

# CDF GREEN SHEET

Investigation Summaries of Serious Injuries, Illnesses, Accidents  
And Near-miss Incidents

## DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION



### PHYSICAL FITNESS HIKE INMATE FIREFIGHTER FATALITY

#### SIERRA/SOUTH REGION

March 16, 2001  
Incident # MVU 1551

#### Joint Investigation with CDC

This Preliminary Report is intended as an aid in accident prevention, to let interested parties know what happened, and to be used as a safety training tool. To that end it is published and distributed within a short time frame. Information contained within may be subject to revision as further investigation is conducted, and other reports and documents are received.

LOOKOUTS... COMMUNICATIONS... ESCAPE ROUTES... SAFETY ZONES

## **SUMMARY**

On Friday March 16, 2001, at approximately 1000 hours, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, McCain Valley Fire Crew 1, was performing a morning physical fitness hike on a commonly used hiking trail. The trail is located north of Wildwood Glenn Lane, west of Highway 79, in the community of Descanso within San Diego County.

While descending from the summit, an Inmate Firefighter was observed falling face forward. Upon contact by fellow crewmembers, the injured inmate was determined to be unconscious. Initial medical assessment by the Captain determined the patient to be in life threatening distress. A portable radio was utilized by the Captain to contact the Monte Vista Emergency Command Center (ECC) to request assistance. Based upon his assessments, the Fire Crew Captain initiated CPR with the assistance of his crew. A local Medic Engine and Paramedic Ambulance were dispatched and utilized on the incident. Paramedics were advised by the Base Hospital Physician at Grossmont Hospital, via portable radio, to discontinue CPR and declared the injured Inmate Firefighter to be deceased at approximately 1110 hours.

## **CONDITIONS**

The hiking trail is located within the Cleveland National Forest. The trail was steep, rocky and dry. Elevation at the site was 2340 feet, slope 42 % and requires negotiating over large rocks. The vegetation is medium brush and the trail is well established and marked.

## **WEATHER**

Weather was taken from the Descanso Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS), 2 miles east of the incident site.

Time:	09:33
Weather:	Hazy becoming clear at the summit
Temperature:	49 degrees
Humidity:	80%
Wind:	Calm

## **SEQUENCE OF EVENTS**

On Friday, March 16, 2001, at approximately 0930 hours, McCain Valley Fire Crew 1 began their physical fitness hike up a commonly used trail at the Wildwood Glen location.

This hiking trail is well marked and is approximately ½ mile long, with a total rise in elevation of approximately 600 feet to the summit. The trail is steep, rocky and commonly used by the McCain Valley Fire Crews for Physical Fitness.

All members of the crew ascended the mountain together, reaching the summit at approximately 0950 hours. The Captain and the crewmembers rested at the top of the summit for approximately 10 minutes before descending. While the crew descended the Captain spoke with the members of the crew who were last to reach the summit and there were no indications of trouble. As they descended the trail, the Captain heard his Swamper call for help from approximately 30 feet behind him up the trail. The Captain arrived to find an Inmate Firefighter unconscious in the arms of the Swamper. The Swamper told the Captain that the injured crewmember had fallen face down onto some rocks.

