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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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State Forester Announces Settlement Agreement for the Yarnell Hill Fire

Phoenix, AZ (June 29, 2015)—Arizona State Forestry announced that it has reached agreement in a settlement of multiple claims and legal proceedings arising out of the 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire that was fatal to 19 members of the Granite Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew. Arizona State Forestry believes that the settlement of these claims arising from the Yarnell Hill Fire is in the best interests of the State of Arizona and its priority of fighting wildfires in a way that safely protects firefighters, the public, state forest resources, and private property.

“The settlement of the Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health citations and the settlement with the 12 families involved in the Ashcraft lawsuit, both arising out of the Yarnell Hill Fire, will enable firefighting professionals to focus their efforts on applying lessons learned and lessons to be learned from the tragic circumstances of the Yarnell Hill Fire for the betterment of firefighter and public safety,” commented Jeff Whitney, Arizona State Forester. Mr. Whitney was appointed State Forester in January, 2015, after a 45-year career in wildland firefighting with the federal government.

State Forester Whitney, who is a member of the Granite Mountain Hotshots Memorial Commission, added, “A crucial part of commemorating the heroic efforts of the Hotshots is to do everything we can to prevent similar tragedies in the future, and the settlement of the legal disputes enhances our ability to do so.”

Arizona State Forestry appreciates the cooperative efforts of the families, the Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health, the Attorney General’s Office, and the Governor’s Office in reaching this historic agreement.

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