

Mr W F Rayner

FMM/CEM

TO: CONSERVATOR (N)
FOR ATTENTION OF MR A M CALDER

FROM: EASTER ROSS FOREST DISTRICT
DINGWALL

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FIRE AT SLATTADALE FOREST

Please find attached a very succinct and useful report by Bill Rayner on the use of foam in combatting and containing the recent fire at Slattadale.

FM

F M MacRae
Forest District Manager
17 May 1984

Encl

A REPORT ON THE USE OF A MUSKEG & FOAM UNIT AT THE SLATTADALE FOREST
FIRE ON WEDNESDAY 4, APRIL 1984.

AREA MAP REFERENCE: NG 855 722

HAZARD: HEATHER/DRY.

WIND SPEED: BEAUFORT SCALE 5

With reference to the fire report dated 24, April 1984.

The muskeg arrived by lorry at 13-30 hours & was promptly unloaded at a convenient roadside bank. Fire brooms were loaded onto the machine & petrol & foam concentrate stocks checked before going to the hill.

A man with intimate knowledge of the ground rode with the muskeg driver to act as guide & 2 men rode on the rear of the machine to operate the foam unit.

Once on the hill water was picked up from the burn junction at map reference NG 855 725. Approximately 400 gallons being lifted by the pump on the foam unit.

A foam trace using concentrate at a 2% dilution was then laid 50m to the West & parallel with the outlet burn from Loch nam Buainichean. However, using foam concentrate at 2% dilution rapidly depleted our stocks & after 2 drums had been used the inductor was adjusted to provide a 1 1/2% dilution. Foam of good quality continued to be produced with the branch set at a minimum flow. Rapid depletion of the concentrate could have been due to a faulty inductor. The trace was laid using the foam branch attached to a 25m length of 1" layflat hose. This gave the muskeg the flexibility to travel over the ground which was rough, clear of the smoke for good vision & ease of operation of the foam unit yet lay a good 1-2m strip of foam.

Another 400 gallons of water was then taken on from Loch nam Buainichean & after thoroughly dowsing the ground at the head of the loch another foam trace was laid using the foam branch attached to the rear of the unit. Ground conditions, visibility & distance from the fire front were all factors enabling this method of application to be used. Again the inductor was set at 1 1/2% dilution & the branch at minimum flow, good foam being produced. The trace was run into the rocks on the North side of Meall Aundrary.

After completion of the trace the unit reverted to water application & was used for damping down with assistance being given to the men beating amongst

amongst/

the rocks. On the return journey the whole length of the fire trace was dowsed on the fireward side. At no point on the trace did the fire leap the foam.

The application of a foam trace proved invaluable. It enabled men to be deployed more widely on the ground behind the fire trace. A reserve of men to be built up & rested before the final assault when the fire was at its weakest in the high rocks of Meall Aundrary. Finally & perhaps most important of all the boost to morale amongst the men when they saw the fire extinguished by the foam trace.

Using the machine for final damping down operations was also very effective, a jet of water far more powerful than a knapsacks being used to knock out deep seated smouldering vegetation & an economical fan spray for general damping down.

I am sure that the machine saved a lot of physical effort & enabled the men to sustain their efforts for a longer period of time than would have been the case without it. The time saved in terms of cost would I believe have paid for the use of the machine.

W. F. Rayner.

15th May 1984.