

Stand 4 - Powder House Turn

This point is located at the head of the Powder House drainage, along Alder Springs Road and offers personnel involved in the incident their best vantage of the overall fire and the Powder House drainage. It logically became the ICP for the incident. It is from this point that 21 Missionary crewmembers and 3 Forest Service overhead, in three different groups, were dispatched to attack and control the Missionary Spot Fire.

At approximately 22:03 spot fires developed below the road at Powder House Turn (Figure 3 - Points 22, 30, 24, 23, 26, & 27) due to a wind shift shortly after 21:45 from the west, down slope. Personnel at Powder House Turn took action on the spot fires. All of the detected spot fires were either quickly controlled or burning upslope towards the road. While devising a plan to contain the rest of the spots a glow was observed further down the down the slope near the bottom (Figure 3 - Point 28). All focus was then directed to this new spot that was burning in a northeasterly direction. Lafferty soon realized that escape route for the men at the Missionary spot fire might become compromised. At 22:15 Lafferty left Powder House Turn to warn the men working on the Missionary Spot Fire.

[Click to see Fire Weather Summary.](#)

[Click to see Investigation Report Figure 2.](#)



Figure 1: Looking from Stand 4 across to the Alder Springs Road. One of the spot fires started near the bottom of the drainage at this location. It was this spot that overtook the firefighters working on the Missionary Spot Fire.



Figure 2: Stand 4 looking east offers the best overall view of Powder House Canyon. This point also offers a good view of, and illustrates the importance of, the location of the Sacramento Valley in relationship to the events that took place. This location, known as Powder House Turn, is where the Fire Boss and other overhead positioned themselves.



Figure 3: Looking west from Stand 4 shows the expansive Grindstone Canyon. This canyon offers an easy, natural funnel for heavier, cooler, marine air from the Pacific Ocean to rush down slope and replace the condensing air of the Sacramento Valley in the evenings.



Figure 4: There is an interpretive site for the Rattlesnake Fire located at a rest area on State Highway 162. To reach this memorial continue west from Stand 4 on the Alder Springs Road for 2 miles until it reaches its junction with Highway 162.