

Summit Fire & Medical District Tunnel Fire Response Overview

Date 04/19/22

- ***Early morning*** –The Coconino National Forest requested assistance of a single wildfire engine from the Summit Fire and Medical District (SFMD) due to increased activity on the Tunnel Fire, located on United States Forest Service (USFS) land. A SFMD Type 6 wildfire engine was sent with four personnel to assist USFS Crews. Multiple USFS units and the SFMD Type 6 engine were on scene when high winds caused the fire to cross control lines. The USFS Incident Commander (IC) advised all fire fighters to pull out and regroup while a dozer worked on larger control lines. SFMD unit and crew were reassigned to the dozer line area where they requested a Water Tender (WT) to the scene. SFMD WT-31 was sent to the scene by the SFMD Battalion Chief (BC) and both units remained working in this location until late evening.
- ***Mid-morning*** – Aircraft support was called and arrived but was only able to complete one retardant drop before unsafe wind conditions required the plane to head back to base. Shortly after this request, USFS IC requested additional structure engines due to fire growth and increasing high winds. Units from both SFMD and Flagstaff Fire Dept (FFD) were sent to assist including two FFD structure engines and one SFMD structure engine. The SFMD BC along with two FFD overhead personnel were assigned to meet up for a plan to set up structure protection needs.

A Highlands Fire District structure engine, along with an additional FFD structure engine were assigned to this structure protection group that was now 5 structures engines strong (all minimum staffed with at least 3 firefighters). This Greater Flagstaff Regional (GFR) group began structure protection as the fire moved through the residential area over the next several hours. The last available SFMD structure engine was assigned with to a GFR overhead staff member to work the area of Brandis Ln and to assist with evacuation needs. The total number of Greater Flagstaff Region was six engines, one WT, plus GFR overhead personnel in the residential area. These were in addition to the SFMD wildfire engine and WT assigned to the original fire area. Total number of structural firefighters from SFMD and GFR partners was now at thirty plus.

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- ***Mid-day through evening***– Recalled personnel from both SFMD and FFD filled reserve units (recalled means called back off-duty members to staff unmanned additional apparatus) to assist with fire needs and other normal emergency response incidents. FFD sent one additional structure engine, three additional wildfire engines, and one additional WT to the scene to assist with on-going structure protection needs. Total in the residences are now nine GFR Engines, one WT with three GFR overhead staff members assigned to protect homes and property. Crews worked diligently and successfully to save dozens of homes threatened over the course of six hours with heavy fire activity and extreme winds.

During this time, Incident command was set up with joint agencies at SFMD Fire Station 33 on N. Hwy 89. Due to fire activity near power lines the power was shut down to Station 33. This necessitated a move to SFMD Fire Station 32 on Koch Field. Command team contacted the Regional Type 3 incident management team for additional support. Members of the team arrived throughout the afternoon to begin transitioning as command of the incident.

- ***Evening through Night ops*** – Two units from SFMD, five units from FFD along with structure engines from multiple other structure fire Departments and Districts remained inside the residential area over night to continue efforts to save homes and suppress fire moving too close. Dozens of additional homes were protected from impinging fire and 40+ mph winds throughout the night. Both the Eastside stations for SFMD were also in service for normal emergency protection and District coverage throughout the night. No additional homes were lost during night ops or afterwards thanks to the efforts by SFMD and GFR crews working inside the residential areas.

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Date 04/20/22

- ***Morning*** – The fire had moved through the residences and was pushing northeast towards Arizona State Land and the Navajo Nation. SFMD sent one wildfire engine and an overhead staff member along with one FFD engine to assist with remaining units assigned to structure protection by the Type 3 team.

Date 04/20/22 – 4/25/22

- Units from SFMD continued to patrol and assist suppressing flare up and hot spots over the course of the next several days as the incident was transitioned from the Type 3 Regional team to a National Type 1 team.