

1994

**Russia fire managers trip to California, August 15 - September 26,
1994**

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United States. Forest Service

REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES - RUSSIA FIRE MANAGEMENT EXCHANGE

RUSSIA FIRE MANAGERS TRIP TO CALIFORNIA

August 15 - September 26, 1994

**BY
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SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST**

OVERVIEW OF EXCHANGE PROGRAM - PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

In 1991, a cooperative work agreement between the Russian Forest Ministry and the United States Forest Service was signed in Moscow. This agreement established common interests in the field of forest fire management and a direction for cooperative efforts between the two countries. One of the items in the agreement calls for "exchanges of work groups to study the experience of each other in fire fighting operations and management". Within this broad objective, specific goals of this six week host activity were, 1) provide information concerning the USFS fire management program and fire service cooperators, with emphasis on suppression, operations, and aviation management, 2) identify specific areas for future technology exchange and make recommendations for implementation, and 3) establish and maintain professional and personal contacts to facilitate future exchanges and strengthen goodwill between the countries. During this six weeks, Russian fire managers were provided a comprehensive look at fire management activities and aspects of resource management practices in California. They interacted with all levels of fire service officials and land managers from many different agencies in California. Activities covered the full scope of fire management in an interagency environment, including suppression, prevention, detection, mobilization, urban interface issues, prescribed burning, fuels and forest health issues, and fire related research programs. The fire management community of California can be credited with the success of this exchange. Everyone they came in contact with willingly shared the challenges, rewards, risks, and frustrations associated with fire management in California.

RUSSIAN PARTICIPANTS

Alexander Selin, Deputy Chief, Krasnoyarsk Forest Fire Protection Regional Air Base, Avielesoohrana

Sergei Rogov, Chief Instructor of Smokejumpers and Helicopter Rappellers, Irkutsk Forest Fire Protection Regional Air Base, Avielesoohrana

Igor Korolev, Deputy Chief, Department of International Cooperation, Federal Forest Service of Russia
Served as translator for the delegation.

ITINERARY

August 15, 1994

The Russian delegation arrived in San Francisco late in the evening and were met by Deanne Shulman, primary host, and Dennis Hulbert, co-host for the northern California portion of the tour.

August 16

A driving tour around San Francisco was followed by lunch with James Lawrence, Deputy Regional Forester, Ray Quintanar, Acting Director FAM, and Dennis Orbus, Coop Fire Protection. After returning to the Regional Office, Lawrence provided information on National Forests in California and Quintanar gave an overview of major issues in fire management in the Region. Mid-afternoon, the delegation and hosts traveled to Grass Valley. Leather boots meeting firefighter safety specifications were purchased for the Russians so they could fully participate in fireline activities. A complete set of fire gear was also issued.

August 17

After receiving an orientation to the Tahoe National Forest, the group left for the Cottonwood Fire. A Type 1 team was managing the incident and Mike Dougherty, Incident Commander, briefed the delegation on the status of the fire. The Situation Unit Leader then provided a more in depth briefing complete with display maps of the exact location of the fire and the private properties threatened. The group then drove out to visit with a Branch Director responsible for protecting a threatened housing subdivision. The Branch Director discussed tactics for protecting the homes, deployment of the structure engines, and organization of his Branch. The delegation then accompanied the Situation Unit Leader on a helicopter recon/mapping flight of the fire. During this time, the fire made a major run towards the subdivision. The group returned to the subdivision to assess the damage and observe structure protection activities. No homes had been lost and the group observed a hotshot crew burning out in sage brush fuels behind a dozer line with helicopter support. The group returned to Grass Valley for the evening.

August 18

The group traveled to the Cottonwood Fire and spent the morning meeting with members of the command and general staff, and many of the unit leaders to discuss their roles, responsibilities, and interrelationships. The delegation again accompanied the Situation Unit Leader on his daily recon/mapping helicopter flight and then returned to attend the night shift operations briefing. The delegation rode out to a staging area with two hotshot crews, with the intention of working the night shift. After staging until midnight, the group returned to fire camp to spend the night.

August 19

The delegation met with the remainder of the incident command team members to gain a full understanding of the team operations. A late morning visit to the heliport where a S-64 with snorkel and fixed tank was preparing to start water drop operations generated much interest. The afternoon was spent on the fireline where crews and a dozer were cutting line around spots where the fire had made a run a few hours earlier. The airtankers and helicopters were working the area, providing an excellent opportunity to observe air operations and coordination. Later that afternoon, the fire again made a run down towards town and the delegation observed a major engine defensive tactic to prevent the fire from jumping a road and a burn out operation to prevent the fire from burning down into a lumber mill. The group returned to Grass Valley for the night.