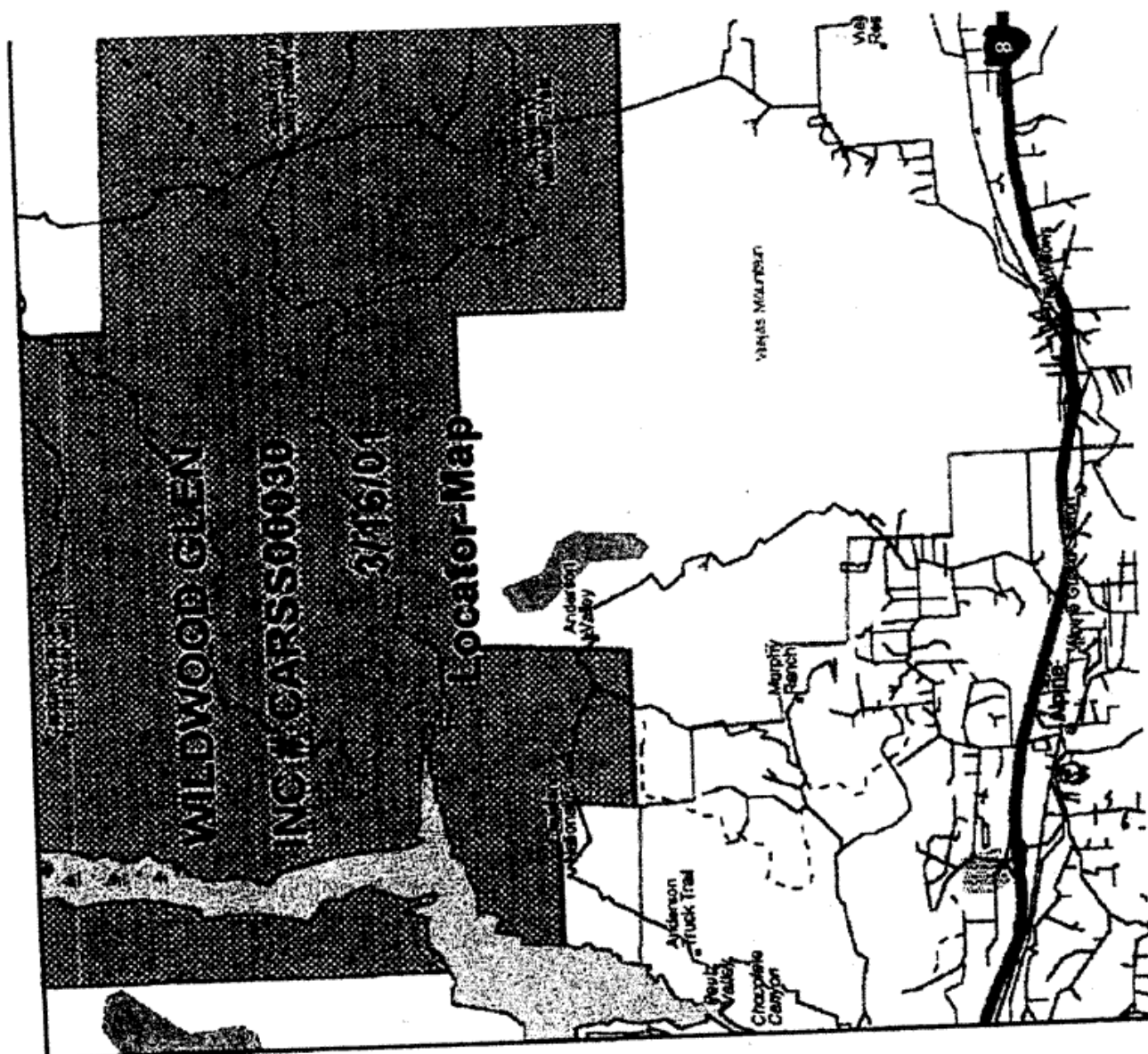
The initial assessment made by the Captain determined the injured Inmate Firefighter (patient) to be unconscious, unresponsive with labored breathing. Several attempts to contact the ECC were unsuccessfully made by the Captain. Contact was made at approximately 1004 hours, at this time the Captain advised the ECC of the medical emergency and requested assistance. American Medical Response Medic 17, (AMR Medic 17) was dispatched at approximately 1008 hours, at approximately 1012 hours, Viejas Engine 6312 was also dispatched. **(This incident had to be routed through another agency as they had primary jurisdiction for the incident. That agency later requested that the ECC respond Medic Engine 6312).**

The Captain reassessed the injured Inmate Firefighter (patient) finding the patient to be in need of ventilation assistance. The Captain assessed his crew to determine their medical competency and to obtain assistance with CPR. A pocket mask was provided to an Inmate Firefighter for use while performing ventilations. A crewmember of McCain Crew 1 performed ventilation and assisted the Captain with assessment of vital signs. After several minutes of ventilation, the patient's vital signs were reassessed and no pulse was found. Under direction of the Captain, the crewmembers performed CPR. The Captain contacted the ECC to notify them that CPR had been initiated and requested an Air Ambulance, at which time an Air Ambulance was ordered.

The Viejas Paramedic Engine 6312 arrived at approximately 1023 hours and the crew ascended the trail to provide assistance. CDF Battalion 3315 was dispatched to the scene at approximately 1040 hours. AMR Medic 17 arrived shortly after the Viejas Engine and their personnel ascended the trail to assist with patient care. After initial Advanced Life Support treatment the Paramedics are advised via portable radio by the attending Physician at Grossmont Hospital to discontinue CPR and declared the patient deceased at approximately 1110 hours.

