



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Rocky Mountain  
Region

740 Simms  
Golden, CO 80401

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**File Code:** 6700

**Date:** July 5, 2002

**Subject:** Preliminary Brief on fatal accident involving employee from Ontario, Oregon, July 2, 2002.

**To:** Regional Forester

At approximately 1735 on July 2, 2002, Alan Wayne Wyatt, from Ontario, Oregon, sustained fatal injuries while felling hazardous trees near Vallecito Reservoir on the Missionary Ridge Fire north of Durango, Colorado.

Wyatt was hired to fell trees for the Forest Service when he was struck from behind by a falling aspen tree.

/s/ DAVE EDGAR  
Investigation Team Leader





**File Code:** 6700

**Date:** July 5, 2002

**Subject:** 72 hour brief of the fatal accident in Durango, Colorado, involving tree feller Allan Wyatt, July 2, 2002.

**To:** Regional Forester

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**Names of injured or deceased: Deceased:** Alan Wyatt

**Preliminary factual findings:** To date, the Investigation Team has determined that Alan Wyatt, a veteran sawyer from Ontario, Oregon, was felling a tree on Middle Mountain above Vallecito Reservoir. Wyatt was struck unawaringly from behind and killed by an aspen tree with a root system weakened by fire.

**Narrative:** At approximately 0955 July 2, 2002, Alan Wyatt reported to the Missionary Ridge Fire from the Million Fire, where he had spent eight days. A faller from Oregon, Wyatt was assigned to Division P of Missionary Ridge East. He arrived at the assigned location between 1500-1600 hours. Prior to this time, strong winds began moving through the area, and all firefighters were pulled off the line into a safety zone. Approximately one hour after the winds subsided, Wyatt and two other cutters were assigned to fell trees. A nearby skidgen operator working with Wyatt saw a previously straight aspen tree begin to lean, and then fall in his vicinity. Wyatt was struck and killed instantly with blunt force trauma. A subsequent inspection of the fallen aspen tree revealed fire damage to its root system. No wind was reported at the time of the accident.

/s/ DAVE EDGAR  
Investigation Team Leader

