

Incident Summary Page for the 100 Fires Project

Incident Name: Big Swamp Fire	Incident Date & Time: 08/10/2022 @ 12:18
Incident Location: Willamette National Forest, Oregon	Incident Size: 120 Acres
Types of resources involved: Bureau of Land Management Interagency Hotshot Crew	# of Fatalities/injuries: 1 fatality
Reason this fire was selected for the 100 Fires list: ➤ Hotshot line of duty death	
Conditions leading up to the event:	
<p>On July 31, 2022 the Willamette, Umpqua, and Deschutes National Forests experienced a lighting event, which caused numerous wildfire starts in the area. Most were caught, but three fires (Windigo, Potter, and Big Swamp) transitioned to extended attack under one Incident Management Team. The Big Swamp Fire, the smallest of the three, had been worked on for several days with limited ground resources utilizing indirect tactics. After gaining ground on the Windigo Fire, resources started shifting to Big Swamp. These resources included an additional crew, and engines. With these new resources the decision was made to try and contain the fire quickly with direct tactics.</p>	
Brief description of the event:	
<p>On August 10, at 12:18 the Craig Interagency Hotshot Crew was constructing handline up the east flank of the Big Swamp Fire, when crewmember Collin Hagan was struck by a tree. A larger tree inside the burn, which had been identified earlier in the day as a hazard, fell, creating a domino effect, eventually knocking down the strike tree which fell across the constructed handline hitting Collin.</p> <p>Medical interventions took place immediately with crew EMTs and the assistance of an additional IHC. A sling site was constructed and a short haul helicopter was dispatched. Collin was transported for short haul by the IHCs 0.7 miles in extreme terrain. En route, at 13:00, ground medics arrived to support the crew medical efforts. At 13:40 Collin was short hauled out, loaded internally on a second helicopter and arrived at Helibase at 14:05. The extent of Collin's injuries were too serious however and he passed away aboard an air ambulance, while enroute from the fire to the hospital.</p>	
Fire behavior factors that were present during the event:	
<p>Fire behavior was very active during previous days and consisted mostly of running ground fire in the thick brush underneath a mature timber overstory. Aerial resources had been effective in working with ground resources to support direct tactics, especially outside of the burning period.</p>	
Operational lessons available for learning from this incident:	
<p>The "P-line" constructed by the second IHC through the thick understory proved to later be critical to the medical extraction and ease of movement of all resources.</p> <p>When a hazard tree is left standing, ensure that it is well communicated to all personnel in the area and a true "no-work zone" is established at minimum two tree-lengths away from the hazard. Redirect control lines if needed to maintain that buffer.</p> <p>A short-haul site only needs to be about 10'x10'. Don't compound an already bad situation by creating more chaos and potential for injury while continuing to run chainsaws unnecessarily.</p> <p>As in the Dutch Creek incident, continue moving toward definitive care. Plan for timelines not being met and unexpected roadblocks arising. Be flexible to come up with new solutions such as alternative transportation, new medivac sites that haven't been thought of, and altering you predefined medical plan in whatever way is necessary.</p> <p>During high stress situations, always ensure that all personnel travel with at least one other person.</p> <p>Know and communicate the incident medical plan to all personnel in the area and ensure that incident medical responders are aware of the working locations of all ground resources.</p> <p>Additionally, this incident is an affirmation that even with the best plans, this job is still very dangerous and bad things can happen very quickly. All we can do on the ground is to try and think of the worst case scenario every day and plan for that, then adapt to whatever happens next.</p>	

Incident Summary Page for the 100 Fires Project

Notable impact or historical significance for the wildland fire service from this incident:

Not applicable

Links to more information on this incident:

Lessons Learned Center Page

<https://lessons.fs2c.usda.gov/incident/big-swamp-fire-hit-by-tree-fatality-2022>

Short Haul Site RLS

https://lessonslearned-prod-media-bucket.s3.us-gov-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-02/Big%20Swamp%20RLS_Final.pdf

Serious Accident Investigation

<https://lessonslearned-prod-media-bucket.s3.us-gov-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-02/Big%20Swamp%20Fire%20Fatality%20Serious%20Accident%20Investigation.pdf>

Additional maps and incident information can be found within the SAI document.

The Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center offers an excellent site which provides information on many wildland incidents.

[Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center's Incident Review Database \(IRDB\) \(wildfire.gov\)](https://www.wildfire.gov/wildland-fire-lessons-learned-center/incident-review-database)

This summary page was proudly provided by:

Logan Blankenship, Superintendent of the Craig Hotshots at time of the Big Swamp Fire

September 2023



Collin Hagan (center)