

## ERSKINE FIRE

SEQUIOIA NATIONAL FOREST,  
CENTRAL CALIFORNIA DISTRICT – BLM,  
KERN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

### *Timeline of Significant Events and Associated Decisions*



Fig. 1. View of the fire taken at approximately 2030 on 06/23/2016.

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*This document represents significant events and decisions associated with the Erskine Fire. The primary focus is to develop a timeline of these events during the Initial Attack period starting from the initial report on June 23, 2016 at 1552 through July 3, 2016 at 0600. Events documented are compiled through several sources including dispatch logs, discussions with BLM and SQF personnel, Kern County Fire and Sheriff's Office, IA resources and Dispatch and Incident Status Summaries (ICS 209).*

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### Background

June 23<sup>rd</sup> was a hot and dry day in the Lake Isabella area. The weather forecast called for gusty winds and low humidity producing “elevated fire danger for the Kern County Desert and Mountain Areas”. The Erskine Fire was first reported at 1552 located near Lake Isabella at the base of Cook Peak. Strong winds pushed the fire uphill to the east. Winds were reported at 14-20 miles per hour, with gusts to 40 mph. An unusually abundant grass fuel component contributed to the rapid fire spread into areas that were last burned by the Cook Fire in 1996, the Yankee Fire in 1998, and the Lakeland Fire in 1994. Just 30 minutes after the initial report, the Kern County IC reported the size of the fire at 200 acres. Historically fire spread has slowed as it reached the top of Cook Peak, spreading out laterally and burning around the north or south side. The conditions this day, however, aligned in such a way to result in the fire spotting over the top of Cook Peak and rapidly spreading down the other side into structures in the Squirrel Mountain Valley area within 45 – 50 minutes of ignition. The fire continued running east towards Kelso Valley then turned south before fire spread finally slowed the night of the 24<sup>th</sup>. The fire had consumed over 35,000 acres at this point.

Coordination and cooperation between the various agencies in Kern County was continually raised as a positive contributing factor to the response. The Agency Administrators and fire managers have a strong history of working together and assisting each other across jurisdictional boundaries. Over 40 cooperators had participated in a Cooperators Meeting in late May. They were sharp from a busy fire season that came earlier than normal with three large fires in the three weeks leading up to Erskine, one that involved ordering a Type 2 Incident Management Team; knowledge, experience, and an atmosphere of cooperative response was well established.

### Narrative

The Erskine Fire was reported on June 23 at 1552 at 3200 Range Road on the edge of the town of Lake Isabella. The origin was in Federal Response Area (FRA) on BLM jurisdictional lands. Initial responders reported the fire at 2 acres with multiple spots uphill at 1605. Strong winds pushed the fire uphill in abundant grass and brush fuels at a rapid rate. At 1622 the fire was estimated to be 200 acres. Fuel, dry and windy conditions and slope all aligned and the fire quickly spread directly across Cook Peak, spotting into residential areas on the back side. By 1650 the fire was estimated by Air Attack at 300 acres and the Incident Commander reported 600-800 homes threatened, one structure lost and infrastructure taken out. The fire would eventually impact USFS and Kern County jurisdictions.

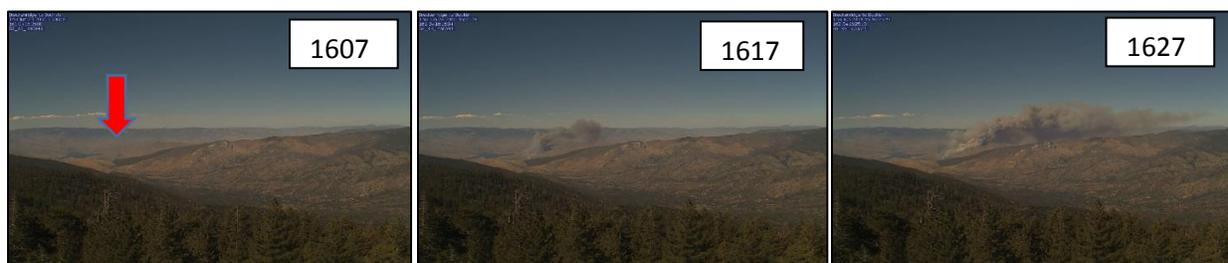


Fig. 2. Time Lapse Photos from Breckenridge Webcam.

The Erskine Fire started in an area which activated a High Response with resources from Kern County, the Sequoia National Forest (SQF) and the Central California District Bureau of Land Management (CND). The Initial Attack Resources are shown in **Appendix 1**. The time of dispatch was 1555. Kern County Patrol 72 arrived on scene and assumed command as Erskine IC at 1605. At 1612 SQF DIV 4 entered into Unified Command with Kern



Fig. 3. Origin of Fire

County Patrol 72. The immediate threat to life, safety and structures was the top priority. The Incident Commanders requested the Kern County Sheriff evacuate Lakeland Estates at 1620. At 1701 BLM 3115, and the Kern County Sheriff's Office have entered into Unified Command with DIV4 and Kern County BC7. The Incident Commanders would continue to work closely together, as much as possible in the same location throughout the initial attack phase of the incident. Based on the rapid spread of the fire, the threat to lives and property, and the complexity of the management of the response, Incident Commanders and Line Officers decided to order a T1 Incident Management Team (IMT). The IMT order was placed at 1733, just one hour 41 minutes after the first report of the fire.

