



## **72 Hour Report of 720 Fire Entrapment Oklahoma Forestry Services**

*THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE*

**Date of Report:** 19 July 2022 @ 1500 hours

**Location:** Approximately 11 miles north of Watonga, OK in Blaine County

**Fire size:** 9,798 acres

**Date of occurrence:** 16 July 2022

**Time of occurrence:** 1839 hours

**Mission:** Wildland Fire Suppression – Initial Attack

**Number injured:** 0

**Number of fatalities:** 0

**Equipment damaged:** 0

### **Narrative:**

At 1839 hours on 16 July, two Oklahoma Forestry Services (OFS) Forest Rangers were entrapped during firefighting operations on the 720 Fire in Blaine County, Oklahoma. Neither firefighter sustained physical injuries. No shelters were deployed, and no equipment was damaged.

Shortly before 0730 hours on 15 July, the OFS Duty Officer was notified of a request to assist Hitchcock VFD suppress a wildfire in Blaine County. One OFS Task Force consisting of a Task Force Leader (TFLD), two (2) Type 6 engines and two (2) firefighting dozers (one Type 2 and one Type 3) were dispatched from the eastern Oklahoma to the wildfire located approximately 70 miles northwest of Oklahoma City, a trip of over 250 miles and 4 hours. OFS resources arrived on scene and worked on the fire until 0500 hours the following morning, 16 July. They overnighted at a motel in Watonga and the Task Force re-assembled to return to the fire at approximately 1100 hours.

Late in the afternoon, the two OFS dozers and one Type 6 OFS engine were assigned to construct line on the fire's west flank. The mission required the two dozers to construct line along a canyon's west rim and then drop down into the bottom of a broad canyon. After completing the dozer line, the resources turned around and began to make their way out of the canyon. The engine made it out of the canyon first, but the two dozers found their escape route cutoff by extreme fire behavior pushed by south-southeast winds. At 1839 hours, the dozer operators cleared a small safety zone approximately 0.3 acres and secured themselves and equipment in the safety zone until 2015 hours when they could safely leave.

#### **720 Fire Environment:**

- **Fuels:** Short to medium grass combined with heavy patches of eastern redcedar and brush. SH5 (145), High Load, Dry Climate Shrub
- **Weather:** 101°, 25% relative humidity, south and southeast winds 10-21 mph. It had been 45 days since the last wetting rain. The area is in D1 moderate drought.
- **Topography:** The burn over occurred on level ground in the bottom of a wide canyon, with steep canyon walls.
- **Fire Behavior:** Fine dead fuel moisture at the time of the incident was 4%, 10-hour fuel moisture was 5%. Surface rates of spread achieved 220 chains per hour (nearly 3 miles an hour) and flame lengths exceeded 26 feet.



**(Figure 1. Safety Zone Post Entrapment)**



***(Figure 2. Aerial of Safety Zone Site)***

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