



File Code: 6100

Date: May 6, 2004

Route To:

Subject: Cramer Fire

To: All Salmon-Challis Employees

The Region, in consultation with the Washington Office, has completed its administrative investigation into the actions of those employees involved in the Cramer Fire and the events that led to the deaths of Jeff Allen and Shane Heath. Following through on my commitment to take appropriate action before the start of this year's fire season, we have issued proposed disciplinary actions to six employees.

These proposed actions were given a lot of consideration and are not something we enter into lightly. These proposals are not issued because we have been directed or pressured to do so. Rather, the proposed disciplinary actions are issued to hold employees accountable for their actions and to limit future risks by helping employees learn from this tragedy.

The proposals follow USDA guidelines for disciplinary action, they are serious in nature and range from suspension to removal. The proposals are based upon review of the administrative investigation results and the findings of the Accident Investigation Team. Employees have the right to review and respond to the proposed actions. If the employee chooses to respond, that response and the above investigative information will be used to issue a final decision. Employees also have the right to appeal the final decision.

There are many people who will want to know the specifics of the proposals. Some individuals have told me they feel they have a right to know that people will be held accountable. While I agree individuals should be held accountable, I respect an employee's right to privacy when disciplinary action is being taken against them. Therefore, in accordance with the Privacy Act, the names of employees facing disciplinary action will not be shared publicly.

In the aftermath of the South Canyon, Thirty Mile and Cramer tragedies, the Forest Service continues to take actions to further reduce the risks of fighting fires. The Intermountain Region and the Salmon-Challis National Forest have taken specific steps to mitigate firefighting risks. These actions are part of a national accident prevention plan based on the recommendations of an agency Board of Review and the agency's abatement plan to address the Notice of Violation issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

As we begin another field season, it is extremely important that we put safety front and center in everything we do. Safety principles must pervade every aspect of our work. We owe it to Jeff and Shane, their families and friends.



I again wish to extend my heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of Jeff and Shane. Their loss has forever changed us all. This continues to be a difficult time for everyone on the Salmon-Challis National Forest, for our Region and for the Forest Service.

Take care of yourselves. Take care of each other. It is only by taking care of ourselves that we will be begin to heal.

/s/ Jack G. Troyer
JACK G. TROYER
Regional Forester