The threat to human life, responder safety and the probability of success, shifted the priority from stopping the spread of the fire to evacuations, structure protection and securing the flanks as the fire moved through residential areas. Incident Commanders' and Agency Administrators' concern for personnel extended beyond safety as many of the responders lived in the areas immediately threatened by the fire (the Incident Commanders did not feel this affected the response). Resources became stretched geographically as more drainages were impacted, the number of evacuations increased and multiple structure protection groups were established. At 1811 Branch 1 was established for better span of control on the northeast side of the fire.

*Employees of the USFS, BLM and Kern County were directly affected by the incident and there was the possibility some would lose homes or have family that would lose homes. The Agency Administrators for the USFS, BLM and Kern County ordered a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team to assist employees of all three agencies. That request was made Thursday night during the initial stage of the incident.*

This pattern of response continued throughout the night and into the next day as the fire continued to spread to the east toward Kelso Valley. Responders found ways to address complicating factors such as the loss of AT&T cellular service, residents not wanting to evacuate or coming back into the evacuated areas before the evacuations were lifted and the loss of power in the area which necessitated the evacuation of the Kern Valley Hospital and took out the municipal water supply. Nearly all available resources responded in the first few hours. Fire behavior remained active on the 24<sup>th</sup> and a Red Flag

Warning for gusty winds and dry conditions was issued and in effect until 2200. These factors necessitated the extension of most IA resources through the day shift because most orders placed during the night had not been filled by morning. Resources did continue to arrive during the day and the T1 IMT assumed command at 2000.

A break in the weather combined with less immediate threat to life and structures and added resources over the next few days allowed good progress on containment of the incident. There was still a lot of work to be done in the evacuated areas to contain the fire, restore power and mitigate conditions to assure residents could safely return to their property. As those objective were met, evacuations were lifted and the fire management organization shifted focus more on the recovery process. The IMT returned command of the incident to the local units at 0600 on July 3. At this point the fire had burned over 48,000 acres, destroyed 285 structures and taken the lives of two individuals that were trying to evacuate their home.

### **Contributing Factors to the Outcome of the Response**

- All three agency line officers were on scene and engaged within the first few hours.
- Unified Command was established immediately. The Incident Commanders were engaged and working together from the same location.
- The County Sheriff was included (informally at first) in the Unified Command for the purpose of evacuations.
- Evacuations started within the first 15 minutes of Initial Attack.



*Fig. 4. Unified Incident Commanders at Initial Attack ICP*

- Participation in regular preseason cooperators meetings, including one in late May.
- Response included a night air attack to provide situational intelligence and guidance from the air.
- The availability and early use of the VLAT.
- The Kern County night-flying helicopter was utilized to drop water the first three nights of the response. The T1 IMT felt this contributed to the success of holding retardant lines.
- The decision was to focus on evacuations, structure protection and controlling the flanks rather than trying to attack the head of the fire with ground or air resources due to safety considerations and low probability of success.

- Work with Kern River Valley Fire Safe Council to prepare defensible space around many of the homes in the area significantly contributed to firefighter safety and reduced the amount of property loss. Some actions were completed within days of the start of the incident.
- Cooperation of the Red Cross for support of the evacuees.
- Communication was hampered by the primary cell service going down in the first 50 minutes of the incident.
- The decision to keep everyone on extended shift through the 24<sup>th</sup> because there were no replacement resources available.
- The decision to order a Type 1 IMT within the first few hours of the incident, due to complexity and the imminent threat to lives and structures.
- Decision to add a Type 3 Branch Director for the north side when the span of control for Operations was exceeded.
- There is a very good operational working relationship between Kern County, USFS, and the BLM in the Lake Isabella Area. The Three Initial Attack Incident Commanders have worked together for over four years and have complimentary capabilities.
- Immediate decision of all agencies involved to commit everything they had to the fire from the outset.

### **Values at Risk**

The immediate threat was to human life and property due to the rapid spread into populated areas. It is estimated that over 1,500 structures were threatened in the first few hours.

The Agency Administrators/Representatives, Fire Managers and Incident Commanders all mentioned one of their first concerns was for the safety of responders. The fact that the fast-moving fire spread resources out over a large area quickly added to the concern for responder safety. In addition to fighting a fast-running fire, initial attack involved structure protection and evacuation measures in over nine subdivisions or structure clusters distributed along a 15 mile stretch of road.

Other Values at Risk in the immediate area were communication towers, power lines, a hospital, campgrounds, and Highway 178.

