



FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Andover, Minnesota Fire Department

APPLICATION:

TetraKO water enhancer helps contain fast moving grassfire.

SUMMARY:

The Andover fire department responds to a fast moving, wind driven grass fire in Bunker Hills Park on the afternoon of September 29, 2011. With wind gusts of up to 40 mph, the call goes out for mutual aid from neighboring Coon Rapids and Anoka-Champlin fire departments. Due to the high winds and flying embers, the fire is jumping from one area to another. The Andover department's Polaris ATV, loaded with TetraKO, races across the park to successfully chase down hot spots.



FIRE INCIDENT REPORT #18:

Combine high winds with dry conditions and a grass fire, and you've got a challenge on your hands. "It started in Coon Rapids and we got called to assist them because it burned into the Andover side of Bunker Hills Park," said Jeff Dexter, Lieutenant for the Andover Fire Department.

In addition to Coon Rapids and Anoka-Champlin, crews from the Minnesota DNR, Ham Lake, and SBM fire departments assisted. "This fire was patchy because it was real windy," said Dexter. "It would burn one area and then jump and start to burn another area. If I had to guess, I'd say 10 to 15 acres burned."

The main area of fire was being attacked using traditional fire trucks, along with firefighters with backpack sprayers. Also on the scene was Andover's Polaris ATV. Adding the ATV to the Andover FD's fleet was the brainchild of Fire Chief Dan Winkel. "The chief was confident we could use the 6x6, but we had no idea how well it was going to work, and how popular it was going to be throughout the county."

The rig features a 50-gallon tank loaded with TetraKO. "We had a lot of open spaces to cover and flying embers were spreading the blaze," said Dexter.

"Firefighters in the Polaris would chase down these hot spot and knock them down with TetraKO."

There is definitely a difference in how fast it brings the heat down on a fire when you cover it with TetraKO." said Dexter. "Our guys used the ATV as a quick attack rover, and wherever they saw a spot burning they hit it. And that took care of it!"

Dexter continued, "You'd be amazed at how much fire you can put out with a little backpack sprayer on a grass fire. We're doing the same thing, except we're coming through the woods with a 6x6 and 50 gallons on our back. And we can put out a LOT more fire in a short period of time."

The Polaris/TetraKO combination is building a reputation with fire departments throughout the region. "Everyone in the county knows we have the 6x6 with TetraKO," states Dexter. "It's really popular with grass fires because of its agility, firepower, and accessibility to remote areas."



Photo courtesy of FireWire.

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