

## Incident Summary Page for the Hotshot Crew Line of Duty Death

<b>Name of Hotshots LODD:</b> Justin R. Beebe	<b>Incident Name:</b> Strawberry Fire
	<b>Incident Date &amp; Time:</b> 08/13/2016
<b>Hotshot Crew:</b> Lolo	<b>Incident Location:</b> Great Basin National Park, Utah
<b>Personal Information</b>	
Justin Beebe was a native of Vermont and a first year member of the Hotshot crew. He was survived by his family and fiancée.	
<b>The Lolo Hotshot Crew provided this summary of the incident</b>	
<b>Conditions leading up to the event:</b>	
<p>First reported at 12:30 on August 8, 2016, the lightning-caused Strawberry Fire started approximately five miles west of Baker, Nevada, within Great Basin National Park and eventually spread onto adjacent Bureau of Land Management land. Initial reports put the fire at about 15 acres. Due to high winds, the fire grew to approximately 4,600 acres within 48 hours. A Type 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) managed the fire the first night, but the acting Park Superintendent quickly ordered a Type 2 IMT. Great Basin IMT 7 took control of the fire at 06:00 on August 11. The two primary objectives were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Minimize impacts to the community of Baker as well as National Park Service infrastructure, including roadways, structures, and other visitor and administrative facilities.</li> <li>➤ Protect sensitive species habitat, in particular sage grouse and Bonneville cutthroat trout. The operational emphasis on August 13 was to continue direct attack on the north, east, and west flanks of the fire to protect critical sage grouse habitat and high-tension power lines.</li> </ul> <p>On the fire's south flank, the objective was to continue to assess opportunities to keep fire out of Mill Creek to protect Bonneville cutthroat trout habitat. By late afternoon on August 13, the fire had burned approximately 4,600 acres with 59 percent containment involving 434 personnel.</p>	
<b>Brief description of the event:</b>	
<p>The day began with a radio briefing at 07:00 from ICP along with the delivery of IAPs, maps, and meals. After hiking into the ground to be worked, Sacramento IHC Superintendent and Lolo IHC Superintendent noticed a lack of burnable vegetation, an abundant amount of rocky talus slopes, and little ground fuel. One stated <i>"It would have been hard to get a blackline on top of that ridge with the lack of fuel."</i> The decision was made to pick up the fire's edge by going direct. The Geronimo IHC Captain notified Sacramento IHC and Lolo IHC that the Division Supervisor approved their movement into Division A to help tie in the handline. The crews worked together to connect their pieces of handline, gradually working upslope. One IHC Superintendent thought they would probably be able to tie in the handline by day's end. Around 14:00, two Lolo IHC saw teams were requested to remove snags near the crest of Blue Ridge, a rocky, steep, scabby piece of ground at around 10,000 feet. The teams would remove snags to reduce potential torching until additional people and water arrived. As Saw Teams #1 and #2 proceeded up the hill, Saw Team 1 encountered a large, fork-topped green Douglas-fir with two Engelmann spruce snags leaning into and hung up in it. The spruce snags were burned out at the base and had fallen into the Douglas-fir prior to any felling activities. During the operation of removing the spruce snags, Justin Beebe was struck on top of his hard hat. At 16:00 a medical emergency was declared over the command channel for Division A. Shortly after a short-haul capable helicopter was requested due to the rugged terrain. EMTs from Lolo and Sacramento IHCs responded and provided medical aid. At 16:12 a "9-line" was transmitted to the communication unit. Trauma kit and other personnel arrived on scene shortly after. After multiple attempts to insert rescuers via rappel operations, rescuers were inserted via short haul. At 17:16 Justin and rescuers were extracted via short haul and transported to H1. Justin and rescuers were moved inside of helicopter and transported to Strawberry Helibase via helicopter. At 17:31 the helicopter landed at Strawberry Helibase, Justin was pronounced deceased at 17:46. He had received CPR for approximately 75 minutes.</p>	
<b>Fire behavior factors that were present during the event:</b>	
Fire behavior was relatively quiet with sparse fuels, creeping and smoldering, low intensity ground fire with occasional torching. Containment issues stemmed from unfavorable winds lofting embers into the tops of very receptive spruce snags along the perimeter.	

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### Operational lessons available for learning from this incident:

Provide additional training for cutting hung trees. Emphasize the size-up process of cutting a hung tree, including the evaluation of escape routes.

Evaluate ways to improve how sawyers communicate about the options available when given a cutting assignment, including whether to cut or to flag and make known.

Provide clear, accurate, and concise information regarding the short-haul program as it relates to wildland fire. Increase the understanding by field-going personnel and IMTs of how short-haul extractions work: process, protocols, and timelines.

### Notable impact or historical significance for the wildland fire service from this incident:

The NWCG chainsaw training curriculum was changed and qualification tracking standards were enhanced. Additional training for cutting hung trees is starting to make its way into the S-212 curriculum and Advanced Feller courses.

### Links to more information on this incident:

<https://wlfalwaysremember.net/2016/08/13/justin-beebe/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strawberry\\_Fire\\_\(2016\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strawberry_Fire_(2016))



### JUSTIN BEEBE

*Justin Randal Beebe was a man of great character and humbleness. He lost his life on August 13, 2016, while cutting a hazard tree during suppression efforts on the Strawberry Fire, Great Basin National Park, Nevada. Born in Bellows Falls, Vermont, Justin grew up with a strong connection to people and a deep love of the natural world. In high school, he excelled at soccer, hockey, and sugaring of maple syrup. Justin sought challenges and pushed himself to achieve his goals, becoming a team member of the Lolo Hotshots in 2016. We remember Justin for his quiet and generous nature, a kind and thoughtful manner, an always-positive attitude and friendly smile, and that tireless work ethic. He was a simple man with large dreams who will be forever missed by all who knew him.*

*-Timothy Laroche and Shawn Faiella*