

Germann Road Fire

Largest Wisconsin Wildfire in 30 years

May 14th, 2013

Douglas/Bayfield County Response

This is the area near Barnes; Pine forests and remote.



May 14th, Time Line

At 2:45 p.m. report of smoke came in. Loggers called DNR With report of fire location.

2:49 Gordon Fire Department was dispatched.

Weather was 82 degrees with a 12 MPH wind gusting to 21 MPH from the South

2:56 First DNR units respond and report a fully involved crown fire in pines. (this is one of the first pictures along Simms Lake road). DNR activated multiple heavy units, air support and additional forester rangers.



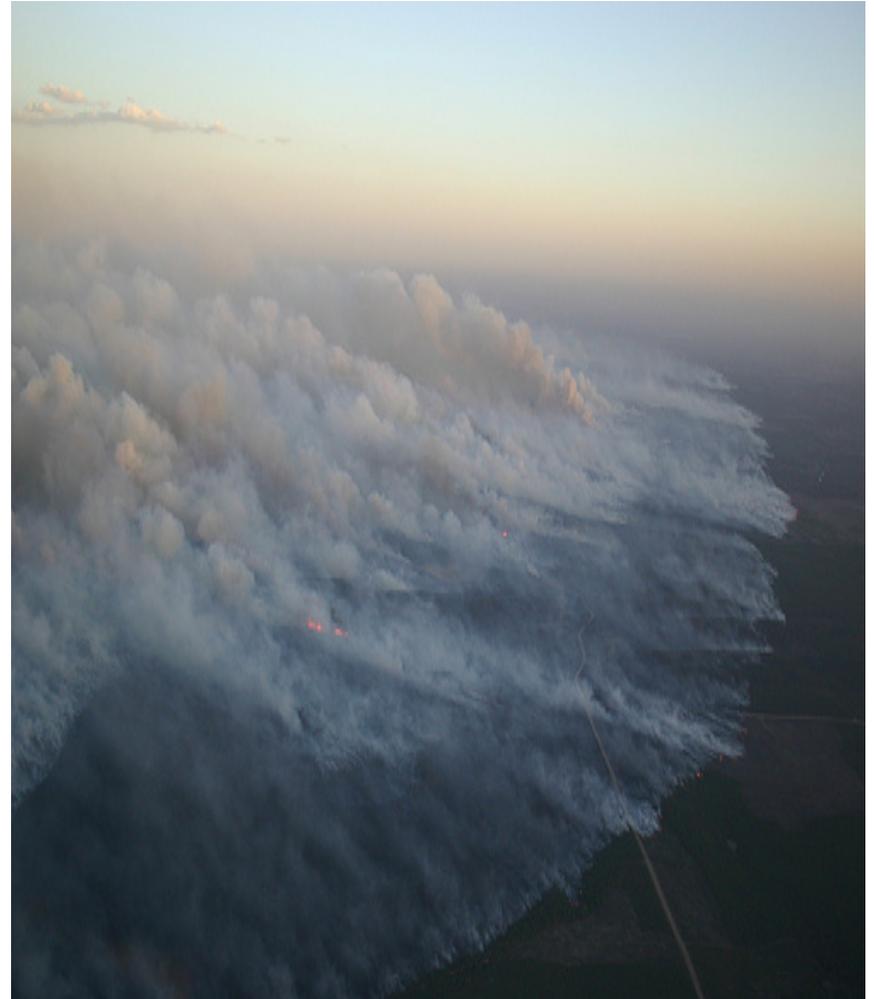
May 14th, 2013

4:20 First report of lost structures in path of fire. Evacuation of homeowners underway.