Values at Risk beyond the immediate threat included Roadless and Wilderness Areas, riparian areas, watersheds and the Pacific Crest Trail.

Outside influences that affected the management of Values at Risk included residents that would not evacuate and those that returned prior to the lift of evacuations. There was continuous pressure on officials to repopulate the area as quickly as possible.

The Incident Commander of California Interagency Incident Management Team 5 stated his priorities for managing Values at Risk were:

- 1. Life and evacuations
- 2. Prevent further loss
- 3. Perimeter control

The Incident Property Protection Objectives based on Values at Risk in the original WFDSS decision on June 23<sup>rd</sup> were defend structures and infrastructure within the fire area and in the path of the fire including:

Mountain Mesa	South Lake	Squirrel Valley
Yankee Canyon	Lakeland Estates	Bella Vista
Weldon	Cooks Peak Comm. Site	Onyx

The following areas were added to the Property Protection Incident Objectives activated on June 26<sup>th</sup>:

Claraville	Landers Meadow
Valley View	McIver Cabin

Kiavah Wilderness Communication Infrastructure

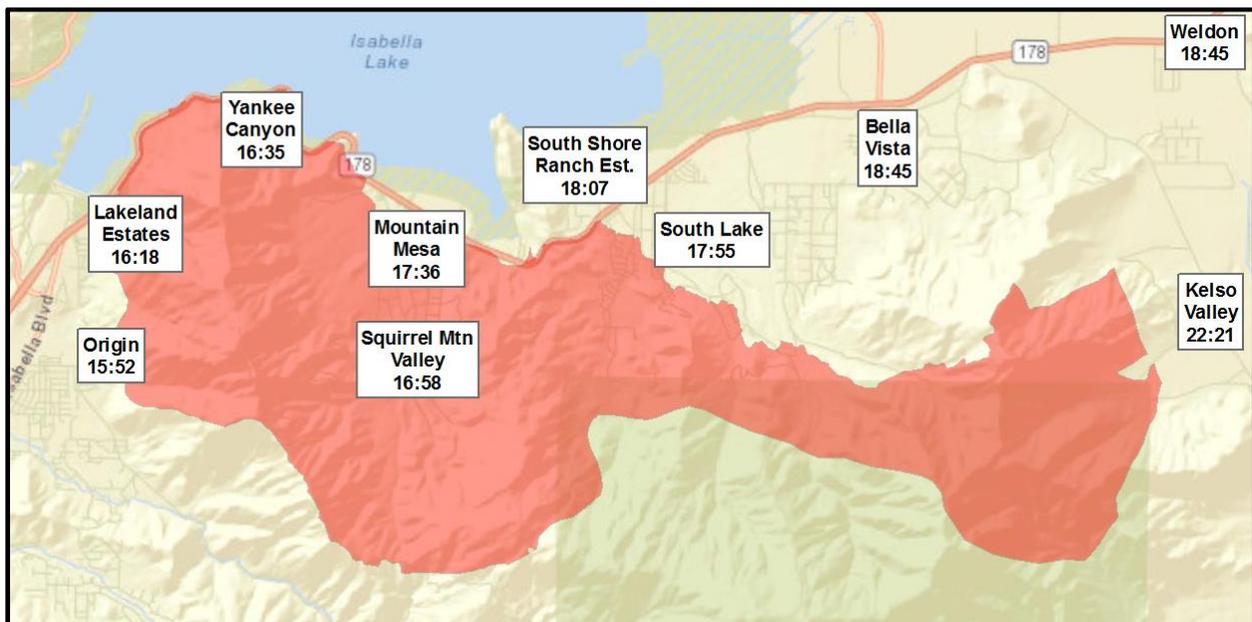


Fig. 5. Location of subdivisions and communities affected by the Erskine fire including the time evacuations started.

