

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION IN WILDLAND FIRE FIGHTING

OVERSIGHT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS AND
FOREST HEALTH

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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FIELD HEARING ON INTERAGENCY COOPERATION IN WILDLAND FIRE FIGHTING

**Saturday, September 28, 2002
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health
Committee on Resources
Show Low, Arizona**

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 1:04 p.m., in the Show Low High School Auditorium, 500 W. Old Linden Road, Show Low, Arizona, Hon. J.D. Hayworth, presiding.

Mr. HAYWORTH. The Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health will now come to order.

We thank so many of you for taking time out to join us today and as you find seats, a couple of housekeeping notes are in order.

We have an agenda that is posted on either side and copies of which you can pick up. We also know that many people have their own perspectives of what has transpired and why I would encourage those who join us today from the public to pick up one of the agendas is because on the back page, there is a provision made for you to mail, fax or e-mail your own testimony, your own perspective, to us as we continue to deal with the challenges that confront us with reference to western wildfires. So I would have you make note of that as we conduct this field hearing today.

OPENING STATEMENT OF THE HON. J.D. HAYWORTH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA

Mr. HAYWORTH. Our Subcommittee today will hear testimony on interagency cooperation in wildland fire fighting.

In the eyes of many, Arizona has just experienced its worst wildfire season ever. Many communities right in this area sustained tremendous damage from the Rodeo-Chediski fire, ranging from burned homes and businesses to destroyed wildlife habitat and environmental devastation. The hearts of our nation go out to the victims of this fire and honor those who assisted in the catastrophe management and cleanup efforts.

But Arizona is not alone. Much of the west has also endured catastrophic fires. So it is understandable and necessary that the U.S. Congress closely examine the Federal actions taken while combating this fire. It is our hope that this testimony presented today will help us determine the effectiveness of Federal wildfire management policies. What we learn today has the potential to save

homes, businesses, wildlife and possibly the lives of firefighters and of those that live on or near our forest land.

Therefore, we are here today bringing Washington to the White Mountains to make an after-action review of the coordination of efforts of Federal, state and local fire fighting authorities during the Rodeo-Chediski fire. Specifically, the Committee hopes to hear testimony that will answer the following questions:

1. In what ways were local officials consulted and relied upon for vital information by Federal agencies?

2. What bureaucratic restrictions exist that hinder or prevent effective fire fighting or fire prevention?

3. Were local fire department personnel and equipment utilized in the most efficient manner?

4. Do regional fire plans contain conflicting rules that could possibly generate confusion and wasted time during an emergency situation.

5. Are regional fire plans coordinated with local and neighboring authorities?

6. What needs to change to prevent future devastation by uncontrollable wildfires?

I look forward to the testimony presented today by the Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the incident commander of the Rodeo-Chediski fire, nationally recognized forest health experts and the many local citizens affected by this catastrophe.

Indeed in the eyes of many, what is called catastrophic fire became cataclysmic. And while we are thankful that there was no loss of human life, the loss to families, to businesses, to our environment, was nothing short of a cataclysm.

Today we will listen and learn from the panels and from many of you who have joined us.

I am honored to be joined on the dias by another good friend who serves with me on the Resources Committee, the gentleman from the First Congressional District, the Honorable Jeff Flake.

Congressman Flake, we recognize you for any opening statement you might want to make.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hayworth follows:]

Statement of Hon. J.D. Hayworth, a Representative in Congress from the State of Arizona

Arizona, like much of the West, has sustained some of the most catastrophic fire seasons ever. Many communities here in Arizona sustained tremendous damage from the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, ranging from burned homes and businesses to destroyed wildlife habitat and environmental devastation. The hearts of the nation go out to the victims of this fire, and honor those who assisted in the catastrophe management and clean-up efforts.

Nevertheless, it is expedient for the United States Congress to closely examine the federal actions taken while combating this fire. It is our hope that the testimony presented today will help us determine the effectiveness of federal wildfire management policies. What we learn today has the potential to save homes, businesses, wildlife, and possibly the lives of firefighters and those that live on or near forestland. Therefore, we are here today in the beautiful White Mountains to make an after-action review of the coordination efforts of federal, state, and local fire fighting authorities during the Rodeo-Chediski fire.

Specifically, the Committee hopes to hear testimony that will answer the following questions:

1) In what ways were local officials consulted and relied upon for vital information by federal agencies?

- 2) What bureaucratic restrictions exist that hinder or prevent effective fire fighting or fire prevention?
- 3) Were local fire department personnel and equipment utilized in the most efficient manner?
- 4) Do regional fire plans contain conflicting rules that could possibly generate confusion and wasted time during an emergency situation?
- 5) Are regional fire plans coordinated with local and neighboring authorities?
- 6) What needs to change to prevent future devastation by uncontrollable wildfires?

I look forward to the testimony presented today by the Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the incident commander of the Rodeo-Chediski fire, nationally-recognized forest health experts, and the many local citizens affected by this catastrophe.

OPENING STATEMENT OF THE HON. JEFF FLAKE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you, Congressman Hayworth, I appreciate you pushing to have this hearing held, appreciate the Resources Committee and this Subcommittee for doing this.

I grew up in this area, in Snowflake, not far away and when I look out in the audience, I see a lot of friends and neighbors and others that I grew up with and that suffered greatly because of this fire. It really had a personal touch for me. I was able to be here on Saturday and Sunday when Show Low was evacuated and when things were I think at their peak here and it was not known if Show Low would be saved at all, and when the fire was raging very close to Heber-Overgaard, actually taking some of those homes.

It struck me as we drove in initially here to see the fire and smoke in the background that the Sonic, where you turned onto Old Linden Road there, was advertising their new milkshake line I believe and the sign out there said "Everything's peachy." I thought that was, in the backdrop of a completely deserted town, waiting for a fire that might come, everything is not peachy with our forest policy and with the regulations that we have in place that sometimes prevent organizations and levels and agencies within the Federal Government from working with each other, and that is why this hearing is so important, that we hear what actually happened, what could have been done differently, what do we need to do in the future to ensure that it does not happen again like this.

I was here for 2 days and received many calls from friends in the Heber-Overgaard area, quite frantic, quite upset at the lack of coordination, the lack of information that they were receiving. We need to do better. And I am very anxious to hear what went into that, what recommendations come from our witnesses here and, as Congressman Hayworth already mentioned, that we can take back with us and actually apply in legislation we introduce as we move forward on this.

I picked up the paper yesterday and read a great article that I would like to submit as part of the record.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. FLAKE. It was written by Kathy Gibson-Boatman, a person that I went to school with in Snowflake. She wrote a great piece about the problems that we had with this fire and what we ought to do moving forward. She just mentioned in the closing line, "The Forest Service is forced to over-document every step they take in

order to protect themselves from litigation. This contributes to unnecessary delays that have devastating results. The Chediski fire and the Rodeo fire as well is a prime example of delays that were occurring at the time when lives were at risk.” This is just one of the problems that we had and I am anxious to hear about the others.

I appreciate again the opportunity to be here and thank Mr. Hayworth and the others for scheduling this hearing.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Congressman Flake, we thank you for your opening statement. And of course Kathy’s column and her perspective will be included in the record without objection.

[The article has been retained in the Committee’s official files.]

[The prepared statement of Mr. Flake follows:]

Statement Hon. Jeff Flake, a Representative in Congress from the State of Arizona

Thank you to those who are here as witnesses, to Congressman Hayworth for requesting this hearing and to the Forests and Forest Health Subcommittee who saw the importance of taking time to organize and provide the necessary support for this field hearing.

I grew up in this area and know very well the lives of those who have been affected by the fires that burned out of control this summer. As I look around the room, I see the faces of families I know personally and faces of those who have had to overcome the obstacles this enormous fire created for them.

The Rodeo-Chedeski Fire burned about 500,000 acres, destroyed over 400 homes and touched the lives of many more families. The goal of this hearing is to hear from those intimately involved in the local forest, and to hear how the current system could be improved upon to provide more effective fire management.

The Committee has already discussed, in a hearing earlier this year, the process gridlock on the nation’s forests. The Government Accounting Office took that opportunity to qualify and expand the results of their focus on the appeals and litigation on National Forests. A portion of the burned area was to be cut as part of the Bacca Timber Sale but was stalled for almost two years.

In answer to the cries of gridlock, we have heard from extremists proposing to allow thinning on the nation’s forests; but thinning only in the interface—the area immediately around human homes - and thinning done only with solar powered chainsaws. I know my way around a hardware store; I’ve never seen the solar powered chainsaw section -this is not an attempt at a realistic solution.

Commercial industry, however, working in partnership with the National Forests has the ability to greatly reduce the amount of fuel the forests are currently supporting. At the same time this effort will support the local economy and reduce taxpayer expense for maintaining the forest.

Just as the Committee has looked at the gridlock, it now turns to look at other issues surrounding the causes of these powerful infernos that have gotten out of control. Already, many have introduced legislation to address areas that have been concerns. Beetle infestation, the ability to bring in management level firefighters from other countries, and making military aircraft available to fight wildfires were all developed as solutions to address forest fire concerns. I’ve also introduced a bill, the Disaster Declaration Exemption Act. It specifically addresses the aftermath of disasters such as this by expediting the cleanup process and exempting the appeals and litigation from stalling debris removal and cleanup.

There is good cause for us to be concerned about this fire and the increased number of larger fires seen throughout the west. The inability to contain them was aggravated by a multiplicity of issues, some of which I expect to hear about today. Given the nature of this year’s fire season, the Forest Service and the Committee need to think long-term, plan for the future, and rethink how current policy should be changed to prevent future harm.

Mr. HAYWORTH. We should also note that we have a statement from our colleague, Jim Kolbe, that we will include in the record today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kolbe follows:]

Statement Hon. Jim Kolbe, a Representative in Congress from the State of Arizona

I would like to commend the Committee for holding this field hearing today to assess the performance of local, state, tribal, and federal agencies in battling wildland fire.

Arizona has been devastated by wildland fires this year, and the rest of the country can learn a lot about fighting fires from the people here in the White Mountains. In Arizona, all levels of government (city, county, state, tribal and federal) have demonstrated a willingness to work together to prevent fires from destroying our communities and our forests, and most important, to prevent the loss of human life.

By September 17, 2002, Arizona had had its worst fire season in modern history—2,741 wildland fires that burned 650,000 acres. This includes the Rodeo-Chediski fire, as well as fires in Southern Arizona and along the border. The border fires are particularly challenging because warming and cooking fires built and abandoned by illegal immigrants likely have caused wildfires that have destroyed more than 40,000 acres.

Another challenge is that fires are spreading more quickly than before. The Rodeo fire grew from 800 acres to 46,000 acres in one day. This resulted from crowded and unhealthy forests, aggravated by severe drought. We must restore our forests to an ecologically healthy condition. This benefits the ecosystems and the people that visit and live near the lands.

Congress appropriated \$2.27 billion last year for the National Fire Plan, which coordinates federal and state efforts to fight wildfires and reduce the underlying causes of hard to control forest fires. One example of a federally funded program is the Volunteer Fire Assistance program to help rural volunteer fire departments obtain protective clothing, self-contained breathing apparatus, radio equipment, and adequate water supplies. Half of all volunteer fire departments around the country lack these essential items. Another federal program provides many small town fire departments with old military trucks that can be rebuilt and used as fire trucks.

These rural fire departments typically are the first responders to most wildland/urban interface fires. We need to support these local firefighters.

We also need to restore the 650,000 acres of land that has been torched during this tragic year of wildland fires in Arizona and ensure that other forest areas such as Mt. Graham are properly managed so they are not tinder boxes waiting to be ignited.

These are complex matters that require seamless cooperation through all levels of government and across all government agencies. But, failing to address wildland fire fighting is failing the people who live in the West.

I am hopeful that this hearing will highlight some of the deficiencies and some of the strengths in our Arizona forest fire fighting strategy, and will suggest new, innovative ways to manage our forests.

Mr. HAYWORTH. And again, if you are just joining us, coming into the auditorium here at Show Low High School, we welcome you, we thank you and we will reiterate from time to time during the course of the hearings that we welcome written testimony from all of you for your perspectives.

But we come to our panel discussions now and testimony and on panel one, the Subcommittee is pleased to welcome Bob Leaverton, the Southwest Regional Coordinator for the National Fire Plan from the United States Forest Service and Wayne Nordwall, the Western Regional Forester from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Wayne is accompanied by John Philbin, to discuss the BIA's perspective on dealing with the fire and its aftermath.

Gentlemen, welcome. And for panel one and for those who offer subsequent testimony, the Chair would note that we will try to limit your statements to 5 minutes. We know that you have full written testimony for the record, which will be included without objection, and if we can try to limit summation of the testimony to 5 minutes that is fine. There is no hard and fast rule there, the

Chair will offer discretion. But we look forward to your testimony and Mr. Leaverton, we begin with your thoughts.

STATEMENT OF BOB LEAVERTON, SOUTHWEST REGION COORDINATOR FOR THE NATIONAL FIRE PLAN, U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Mr. LEAVERTON. Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today about interagency cooperation in wildland fire fighting. I am Bob Leaverton, National Fire Plan Coordinator for the Southwestern Region of the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, headquartered in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

And because of the time, I think I know what is important and what you want to hear today, so I will paraphrase some of the statement.

As the Subcommittee and everyone is well aware, the southwest began the 2002 fire season in its fourth year of drought with no moisture relief in sight. Records from the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, North Carolina show that May 2002 was the second driest May on record in Arizona and New Mexico in 108 years of recordkeeping.

Even though we had a lot of fires this year, we were successful in putting out over 99 percent of all fires during the initial attack. Over 920,000 acres burned in the southwest this year. This is well above the 10-year average of 390,000 acres and is reflective of the drought, weather and the buildup of litter, underbrush and other fuels.

I think in answer to some of your questions, Mr. Hayworth, we need to talk a little bit about the incident command system. Federal agencies, states and rural fire departments operate under the incident command system when fighting fires on Federal lands. The incident command system uses standard organizational structures, training and position qualifications in order for us to integrate fire fighting resources easily into an effective, rapid response team.

The southwest was the first area of the country to adapt a multi-agency fire suppression organization back in 1983. The multi-agency Southwest Coordination Center in Albuquerque locates and dispatches equipment and people when one of the 11 zone dispatch centers in the southwest needs assistance meeting the needs of local units in their zone. The Southwest Coordination Center reports to the multi-agency Southwest Fire Management Board, and the current chairman is Kurt Rowdabaugh with the Arizona State Land Department.

Major fires like the Rodeo-Chediski fire come under the direction of multi-agency national incident command teams called Type I teams, of which there are 16 in the United States. Incident command teams are organized, trained and qualified, using the incident command system. Each team trains and works together throughout the fire season. The team has specific lines of delegated authority and formal reporting relationships at the local agencies and they are responsible for operations, planning, logistics and finance of the incident. The incident commander and staff, in concert with local units, work with administrative and resource advisers to

determine fire fighting objectives and potential strategies and set immediate priorities.

At an incident, local agencies first brief the national team about the local situation and continue to do so throughout the incident. Safety is always the incident command team's highest priority.

I think it is interesting to understand that when responding to a fire, coordination operates at several levels. At the beginning of a fire, called initial attack, the local zone center, the White Mountain Zone in Springerville, for example, is responsible for coordination and dispatch of local resources and equipment. Once it is apparent the incident will not be contained at initial attack or if a unit is facing multiple ignitions with people or equipment shortages, then orders are placed with the Geographic Area Coordination Center in Albuquerque. If shortages continue at the regional level, the geographic coordination area places orders at the national level.

The factors that determine the number of fire fighters dispatched to a fire include the severity and location of the fire and the current demand from the other fire locations. A wild fire in a wildland/urban area draws more fire fighting resources than a fire in a more remote area. Years of experience have shown us that it is unwise to tap all nearby resources to fight a fire. Given the fire danger in an area and fire behavior, fire fighters, engines and other equipment are needed at their home bases to deal with the possibility of new fire starts. Parts of the country without severe fire conditions can often more easily and safely provide additional fire-fighters and equipment.

In my testimony, I can't over state safety. Fire fighting is a high risk, high consequence activity and firefighters and public safety are our highest priorities.

When the Rodeo fire started on June 18, 2002, the southwest was in the midst of a severe drought. Weather, fuels and drought conditions all contribute to the number, size and behavior of wildfires. The overall fire behavior exhibited at the Rodeo-Chediski fire would be rated as extreme in most senses. Historically in the southwest, most fire events on the Mogollon Rim are driven by frontal passage winds in spring and early summer that tend to push the fires in a southwest to northeast direction. They are usually long and narrow. Fires tend to be long and narrow in this dimension because of the winds. Traditionally, the fires are contained with an anticipated drop in wind speed occurring near sunset or they are contained after pushing through the Ponderosa pine into other vegetation types such as Pinyon juniper. The Rodeo-Chediski fire departed from this model and was a plume, fuel and topography driven fire. I think these gentlemen are going to talk more about that, so I will move on.

Saving homes. You know, no forest can be made fireproof and as homes and communities are built in a wildland/urban interface, they face the additional risk of fire. Efforts to reduce hazardous fuels on Federal land must be coupled with efforts to assist private landowners to take preventive action in their own communities. During dry years or other adverse weather conditions like the southwest experienced this summer, wildland/urban interface areas

that have high-risk fuels may experience fires that quickly exceed firefighters' capabilities with initial attack forces.

Type I incident teams have members who are structural fire-fighting specialists. These structural specialists provide advice to the operations chief and incident commander on capabilities and needs in relation to structures threatened. Approximately 125 structural engines and water tenders were ordered for the Rodeo-Chediski fire. Numerous structures were saved by aggressive structural protection from the local fire departments and agency-owned engines.

It is common practice to anchor the fire and then proceed along the flanks of the fire to pinch it off as conditions allow. On the Rodeo-Chediski fire, due to the immediate need to protect as many structures as possible, the head of the fire became the primary place for suppression. This called for a different style of tactics in fighting the fire. Lack of resources and time dictated that little triage was possible before the fire entered several communities. Clearing out a path and burning to remove fuels and provide a safe area was attempted, however the fire advanced too quickly for these efforts to work. Firefighters, dozers and structural engines were forced to leave housing areas due to extreme spotting and control problems. The best and safest route was to allow the flaming front to pass through the subdivisions, then get behind the front and save the structures which did not burn with the initial flames. Flame lengths were in excess of 150 feet and this tactic was the only one that could be done safely.

Over 400 homes and structures were destroyed by the Rodeo-Chediski fire after about 30,000 people were evacuated, but thousands of homes were saved. More importantly, there was no loss of human life.

Now going to what we can do in the future, I think that has to do with the National Fire Plan and community assistance.

As both of you know, the National Fire Plan was born out of the 2000 fire season. It emphasizes five key points:

Preparedness—that is to strengthen and enhance Federal fire-fighting capability

Restoration and rehab—the rehabilitation of fire damaged wildlands and restore high risk ecosystems

Hazardous fuel reduction, which is to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, mitigate hazards and restore fire adapted ecosystems with an emphasis on the wildland/urban interface

Community assistance—work with communities to reduce the risks of catastrophic fire

And the fifth was accountability—doing what we said we would do.

I think what is important here is community assistance, because as a part of the community assistance item in the National Fire Plan, we have volunteer fire department funds that are funneled through the state and go to volunteer fire departments and rural fire departments for the training and qualifications and equipment needed by the rural fire departments to participate with their Federal firefighting forces on wildland fire.

So I think the goal of the Federal agencies is in fact to coordinate better and communicate with the rural fire departments. That is

one of the goals of the national fire plan, to not only do that, but provide funds to these rural fire departments so that they can get trained in the ICS system and meet the qualifications of everybody else, so that they can get the proper safety equipment particularly, so that they can participate with the Federal agencies and state agencies in wildland fire.

So I think we are going in the right direction. It is going to take some time, it is not going to happen overnight. I think last year, we touched about 15,000 rural fire departments nationwide. I know there were some within the Rim fire group that received funds last year and there are funds available again this year. So I encourage all rural fire departments to join hands with their neighbors and the Federal agencies and take advantage of the opportunity.

In summary, as predicted, 2002 has been a severe and prolonged fire season. We have in place a long used and tested national model in the incident command system. When responding to a fire, coordination operates on several levels from the local to the national. Firefighting is a high risk, high consequence activity and firefighter and public safety are our highest priority. The extreme fire behavior of the Rodeo-Chediski fire made conditions exceedingly dangerous and difficult to fight. While we were not able to save every home, thousands of homes were saved and more importantly, there was no loss of human life.

Finally, the National Fire Plan has given us the resources to increase our firefighting capabilities, reduce hazardous fuels and provide community assistance, and we appreciate the support of Congress for that.

This concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. HAYWORTH. And we thank you for your testimony. There will be questions that will follow the testimony of Wayne Nordwall.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Leaverton follows:]

**Statement of Bob Leaverton, Southwest Region National Fire Plan
Coordinator, USDA Forest Service**

Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today about interagency cooperation in wildland fire fighting. I am Bob Leaverton, National Fire Plan Coordinator for the Southwestern Region of the USDA Forest Service headquartered in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

In my testimony today, I will give an overview of the 2002 wildland fire season, and key aspects of our cooperative wildland firefighting operations, especially safety. I want to emphasize that safety is reflected in our operational guidelines because of the many years of experience and evaluation of those experiences by the federal land management agencies and our state, local, and Tribal partners.

2002 Fire Season

As the Subcommittee and everyone here is well aware, the Southwest began the 2002 fire season in its fourth year of drought with no moisture relief in sight. Records from the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, North Carolina show that May 2002 was the second driest May on record in Arizona and New Mexico in 108 years of record keeping.

Early in 2002, the Southwest Coordination Center meteorologist and fire behavior analyst prepared an assessment of the potential fire situation for the Nation and the Southwest in particular. The cumulative effects of the drought and the long term buildup of hazardous fuels made for a dire fire season prediction and resulted in pre-positioning firefighting resources and the acquisition of a regional prevention team to get fire prevention messages and community action plans in place.

As predicted, it has been a severe and prolonged fire season throughout much of the Nation. As of September 16, 2002, nearly 6.5 million acres have burned nation-

wide, 21 lives have been tragically lost in the overall effort, and over 2,900 homes and structures have been lost. Thanks to the National Fire Plan, over 17,000 fire employees were in place in the federal agencies to prevent and suppress wildland fires, which kept these statistics from being worse.

Even though we have successfully put out over 99 percent of all fires during initial attack, over 920,000 acres have burned in the Southwest. This is well above the 10-year average of 390,000 acres and is reflective of the drought, weather and the buildup of litter, underbrush, and other fuels.

After visiting several of the catastrophic wildfires that have occurred this fire season, President Bush announced his Healthy Forest Initiative in August. This initiative is meant to respond to the hazardous fuels buildups in our nation's forests and grasslands. The President stated that the need for a plan to restore our forests and rangelands has never been greater. When coupled with seasonal drought, unhealthy forests, overloaded with fuels are vulnerable to unnaturally severe wildfires. The Administration's legislative proposal, which was submitted recently to Congress, aims to reduce hazardous fuels as well as catastrophic wildfire threats to communities and the environment. The proposal would allow for the timely treatment of forests at the greatest risk and would give first priority to wildland urban interface areas, municipal watersheds, areas affected by disease, insect activity, wind throw, and areas susceptible to catastrophic reburn.

The Incident Command System

I would now like to turn to the Incident Command System. Federal agencies, states and rural fire departments operate under the Incident Command System (ICS) when fighting fires on federal lands. The ICS uses standard organizational structures, training, and position qualifications in order to for us to integrate firefighting resources easily into an effective, rapid response team.

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho serves as the national coordination, dispatch, and communications center for all wildland fire agencies. Co-located at NIFC are: Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Weather Service, Office of Aircraft Services and the National Association of State Foresters. Federal and state agencies work with Tribal and local agencies and share firefighting supplies, equipment, and personnel to facilitate efficient and cost-effective firefighting. Partnerships with state, local, and rural agencies enhance these efforts.

The Southwest was the first area of the country to adopt a multi-agency fire suppression organization back in 1983. The multi-agency Southwest Coordination Center in Albuquerque locates and dispatches equipment and people when one of the 11 zone dispatch centers in the Southwest needs assistance meeting the needs of local units in their zone. The Southwest West Coordination Center reports to the multi-agency Southwest Fire Management Board and the current Chairman is Kurt Rowdabaugh with the Arizona State Land Department.

Major fires come under the direction of multi-agency national incident command teams, called Type I teams, of which there are 16 in the United States. Incident command teams are organized, trained, and qualified using the ICS system. Each team trains and works together throughout the fire season. The team has specific lines of delegated authority and formal reporting relationships with the local agency and they are responsible for operations, planning, logistics, and finance. The incident commander and staff, in concert with local units, work with administrative and resource advisors to determine firefighting objectives and potential strategies, and set immediate priorities. At an incident, local agencies first brief the national team about the local situation and continue to do so throughout the incident. Safety is always the incident command team's highest priority.

Immediately after a fire has been declared out, there is a review of the fire fighting efforts. For major fires, there are additional reviews for safety (a review that is ongoing during the fire), cost, equipment use, strategies, and agreements with local firefighting agencies. These reviews allow us to evaluate the efforts and make adjustments for the future.

Responding To A Fire

When responding to a fire, coordination operates on several levels. At the very beginning of a fire (called initial attack), the local zone center (White Mountain Zone for example) is responsible for coordination and dispatch of local resources and equipment. Once it is apparent the incident will not be contained at initial attack or if a unit is facing multiple ignitions with people or equipment shortages, then orders are placed with the geographic area coordination center (Southwest Coordination Center, for example). If shortages continue, the Geographic Coordination

Area places orders at NIFC. The coordination center at NIFC will then go to adjoining Geographic Coordination Areas to acquire the assets that are needed.

In major fire suppression response efforts, NIFC establishes priorities for the Nation when multiple geographic areas are involved. In the Southwest, when there are several major incidents occurring at the same time with competing demand for resources, the Geographic Area Multi-agency Coordination Group in Albuquerque establishes priorities for the Southwest based on the potential to harm people and communities. When it is reasonable to expect a fire can be contained within first operational period, dispatch centers at the local level may coordinate directly if the resources are used for initial attack on adjacent jurisdictions.

The factors that determine the number of firefighters dispatched to a fire include the severity and location of the fire and the current demand from other fire locations. A wildfire in a wildland-urban area draws more firefighting resources than a fire in a more remote area.

Years of experience have shown us that it is unwise to tap ALL nearby resources to fight a fire. Given the fire danger in an area and fire behavior, firefighters, engines and other equipment are needed at their home bases to deal with the possibility of new fire starts. Parts of the country without severe fire conditions can often more easily and safely provide additional firefighters and equipment.