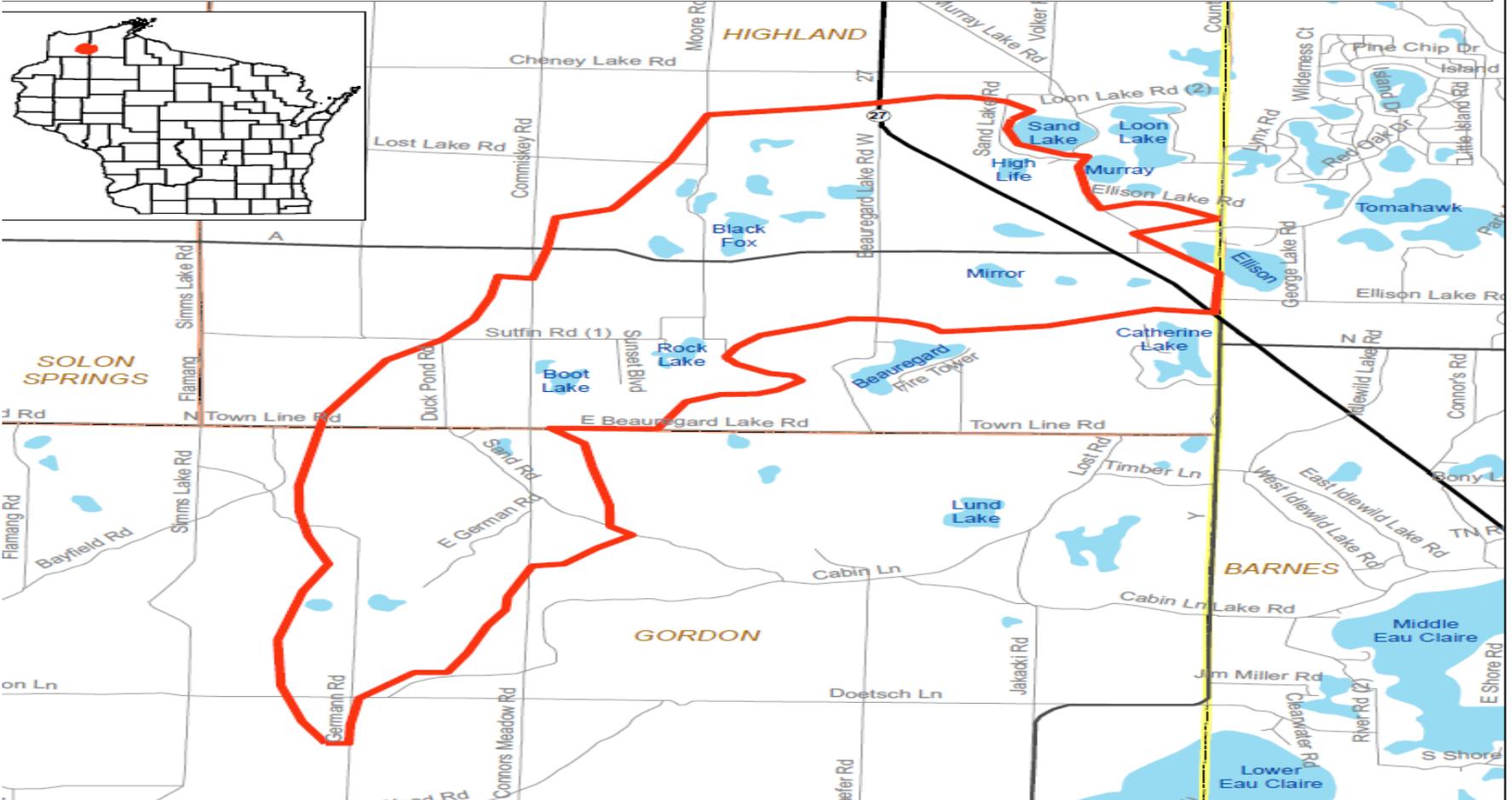
5:20 Incident Command Post is established at Barnes Ranger Station.

- Law enforcement support in addition to DNR and State Patrol, includes the Sheriff's departments from Bayfield, Douglas, Ashland, Sawyer, Polk, Barron, Price and Washburn counties, and officers from Barnes, Solon Springs, Iron River and Lake Nebagamon are requested to help evacuate, road block and patrol.