August 20

Ron Bradley, Grass Valley retardant base manager provided an indepth tour of the retardant base operations, various aircraft, and the forest fire warehouse. The afternoon concluded with a tour through the Empire Mine State Park. Dennis and Marque Hulbert hosted a dinner at their house in the evening.

August 21

Harley Greiman, Regional Forester's Representative, and Jean Masquelier, District Ranger Tahoe National Forest hosted a leisurely boating and swimming afternoon at their lakeshore home. A videotape in Russian provided an overview of the controversial issues surrounding the management of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The group also viewed a videotape of the Turning Point documentary on the deaths of fourteen firefighters in Colorado.

August 22

The morning was occupied preparing and purchasing supplies for a backcountry trip into the Granite Chief wilderness area. The group rode in on horses with mules carrying overnight supplies. Discussions focused on fire management in the wilderness, development of wilderness fire plans, ecologic effects of varying intensity fires, and the controversy over restoring forests to pre-fire suppression stand structures. The evening was spent sitting around the "campfire" (in this case a lantern due to fire restrictions) singing songs.

August 23

After assessing which activity would cause the least amount of pain, walking out or riding horseback (exacerbating sore spots from the previous day's ride in), some of the group elected to hike out. A visit to the Donner Museum in the late afternoon provided a glimpse into the hardships of the early California settlers lives.

August 24

As the group drove around the west side of Lake Tahoe, the inevitable comparisons between Lake Baikal and Lake Tahoe were drawn. A highlight of the Lake Tahoe Visitor Information Center was the fish profile chamber. In the afternoon, the group descended down the east side of the Sierra Nevada range to the Minden Interagency Dispatch and Air Tanker Base. Rosie Thomas, BLM Base Manager, provided a tour of the dispatch center and the OV-10 and DC-7 aircraft on the base. In the evening, the group enjoyed a Reno extravaganza show and the downtown Reno scene.

August 25

Traveled to Redding

August 26

Walt Smith, training officer with the Missoula Smokejump Base gave the delegation a complete orientation to the Forest Service smokejump program and trained Sergei in the use of the FS parachute deployment system. Sergei also went through the simulation unit exercises for exiting, landing rolls, and tree letdown, and the computer simulation for parachute maneuvering in preparation for the practice jump the following morning. Dinner was hosted by the Thompson family, relatives of Deanne.

August 27

Early in the morning Sergei made a practice parachute jump. This historic event, the first Russian smokejumper to jump in California, was Sergei's one thousand twenty fifth jump. The local TV station recorded the event and interviewed Sergei for the evening news. In the afternoon, Alice Forbes, North Zone Coordinator, gave a complete tour of the North Zone facilities, including the sign construction shop, the mechanic shop, the barracks, the training center, the coordination center, the weather information center, and the CDF portion of the facility. That evening, Walt Smith and Ken Perkins, a long time Redding smokejumper, joined the group to celebrate with a night out on the town in Redding.

August 28

Traveled to Arcata over the spectacular Trinity Canyon route. Dennis's parents, Nita and Dan Hulbert, hosted the group for a late afternoon meal in Arcata.

August 29

The group toured the coastal redwood area including the impressive Ladybird Johnson Grove in Redwood National Park. The group saw two large herds of Roosevelt Elk, and a Park Service employee explained the conservation efforts to maintain the Elk population in its natural habitat.

August 30

Two members of the delegation had not seen an ocean before, so the day was spent exploring tidepools, watching sea lions, and collecting agates on the beach.

August 31

Tom Herman, a forester with the Pacific Lumber Company in Scotia, gave a personalized tour of the redwood lumber mill. The group then traveled to the Redwood Sciences Lab in Arcata and visited with scientists to discuss long term fire effects computer modelling and attempts to use prescribed fire to return forests to their pre-fire suppression stand structure. The last visit of the day was to the Humbolt Nursery. That evening, Nita and Dan Hulbert hosted a surprise birthday party for Igor.

September 1

Travel to Sacramento. Patti Hiram, Fire Management Officer on the Tahoe National Forest joined the group for a "farewell to northern California" dinner. Dennis Hulbert departed the group at this time.

September 2

Travel to Mather Park located just outside Yosemite National Park to attend the Strawberry Bluegrass Music Festival.

September 3-4

The Strawberry Music Festival is an outdoor, family-oriented music festival. The festival features a wide variety of music in a beautiful, mountain meadow setting.

September 5

Traveled to Kernville. While enroute, group toured through Yosemite National Park valley and stopped at the Mono Lake Visitor Center. Discussions focused on water use controversies in the state.

September 6

The delegation met with the Kernville Engine crew and looked at weather station data collection, the interagency automatic dispatch response plan, and the BLM heavy equipment staged at the station. In the afternoon, Julie Thrupp, the Greenhorn RD fuels officer met with the group to demonstrate the BEHAVE fire prediction program and discuss the fuels program on the Greenhorn RD. In the evening, the delegation accompanied the engine crew on a dove hunting expedition.

