Big Water Incidents

House Fire
Frederick County, Maryland
January 2010





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Facts & Figures…

- This incident was a house fire that occurred near the Frederick County/Carroll County in Maryland line in the early part of January 2010.
- The area is a non-hydranted response area protected by the Libertytown (Frederick County) and New Windsor (Carroll County) VFDs.
- Companies arrived on the scene to find heavy fire conditions in the rear of a 2-story farmhouse.
- With several LPG tanks involved and structural integrity in question – the attack moved to a master stream operation until the fire could be darkened down.
- In lieu of a tanker shuttle operation, nearby Sam's Creek was used as a draft site and water in excess of 1,500 gpm was supplied to the fire ground using two separate, pumping relay operations.
- A thank you goes out to Captain Tom Coe and AC Tim Legore for sharing their photos of this Big Water Incident.

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Fire Showing on Arrival



New Windsor VFD crews arrived to find heavy fire conditions showing from the rear of a 2-1/2-story, wood frame farmhouse.

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Winfield Engine 142 Establishes a Water Supply



WVFD E142 (1,500 gpm) arrived shortly behind the New Windsor units and set up to draft out of Sam's Creek which was about 500 feet from the fire.

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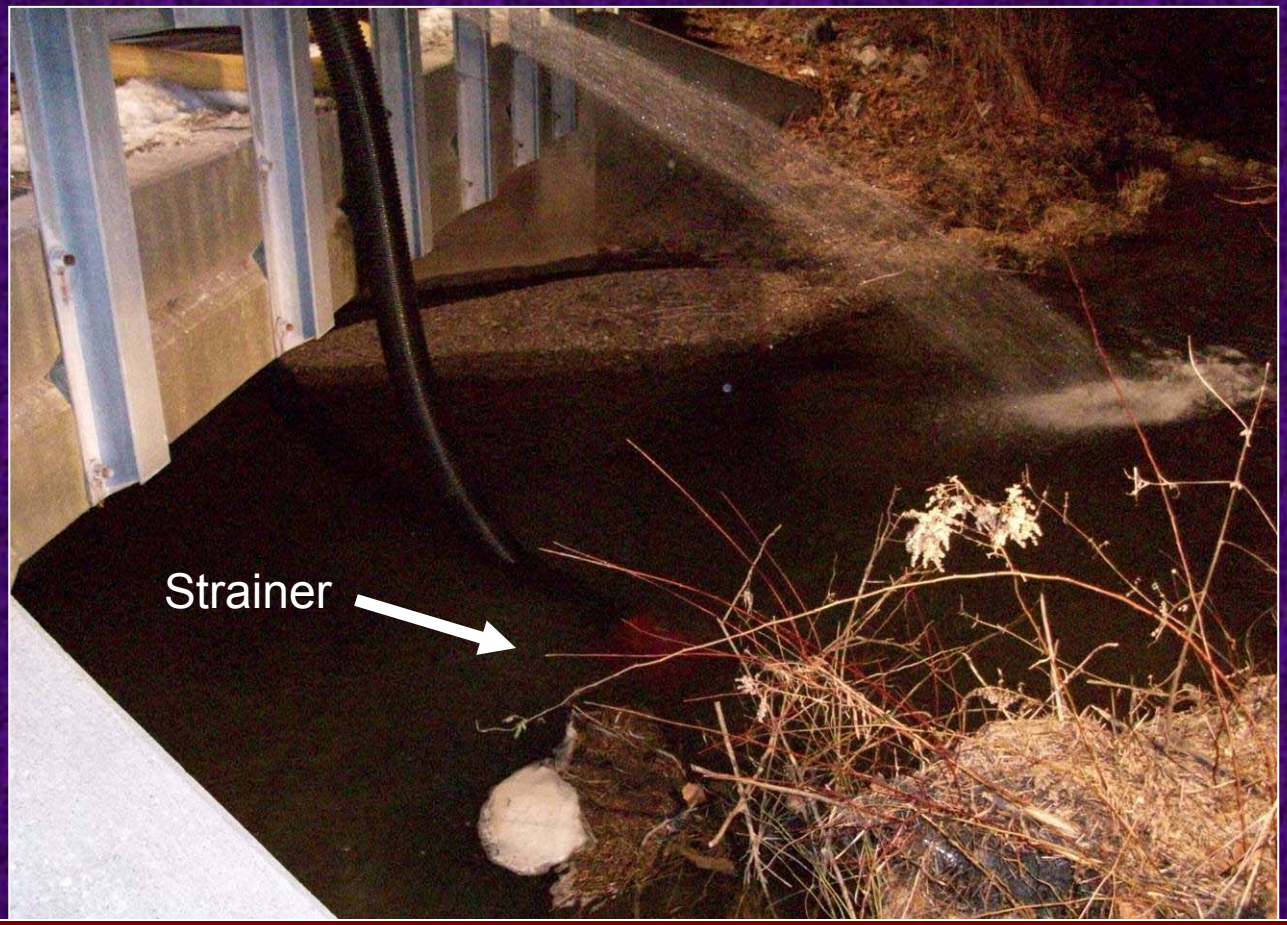
Water Supply Site



A 1-3/4-inch line was used as a re-circulating line in order to insure no loss of prime.

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Low Level Strainer Used



A Kochek low-level strainer was used because the streambed was all rock and the stream's flow was in question at first.

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4-inch Supply Hose



E142 supplied a New Windsor pumper through about 500 feet of 4-inch LDH that New Windsor had laid out going in to the scene.