Safety

Firefighting is a high risk, high consequence activity, and firefighter and public safety are our highest priority. The Forest Service and Interior agencies have strong firefighter safety and training programs. Following the 30 Mile tragedy in July, 2001, where four firefighters lost their lives, we reexamined our safety programs and identified areas that needed improvement. The areas identified include managing firefighter fatigue, reinforcing the use of the 10 Standard Fire Orders, the 18 Watch Out Situations, and reinforcing training to avoid entrapment by fire. All of these improvements are in place this year and have been important during this year of severe fire activity.

In the initial stages of a large fire, we are often approached by volunteers who want to help but are not familiar with the Incident Command System or do not have adequate training or equipment to fight wildland fires. Without the proper training, equipment, and understanding, volunteers can put themselves and others into unnecessary danger.

When there is extreme fire behavior such as occurred on the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, then even the most experienced firefighters are kept out of harm's way until it is safe for them to attack the fire.

Rodeo-Chediski Fire

When the Rodeo fire started on June 18, 2002, the Southwest was in the midst of a severe drought with several large fires burning and no weather relief in sight. By June 20, 2002, the Rodeo fire had grown to 85,000 acres and was about 10 miles south of Show Low Arizona, and had a 6-mile flame front.

Weather, fuels, and drought conditions all contribute to the number, size, and behavior of wildfires. The overall fire behavior exhibited at the Rodeo-Chediski fire would be rated as extreme in most senses. Historically, large fire events on the Mogollon Rim are driven by frontal passage winds in spring and early summer that tend to push the fires in a southwest to northeast direction. Fires tend to be long and narrow in dimension. Traditionally the fires are contained with an anticipated drop in wind speed occurring near sunset, or they are contained after pushing through the Ponderosa Pine into the Pinyon Juniper. The Rodeo-Chediski Fire departed from this model and was a plume, fuel, and topographically driven fire.

The initial fire spread was influenced by the prevailing southwest winds and the southerly aspects of the Mogollon Rim. During the days of extreme fire growth, the fire was driven by the wind, fuels, and the terrain. The availability of fuel due to low live fuel moistures became an influence and assisted in the creation of towering plumes—building columns of smoke that act as a chimney. A rapid increase in fire movement occurred on all flanks once the plume collapsed, spreading superheated winds, and brands at ground level. Ignitions caused by spotting were numerous and quickly gained size. Spotting occurred up to 1 mile ahead of the flaming front on all sides of the falling columns of air. Towering smoke plume development was evident up to 5 times per day on various parts of the fire throughout the duration of the active fire advance. In addition, independent crown fire was occurring when plumes collapsed. These events are extremely rare in the Southwest and represent extremely dangerous conditions.

Saving Homes

No forest can be made fire proof. As homes and communities are built in the wildland-urban interface, they face the additional risk of fire. Efforts to reduce hazardous fuels on federal land must be coupled with efforts to assist private land-owners to take preventive action in their own communities. During dry years or under adverse weather conditions like the Southwest has experienced during 2002, wildland-urban interface areas that have high-risk fuels may experience fires that quickly exceed firefighters' capabilities with initial attack forces.

Over the last decade, several tragedies occurred as firefighters tried to control wildland fires threatening human developments. For example, in 1991, six firefighters lost their lives on the Dude fire near Payson, Arizona while attempting to protect a rural subdivision.

Type I incident command teams have members who are structural firefighting specialists. These structural specialists provide advice to the Operations Chiefs and Incident Commander on capabilities and needs in relation to structures threatened. Approximately 125 structural engines and water tenders were ordered for the Rodeo-Chediski fire. Numerous structures were saved by aggressive structural protection from the local fire departments and agency-owned engines.

It is common practice to anchor the fire and then proceed along the flanks of the fire to pinch it off as conditions allow. On the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, due to the immediate need to protect as many structures as possible, the head of the fire became the primary place for suppression. This called for a different style of tactics in fighting the fire. Lack of resources and time dictated that little triage was possible before the fire entered several communities. Clearing out a path and burning to remove fuels and provide a safe area was attempted, however the fire advanced too quickly for these efforts to work. Firefighters, dozers, and structural engines were forced to leave housing areas due to extreme spotting and control problems. The best and safest route was to allow the flaming front to pass through the subdivisions, then get behind the front and save the structures which did not burn with the initial flames. Flame lengths were in excess of 150 feet and this tactic was the only one that could be done safely.

Over 400 homes and structures were destroyed by the Rodeo-Chediski fire after about 30,000 people were evacuated, but thousands more homes were saved. Most importantly, there was no loss of human life.

In many areas, heavy equipment such as bulldozers and excavators are effective firefighting tools (generally in areas of less than 35 percent slopes in Arizona and New Mexico). Fire fighting plans usually specify what types and where the equipment can or cannot be used because of significant environmental or other concerns.

Use of The Military

We are often asked about using the military to fight fire. Under the 1975 Agreement with the Department of the Defense and the Economy Act of 1932 (as amended), civilian firefighting agencies may not call upon the military for help until all civilian resources are in use, including contractors. The military can provide a variety of assets to the firefighting endeavor. These include heavy and medium lift helicopters as well as eight C-130 E and H models modular airborne firefighting systems (MAFFS) that are used for dropping fire retardant. Battalions are broken into 25, 20-person crews led by crew bosses and strike team leaders from agencies that provide fire skills and experience. With one week of classroom and on-the-job fire specific training, these crews are operational in 8 to 10 days. The National Multi-agency Coordination Group at NIFC makes the decision to activate the military when all other resources are committed.

National Fire Plan and Community Assistance

The National Fire Plan was born out of the 2000 fire season. The plan emphasizes five key points:

- Preparedness—strengthen and enhance federal firefighting capability
- Restoration and Rehabilitation—rehabilitate fire damaged wildlands and restore high risk ecosystems
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction—reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, mitigate hazards, and restore fire adapted ecosystems with an emphasis on the wildland-urban interface
- Community Assistance—work with communities to reduce the risks of catastrophic fire
- Accountability—ensure efforts achieve the desired goals of the National Fire Plan

I would like to emphasize the community assistance part of the National Fire Plan. It helped prepare local volunteer fire departments in this area for this fire

season and it will continue to help us improve our cooperation. Each year, assistance monies are made available through the state forester to volunteer fire departments. These grants assist in paying for training in the incident command system and for equipment needed for cooperative wildland firefighting in a safe and effective manner. The Forest Service and the Department of the Interior trained thousands of local and volunteer firefighters in wildland firefighting technology in fiscal year 01 and those efforts have continued. In addition, the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior agencies work with the National Association of State Foresters and the National Fire Protection Association in programs such as FIREWISE, a cooperative community program that helps homeowners protect their homes from wildfire. The National Fire Plan and community assistance are essential parts of improving our skills and preparedness.

Summary

As predicted, 2002 has been a severe and prolonged fire season. We have in place a long used and tested national model in the Incident Command System. When responding to a fire, coordination operates on several levels from the local to the national. Firefighting is a high risk, high consequence activity and firefighter and public safety are our highest priority. The extreme fire behavior of the Rodeo-Chediski fire made conditions exceedingly dangerous and difficult to fight. While we were not able to save every home, thousands of homes were saved and more importantly, there was no loss of human life. The National Fire Plan has given us the resources to increase our firefighting capabilities, reduce hazardous fuels, and provide community assistance and we appreciate the support of Congress for the National Fire Plan.

This concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman. I would be happy to answer questions.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Wayne, welcome, and we know that you at BIA also have a PowerPoint presentation for us. You may begin.

STATEMENT OF WAYNE NORDWALL, DIRECTOR, WESTERN REGION, BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Mr. NORDWALL. Thank you, Congressman Hayworth, Congressman Flake. I thank you the Committee for inviting the Bureau to attend this meeting. My name is Wayne Nordwall and I am the Bureau of Indian Affairs Western Regional Director. This is John Philbin, he is our Regional Forester. The BIA Western Region takes care of approximately 42 tribes, located primarily in Arizona, Nevada and Utah. We have approximately 13 million acres that we manage on behalf of the tribes. That is roughly 25 percent of all the Indian land in the country. If you add Navajo, which is under a different region, Arizona probably has almost 50 percent of all the Indian land in the country in this one state.

So the BIA is a very active partner in the National Fire Plan. We are very proud of the fact that we work with the Forest Service, state and local agencies and citizenry groups. We think it is very interesting to note that over 20 percent of the Federal firefighters are either BIA employees or tribal employees.

Now I noticed in this morning's newspaper, it said fire experts to testify at Show Low. I am decidedly not such an expert. I will turn this over in a couple of minutes to John, Bob, Dr. Covington and others who are truly experts. The reason I am here is because the Department of the Interior wanted to take the opportunity to emphasize how critical it is that we do collectively a better job of managing our forest resources. I will, therefore, just turn in my statement to the Committee and then try to summarize and take as little time as possible.

As we are all familiar now, the Rodeo fire was first reported to the Bureau of Indian Affairs at approximately 4:11 p.m. on June 18, and as we know in retrospect, there was an earlier arson fire earlier in that day, the Pinyon fire. The Bureau had employees out there dealing with that fire and they were actually on their way back to White River when the second fire was reported. So within a matter of 12 minutes, the first air tanker was putting retardant on the fire, within a matter of an hour, there were over 60 people onsite. We had helicopter crews, four fire engines, two of what are known as SEATs, single engine air tankers.

Part of the problem that we had at the time was that because various people were calling into the agency and calling into the Forest Service reporting seeing smoke, it appeared that there were multiple fires, and it turns out in retrospect there was only one and there were a lot of false alarms, but that did initially take away the resources that were necessary to address the Rodeo fire at an early stage.

The fire, as noted by Bob, did not react in a normal fashion. It moved very rapidly. Within a matter of minutes, the flames were in excess of 70 feet in height. Within a matter of an hour, the Bureau began calling the White Mountain zone inter-agency office at Springerville in order to get additional resources on the fire.

Normally, since it was late in the afternoon when this fire started, it would have been expected that when the sun went down, the fire would have slowed. It did not. It increased in speed and by 7:30 that night, the fire had exceeded 700 acres and there were more than 200 personnel onsite with an additional 200 en route. By midnight, there were over 300 people onsite and the fire continued to grow and grow at an uncontrolled pace.

Finally, about 10 the next morning, on June 19, the fire made an unexpected, again—you normally expect fire to go up hill, it went down hill—went down hill from Cibecue ridge, it jumped Carrizo Creek, and at that point, the fire was essentially out of control.

By 5:30 that afternoon, the fire crossed the Rim Road and started onto the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest, and at that point, the fire was over six miles wide. During this period between 10 in the morning and 5:30, there was a 15 minute span when over 10,000 acres burned. That is a square mile per minute. At that point, the fire was moving so rapidly, nobody could have gotten in front of it and did anything effectively by a frontal assault. During a protracted 9 hour period, the fire consumed over 100 acres per minute. Again, these are unprecedented activities on a fire that occurs here in the southwest.

The next morning at approximately 8:35, the Tonto National Forest received a call that there was a fire burning and the location was not precise, the reports we have is that initially they believed it to be near a fish hatchery in Canyon Creek. They responded by dispatching several fire engines even though they did not know the precise location. Finally about 8:35, the Tonto Lookout Station at Colcord reported smoke and 2 minutes later, at 8:37, the Bureau Lookout Station at Chediski reported smoke. At that point, we had a better indication of where the fire was physically located. The Forest Service fire engines had to go back, backtrack a few miles,

because the road they were on did not go to the site and they had to approach from a different area.

The Bureau, within an hour, had air tankers onsite, helicopters, fire engines and crews, but again, because of the wind conditions, it was very difficult to respond. And we also had the other fire going at Rodeo. So it was a matter of trying to get resources to address the Chediski fire as well as continuing trying to address the fire over on the Rodeo side. In fact, while we had several of these SEATs attack the fire at Chediski, the first drop with the large air tanker did not occur until approximately noon. At any rate, by 2 in the afternoon, the Chediski fire was again essentially out of control and as we all know, on June 23rd, it merged and resulted in the largest fire in southwest history with 468,000 acres having been burned, 730 square miles.

Of that 730 square miles or 468,000 acres, 276,000 were on the White Mountain Apache reservation. It destroyed approximately 60 percent of that 276,000 acres and since then, our primary objective has been to work with the tribe in order to salvage that timber. We are running as much timber as we can into the tribe's timber mills. They have one at Cibecue and one at White River, it is called the Fort Apache Timber Company, FATCO. But unfortunately those two mills do not have enough capacity to process all the salvage timber just on the Indian land. I am not sure what the Forest Service is doing with their timber that they are going to salvage.

So we have had to go out on the open market in order to try to solicit additional mills to process the salvage, and again, because the timber industry in Arizona is in decline right now, the bids that we have been getting are from out of state and this is causing an additional impact on the tribe, because in addition to the loss that they incurred from the damaged timber, they are now going to have to pay transportation cost to these out-of-state mills.

In addition to the salvage operation, the Bureau is actively working with the tribe in order to begin rehabilitation of the site. Thus far, we have dropped over five million pounds of grass seed and we have got over 200,000 seedlings growing in greenhouses right now on the reservation, and by the fall of 2003, there will be over a million seedling trees to be replanted.

Despite this rehabilitation effort, the impacts on the White Mountain Apache Tribe continue to be profound. They have lost a significant portion of their commercial timber, the ground cover has been destroyed and has not succeeded in some places in being re-established. The natural ecology has been permanently altered or altered for several years into the future. Habitat for wildlife has been lost and there has been a significant loss of cultural resources. I guess as a non-member of the tribe, I really cannot speak about those, only tribal members can really tell you how significant an impact the loss of these cultural resources has had on the tribe.

One of the things that the Bureau believes is absolutely essential is that we maintain a regimen of fuel reduction, controlled burns and other things to control the fuel's accumulation in the forest. And we note in that respect that not all of the timber in the fire area was in fact destroyed. There are several green islands out there and when we look at those things, a lot of those were attributable to earlier efforts that the Bureau and the tribe had made

in fuel reduction. Where some of these sites were located, the fire ran up to the boundary, it did destroy some of the trees on the edge, but the trees in the center of these areas that had been treated, survived and are still commercially viable trees.

The BIA has been engaged in prescribed burning on the Fort Apache Reservation for over 50 years. At various times, as in the private sector and every place else, people become concerned—I think this entire notion that fire in the forest is bad has caused some reluctance occasionally to engage in prescribed burns, but the Bureau has nevertheless tried to work with the tribe to do this. There was a large fire in 1971, the Carrizo fire, that burned 60,000 acres. As a result of that fire, the Bureau began planning on burning approximately 100,000 acres a year, but in the middle 1970's, we began having other issues. For example, the EPA began imposing stricter requirements on particulates in the Phoenix area, and whenever we burn up here, sometimes, depending on which way the wind is blowing, those particulates wind up in Phoenix. So we have had to work very closely with state and local governments on these burn plans, when the burning would take place. And in all candor, because of the very high particulate standards of EPA, there has been some occasions we have had to cancel altogether certain burns. So that is one of the things, I think again, we need to address, is the conflicting interests between clean air and safe forests. Those are things that ultimately need to be worked out.

Again, the Department wants to emphasize that the only way that this is going to work is that we have strong relationships between the private sector, the Federal agencies, the state and local governments, local citizenries and other citizens with concern for the health and welfare of our forests. But something does need to be done, we have simply got to take steps now in order to prevent additional disasters like this one from recurring.

And I think one thing that was very stunning yesterday, I had been up here quite frequently during the fire, but I had not actually driven. We came up yesterday and on the road between Payson and Christopher Creek, you can look out and you can see stands of brown timber that is dead, not because of the fire, it is dead because of the drought. You can look right next to this school and there is a whole row of trees right down the side that are brown, that are dead because of the drought. If we do not get significant rainfall this winter and we do not begin a fuel reduction program, next summer could be far worse than the one we had this summer.

So at this point, I will turn it over to John. Like I said, he is the real expert. He has a presentation and will be glad to answer any questions the Committee may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nordwall follows:]

Statement of Wayne Nordwall, Director, Western Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior

Introduction

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Wayne Nordwall and I am the Director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Western Regional Office which includes the federally recognized tribes of the states of Nevada, Utah and Arizona. I am accompanied by John Philbin, the BIA's Western Regional Forester. My testimony today will discuss the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) response to the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, the effects the fire had on the Fort

Apache Indian Reservation, and land management practices regarding fire treatment.

Background

The BIA is a major partner in wildland firefighting. We partner with federal and State agencies through National, State, and local agreements. More than 20 percent of all federal wildland firefighters are BIA or tribal employees hired under contracts or cooperative agreements. The fact that so many people can be available on short notice for extended periods of time for this difficult and dangerous work speaks for itself.

Our preparedness funding is based on a planning process that recognizes the high fire occurrence is due to the flammable fuel types that exist here in the Southwest. Most of the funding is directed at initial attack resources such as, engines, helicopters and the staffing that goes along with that. Funding is available for national resources (hotshot crews), interagency cooperation (staffing at local, regional and national coordination centers) and emergency crews.

Local managers make decisions on a daily basis about which of their firefighting resources are available to help on fires outside of their immediate area. In almost all cases, firefighting resources are available to assist immediate neighbors on initial attack, with the provision that they be returned at the end of the shift.

In addition to the resources provided through the planning process, severity funding may be requested when it becomes apparent that the conditions contributing to fire danger will be substantially above normal. That was obviously the case this year and we requested an additional \$1,500,000 for the Western region. This resulted in the availability of additional helicopters and single engine air tankers (SEATS) at the San Carlos and Fort Apache Agencies.

Responses to the Rodeo–Chediski Fire

The Rodeo Fire was first reported to the BIA Fort Apache Agency in Whiteriver, Arizona at 1611 hours on June 18, 2002. Since we still had resources on an earlier fire (Pina) nearby and two SEATS were on duty at the Cibecue airport, the response was rapid. The first SEAT drop was within twelve minutes and shortly followed by three engines and two crews. Within one hour of the first report we had two crews (40 personnel), two helitack crews (6 personnel), four engines (8 personnel), two SEATS and three dozers working the fire with additional crews, overhead, and air tankers on order. At the same time we were responding to five false alarms. Because of the nature of the smoke column, people were reporting the Rodeo fire at different locations. This required initial attack responses until the reports could be checked out.

By the end of the first hour the fire was estimated to be over 100 acres and growing. The fire intensity, from early on, exceeded the capabilities of the control resources. Seventy foot flame lengths fueled by overabundant fuels rendered retardants ineffective. Rates of spread were such that retardant lines could not be connected. It should be noted that within the first hour, orders for fire resources were being placed with the White Mountain Zone (WMZ) interagency office in Springerville, AZ.

After the sun went down the normal reduction in fire behavior did not occur. The fire continued to burn through the night and into some very difficult terrain. By 1930 hours the fire exceeded 700 acres and had more than 200 people working on it with 200 more on order. At 2236 hours the Eastern Arizona Fire Management team was ordered. This team consisted of thirty people from federal and state agencies in Eastern Arizona. Many of the team members are BIA employees and were already assigned to the fire. Before midnight there were 300 people on the fire. Crews did not pursue the fire downhill in the dark for two reasons: (1) building line downhill is as dangerous as attacking a running fire head-on, and (2) the steep slopes were interspersed with forty foot cliffs. The first opportunity to actually stop the head of the fire appeared to be Carrizo Creek, which is a broad gravelly drainage area with numerous interruptions in the vegetation. This was not to be.

At roughly 1000 hours on June 19, 2002, the fire made a crowning downhill run from Cibecue ridge and crossed Carrizo Creek with a wall of flame. At about 1015 hours an evacuation was recommended for the communities located in the path of this fire. By 1108 hours all personnel were ordered off the fire due to the extreme fire behavior and a "Type I" Incident Management team was ordered, which consisted of a team of seventy-two people from various agencies in Arizona and New Mexico, including BIA employees from the Fort Apache Agency.

By 1730 hours the fire crossed the Rim Road into the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest along a six mile front. It is estimated that the fire consumed more than 10,000 acres in a fifteen minute period at about this time, or about one square mile

a minute. During a nine hour period on June 19th, the fire averaged 100 acres per minute, an unprecedented incident in the Southwest.

Meanwhile, on the morning of June 20, at 0837 hours, the Chediski fire was reported to the BIA at the Whiteriver fire dispatch office on June 20 at 0837 hours. The Tonto National Forest had received a report earlier in the morning that there was a fire in the vicinity of the fish hatchery in Canyon Creek. They responded with engines to the incident before an exact location was determined. While our lookout at Chediski was aware of action that the Tonto National Forest crew was taking, the Chediski lookout was unable to see any smoke at the time. The Tonto lookout at Colcord finally reported smoke at about 0835 and our BIA lookout at Chediski reported the smoke 6 minutes later. This is when jurisdiction of the fire was determined. There was a short period of time when those engines were turned around because the fire was inaccessible by road, but they were asked to continue to get as close as possible to the incident, which they did.

Once again, the BIA responded within the hour with air tankers, helicopters, engines, and crews, but was still unsuccessful, as the fire weather conditions worsened from the previous day. Before 1000 hours the wind was reported to be at twenty-five miles per hour and growing. The first heavy air tankers did not arrive until around noon. The SEATs had to switch to Whiteriver from Cibecue because of the difficult winds. This made for a longer turn-around time. The fire already exceeded one hundred twenty acres. By 1400 hours, the possibility of needing to evacuate the town of Heber was reported. Within two hours the fire spread rapidly to more than 2,000 acres, the Chediski look-out was evacuated, the Eastern Arizona fire team was ordered, and a recommendation to evacuate Heber and the Canyon Creek fish hatchery was relayed to the White Mountain interagency office.

By June 23, the Rodeo fire joined the Chediski fire to create the largest fire in the history of the Southwest—ultimately burning over 468,000 acres, or 730 square miles.

PowerPoint Presentation

We would like to take this opportunity to provide a PowerPoint presentation which shows the fire during the first few days and provides visual information of the difference between treated and untreated areas. The presentation runs about twenty minutes.

Fire Effects on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation

Of the 468,000 acres burned during the Rodeo–Chediski fire, 276,000 acres were on tribal-trust land. We estimate that more than 60 percent of the standing timber was destroyed by the fire. To date, we have made two modifications to an existing timber salvage contract that would allow the Tribe's own enterprise, Fort Apache Timber Company (FATCO) to log the burnt timber for both the Cibecue and Whiteriver sawmills. But the White Mountain Apache Tribe has requested that we prepare some salvage timber sales for the open market because FATCO does not have the capacity to handle all the sawmill work that needs to be done. Unfortunately, the interest in open market sales has all come from outside of Arizona, since local sawmill capacity has diminished in recent years. Selling to sawmills out of state will cause increased transportation costs for the salvage timber that will have a negative impact on the price the Tribe receives. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the timber will sell or how much it will sell for, but we know that time is against us as the dead trees have already begun to deteriorate.

Intensive and extensive rehabilitation work has also begun, with over five million pounds of grass seed applied to reduce the soil losses. Almost 200,000 seedlings are growing and we expect to have nearly one million containerized seedlings ready for planting next fall.

While rehabilitation is moving forward, the impacts of the destroyed forests on the White Mountain Apache people will be profound. A large amount of their commercially producible timber has been destroyed and vast areas have been left with no living ground cover to protect the soil from devastating erosion. The natural ecology has been nearly extinguished and with it all of the wildlife habitat that used to dominate the area. In addition, there have been significant cultural losses to the White Mountain Apache people that I will not attempt to describe here today. Besides specific locations with special meaning, the land itself is sacred to the people and they are the only ones who could begin to express that loss. I raise these issues with the Committee to point out the long-term harm to the ecosystem, the wildlife and the people that will arise from this catastrophic fire. A fire management regime that includes a strong hazardous fuels reduction component could really improve our ability to protect remaining forests in the area from a similar fate.

Land management practices and fire effects

It is important to note that not all of the fire area suffered severe damage. There are several reasons for this, including most notably, the thinning of forests and prescribed burning. Three large units within the fire area were either commercially harvested and burned, or precommercially thinned and burned, all within the last five years. During the fire run, these units were in the direct path of high-intensity crown fires. However, major tree mortality occurred only on the perimeter of these units. The fire proceeded to drop out of the crowns and continue through these areas as a low to moderate intensity surface fire. Without the thinning and burning treatments, these areas would have sustained a very high mortality rate and could have incurred the same severe ecological damage that destroyed the natural environment in many other parts of the burned area.

Currently, we thin smaller diameter trees under three different programs: (1) fire crews may thin limited areas to create fuel breaks for the fire suppression, (2) forest development crews conduct precommercial thinning, and (3) BIA treats certain areas for mistletoe control under a U.S. Department of Agriculture program. Lately we have begun implementing the Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) program, including the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) program, which are part of the National Fire Plan that began in 2001. These will supplement and improve the strategic direction of our small diameter thinning programs.

Once many areas are thinned, it becomes safe to begin a prescribed fire regimen. The BIA has been performing prescribed burning for over 50 years on the Fort Apache Reservation. Harold Weaver, the Area Forester, introduced prescribed burning to the Forest Manager, Harry Kallender, in the late 1940's. During the 1950's Mr. Kallender instituted an extensive prescribed burning program on Fort Apache. This program continued under the next Forest Manager, Bud Mast. In 1971, a lightning storm ignited 80 separate fires which joined to become the Carrizo fire. This 60,000 acre fire had been the largest timber fire in Arizona and it prompted an aggressive program to treat 111,000 acres with prescribed burning in 1975 alone. That year, however, the amount of smoke, coupled with inversions, had impacts as far as the city of Phoenix and since that date we have modified and improved our practices to better account for weather conditions, moisture levels, air quality concerns, and to take account of specific tribal government concerns. In the areas where we have conducted prescribed burning and thinning (including logging) in a regular and managed regime, we have been very successful in controlling the intensity of fires and have generally improved the health of the forest stands on public and on tribal-trust lands.

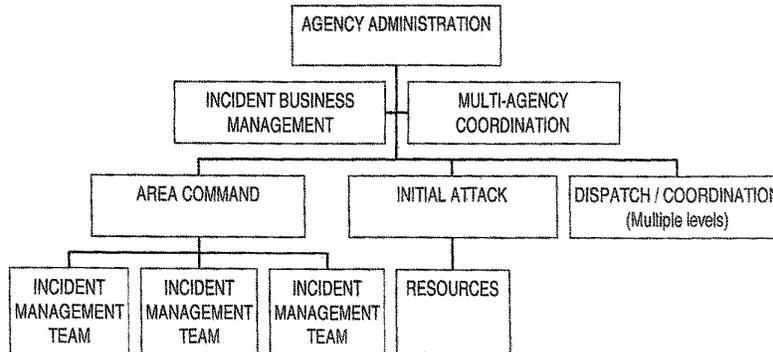
One important point that I want to emphasize is our strong belief that solutions to the problem of overabundant forest and rangeland fuels must include the private sector and local governments, including tribal governments. It is critical that they are fully involved in any opportunities to engage in forest health management and to receive the benefits of economic development.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[An attachment to Mr. Nordwall's statement follows:]

RESOURCE AND FIRE MANAGEMENT



**STATEMENT OF JOHN PHILBIN, REGIONAL FORESTER,
WESTERN REGION, BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS**

Mr. PHILBIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee members for inviting me. My name is John Philbin, I am the Regional Forester for the Western Region of the BIA. Could we have the lights turned down just a little bit for the screen in the back?