Germann Road Fire - Douglas County, Townships of Highland and Gordon

For more current information, please visit dnr.wi.gov/ keyword: Germann Road Fire.



This map is intended to show the approximate perimeter of the Germann Road Fire. It is not intended to be used to make assumptions regarding property loss or survival.

The data shown on this map have been obtained from various sources, and are of varying age, reliability and resolution. This map is not intended to be used for navigation, nor is this map an authoritative source of information about legal land ownership or public access. Users of this map should confirm the ownership of land through other means in order to avoid trespassing. No warranty, expressed or implied, is made regarding accuracy, applicability for a particular use, completeness, or legality of the information depicted on this map.

- Fire Perimeter
- County Boundaries
- State Highway
- County Road
- Local Road
- Towns
- Open Water



5/15/2013 - 2:50 pm



Scale: 1:75,000

Wind and Fire Switch

- As people are being evacuated, they are told to muster at the Barnes Town Hall.
- At 6:30 the fire, has run five miles in length and has crossed County Hwy. A. Strong wind gusts (30 MPH) switching from southwest to northwest in a matter of minutes cause the fire to advance one mile in 15 minutes and jump State Highway 27 and advance towards the Potawatomi subdivision.

Germand Fire 7:00 p.m. 5/14/2013



Establish Shelter, Move ICP

- 8:00 p.m. the fire front is now two miles wide and burning toward the area north of Barnes, including the Barnes Ranger Station Incident Command Post and the muster station for evacuees.
- Douglas County requests open a shelter for evacuees at Drummond School in Bayfield County and activate Red Cross and support staffing.
- ICP is moved to Gordon Fire Station.

Sheltering

Douglas County requests Red Cross support to man a shelter at Drummond School.

Douglas County activated Red Cross from Duluth which is in their contract area. Bayfield County Red Cross service comes from Eau Claire and that Red Cross Chapter was activated by Bayfield County Emergency Management. By 8:30 Douglas County Health and Human Service staff moved from the muster station to Drummond School to assist with sheltering. Bayfield County Health Officer was contacted by Dispatch for support at the shelter.



Drummond School



Drummond School Bayfield County



Sheltering

- Drummond School and Drummond EMS services made coffee, provided snacks and evacuees gathered in the commons to await updates from the ICP and the DNR communications person who stayed in the shelter.
- Updates and maps were posted on the walls at the school as they were received.
- Cots and Red Cross staff arrived approximately 2:00 a.m.
- Evacuees were ready to try to sleep, cots were set up in the gymnasium, lights out, doors closed.

Not Everyone Slept in the Shelter

Dogs were not allowed in Shelter



- The Red Cross does not allow animals (except service animals) in shelters.
- Many people evacuated with their cats and dogs, some horses were released to outrun the fire.
- Some people slept outside the school in their cars in the parking lot.
- It was 68 degrees overnight.
- The school fenced off an area of playground the next day for pets.

Health and Human Services

Public Health Role

- The Public Health Department provided nursing services. Completed Medical Intake forms for the Red Cross. Assisted with medication issues, diabetics without glucometers, blood pressure issues, anxiety. Interviewing, assessing, supporting.

Human Services Role

- Human Services from Douglas County brought mental health workers, support staff, Director, and health department staff. Early in shelter their role was support and staffing for next shifts, later they gathered resources and information for the people that had lost homes.