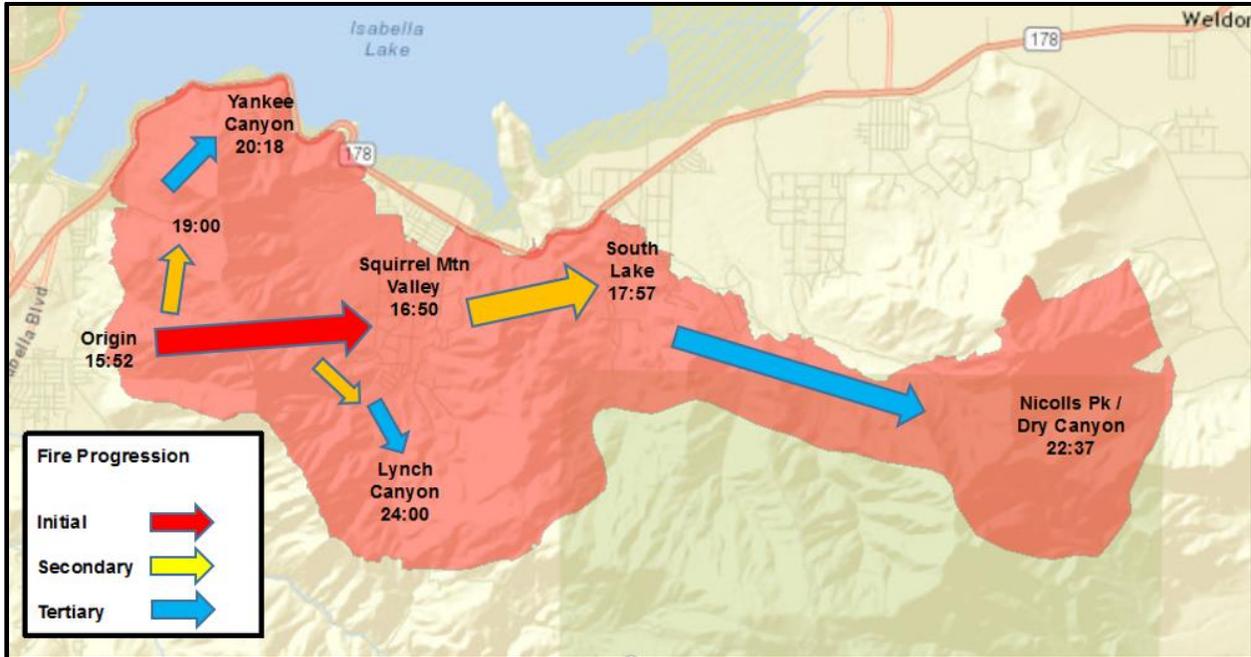


Fig. 6. Fire Progression on 06/23/2016 based upon IA resource radio reports of the time landmarks were impacted.

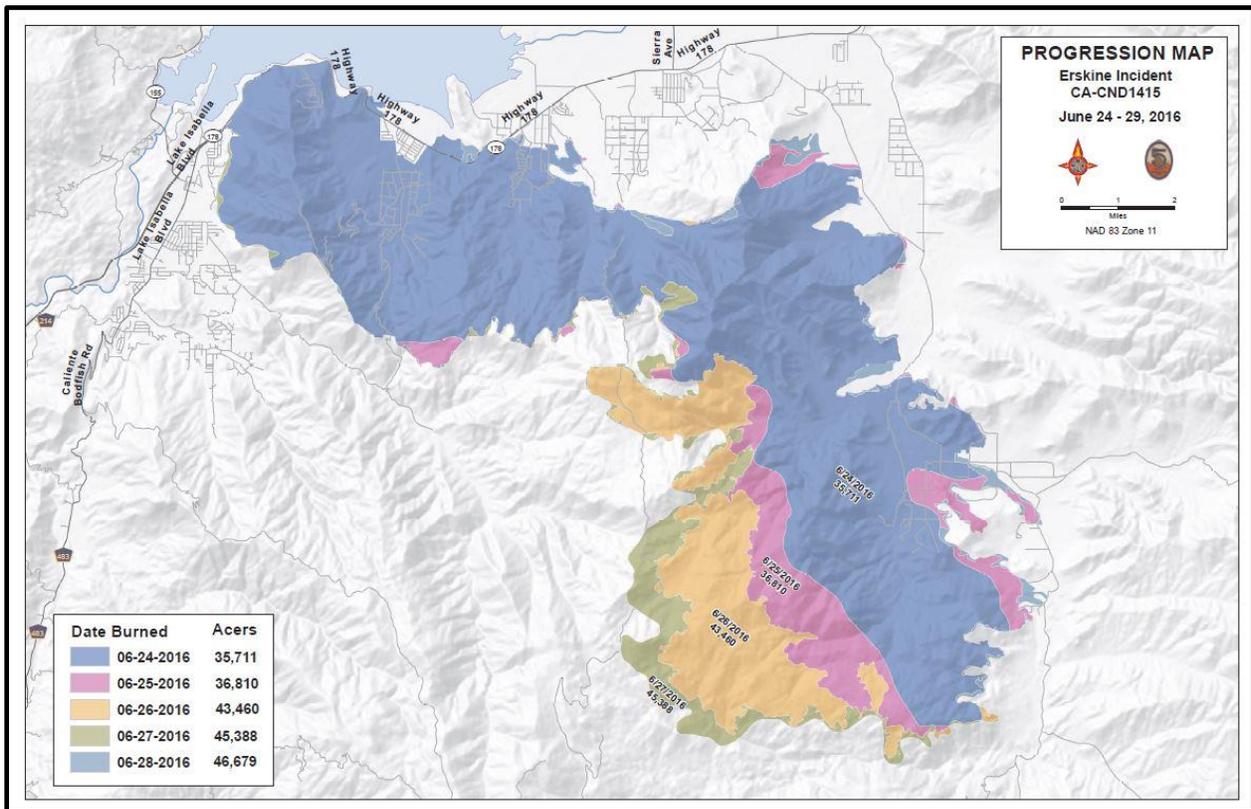


Fig. 7. Fire Progression on 06/24/2016 through 06/28/2016 based upon IR mapping.

