

to DO!!



Liz M Schuppert

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cc:

Subject: Fire Strategy For Dolly Sods

Rick Meadows, Corps of Engineers, and I were finally able to touch base on this. As you all may remember, I sent him the map and strategy a while ago, and hadn't heard anything back. Rick really likes what has been done here. He feels this shows a good strategy and risk management. Gary, he'd like you to take this map with you when you go to talk with the VFDs, and develop an actual written agreement with them for this area. He'd like to see it incorporated into the VFDs pre-planning.

There are a few things we need to add to the Strategy:

- 1) Get the Ordnance Avoidance Report that was done for the Nature Conservancy property around Bear Rocks. An ordnance was found just over the boundary line, and there were 3 other suspected areas. This needs to be incorporated into our Strategy and map.
- 2) What is our strategy if, during firefighting activities up there, an ordnance is found? I said that we would back off to a safety zone and hold the line from there. We would also need to report the ordnance to the bomb squad (how we've done it before when an ordnance has been located).
- 3) Pinpoint on the map where the smoke bomb was located. Did we ever get the bomb squad back to detonate that? If not, let's not forget to get that done. Rick was very interested in this one. He's not sure whether this one is different from what else has been found, so remember to keep him informed.

Rick is working with the State EPA. They want to come out and look at the area. They'll all probably come out for a field trip in the spring. He thinks one of the things they want to look at is if there's residual waste that's been left there.

The Public Awareness Plan need to be finalized. I was working on that with Major Osborne, but he's been moved to Kansas or somewhere. Anyway, I'll have to forward our work to you all to complete.

Rick also mentioned that he thought there is a historic area in the SE part of Dolly Sods? I don't remember this, but maybe you all could check that out with John Calabrese.

So, that's where we are right now. I've asked Sam for more copies of the map, but he hasn't been able to get to them. Gary, since you're in the same office, you might want to go see when he can get those, and to let him know there will be some changes.

If you need to speak to Rick, his number is 304-529-5388.

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Potomac Ranger District
Monongahela National Forest
Dolly Sods Unexploded Ordnance
Fire Prevention/Suppression Plan

The following document displays the Monongahela National Forest fire prevention/suppression tactics to be used in vicinity of Dolly Sods Wilderness and Dolly Sods North. The plan is based on the following premises:

- It is unreasonable to simply ignore all fires within the unexploded ordnance area.
- We expect small fires to become larger in Dolly Sods Wilderness and Dolly Sods North because of less aggressive containment strategies employed. Public misunderstanding is likely.
- The firefighting strategies listed are not risk free. We cannot quantify absolutely the risks associated with 50-year-old ordnance. Note: the general public is not provided a risk free experience if they wander off the designated trails.
- Based on fuel types, location, and prevalent winds it does not appear that even a moderate threat to public homes or other structures exist.
- The strategies, risks, and likely public concern require the Forest/Region to become more actively involved in fire incidents here than elsewhere on the Forest. A more aggressive prevention program is needed.
- The published public withdrawal distance used by the COE will be used as the minimum safety zone for consenting firefighters. **WHAT IS IT?**

Decisions concerning suppression strategies should be based on the information displayed on the base map along with the extended fire weather forecast. The base map displays fire management polygons, which contain the following information:

- EXISTING FIRE LINE - This is a combination of cleared trails and natural barriers, ex streams and rock outcrops.
 - STRONG
 - WEAK use a dashed line to displayed known weak sections
- RISK LEVEL - For each polygon. The risk levels are:
 - c - CONFIRMED - ordnance contamination confirmed
 - s - SUSPECTED – ordnance likely due to proximity to impact area or historical information.
 - u -UNLIKELY – no reasonable evidence that unexploded ordnance will be located.

- VEGETATION TYPE - For each polygon
 - NORTHERN HARDWOOD (closed canopy)
 - OAK (closed canopy)
 - SOD
 - CONIFER
 - UPLAND BRUSH (blueberries, laurel, thickets)

Suppression Strategies

CONTAINMENT – The least aggressive strategy, allowing fire to burn itself out within existing boundaries. The fire is restricted within determined boundaries established prior to or during fire activities. Limited suppression action can reasonably be expected to check the fire spread under prevailing conditions.