Red Cross forms

INITIAL INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT TOOL - AMERICAN RED CROSS - U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES			
Date/Time: _____ Shelter Name/City/State: _____		DRO Name/#: _____	
Family Last Name: _____		Does the family need language assistance/interpreter?: _____	
Primary language spoken in home: _____		Names/ages/genders of all family members present: _____	
If alone and under 18, location of next of kin/parent/guardian: _____ If unknown, notify shelter manager & interviewer initial here: _____			
Home Address: _____		Interviewer Name (print name): _____	
Client Contact Number: _____		Interviewer Name (print name): _____	
INITIAL INTAKE	Circle	Actions to be taken	Include ONLY name of affected family member
1. Do you need assistance hearing me?	YES / NO	If Yes, consult with Disaster Health Services (HS).	
2. Will you need assistance with understanding or answering these questions?	YES / NO	If Yes, notify shelter manager and refer to HS.	
3. Do you have a medical or health concern or need right now?	YES / NO	If Yes, stop interview and refer to HS immediately. If life threatening, call 911.	
4. Observation for the interviewer: Does the client appear to be overwhelmed, disoriented, agitated, or a threat to self or others?	YES / NO	If life threatening, call 911. If yes, or unsure, refer immediately to HS or Disaster Mental Health (DMH).	
5. Do you need medicine, equipment or electricity to operate medical equipment or other items for daily living?	YES / NO	If Yes, refer to HS.	
6. Do you normally need a caregiver, personal assistant, or service animal?	YES / NO	If Yes, ask next question. If No, skip next question.	
7. Is your caregiver, personal assistant, or service animal inaccessible?	YES / NO	If Yes, circle which one and refer to HS.	
8. Do you have any severe environmental, food, or medication allergies?	YES / NO	If Yes, refer to HS.	
9. Question to Interviewer: Would this person benefit from a more detailed health or mental health assessment?	YES / NO	If Yes, refer to HS or DMH.	*If client is uncertain or unsure of answer to any question, refer to HS or DMH for more in-depth evaluation.
STOP HERE!		REFER to: HS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> DMH <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Interviewer Initial _____
DISASTER HEALTH SERVICES/DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT FOLLOW-UP			
ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT INFORMATION	Circle	Actions to be taken	Comments
Have you been hospitalized or under the care of a physician in the past month?	YES / NO	If Yes, list reason.	
Do you have a condition that requires any special medical equipment/supplies? (Epi-pen, diabetes supplies, respirator, oxygen, dialysis, ostomy supplies, etc.)	YES / NO	If Yes, list potential sources if available.	
Are you presently receiving any benefits (Medicare/Medicaid) or do you have other health insurance coverage?	YES / NO	If Yes, list type and benefit number(s) if available.	
MEDICATIONS	Circle	Actions to be taken	Comments
Do you take any medication(s) regularly?	YES / NO	If No, skip to the questions regarding hearing.	
When did you last take your medication?		Date/Time.	
When are you due for your next dose?		Date/Time.	
Do you have the medications with you?	YES / NO	If No, identify medications and process for replacement.	

INITIAL INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT TOOL - AMERICAN RED CROSS - U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES			
HEARING	Circle	Actions to be taken	Comments
Do you use a hearing aid and do you have it with you?	YES / NO	If Yes to either, ask the next two questions. If No, skip next two questions.	
Is the hearing aid working?	YES / NO	If No, identify potential resources for replacement.	
Do you need a battery?	YES / NO	If Yes, identify potential resources for replacement.	
Do you need a sign language interpreter?	YES / NO	If Yes, identify potential resources in conjunction with shelter manager.	
How do you best communicate with others?		Sign language? Lip read? Use a TTY? Other (explain).	
VISION/SIGHT	Circle	Actions to be taken	Comments
Do you wear prescription glasses and do you have them with you?	YES / NO	If Yes to either, ask next question. If No, skip the next question.	
Do you have difficulty seeing, even with glasses?	YES / NO	If No, skip the remaining Vision/Sight questions and go to Activities of Daily Living section.	
Do you use a white cane?	YES / NO	If Yes, ask next question. If No, skip the next question.	
Do you have your white cane with you?	YES / NO	If No, identify potential resources for replacement.	
Do you need assistance getting around, even with your white cane?	YES / NO	If Yes, collaborate with HS and shelter manager.	
ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING	Circle	Ask all questions in category.	Comments
Do you need help getting dressed, bathing, eating, toileting?	YES / NO	If Yes, specify and explain.	
Do you have a family member, friend or caregiver with you to help with these activities?	YES / NO	If No, consult shelter manager to determine if general population shelter is appropriate.	
Do you need help moving around or getting in and out of bed?	YES / NO	If Yes, explain.	
Do you rely on a mobility device such as a cane, walker, wheelchair or transfer board?	YES / NO	If No, skip the next question. If Yes, list.	
Do you have the mobility device/equipment with you?	YES / NO	If No, identify potential resources for replacement.	
NUTRITION	Circle	Actions to be taken	Comments
Do you wear dentures and do you have them with you?	YES / NO	If needed, identify potential resources for replacement.	
Are you on any special diet?	YES / NO	If Yes, list special diet and notify feeding staff.	
Do you have any allergies to food?	YES / NO	If Yes, list allergies and notify feeding staff.	
IMPORTANT! HS/DMH INTERVIEWER EVALUATION			
Question to Interviewer: Has the person been able to express his/her needs and make choices?	YES / NO	If No or uncertain, consult with HS, DMH and shelter manager.	
Question to Interviewer: Can this shelter provide the assistance and support needed?	YES / NO	If No, collaborate with HS and shelter manager on alternative sheltering options.	
NAME OF PERSON COLLECTING INFORMATION:		HS/ DMH Signature: _____	Date: _____