This is just a recap on the amount of resources we had on that fire. The Rodeo fire, when it first started, it was actually right next to town, the Cibecue Airport is about three miles away from the location and we sent quite a few folks over to it and there is a list of what we had on there. Also note that the fire was now 15 acres in just 13 minutes after it was reported.

This is a picture taken near Cedar Creek, less than 30 minutes after the fire was reported. This is probably about 15 miles away and you can see the kind of column that is already involved. And this also led to some of the problems we had of reports of fire down the street. You will see the next picture is from Pine Top, 25 miles away at about 6:30. I think we had half a dozen calls in our office in White River reporting fires at different locations all over the reservation, just from that one smoke and I understand the 911 lines on the mountain kind of burned up about that time, everybody was calling to report a fire that they had down the street and it was 25 miles away.

We had rates of spread that were fairly high to start with, an acre and a quarter a minute, and with some flame lengths over 50 feet.

This is by 7:30 in the evening, the fire was over 700 acres and we had 200 people working on the fire and, as Wayne said, 200 more on order.

This just shows you the kind of fire behavior we were getting still at 2 in the morning, the stands were very hot, torching out, crowning out. We do not know what the acreage was by 2 in the morning.

This is a picture of the ignition point, which is that circle in the middle of the screen up there near the top of the screen. You can see it is a little canyon and it actually is pointed in the direction of the northeast, so the lower end of the canyon is the southwest

where the wind was coming from, so it was an ideal place for a fire to get started. There is really not any place to get any vehicles in, it has to get up a little bit higher before you can actually get to it with vehicles.

The other thing is you can see the retardant on the lower side, going from the circle on down. Let me point at it here. There is the retardant line, there is another retardant line, and there is another one and another one there. And also on this other side here. And the fire was just continually hooking around the retardant or spotting across it. They had very quick turnarounds, I understand they got over 20 loads of retardant from the SEATs on there before the sun went down.

There is no smoke. It is 9 the next morning, it was so dry, everything burned up completely.

This is the next morning at 9:30 on Cibecue Ridge. By that time, we did have the large air tankers. There is a big demand for those air tankers, there are only about 30 of them in the nation. I think everybody is familiar with the story of the air tankers and the ones we lost this summer.

This is just before 10:00, the fire is now going down Cibecue Ridge, crowning as it goes. There was no place on those slopes to stop the fire, a lot of cliffs, heavily timbered. So they selected Carrizo Creek out in front of it.

Here is another shot 5 minutes later. That is ash that the flash is reflecting off of, from the helicopter picture.

This is 10 minutes after 10 and it is now across Carrizo and it is running up the other side 5 minutes later and at 10:30.

The other thing I want to point out is these plumes. We were talking about plume-driven fires. This one has an ice cap on top. That is what that fuzzy stuff is. It has gone up so high, it is so cold up there that it is actually forming ice on it, like a cumulus cloud, like a thunderstorm. And when it gets there, the weight of the air, the cold air and all the material that it has carried up into it, causes it to collapse and at that point, when it collapses, it acts like a thunderstorm, with rushing winds out on the bottom of the cloud. And so we get winds in all directions and the fire spreads in all directions while that plume collapses. And then as those things ignite, new plumes develop and the process starts over again. We observed as many as six plumes collapsing and redeveloping within 30 minutes at one time.

This is the fire crossing CC Canyon, seven miles in just 3 hours.

This is two plumes that are actually several miles apart. There is one there and this one is probably two or three miles away from the other one. This angle makes them look like they are right together. And they also would collapse on a regular basis and spread fire.

This was one of the points in time we guessed at the acreage the best we could from the air attack, it was about 25,000 acres just before 4 in the afternoon.

And at 5:30 in the evening, it crossed the rim and this is what it looked like when it was crossing the rim on the six-mile front.

And again, another shot.

And then this is referencing what Wayne talked about. This is absolutely unprecedented fire behavior—640 acres a minute for 15

minutes. You think of some of the subdivisions that might be out there, a lot of times they might be 40 acres or 160 acres. A 160-acre subdivision would be covered with fire in 15 seconds.

This is much later, several days later down on Highway 60, the crew is watching for spot fires across the road. They burned out there near Cottonwood Canyon. And this is one of the success stories. Because of prescribed burning that had happened in particularly Cottonwood Canyon, the incident management teams and the firefighters were able to stop, hold the fire, keep it from expanding into Show Low and Pine Top, Lakeside and even over to McNary and points east.

Now there was another fire, on June 20, the Chediski fire started. I do not have any pictures earlier than 1400 on that particular day, but this is where the two smoke columns are joining, looking north about Arrow Pine.

This is another shot with the column at 4 in the afternoon, the Chediski, and the smoke on the lower right is actually the Rodeo fire, the south end of the Rodeo.

This is 2 days later, Chediski crossing Salt Creek, the major column.

This is the Chediski fire in a treated area and there are actually some flames in there and the fire is backing down hill right through here. This is all burned already, but it has not affected the trees at all. I think the next picture might show it a little better.

Here is the treated area, this was logged, there was some thinning, mistletoe treatments. You cannot even hardly find a place that burned in there at all.

Here is another treated area. That fire is actually occurring, that same wildfire is going on back in the stand right here, there is a little smoke and a little bit of flame right in through here. That is the difference between the treated areas and the untreated areas.

And here again is Chuckbox treated area where the fire had gone through, burned a few needles on the ground and continued. Most of those were actually spot fires from the main columns.

Here is what an untreated area looks like and here's what it looks like after the fire goes through the untreated area.

Here are the things that have already been outlined, the drought conditions, low fuel moistures, hot temperatures, humidity down to 3 percent, winds 5 to 40, plume-dominated fires with wind. The pine needles were so dry that we actually could not measure any moisture in them, we just did not even try. The 10-hour fuels, which are pencil fuels, were about 1 percent. If you had 2 percent fuel moisture, then that was really wet stuff under these conditions. And then the other thing is the drought conditions themselves are leading to a lot of mortality right now all across the state. We have observed quite a bit of it. We think a lot of the trees that were in that fire were already dead, they just had not turned brown yet, because of the drought. And the drought impacts those trees that are more crowded together. The ones that are thinned out have a better chance of withstanding the drought and the beetles.

And this is a chart of the energy release component and the top blue line is 2002, the red line is the 25-year average measured at

Heber. You can see the blue line just went—new territory, we had never seen it up there in the last 25 years.

This one is not so good, but this shows pretty well the Limestone area, there is the lookout tower there and this area in the foreground was all treated and all this black beyond is untreated. All areas were in the fire and you can see that from the fire effects map, if you look at it, you will see that difference.

This is showing the area that I just showed you, the treated area here. The fire made runs at that treated area, but it took it 2 days to get through it. So this was actually protecting this area for a couple of days, the Show Low area, and bought a little more time. So there were some things that went well with that. It may not have seemed like it at the time.

This is Chuckbox on the west end near Chediski. The green area in the distance is treated and the canyon steep ground here was untreated, it is all burned. The next slide shows it even better and more dramatic. Gatewood Canyon untreated, total mortality here. And this is the Chuckbox area, the fire just laid down or spotted through and held for quite awhile before it went out the other side, or went around it.

In Limestone, we can see the same thing, in the treated area, you can see on the ground an occasionally torched out little tree here or there, a little spot there, but for the most part did not do any damage.

This is the progression map of the two fires as they burned together. It is interesting, the area in the middle where they finally—when they finally came together, that last little bit was the Carrizo fire of 1971, a lot of that had not fully recovered yet.

There are the two smoke columns. This column from the Chediski fire is being pulled over to the Rodeo fire in this NASA shot. There is Missionary Ridge up by Durango. If it was a wider shot, you could see the fire, the Hayman fire just outside of Denver, which were all going on about the same time and demanding resources.

Any questions, Mr. Chairman, I would be glad to answer.

Mr. HAYWORTH. We thank you, John, and believe me there are probably more questions that we have than we can get to in our limited time this afternoon.

But inherent in reviewing this fire and the dramatic scenes you show us here in this PowerPoint presentation, it begs the question, do you at the BIA through Interior have an easier time of forest management than our friends at the Forest Service under Ag and specifically does the fact that you are on sovereign Indian land give you the latitude to get things done easier than what we have seen, especially over the course of the last decade when so many lawsuits were filed, to circumvent or stop altogether prescribed burns in other areas?

Mr. PHILBIN. I think it is easier for us because our constituency is the tribe and the tribal governments directly. We see less folks outside the reservation interested in what happens there and trying to change what goes on there. And so in that respect, yes. But we are still subject to the same NEPA as everyone else, and we are doing environmental assessments on our salvage sales and our prescribed burns and will continue to do so.

Mr. HAYWORTH. In terms of the salvage—and Wayne, you touched on that earlier—your salvage is going on right now. John, you may go ahead.

Mr. PHILBIN. The reason we were able to do that is we had an existing reservation-wide salvage contract, so that the tribe can go out on very short notice and pick up these pockets of bug-killed trees or fire. Because of the size of this, we were able to make some modifications to that existing contract and allow the tribal mills to get started on harvesting.

But we have not done the entire sale area yet, but we had enough for them to get working and that is why we were able to do that.

Mr. HAYWORTH. I know that the title is Inter-Agency Cooperation, but at this juncture, Bob, I would almost have to say there is a type of inter-agency contrast. Because on the non-reservation land, Bob, how would you evaluate what is going on with possible salvage? Obviously that has been an initiative that the White House through Executive Order has tried to implement and yet we read this morning of lawsuits, not here but in Reno, to stop salvage there. What is your assessment of the ability to in fact conduct necessary salvage under reasonable time constraints, given the after-effects of the Rodeo-Chediski fire?

Mr. LEAVERTON. Given the Department of Agriculture Forest Service's authorities, it is a little bit harder for us. I know the local forest, the Apache Sitgreaves, is currently doing two abbreviated NEPA decisions, which we call categorical exclusions, to take care of those areas that are of some safety concern, in terms of getting the dead trees down where there may be a safety issue.

Concurrently, they are also working on a larger environmental impact statement to take care of the remainder of the area. But that is going to take some time because our laws and authorities require us to look at consequences and effects to almost everything.

Mr. HAYWORTH. The environmental impact statement—it seems to the Chair this is the irony we confront, we want to work to save the environment, but it seems that over the course of the last decade, we have had a terrible predicament where some folks cannot seem to see the forest for the trees. And overall forest health has been placed in jeopardy.

With the environmental impact statement, under the best scenario, what is the time involved to complete that?

Mr. LEAVERTON. I believe the Forest is working on a time line right now to have the EIS done by next May.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Next May.

For the entire panel, based on your knowledge of forests and forest health, when does the insect infestation and the disease take effect with the dead and decaying timber, is that going on right now?

Mr. LEAVERTON. Yeah, that is ongoing as we speak. Mr. Hayworth, I have spent a lot of years on the Apache Sitgreaves as a forester and I can tell you that probably in Ponderosa pine, within probably 12 to 18 months, you can pretty well forget about anything under about 12 inches in diameter. It will be too badly affected by bugs and blue stain fungus to be of any value.

Mr. HAYWORTH. So the fungus, the insects, the disease and the aftermath of catastrophic fire, by the time a study is complete, you are sending the ambulance when it is a 1-year anniversary of a funeral.

Mr. LEAVERTON. Yeah, we are sending the ambulance toward the end of the accident, but we are hopeful that there will still be some recoverable valuable timber in the larger diameter classes by the time we get there.

Mr. HAYWORTH. You are a policy implementer. We have the administration that works obviously through Executive Order at times of urgency. The Congress of the United States tries to move legislation and perhaps it is not your venue, any of you, to answer this question, but it would seem from the venue of the Chair, we are going to have to redouble our efforts to let folks in Washington understand the urgency of salvage right now. Not next May, not in the year 2525, but right now.

[Applause.]

Mr. LEAVERTON. If I may, you know, we have a second emergency facing us also, beyond salvage. And that is thinning the green forest, particularly around the communities at risk. You know, we are not going to get out of this drought this winter, we are going to be back in it next summer. What we do now could save homes next year, but we need to be busy doing that right now.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you. Congressman Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you. Just following up on hindsight I guess and to help guide us in the future.

I mentioned in my opening testimony that there were a lot of complaints at the time when I was here about kind of the deployment of resources with regard to the incident management. It seemed that there were Heber hotshot crews, for example, near Cibecue on the Rodeo fire, when obviously they know best the area around Heber-Overgaard. There was a question as to why they were not pulled back sooner. The failure to use local resources was a complaint that we still hear.

Do you want to comment on that and comment on what could have been done differently and how that will guide us in the future?

Mr. LEAVERTON. I think there has been a lot of good things happen in this area in the past. Unfortunately, you know, I agree with Mr. Hayworth, when you have something bad like this happen, as severe as the Rodeo-Chediski fire was, I understand after the fact the frustration and the anguish and the wishing we could have done something different, I think that is normal human reaction.

Quite frankly, in order to do better next time, we need to work better together in the off season. I think that has been happening along the rim. You know, you have the Association of Fire Chiefs, you have the Rim Fire Group. There are a lot of good things that have happened along the Mogollon Rim with the rural fire departments over the years. We need to strengthen and bolster those efforts, we need to get our rural fire department personnel the proper training and qualifications so that they can participate and be mobilized with Federal and state and tribal firefighters when a wildland fire starts.

This all has to do with safety. It is like waging a war. If you are waging a war, you have got to have one general and you have got to listen to the general and all bits of the army have to be following the orders of the general. Otherwise, you put other people at risk. I think through the incident command system, we can all do that. The incident command system provides for that. I think we just need to pay more attention to the use of unified command, we need to pay attention to the Federal money available for the volunteer fire departments, for safety clothing, equipment and training, and we need to have winter exercises like they have done in the past on the Rim so that we get used to working together before the accident happens.

Mr. FLAKE. Back to my initial question. Does the Forest Service recognize that there was a problem? Safety is certainly of utmost importance, but you have to consider also the safety concerns if you do not stop a fire. Is there a recognition that maybe the Forest Service was a little too reticent to employ local resources? Is that a fair assessment?

Mr. LEAVERTON. No, I do not believe that is true. I think the incident command system and the dispatch system worked perfectly well. I think what you end up with though, in the time of the incident is there is always some bit of confusion and chaos because of just what is going on at the time. And I think that is prevalent throughout, the incident command system tries to straighten that out in a relatively short period of time where it tries to unify all the firefighters in the effort, according to one strategy and tactic. But it takes time to do that, and I think that leaves the perception of maybe confusion after the fact, when in fact it is just part of getting organized.

Mr. FLAKE. Would you concede that there was at least a problem of information? Those, particularly in the Heber-Overgaard area, simply were not getting the information they needed. There was an incident management team here, daily briefings, virtually nothing there until after, in many cases, it was too late.

Mr. LEAVERTON. I do understand that there was a large effort to save the town of Show Low and it was a few days later before an incident command team was placed over on the west side, and I think that did contribute to maybe some lack of information over there.

Mr. FLAKE. Back to the salvage operation, I have legislation, J.D. has something similar, called the Federal Disaster Declaration Exemption Act, which would allow—after declaration of a Federal disaster area, it would allow us to expedite NEPA processes and some of the other issues.

Now working through Congress, as you can understand, we have 435 very individualist members, I will put it that way. We have the east versus west thing going on and all that. You are in one agency—it is going to take us awhile to move that legislation through is what I am saying.

Mr. LEAVERTON. Right.

Mr. FLAKE. It would seem that in 1 year—not 1 year, just less than 1 year, to put together a plan that will weather the scrutiny that might come from environmentalists or others is a bit too long

in an agency where you are in control of your members, you are in control of the process.

Mr. LEAVERTON. Right.

Mr. FLAKE. Is there any way—what can be done? Do we need more prodding from the outside? How can we speed that process up? Because I agree with everyone here and with Congressman Hayworth, that that is completely unacceptable. When you have, as I understand it, depending on the products you are trying to get out of the forest, in a period of 6 months after the fire, some of it is useless; within 2 years, it is all useless.

Mr. LEAVERTON. Right.

Mr. FLAKE. And within a year most of it is useless.

Mr. LEAVERTON. Right.

Mr. FLAKE. What can we do? Is that as fast as we can move?

Mr. LEAVERTON. Well, I think nationally—I understand your concern. I think nationally, the process needs to be looked at in terms of salvage in emergency situations where public safety could be at stake. The process needs to be looked at and straightened out. I have full faith that the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest is moving forward as fast as they can on the EIS. I know a lot of the people that are working on it and they are top notch people, they are not dallying around, they are expediting it as fast as they can. The worst thing we could do though at this point in time is put out a shabby document, be taken to task on it through a court or appeal and lose. None of us are going to gain anything by that. So I do think they are trying to do a thorough job, I do think they are trying to expedite the process and I am confident that will happen.

I understand what you are saying is true, but I think it just needs to be looked at nationally in terms of the current policy and authorities that we have to do this in a faster fashion.

Mr. FLAKE. I might suggest, if I might, the Forest Service comes from a different perspective. We have people here whose livelihoods depend on it. My guess is—and you say you do not want to put forth a shabby document and lose it all. If we put forward a concise document, one that will weather scrutiny and we take a year to do it, all is lost anyway. There has to be some recognition you have got to move a little faster, I would think, and people need to put themselves in the position of those who are here who have lost much of it already and have the prospect of losing it all.

Mr. LEAVERTON. I understand.

Mr. FLAKE. John.

Mr. PHILBIN. That is a problem and it is one that we have experienced frequently also, is that even if you take the time to prepare a decent document, if some group sues you, no matter how good that document is, there is a certain amount of time that is going to be taken up in the litigation, which will push it beyond the time period that you can successfully salvage this material.

We have got an even probably more pressing difficulty and I know Congressman Hayworth is very familiar with it. That is the trust responsibility of the tribes. If we comply—it puts us in a box. If we comply with the Federal requirements to do the NEPA process and that delays the salvage of this material, then that trust resource is lost. It puts us literally in a box—do we meet our trust responsibility to the tribe by salvaging that timber and making as

much money as we can for the tribe off that damaged resource, or do we comply with the letter of the Federal law as it presently exists and allow that resource to be lost. It puts us in a real conundrum.

Mr. HAYWORTH. We thank you all for the testimony and you point out in conclusion, Wayne, again, with the challenges confronting the Federal Government, at times the right hand and the left hand—it is not necessarily a case of the right hand and the left hand not knowing what one or the other is doing, but in fact it seems at times working at cross purposes. And so either administratively or legislatively or through Executive Order, we are going to have to untangle that knot, to prioritize what is most important here.

As I recall discussions with those who say they champion biological diversity, the ultimate irony is where is your biological diversity if everything is incinerated and the watershed is hopelessly polluted and the particulates from the air pollution are such that you do grave damage by the very occurrence of the fire.

We thank you for your testimony. We should point out this caveat, as is often the case, your testimony raises many questions that during the time and the nature of this forum, we will not be having a chance to answer. We reserve the right to contact you in writing to have more thoughts passed along to be made part of the official record.

And with that, you have our thanks and we hope you will be able to stay around and hear the rest of the testimony. Thank you very much.

Again, we thank the witnesses on our first panel for their time and we should point out also a matter of housekeeping. The hearing record will be held open 10 days for your responses once we get to you in writing.

Our second panel, let me just list all who we have invited and some may not yet be here with us, but we will continue to try and work to make this as flexible as possible within the constraints and the protocol of a Congressional field hearing.

On panel two, we have invited Vice Chairman Frank Endfield of the White Mountain Apache Tribe; Mr. David Behrens, Fire Management Officer, Arizona State Land Department, Fire Management Division; Vice Chairman of the Board Pete Shumway of the Navajo County—he is the Navajo County District Supervisor from District 4; Fire Chief Ben Owens of the Show Low Fire Department and Fire Chief Mell Epps of the Heber-Overgaard Fire Department.

So as we bring those gentlemen up, we thank those who have joined us now and we will make accommodations for those who have been invited who may not yet have joined us. And again, the point I want to make, those who join us here at this hearing, who may not have been here for earlier comments, if you have a copy of our agenda, the thing that I would like to point out to all who join us here today, on the back, there is an address where you are able to mail, fax or e-mail your own perspective on what has transpired, your own testimony of what this fire has done to you, of what you think we can do to make the situation better and what we can do to look ahead. I will continue to mention that because

I think it is so vital as we try to—it typifies why we bring Washington to the White Mountains.

Mr. FLAKE. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. HAYWORTH. I am glad to yield to my friend from the First District.

Mr. FLAKE. Also, Congressman Hayworth mentioned that the hearing record is open for a few days. Many of you have questions that you would have liked to ask the panelists. If you want to submit those and have us ask those in writing—therefore the letters will come from us and may have a better likelihood of being answered in a timely fashion—if you want to do that, please contact our office and do that. Our staffs are here and please contact us afterward or e-mail them with the indication that you would like those questions submitted on your behalf.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you, Congressman Flake. And now we officially welcome panel two and we will begin with David Behrens of the Arizona State Land Department. David, welcome, we appreciate you joining us.

STATEMENT OF DAVID BEHRENS, FIRE MANAGEMENT OFFICER, ARIZONA STATE LAND DEPARTMENT, FIRE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Mr. BEHRENS. Honorable Representative Hayworth, Committee Chair—

Mr. HAYWORTH. If you will just suspend for a second, we will try to get the mic working for you here.

Mr. BEHRENS. There we go. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your Committee. My testimony will be on how the State Land Department, Fire Management Division, operates with rural fire departments, Federal agencies, in suppressing wild fires in the state of Arizona.

The State Land Department provides for prevention, suppression of wildfires on state and private lands, which are located outside incorporated municipalities. It accomplishes this mostly through the use of cooperative agreements with local fire departments, other state agencies, Federal agencies and persons organized to prevent and suppress wildfires.

The Division also maintains in-house overhead fire fighting capability through qualifications of its own employees. Through this program, we protect about 22.4 million acres of state and private land.

The Division has in place four very important cooperative agreements to facilitate the cooperative effort in fire suppression. These agreements are the inter-governmental cooperative agreement with rural fire departments and cooperative agreements with volunteer fire departments, the joint powers agreement with the Federal agencies and the FEMA-State fire management assistance grant.

The joint powers agreement is the one I will talk about first. It is an agreement between the state and the Federal agencies that allow wildland fire suppression assistance and cooperation between the state and Federal agencies involved in wildland fire suppression. There are three important functions of this agreement. First, the agreement provides for a means for coordinating initial attack on each other's jurisdiction, the initial response may or may not be

reimbursable. Second, it provides for reimbursement of costs when requested to assist a cooperating agency in suppression action. And third, it establishes a method for reimbursement of both agencies, the state and the Fed, if the fire burns on both parties. There are several other provisions that provide for annual operating plans and mobilization plans and we will talk about those a little later.

The next two agreements are probably some of the most important to rural fire communities, rural fire departments and communities in Arizona. The two agreements, the cooperative inter-governmental agreement and the cooperative agreement with volunteer fire departments. These are considered legal subdivisions of the state of Arizona and therefore, they are considered to be state agencies.

There are five important provisions to this agreement that supply benefits to fire departments. They are training, technical assistance, equipment, reimbursement and suppression assistance.

The training provides for the opportunity to receive basic, intermediate and advanced training in wildland fire suppression. This training allows them to participate in suppression requests and other advanced fire assignments.

The second important provision allows the state to provide technical assistance. And for example, we could provide fuel hazard treatment, which we have done in several communities in and along the rim, and we provide funds that are supplied to us through the Federal Government.

The third provisions provides the Department an opportunity to obtain fire suppression equipment from the Division. The Division obtains a lot of Federal excess property, military trucks and recondition those into fire engines and loan those to the fire departments. If you were at the parade this morning, Lakeside just received one of our new type 3 engines, which we are kind of proud of and I think they are too.

And then we also allow, through special contracts that we have for rural fire departments to buy fire suppression tools. Over this last year, the fire departments have spent in excess of about \$300,000 buying wildland fire suppression equipment and clothing.

The fourth provision allows the departments to be reimbursed. This is how the State of Arizona protects its 2.4 million acres, we contract rural fire departments to do it. They are very efficient, they are located all over the state. They report the fire, we send them out and they get paid.

The last provision is really important, especially with the Rodeo fire, is the fact the these rural fire departments requested assistance from the state and we provided that to them, either through the incident management team or several communities called us directly and we supplied additional resources.

A couple of things happened in the White Mountains area and in the Coconino area in the Northern Arizona Zone and the White Mountain Zone. Our state resource, which is rural fire departments, are mobilized and dispatched by the local zone offices. The Apache Sitgreaves and the Coconino National Forest.

We also, during this particular dry season, have a severity fund, which the Governor allows us to spend up to about a million dollars and we bring on additional resources. This year, we had sev-

eral single engine air tankers, some severity patrols, our local crews were trained and brought up to full strength.

And with these agreements that we talked about, we mobilize about 230 rural fire departments. Now whether they can come outside their boundary very far or not, they are part of the State Land Department's fire management suppression force. And with these forces, we also under the joint powers agreement provide those to the Federal agencies when they need further assistance.

The last agreement is one, it is kind of a fiscal one, it is with FEMA, which allows us to request assistance financially when we think we are going to be in trouble, and this fire was no exception. On the 19th, I formally applied for a fire management assistance grant which gave us an advance of about \$20 million to help pay for the suppression costs that were encumbered by the state and the counties in the process.

Again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak and I also had a couple of things that we have thought about in the past since the fire. One is just for information purposes, 151 pieces of state, local resource in the form of equipment was sent to this area, probably 50 of that was in the area already with local fire departments. We sent 102 overhead to assist the teams in various functions. These included not only our personnel, which is only about 24 of us that are in the Land Department Division. These other individuals are trained rural fire department people and some seasonal employees that we hire. And it looks like, from our records, about 53 different rural fire departments participated in the control of the fire.

We have been talking about some things we can do. One of the things is we need to continue the Federal funding through the Forest Service for the volunteer fire assistance. It provides needed money to equip and train rural fire departments. And again, I echo it for the Department of Interior, we handle their rural fire assistance grant in this state. And over the last 2 years we have probably given rural fire departments through this system about a million and a half dollars for equipment and training.

And then the state fire assistance grants, which is the last one, talking about doing hazard treatment in communities and on private lands. The state has been the recipient of about, in 2001 and 2002—2001 was \$1.3 million; 2002 was about \$2 million.

And again, I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. HAYWORTH. We thank you very much for your testimony, David. Now we will call on Vice Chairman Shumway of Navajo County. Welcome, Mr. Vice Chairman, we appreciate you coming. It goes without saying, but we will repeat it. Everyone's full testimony will be submitted for the record but we invite you to summarize it now with the relevant points you would like to share with us in this open hearing. Welcome.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Behrens follows:]

Statement of David Behrens, Fire Management Officer, Arizona State Land Department

Honorable Representative Hayworth, Committee Chairperson, and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee.

