better than average fire camp location. Three crews and six cats began a flanking action from the approximate point of origin near Walker Lake. Two other crews attempted burning out Forest Road 523 near the head of the fire. Due to the extreme winds and fire intensity, the effect of aerial retardants is questionable. Because of insufficient manpower, much line was lost in the first shift. Cats were building line, but the fire continued to spot over it and the cats had to back up to pick up spot fires.

The Regional overhead team was ordered at approximately 0400. The team took charge of the fire on the shift change at approximately 1800, October 7, 1973. At this time, all available crews were put on the line and the suppression action began paying off. The fire was controlled at 1800 on the 8th of October, approximately 24 hours after the Regional team took charge of the fire.

The main single reason the fire became Class G size is very hard to determine. The winds carried fire brands into slash piles and the slash piles ignited, causing intense heat and more spotting. Some spotting came from crowns torching out, however, most of the spotting went from slash pile to slash pile. The fire would not have been so troublesome if one of these factors had not existed - slash or wind.

ANGUS M. PORTER, III
Forestry Technician



Narrative - Wild Bill Fire

Day Shift 10/7/73

The fire started approximately midnight October 6. By 0900 fire was approximately 300 acres and two and one-half miles long. Twenty crew ordered and twelve cats.

Winds from SW were gusting to 45 MPH during the day. Fire continued to spot and cross lines. Backfiring was started in the morning from Forest Road 550. This line at Road 550 was lost.

Backfiring was also done from Roads 523 and 514, as well as from cat lines. The line on 523 was lost. A portion of backfiring along 514 held, but spotting occurred over the line in Sections 10 and 30 on the east side of this road. A total of ten air tankers were used on the fire. Ki Porter was Fire Boss for this shift with a line organization between east and west lines. Buddy Caylor was on the west line and Jim Bedlion on the east line.

The Regional fire team had been called for early in the day and took over the fire at the beginning of the night shift.

Night Shift 10/7/73

The Regional fire team took over the fire at the beginning of this shift.

Weather forecast was for south to southwest winds 15 to 25 MPH with gusts 35 MPH during evening, dropping to southerly 5 to 15 MPH after 8:00 PM.

A total of ten crews, twelve cats, and ten pumpers were used on the fire during this shift on a three-division fire.

At 2200 hours the fire size was calculated as 5,043 acres. Spotting across lines was common on all sectors.

Saddle Mountain visible from U.S. Highway 180 was burning on the top of the mountain.

At the end of the shift, 1,120 chains had been constructed, 400 chains left to build.

East side of line looked good at the end of shift.

Fire is burning north toward P-J woodland, but woodland is described as a heavy stand with joining crowns. Fire has crossed underground telephone line.

Day Shift 10/8/73

Fire was burning on top of Saddle Mountain visible from U.S. Highway 180. Secondary line is below hill to southwest. Possible control action was to burn off south side of Saddle Mountain. Ranger Roger Baker advised against this. Other alternative was to build line against burn. This procedure was later followed.

Early fire weather forecast had predicted a cold front with shifting winds from SW to west to NW due to front moving through. This did not materialize.

Most of line was tied in during this shift. There is still some line to be tied in NW corner at Division III and hot spots needing work in Division IV south of Road 523.

Slurry drops were shut off early in the day due to high erratic winds.

Borrego Trick Tank was damaged today at an estimated cost of \$1,000 damage.

Some damage also occurred to private land due to fire line construction and burned acreage. This is estimated at \$1,000 damage.

Thirteen cats and nineteen pumpers worked the fire today along with crews.

10/9/73

Beginning late on the preceding afternoon, moisture began to fall over the fire. It reached a significant intensity about midnight and turned from showers to snow between midnight and 0300.

The showers thoroughly soaked crews on the line and caused some concern on demobilization because of low temperatures. Tarps and plastic tarps were ordered and received about 2300 on 10/8/73.

