**EXERCISE: Firing Trainee Exercise: Cold Springs Prescribed Burn**

Purpose:

* To aide students in developing a firing plan which meets safety requirements and firing objectives.

Time:

* 1 hour

Format:

* Students will work in groups

Materials Needed:

* Cold Springs

Hand out: (HO)

* Corresponding map of Cold Springs Burn Plan

Instructions:

1. **Divide the class into groups of four students.**
2. **Hand out the Cold Springs Burn map and allow the students 10 minutes to develop a solution for working with a risk adverse trainee**

2. Read the scenario and h**and out the Cold Springs Burn map.**

**3.) Allow the students 10 minutes to develop a basic firing plan and present it to the class.**

4. **Instructors may choose to deliver this exercise using sand tables if the classroom facilities allow.**

5. Pick a student from each group to present the groups firing plan.

6. Discuss the components of each groups plan, is it viable, safe and does it meet the firing objectives.

7.) Go through the discussion items with the students, answer any student questions.

Scenario:

Congratulations, after taking S-219 and some trainee assignments, you are now a fully qualified Firing Boss. You are assigned to the Cold Springs Prescribed Burn as a Firing Boss. You have a trainee whom you know and work with on your home unit. The unit is prepped and all parameters are comfortably within prescription. Winds are upcanyon out of the west.

Size: 354 acres

Fuels: Timber with heavy dead and down

Topography: Steep south facing slope averaging around 70%

Objectives: Reduce dead and down fuels in all size classes by 60-80%.

Restore a fire adapted landscape to improve forest and ecosystem health as well as wildlife habitat.

The plan for the first shift is to blackline Division C along a narrow, overslung road a distance of 1.5 miles in an east to west direction. This operation has to be completed before aerial ignition can be initiated the following day. The Burn Boss would like at least 200 foot depth below the road with your blackline. The primary concern is smoke along the road which is open to local traffic. The area above the unit was burned the previous year and spotting is not an issue. You do not have authority to close the road.

The burn window is tight with only three days before wet weather comes in. It is late fall and the days are short. You have about 6-7 hours of good burning conditions before the humidity gets too high. This is the highest priority burn for your home unit.

After the successful test burn, you turn the operation over to your trainee with the intent of remaining hands off. The Holding Boss set up traffic control with a pilot car to mitigate the heavy smoke across the road. After an hour, the pace of the operation is going too slow to complete the assignment within the necessary time frame. Your trainee appears primarily concerned about minimizing smoke. They are using one burner to light one strip off the road and letting it back to achieve the depth. However, you walked underneath the firing and observed that it is not backing and there is not an adequate buffer for the aerial ignition. Holding is not a concern.

You feel you need at least four burners to get the desired depth and that the operational tempo needs to increase to complete the assignment. You feel this can all be done safely. You tried gently prodding your trainee but they played the safety card and are still only lighting one slow strip. From your perspective the trainee is risk adverse and this assignment may be over their head. You brought your concerns to the Burn Boss, but that individual was hesitant to get involved and wants you to work it out.

How do you deal with the trainee? What are some of the possible solutions?

**Discussion Items**

**There is no textbook answer to this exercise. Items the students should consider:**

* **Can a different plan be implemented (e.g. – using more than one firing team working towards each other along the road; forming an additional ignition team to deepen the blackline working directly for the FIRB; etc) and how can this be presented to the trainee in a non-critical way.**
* **The potential difficulty and sensitivity of suggesting changes to a trainee’s plan.**
* **The advantages and disadvantages of having a trainee you know and work with.**
* **When to elevate the situation to the Burn Boss and what to do if they are not responsive.**
* **Determining when a trainee should be relieved of their assignment.**
* **What the programmatic fall out would be from relieving a trainee in mid-shift.**
* **Bringing up the day’s firing tactics at an AAR in a non-threatening or critical way.**

**Close the discussion by asking the students to think about what type of trainee they are.**

* **How do they respond to constructive criticism?**
* **Are they open to suggestions?**
* **Do they retain strong ownership to their plans?**
* **How do they react when someone comes up with a different plan which may in fact be better than theirs?**