Timeline – Significant Events and Associated Decisions

*Important decisions are highlighted with bold text in the following list:*

TIME	<b>06/23/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
1552	Kern County Dispatch receives multiple reports of a vegetation fire near the archery range on Erskine Creek Road at Apollo Way.
1555	Kern County initiated a response which included the following resources: 4 Type 3 Engines 3 Patrols 2 Type 2 Dozers 2 Type 2IA Hand Crew 1 Water Tender 1 Type 2 Helicopter 2 Chief Officers 1 Public Information Officer 1 Dozer Manager
1557	Central California Interagency Communications Center (CCICC) received the initial report of the fire from Kern County Dispatch and initiated the ERSKINE FIRE CA-CND-2016-1414 entry in WildCAD.
1600	CCICC initiated a high response which included the following resources: 5 Type 3 Engines 1 Patrols 1 Type 2 Dozer 3 Type 2 Hand Crews 1 Water Tender 1 Type 2 Helicopter 1 Air Attack 2 Air Tankers 3 Chief Officers  The initial Federal response included resources from both the Sequoia National Forest (SQF) and the Central California District BLM (CND).  Within the first 15 minutes of the initial run card dispatch, the following additional resources were ordered from CCICC to the fire: 2 Chief Officers 1 Type 1 Hand Crew 3 Type 2 Hand Crews 1 Water Tender 2 Patrols
1605	Kern County Patrol 72 arrived on scene and assumed command as Erskine IC. Initial Size-up: The fire was 2 acres, crossing the archery range road now, has multiple spots and is running up the hill.

1612	SQF DIV 4 arrives on scene. <b>Decision: SQF DIV 4 enters into unified command with Kern County Patrol 72.</b>
1615	Kern County Sheriff's Office Deputies (KCSO) begin checking Erskine Creek, an area known for homeless encampments, in order to evacuate the area.
1620	<b>Decision: Incident Commander requests KCSO to begin evacuations in Lakeland Estates.</b> KCSO had already begun these evacuations.
1622	Incident Commander update on conditions: The fire is approximately 200 acres, running with the wind and will hit the top of Cook Peak. The fire will possibly wrap around the north side of Cook Peak into Yankee Canyon within a couple hours.
1635	Kern County Dispatch receives reports of spot fires in the Squirrel Valley subdivision. One structure is involved as a result of the spot fires.  KCSO begins evacuating the Yankee Canyon area.
1637	<b>Decision: The BLM Duty Officer (3101) contacted CCICC and advised them that the Erskine Fire will be a full suppression fire.</b>
1640	Kern County Dispatch utilizes the ReadyKern (reverse 911) to notify affected areas of evacuations. ReadyKern Message:  "If you live, work or are visiting an area affected by today's wildland fire near Lake Isabella, please pay close attention to this message.  A wildland fire is threatening Lakeland Tract, Squirrel Valley, Southlake and Weldon. Lakeland Tract, Squirrel Valley, Southlake and Weldon are currently under a recommended evacuation....."
1646	AT&T vault burns taking out cell service in the Lake Isabella area.
1648	Air Attack estimated the fire size to be 300 acres.
1650	Incident Commander reported that there were 600 – 800 structures threatened, one structure lost and infrastructure taken out.
1658	KCSO begins evacuations in the Squirrel Valley subdivision. They were unable to evacuate Seclusion and Cook Peak roads (southeast side of Squirrel Valley) due to thick smoke in that area.
1700-1800	Multiple Agencies began work on the Wildland Decision Support System in WFDSS.

1701	<b>Decision: BLM 3115, DIV4, Kern County BC7 and KCSO are now in unified command.</b>
1707	Law Enforcement Assistance requested from California Highway Patrol (CHP) for traffic control.
1709	Incident Commander reported the fire size was approximately 500 acres.
1712	<b>Decision: 3101 advised dispatch that he was planning to order a Type 2 Team. Discussions occurred between 3101, ICs, SQF Chief 1 and the Forest Service District Ranger about the type of team.</b>
1728	Incident Commander Update on conditions: Fire is moving East/Northeast at a rapid rate of spread. Current size is 600+ acres. Have established two Divisions and two Structure Protection Groups. The fire is moving into the Squirrel Valley area. Three structures have been lost. Currently evacuating Squirrel Valley and Lakeland Estates.
1730	10 Structures are reported as lost. The Incident Commander establishes two structure groups.
1733	<b>Decision: An order was placed for a Type 1 Team by CCICC.</b>
1736	KCSO begin evacuations in the Mountain Mesa subdivision.
1748	Incident Commander added South Lake and Weldon areas to the evacuation order.
1756	<b>Decision: The Incident Commander recommended the evacuation of the Kern Valley Hospital due to fire activity in the area.</b> The hospital occupants/staff initially sheltered in place, but evacuated later that night due to power issues at the hospital.
1755	KCSO begin evacuations in the South Lake area. The fire is currently in the Mountain Mesa area and moving towards South Lake.
1757	The Central Valley Red Cross setup an Evacuation Center at the Kern River Valley Senior Center in Lake Isabella.
1801	<b>Decision: Incident Commander requested closure of Highway 178</b>
1807	KCSO begins evacuations in South Shore Ranch Estates on the north side of South Lake, north of Highway 178.
1810	Evacuation order increased to include everything south of the Lake between Erskine Creek and Onyx. The fire jumped Highway 178.
1811	<b>Decision: A Branch is added to the fire organization for better span of control on the northeast side of the fire.</b> Between 2000-2100 two additional Divisions are established under Branch I.