My testimony will be on how the Arizona State Land Department, Fire Management Division, operates with rural fire departments and federal agencies in the suppression of wildfires in this state.

The Arizona State Land Department, Fire Management Division, provides for the prevention and suppression of wildfires on state and private lands which are located outside incorporated municipalities. It accomplishes this mostly through the use of cooperative agreement with local fire departments, other state agencies, federal agencies, and persons organized to prevent and suppress wildfires. The division also maintains in-house overhead and firefighting capabilities through the qualifications of its own employees. Through this program we protect 22,400,000 acres of state and private land (see exhibit A for more information on the division). The Division has in place four (4) very important cooperative agreements to help facilitate this cooperative effort in fire suppression. These agreements are the Joint Powers Agreement, Cooperative Intergovernmental Agreements with rural fire departments, Cooperative Agreements with volunteer fire departments, and FEMA-State Fire Management Assistance Grant.

The Joint Power Agreement (Exhibit B) is an agreement between the state and federal agencies that allows for mutual wildland fire suppression assistance and cooperation between the state and federal agencies involved in wildland fire suppression. There are three important functions of this agreement. First, the agreement provides for coordinated initial attack of wildfires on each other's jurisdiction. This initial response may or may not be reimbursable. Secondly, it provides for reimbursement of costs when requested to assist cooperating agencies in suppression action. Thirdly, it establishes a method of allocating suppression costs when the fire burns on lands of both parties. There are several other provisions that provide for annual operating plans and mobilization plans.

The next two agreements, the Cooperative Intergovernmental Agreements with rural fire departments and the Cooperative Agreements with volunteer fire departments (Exhibit C & D), deal with the subdivision of state government and volunteer associations. (Rural Fire Districts vs Volunteer Fire Department) There are five important provisions in this agreement that supply important benefits to fire departments. They are training, technical assistance, equipment, reimbursement, and suppression assistance. The training provision provides for the opportunity to receive basic, intermediate, and advanced training in wildland fire suppression. This training will allow them to participate in suppression requests and other advanced fire assignments. The second important provision allows the state to provide technical assistance to the department.

For example, the state could provide fuel hazard reduction planning or grant applications for equipment. The third provision provides the department with the opportunity to obtain fire suppression equipment from the Division. The Division has the ability to obtain federal excess property vehicles which are then reconditioned into fire engines. The Fire Management Division loans these engines to fire departments, along with the ability to purchase suppression tools at reduced cost. The fourth provision allow for the fire departments to be reimbursed for suppression action outside their response area when it is requested by the state. The fifth provision provides for additional suppression resources inside the fire department's response area when requested by the fire department.

Initial and extended suppression action for wildland fires in the State of Arizona are based on these three agreements plus annual operating plans for the four Area Zones in Arizona. In the White Mountain and Northern Arizona Zones, state resources are dispatched by agreement through the Apache-Sitgreaves and Coconino National Forest (Exhibit E & E-1). The other two Zones are dispatched out of the state dispatch center in Phoenix. During severe fire seasons, the Land Department, through the Fire Management Division, provides additional suppression and prevention resources through a special funding process of up to \$1,000,000. The system of agreements and operating plans is used to mobilize approximately 230 rural and city fire departments to assist the State Forester in suppressing wildland fires on 22.4 million acres (Exhibit F). This system also allows the state to assist our federal cooperators with additional suppression resources.

The last agreement is between the State and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which allows the State to request the financial assistance in hopes of mitigating a disaster. This helps the state mobilize additional suppression and emergency response resources without the fear of being unable to pay for the added expenses (Exhibit G).

Again, I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity.

[NOTE: Exhibits A through G have been retained in the Committee's official files.]

STATEMENT OF PETE SHUMWAY, COUNTY SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 4, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, NAVAJO COUNTY

Mr. SHUMWAY. Mr. Chairman, on behalf of Show Low, Navajo County, welcome. Mr. Flake, welcome home, it is a pleasure to be with you today.

The western forest health issue represents a crisis of massive proportions. I come before this Committee today harboring a great deal of frustration over the inability of our Federal Government to fulfill its obligation in implementing effective strategies to resolve western forest health issues. I believe, as does Congress, that strong partnerships between Federal, state, county and local governments are absolutely necessary to make meaningful progress on this issue.

The southwestern United States contains one of the largest Ponderosa pine forests. Presently these pine forests are at extreme risk of loss from catastrophic fire, insects and disease and drought mortality due to the tree densities far in excess of historic levels. The present realization of such a risk has occurred in Navajo County where we experienced this upwards of 500,000 acres of lost property and upwards of 500 homes. Failure to implement effective strategies has not only resulted in a catastrophic fire, but is also resulting in sediment-choked streams, lakes, floods and now a multi-million dollar emergency program of restoration.

In 2001, the area of the present Rodeo-Chediski fire was proposed for aggressive restoration under the CPR, which is the Forest Service-county partnership restoration program. The CPR program is designed to prevent this very kind of catastrophic tragedy.

In our view, the only acceptable management response to preventing these types of emergency situations is implementing aggressive restoration programs. I am here today to request your assistance in making sure actions are taken immediately to fully launch the national-county partnership restoration program and a stewardship program to restore the area of the Rodeo-Chediski fire. The national forest-county partnership restoration program, a national pilot restoration program developed for the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest, the Lincoln in New Mexico and the Grand Mesa in Colorado, is designed to prevent such tragedies as seen in 2002. This program restores areas of these forests determined to be high risk and it accomplishes in a 10-year period up to 40,000 acres per forest per year. Under Secretary of Agriculture Mark Gray and southwest Congressional delegation has endorsed this program for inclusion in the National Fire Plan.

The CPR program that I am outlining is based on sound scientific principles developed from continuing research efforts.

It is designed as a pilot to permit redesign of adaption across the west if desired.

It is co-managed by the Forest Service and local county government representing states' interests and has extensive local community input.

It follows alternative approaches that are compatible with existing laws and regulations to provided needed flexibility for resource assessment, NEPA process, budgeting and et cetera.

Will reduce catastrophic fire risk near communities and creates healthy forest landscapes and watersheds.

Creates an assured annual supply of sufficient restoration raw materials to encourage new industry and reduce the public expenditures on the program.

Most critical to the State of Arizona and its people is the need for immediate action to cope with the emergency created by the Rodeo-Chediski fire. The counties of the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest CPR program have worked with our Governor, legislators and communities to petition the Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of the President to declare this an emergency area and provide aid for rapid restoration to prevent further impacts of health, welfare, safety of our people and communities. We have submitted in excess of 5000 petitions and letters from our communities' citizens, mayors, county commissioners, legislators and others and the Governor. In short, the people of Arizona know the present post-fire condition represents a critical emergency. We will make available to a national forest CPR program plan and the co-partnership stewardship plan to resolve the post-fire emergency.

The stewardship plan includes the following:

The national forest restoration plan developed by the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest Supervisor presents needs for dead tree and other material removal, stream corridor and riparian restoration, plant reseeding and replanting of trees, wildlife improvements and watershed improvements.

The economic development activity plan includes the following:

Programs for assessing equipment for removal of dead standing or down materials and other materials throughout the fire regimen.

A program of contracted and volunteer labor pools for replanting of trees, rehabilitation and restoration of riparian zones and wildlife niches.

A program for developing wood processing, paper building at a Navajo County, Arizona facility as well as in the adjacent New Mexico counties.

School educational programs in natural resource stewardship and economic aspects of management and constructive use of natural resources.

Now in conclusion, here today we request two programs, request that the CEQ director and the staff meet with representatives of the southwestern delegation, the Arizona Governor's staff and Apache Sitgreaves National Forest CPR partners to quickly resolve this emergency condition.

We request the southwestern Congressional delegation to implant a proposed stewardship plan so that we can utilize damaged trees to offset public costs of restoration, properly restore our watersheds and resolve the immediate emergency condition.

We request the support of the National Forest CPR program so that we can take a proactive role with our Federal partners to prevent another Rodeo-Chediski fire.

We also recognize the importance of supporting youth programs to augment the national resource stewardship programs in our schools.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this and we will be happy to answer questions relative to the program.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Vice Chairman Shumway, we thank you for your testimony. We entertain your requests very seriously. We appre-

ciate the fact that in Washington, we have taken steps to try and begin those things and the emergency designation of which you speak, of course, would expedite the process so vital, as we heard from the previous panel. We thank you for the testimony, we will have questions in a moment.

We also welcome Fire Chief Mell Epps. Chief Epps, welcome, we appreciate your testimony and the chance to ask you some questions. Thank you for coming.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Shumway follows:]

Statement of Mr. Pete Shumway, Supervisor, Navajo County Board of Supervisors

The western forest health issue represents a crisis in massive proportions. I come before this committee today harboring a great deal of frustration over the inability of our federal government to fulfill its obligations in implementing effective strategies to resolve western forest health issues. I believe, as does Congress, that strong partnerships between federal, state, county and local governments are absolutely necessary to make meaningful progress on this issue.

The southwestern United States contains one of the world's largest Ponderosa Pine Forests. Presently these pine forests are at extreme risk of loss from catastrophic fire, insect and disease, and drought mortality due to tree densities far in excess of historic levels. The present realization of such a risk has occurred in Navajo County, where 469,000 acres of this pine forest has been destroyed in the Rodeo-Chediski Fire. Failure to implement effective strategies has not only resulted in a catastrophic fire, but is also resulting in sediment choked streams and lakes, floods, and now a multi-million dollar emergency program for restoration.

In 2001, the area of the present Rodeo-Chediski Fire was proposed for aggressive restoration under our CPR Program. The CPR Program is designed to prevent this very kind of catastrophic tragedy.

In our view, the only acceptable management response to preventing these types of emergency situations is implementing aggressive restoration programs. I am here today to request your assistance in making sure actions are taken immediately to fully launch the National Forest County Partnership Restoration Program (CPR) and a Stewardship Program to restore the area of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire.

The National Forest County Partnership Restoration Program, a national pilot restoration program developed for the Apache-Sitgreaves (AZ), Lincoln (NM), and Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison (CO) National Forests, is designed to prevent such tragedies as seen in 2002. This program restores areas of these forests determined to be at high risk, and it accomplishes it in 10 years (up to 40,000 acres per forest). Under-Secretary of Agriculture, Mark Rey, and the Southwest Congressional Delegation has endorsed this program for inclusion in the National Fire Plan.

The CPR Program:

- Is based on sound scientific principles, developed from continuing research efforts,
- Is designed as a pilot, to permit redesign for adaptation across the West if desired,
- Is co-managed by the Forest Service and local County Government representing state interests, and has extensive local community involvement,
- Follows alternative approaches that are compatible with existing law and regulations, to provide needed flexibility for resource assessments, NEPA processes, budgeting, etc,
- Will reduce catastrophic fire risk near communities, and create healthy forest landscapes and watersheds and,
- Creates sufficient restoration raw materials to encourage new industry investments and reduce public expenditures on the program.

Most critical to the State of Arizona and its people is the need for immediate action to cope with the emergency created by the Rodeo-Chediski Fire. The Counties of the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest CPR Program have worked with our Governor, legislators and communities to petition the Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of the President to declare this an emergency area and provide aid for rapid restoration to prevent further impacts to the health, welfare, and safety of our people and communities. Before you are over 5000 petitions and letters from our community citizens, mayors, county commissioners, legislators and our Governor. In short, the people of Arizona know the present post-fire conditions represent a critical emergency.

We will make available to you the National Forest CPR Program Plan, and the Co-Partnership Stewardship Plan to resolve the post-fire emergency conditions.

The Stewardship Plan includes the following:

1. The Natural Resource Restoration Plan developed by the Apache Sitgreaves Forest Supervisor, presents needs for dead tree and other material removal, stream corridor and riparian restoration, plant reseeding and replanting of trees, wildlife improvements and watershed improvements.
2. The Economic Development Activity Plan includes the following:
 - Programs for accessing equipment for removal of dead standing or down material and other material throughout the fire regime,
 - A program of contracted and volunteer labor pools for replanting of grasses and trees, rehabilitation and restoration of riparian zones and wildlife niches,
 - A program for developing wood processing capability at a Navajo County, Arizona facility and at a Catron County, New Mexico owned facility proposed for refitting for milling small trees by county cooperators in the CPR Program.

In closing I would like to ask today that you offer the assistance of your staff to help the State of Arizona move those two Programs forward by doing the following:

- Request that the CEQ Director and staff meet with representatives of the Southwestern Delegation, the Arizona Governor's Staff and Apache Sitgreaves National Forest CPR Partners, to quickly resolve this emergency condition,
- Request the Southwest Congressional Delegation to implement a proposed Stewardship Plan so that we can utilize damaged trees to offset public costs of restoration, properly restore our watersheds, and resolve the emergency conditions and,
- Support our proposed National Forest CPR Program so that we can take a proactive role with our federal partners to prevent another Rodeo-Chediski Fire.

**STATEMENT OF FIRE CHIEF MELL EPPS, HEBER-OVERGAARD
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Mr. EPPS. Mr. Hayworth and Mr. Flake, I want to thank you for the opportunity to come and testify before this Committee. I would like to just read my statement.

Let me begin by stating I have no ill feelings or animosity toward any individual or groups as a result of these tragic fires. I believe I came away from this incident with a far better idea of what we as individuals and organizations can do to make these types of situations a lesser threat and possibly eliminate much of their destruction. I can assure all of you this fire could have been prevented. I am not interested in discussing or commenting to a great degree on how the fires got started. I am convinced they would have got started regardless—careless smoking, unattended campfires, motorized vehicles or even lightning strikes.

It is clear there are two factors which made this fire the largest in Arizona's history—over 450,000 acres—the incident that it was. One is the very dry conditions of the forest. We are in a drought which causes conditions to be far more critical than normal. We have known for some time of these extreme hazardous and try conditions, all of us, both local and national agencies. These severe dry conditions made ignition and combustion inevitable. No. 2, over the past several decades, cleaning the combustible debris out of the forests has become the exception instead of the rule. Our local forest is a prime example. We had an average of 25 tons of fuel per acre, which should, for the safety of the communities such as ours and the health of the national forests, be eliminated or at least reduced to an acceptable level.

This fire had entirely too much fuel in its path from its beginning until its arrival in our community. The fire fronts were in excess of 200 feet in height with temperatures in excess of 2000 degrees. I sincerely believe it is unfair for any community to be subjected to these kinds of unnecessary exposures and risks, especially when they could have been eliminated. Somewhere, at some date in time, some government body decided the U.S. Forest Service would be the stewards over our forests. For a lot of reasons, some I am sure are totally out of their control, they kind of dropped the ball. I have been in forests all across the state of Arizona and I have yet to find one where the condition places it in the safe zones. I am told there are some, I have just not been able to visit them.

I would like to give this group a description of the events which occurred after the fire was started and discovered. On June 20, 2002, very early in the morning, I believe it was about 8:30, I was notified there was a fire southeast of Overgaard-Heber. The Rodeo fire had been burning for about 2 days. At this point we were all a little jumpy. I made contact with a local resident, Mr. Pat McLeod at our local air park. We flew down to the location of the fire near Chediski on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. We were under some flight restrictions and we were unable to get any closer than about 10,000 feet to the fire. These conditions made viewing a little difficult, which required us to stay above the 10,000 foot levels, however, we got what I felt was a fairly good look at the fire and the area it had consumed to this point.

I saw a helicopter with a drop bucket. I assumed he was working to control the fire. It appeared it was working what I thought to be the leading edge of the fire, the uphill side. We estimated the fire had consumed approximately 150 to 200 acres. I commented to Mr. McLeod, I felt as though this fire could be no real big threat to us in our area. Mr. McLeod agreed and we returned to the air park located in Overgaard. At this point in time, our primary concern of course was the Rodeo fire, which our neighbors in the communities to the east of us were experiencing.

We had three of our units assigned to this fire, to a team in Clay Springs and Pinedale, our closest neighbors to the east. They were recalled home a little later in the day as conditions in our community appeared to worsen. Approximately 1.5 hours after returning to my office, I received a telephone call from the Forest Service dispatch center. They informed me that the Chediski fire had increased to over 2000 acres. I realized we were in some serious danger. I notified the county sheriff's office and informed them that we were setting up a command center in our fire station. I expressed my desire to prepare for evacuation of the community, as these messages were going out over the air for Show Low, Pine Top and Lakeside. We established our command center in the fire station. The sheriff's department joined us. Just after noon, the sheriff's officers, with assistance from our personnel, made a street-by-street, house-by-house notification of all to be prepared to evacuate within 1 hour after notification. This, as well as the actual evacuation, was accomplished by our using vehicle public address systems and door-to-door notification. There is no other means in our community.

We began to contact suppliers and request special supplies and equipment such as tools, bottled water, Gatorade, Class A foam and food. At around half past two, some support services began to arrive. We had earlier called the State Land Department and told them of our situation. They in turn had told us that they were watching the fire and that they did think that we were probably in some trouble. Several structure teams and crews began to arrive, as did a structural protection box. Just before 4 p.m., I made the decision to evacuate the residents of the community. My decision was based on the reports I received regarding the fire behavior. Heavy smoke and tremendous amounts of ash had begun to enter the community. The vast majority of the residents offered no resistance to the request to evacuate. Conditions within the community were rapidly changing. Community members could see we were most likely in the past of the approaching fire. By early afternoon, television stations had discovered the second fire, the Chediski fire, and began reporting its rapid encroachment on the communities of Heber-Overgaard and Forest Lakes. I believe that had some effect on the residents of our community. I believe it assisted us in our evacuation efforts.

Manpower, equipment and supplies continued to arrive. The next couple of days were spent triaging properties throughout the communities' neighborhoods and homes. The triage was being performed by fire crews which had current red cards and approved equipment.

There were literally dozens and dozens of pieces of equipment staged in and around the Heber-Overgaard fire station. There was also many operators. They were very upset we would not give them permission to enter the forest. We learned, as many of these folks checked in, they could not produce any documentation of their equipment passing inspection or their having any personal red cards. The absence of either of these documents will disqualify them from working in wildland fires.

In the first 3 days of the incident, we did not have the expertise nor the capability to inspect their equipment. The equipment consisted of bulldozers, log skidders, backhoes, water trucks and a large variety of fire apparatus as well as support vehicles.

The purpose of these inspections and the red card is, of course, to not only qualify the equipment and the individual, but also to let us know with what and whom we are dealing with. Our posture on this subject stirred a lot of discontent and anger with many of these individuals. I stood firm on my decision to exclude these pieces of equipment and individuals for safety reasons. We relaxed our policy only to those we knew to be qualified. My feeling on this decision was to err on the side of caution, especially when human life is in the equation.

We found another problem on Thursday. We had well over 150 people to feed in our fire station. We made contact with the Salvation Army camp within our community and we asked them if they would remain on the site and assist with food and food preparation. That proved to be a very vital decision to our entire operation.

By mid-morning Saturday, we were dealing with well over 500 people. Although many of these people were unable to work, they still had to be fed. We were receiving a tremendous amount of sup-

plies, some of which we ordered and some we still do not have any clue where they came from or why they were sent. We had seven apparatus bays in our station, four of which were used for feeding the crews. The remaining three bays as well as numerous rooms throughout the station were used to store a wide variety of supplies. We are still dealing with a great deal of these items.

Saturday afternoon around 5 p.m., the fire storm hit at least seven neighborhoods in the Overgaard area. Most of our resources were directed to these neighborhoods and at the end of the night we suffered over 230 structures lost to the fast-paced fire.

As I visited with many of the front line firefighters, many of which were veterans of literally hundreds and hundreds of fires, the comments were pretty much the same, "I have never witnessed anything like this in my entire career." I have to echo that statement. At midnight I met with the local Forest Service group. We mapped out a plan to cut a fire line through the very volatile section of our community. It was all our fear this would be the next target of the fire. The fire seemed to take a breather during the early morning Sunday hours. This, of course, gave us the opportunity to complete that fire line and it worked. We were successful in diverting the fire within this particular section. I am convinced we were divinely favored. If the fire had come through that section, I am sure we would not have had any success in stopping it. We would have lost several hundred additional structures, including our fire station. In fact, we cut over 30 mature Ponderosa pines adjacent to the fire station as a prevention and protection measure.

Sunday morning, we found ourselves with the responsibility to feed over 800 hungry people three times a day. We were now using forcible entry into some of the businesses in our community to obtain necessary essentials to keep this operation up and running. We were confiscating food, auto parts, tools and equipment. I would like to add at this point, there was no one in our operation that had ever worked in an incident of this magnitude. Most of them being volunteers that had never served on any kind of an incident command system. We were all on virgin turf. However, we were pulling it off and doing a pretty good job.

The reason I say that is because late Sunday morning, a Type II team arrived from Alaska. Up to this point, we local Arizona firefighters had been working on our own. There were a dozen or so that came to our command center. The team leader was a fellow named Kato Howard—I think that is correct, but I am not sure, I am not real clear on his name. He and his staff looked our operation over, he said he wanted to leave everything as it was. He said he was impressed with our operation and our command structure. I remained as the incident commander and Kato would stop in for briefings in the morning and a couple of times throughout the day. He was working to a great degree to the west of us in the Forest Lakes area. Some of his people met with our staff. They said they could be of great assistance to our efforts and they wanted to support our system. The following is not a criticism but merely a report of what took place.

A fellow from this group said that they would take over the food. He convinced us that he was better equipped to handle the job than our folks were. We welcomed the assistance. The assistance

he offered was coming from Cibecue, approximately 70 miles away from our location. The food was late, cold and certainly of lesser quality than that that our shift crews had prepared and served. Several times when meals were unexplainably late, our crews prepared meals themselves. Many of the fire crews were vocally displeased with our newfound assistance. On occasion, the food they supplied us with was thrown away due to the poor quality, cold or late.

A lady met with our financial chief and took several days' sign-in sheets. These sheets were lost in the system for several days. That caused a great deal of distress in our staff. We had hammered them from the onset of this incident of the importance of accurate recordkeeping.

An inspection team was now inspecting some of the equipment, which had been standing idle for up to 4 days. The problem we found with this process was too little too late. Seems the vast numbers of equipment and only one or two inspectors hampered the process, making it very slow. Tempers had a tendency to blow up very frequently.

If the infractions that kept a piece of equipment out of service were minor such as fire extinguishers or something of that nature, our personnel made those things available to those crews.

On Sunday, we lost one structure. Now that is pretty bad in Heber-Overgaard, but compared to what we lost the previous day, we felt really blessed. Fire crews spent the day Sunday battling spot fires over a wide area, which included over a dozen neighborhoods. Hot shot crews were deployed throughout the forest. They were desperately trying to build fire lines by hand in an effort to control the fire.

There were dozens of dozers building fire lines in attempts to stop the fire's rapid spread. Some of their efforts paid off, but much too often, there was too much fire to stop.

Monday arrived with its own set of problems. The fire was making an assault on another section of our community, west of its previous attack.

We deployed most of our structure crews, hot shot crews and slurry attack bombers. When the fire made its assault, it came through at least five fronts. Each of these fronts came via small canyons or draws, all of which contained some very expensive homes. At the end of the siege, we lost over 30 additional structures. This brought our grand total of 268 structures. That was the end of our structure loss, however we did not realize that for about a week after that was over, because we kept expecting the fire to come back.

On Monday evening about 9:00, I received a visit from a gentleman by the name of Kim Martin. Mr. Martin was a Type I team leader. He had several people on his staff with him. He informed me he was taking command of the fire. He was very courteous and polite, he asked if I would work with him in a unified command structure. After our experience with the Type II team, I was a little skeptical. He said he would assume command the following evening, and that was on Tuesday, at 6 p.m.

He moved the entire command and operation center to a large local Salvation Army camp. A visit to the new command center re-

moved any skepticism on my part. A very large transformation was taking place, and I believe it was the best thing for us. The problem fire was a continual threat to our community for well over a week after the Type I team arrived.

I have been in the fire service since 1968 and I have faced some pretty traumatic and volatile situations. I have, however, never been in a situation so intense, and pardon the expression, stressful, in my entire career. I remember on several occasions in the early morning hours, 2 or 3 a.m., just sitting down and thinking "will this ever go away." What can be done to prevent some other poor, unsuspecting slob and his community from experiencing what we lived with for over 2 weeks?

First and foremost, clean up the forest. We have gone from an acceptable condition to the far extreme. As I earlier stated, the Forest Service is the organization selected to be the stewards over our forest lands. I am not 100 percent convinced that they do all they should and could to prevent the kind of thing that we have recently experienced. I almost believe their excuse of the blockage by special interest groups has become more of an excuse than a legitimate reason. It seems that is a pretty standard answer by all levels of Forest Service employees without even a hint of hesitation or research.

I believe a very aggressive attempt, with some backing from lawmakers, could go a long way toward eliminating this problem. It is not over. The same thing could and probably under current conditions will happen again very soon. After what our community has experienced and the destruction we are dealing with, I am convinced if we do not repair our broken forest system, it is a crime and someone or something should have to be punished for it. It is an allegations problem, it is broken and it does need to be fixed. And I am not exactly sure what it is going to take for that to happen. I do not know that it is my job to figure that out. I think there are some powers above me that need to take care of that. I honestly believe that the beginning of the end came when the logging and the cattle industry were eliminated from the equation of our recipe for a healthy forest. Cattle grazing can be and, from what I know, is easily controlled. The fast burning grass-like fuels can be controlled by a well-managed grazing system.

The lumber industry has at least proven to me that they are pretty darned good as forest managers. The lumber forests that they currently control do not look anything like what we are surrounded by. The forests are healthy and beautiful, the trees are properly spaced and harvested in acceptable intervals. They are not overly stressed, competing for the little amounts of moisture that they receive or the insect infestation. These forests produce a usable product and serve all the other purposes as well, and in most cases look and feel better than those that we have around us. How is it private industry can and does make this work and we just cannot seem to get the hang of it?

I am not a logger, nor am I a cattleman and I do not have any special ties with anyone or any organization in this industry. However, I do know things were not in the state that we are currently experiencing when these industries were a part of the solution. I

am aware of most of what has brought us to this point. In simple terms, it is called the tail wagging the dog.

The result of this catastrophic incident has not only left some ugly visual scars on our community and surrounding area; it has a long-lasting financial depression on it as well. A dollar loss of over \$40 million has been estimated for the Heber-Overgaard area alone. That estimate is structural damage only. The forest has its own price tag. Our fire department budget will be affected for many years as a result of this catastrophic fire.

This small unincorporated community was not at fault for this incident. However, we will be required in one way or another to pick up the tab for something or someone else's shortcomings.

I am not implying the government picks up any additional costs. I am aware these fires have cost more millions than I can count. That is specifically why I believe we must practice proactivity instead of reactivity.