September 7

The group participated in a Sequoia Forest management team field meeting evaluating rehabilitation efforts in a 24,000 fire area that burned in 1990. Topics of discussion included salvage harvest, fuels treatment, protection of riparian areas, and use of herbicides to protect plantations. In the evening, the Sequoia NF hosted a welcoming reception for the delegation. Sandra Key, Forest Supervisor, Lee Belau, Forest FMO, Anne Sandborg, Forest Fire Training Officer, and Alice Buckley, Public Affairs Officer, greeted and welcomed the group. Members of the community attended the reception, some of them Russian speaking, as well as a local newspaper reporter. A favorable article about the exchange program appeared in the Porterville Recorder the following day.

September 8

In the morning the group, accompanied by Julie Mendenhall, DFMO on the Tule RD, met with Ed Wristen, Ranger, Tulare Ranger Unit CDF, and Steve Sunderland, Division Chief, Mountain Home Conservation Camp CDF, for a tour through the CDF Mountain Home Camp. One of the fire crews demonstrated the "tool-up and line out" procedure, and then demonstrated a fire shelter deployment. The group traveled up to the Mountain Home State Forest in the afternoon. This demonstration forest, managed by the California Department of Forestry, is an excellent example of sustained yield, multiple use management within Sequoia groves. Lloyd Stahl, CDF Forester gave a tour highlighted with visits to prime specimen old growth Sequoia trees and stories of logging methods in the early part of the century.

September 9

In the morning, again accompanied by Julie Mendenhall, the group traveled to the Tule Indian Reservation to look at and discuss the extensive arson problem on the reservation and subsequent prevention efforts. In the afternoon, the group hiked out to the Needles Lookout, a spectacular vantage point overlooking the Kern Canyon. The lookout explained the Osborne firefinder and the duties of a lookout.

September 10

The group visited the California Department of Fish and Game fish hatchery in Kernville, in preparation for the following three day backpack trip working with the Department to restore native Golden Trout to their original habitat. Judy Urrutia and Christy McGuire from CDFG explained the long term joint CDFG/USFS project to eliminate non-native species from Golden Trout habitat, and restore genetically pure Golden Trout to these streams. The afternoon was spent shopping in Bakersfield and, in the evening, the group attended a going-away party for a transferring Greenhorn District employee.

September 11

Traveled to the trailhead into the Golden Trout Wilderness on the Inyo National Forest. Accompanied by four Fish and Game employees, the group hiked six miles to the work site and set up camp.

September 12

Working with Fish and Game employees, over 1000 Golden Trout and suckers were electroshocked and netted out of the South Fork of the Kern River, then transferred by bucket to a "holding" tributary. The South Fork of the Kern was to be chemically treated the following day and the transferred fish used to repopulate after treatment.

September 13

After a exploratory hike in the morning, the group hiked the six miles out to the trailhead and returned to Kernville by early evening.

September 14

In the morning, the delegation took a flight over Sequoia Forest in a lead plane from Ontario. Afterwards the group met with the Kernville Helitack crew and went over helicopter operations, equipment, accessories, safety procedures, and the rappel program.

September 15

The group drove up to Breckenridge Lookout, passing through a prescribed burn area from the previous year and a proposed burn block for this year. In the afternoon, the Havilah Engine Crew gave a demonstration of an initial attack progressive hoselay, and demonstrated the use of the equipment carried on the engine. In the evening, one of the Russian speaking Porterville community members that had attended the Sequoia reception, sponsored a barbecue in honor of the delegation.

September 16

In the morning, a press conference was held in Bakersfield with local television stations, radio stations, and newspapers. Afterwards, the group toured through the Kern County Fire Department administrative and training complex accompanied by Tom McCarthy, Kern County Fire Department Chief, Dan Clark, KCFD Deputy Chief, and Dennis Thompson, KCFD Training Officer. A tour through the Kern County communications center, provided the delegation an understanding of the immense volume of calls that the emergency command center handles, and the 911 statewide system for emergencies. Dinner at a Japanese restaurant was followed by a showing of The Hunchback Of Notre Dame at the Bakersfield Melodrama.

September 17

Shop in Bakersfield.

September 18

Private time day off.

September 19

Travel to Santa Barbara to look out interface fire problems. Discussions centered around local "sundowner" wind phenomena and the resulting periodic catastrophic fires in the coastal front country.

September 20

The group toured the Santa Barbara Mission in the morning and then travelled down the coast and through Los Angeles to Riverside. Susan Conard, Project Leader for Ecology and Fire Effects Research at the Riverside Fire Lab and co-host for the southern California portion of the trip, met the group for a welcome dinner.