This following information is only relevant for interviews conducted at DHS medical facilities. Federal agencies conducting or sponsoring collection of information by use of these tools, as long as these tools are used in the provision of treatment or clinical observation, are exempt from the Paperwork Reduction Act under 5 C.F.R. 1320.103(c).

The authority for collecting this information is 42 USC 2004b-1(b)(1). Your disclosure of this information is voluntary. The primary purpose of this collection is to appropriately treat, or provide assistance to, you. The primary routine use of the information provided is to help determine if agency customers who are performing a service related to this collection, in medical facilities, are agency healthcare workers, and to other federal agencies to facilitate treatment and assistance, and to the Justice Department in the event of litigation. Providing the information requested will assist us in properly bringing you or providing assistance to you.

As of 7 a.m. on May 15th , there were 59 evacuees registered at Drummond High School and 22 people occupied cots overnight.

Waiting



Cots ready for night number two



Wednesday Morning May 15th

The firefight will be joined today by two 415 water bombers from Ontario and two Blackhawk helicopters from the Wisconsin National Guard equipped with buckets for water drops. DNR pilots in spotter planes have been in the air since the fire began.



Air Support

A Blackhawk helicopter from the Wisconsin Air National Guard drops a huge bucket of water to help control the blaze.



At Daylight Damage Assessment Begins





8:00 on May 15th

DNR Incident Command and Emergency Management from both Douglas and Bayfield Counties along with Forestry and Law Enforcement officials hold the first briefing at Drummond School and the auditorium is nearly filled with people. The Incident Commander gives a run down of the fire, reports on fire conditions, expected weather conditions ,planning, and known structural losses. Many citizens have questions about their homes when they can return to them.

Drummond School opens the library to evacuees and people get on the internet and Facebook and begin to see pictures of the losses.