1816	Incident Commander requested a “no divert” on aircraft for life and safety. There are currently 1500 structures threatened.
1817	High Tension power lines came down across Highway 178. The Incident Commander requested a power company representative to the fire to help manage turning off power. Yankee Structure Group was established for structure protection in Yankee Canyon. Air Attack reported that the column had collapsed and they were unable to work air tankers on the head of the fire. They would continue dropping on the heel and flanks.
1828	KCSO begins evacuations between South Lake and Weldon.
1836	The Incident Commander advises dispatch that 50-60 structures have been lost. The fire jumps 178 in a second location.
1845	KCSO begins evacuations of the Weldon area to include Hillview Acres and Bella Vista.
1849	Fire is moving south into Willow Gulch and Goat Ranch Canyon. Current fire size is estimated to be 1,500 acres.
1900-2000	Agency Administrators for all three agencies arrive at the ICP and meet with the Incident Commanders.
1927	The Incident Commander requests Kernville Elementary School be setup as a secondary evacuation center.
2201	<b>Decision: Initial order for Critical Incident Stress Management assistance ordered by the Forest Supervisor.</b> Coordination with other agencies would occur the next morning to operate this in a joint effort.
2036	Hydrants are reported to have dried up in the Squirrel Valley and South Lake areas.
2058	Incident Commander update on conditions: Wind shifted to a southerly wind. The Fire is moving down toward Highway 178, fire moving into Yankee Canyon. Lateral backing fire spread into Erskine Creek. The main fire is pushing east, northeast and southeast toward Cortez Canyon. Also moving towards Lakeland Estates by Auxiliary Dam. Current fire size is estimated at 2500 acres.
2221	KCSO begins evacuations in the Kelso Valley area.
2247	Two Kern County firefighters reported to be suffering from smoke inhalation. Both firefighters were medevaced from the fire by helicopter then transferred to ambulance for ground transport to the hospital.

2252	Incident Commander update on conditions: Fire is currently approximately 3,000 acres. The N/NE side of the fire is in the Nichols Peak/Nichols Spring area, E is in Pack Springs, SE is established and running in Dry Canyon, S is hung up on Needles Peak, SW is backing into Erskine Creek, W is in Long Canyon and Willow Gulch. The fire made a run into Lakeland Estates. The fire is well established in Yankee Canyon and is pushing into Paradise Cove. The fire is on both sides of Highway 178 near Yankee Canyon. Current winds are 20-25 mph out of the S/SW.
2302	KCSO begins evacuations in the Cortez Canyon neighborhood.
2347	Air Attack estimates the fire to be 7,000 acres with over 100 structures lost in the South Lake area.
1609 – 2400	<b>Decision: The Initial Attack Incident Commanders continually ordered additional resources throughout the first night.</b> Many of these orders were submitted as immediate need/closest available/any type. Resources arrived throughout the initial attack and were briefed and immediately assigned to the incident. By midnight, the orders included: 6 air tankers (including the VLAT), 10 helicopters, 116 engines, 15 water tenders, 28 hand crews, 16 dozers and overhead positions to manage the fire on 6/24.  <b>Decision: KCSO also requested assistance early in the first burning period for evacuations and road closures and received law enforcement assistance from the CHP, US Forest Service, BLM, Kern County Park Rangers, Stallion Springs Police Department, and Tehachapi Police Department. Kern County Sheriff's Search and Rescue volunteers also assisted in evacuations.</b>
<b>TIME</b>	<b>06/24/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
0130	The Senior Center was closed as the primary evacuation shelter due to proximity to the fire and safety concerns. The evacuees were relocated to Kernville elementary school which now served as the primary evacuation center.
0150	Evacuations were requested in the North Piute Mountain Road and Bull Center area, but when Deputies arrived they were unable to safely access the area due to fire behavior.
0250	A firefighter suffering from smoke inhalation symptoms was transported from the fire to the hospital by ambulance.
	<b>Decision: The Unified Incident Commanders made the decision to remain in place and continue command of the fire until relieved by the Type 1 IMT.</b> Orders placed for replacement overhead were unable to be filled and there was a continued life safety threat.
0500	A press briefing was held to update the public on the fire and evacuation status.

