earlier. That such dire circumstanc-
es have not occurred as yet, in our 
estimation, demonstrates the use-
fulness of past smoke science, mod-
eling and models, collegial relations 
between all parties, and continuing 
thoughtful attention to the issue.

More information on the ques-
tionnaire and its results may be 
downloaded at <http://www.nine-
pointsouth.com.au>. Readers are 
reminded that the questionnaire 
was not a scientifically designed 
survey and should approach its 
results with that understanding.

Acknowledgement
The authors wish to thank the Joint 
Fire Science Program for its finan-
cial and intellectual support of this 
work under the JFSP project num-
ber 10-C-01-01.

References
Bytnerowicz, A.; Arbaugh, M.J.; Anderson, 
C.; Riebau, A.R. 2009. Integrating fire 
research and air quality: Needs and rec-
ommendations. In: Wildland Fires and 
Air Pollution. Oxford, United Kingdom; 
Elsevier. Developments in Environmental 
management. International Journal of 

How Big Was Dodge’s Escape Fire?

Martin E. Alexander

Several published accounts 
exist of how smokejumper 
foreman Wag Dodge survived 
the 1949 Mann Gulch Fire in 
northwestern Montana by setting 
an “escape fire” in cured grass 
fuels, the most notable among 
them being Norman Maclean’s 
Two other smokejumpers sur-
vived by reaching a rockslide. 
 Sadly, 12 smokejumpers and a 
local fireguard perished in their 
attempt to try and outrun the 
rapidly spreading grass fire in 
steep terrain.

In a recent paper (part of a project 
dealing with survival zones for 
wildland firefighters), Alexander 
and others (2009a) critically exam-
inied the question of how big an 
area was burned off before Dodge 
was overrun by the main advanc-
ing fire front. They also addressed 
the issue of how tall the flames of 
the advancing fire front were that 
initially met and ultimately swept 
around the area burned out by 
Dodge’s escape fire.

The contents of the paper pre-
pared by Alexander and others 
(2009b) were first presented at the 
10th Wildland Fire Safety Summit 
sponsored by the International 
Association of Wildland Fire held 
in April 2009 in Phoenix, AZ, and, 
again, as an invited presenta-
tion at the Pacific Northwest Fire 
Operations Safety Conference held 
in March 2010 in Portland, OR.

For a copy of the paper, includ-
ing an associated presenta-
tion at, visit <http://fire.feric. 
ca/36702008/36702008.asp>.

References
Alexander, M.E.; Baxter, G.J.; Ackerman, 
M.Y. 2009a. Is a wellsite opening a 
safety zone for a wildland firefighter or 
a survival zone or neither? In: Masters, 
R.E.; Galley, K.E.M.; Despain, D.G., eds. 
The ‘88 Fires: Yellowstone and Beyond. 
Tall Timbers Miscellaneous Publication 
No. 16. Tallahassee, FL: Tall Timbers 
Research Station: 110.
Alexander, M.E.; Ackerman, M.Y.; Baxter, 
G.J. 2009b. An analysis of Dodge’s 
escape fire on the 1949 Mann Gulch 
Fire in terms of a survival zone for 
wildland firefighters. In: Proceedings 
of 10th Wildland Fire Safety Summit; 
2009 April 27–30; Phoenix, AZ.
Birmingham, AL: International 
Association of Wildland Fire. 27 p. 
CD-ROM.
From the Ground Up: Wildland Fire Fuels

Also inside:
• Opinions on Wildland Fire Smoke
• Recruiting a Diverse Workforce
• Trail Cameras Capture Fire Behavior
• Improving Radio Discipline
The USDA Forest Service’s Fire and Aviation Management Staff has adopted a logo reflecting three central principles of wildland fire management:

- **Innovation**: We will respect and value thinking minds, voices, and thoughts of those that challenge the status quo while focusing on the greater good.

- **Execution**: We will do what we say we will do. Achieving program objectives, improving diversity, and accomplishing targets are essential to our credibility.

- **Discipline**: What we do, we will do well. Fiscal, managerial, and operational discipline are at the core of our ability to fulfill our mission.

Firefighter and public safety is our first priority.