- Appropriate where the polygon has a confirmed risk of contamination, when the natural barriers are strong, or when spread rate is considered low.

CONTROL – Complete a control line around fire and any spot fires. Burn out adjacent to line; hot spots threatening line are cooled down until line can reasonably be expected to hold under foreseeable conditions.

- Could be considered in polygons that have an unlikely or cleared risk level.
- The use of burning out to reinforce a fire line when the fire is within the established safety circle.

FIRE SUPPRESSION PLAN
Unexploded Ordnance Area
Dolly Sods

Everyone needs to recognize that any fire in this area has unique circumstances that warrant additional safety evaluations. In addition to being in or near wilderness, there is the concern over unexploded ordnance. Not only do we have to consider firefighter safety, we will have to address local VFD safety, local landowner safety, as well as the general public. A fire in this area will likely involve additional personnel to handle the public safety issue.

Dispatcher duties:

- Contact the line officer or the acting, brief and expect them to report to the scene ASAP.
- Initiate the public safety plan. **Under development**
- Confirm that a copy of unexploded ordnance map with support documentation is available at the fire scene.
- Contact the WV DOF to establish lines of communication in reference to fire suppression operations.
- Request a spot fire weather forecast from NWS in Sterling, VA. 703-260-0106.
- Contact the Forest Supervisor to advise of the developing situation and establish appropriate update protocol.

Incident commander duties:

- Evaluate the location of fire and base suppression strategy on the approved unexploded ordnance plan. If the fire is not on Forest Service lands all we can do is inform the firefighters of the risk. **DO NOT** grant permission for the use of mechanized equipment. This authority has not been delegated below the Forest Supervisor. Provide dispatch with the details and let them work on the request.
- Establish communications with either the Potomac District and/or the SO ASAP.
- Establish IC Post to function as a check in post for all resources to report to and receive their job assignments and standard briefings.
- Additionally, brief all firefighters on the risk of unexploded ordnance. This includes VFD personnel. Forest Service firefighters **must be briefed** and given the opportunity to decline participation should they feel the risk is unacceptable.
- Consider the alternate suppression strategies listed in appendix one. Several will require FS approval. NOTE: it may take up to 24 hours to have a helicopter on site due to scheduling, communication, and safety issues.

Line Officer duties:

Be available to report to the fire scene ASAP or have the acting fulfill this obligation. The incident commander will need your help taking care of all the non-technical distractions.

- Implement the appropriate level of the public safety plan warranted by the incident.
- Expect pressure from the WV DOF to take aggressive control actions on all fires.

- Expect pressure to use mechanized equipment to access the fire regardless of the location of the fire.
- Expect pressure from the public to protect their lands, even if the threat is unrealistic.
- Expect the press to be on scene.

APPENDIX 1

ALTERNATIVE FIRE PREVENTION/SUPPRESSION STRATEGIES UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE AREAS IN VICINITY OF DOLLY SODS NORTH AND DOLLY SODS WILDERNESS

- The notification of the EACC of the need for specialized equipment/personnel.
- Calling up a CWN helicopter equipped with foam applicator. The helicopter would also provide a safe platform for monitoring fire behavior.
- Implement a fire closure order based on the drought index, rather than waiting for the State to impose a burn ban.
- It is suggested that the State pursue State and Private support.
- The use of conventional motorized equipment in Dolly Sods North area since it is not a wilderness. It represents the most active area and we have the justification to use aggressive suppression strategies.
- The use of leaf blowers to reduce ground disturbance (versus rake or Pulaski).
- Exclude the use of open fires altogether in the wilderness.
- First light suppression activities to reduce risk of heat detonating a round.
- Night suppression activities along cleared trails to reduce risk of heat detonating a round.
- Minimize personnel exposure along fireline during patrols.