September 21

Susan Conard gave the group a slide presentation overview of the Riverside Fire Lab organization and current research emphasis areas, followed by a tour of the lab. Researchers gave presentations of current projects in lightning detection, fire hazard predictions, and remote sensing of fire characteristics and behavior. An afternoon visit to the San Dimas Technology and Equipment Center, hosted by Sig Palm, Fire Program Manager, and Steve Raybould, was highlighted with a demonstration of firefighting foam.

September 22

The group spent the day touring the San Jacinto RD, where Joe Millar, DFMO and Johns Hatcher, Forest FMO discussed the district's model, long-term prescribed fire program to reduce fire hazard and improve deer habitat. At dusk, the group rode the Palm Springs tramway up to the mountaintop and ate dinner at the restaurant, returning to Riverside late in the evening.

September 23

California Department of Forestry hosted a day tour of the South Zone Operations Control Center, Hemet-Ryan Airbase, and Prado Conservation Camp. One of the highlights was a helicopter tour over the recent Laguna Beach fire with discussion concerning goat maintained fuelbreaks around urban areas. Jim Dykes, Deputy Director, Fire Protection Program, Jim Owen, Region Chief, Sierra South Region, Glen Newman, Area Chief Sierra South Region, and David Neff, Deputy Chief Resource Manager, Sierra South Region accompanied the tour.

September 24

The day was spent shopping in Riverside. Susan hosted a farewell dinner at her home and showed slides of her fire research project in the Krasnoyarsk Region of Siberia.

September 25

Disneyland

September 26

Depart for LAX early in the morning for the return trip to Russia.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION

- 1) The US fire stations seemed well equipped with available technology.
- 2) Dozers are readily available and easily ordered for use on fires.
- 3) Coordination centers are efficient in mobilizing resources.
- 4) Retardant plane loading capabilities are impressive as well as the number of retardant planes available.
- 5) Technology transfer between research facilities and the field seemed effective.
- 6) San Dimas Technology and Equipment Center filled a vital role in developing effective fire suppression and prevention equipment.
- 7) The 911 emergency response system was impressive with its quick and easy access for emergency response statewide.
- 8) The general public recognition of the USFS through agency trucks and uniforms, and the "good host" concept provides a positive image of the agency.
- 9) Our communications systems, both DG and radios, are very effective.
- 10) Computerized parachute maneuvering simulator at Redding seemed a very useful training tool.
- 11) The Russian smokejumper parachute deployment system and spotting procedures have many potential advantages over those currently used in the US.
- 12) Large fires in the US tend to have more support personnel per firefighter than fires in Russia, and also offer more amenities for the firefighter.
- 13) The US management structure on fires is significantly more complex, with a higher pyramid shape. The Russians tend to have fewer "bosses" with a flatter management structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES

- 1) Continue providing Russians exposure to the Hotshot Crew Program/Handtools Use for possible incorporation into their fire suppression program.

Send Hotshot crew overhead with a complement of tools to Russia and develop a joint USFS/Russia Hotshot crew that could be used in a demonstration capacity in various regions throughout Russia during the fire season

Continue to host teams of two or three Russian firefighters on USFS Hotshot crews.

Continue to expose visiting Russian fire managers to the Hotshot Program with field demonstration of handtool use and line construction.

- 2) Continue smokejumper technology exchange.
- 3) Host a Russian pilot-observer and contingent of smokejumpers in the US for operational use on USFS fires.
- 4) Give Russian Federal Forest Service exposure to USFS fire prevention and education program.
- 5) Continue to support joint international fire effects research in the boreal forests.
- 6) Work with Russian Federal Forest Service to implement fuels treatments in their timber sale programs including areas harvested by forestry cooperatives, and those harvested by joint venture operations.
- 7) Maintain momentum of the current management level exchange program to provide opportunities for Russian fire managers to understand our fire management program. Continue the "show me" type trips for both management and regional operational level officials.

INFORMATION FOR HOSTS

- Visitors should be signed up on a volunteer agreement. This allows them to be considered as federal employees for the purpose of tort claims and compensation for work injuries.
- Purchase nameplates for visitors, particularly if they will be meeting many people over the course of their visit.
- Provide maps of the areas visited and, if possible, have a map available from the person's country of origin for use during introductions and presentations.
- If visitors will be in the US for over a week or two, rent a minivan or other suitable size vehicle for travel, as its use is more flexible than an agency vehicle.
- Purchase a supply of film and have available extra cameras so that visitors can take photographs if they do not bring cameras with them.
- Where possible, invite native speakers to social occasions to facilitate conversations.
- If visitors are to stay in one area for a while, house them in a kitchenette type facility, so they do not have to eat at restaurants continuously.
- Allow enough flexibility in the schedule to accommodate special interests of the visitors.