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Initial Synopsis of Yarnell Hill Fire Resources Deployed, June 28-July 1, 2013 **Compiled July 15, 2013**

Friday, June 28, 2013

- Multiple lightning ignitions occurred from thunderstorm activity in the area southwest of Prescott about 5:00 p.m. on Friday afternoon. Seven lightning fires were discovered (four of them on State, private and adjacent BLM lands). There were 33 new fires and four ongoing fires for a total of 37 fires active and being managed, statewide.
- Congress Volunteer Fire Department reported the fire to Arizona Dispatch Center at 5:40 p.m.
- Yarnell Volunteer Fire Department reported to Arizona Dispatch Center that they were responding to a fire on the hill, but they were not sure they could get to it.
- Air Attack from the Doce Fire flew over from Prescott and assessed the situation. The fire was named the Yarnell Hill Fire. The incident was less than one acre, in a large boulder field, had no vehicular access, showed very little smoke and no improvements were immediately at risk.
- The Yarnell Hill Fire was not staffed at night for safety and lack-of-access reasons.
- The Initial Attack Incident Commander (I.C.) ordered two State Forestry inmate crews and a State Type 6 engine for early Saturday. He also ordered a light helicopter. State Forestry and BLM agreed to pool resources in the Yarnell area next morning to work the multiple lightning fires.
- A spot weather forecast was requested from National Weather Service in Flagstaff (NWS-Flag) at 9:56 p.m. and was received at 10:07 p.m. The expected forecast for Saturday 29th-hot (102-104 degrees), dry (10-11% relative humidity), winds light (W-SW 6-10 gusts to 14 m.p.h.), very little moisture recovery, possibility of high based showers or thunderstorms with slight chance of moisture. If thunderstorms developed, the area of the fire could experience gusty winds.

Saturday, June 29, 2013

- Early morning helicopter reconnaissance showed the Yarnell Hill Fire the only active fire of the four lightning ignitions sighted yesterday. The helicopter

- reconnaissance estimated the fire at eight acres with very little fire activity showing. Later, ground estimates put the fire at two to four acres.
- The I.C.s from State Forestry and BLM worked together to build an initial attack plan to send resources to expected multiple fires from the previous night's lightning activity.
 - State Forestry hand crews from Lewis and Yuma, the State Engine, and the BLM engine were on scene at Yarnell V.F.D.
 - A six man squad from Lewis Crew and one BLM helitack crewman were flown into the fire by the BLM light helicopter. Firefighters made progress hot-spotting the few active areas and mopped up (extinguishing burning material) along the two track jeep road.
 - The I. C. requested that the tanker base in Wickenburg be activated for quicker turn-around response with the single engine airtankers (SEATs).
 - The Yarnell Hill Fire was treated with multiple SEAT retardant drops (est. 800 gallons per drop) to minimize fire growth. SEATs were then released to return to base.
 - The west side of the fire was in very large rock bluffs and considered too steep to treat with aerial retardant.
 - The east side of the fire was a two-track jeep road that fire had not crossed.
 - NWS-Flag issued a weather alert at approximately 3:00 p.m., noting a thunderstorm moving south from Kingman which was delivered from the I.C. by radio to firefighters. The storm cell dissipated before reaching the fire.
 - A spot weather forecast for 4760' elevation called for dry (11% relative humidity), hot (105 degrees) light winds (6-7 m.p.h.), slight chance of thunderstorms with very little chance of moisture.
 - At about 4:30 p.m. a small unburned island on the east side of the fire flamed up and spotted across the two track jeep road on the east side (called a "slopover").
 - The I.C. requested SEATs and an Air Attack return to the fire.
 - A total of 13 firefighters on the hill were committed to digging fireline to stop the growth of the slopover.
 - At 5:30 p.m. the I.C. reported the slopover at approximately two acres, making the fire an estimated six + acres total.
 - The I.C. requested a heavy helitanker and fixed wing heavy airtanker to assist with the slopover. A helitanker was located in Prescott, but was unable to respond due to thunderstorm activity and high winds in Prescott. The nearest available heavy airtanker was in Albuquerque, but also unable to respond due to weather conditions.
 - Later, a DC-10 very large airtanker (VLAT) was in Albuquerque and available, but was not ordered due to Air Attack's concern about effectiveness in steep terrain and inability to deliver retardant before cut-off time, due to darkness.
 - The fire was estimated at 100 acres at 7:38 p.m. and was moving laterally along the ridge to the north, with active burning in isolated areas of dense fuel pockets. The leading edge of the fire was advancing slowly. The fire's flanks were burning with very little activity. The fire was estimated to be one mile from the closest structures in Peoples Valley and 2.5 miles from Yarnell.

- SEATs delivered 15 loads for a total of 7,430 gallons of retardant for the day. No larger airtankers were utilized on this date.
- Saturday evening at approximately 10:00 p.m., the I.C. ordered structure protection specialists and an analysis of homes in Model Creek, AA Ranch, Peoples Valley, Yarnell and Glen Ilah. The I.C. asked the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office to prepare for reverse 911 calls if evacuations became necessary.
- The I.C. ordered additional ground resources, including 14 Type 6 engines, six water tenders, three additional Type I (Hotshot) crews, two Type II crews and two bulldozers with Dozer Bosses for June 30.
- The I.C. ordered air resources for early Sunday, June 30, including three heavy airtankers, Air Attack, four SEATs, two heavy helicopters, two medium helicopters, two light helicopters and a lead plane. The Yarnell Hill Fire was competing with other fires in the Southwest for scarce air resources.
- The I.C. ordered a short Type II Incident Management Team (IMT) to report Sunday to manage the increasing number of resources being ordered.