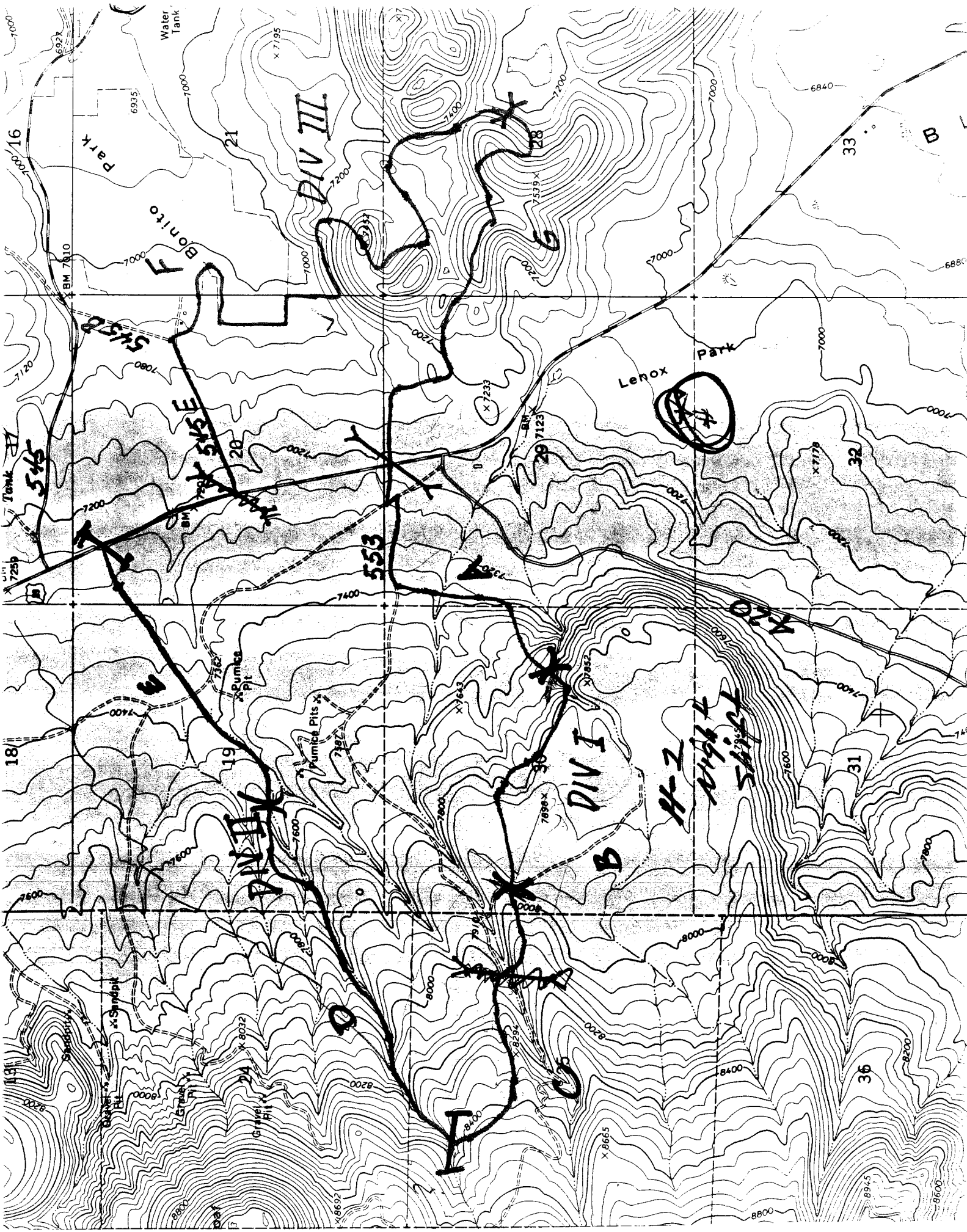
Plans were tentatively made for light patrol and mop-up for a day shift on 10/9/73; however, when the fire boss arose and took stock of the snow and weather conditions, crews planned for the line were not sent out.

Breakfast feeding of the crews was delayed a couple of hours to avoid getting the men up in the cold weather with no assignments for them.

The resource rehabilitation team stopped by the plans section to pick up maps and see about obtaining a helicopter for use in planning and effecting rehabilitation of the burn.

Demobilization was in full swing and 90-95 percent of the fire personnel was in release status by 1100. Two cats were left on the fire with Ki Porter in charge for drainage of firelines and repair of road damage.

Above narrative taken from fire camp personnel reports.



DIV III

DIV I

DIV II

B

H-2
AUG 14
SHIFT

Lenox Park

Bonito Park

Water Tank

Water Tank

545B

545E

545

553

470

32

31

36

33

30

19

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16

17

13

14

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