0743	Structure loss is estimated to be 150.
0844	Precautionary evacuation ordered for Erskine Creek and Lake Isabella areas.
0955	Hard closure for the Pacific Crest Trail east of the fire area.
1030	Human remains of two individuals were found in the Squirrel Valley area.
1200 - 1335	<p>California Interagency Incident Management Team 5 is in-briefed at the Forest Service District Office in Kernville.</p> <p>The fire size estimated to be approximately 19,000 acres. The fire has reached the Bright Star Wilderness Area. Evacuations ordered from Kelso Valley south to Piute Mountain Road.</p>
1354	The National Weather Service Office in Hanford, CA issues a Red Flag Warning for the fire area until 10pm on 6/24 for low relative humidity and gusty winds.
1359	Structures compromised in Cortez Canyon.
1417	The fire spotted east of Kelso Valley Road north of Janice Road.
1445	A dozer transport was totally destroyed while a second sustained moderate fire damage. The operators of the dozers were constructing fire line approximately two miles away when the incident occurred. There were no injuries associated with the incident.
1600	Governor Jerry Brown declares a State of Emergency in Kern County due to the devastation from the Erskine Fire.
1605	Fire in Cortez Canyon is burning structures.
2000	The Type 1 Incident Commander assumes command of the fire.
	<b>Decision: Night Operations prioritized keeping the fire west of Kelso Valley Road to reduce further life safety risks.</b> The fire had spotted across Kelso Valley road and resources were able to contain the spot to approximately 200 acres.
<b>TIME</b>	<b>06/25/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
Day Shift	<b>Decision: The IMT initially prioritized reducing further loss within the fire area, keeping the fire from moving north or east into populated areas, and planned an indirect strategy on the south side of the fire which included opening dozer lines from the 2008 Piute fire.</b>
Effective 06/25	The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management issue closure orders for the Erskine fire area.

0710	<p>Air Attack provides an update of the fire:                  Main fire activity is backing in the Bright Star Canyon on the southeast corner of the fire. Fire is also established in the Cortez Canyon burning to the west. Three helicopters are in route to work a slop over on the east side of Kelso Valley Road. Minimal activity on the west and north flanks of the fire. Worked H-407 overnight on the Southwest corner of the fire. Major concern based on the weather is the fire moving towards Clareville Flat and Landers Meadow.</p>
<b>TIME</b>	<b>06/26/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
Day Shift	<p><b>Decision: The IMT adjusted to a direct strategy on the south side of the fire due to the reduction in fire behavior and effectiveness of the previous days retardant.</b></p> <p>The ICS 209 reported the fire as 36,810 acres and 10% contained.</p> <p>A drone incursion inside the TFR caused a 30 minute delay in air operations.</p>
<b>Time</b>	<b>06/27/2016 - SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
	<p>The ICS 209 reported the fire as 43,460 acres and 40% contained.</p> <p>Evacuations for the areas of Yankee Canyon and Mountain Mesa were opened to repopulation with the warning that there was still no power in that area and that bottled water would be available</p> <p>Evacuations for the areas East of South Lake along Highway 178 were opened to repopulation, including Larson Tract, Navajo, Hillview Acres, Bella Vista and Weldon. These areas had electrical power, but water safety guidelines were still in effect for compromised water systems.</p> <p>Search and Rescue teams begin search of the impacted communities.</p>
<b>TIME</b>	<b>06/28/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
1200	<p>The ICS 209 reported the fire as 45,388 acres and 45% contained.</p> <p>Wildland Firefighter Foundation began providing support to firefighters impacted by the Erskine Fire.</p> <p>Transition Center in Lake Isabella opened to support repopulation effort.</p> <p>Search, Rescue, and Recovery efforts are complete within the fire area.</p> <p>Evacuations for the areas of South Lake and Squirrel Mountain Valley open for residents with proof of residency.</p> <p>Precipitation occurred over the fire area. This created some concerns of flash flooding (this occurred during the Piute fire in 2008) and potential fire spread driven by outflow winds associated with thunderstorms. Both the IMT and agencies</p>

	recognized these as potentials and had plans and contingency plans in place if either occurred.
<b>TIME</b>	<b>06/29/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
	The ICS 209 reported the fire as 46,679 acres and 60% contained.
<b>TIME</b>	<b>06/30/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
	The ICS 209 reported the fire as 46,684 acres and 70% contained.  All road closures were lifted and all residential areas are open to the public.
<b>TIME</b>	<b>07/01/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
1200	The ICS 209 reported the fire as 47,864 acres and 80% contained.  Transition Center in Lake Isabella converted into a Local Assistance Center. LAC provides one location for information services on disaster relief; how to replace records lost, apply for assistance, and start on the road to recovery.
1500	The Hospital in Mountain Mesa was reopened.
<b>TIME</b>	<b>07/02/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
1200	The ICS 209 reported the fire as 48,019 acres and 90% contained.  St. Jude Red Cross center in Wofford Heights was closed. The Red Cross Center in Kernville remains open.
<b>TIME</b>	<b>07/03/2016 – SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED DECISIONS</b>
0600	California Interagency Incident Management Team transitions command of the fire back to a local Type 3 organization. The fire was reported as 95% contained at the time of transition.

