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State Forester Releases Yarnell Hill Accident Investigation Report

PHOENIX, Ariz. – The Arizona State Forester today released the Yarnell Hill Fire Serious Accident Investigation Report, which analyzes the circumstances leading to the June 30 entrapment and deaths of 19 firefighters of the Granite Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew. The report and accompanying documents are available at <https://sites.google.com/site/yarnellreport/>.

The State of Arizona convened an accident investigation team July 3 to review the conditions and events leading to the tragedy. The investigation team visited the site of the accident, reviewed audio and video files, interviewed individuals associated with the incident, reviewed fire weather and behavior data, and examined available records and physical evidence. The resulting report contains the most complete information available about the accident.

“Our mission was to find out what happened and to discern the facts surrounding this tragedy to the best of our ability,” said Jim Karels, investigation team lead and the State Forester for the Florida Forest Service. “We also hope this report facilitates learning within the wildland fire community in order to reduce the likelihood of repeating actions that contributed to the loss of life.”

The 116-page report includes a fact-based narrative of the incident and offers the investigation team’s analysis, conclusions and recommendations. It also includes a discussion section that is meant to facilitate understanding and learning by exploring various perspectives and issues that arose during the investigation.

“Our number one concern right now is ensuring that the families have the information and support that they need as this report is released,” said Arizona State Forester Scott Hunt. “Beyond that, it is critical that the State of Arizona and the broader wildland fire community have the opportunity to thoroughly review the report so that we fully understand the events leading to the loss of the Granite Mountain hotshots.”

To coordinate a phone interview with a Serious Accident Investigation Team Member please call 707-602-7568.