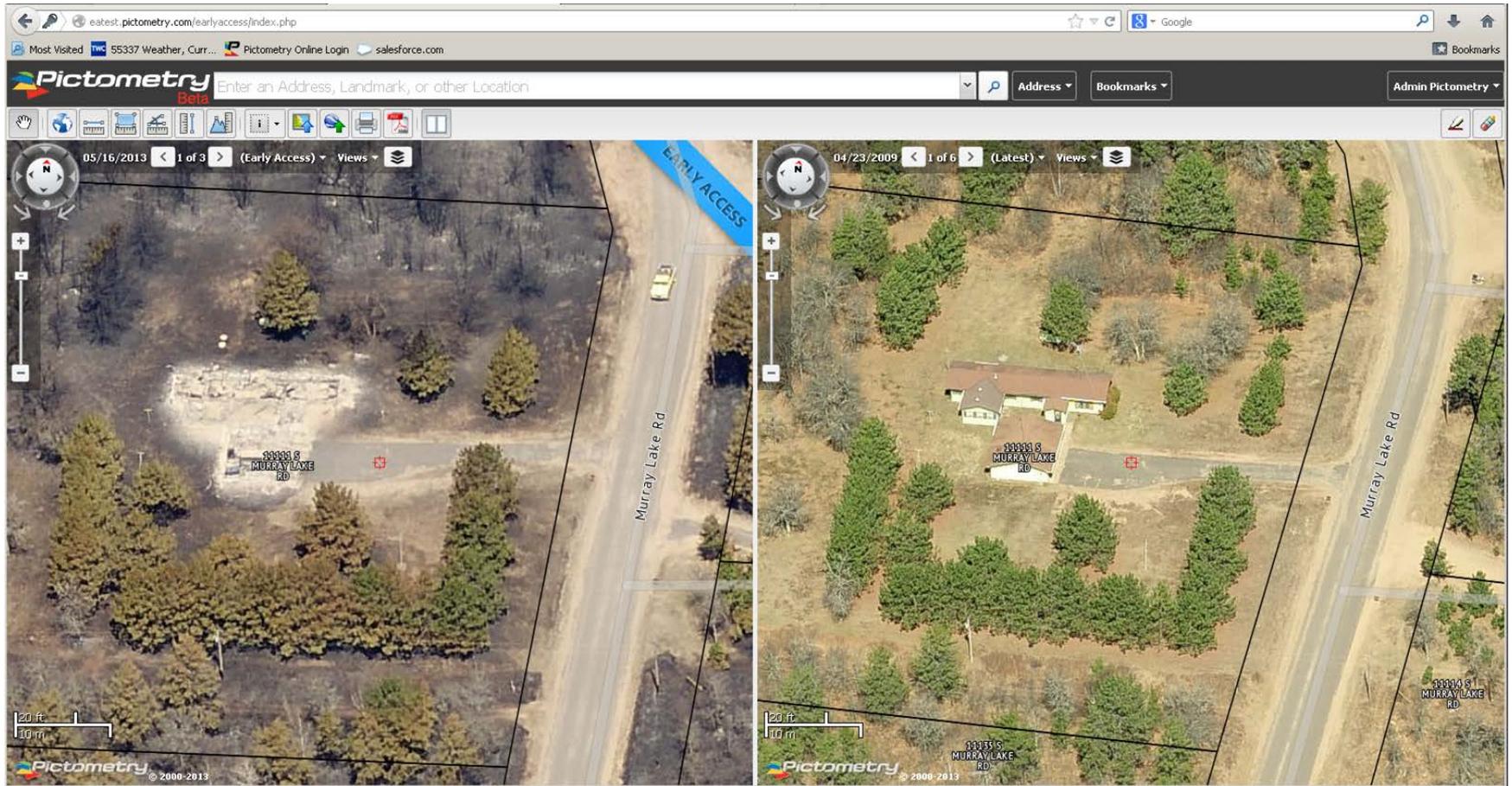
In the Shelter

- People are contacting relatives and friends and are leaving as they find alternate places to go for the day.
- Drummond School holds classes as planned, students mingle with evacuees still at the shelter.
- By 9:00 a.m. media outlets show up to interview evacuees. Red Cross asks us to intervene with media and screen evacuees.