Sunday, June 30, 2013

- Individual operational overhead resources from the Type II IMT began arriving on scene as early as 6:00 a.m. and immediately began working with the Type IV I.C.
- The Granite Mountain Hotshots arrived approximately 8:00 a.m. and began work after an operational, weather and safety briefing.
- The Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC) advised Arizona Dispatch Center that competition existed from other fires, for air tankers. SWCC launched two heavy air tankers and suggested the State could order a very large airtanker (VLAT).
- One VLAT was ordered for Yarnell Hill Fire at 8:54 a.m.
- Blue Ridge Hotshots arrived at approximately 9:00 a.m., received a briefing and also began working the fire.
- The fire was active on the northeast and moving towards AA Ranch and Model Creek subdivision in Peoples Valley.
- Two SEATs began working the fire at approximately 9:00 a.m., making multiple retardant drops on the fire. Two additional SEATs were ordered from Tucson and Show Low and worked the fire later in the day.
- Two heavy helicopters, two medium helicopters and two light helicopters were ordered and confirmed. The heavy helicopter came from Show Low and arrived over the fire late afternoon.
- Two heavy airtankers ordered for Yarnell Hill Fire were diverted to the Dean Peak Fire near Kingman by SWCC at 9:40 a.m.
- Command transferred from Type IV to Type II I.C. at 10:21 a.m.
- Flame lengths of 15' to 20' were observed with some spotting. The fire was advancing at about 1/8 mile per hour.
- The I.C. ordered the second VLAT for Yarnell Fire 11:38 a.m.

- Arizona Dispatch Center ordered two more heavy airtankers at 12:24 p.m. One heavy airtanker was assigned but the second was unable to be filled (UTF). The assigned heavy airtanker made multiple drops on the fire.
- Arizona Dispatch Center also ordered two more heavy helicopters. One helicopter was assigned, the second was unable to be filled.
- Fire activity in heavy chaparral increased dramatically. The fire increased to an estimated 1000 acres by noon. The area where the fire was burning had not experienced a large fire in an estimated 45 years.
- SWCC diverted two heavy airtankers back to Yarnell Hill Fire from the Dean Peak Fire at approximately 12:30 p.m. Both airtankers continued to work the Yarnell Hill Fire and made multiple retardant drops each.
- Air Attack reported that the east flank of the fire was active and burning slowly towards Yarnell. Yavapai County Sheriff's Office initiated a four hour pre-evacuation notification at 1:50 p.m.
- The Fire Behavior Analyst (FBAN) at the Yarnell Hill Fire received a weather alert from NWS-Flag at 2:02 p.m. with notice of the chance of thunderstorm activity to the fire's east side with downdrafts of 30+ m.p.h. and relayed that information to Operations by radio and then to the Division Supervisors by radio. Receipt of information was confirmed by the Division Supervisors.
- Arizona Dispatch Center ordered a Southwest Area Type I Interagency Incident Management Team (IMT) at 2:13 p.m.
- FBAN received notice of weather alert from NWS-Flag at 3:26 p.m. of outflow winds from a thunderstorm moving from the northeast to the southwest with very high winds of 40-50 + m.p.h. Information was passed on to Operations and each Division Supervisor by radio. Receipt of information was confirmed by Division Supervisors.
- The Yarnell Hill Fire continued to grow to the north and east.
- The Yarnell Hill Fire increased in intensity and rate of spread from 4:00 p.m. The head of the fire changed direction and the fire advanced rapidly to the Southeast.
- Air Attack orders six additional heavy airtankers at 4:03 p.m. SWCC unable to fill five of these air tanker requests. One heavy airtanker was committed out of Southern California (South Ops).
- Extensive thunderstorms and high winds around Prescott grounded air tankers the same for helicopters.
- Yavapai County Sheriff's Office ordered mandatory evacuation of Yarnell and Glen Ilah at 4:10 p.m.
- At 4:47 p.m. I.C. and Arizona Dispatch Center received notice from Air Attack that shelters had been deployed, unknown number and unknown exact location.
- Heavy smoke and extreme fire behavior. The DPS helicopter and other ground units were standing by for rescue/medical assistance.
- Multiple structures reported burned in Yarnell.
- DPS EMT on ground confirmed 19 fatalities at 6:35 p.m. June 30, 2013.
- Fire jumped Highway 89 at 6:39 p.m.
- Airtanker operations were completed for the day at 7:48 p.m. A total of 47 drops were made by SEATs for 31,300 gallons of retardant delivered. Heavy airtankers

made 16 drops of 28,875 gallons of retardant delivered. VLATs made five drops of 55,522 gallons of retardant delivered. A total of 115,697 gallons of retardant were delivered on the fire on this date.

- Ground resources continued to engage fire and protect structures throughout the night.
- Approximately 400 + personnel were assigned to the Yarnell Hill Fire.

Monday, July 1, 2013

- Very little fire growth occurred and no further structures were lost.
- Two retardant drops were made by VLAT and two retardant drops by a heavy airtanker.
- Transition of command of the fire to the Type I IMT occurred at 6:00 p.m.
- SEATs were very active with 47 drops made. Heavy airtankers and the VLATs each made two drops. A total of 43,665 gallons of retardant were delivered on the fire on this date.
- Approximately 448 personnel assigned to the fire.