During the initial stages of the Chediski fire, as it seemed to be growing in astronomical leaps, I remember wondering several whys:

A. Why did we not take the fire serious before it got totally out of control? They were dealing with the Rodeo fire—same fuel, same terrain, same weather conditions and same direction.

B. Why did those in charge believe the Chediski fire would be slower, smaller or less devastating than the Rodeo fire?

C. Why must a fire reach a certain size or meet certain criteria before the big guys take it serious and take steps to extinguish it?

[Applause.]

Mr. EPPS. Why were we left to fend for ourselves for so long before we got that much-needed assistance? Had our side of the fire been taken as serious as the Rodeo fire, our losses could have been kept at a minimum. It has become very clear to me, fires of the nature we experienced, with the volume of fuel present in our forests, especially when the conditions are as dry as they currently are, should be extinguished at all costs as soon as possible, regardless of their location, be it public lands, private lands or reservation.

[Applause.]

Mr. EPPS. When a fire or similar incident of this size is in progress, it generates a lot of problems for local agencies. I am referring mostly to financial problems, some of which are long-term. We have come to refer to this as the "Second Disaster."

We realized very early into this operation that we needed to maintain some records on just about everything and anyone that we dealt with. We appointed a finance officer to attempt to track our financial trail. This individual is our full time administrative assistant. She is totally familiar with our department and our day-to-day activities and practices. Unfortunately, we, like most, were not familiar with how incidents on this level are run. We did not know all of the procedures required in retrieving payment from all the different government agencies. I am relatively sure most organizations in our situation would have had similar difficulties. I am positive, based on what we have experienced with the financial side of this incident, we will be dealing with some of this for several years to come.

We were told when we were dealing with this fire that we should have done this and we should have done that. Our response to them was next time we are going to have a fire like this, please contact us 2 weeks ahead of time with a brochure telling us what we are supposed to do.

[Laughter and applause.]

Mr. EPPS. When an incident begins to look as though it has a chance to escalate into a major event, especially when a number of different agencies will be involved, I make the following request and recommendation. Dispatch a financial consultant familiar with all the different agencies' policies. We are currently searching for agencies which will pay some of the expenses we incurred as a result of this fire. The following is a list of categories of agencies which we are currently dealing with:

Arizona State Land Department
 Federal Emergency Management Agency
 Bureau of Indian Affairs
 Arizona Department of Emergency Management
 Navajo County Emergency Services
 United States Forest Service, Sitgreaves and Tonto
 Fort Apache Indian Reservation
 Arizona State Governor's Office
 And Bureau of Land Management.

We are a small department with 10 full time employees and 25 volunteers. This is out of our realm of expertise.

Each of these agencies had their own set of rules and there is a wide variation from one to another. It becomes one more area where organizations such as ours are loaded down with rules and regulations we are unfamiliar with. They bog us down with their red tape and their bureaucracy. We spend hours, days, weeks and months attempting to identify the proper agency for the right payment.

Another situation which reared its ugly little head was wage disparity—two individuals working side by side, doing the same job, drawing different scales—\$14.00 an hour as opposed to \$26.00 an hour. The only difference we have been able to find is the agency they are working through. Arizona State Land is \$14.00 an hour and the Federal Government is \$26.00 an hour.

The best we can figure, all the money comes from FEMA, so why the disparity? This factor has created some very serious problems in our agency. I am of the believe all would have been fine with the wages established in contracts by the Arizona State Land Department of \$14.00 an hour if FEMA had not come and paid twice that amount. Seems they should do whatever is necessary to make sure to stay on the same pace with the locals.

I certainly do not profess to be any kind of an expert on this and have all the answers and know what the Forest Service is supposed to do. We obviously do have a serious shortcoming in our forest management skills. The problems should be determined and a solution should be conceived. Anything less will keep things as they are and as far as I am concerned, that is totally unacceptable.

[Applause.]

Mr. EPPS. I submit this testimony to you, gentlemen, and just want to express again my thanks to you for allowing me to come

here. I have no bad feelings toward anyone or any organization, I just think it is like Kevin Hooney said when he was taken away as the trainer for Mike Tyson, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." This is broke and it does need to be fixed.

I want to say this too, for the first four or 5 days of this fire, if it had not been for Mr. Behrens and his organization, there would be no Heber-Overgaard here today. Those things would not have happened, we would not have been able to stop this fire. I do not know where they came up with these things. I know that they have got a magic wand someplace and they pulled this stuff out of a hat because everybody was sent over to the east of us and there was a big fire going on there, yet they found some people to send to us and they send some good people over there. That is the only reason that Heber-Overgaard is there today.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Mr. HAYWORTH. Chief, thank you.

[Applause.]

[The prepared statement of Mr. Epps follows:]

Statement of Mell Epps, Chief, Herber-Overgaard Fire Department

Let me begin by stating; I have no ill feelings or animosity toward any individual or groups as a result of these tragic fires. I believe I came away from this incident with a far better idea of what we as individuals and organizations can do to make these types of situations a lesser threat and possibly eliminate much of their destruction. I can assure all of you this fire could have been prevented. I'm not interested in discussing or commenting a great degree on how the fires (Rodeo-Chediski) got started. I'm convinced they would have gotten started regardless: careless smoking, unattended campfires, motorized vehicles or even lighting strikes.

It's clear, there were two factors, which made this fire, the largest in Arizona history, (over 450,000 acres), the incident it was: 1.) The very dry conditions of the forest. We are in a drought, which causes conditions to be far more critical than normal. We have known for some time of these extremely hazardous and dry conditions, all of us, both local and national agencies. These severe dry conditions made ignition and combustion inevitable 2.) Over the past several decades cleaning the combustible debris out of the forest has become the exception instead of the rule. Our local forest is a prime example. We had an average of 25 tons of fuel per acre, which should for the safety of communities' such as ours and the health of the forest itself, be eliminated or at least reduced to an acceptable level.

This fire had entirely too much fuel in its path from its beginning until its arrival in our community. The fire fronts were in excess of two hundred (200) feet in height with temperatures in excess of two thousand (2000) degrees. I sincerely believe it's unfair for any community to be subjected to these kinds of unnecessary exposures and risks. Especially when they could have been eliminated. Somewhere at some date in time, some government body decided the US Forest Service would be the stewards for our forests. For a lot of reasons, some I'm sure are totally out of their control, they've kind of dropped the ball. I've been in forests all across the state of Arizona. I've yet to find one where the condition places it in the safe zones. I'm told there are some, I've just not viewed them.

I would like to give this group a description of the events, which occurred after the fire was started and discovered. On June 20, 2002 very early in the morning (I believe about 8:30 am) I was notified a fire was Southwest of Heber-Overgaard. The Rodeo fire had been burning for two days at this point so we were all a little jumpy. I made contact with a local resident Mr. Pat Mcleod at our local Air Park. We flew to the fire location near Chediski, on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. We were under some flight restrictions; these conditions made viewing the fire difficult, which required us to stay above the ten thousand-foot levels. However, we got what I felt was a fairly good look at the fire and the area it had to this point consumed.

I saw a helicopter with a drop bucket. I assumed he was working to control the fire. It appeared he was working what I thought to be the leading edge of the fire (up-hill side). We estimated the fire had consumed approximately one hundred fifty to

two hundred (150–200) acres. I commented to Mr. Mcleod, I felt as though this fire should not be a big threat to our area. Mr. Mcleod agreed and we returned to the Air Port located at the Air Park in Overgaard. At this point in time our primary concern was the Rodeo Fire which our neighbors in the communities east of us were experiencing.

We had three (3) of our units assigned to the fire team in Clay Springs and Pinedale, our closest neighbors on the east. They were recalled home a little later in the day, as conditions in our community appeared to worsen. Approximately one and one half-hour after I returned to my office, I received a telephone call from the Forest Service dispatch center. They informed me the Chediski Fire had increased to over two thousand (2000) acres. I realized we were in serious danger. I notified the County Sheriffs Office and informed them we were setting up a command center in our fire station. I expressed my desire to prepare for evacuation of the community, which was their responsibility. I requested all our off duty folks both career and volunteer be summoned to the Fire Station for assignment. I notified the State Land Department we were in harms way and would need assistance. Once my staff was in place we made some very quick and complex assignments. We established our command center in the Fire Station. The Sheriffs Department joined us. Just after noon the Sheriffs Officers with assistance from our personnel made a street by street, house by house notification to all “to be prepared to evacuate within one hour after notification. This as well as the actual evacuation was accomplished by our using vehicle public address systems and door to door notification. There is no other means within our community.

We began to contact suppliers and request special supplies and equipment such as; tools, bottled water, Gatorade, Class “A” Foam and food. At around half past two (2:30) p.m. some support services began to arrive. Several structural protection crews arrived, as did a structural protection boss. Just before four (4:00) p.m. I made the decision to evacuate the residents of the community. My decision was based on reports I received regarding the fire behavior. Heavy smoke and tremendous amounts of ash began to enter the community. The vast majority of residents offered no resistance to the request to evacuate. Conditions within the community were rapidly changing. Community members could see we were most likely in the path of the approaching fire. By early afternoon television stations had discovered the second fire (Chediski) and began reporting its rapid encroachment on the communities of Heber–Overgaard and Forest Lakes. I believe that had some effect on residents in our communities. I believe it assisted us in our evacuation efforts.

Manpower, equipment and supplies continued to arrive. The next couple of days were spent triaging properties throughout our communities’ neighborhoods. The triage was being performed by fire crews, which had current red cards and approved equipment (apparatus).

There were literally dozens and dozens of pieces of equipment staged in and around the Heber–Overgaard Fire Station. There were also as many operators. They were very upset we would not give them permission to enter the forest. We learned, as many of these folks checked in, they could not produce any documentation of their equipment passing inspection or their having personal Red Cards. The absence of either of these documents will disqualify them from working a Wild Land Fire.

In the first three days of the incident we did not have the expertise or the capability to inspect their equipment. The equipment consisted of bulldozers, log skidders, backhoes, water trucks, and a large variety of fire apparatus as well as support vehicles.

The purpose of these inspections and the red card is of course to not only qualify the equipment and the individual but also let us know what and whom we are dealing with. Our posture on this subject stirred a lot of discontent and anger with many of these individuals. I stood firm on the decision to exclude these pieces of equipment and individuals for safety reasons. We relaxed our policy only to those we knew to be qualified. My feeling on this decision was to “error on the side of caution” especially when human life is in the equation.

We found another problem on Thursday. We had well over one hundred fifty people to feed. We made contact with the Salvation Army camp within our community. We asked them if they would remain on their site and assist with food and food preparation. That proved to be a very vital decision to our entire operation.

By mid morning Saturday we were dealing with well over five hundred (500) people. Although many of these individuals were unable to work, they still had to be fed. We were receiving a tremendous amount of supplies. Some of which we ordered and some we still don’t have a clue where it came from or why they sent it. We have seven (7) apparatus bays in our station, four (4) of which were used for feeding the crews. The remaining three (3) bays as well as numerous rooms throughout the

station were used to store a wide variety of supplies. We are still dealing with a great deal of those items.

Saturday afternoon around five (5) p.m. the fire storm hit at least seven (7) neighborhoods in the Overgaard area. Most of our resources were directed to those neighborhoods and at the end of the night we suffered over two hundred thirty (230) structures lost to the fast paced fire.

As I visited with many of the front line firefighters many of which were veterans of literally hundreds and hundreds of fires, the comments were pretty much the same; "I've never witnessed anything like this in my entire career". I have to echo that statement. At midnight I met with the local Forest Service group. We mapped out a plan to cut a fire line through a very volatile section in our community. It was all our fear this would be the next target of the fire. The fire seemed to take a breather during the very early Sunday morning hours. This of course gave us the opportunity to complete the planned fire line, It worked. We were successful in diverting the fire within this particular section. I'm convinced we were divinely favored. If the fire had come through that section, I'm sure we would not have been successful in stopping it. We would have lost several hundred additional structures including our Fire Station. In fact we cut over thirty Ponderosas Pine trees adjacent to our Fire Station, as a fire prevention and protection measure.

Sunday morning we found ourselves with the responsibility to feed over eight hundred- (800) hungry people three (3) times a day. We were now using forcible entry into many of the businesses in our community to obtain the necessary essentials to keep this operation up and running. We were confiscating food, auto parts, tools, and equipment. I would like to add at this point there was no one in our operation that ever worked in an incident of this magnitude. We were all on virgin turf. Somehow we were pulling it off and not doing a half-bad job.

The reason I say that is because late Sunday morning a type II team arrived from Alaska. Up to this point we (local Arizona fire fighters) had been working on our own. There was a dozen or so that came to our command center. The team leader was a fellow named Kato Howard (I believe that's correct). He and his staff looked our operation over. He said he wanted to leave everything as it was. He said he was impressed with our operation and our command structure. I remained as the incident commander and Kato would stop in for briefings in the morning and a couple of times throughout the day. He was working to a great degree to the west of us, in the Forest Lakes area. Some of his people met with our staff. They said they could be of great assistance to our efforts, and they wanted to support our system. The following is not a criticism but merely a report of what took place:

- 1.) A fellow from this group said he would take over the food. He convinced us he was better equipped to handle the job than our folks were. We welcomed the assistance. The assistance he offered was coming from Cibique. Approximately seventy (70) miles away. The food was late, cold and certainly of lesser quality than that our shift crews prepared and served. Several times when meals were unexplainably late our crew prepared meals. Many of the fire crews were vocally displeased with our newfound assistance. On occasion the food they supplied was thrown away due to the poor quality and/or because it was late and cold.
- 2.) A lady met with our financial chief and took several days sign in sheets. These sheets were lost in the system for several days. That caused a great deal of distress to our staff. We had hammered them from the onset of this incident of the importance of accurate record keeping.
- 3.) An inspection team was now inspecting some of the equipment, which had been standing idle for up to four (4) days. The problem we found with this process was too little too late. Seems the vast numbers of equipment and only one or two inspectors hampered this process making it slow. Tempers had a tendency to blow up very frequently.

If the infractions that kept a piece of equipment out of service was minor i.e. "no fire extinguisher" our personnel made extinguishers available.

On Sunday we lost one structure, which is bad enough, but compared to the previous day we felt really blessed. Fire crews spent all day Sunday battling spot fires over a very wide area. Which included over a dozen neighborhoods. Hot Shot Crews were deployed throughout the forest. They were desperately trying to build fire lines by hand in an effort to control the fire.

There were dozens of bulldozers building fire lines in attempts to stop the fires rapid spread. Some of their efforts paid off but much too often, there was just too much fire to stop.

Monday arrived with it's own set of problems. The fire was making an assault on another section of our community, west of its previous attack.

We deployed most of our structure crews, hot shot crews and slurry attack (air tankers) bombers. When the fire made its assault, it came on at least five (5) fronts. Each of these fronts came via small canyons and draws. All of which contained very expensive homes. At the end of the siege we lost over thirty (30) additional structures. This brought our grand total of loss to two hundred sixty eight (268) structures. That was the end of our structure loss, however, we did not realize our major losses were over. That knowledge did not come for over a week.

On Monday evening at about nine (9) p.m. I received a visit from a gentleman by the name of Kim Martin. Mr. Martin is a type I team leader. He had several people of his staff with him. He informed me he was taking command of the fire. He was very courteous and polite. He asked if I would work with him in a unified command structure. After our experience with the type II team, I was a little skeptical. He said he would assume command the following evening (Tuesday) at six (6) p.m.

He moved the entire command and operation center to a large local Salvation Army Camp. A visit to the new command center removed any skepticism on my part. It became very clear to me this team came to resolve the problem at any cost. A very large transformation was taking place, and I believe it was the best thing for us. The problem fire was a continual threat to our community for well over a week after the type I team arrived.

I have been in the fire service since 1968. I faced some very traumatic and volatile situations. I have however, never been in a situation so intense. (Pardon the use of a very over used term) and stressful in my career. I remember on several occasions in the early morning hours (2 or 3 am) just sitting down and thinking: "will this ever go away? What can be done to prevent some other poor unsuspecting slob and his community from experiencing what we lived with for over two weeks?"

- 1.) First and foremost, clean up the forest. We've gone from an acceptable condition to the far extreme. As I earlier stated, the US Forest Service is the organization selected to be the stewards over our forestlands. I'm not 100% convinced they do all they should and could to prevent the kind of thing we've recently experienced. I almost believe their excuse of the blockage by "special interest groups" has become more an excuse than a legitimate reason. Seems that's a pretty standard answer by all levels of Forest Service employees without even a hint of hesitation or research.

I believe a very aggressive attempt with some backing from lawmakers could go a long way toward eliminating the problem. It's not over. The same thing could and probably under our current conditions, will happen again very soon. After what our community has experienced and the destruction we are dealing with, I'm convinced if we do not repair our broken forest system, it's a crime and someone or something should be punished. It is broken so we need to fix it. I'm not exactly clear on what its going to take or how we need to go about correcting it. I honestly believe the beginning of the end came about when the logging and the cattle industry were eliminated from the equation of our recipe for a healthy forest. Cattle grazing can be and from what I know is easily controlled. The fast burning grass like fuels can be controlled by well managed grazing programs.

The lumber industry has at least proven to me, they are pretty darn good forest managers. The lumber forests they currently control do not look anything like what we are surrounded by. Those forests are healthy and beautiful. The trees are properly spaced and harvested at acceptable intervals. They are not overly stressed competing for the little amounts of moisture they receive or insect infestation. Those forests produce a useable product and serve all the other purposes as well, and in most cases look and feel better than those managed by the Forest Service. How is it private industry can and does make this work and we just can't seem to get the hang of it?

I'm not a logger or a cattleman nor do I have any special ties to anyone in those industries. However, I do know things were not in the state we are currently experiencing when these industries were a part of the solution. I am aware of most of what has brought us to this point. In simple terms it's called the "tail wagging the dog".

The result of this catastrophic incident has not only left some ugly visual scars on our community and surrounding area. It has a long lasting financial depression on it as well. A dollar loss of over forty million (\$40,000,000.00) dollars has been estimated for the Heber-Overgaard area alone. That estimate is structural damage only. The surrounding forest has it's own problems. Our Fire Department budget will be affected for an undetermined amount of time.

This small-unincorporated community was not at fault for this incident, however; they will be required in one way or another to pick up the tab for something or someone else's shortcomings.

I'm not implying the government picks up any additional costs. I'm aware these fires have cost more millions than I care to think about. That is specifically why I believe we must be proactive instead of reactive.

- 1.) During the initial stages of the Chediski Fire, as it seemed to be growing in astronomical leaps, I remember wondering several whys:
 - A. Why did they not take the fire serious before it got totally out of control? They were dealing with the Rodeo Fire. Same fuel, same terrain, same weather conditions, and same direction.
 - B. Why did those in charge believe the Chediski Fire would be slower, smaller or less devastating than the Rodeo Fire?
 - C. Why must a fire reach a certain size or meet certain criteria before the big guys take it serious and take steps to extinguish it?
 - D. Why were we left to fend for ourselves for so long before we got that much-needed assistance. Had our side of the fire been taken as serious as the Rodeo Fire, our losses could have been as small as those experienced by our neighbors to the east. It's become very clear to me fires of the nature we experienced, with the volume of fuel present in our forest, especially when conditions are as dry as they currently are should be extinguished at all costs as soon as possible. Regardless of their location be it: public lands, private lands or reservation.

- 2.) When a fire or similar incident of this size is in progress, it generates a lot of problems for local agencies. I'm referring to mostly financial problems. Some of which is long term. We have come to refer to this as the "Second Disaster".

We realized very early (day one) we would need to maintain a record of just about everything and everybody we dealt with. We appointed a finance officer to attempt to track our financial trail. This individual is our full time administrative assistant. She is totally familiar with our department or our day to day practices. Unfortunately we like most was not familiar with how incidents on this level are run. We did not know all the procedures required in retrieving payment from all the different government agencies. I'm relatively sure most organization in our situation would have similar difficulties. I'm positive, based on what we've experienced, with the financial side of this incident, we will be dealing with some of this for several years to come.

When an incident begins to look as though it has a chance to escalate into a major event; especially when a number of different agencies will be involved, I make the following request and recommendation. Dispatch a financial consultant familiar with all the different agency policies. We are currently searching for agencies, which will pay some of the expenses we incurred as a result of the fire. The following is a list of agencies we have and are currently dealing with:

1. Arizona State Land Department
2. Federal Emergency Management Agency
3. Bureau of Indian Affairs
4. Arizona Department of Emergency Management
5. Navajo County Emergency Services
6. U.S. Forest Service (Apache Sitgreaves) (Tonto)
7. Fort Apache Indian Reservation
8. Arizona State Governors Office
9. Bureau of Land Management

Each of these Agencies has their own set of rules and there is a wide variation from one to another. It becomes one more area where organizations such as ours are loaded with rules and regulations were unfamiliar with. They bog us down with the red tape of their bureaucracy. As we spend hours, days, weeks and months attempting to identify the proper agency for the right payment.

10. Another situation, which reared its ugly little head, was "Wage Disparity". Two individuals working side by side doing the same job, drawing different wage scales. \$14.00 per hour opposed to \$26.00 per hour. The only difference we've been able to find is; the agency they are working through. Arizona State Land Department \$14.00 per hour Federal Government (FEMA) \$26.00.

The best we can figure, all the money comes from FEMA so why the disparity? This factor has created some very serious problems for our agency. I'm of the belief, all would have been fine with the wages established in contracts by the Arizona State Land Department (\$14.00 per hour) if FEMA had not come and paid over twice that. Seems they should do whatever is necessary to make sure there on the same pace with locals.

I certainly don't profess to have all the answers to correct our current forest management problems. We obviously do have a serious shortcoming in our forest management skills. The problem should be determined and a solution should be conceived. Anything less will keep things as they are and to me that's unacceptable.

It's also unacceptable to me for legislation dealing with our forest in the west be rubber stamped by a legislator in the east. Especially if he/she has never walked or even seen what he's/she's voting for.

I submit this testimony to you and will try to answer your questions and/or assist in a reasonable solution to a problem I believe can destroy our forest system, as we know it.

Mr. HAYWORTH. We thank you for all the testimony from all three of you gentlemen. Chief Epps, very compelling testimony about the nature of what you confronted. As we look through your eight pages of testimony, toward the end, you tell us you are dealing with nine different agencies, you extol the virtues of our friends from the State Land Department and we duly note that in the record.

I guess the simplest way to say it, maybe it is easier said than done. We need to streamline those with whom you deal.

Mr. EPPS. Yeah. What is stopping us, let us do it.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Yeah, we have got to get that done.

You talk about a financial consultant and you have had a situation where you were trying to keep very careful records of all that went on so you could know which way you are headed. At what point should a financial assistance team arrive during the course of one of these crises or should they be on staff ahead of time? What should happen with the whole notion of financial consultants keeping an eye on the money?

Mr. EPPS. It seems to me—there was a fire going on 2 days before ours ever started and it seems to me those people should have been onsite long before they were. It was Sunday before anybody showed up. Our fire hit on Saturday—excuse me, our fire was discovered on Thursday. Our fire was never taken serious until it got completely out of control. Once it was out of control, it was out of control. We certainly were not going to control it. But I think those people should have been here, they should have realized—I mean we are not dealing with novices here, these people have been through all this before. They know what is going on a lot more so than we do. We are just a bunch of poor dumb hicks that only get to come to town about every 30 days. So we do not know much. But we do know that it is broke and it is not going to fix itself, we are going to have to fix it.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Vice Chairman Shumway, you talked about CPR, community partnership—county partnership—we talked about working to make this happen. When you look at your goals for the county partnership restoration program, in reducing fire risk near communities, do you have an estimate of the number of acres that could be treated in Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado, as you all work together in terms of taking a look at the county partnership program? What kind of area are we talking about here?

Mr. SHUMWAY. We initiated the CPR program, the county partnership program, to address all of the national forests across the west. We initially got together with the Apache Sitgreaves, the Lincoln in New Mexico and the Gemot in Colorado because we felt we had some similar interests. We did this a number of years ago. This is not something that we have done since the fire. We have been to Washington in the last year five times prior to the Chediski

fire. We worked with you, Mr. Chairman, we appreciate your input, Mr. Kyl of the Senate side, we worked with the Senators in New Mexico and Colorado. We recognize that all of the forests in the western United States need attention. We initiated in these three states a pilot program to gain support from the Department of Agriculture, following the recommendation of the Congressional delegation, the western Governors, knowing that we need to do something and we need to do it now.

The answer is all of the forests need attention. Yes, there are some areas where we have done treatment and we know the value of treatment. We do not have to go back and reinvent the wheel, we know how to do it. We just need the permission to move forward.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Vice Chairman.

And again, David, I want to note your presence, thank you for your testimony. You have received the highest praise you can receive right here from Chief Epps. So we thank you for the efforts you have made and the equipment you have had and the challenges that you confront.

I would turn the questions over to my colleague from the First District now.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Shumway, you have collected a number of signatures, I hear lately, on a petition. How many have you got so far?

Mr. SHUMWAY. We have in excess of 5000 petitions that we have delivered to the President through CEQ in Washington, to the Chief of the U.S. Forest, to the Secretary of Agriculture, to the Under Secretary, and to Senator Jon Kyl.

[Applause.]

Mr. FLAKE. That is commendable. I think that is why you have so many on board at this point. Thank you for that effort, that really helps us with our colleagues and others as we try to move forward.

Do you see any other way moving forward without a Federal disaster declaration? You have dealt with this process for a number of years now. Is there any way we can have a good resolution to this or moving forward without a disaster declaration which will short circuit or expedite NEPA and some of the other processes?

Mr. SHUMWAY. We have two efforts ongoing as we sit here today.

Mr. FLAKE. Speak about the CPR project first.

Mr. SHUMWAY. One is the CPR program. And the reason for the forest county partnership program, county government receives a large portion of their revenues from the Federal lands that exist within our county—national forest properties, BLM type properties. And we also receive from the State Land Department to our schools. But we receive these dollars through forest fees and payments in lieu of taxes because they are Federal lands. Recognizing not the right for counties to be involved with national forests, but the responsibility, we believe in implementing the CPR program that we are recognizing the responsibility of county governments across the west. And frankly, folks, I believe that we have not supported the U.S. Forest Service from a local community, from county, from state and from the Federal Government, maybe through Congress, western Governors. We should have been more proactive

a long time ago. And that is the reason we have implemented this county forest partnership program, to fulfill our local responsibility in support of the Forest Service. So that is where we are going.

Mr. FLAKE. OK. Mr. Epps, it seems that the equipment verification process and red card verification process were obstacles around the Heber-Overgaard area. How should that be done differently, if you were in charge of that completely?

Mr. EPPS. I would not want to be in charge of that completely. [Laughter.]

Mr. FLAKE. I did not ask you that.

Mr. EPPS. I think that—I am not sure how we could handle that with the exception that if we—most of this equipment is placed in an acceptable state before we ever see it. A lot of the people that showed up on our doorstep were people I did not know, I had no idea who they were, I did not have any idea where they came from or who sent them. And a lot of them were private people, they were not associated with any department or any district.