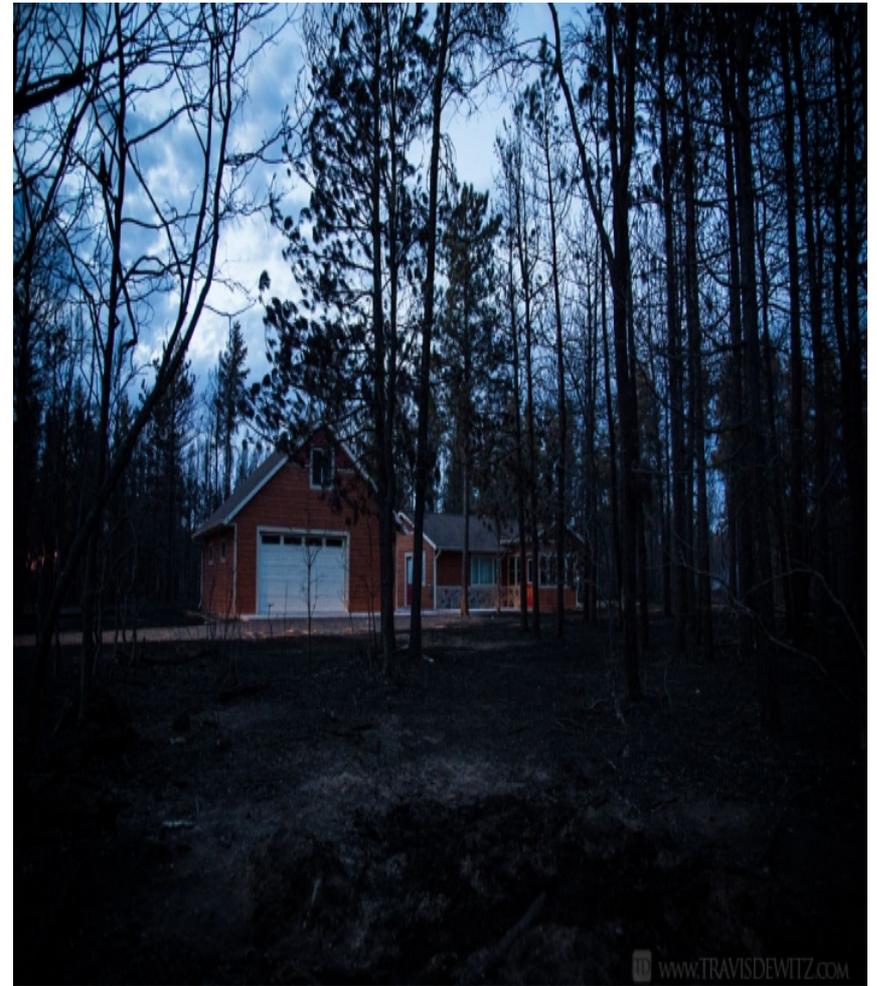
Update from ICP

- 2:00 p.m. fire breaks the containment line, Beaugard Lake is evacuated and we are told at the shelter to expect another group of evacuees to possibly spend another night.
- As the nurse covering the shelter, I scrub down cots, sort blankets and remake beds.
- At any time during the day some people were trying to sleep in the gymnasium. School bell woke them every hour.

Picture of home one week later



Homes Saved



Propane Tanks



No fatalities or Injuries

By 5:00 p.m. Public Health is arranging the next shift since we know that people will be coming to the shelter.

Of note, there were no fatalities or injuries in the evacuation or fire fighting of the Germann Road Fire.

In the shelter we are taking calls from places offering beds and meals for evacuees. Red Cross organizes this information and updates the white board.

Law Enforcement

Law
Enforcement
from 28
different
agencies
assisted in the
response.

- **Cooperating agencies**
- American Red Cross
- Ashland County Sheriff's Department
- Barron County Sheriff's Department
- Bayfield County Emergency Management
- Bayfield County Sheriff's Department
- Bayfield Electric
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Burnett County Forestry
- Citizen volunteers
- Dahlberg Power and Light
- Douglas County Emergency Management
- Douglas County Forestry
- Douglas County Highway Department
- Douglas County Sheriff's Department
- East Central Energy
- Gordon/Wascott EMS
- Iron River Police Department
- Lake Nebagamon Police Department
- Menonite crew
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Department of natural Resources
- Polk County Sheriff's Department
- Price County Sheriff's Department
- Province of Ontario
- Sawyer County Sheriff's Department
- Select Industry
- Siren Police Department
- Solon Springs Police Department
- Superior Department of Transportation
- Unites States Forest Service
- Washburn County Sheriff's Department
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Emergency Management
- Wisconsin State Patrol