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Water Supply Site



Since E142 uses 5-inch LDH, they had to use a reducer in order to support the 4-inch line – but everything worked out just fine.

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Second Suction Placed Into Operation



With the water supply up and running okay, E142 placed a second, 6-inch suction into operation using the front suction inlet. This additional suction increased the pumper's ability to move water and was a smart move by the crew as fire attack ops moved to master stream operations.

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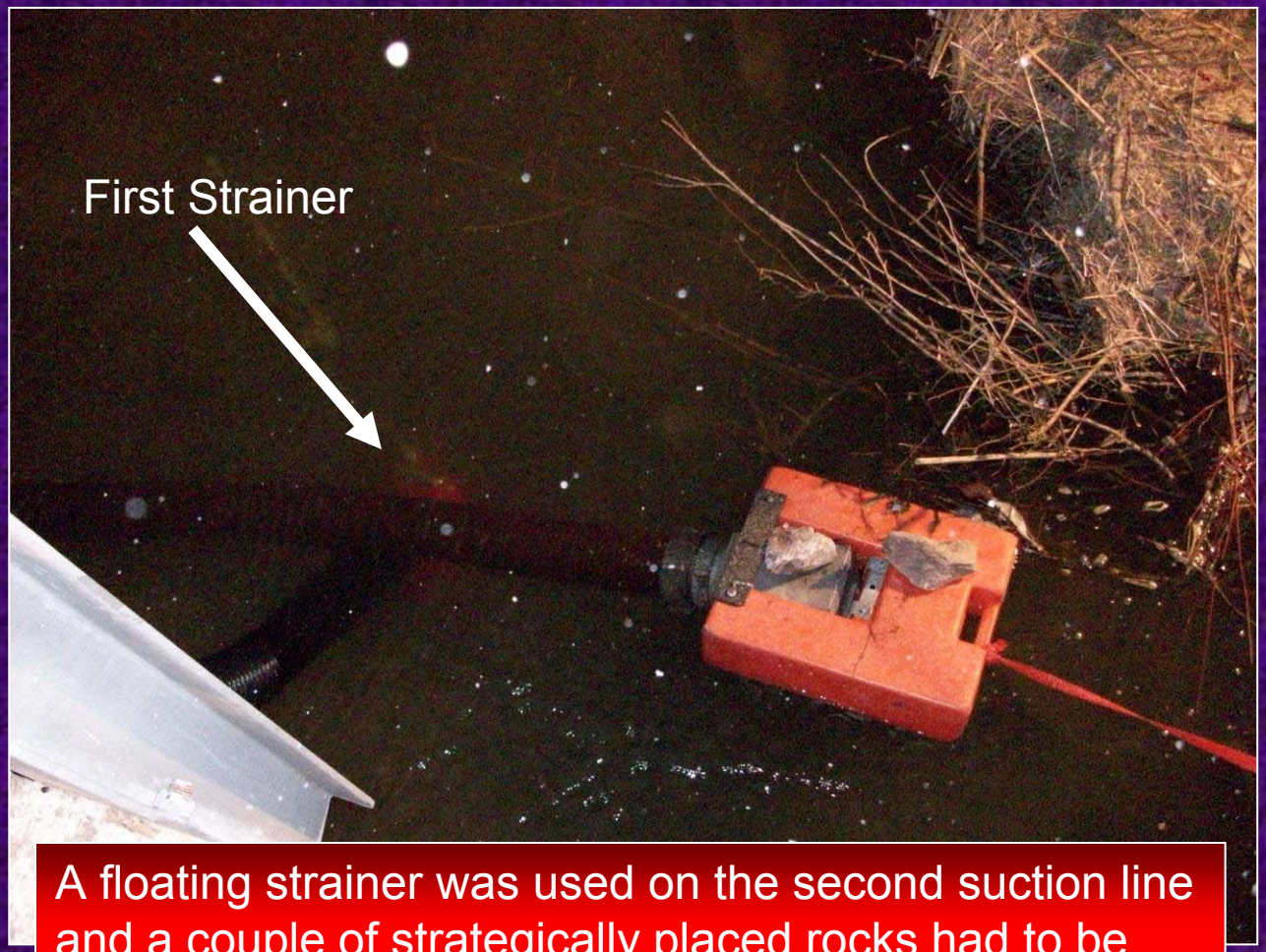
Lift and Stream Depth



Lift ended up being a little over 10-feet and the stream depth was around 2-feet. At no time did the stream flow fail to support the water supply operation.

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Floating Strainer



A floating strainer was used on the second suction line and a couple of strategically placed rocks had to be used to keep the strainer from flipping up.

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Looks Confusing?



To the untrained eye – this looks like a mess. To the experienced pump operator and water supply guy – this shows how to maximize an operation!

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Fire Under Control – Side A



Obviously, the master stream attack was able to darken the fire and the house did not burn to the ground.

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Fire Under Control – Side B



A bunch of mop-up work was needed, but the big water attack did its job on the heavy fire conditions.

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Here Comes the Snow!



Of course – had this house been constructed of lightweight materials – the FD probably would never had a chance.

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Lessons Learned

- Big fires require big application rates of extinguishing agent.
- Pumpers that operate in rural areas have to carry more than the standard 20-feet of suction hose.
- At this fire, E142 was certainly able to support more than its 1,500 gpm rated capacity because they used dual suctions.
- Six people came on E142 and all six helped get the drafting site set-up BEFORE any one helped fight the fire. This made a huge difference because just when the initial crews were about to run out of water, the draft site was placed into operation. You CANNOT abandon the driver – he cannot do it all himself.

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