Mr. FLAKE. Is there any central point that collects who has red cards, who is certified, at this point? Should that be the county or should that be local fire departments?

Mr. EPPS. It would not be the county, it would probably be some—Dave, who would do that?

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Behrens, can you speak to that?

Mr. BEHRENS. The red card system, the National NWCG training qualification system adopted by Federal partners and state partners, county and rural fire departments. And in this state, the fire department has the ability to card and give training up to what we call a strike team leader.

Mr. FLAKE. Are those lists then provided—

Mr. BEHRENS. The fire department maintains its list of its own qualified people at that level. Once above that level, those cards are held by the state.

Mr. FLAKE. One follow up. You talked a lot in your testimony about dealing with the Type I and Type II management teams and there was a lot of frustration in that they do not understand local conditions and the area. How should that structure and that I guess organizational chart be done differently? Should a local individual have more input there or be in a position to actually question some calls? What would you recommend?

Mr. EPPS. Well, based on my experience, it would be hard to determine that. And let me explain that. I have only dealt with one Type I team and I have only dealt with one Type II team, and that is this fire that we just got through, the one we are discussing today. I saw some big shortcomings in the Type II team and I saw—I did not see anything that was lacking in the Type I team. When I went out and visited that camp, I realized that these guys were ready, they come to go to work, they come to do some things. They had a lot of jurisdiction, they had a lot of expertise. They came to us and they took over a situation that we were way under matched and they took this situation over and they handled it very well.

I have heard rumors, as you have, that some of the other teams were not quite as good as that, they did not do quite that good a job. I do not know about that, that is rumors and I cannot really

comment on rumors. I just know that my experience with these gentlemen and these people was very good.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you, Congressman Flake.

Just one other question before we dismiss the panel. David, you mentioned the cards are kept by the state. Now how do local communities get access to the knowledge of who has the cards? Is there a—

Mr. EPPS. Well, first and foremost, they will not send anybody that is not carded. They are not going to send me people that are not qualified to go out in the field. A lot of the people that we were dealing with have never been through this agency or been through our agency. They were people we were totally unfamiliar with. Some of our locals we are familiar with and we know what they can and cannot do and we are willing to give them some leeway. As my testimony indicated, we only relaxed our posture on that when we were familiar with the people we were dealing with. Some of those people we did not know. We had no idea about their equipment or anything else.

Mr. HAYWORTH. I just did not know if the state, David, had a list it sent out or access to a data base, to have a roster of people who checked out so that it could be available to local departments again when time is of the essence.

Mr. BEHRENS. We could give that, we do have a list. But most of the cooperating fire departments we are on a first name basis with and they recognize if they request help from the state, they are only going to get the best.

Mr. EPPS. That is right.

Mr. BEHRENS. And they will come carded.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Well, gentlemen, we appreciate your testimony. There will be more questions we will have that we will put in writing to you and we want to thank you for coming and being part of this today and we invite you to stay and hear the other gentlemen and their points of view. Thank you all very much.

[Applause.]

Mr. HAYWORTH. Again for the record, so the others will know, the questions we send to the witnesses for written response will be forthcoming and we will hold the hearing record open 10 days to receive those appropriate responses.

Panel three, we welcome Mr. Lon Porter, who is the owner of Precision Pine and Timber and Dr. Wally Covington of the School of Forestry from Northern Arizona University.

As we bring you up, we thank you and again appreciate the fact that you are part of this. Lon, welcome, we are glad to have you here. We know Wally is making his way up from the audience here and we appreciate him making the trip over from Flagstaff.

Lon, for all those times you have come to Washington, we wanted to bring Washington to you here, it is a little bit easier we hope right here in the backyard.

Again, we would like you, if possible, to try and limit your oral statements to 5 minutes. Your entire statements will appear in the record, but as you have seen this afternoon, given the gravity of the testimony and the format and the importance to those who joined

us here, we have not held strictly to those time limits. But they are strong suggestions.

With that, we welcome you both and Mr. Porter, please, your testimony, sir.

**STATEMENTS OF LON PORTER, OWNER, PRECISION PINE AND
TIMBER**

Mr. PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to be here, Mr. Flake, Mr. Hayworth, for the opportunity to testify in this Congressional hearing.

In the beginning, I have lived here in northern Arizona for over 50 years and have been associated with the lumber manufacturing business in the same region for 25 years. I have hiked, camped, hunted in the forests in northern Arizona for over 40 years. I have loved these forests, I have fought fires in these forests, I have helped manage these forests. Therefore, I hope I have something that I might add here that will be worthwhile.

My father, who was born in northeastern Arizona in 1909, worked in and owned lumber manufacturing facilities for over 50 of his 88 years. He told me that when he was a young man, you could pick up a rock and throw it in the forest—you know, close your eyes, throw it in the forest and almost would never hit a tree. Today, if you closed your eyes and threw a rock in our forests, it would probably ricochet off several small diameter trees before it hit the ground.

The Southwest Region of the U.S. Forest Service explains the reason for the present fire-hazard conditions of the Apache Sitgreaves and Tonto National Forests. And this came from their scoping document that we received. It says "As reduction in fire frequency over the last century, early Forest Service fire suppression policies and high levels of livestock grazing, combined with an unusual period of increased precipitation in the southwest between 1960 and 1988, has resulted in tree densities and are above historic levels of fuel loading throughout much of northern Arizona. Insects, disease and prolonged drought have combined to create extremely volatile fuels over large areas."

The fire danger is not new. It has been evolving over a long period of time and has existed for years. While tree densities, heavy fuel loads and competition of trees for groundwater were increasing, thinning and logging were decreasing due to frivolous lawsuits filed by pseudo-environmental groups against the Forest Service. The suspension of virtually all Forest Service timber sales—even salvage sales—led to the demise of the forest products industry in northern Arizona, which was dependent upon raw materials from public lands, including a pulp mill between Heber and Snowflake, which was really the only real outlet for small diameter roundwood. The allowable cut of timber, not including roundwood, on the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest, for example, in 1992, was approximately 89 million board feet. At present, the allowable cut is approximately five million board feet and that includes roundwood, firewood and possibly even Aunt Agatha's Christmas tree. While many are led by the pseudo-environmental movement to believe that to save a few trees is to save a forest, the wise by

now have learned, recently by sad experience, the paradox that to cut a few trees is to save a forest.

Until the capitulation of the Forest Service to the pseudo-environmental forces, the forests of northern Arizona were being managed by sustained yield, selective cut—virtually never clear-cut—process. Roundwood removal was feasible because of the nearby pulp mill. Prescribed burns were employed but were less extensive with the regular removal of roundwood and the completion of erosion control and brush disposal required by every timber sale. Huge strides had been made to amend damages from errant practices of the past. Optimal forest health conditions were a foreseeable goal of the Forest Service and the people and industries dependent upon our forests. However, impatient with the process and espousing the nature should do the job, the pseudo-environmental movement wreaked havoc with their endless appeals and lawsuits.

Nature, left to itself, will eventually reach a balance, but will the end result be desirable? How long will it take? Is the process worth it? The damage from the Rodeo-Chediski fire and the extensive destruction in our forests from drought, disease and insects should give us a glimpse of nature's processes and the timeframe of positive change following catastrophe. Nature has no conscience. Humanity has the intellect and capability to work with nature to manage forests for recreation, wildlife, flora, endangered species, community stability and human condition. And man has a conscience. Only a pseudo-environmentalist perceives nature and humanity as enemies.

And only a hypocrite denies that we need what a forest provides for us, and which we demand to have. If the 100 percent biodegradable, renewable and recyclable paper and wood products, which we all use, do not come from a managed forest, I ask from what source will we obtain them. When the raw material of a forest is not harvested, there is no utilization of readily available and necessary natural resources. When that unused material is from public lands, there is no recovery of stumpage fees to the national treasury. That unused material instead becomes something even worse than a wasted resource. It becomes fuel for devastating fires. When costs of fighting the Rodeo-Chediski fire and rehabilitating the land are weighed against the potential revenue the timber would have yielded had it been harvested indefinitely with sustained-yield, selective-cut management practices, it is obvious that the losses are incalculable.

The letter I received from the House of Representatives Committee on Resources states that the purpose of this hearing is to assess the role of local and Federal agencies in the interagency incident management system when battling wildland fire. I have never really been exposed to what the interagency incident management system is. With the confusion that ensued during the fire, I have to wonder if the local and Federal agencies know any more than I do about the interagency incident management system, particularly about the jurisdiction within incorporated towns.

However—and I added this—I personally fought the Chediski fire. The incident team in Heber-Overgaard for the first few days seemed to be indecisive and much of the equipment and resources were not used to any degree of effectiveness. We literally lost

homes because of this lack of effectiveness. I do not point fingers at any individual, because I was not in their shoes. But it could have and should have been organized and implemented better in the first few days of the Chediski fire.

I would like to echo what Mr. Epps said, to the credit of the agency after the Type I incident team arrived and was set up, it seemed to take on a faster, more firm stance.

I have addressed only minimally this issue of which I have little knowledge. I have instead addressed the issue of wildlands, which should be managed to prevent catastrophic fire. The agency whose motto is "Caring for the land and serving the people" needs to return to caring for the land and serving the people, abiding by the laws and regulations by which they are bound, but without the obstruction of irresponsible and frivolous lawsuits and appeals which prevent them from honoring their stewardship to the land and its people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Applause.]

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Porter, for your testimony.

And now we are pleased to welcome Dr. Wally Covington for his testimony this afternoon. Dr. Covington, thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Porter follows:]

Statement of Lorin D. Porter, President, Precision Pine & Timber, Inc.

I was asked if I would testify in this congressional hearing. I have lived in northeastern Arizona for over 50 years and have been associated with the lumber manufacturing business in this same region for over 25 years. I have hiked, camped, and hunted in the forests of northern Arizona for over 40 years. I have loved these forests, fought fires in these forests, and helped manage these forests. Therefore, I felt that I might add something worthwhile.

My father who was born in northeastern Arizona in 1909, worked in and owned lumber manufacturing facilities for over 50 of his 88 years. He told me that when he was a young man, you could pick up a rock in the forest, close your eyes and throw it, and you would almost never hit a tree. But today, a rock thrown in our forests will likely ricochet off several small diameter trees before it hits the ground.

The Southwestern Region of the USDA Forest Service explains the reasons for the present fire-hazard conditions of the Apache-Sitgreaves and Tonto National Forests. (This would apply as well to the other forests in northern Arizona):

A reduction in fire frequency over the last century, early Forest Service fire suppression policies and high levels of livestock grazing, combined with an unusual period of increased precipitation in the southwest between 1960 and 1988, has resulted in tree densities and [sic] are above historic levels of fuel loading throughout much of northern Arizona. Insects, disease, and a prolonged drought have combined to create extremely volatile fuels over large areas.¹

The fire danger is not new; it has been evolving over a long period of time and has existed for years. While tree densities, heavy fuel loads, and competition of trees for groundwater were increasing, thinning and logging were decreasing due to frivolous lawsuits filed by pseudo-environmental groups against the Forest Service. The suspension of virtually all Forest Service timber sales" even salvage sales" led to the demise of the forest products industry in northern Arizona (which was dependent upon raw materials from public lands), including a pulp mill between Heber and Snowflake, the only real outlet for small diameter wood (roundwood). The allowable cut of timber (not including roundwood) on the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest in 1992, was approximately 89 million board feet. At present, the allowable cut is approximately 5 million board feet and includes roundwood, firewood, and possibly Aunt Agatha's Christmas tree. While many are led by the pseudo-environmental movement to believe that to save a few trees is to save a forest, the wise by now have

¹USDA Forest Service, "Scoping Request," Rodeo/Chediski Fire Salvage and Rehabilitation Project, p. 1.

learned” recently by sad experience” the paradox that to cut a few trees is to save a forest.

Until the capitulation of the Forest Service to the pseudo-environmental forces, the forests of northern Arizona were being managed by a sustained-yield, selective-cut (never clear-cut) process. Roundwood removal was feasible because of the nearby pulp mill. Prescribed burns were employed but were less extensive with the regular removal of roundwood and the completion of erosion control and brush disposal required by every timber sale. Huge strides had been made to amend damages from errant practices of the past. Optimal forest health conditions was a foreseeable goal of the Forest Service and the people and industries dependent upon our forests. However, impatient with the process and espousing that Nature should do the job, the pseudo-environmental movement wreaked havoc with their endless appeals and lawsuits.

Nature, left to itself will eventually reach a balance, but will the end result be desirable? How long will it take? Is the process worth it? The damage from the Rodeo/Chediski fire and the extensive destruction in our forests from drought, disease, and insects should give us a glimpse of Nature’s processes and the time frame of positive change following catastrophe. Nature has no conscience. Humanity has the intellect and capability to work with nature to manage forests for recreation, wildlife, flora, endangered species, community stability, and the human condition. And man has a conscience. Only a pseudo-environmentalist perceives Nature and Humanity as enemies.

And only a hypocrite denies that we need what a forest provides for us” and which we demand to have. If the 100% biodegradable, renewable, and recyclable paper and wood products” which we ALL use” do not come from a managed forest, from what source will we obtain them? When the raw material of a forest is not harvested, there is no utilization of a readily available and necessary natural resource. When that unused material is from public lands, there is no recovery in stumpage fees to the national treasury. That unused material, instead, becomes something even worse than a wasted resource. It becomes fuel for devastating fires. When costs of fighting the Rodeo/Chediski fire and rehabilitating the land are weighed against the potential revenue the timber would have yielded had it been harvested indefinitely with sustained-yield, selective-cut management practices, it is obvious that the losses are incalculable.

The letter I received from the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Resources states that the purpose of this hearing is to “assess the role of local and federal agencies in the interagency incident management system when battling wildland fire.” I have never been exposed to what the “interagency incident management system” is. With the confusion that ensued during the fire, I have to wonder if local and federal agencies know any more than I do about the interagency incident management system, particularly about jurisdiction within unincorporated towns. I have not addressed this issue of which I have little knowledge; I have instead addressed the issue of wildlands which should be managed to prevent catastrophic wildfires. The agency whose motto is “Caring for the land and serving the people” needs to return to caring for the land and serving the people, abiding by the laws and regulations by which they are bound, but without the obstruction of irresponsible and frivolous lawsuits and appeals which prevent them from honoring their stewardship to the land and its people.

**STATEMENT OF WALLY COVINGTON, PH.D., SCHOOL OF
FORESTRY, NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY**

Mr. COVINGTON. Thanks, J.D.

Thanks Chairman Hayworth and Congressman Flake, for inviting me here to give this presentation. I am going to just hit the high points. You know, I have got a lot of ideas and a lot of stuff to say, but I am not going to say it all at once here. It is in the printed testimony that I have submitted and I know it will be in the record.

My name is Wally Covington, I am Regents’ Professor of Forest Ecology and I direct the Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University. I have been there for 27 years. I teach fire ecology and management and restoration and just about everything under the sun at the university over that period of time. And dur-

ing that time period, my students and I and my colleagues have conducted fire and restoration research throughout the western United States, from South Dakota, eastern Washington on to Colville Indian Reservation, California, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, down in old Mexico in Chihuahua, Sonora and Durango. And of course, here in Arizona, which is my home and will be forever more, I hope.

First, I would like to take a little bit of—I do not know if I am taking exception with some of the criticisms of the incident command system and its application, but this is something that I am somewhat of an expert in, I have been teaching it for quite awhile and observed it on quite a few fires throughout the western United States over the past 30 years or so and I really do think, despite the shortcomings—there are always shortcomings when you are doing anything in a crisis mode. The incident command system, as I followed it here on the Rodeo-Chediski fire, really was a textbook case of how it is supposed to work. There are always mistakes, there are always problems getting material from point A to point B. You always—at the end of most days, you look back and you say gosh, if we had only known that, we would have done this differently. The problem is, you do not really know that until after it happens.

So I would just like to take a second to recognize the outstanding community support, the interagency coordination and the dedication of local leaders and of the professional firefighters and all of the support folks in the incident command system. They really did a good job. This fire should easily have gone a million to a million and a half acres, it should have burned up 1000 houses and it could very likely have killed hundreds of civilians. And the reason it did not do that is because of the dedicated work, not just of the agency folks, but of the local leaders in the community that worked together to get people out of harm's way quickly and efficiently. So I am using this in my teaching as an example of how the incident command system is supposed to work.

So with that, I am going to move on then to the rest of my remarks. I am going to take off my jacket if you do not mind.

I start out my testimony with some of the historical background. I talked a little bit about this when we were in Washington last—the fifth of September when I presented testimony before the Committee, and in this testimony that I have submitted, I fleshed that out a little bit more. And basically what that testimony does is to—what my testimony does in that context is just talk about the historical background of some of the ideological wars that have occurred starting in about 1889 in the United States, about how do we manage our forests.

In 1889, John Wesley Powell and Gifford Pinchot got together with then Secretary of the Interior Noble to talk about what we should do with our western forests, and basically Powell, who learned all of his forest management and fire policy from the Paiute Indians of northern Arizona and southern Utah, was advocating for working with fire in the landscapes in our western forests. Pinchot was not educated in the west, he was educated actually in western Europe in French and German forestry, and under those conditions, you know, French and German forestry was really

oriented toward producing wood from wet hardwood forests and wet, cold spruce forests. And there, fire was clearly the enemy of the forests.

Well, these two individuals went at loggerheads over how to do this stuff. Powell actually, in his meeting with Secretary Noble, recounted how he had personally sat with his Paiute friends a fire that burned over 600,000 acres. Of course, it was a surface fire, it was not the kind of crown fires that we have seen today. Pinchot called it an act of vandalism and advocated really behind the scenes that he thought Powell, who was head of the Geological Survey, should be arrested for doing that sort of stuff.

Well, Powell lost that argument. Powell was not as well-connected as Pinchot. Pinchot was one of the Boston Brahmins and very wealthy. In fact, his family endowed the School of Forestry at Yale University, the first school of forestry in the United States.

So anyway, then I traced in my testimony going on through Aldo Leopold, who showed up here as soon as he graduated from the Yale School of Forestry, showed up here as a forester with Region III, with the Southwestern Region, in 1909. Immediately he looked at the landscape and said everything is going to heck in a hand basket and something needs to be done about it.

Next came Harold Weaver onto the scene. Harold Weaver worked on the Colville Reservation up in eastern Washington first. He was a BIA forester. In the 1930's he saw the future, he saw what we have got today and he started saying we have got to do something about it, he actually started prescribed burning in 1943 on the Colville Indian Reservation with tribal members. Those plots are still being burned. After Weaver did his last fire, one of our alumnae Robin Boyce started burning them in 1976 and then Kathy Covington, a tribal member there, continued working with the tribe to keep that project going.

The next point in time that I bring up is Weaver came here to Arizona. He was forester with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Phoenix and immediately started working with the White Mountain Apaches to try to start giving an opportunity for fire to return to the land. The Fort Apache Reservation especially and San Carlos as well had a good fire program going on until about the time I came here in 1975. They still have a good fire program but I remember it very well and those of you that have been here that long remember it too, when they had a little over 100,000 acres on fire. I believe it was 1977 and the wind changed directions sort of like the smoke that got down from the Rodeo-Chediski fire into Phoenix, and all of a sudden we are more concerned about air quality than we are the health of the land. And we started implementing some policies that restricted fire.

So anyway, that chain of events up through Weaver, the next thing was Cooper, also a BIA forester, clearly identified—he published a seminal paper in 1960 based on his doctoral dissertation work at Duke, in which he described the changes in forest conditions since white settlement. He interviewed in the 1950's some tribal elders and elders of settlers, you know, the grandparents, all of whom are gone now, and also looked at stand structure, and concluded the same thing that we have concluded with our studies

today, that the forests have changed radically, they are not sustainable, something has to be done.

I do want to just quote a couple of things here. In 1976, there was a report called "Ponderosa Fire Management: A Task Force Evaluation of Controlled Burning in Ponderosa pine forests of central Arizona," it was actually conducted in 1973. I came out on a field trip out here on the Apache reservation in 1977 with the Tall Timbers Group.

But anyway, Weaver, along with Harold Biswell and Harry Kallender, Roy Komarek and Dick Vogl have this quote in their document, and this is real telling. I will just read it to you.

"Between 1947 and 1956 in the national forests of New Mexico and Arizona, 115,000 acres of timber were burned...with most trees kills or heavily damaged. In 1948, 1950 and 1954, three wildfires on the Fort Apache Reservation in Arizona covered 8,100 acres in which nearly all timber was killed."

This was an alarm back then when in a 9-year period, you burned 156,000 total acres. Man, we wish we had those problems today. So this recognition is not new that the problem exists.

I also want to just quote briefly from Cooper's paper, from his doctoral dissertation in the 1950's and then published in *Ecological Monographs* in 1960. This is what Cooper says:

It is doubtful if, after 40 years of [fire exclusion], use of prescribed fire can now reverse the trend toward excessively dense pine thickets. Silvicultural possibilities [that is, thinning] of planned fire can probably only be realized in young stands originating after timber harvest. Some practical and economic means must be found for thinning young pine stands and for reducing the amount of hazardous fuel."

At the time he wrote that, these were small trees, they were only about three or four inches in diameter. Those trees are now bumping up to and exceeding 16 inches in diameter and we still have not solved this problem over most of the western United States.

At For Apache, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, working with BIA has done a lot to go forward with active fire management and with thinning of the forest and that is why we have still got some green patches in the Rodeo-Chediski fire area. For the most part, that is where we see ecosystems that are not completely burned all to heck.

The next point that I want to make is—and I will try to hit this real quickly—is that we do need to move forward and we need to move forward swiftly. There are some things that we can do to meet the demands that are placed upon our generation, but we have to move forward and we have to move forward in a systematic way.

Now I think that one way that we can do this is use as the model the incident command system. Let me just do a little bit, I have got this in the testimony in greater detail but I will just hit it real quickly here.

Just imagine—let us just imagine that we are time travelers. We go back to 1997, 7 years ago, something like that, and we say OK, now we know that this area is going to burn, Rodeo-Chediski fire area is going to burn and it is going to burn hot. Well, what do we do? Well, we put together an interagency multi-level group of folks

that are experts on forest restoration and fire management, we get together with community leaders, with local, state and Federal elected officials and agencies and we put together a plan for systematically reducing in the greater ecosystem the threat of fire through using restoration treatments. So we start that—we are in 1997, by 1998, we have got a plan in place and we start doing large strategically located restoration fuel treatments.

You know, it kind of galls me a little bit when people talk about oh, we might get as much as 30,000 acres treated per year. Well, nonsense, we need to treat hundreds of thousands of acres per year. But again, if we attack this problem in the same way that we attack an active fire, the inevitable landscape fire, then we can do this. So now we are in 1998, we have got 1999, we have got 2000, we have got 2001 and then we hit the drought and then two fires start near Rodeo area and Chediski, but now the fires are burning through a landscape where about a third of it has restoration-based fuel treatments. We catch the fires before they burn a single house. That could have happened.

Now let us come to the present. Here we are today. We can do this throughout the western United States and we have to do this. There is absolutely no question where these forests are headed. It has been known since the 1960's, the 1950's, the 1940's, and Leopold wrote about it in the late—by 1914 through 1924. So we do have to move forward.

Now, what do we do to move forward? What I advocate for is that we need to move forward with thorough knowledge and carefully reasoned analysis, systematically checked against factual evidence, not a lot of intuitive, kind of subjective, oh gosh, oh golly, we ought to do this. But we need to build on the knowledge that we have, come up with effective plans and get after it. Now clear thinking is essential for this. We need to define our problems carefully, we need to understand the context for our degraded forest health problems, we need to determine what the sustainable carrying capacity of the land is for trees and for other organisms on the landscape, including human beings. Then we need to assemble practical field data that is readily available and useful for designing these treatments, analyze the information, develop restoration-oriented side boards and then implement these treatments.

We need to implement the treatments though before we know everything. We will never know everything. What we have to do is we have to do a learning by doing approach and I am not talking about tinkering here, you know, about just messing around and kind of seeing what works and what does not. This is a formal procedure that has been well in place since the early 1960's. It is called adaptive environmental assessment or adaptive management. And in that procedure, what you do is that you use the best information that is available, you bring together professional resource managers, you bring together interested members of the public, stakeholders, you bring together technical experts in conservation and fire management and so on in intensive workshops in which you develop sort of hypotheses, scientific hypotheses, which then you test operationally. These are not little 1000 or 200-acre treatments, these are 20,000, 100,000-acre treatments. And then you have to go, as you implement those treatments, you have

to see which ones are superior, so we have to monitor them, we have to invest some money in finding out which ones are superior, and then it is pretty simple. Those that are doing a better job, you do more of that. Those that are not doing so good a job, you do not do that any more. So that is all adaptive management is.

Now I am going to wrap this up pretty quickly. I have some other stuff in the testimony which you have read or will read. There is a subhead that says "Love of the land is good but it is not enough." And basically what I am saying there—that is on page 8—I am saying look, we all love the land, it is in our genetic make-up to love the land, it is in our genetic makeup to want to leave the land in a better condition than we received it. But that is not enough. Good—you know, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Bertrand Russell has a great story about this in his writings about the plague in the Middle Ages when church leaders told everybody to get together in the churches and pray for deliverance from this awful visitation on the land. Now the plague was worse in Christian countries where the church leaders had people get together in the churches to pray because that is how the disease was spread. In other areas, it did not spread nearly so fast, nor were so many people killed.

Now the church leaders, there is no question they loved their flock, you know, they loved their people. They were not trying to get them into harm's way, but nonetheless, they did not have the knowledge about how the plague was spread. So that is what got them in so much trouble.

My last point is pretty straight-forward. We have got to think big and we have got to act big and we have got to do it immediately. Had we done this in 1997 or in 1993 or in 1960, we would not have what we have got today out there. We would not have all the homes burned down, we would not have spent the millions and millions of dollars that we are now spending on the Rodeo-Chediski fire area. And how many areas do we have like this? We have not even burned 5 percent of it yet nationally.

So it makes sense, it makes economic sense and not only that, it is our ethical responsibility to care for the land and to prevent these kind of disasters from happening.

The last point—I have some comments there about what Congress can do and you have both heard this from me before, so I will not belabor the point there. There is one additional point that I made in the September 5 hearings there in D.C., that I really feel like we have got to move forward on the synthesis of knowledge reports. We have got to get groups of experts together to lay out in short, readable documents and on the web, the biophysical basis or the ecological basis for restoration and fuel treatments at the greater ecosystem scale, the social, political and economic aspects of it, and then a practical here is how we can move forward document as well. We have got to do that quickly. We should have this done within 12 months. If we have got that done within 12 months, then you will see EAs slicking through the system quickly because the people will have at their hands the resources that they need to design projects and to support them so that they will readily withstand the appeal process and judicial review.