### Summary

The Erskine Fire started under extreme fire conditions, with a much heavier than normal grass fuel load, Extreme adjective rating, and strong winds, resulting in an 11 mile, 16,000 acre run in under 9 hours. In that time period, the initial attack resources executed evacuation and structure protection for over 10 distinct communities along the Highway 178 corridor. At no time did they have enough resources or overhead to provide continuous coverage for any one community, leapfrogging and progressing to the most heavily impacted communities in an attempt to keep pace



*Fig. 7. Initial Attack*

with the fire. Initial attack, evacuation of residents, and structure protection continued for 28 hours. The Type-1 Incident Management Team assumed command at 2000 on June 24<sup>th</sup> after an extremely rapid mobilization, in-briefing and curtailed situational awareness gathering period. Resources remained reactionary well into the 25<sup>th</sup>, before winds moderated and perimeter control could become the primary strategy.

By July 3 when command of the incident was transferred back to the local agencies, 285 residences had been destroyed, three firefighters had been hospitalized for smoke inhalation injuries, and two residents had been overrun by the fire and killed. It is a measure of the well-coordinated response of both the initial attack resources and subsequent Type-1 IMT that the destruction and loss of life was not worse. At no time during the incident did it devolve into chaos or panicked heroics by the responding resources; they correctly prioritized public and responder safety over all other values and executed the evacuation and structure protection strategy accordingly. Without the strong interagency working relationships that exist in this area it is unlikely that such an effective response could have been safely accomplished under the prevailing conditions.

**Appendix 1: Resources Initially Dispatched to the Erskine Fire:**

**Kern County Dispatch:**

Time of dispatch: 1555 06/23/2016

4 Type 3 Engines 3 Patrols 2 Type 2 Dozers 2 Type 2IA Hand Crews 1 Water Tender	1 Type 2 Helicopter 2 Chief Officers 1 Public Information Officer 1 Dozer Manager
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**CCICC Dispatch (Sequoia National Forest / Central California District Bureau of Land Management)**

Time of Dispatch: 1557 06/23/2016

5 Type 3 Engines 1 Patrols 1 Type 2 Dozer 3 Type 2 Hand Crews 1 Water Tender	1 Type 2 Helicopter 1 Air Attack 2 Air Tankers 3 Chief Officers
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**Additional Resources Ordered on 06/23/2016:**

1 Air Attack (night flying) 2 Lead Planes 6 Air Tankers (including VLAT) 4 Type 1 Helicopters 5 Type 2 Helicopters 1 Type 3 Helicopter	14 Type 1 Hand Crews 10 Type 2IA Hand Crews 4 Type 2 Crews
25 Type 2 Engines 85 Type 3 Engines 6 Type 6 Engines	15 Water Tenders 15 Type 2 Dozers 1 Type 1 Dozer

**Appendix 2: Summary of Air Tanker Use on the Erskine Fire – June 23<sup>rd</sup> through June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Aircraft	Agency	Type	Gallons of Retardant Delivered					Cost
			6/23	6/24	6/25	6/26	6/27	
Tanker 01	USFS	BAe-146	2,937	11,738		23,442	17,722	\$260,700.68
Tanker 10	USFS	BAe-146		8,795		14,336	14,589	\$218,616.00
Tanker 41	USFS	BAe-146			17,713	11,672	5,885	\$187,562.17
Tanker 60	USFS	DC-7B		2,245	16,834	10,832		\$195,744.75
Tanker 75	CALFIRE	S-2T	3,898					\$ 15,972.43
Tanker 76	CALFIRE	S-2T	3,906	8,994		9,019		\$ 96,139.53
Tanker 78	CALFIRE	S-2T	4,040	10,183		8,353		\$ 99,566.08
Tanker 131	USFS	C-130Q	10,774	36,701	32,069	32,254		\$462,982.69
Tanker 132	USFS	L-382G	3,986	39,542	36,057	31,740	15,869	\$481,241.82
Tanker 163	USFS	RJ85	5,875	29,725	3,013		3,000	\$192,549.60
Tanker 910	CALFIRE	DC-10		65,167	65,398	54,594	22,365	\$697,255.07
Tanker 912	USFS	DC-10	21,949	67,669	34,190	68,453		\$781,582.56
<b>Total</b>			<b>57,365</b>	<b>280,759</b>	<b>205274</b>	<b>264,695</b>	<b>79,430</b>	<b>\$3,689,913.38</b>

No Air Tankers were used after June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016.



Appendix 3: Vicinity Map

