

# BRIEFING PAPER

## Pacific Northwest Region - Regional Office

### Barry Point Fire

**Contact:** Fremont-Winema Forest Supervisor Fred Way – 541 947-2151

#### **Background**

- On Aug. 5, 2012, a lightning strike ignited the Barry Point fire, which by Aug. 20 had burned 92,997 acres of federal and private lands in Oregon and California.
- No lives were lost and no homes were burned by the fire, but objectives to minimize acres burned and protect private property were not fully achieved.
- Four different incident management teams had responsibility for the fire as it grew rapidly from August 6-15.
- Despite extreme burning conditions and rapid fire growth, many values including life and property were protected. especially north of the fire.

#### **Concern**

- Some landowners and community members expressed strong concerns with management of the fire, communication with fire managers, and direct impacts to their private property and livelihoods.

#### **Fact Finding Report**

- In response to community concerns, Regional Forester Kent Connaughton commissioned the *Barry Point Fact-Finding Review Report* (Completed January 9, 2013 by Ed Shepard and Associates, LLC.)
- The Regional Forester met with community members in Lakeview on January 28, 2013. Community members expressed concern that the Fact Finding Report did not reflect their experiences of the fire.
- The Fact Finding Report made four recommendations:
  1. Work with the Oregon Dept. of Forestry to clarify delegations of authority, joint operations, and supervision and evaluation of incident management teams on fires that cross jurisdictions.
  2. Ensure that the Forest Service addresses how local knowledge of terrain and environmental conditions, as well as community and landowner communication, can best be addressed by management teams at the time they are ordered and throughout the duration of the fire.
  3. Establish procedures to ensure ongoing direct communications with individual landowners and permittees relative to future fire threats to their property and grazing allotments and suppression actions to mitigate those threats.

(More)



for the greatest good

4. Conduct a further review of the events that occurred when the fire burned across the Morris and Harvey properties and the Albertson's property; and evaluate the risk to the landowners and firefighters as the events occurred.

***Barry Point Retrospectives and Lessons Learned Report/ Shepard Supplement***

- The Regional Forester commissioned a second, interagency review of the Barry Point Fire, led by Kelly Keenan of CAL FIRE, to focus on recommendations of the Fact Finding Report and to document key fire events and decisions. The report and its appendices are posted at [www.fs.usda.gov/fremont-winema](http://www.fs.usda.gov/fremont-winema)
- The Regional Forester contracted with Shepard and Associates, LLC, to produce a complete record of interviews and to provide community members the chance to review and edit interview notes. Interviewees are currently reviewing the notes, which are expected to be published as a supplement to the Shepard fact-finding report in May 2013.

***Learning***

- Wildland firefighters are already incorporating lessons from the Barry Point Fire into preparation for this year's fire season. While fires will continue to be unpredictable and dangerous, the focus will be on:
  - Coordination with State and local firefighting partners,
  - Timely and frequent communication with private landowners which is essential to maintain and enhance trust,
  - Management of incident management team transitions,
  - Assigning the appropriate incident management team based on current and expected fire behavior,
  - Ensuring that agency administrators and incident commanders provide oversight of the incident planning process with proper documentation.

*May 7, 2013*