So I guess in conclusion what I am saying here is that we need to get moving, we need to do it in a scientifically rigorous way and that I think that incident command system is a good model where we have local collaboration of local governmental leaders, public leaders, civic minded corporations and businesses and local to Federal agencies, local to Federal elected officials. And we can do this. We can do it in a big way and we have got to do it.

That concludes my formal remarks. I had some photos here which maybe after we let these good people go, I will go over with you later on.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Covington follows:]

Statement of Dr. William Wallace Covington, Regents' Professor and Director of the Ecological Restoration Institute, Northern Arizona University

Chairman McInnis, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify on a subject of personal importance to me and of critical importance to the health of our nation's forests and the people and communities that live within them.

My name is Wally Covington. I am Regents' Professor of Forest Ecology at Northern Arizona University and Director of the Ecological Restoration Institute. I have been a professor at NAU for just over 27 years. My colleagues, graduate students and I have conducted research into ponderosa pine and related frequent fire types in South Dakota, Eastern Washington, California, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Durango (Mexico), and, of course, Arizona since I arrived in Arizona in 1975.

In addition to my publications on fire ecology and management, ecosystem health and forest restoration, I have co-authored scientific papers on a broad variety of topics in forest ecology and resource management including research on fire effects, prescribed burning, thinning, operations research, silviculture, range management, wildlife effects, multiresource management, forest health, and natural resource conservation. I am senior author of the Ecosystem Restoration and Management Principles chapter of the interagency publication on Ecological Stewardship published in 1999.

I am a member of numerous professional societies including the Ecological Society of America, the International Society for Ecosystem Health, the Society for Conservation Biology, and the Society of American Foresters. I am also a member of the Society for Ecological Restoration and was chair of its Science and Policy Working Group from its inception through 2000 when I vacated that position to take a sabbatical year at Duke University. In addition to publishing in the scientific literature I have been actively involved in outreach efforts to natural resource professionals, community leaders, the general public, and local to national policy makers on issues related to forest ecosystem management.

A Textbook Example of How to Do it Right

Before I begin my formal remarks I want to take a minute to recognize the outstanding community support and interagency coordination, dedication, and firefighting expertise demonstrated by those who worked so long and diligently to keep the Rodeo-Chediski fire from being even more devastating than it was. Were it not for the great skill, team work, and creativity of firefighters, federal, state, and local governments and community leaders working together for a common goal, it is likely that hundreds more houses would have burned, and worse yet civilian and firefighter lives would have been lost. We now need to develop and apply that same approach to implementing preventative restoration based hazard reduction and ecosystem health treatments at similar scales so that a disaster of this magnitude never happens again.

My Approach in this Testimony

Although the general principles that I will discuss apply broadly to the vast majority of the West's dry frequent fire forest types, I will focus my testimony on ponderosa pine forests. As the GAO has pointed out in 1999 over 90 percent of the severe crown fire damage nationally is in this forest type.

In my remarks I will give a brief overview of the historical context for federal fire management policies, discuss some ideological barriers to achieving consensus about how to proceed, and recommend a set of actions designed to help overcome these limitations.

Historical Background: Ideology and Land Management Rivalry 1889–Present

Ideological warfare over how to manage western forests is not new. The roots of this crisis in western forest management go deep. Fire historian Stephen Pyne is undoubtedly our best modern day chronicler of the history of our failure to work with fire in forests of the West. In his book, *Paiute Forestry: A History of the Light-burning Controversy*, Pyne describes the historic meeting between then Secretary of Interior John Noble and John Wesley Powell, then director of Interior's Geological Service. The meeting had been set up by Gifford Pinchot, director of the government's new Forestry Department, then in the Department of Interior also.

It was obvious to Aldo Leopold shortly after he graduated from the Yale School of Forestry arrived in the Southwest in 1909. Having just graduated with a Master of Forestry degree from Yale University, Leopold was trained as a keen observer of land conditions. He wrote a series of reports and essays, perhaps the most notable of which was his 1924 paper in the *Journal of Forestry* entitled, "Grass, brush, timber and fire in southern Arizona." In that paper he noted that south of the US-Mexico border, frequent fires and absence of overgrazing had maintained diverse, productive, sustainable watersheds, but that north of the border, assiduously protected from fire but mercilessly overgrazed, watersheds were degrading rapidly and woody vegetation was encroaching everywhere.

Bureau of Indian Affairs forester, Harold Weaver, recognized the coming forest health crisis in the 1930s raising the alarm that because of the disruption of the natural frequent, low intensity fire regime ponderosa forests were becoming overstocked with dense sapling thickets, unprecedented tree disease and insect attacks were occurring, and fire behavior was intensifying. He warned that unless something was done, these symptoms of degrading forest health would only get worse (H. Weaver. 1943. Fire as an ecological and silvicultural factor in the ponderosa pine region of the Pacific slope. *Journal of Forestry* 41:7–14. Working with tribal members, Weaver started a prescribed burning research program on the Colville Indian Reservation in 1942, designed to be re-burned on an approximate 10 yr interval. Those plots continue to be burned regularly today.

It is interesting to note that in a 1976 report entitled, "Ponderosa fire management: a task force evaluation of controlled burning in ponderosa pine forests of central Arizona", Harold Weaver along with Harold Biswell, Harry Kallendar, Roy Komarek, Richard Vogl noted that:

"Between 1947 and 1956 in the National Forests of New Mexico and Arizona, 115,000 acres of timber were burned in six fires with most trees killed or heavily damaged. In 1948, 1950, and 1954, three wildfires on the Fort Apache Reservation in Arizona covered 8,100 acres in which nearly all timber was killed.

We only wish we had that problem today.

Weaver became BIA Area Forester in Phoenix, Arizona, in March, 1948. Weaver began working with Fort Apache tribal members to restore periodic burning to reservation lands. Despite periodic setbacks due to restrictions related to air quality concerns dating from the late 1970s, prescribed burning coupled with active forest management have continued, and as you have heard helped to prevent severe crownfire in several stands within reservation lands.

In the late 1950s, Charles Cooper, also a BIA forester, conducted a sweeping analysis that constituted his doctoral dissertation from Duke University. In that dissertation and in subsequent publications (see Charles F. Cooper. 1960. Changes in vegetation, structure, and growth of southwestern pine forests since white settlement. *Ecological Monographs* 30:129–164) Cooper described the population irruption of pine trees, the increase in fuel loads, and the degradation of forest health. In his concluding paragraphs on page 162 of his monograph, Cooper states:

"It is doubtful if, after 40 yrs of protection, use of prescribed fire can now reverse the trend toward excessively dense pine thickets. Silvicultural possibilities of planned fire can probably only be realized in young stands originating after timber harvest. Some practical and economic means must be found for thinning young pine stands and for reducing the amount of hazardous fuel.

By the late 1970s it became obvious to me that ponderosa pine dominated landscapes were filling in so quickly with overly dense stand level fuel loadings such that by early on in the 21st century we would see very large, landscape scale fires that were essentially uncontrollable.

My warnings became more strident as I saw both the size and the severity of crownfires increase throughout the 1980s. In fact in a recently discovered video tape of a presentation Silver City, NM, on February 23, 1993, I forecast that if we failed to implement large restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments, by 2010 we would witness greater ecosystem scale fires in excess of 100,000 acre and that we would have to evacuate communities along the Mogollon Rim rapidly and efficiently or risk losing 100s of civilian lives. It is not a prediction that I wanted to come true, but, of course it did.

In 1994 I was senior author on a review paper (Attachment One) in which I stated that we could anticipate exponential increases in the severity and extent of catastrophic fire. It is not a prediction I ever wanted to come true. In that same paper, I also suggested that we have a narrow window of opportunity to take preventative actions to restore forest health and minimize the losses of civilian and firefighter lives as well as the mounting damage to our nation's natural resources.

How We Can Meet the Demands Placed upon Our Generation

Recognizing that unnatural crownfires and other symptoms of ecosystem stress are signals that these ecosystems are falling apart, we must act and we must act quickly. A "learning by doing" approach known as active adaptive management is a well established procedure that we know will work. No one is talking about tinkering here and this isn't just some new fangled academic idea. Adaptive management is rooted deep in theory and practice, having sprung from the evolutionary operations approach long used in optimizing complex chemical engineering problems. Crawford S. Holling (University of Florida) and Carl Walters (University of British Columbia) and their intellectual "offspring" have developed this approach as a tried and true procedure for solving complex resource management problems, monitoring and evaluating a range of policy options, and then feeding resulting knowledge back into the ongoing resource management endeavor.

A soft systems approach to adaptive management might be most appropriate for restoration of ponderosa pine and related frequent fire landscapes. In such a situation collaborative groups consisting of policy makers, stakeholders, technical specialists and land managers develop well informed alternative working hypotheses about reasonable ways to simultaneously work toward restoring ecosystem health while probing for deeper understanding of greater ecosystem structure and function.

We Need Thorough Knowledge and Carefully Reasoned Analysis, Systematically Checked Against Factual Evidence.

In applying this approach, clear thinking, objective acquisition and interpretation of information, and open dialogue among collaborators is essential. Following are some steps to implement this approach

Define the problem

Describe the pathology of degradation

1. Are there unnatural population dynamics—irruptions of some, crashes of others?
2. Are there deleterious changes in nutrient cycling and hydrology?
3. Are there decreases in diversity and net productivity of herbaceous food webs?
4. Are there losses of tree vigor, especially of old-growth?
5. Are there unnatural insect and disease outbreaks?
6. Are fuels steadily accumulating on the forest floor and in the tree canopies?
7. Has there been a shift away from presettlement fire regimes?

Describe the contexts for the ecological restoration issues.

1. What are reference conditions for different hierarchies?
2. What is the cause of degradation?
3. What are the temporal and spatial patterns of post-disruption changes?
4. To what extent, and at what rate, do current disturbances (e.g. wildfire, bark beetle irruptions) and conventional management practices (e.g., thinning alone, prescribed fire alone) restore ecosystem structure and function?
5. What ecological, social, and political factors affect recovery?
6. How can humans speed recovery to fully functioning ecosystems?
7. How can we do this while providing for continued use by humans?

Determine changes in reference conditions over time.

1. What was the natural fire regime?
2. When was the fire regime disrupted?
3. How have ecosystem structures/processes changed over time?
4. How have ecosystem functions/processes

Assemble practical field data readily available or easy to acquire to inform treatment, monitoring, and evaluation design. Examples of such data are:

1. Fire scars

2. Tree structure, species composition, age, vigor
 3. Herbaceous density and composition
 4. Forest floor fuels and dead biomass
- Use practical analysis techniques to provide useful information for designing and comparing proposed treatments. Examples of such analysis are:
1. Reconstruction of presettlement forest structure
 2. Intersecting lines of evidence
 3. Dendrochronology / fire history
 4. Ecological simulation
 5. Fire behavior analysis
- Develop restoration-based sideboards for designing alternative prescriptions. Examples of such sideboards are:
1. Retain all trees which predate settlement
 2. Retain postsettlement trees needed to re-establish presettlement structure
 3. Thin and remove excess trees
 4. Rake heavy fuels from base of trees
 5. Burn to emulate natural disturbance regime
 6. Seed with natives/control exotics
- Determine how alternative restoration treatments will be tested. A multi-scaled approach might make sense, with pre/post measurements, replication, and random assignment of treatments where possible. One such approach that we have developed in concert with collaborators in federal, state and local agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and interested volunteers consists of:
1. Spot treatments (.01-.03 acres) around old-growth trees
 2. Micro treatments (1 - 40 acres)
 3. Initial large-scale treatments (500 - 1000 acres)
 4. Monitoring and feedback of results from these treatments
 5. Adaptive management approach at the scale of 10–50 thousand acres

Overcoming Barriers to Implementing Restoration at the Greater Ecosystem Scale

There are some challenges to getting operational scale adaptive ecosystem restoration and management on the ground.

1. Fuzzy thinking about the problem.
2. Reverse logic: prejudging the conclusion then selectively finding facts and arguments that support that conclusion
3. Scientific, social, and political perfectionism; let's not do anything until all uncertainties are removed
4. Cultural differences and distrust among policymakers, practitioners, researchers, interest groups, and the public
5. Funding problems

There is much wailing and gnashing of teeth by activists, members of the lay public, and even some within the academic community about the scientific basis of forest restoration. Some of the arguments are founded on differences of opinion about desirable ecological conditions for western forestlands. Others stem from differences of opinion about whether public lands should be used for consumptive resource use, especially by wood products or grazing interests, or for individual uses and/or non-consumptive uses. Some differences of opinion are ideological. At times individuals use what might best be described as pseudoscientific arguments to try to advance a particular cause.

By pseudoscience, I mean a set of theories, assumptions, and methods erroneously advanced as science. Pseudoscience stands in contrast to science, which is based on attempts to objectively discover the truth about a natural system. The scientific method has been developed as a systematic way to discover truth, or more specifically to avoid being fooled by biases about how we imagine that things might be. A.D. Bradshaw of the University of Liverpool in England has often presented a particularly cogent discussion of the need for objectivity in ecological restoration work. Otherwise, he fears that arguments over restoration objectives and approaches will tend to degenerate in to decisions and actions based on intuition and impressions instead of the best knowledge available. He goes on to state that, "With this goes the belief that good restoration is intuitive, stemming from feelings rather than logical understanding, and that because of this it is only learned by experience" Certainly nobody should ever decry the importance of intuition." Yet applied to the exclusion of other principles, these beliefs will destroy the efficiency and effectiveness of restoration ecology".

Restoration ecology, he posits, must be based on six cardinal points:

1. Awareness of other work.
2. Preparedness to carry out proper experiments to test ideas.
3. Preparedness to monitor fundamental parameters in a restoration scheme.

4. Further tests and experiments suggested by these monitoring observations.
 5. The restoration of functioning ecosystems in which a whole variety of species is involved.
 6. Published results.
- We must seek to follow such a science-based approach if we are to resolve the forest ecosystem health and crownfire problems we are confronted with today.

Love of the Land is Good, But not Enough

We all love the land. It's in our genetic makeup. Although love of the land is important, it is not sufficient. Actions based on love alone without adequate knowledge can be devastating. The philosopher Bertrand Russell used a teaching story to illustrate this point. In the Middle Ages when the plague was rampant in Europe, religious leaders urged the population to assemble in churches to pray for deliverance. As a result of so many people being gathered in overcrowded conditions, the plague spread with accelerated rapidity throughout Europe. No one questions the love of the religious leaders for their congregations, but without scientifically based knowledge of how the plague spread, their advice had consequences that were the opposite of their desires for their congregations. This is an example of love without knowledge of the consequences of uninformed action. Today there are many examples of individuals inspired by love of the land, but without sufficient knowledge or time for critical and comprehensive thought who are obstructing meaningful action to restore forest ecosystem health and protect the land and people of the West.

Restoration has Many Benefits

If we overcome these challenges, the benefits of ecological restoration and diligent land stewardship in ponderosa pine and related ecosystems are many and they are sustainable indefinitely

1. It eliminates unnatural forest insect and disease outbreaks
2. It enhances native plant and animal biodiversity
3. It protects critical habitats for threatened or endangered species
4. It improves watershed function and sustainability
5. It enhances natural beauty of the land
6. It improves resource values for humans, not just for current, but also for future generations
7. In cases where a road system is in place and small wood processing facilities are available, the trees removed can often help defray the cost of restoration treatments and provide jobs and income for local communities

We Must Think and Act Big and Start Immediately

We can restore ecosystems but we must act on large scales and act immediately.

1. To restore these degraded ecosystems, it is essential that we restore entire greater landscapes, and do so quickly—time is clearly not our ally.
2. We must do so in a systematic, scientifically rigorous fashion.
3. For protection of structures such as houses, the science seems pretty clear: use fire resistant materials, fire resistant landscaping and don't build too close to heavily fueled landscapes.
4. For protection of watersheds, critical habitat for humans and other animals and plants we have to think much bigger. Here we need to think and act at the scale of greater ecosystems—large chunks of the landscape that include not only wildlands but also embedded human communities. These greater ecosystems typically occur on a scale of 100,000 to 1,000,000 acres.

What Congress Can Do

There are several constructive steps Congress and the federal agencies can take to improve our current situation.

1. Treatments to reduce fire threat and restore the ecological integrity of forests should become the single biggest priority of forest management policy and the land management agencies working in the Intermountain West.
2. Congress should provide adequate resources to the agencies to maximize comprehensive restoration treatments, not just thinning and burning, but also restoration and rehabilitation of seeps, springs and riparian areas, closure and rehabilitation of unwanted roads, improvement of existing roads to minimize watershed impacts, control of aggressive exotic species and reintroduction of missing native plants and animals.
3. Where ever possible, Congress and the land management agencies should support the collaboration of forest communities to design ecologically based restoration treatments. This includes: producing high quality, timely environmental review documents; elevating the production of the review documents to a top priority; assisting communities to develop economically viable opportuni-

ties for restoration jobs and where feasible restoration products; and, assisting to develop new employment opportunities related to restoration.

4. Support the development of science-based restoration treatments.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I suggest that those participating in restoration efforts follow a holistic, systematic approach characterized by clear thinking, local collaboration, and solid knowledge, both of the biophysical system and of the sociopolitical system. Then we need to develop clear objectives for desired resource uses and ecosystem conditions coupled with practical plans for implementing and testing alternative treatments at operational scales. Otherwise, decisions regarding restoration-based fuel treatments will continue to degenerate into ill informed speculation, subjective judgment, bias, ideology, and personal policy preferences.

We are at a fork in the road. Down one fork lies burned out, depauperate landscapes—landscapes that are a liability for future generations. Down the other fork lies healthy, diverse, sustaining landscapes—landscapes that will bring multiple benefits for generations to come. Inaction is taking, and will continue to take, us down the path to unhealthy landscapes, costly to manage. Scientifically-based forest restoration treatments, including thinning and prescribed burning, will set us on the path to healthy landscapes, landscapes like the early settlers and explorers saw in the late 1800s.

Knowing what we now know, it would be grossly negligent for our generation not to move forward with large-scale restoration based fuel treatments in the dry forests of the West. Inaction is clearly the greatest threat to the long-term sustainability of these western ecosystems.

Thank you very much for asking me to appear before the Subcommittee.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Dr. Covington, we thank you; Mr. Porter, we thank you for your testimony.

Dr. Covington, on two occasions now, you have reiterated, and it is important as we are taking a look going ahead, you are a strong proponent of the incident command system model that is used. In fact, you are saying now that even with the challenges confronted, in retrospect, looking back at Rodeo-Chediski, this on balance is a textbook operation, from your perspective.

Mr. COVINGTON. That is correct.

Mr. HAYWORTH. And the reason—obviously we are thankful there was no loss of life.

Mr. COVINGTON. It is a miracle in a way.

Mr. HAYWORTH. And when you think about it, especially in contrast to the Dude fire, and I remember saying on occasions, we had the Dude fire, the next fire we ought to name for the devil himself, with the accumulation of fuel and everything else that we have seen in our forests, but still, there was no loss of human life.

We are so thankful for that, but it is so difficult—I know there are those with us here who have had immense personal losses.

Mr. COVINGTON. Oh, sure.

Mr. HAYWORTH. I guess the conundrum is this—and what we are trying to understand is—we often hear about the fog of war and what happens in military operations. And in essence, there is the smoke and the fog that comes with trying to deal with a massive conflagration like we had here.

But the ICS you say can be a model now to work prospectively. We are moving almost into the range of predictive models and an aggressive approach is what you are advocating now, correct?

Mr. COVINGTON. Right, preventative medicine essentially. I mean what we are doing right now is we are getting these ecosystems into the emergency room and that is the most expensive medicine you can practice, and that is exactly what we have seen here today.

If just 7 years ago we had gotten a little bit of a start on this, we would not have seen the incredible losses that we have seen.

The incident command system, by the way, is a worldwide model for how to handle crises. You know, you have been in emergency situations, there is always, you know, gosh, if I had known this, I would have done things differently. But it is the system that responded to September 11 and that worked very well, despite the tremendous loss of life. It is that kind of a model. We cannot get into it right now, but it is a modular system, it is integrative hierarchy across different governmental levels and it is designed to provide for logistical support for planning, for public information, for all that sort of stuff. It really is a good system. I wish it had worked better at the Rodeo-Chediski fire, but I would have predicted 99 times out of 100, that it would have worked a lot worse than it did. It worked very well.

Every big incident like this has some snafus in it, it is just the way it is. It is a terrible problem.

Mr. HAYWORTH. There has been talk, and the distinction was made, and we talked about catastrophe management, some have likened these situations to chaos management. In other words, every 15 minutes a set of presumptions you had is rendered invalid and you have to work from an entirely different situation and that is the nature of this beast we confronted.

Lon, you have lived on this land a long time, I have come to respect the common sense perspective you bring here. What about the model that Dr. Covington lays out, in your mind. On your knowledge of loving the land and working it, do you concur with Dr. Covington's analysis?

Mr. PORTER. I concur 100 percent that something has got to be done and we need to come up with a plan and move forward with it. And the challenge that I see that the Forest Service has and that I hope that legislation can correct is streamlining that process. The Forest Service I believe has some idea of what they want to do and Dr. Covington can add to that and give them some better direction there, especially as it deals with restoring the health of these forests.

But I think that it does not matter to a person that does not understand. And I call them pseudo-environmentalists or thorny environmentalists because they do not understand what really needs to be done. And unless something is done to streamline that and make it less available to them, then we are going to have a hard time getting the work done that needs to be done.

Mr. HAYWORTH. We have tried to take some steps in that direction, working with the administration and I know that Congressman Flake had the chance to be with the President last night and I can recall our visit up to the Round Valley to visit with some who may be in this room right now. The President's last remark to me that day was that real environmentalists want to see effective forest management.

Congressman Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you. Mr. Porter, you talked narrowly about the recovery efforts in your experience, your industry. We are hearing different numbers as far as at what point the wood is useless.

Small diameter, maybe 6 months, large diameter later than that. Can you give us kind of a rundown of the reality here?

Mr. PORTER. I can tell you that in the past we tried to utilize a timber sale that was brought up by the Forest Service, it was called the Kendrick Saddle Toll Project up by Flagstaff. Those projects were approximately 2 years old when we—we attempted it, we actually purchased that timber sale contract from the Forest Service to cut that volume. And it was small to intermediate size and some larger size trees. When we started cutting that material at our mills, I had never seen so many different colors in my life. There was orange, there was black, there was blue, there was white. It was as hard as oak to cut and it was virtually worthless. It was falling apart, it had cracks all through it and was falling apart in our equipment. In fact, I will tell you I think that is what caused our fire at our sawmill at Winslow is that material. Later the Forest Service backed out of that and said we see—we had them come to the mill, we ran a study for them, showed it to them. And that was 2 years, and I can tell you it was virtually worthless.

So my personal feeling is you have about a year, you have about a year and maybe a 6-month window after that to really get anything of any value out of those trees. The smaller trees first are going to go and then the larger trees behind that.

Mr. FLAKE. So from the earlier testimony, then it will take almost a year to get the plan together before any contracts.

Mr. PORTER. I can tell you, I will not buy timber from the government that is—if it is purchased at a year and a half, how long is it going to take us to get out there and get the work actually done, then you are looking at another 6 months. There is no way it can be economically feasible. It has got to be done and it has got to be done in a hurry.

The Fort Apache Tribe has the right idea, you have got to get out there and you have got to get started on it right now and utilize what you can. Bring that revenue, bring the usefulness of that resource to the people.

Mr. FLAKE. Congressman Hayworth mentioned the President was in the state yesterday and he did, at both stops, push his healthy forests initiative very hard.

I know that with your industry, what you need most is certainty moving forward. In order to amortize costs and everything else, you have to have certainty that contracts will be available over a period of time. The healthy forest initiative right now says that contracts will be at least five to 10 years. Is that sufficient for a business like yours to actually re-enter the market here or actually go forward?

Mr. PORTER. There were at one time 11 or so different mills that operated in Arizona. There was a pulp and paper mill here, that utilized a great deal of this material, that went to the government and said if we could have a long-term contract, we will upgrade our facilities and we will go ahead and continue to use this volume. And the government basically said we cannot guarantee that. And they wanted about 10 years. And when they said that, they said well, then we are going to 100 percent recycle, we are shutting down this process that could have used so many of these small trees.

So you have to have sufficient time. And I think 10 years to 15 years. A pulp mill is like a \$200 million investment and an OSD plant, a small one is \$60 million. So for anyone to go into that, they have got to have some long-term contracts and understand what they can do for that period of time or they will not economically get involved and neither will any financial institution.

Mr. FLAKE. Dr. Covington, fighting the fire alone, leaving aside the property losses and everything, was around \$45 million I believe; is that the numbers?

Mr. COVINGTON. Uh-huh.

Mr. FLAKE. Assuming we move forward with the kind of forest restoration that you talk about and assuming that we do not have any, you know, politically correct diameter limits of 16 or whatever, we restore the forest to as close to native conditions as we can; how much of the area we are in here, the White Mountain area, the Ponderosa pine stand, could we treat for \$50 million, assuming that we could have commercial interests come in and how much per acre? We have talked about this in the past.

Mr. COVINGTON. Yeah.

Mr. FLAKE. If we cannot recoup any costs versus having no diameter limits but actually doing it as we know we should using sound science.

Mr. COVINGTON. Probably the best information on that is some studies done by Carl Fielder and Keegan and others at Montana who have been looking at this question exactly. They looked at it in Idaho, Montana and they completed one in New Mexico. They have not done one in Arizona yet. But in New Mexico what they found is that without diameter caps, where you are just strictly doing the restoration thinning, that it yielded about \$8.00 per acre to do the thinning treatments and all of the operations with that, about \$8.00 per acre. So it would not cost anything for just the hazardous fuel reduction part, the thinning and removal.

If you had a—I am going to say a 16-inch cap, it might have been 14-inches, I will have to look at it again, it cost about \$370.00 per acre instead of yielding eight.

So these caps make a huge difference because the value is not linear with tree diameter, there are some real thresholds there. It is more exponential in its function's shape.

So anyway, with the 12-inch diameter, I believe it was \$370.00—or 14-inch diameter, it was \$370.00 per acre—I can get this for you instead of me just trying to recall it from my feeble mind. And then at nine inches, I think it cost around \$500.00 per acre to do the treatments. And that was in Ponderosa pine and in New Mexico. I would expect similar here.

Mr. FLAKE. Are these stands similar to that?

Mr. COVINGTON. They are similar to the analysis they did in New Mexico, although the value might be a little higher here because we have larger areas that are pure Ponderosa pine than they have in New Mexico.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you. I thank the Chairman.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you, Congressman Flake. And I thank our witnesses. We point out that stewardship contracting, a pilot project that has been in existence, the President's bill, what we are trying to do now is get permanent authority to get this done from

Ag and from Interior, goods for services, best value, choose the contractor with the best project proposal, not solely based on lowest bid, which reminds me of what the late Alan Shephard used to say about the space program, he said you are sitting on top of that rocket and you realize everything has gone to the lowest bidder.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HAYWORTH. Local preference vitally important to businesses, collaborative planning of projects and receipt retention on forests—some common sense steps that we welcome from the administration. Congressman Flake and I are trying to work with colleagues from across the country from both political parties to get done.