40 Fire Departments assisted the DNR and the U.S. Forest Service on the massive fire. There were 52 fire trucks active.



- **Responding fire departments and other units**
- Amnicon Fire Department
- Ashland Fire Department
- Barnes Fire Department
- Bass Lake Fire Department
- Bennet Fire Department
- Brule Fire Department
- Chicog Fire Department
- Dairyland Fire Department
- Danbury Fire Department
- Glidden Fire Department
- Gordon Fire Department
- Gordon-Wascott EMS
- Grandview Fire Department
- Hawthorne Fire Department
- Highland Fire Department
- Hayward (City of) Fire Department
- Hayward (Town of) Fire Department
- Iron River Fire Department
- Jackson Fire Department
- Lac Courte Oreilles Fire Department
- Lake Nebagamon Fire Department
- Lakeside Fire Department
- Mason Fire Department
- Mellen Fire Department
- Namekagon Fire Department
- Oakland Fire Department
- Port Wing Fire Department
- Poplar Fire Department
- Parkland Fire Department
- Round Lake Fire Department
- Scott Fire Department
- Shell Lake Fire Department
- Solon Springs Fire Department
- Spider Lake Fire Department
- Spooner Fire Department
- Stone Lake Fire Department
- Summit Fire Department
- Superior (Town of) Fire Department
- Wascott Fire Department
- Webb Lake Fire Department

Debriefing at Barnes Town Hall

DNR law enforcement officials have confirmed that the fire was caused by equipment associated with logging operations. A logging crew, running a Timberjack 840 feller/buncher, was harvesting timber on industrial timber lands owned by Lyme St. Croix Forest Company LLC. These lands are managed by Steigerwaldt Land Services, Inc.. The operator noticed smoke coming from the machine and used fire extinguisher. He was not able to suppress or contain the blaze. His partner initiated the dozer to cut a perimeter around the fire on the machine. Winds took the flames and sparks into the trees and the loggers called the DNR. DNR responded with water truck in 10 minutes but it was too late.

- The DNR reported 47 structures lost, including 17 homes, 15 garages, nine out buildings and six unknown. Firefighters have saved 77 structures, including 42 houses.



Services Offered

- • The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority will provide access to funding for temporary housing assistance for the affected residents from the fire.
- • The Office of Commissioner of Insurance will make available assistance for property owners filing claims who have been impacted by the fire. Homeowners can contact the OCI helpline, 1 (800) 236-8517, for assistance with their [homeowners insurance coverage](#).
- • The Department of Administration will make emergency funds available to eligible residents whose homes were damaged or destroyed. Also, funding for businesses impacted by the fire will be made available to those who are eligible.
- • The Department of Health Services has been in contact with local health departments to provide assistance. As well, they will be working with DNR on air quality concerns and will continue to work with other state and local partners to provide public health assistance.
- • The Department of Natural Resources has established a hotline which residents impacted by the fire can learn about the status of their homes and property. The phone number, (715) 376-4185, will connect residents directly to Incident Command where staff are prepared to help update them regarding the status of buildings on their property.
- • The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection will provide assistance to any residents with livestock or pets impacted by the fire and regional experts with crop distribution assistance as well.

Recovery Phase

- Responded with mental health
- PH environmental health, initial shelter response, later reentry, safety, clean up, wells, respiratory issues, smoke damage. Avoid tracking ash into home, propane explosions and debris, proper footwear, ventilation of homes, well caps and free testing, change all air filters, furnaces, air conditioners, cars, lawn mowers, anything that uses a filter.

And we complained.....

- The snows we had in Bayfield County made a difference in the degree of spread, it was still wet here, further south in Douglas County they did not get the late snows
- No homes lost in Bayfield County



What went well

- Douglas County well organized, exercised, trained staff who knew what to bring, what to expect in the shelter, brought mental health
- Drummond School
- Community outreach
- Pastoral support
- Coordination of services (Debriefing)

What needs improvement

- Red Cross did not get to shelter until 2:00 am
- Douglas County did not have nursing staff
- Communication within Bayfield County, HS to HD
- Pets were an issue, will need to plan
- Communication between departments

Lessons Learned

- Fire Wise
- Defensible Perimeter

Recovery

