

Subject:72-Hour Preliminary Report, Yarnell Hill Fire

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Location: Yarnell, AZ

Date and Time of Occurrence: Late Afternoon, June 30, 2013

Team Leader: Jim Karels

Mission: Wildfire Suppression

Number of Fatalities: 19

Narrative:

The Yarnell Hill Fire started Friday, June 28, 2013, with a lightning strike on Arizona state land. The Granite Mountain Hotshots, whose members are City of Prescott Fire Department personnel but operate under Arizona State Forestry Division (ASFD) jurisdiction, were dispatched to the fire. An Arizona State Forestry Division Type 3 team was managing the fire.

Nineteen members of the Granite Mountain Hotshots were entrapped when flames overran their position on June 30. Eye witnesses state that fire behavior was extreme with heavy winds. The crew of 19 deployed fire shelters late Sunday afternoon but did not survive. The Maricopa County Medical Examiner's Office in Phoenix determined the firefighters died from burns and inhalation problems. The 20th member of the crew was serving as lookout on a small ridge a short distance away and was able to retreat when the fire reached a predetermined trigger point.

An interagency Serious Accident Investigation Team is in place. The team received a Delegation of Authority from State Forester Scott Hunt. They are conducting interviews, collecting documentation and have performed a site review of the deployment site.

The intent of the investigation is to learn from the events leading up to this accident and to help prevent future occurrences.

JIM KARELS

Team Leader