## **INJURIES**

The Medical Examiners preliminary report identifies the possible cause of death as a heart attack. The final report will be completed after the Toxicology Report is concluded, which is estimated to take 8 weeks.

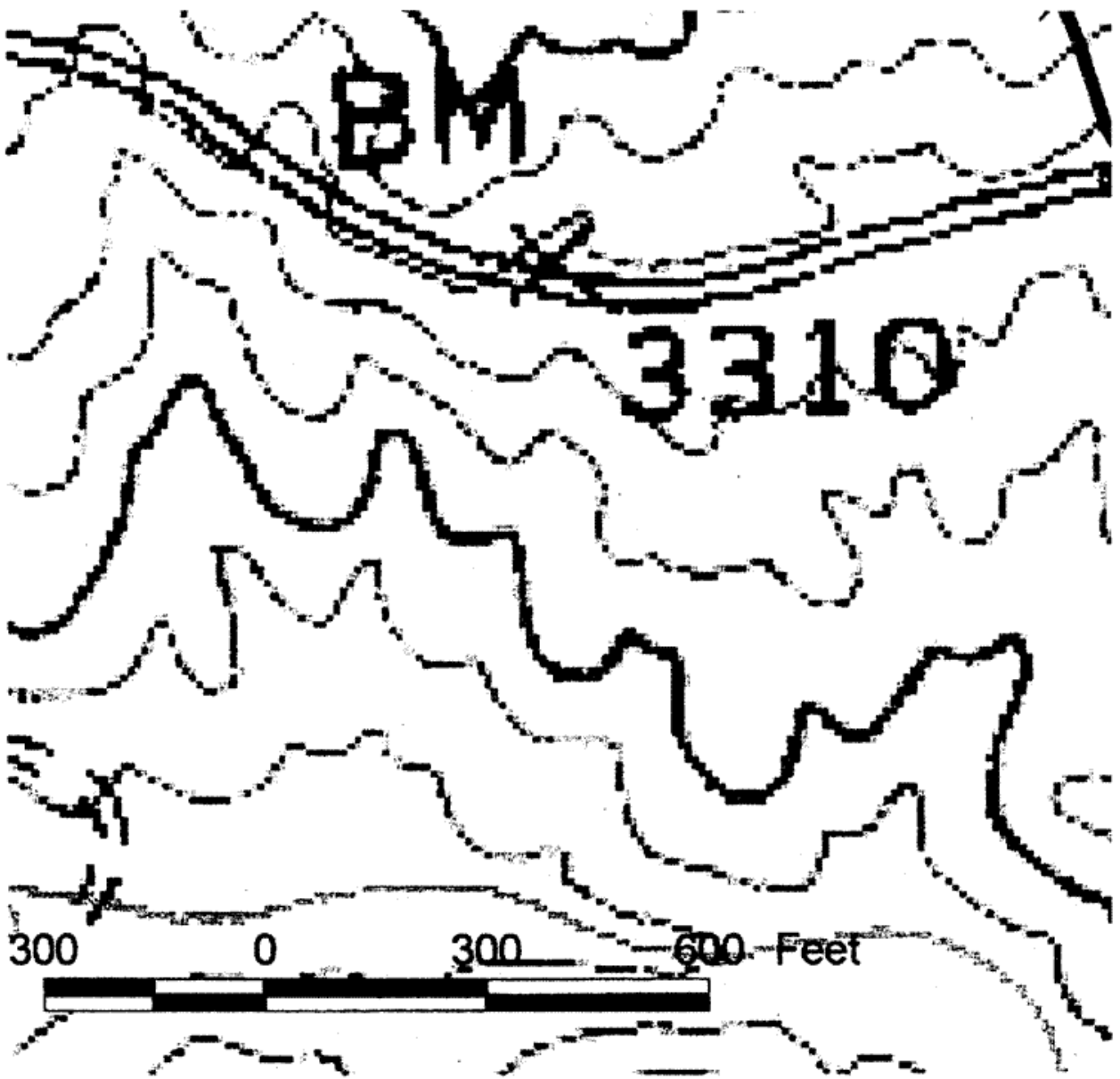


**WILDWOOD GLEN  
INC# CARSS00030  
3/16/01**

**Rest Area**

**Fire Captain B  
Location**

**Accident Site  
N32 50.66'  
W116 38.06'**



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