Gentlemen, we thank you again for your testimony, Dr. Covington and Mr. Porter, the fact that we were able to come here but also the number of times you have come to Washington to testify there and to work to be proponents for effective forest management. Thank you both.

Ladies and gentlemen, the first three words of our Constitution read “We the people.” Keeping that in mind and thanking you for your indulgence this afternoon, we would invite you front and center. We have a microphone right here. It is 10 minutes until four and we thank you for your patience and forbearance. While we were a bit more indulgent with time for our formal witnesses, we will give each of you who wants to line up 2 minutes to offer your thoughts to us if you are so inclined, if you can encapsulate some thoughts. We do not mean to be abrupt, but we will try to be very strict with the time limit to get a multiplicity of voices.

And so it is in that spirit that we invite you front and center. If you could state your name for us and offer your thoughts succinctly in 2 minutes time, that would be great. The other thing that we would again point out to you this afternoon is that as you see on the copies of the agenda distributed earlier, on the back side of the agenda, there are addresses where you can mail, e-mail or fax your own testimony to be a part of this record of this public hearing today.

With that, we open the mic here front and center, as you see it right down here in front of the orchestra pit, and we welcome you here for your comments. Yes, ma’am.

COMMENTS OF VICKY STOCKTON

Ms. STOCKTON. My name is Vicky Stockton, I have lived in this community for 10 years, I owned a home in Timberland Acres. In Timberland Acres, 80 percent of the homes that were lost there were primary homes, not secondary, two-thirds of the neighborhood is gone.

I have the following statements:

I am tired of hearing that no lives were lost. There were lives lost—people that died from stroke because of the gestapo tactics that were used to evacuate us, people that had heart attacks—there are people that died because of this fire.

I am also tired of being desensitized with the word “structure.” Structures were not lost, homes were lost.

I think that there should be some question about the delay that it took on the Rodeo fire because of an archeological dig. That was

not mentioned by anybody who spoke today and our understanding is that it was several hours.

Jake Flake, you have said that—were quoted in the paper saying that there was no entity in Timberland Acres and that you had been offered a lot of money—not offered like that—offered money to help those people. We have a road board in Timberland Acres that has a chairman, a vice chairman and a secretary-treasurer and I am sure that they could accommodate any of those funds so that it could be disbursed to us in that community.

We are worried about the grasses that are being planted. No grazing is said to be done on that land that the grasses are being planted, and from the ranchers in my area, they are telling me that when that grass gets three foot high, that fire is going to come through there quicker and faster than it did this time.

When us in our community called at 8 on Tuesday night when the Rodeo fire started, we were told by our local sheriff that it was contained. Then we were only given 2 hours to evacuate.

We were not happy that this fire was fought 9 to 5. When they were in there having their meetings every morning, our land was burning. That fire started on Tuesday, my home burned on Saturday afternoon late.

Pete Shumway told us that there is four million available for our area. We have not seen it. Dumpsters were put out there the first couple of weeks, but we could not put metal or concrete or anything in there. What were they for? Now dumpsters were put out there and all we have got is wood to get rid of and we are not allowed to put wood in them. So I do not know what that money was used for.

Now they are telling us that chipper crews are out there. However, the logs have to be exactly 36 inches long and cannot be any bigger in diameter than whatever the number is.

[Applause.]

Ms. STOCKTON. It is a waste of time and money.

And last but not least, myself and another individual in Timberland Acres observed the fire—the United States Forest Service cutting in fire lines on Forest Service property after the fire.

[Applause.]

Ms. STOCKTON. Were they doing that to cover their butts? Because they were cutting in fire lines after the fire.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Vicky, thank you for your comments. Again, if you would put them in writing as well, we would like to have them to continue.

And since your name was mentioned, Congressman Flake, would you like to comment?

Mr. FLAKE. Just for the record, Vicky, thank you for your comments. I am Jeff. Jake is my uncle. It may have been Jake. If I do not get back to you, that is why. He is a good guy, I am pleased to be confused with him most times.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Our very capable staff has given me a chance to see that we have microphones on both sides. We turn now a recognize the Mayor of Pine Top, our friend Ginny Handorf.

**COMMENTS OF HON. GINNY HANDORF, MAYOR, PINE TOP,
ARIZONA**

Mayor HANDORF. Thank you, J.D.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mayor, welcome.

Mayor HANDORF. Thank you. And thank you for being here and having this hearing.

I just wanted to probably represent to you, I assume it is somewhere in your documentation, but I wanted to draw it to your attention. A couple of weeks ago, the League of Arizona Cities and Towns passed a special resolution from the entire League and I want you all to know this was passed by every city and town in the state of Arizona, whether they were an urban community, whether they were a desert community, all of them. They are supporting the President's forest health initiative. This is a lot of whereases and I do not want to take up the time for that, but they are supporting Senator Kyl's initiative to expedite the procedures for forest thinning and restoration.

A couple of things I will read:

"Whereas, Arizona witnessed firsthand the consequences of current policy in the tragic and devastating forest fires throughout the summer of 2002, culminating in the Rodeo-Chediski fire which consumed nearly one-half million acres of forest; and

"Whereas, fires not only destroy lives, forests, wildlife, homes and other structures, but also affect the economy of the entire region."

This was passed by all the cities and towns and I think it shows the severity, the need to get at this immediately. It is not just our area, it is not just our towns, it is not just our communities, it is the whole state begging and pleading.

I heard the President yesterday say we have got to get rid of some of these rules that are just crazy rules, that are stopping us from getting things done.

Also, on behalf of the towns of Pine Top and Lakeside, I would like to express to all of the people that did lose their homes or that had bad experiences with this fire, please do not hate us because we survived. You know, we were very fortunate, we certainly did not wish the fire to go in that direction and we are really sorry for all of you that experienced this terrible tragedy. We are trying to do our best to help in any way that we can and if we are not helping enough, let us know because maybe there is more we can do.

So please, I know it is awful to go through this kind of thing, but you know, in your anger and in your traumatic experience, do not hate everybody that this did not happen to, I beg you of that.

That is my thing. If you need a copy of this, this is just a copy, I think you probably have that documentation, but I can submit this.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Mayor, we thank you, and we will have it submitted for the record and it will become part of our record, as your comments will.

Mayor HANDORF. Thank you.

Mr. HAYWORTH. To C.D. Nunnally from Timberland Acres. Welcome, C.D.

[The resolution has been retained in the Committee's official files.]

COMMENTS OF C.D. NUNNALLY

Mr. NUNNALLY. Thank you for letting me speak. I am C.D. Nunnally from the Linden Fire Department and I also live in Timberland Acres.

The system that they have for managing these fires is great, but they need to get more input from the local fire departments. They went into Timberland Acres, they had no idea of the streets and how they are structured. So they need to get the team, the No. 1 team, when they come into these areas, to get the locals' input. Without that, they are shooting blind.

Also, they need to get them more involved in the system. If they would get the locals involved, they would have a much better way of fighting the fires.

That is all I have got to say.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you very much, C.D., appreciate it.

Now I believe it is Jeff's old pal from school, if I am not mistaken, Kathy Gibson-Boatman.

Mr. FLAKE. She did a lot better in school than I did.

Mr. HAYWORTH. She did a lot better. The Congressman for purposes of the full disclosure law, your academic achievement.

We welcome you here to the microphone.

COMMENTS OF KATHY GIBSON-BOATMAN

Ms. GIBSON-BOATMAN. OK. I had a list of questions that I submitted and we sort of chose one that seemed to be one of our most burning questions, what we really wanted to know.

I have heard people state that the incident command system worked perfectly. And I beg to disagree with that. I have spoken with officials in Washington, people that have worked in fire-fighting for 20-plus years on a Type I team, and I have been informed that that system did not work the way that it should have worked.

I am a bit disappointed that we do not have Mr. Humphries here today so that maybe we could ask him a few of these questions directly. He was the leader, the incident commander, of that situation.

So I have a question for you. What was the outcome of the inquiry/investigation and what are agency plans for accountability, as discussed at previous Congressional hearings? I have been informed that there was an inquiry into the way that that situation was handled with the incident commander. Can you tell me what is the outcome of the inquiry into the way the situation was handled with the Rodeo-Chediski fire?

Mr. HAYWORTH. Kathy, as you mentioned this, I am not familiar with the completion of the inquiry.

Ms. GIBSON-BOATMAN. Well, I do not know if it is completed, but I know that there was an inquiry started and that senior officials were sent from Washington to Arizona to speak with Mr. Humphries regarding the deployment of resources and things of that nature. And for that matter, if you want witnesses in that, you may want to check with Chief Bosworth and Under Secretary Ray. They have direct knowledge of that incident.

Mr. HAYWORTH. I appreciate that.

Mr. FLAKE. We can follow up now that we know and see what the status of that inquiry is. And we would be glad to do so.

Ms. GIBSON-BOATMAN. That is a question that we would really like to understand. That may help explain why Heber did not get help for what is it, 5 days. And I do not think that that is acceptable under anybody's guidelines on a fire of this size. We heard Chief Epps say he did not have a Type I crew there until, what was it, five-six days into that fire. I do not think that is acceptable anywhere.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you for raising that and we will follow up on it. Thank you for raising that, Kathy.

Ms. GIBSON-BOATMAN. Thank you.

Mr. FLAKE. Let me just add to that. As mentioned, Kathy and I had a few conversations during the time, the Sunday and Monday when a lot of this was going on, and I felt at that time and continue to feel that there are legitimate grievances by those in the Heber-Overgaard area, particularly in the area of information, if nothing else, that they were not given, about what was going on. And also from the deployment of resources and what-not. I have heard enough from enough people to believe that we ought to have more follow up, and so I will be interested in the outcome of that inquiry as well.

Mr. HAYWORTH. We welcome next, Al Zoellner to the mic. Al, welcome.

COMMENTS OF AL ZOELLNER

Mr. ZOELLNER. I live in Timberland Acres. I was on the—we have a special road district there which is kind of unique. We have to maintain our own roads. I was on that for approximately 4 years.

The thing I am going to address is the environmentalists are the ones that are hurting us the most. I know the government's hands are tied every time they go to court. Is it possible that individuals or groups of individuals could sue the environmentalists for all the damage they are doing?

[Applause.]

Mr. ZOELLNER. I figure that is pretty cheap. I figure is we sue them for \$300 million, that it will be just like a sinking ship, watch the rats go off.

I really agree with Vicky, it is unfortunate of all the stuff she went through, being a single mom, she did not know about the container program to get cleaned up, so she had to come out of her own pocket, made her very poor. I worked on that dumpster program, I put on about 700 volunteer hours as a volunteer and if Timberland Acres would not have had the volunteers from the churches, the Boy Scouts and the Eagle Scouts, we would still be 6 months in cleaning up. Right now, we have only got two places to clean up yet.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

Mr. HAYWORTH. Al, thank you.

Dr. Martin Moore from St. Johns joins us. Dr. Moore, welcome.

COMMENTS OF DR. MARTIN MOORE

Dr. MOORE. Thank you, Congressman Hayworth, Congressman Flake, I appreciate this opportunity.

First of all, we offer greetings on behalf of Ron Christianson from the Heber County Board of Supervisors, who is also the Chairman of our Eastern Arizona Counties Organization Board of Directors. Mr. Shumway also serves on the Board of Directors in addition to being the Vice Chairman and we wanted to say we fully concur and appreciate the comments that he has made in relationship. All five of the counties have been working very diligently and very hard on these types of restoration type programs, and fully support the county partnership restoration effort.

And obviously look forward on the Coronado, the Tonto and the other national forests, to the successful pilot on the Apache Sitgreaves Forest.

On behalf of Mr. Harrington, our Vice Chairman from Grand County, we also extend to you the great concern for Mt. Graham, which is a similar issue here. We know we are talking about the Rodeo fire here.

We also extend publicly to all of those who lost homes, all of those who lost lives because of health related concerns that were tied to smoke and other things with the fire, our deepest condolences.

We also offer to you to continue to work with you and other Members of Congress and the administration in the development of these programs that will help to bring the forests back to a healthy condition and avoid these catastrophic fire circumstances.

And in conjunction with that, we appreciate the opportunity to work on the Energy Advisory types of teams and continue to work on the West Moreno Energy Initiative that we are working on that hopefully can use a lot of the small diameter timber that we are trying to struggle so mightily to dispose of.

Thank you.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you very much, Dr. Moore.

Now I believe more kinfolks, huh, Jeff? There is Sanford Flake over at the mic from Snowflake. Welcome, Mr. Flake.

COMMENTS OF SANFORD FLAKE

Mr. SANFORD FLAKE. How are you doing?

Mr. HAYWORTH. Fine, sir. Welcome.

Mr. SANFORD FLAKE. I worked in the woods when I was a young married man, that was my employment, for the Porters.

I have seen this forest situation grow to what it is today, a hazard that they just could not corral, they just could not corral it. All that fancy equipment that the Bureau of Land Management or anybody could bring there, they could not do nothing with it, or they were scared of it. There was a lot of people so afraid that they did not attack the fire in a timely manner.

I think, however, in order to save those kinds of risks again, or those dangers again, we have got to have a plan. Contiguous forests breed that thing, especially when we have not whipped the drought. It is going to happen again and we need to make a grid of clear-cut grids where—you know, they used a few roads here that helped contain the fire and if we do not have any roads in

there, no grids where you can just block each grid off where it cannot catch fire onto the next one and you can be there to catch it if it blows over. You have got to open these forests, you cannot just leave them where you cannot get into them and they are a big thing that will take your whole town and it should be done over the whole forest.

I know you have got a lot of problems with people suing you because you cannot touch it and you are all afraid to do anything because they are going to lodge a complaint and they are going to throw it into court and you cannot get at it. But we have got to do the right thing, anything that is right, and let the consequence fall. You have got to get some kind of a document before the President and the legislature or whatever, to get the right thing started to be done, and now, to save this thing. And then let them sue or do anything they want. Worry about them court cases later. I feel that that is what a person needs to do.

Now to quote a little scripture, the second chapter of Genesis, the 15th verse said that the Lord took Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden and he told him to dress and take care of it.

Now you have to take care of the thing, even in that day before Adam fell, the garden had to be dressed and taken care of.

We have got a wonderful heritage here if we will just dress and take care of it.

I went to Washington, D.C., that is the knock downdest, worst place to go today in the mall, there is no grass because these guys that have nothing to do stand there and give you guys a hassle for doing the right thing, and they march and they try to get things for nothing.

I think we need to instigate something like the WPA, the CCC or whatever, and if anybody opens their mouth about they need reparations or whatever, well, bring them in this forest and clean it up. And try to get a little grass started out there on the mall so that we can enjoy our national Capitol when we come see it and not let it be tread down by these carriers of bad news, lawsuits and people that have nothing else to do but complain against our government.

Thank you.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Flake, thank you for coming.

Mr. FLAKE. I have a drawing here by Mr. Flake. Anybody that knows Uncle Sanford knows he is a noted artist. This is not his best work, but he did put a grid system here which I will be glad to pass along.

Mr. HAYWORTH. And I believe next to the mic here, if I am not mistaken, Janet Gibson joins us from Heber. Hi, Janet, welcome.

COMMENTS OF JANET GIBSON

Ms. GIBSON. Thank you.

I just had two points that struck me for quite some time now, but No. 1, I know Dr. Covington, he extolled some of the advantages of the Type I, Type II teams and I am sure that they work and I think we even saw that work in the Show Low area. But I think that one of the problems that we ran into was that the Chediski fire was never addressed as being a separate incident in and of itself. It was lumped in with the Rodeo fire, and hence the

long delay in getting teams over there and getting them working and fighting that fire. It was all lumped into one incident, which it was not.

The other point I just want to bring up in maybe looking at the overall situation of forest health is that looking back in history, the original commission of the U.S.D.A. Forest Service was to manage our public lands for multiple use, and that included ranching and logging and recreation and areas that did need protection perhaps for particular habitat, et cetera.

I contend that for numerous years now, the Forest Service has lost that mission and a lot of it is due to these special interest groups and lawsuits always being lobbied against them. And that in fact, some of these special interest people have even infiltrated and are employees of the Forest Service so that—I mean there are times when the Forest Service is actually working against itself because you have people in here trying to manage timber and then you have environmentalists over here, and within the same agency, the same two interests cannot reach an agreement to manage the forests for multiple use.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you very much for your comments, Janet. Now we turn to this mic and—

[Applause.]

Mr. HAYWORTH. —Susan Weidner came all the way from Mesa. Welcome, Susan.

COMMENTS OF SUSAN WEIDNER

Ms. WEIDNER. Yes, sir, thank you. My husband is also here in the audience today. I moved to the Valley about 4 years ago. He is a geologist who did his graduate work at the University of Arizona in Tucson, he loves this state and that is why we are here.

I had previously served as senior commercial officer at two U.S. embassies abroad, so one of my particular interests is economic development.

We made a decision to build a home at Bison Ranch in Overgaard. We took possession of it in February of 2001, we lost that home in its entirety, it burned to the ground in half an hour, we are told by people who were there on the ground. We were particularly interested in Chief Epps' account of what he attempted to do and what resources he had or did not have.

My comment concerns economic development in the area and the fact that we made that choice because we love the state and its beauty, we wanted to enjoy that, but we also wanted to help promote further economic development. As we sat in our home in Mesa and watched the coverage of the Rodeo fire with increasing alarm, particularly with the advent of the second fire, we were struck—I must say certainly after the Chediski fire was underway, we were struck by the very little mention of Heber and Overgaard and Bison Ranch, virtually no mention until quite late in the scheme of things. We found out only on Tuesday because of our next door neighbor who also lost his home at Bison Ranch, someone on the ground told him that our homes had both burned to the ground. We were at a loss to understand why there was so little attention devoted to that particular area.

It seemed to us that Gary Martin's imminent project at Bison Ranch was a significant step forward in the increasing economic development of the area. It, by all accounts, at least in our opinion, our experience, was quality work and only a boon to the local economy, bringing more people and money to be spent in the area and illustrating to people what exists and what can be further done there.

Our concern now is whether to rebuild. Our woods are ruined, totally blackened behind our former home site. That is one break on our possible rebuilding there. Another concern would be why that area was so ignored and are we only safer building a home further east where there was a lot more attention paid, at least judging by the media coverage.

If our area was neglected for triage reasons, if it was because there were inadequate resources to deal with both fires at the same time, we wish someone would be honest enough to say that, that the was a deliberate decision taken. And we hope that that policy will be looked at again in light of the specific problems that Chief Epps has mentioned today.

I was very pleased to learn about these hearings today and I thank the Arizona Republic and NPR for making that known, and also one of the staff at Bison Ranch first told me about it a little bit earlier in the week. I had worked on environmental issues for Phillips Petroleum for a few years, so I am very pleased to have a chance to participate here today and thank you very much for holding this session.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Susan, we thank you very much for taking time to join us and for your perspective.

The Executive Director of the White Mountain Youth Corps of Show Low and White River, Rob Breen is here. Rob, welcome.

COMMENTS OF ROB BREEN

Mr. BREEN. Thank you, Chairman Hayworth and Congressman Flake. My name is Rob Breen, I am the Executive Director of the White Mountain Youth Corps. We are a youth and young adult conservation corps program, an Americorps program, that recently moved down to this area to create a youth and young adult conservation corps to respond to forest restoration issues in response to the Rodeo-Chediski fire.

What we do is we gather all rural youth from the area, including young people from White River on the reservation, and we will respond to forest restoration issues and projects over this next year.

But there have been so many critiques that are going on here, I wanted to offer you a little bit of hope here and also provide perhaps some recommendations of ways that we can address the western forest health issues, using youth and young adult conservation corps. There are many conservation corps around the United States, including many that are in the southwest, and we do have three corps right here in Arizona.

We can respond by doing thinning projects in the forest, doing environmental assessments which provide researchers for gathering management data that we need to do environmental assessments. We can actually respond to fires when they break out, do emergency response, particularly initial response in fires and do

ongoing firefighting. And we can engage in post-fire restoration with young people, training them to do these types of skills, this type of work afterwards. And then we can also engage in rural young entrepreneurship in wood utilization projects. There is a corps in northern New Mexico that is engaged in that using small diameter trees to produce products. In this, we are engaging our young rural sons and daughters instead of sending them off to the cities, they can stay here, do these jobs, learn these skills, perhaps learn entrepreneurship skills and stay right here and we can use them—we can use WIA youth employment dollars federally, we can use Americorps dollars. There are a lot of state dollars that we can utilize, and by crossing two different policy issues—forest health policy and youth and young adult development and employment dollars, we can cross those two policy issues and respond to these issues in a positive way.

Thank you.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Rob, we thank you very much for offering that perspective here today. We will certainly keep that in mind.

Up from Scottsdale, John McConnell. Welcome, John.

COMMENTS OF JOHN MCCONNELL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Thank you.

Everyone heard on the program was speaking about the future, what can we do for the future.

I have a program that I have been working on for quite sometime, I will give you a couple of clues. I am a former Air Force pilot, World War II, did a lot of formation flying. No. 2, I moved to Phoenix and have been in the swimming pool business for about 50 years, so I have a lot of water knowledge. These two clues should give you an idea where I am coming from.

I do not know whether I mentioned it or not, but on May 12, 1945, the U.S. Air Force and the British put 1000 bombers over Berlin in a 24-hour period. Just recently, I had four basic patents submitted to be able to convert most any cargo plane with very little modification to become a vehicle to spray water out in order to create a rainstorm. Any firefighter, he knows what he prays for, it is rain. Also, the environmental people would love this due to the pollution.

I could go forward with this project if I knew what way to go from here. That is why I am speaking to you, Mr. Hayworth. I have the patents, I have the time, I need the party to help me go forward with this process.

Thank you.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Well, thank you very much, John. To let you know, I think we have a chance closer to us, October 22, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and BLM are putting together a fact-finding panel on aviation to identify some key planning and we will be happy to get you those addresses at the end of the time here and maybe try to find some other avenues.

The great thing we learn, ladies and gentlemen, from these gatherings and these hearings and this open mic time, like many town halls, we understand that all good ideas certainly do not emanate from Washington, D.C. And we will be very happy to follow up to let you know how to propose that. And we thank you for that.

Now we turn to our friend, His Honor, the Mayor of Show Low, Gene Kelley. Gene, welcome, and thank you for being here.

COMMENTS OF HON. GENE KELLEY, MAYOR, SHOW LOW, AZ

Mayor. KELLEY. Thank you, Chairman Hayworth, and Congressman Flake. I want to take this opportunity to welcome you to Show Low. As the Mayor of our town, I was told if I were to be mayor, I would have an opportunity to welcome people to Show Low. The truth of the matter is just days after I accepted that responsibility, and indeed I had asked for it, I had the very poor job assigned to me to ask everybody to leave Show Low. That was no fun. However, it was a joyous day not many days after that to welcome them back to a town that never had fire in it.

We felt so badly for our neighbors to the west and I have to point out that in all of this, all the records that were set by this horrible fire, there is one record that people tell me is probably very valid, and that is about people helping people. We moved some 30,000 people out of this area, not all out of Show Low, and a big, large number of them went over to the dome, as you well know. I am told half of those people that registered in wound up in people's homes that they did not know—people helping people.

It has been testified that out here at Timberland Acres, it is nearly cleaned up—volunteerism, people helping people on a scale that is literally unheard of and should be looked at just for example's sake.

You know, I am so discouraged at the continued talk and rhetoric that comes about the salvage harvest of this timber. And please, understand with all due respect, my blunt comment is not directed at you two gentlemen. I did take the hand of our President in mine and asked him if he understood what we could anticipate in terms of being able to successfully salvage this timber and he said he understood it and I asked him if he would cooperate in declaring the necessary emergencies to allow this to take place. Because it is not only the economic value of this timber and the board feet that can be extracted from it. The urgency of time has been repeated over and over by the experts. But if we leave it there, I am told that we will have an insect infestation that is likely to wipe out the green that has been left among it, not just the bark beetle, but many, many other forms of insect infestation that will be rampant because of all the food supply. It is a simple thing that forest management knows.

It would seem to me that if we are collectively unable to accomplish permitting salvage harvest to begin within weeks, if not months, knowing it can only take place during a dry forest surface so we do not tear up the ground, or a frozen surface, therefore, we know we only have limited months for this to occur.

I submit to you if we are unable collectively to manage this, it is not what would appear to be the behavior of intelligent beings. It is foolishness. Every expert agrees on what needs to be done for the salvage, and then what needs to be done on the thinning.

You probably know all of the fuels east of 60 and immediately south of Show Low are still there, a very present danger that we could burn next year. If Show Low burns, all the experts tell me, Pine Top and Lakeside will burn, Honda homesites will burn, the

casino area. You know, they told me in those meetings the next place they had a chance at stopping this thing, if they did not stop it on 60, was up at the junction leading into Sunrise Lake.

So I just challenge you to redouble your efforts. I know they are there already, so please do not be insulted. I was told today not to bother coming here, "Gene, you can effect no change at the Federal level." I could not accept that, I hope we can effect a change. When we continue to perpetuate a behavior that causes harm to ourselves—we can watch animals, if they harm themselves perpetually, they will stop that behavior.

We know what we are doing is harming ourselves. We must stop that behavior.

And I thank you gentlemen.

Mr. HAYWORTH. We thank you, Mr. Mayor, well said.

[Applause.]

Mr. HAYWORTH. Next we will hear from Jerry Smith from Snowflake.

COMMENTS OF JERRY SMITH

Mr. SMITH. I would like to thank both of you for being here today and giving us the opportunity to participate in this. Two minutes is not a whole lot of time to say anything, but you will be getting a written statement from me.

Just to give you a little background, I was on the Chediski fire for 12 straight days, started the second day after it got started. And worked with my brother, Wally Smith, who owns a logging company in Overgaard.

To answer your earlier question about how do you keep track of these red cards and equipment that are signed up. Every year since I can remember, the Forest Service signs up equipment. My brother had signed up his equipment in April and so he was well documented before the fire came.

The thing that interested me was it was on Friday afternoon that they finally called us to send equipment out on this fire at Overgaard, to try to build a fuel break right there along the fence. Of course, the fire hit Overgaard on Saturday. Well, we missed about 3 days we could have been doing something, yet they did not even call us and we were signed up.

So I am not quite as proud of the number I team management or whatever they call these Forest Service people as Dr. Covington is. I think there is a communication problem there. Like somebody alluded to said that the first fellow that came there was from Alaska. Well, no doubt he is well trained in forest management and fires and all that kind of stuff, but I think they should have looked more toward the local people and had us out there helping more. I mean if you sent me to Alaska, I would not know what to do either, I would not know the lay of the land or anything else.

So I think there are some issues that need to be addressed on this management team thing. I think the local Forest Service people and the local contractors should be asked more for input. Mell Epps done the best he could and I praise him for doing a good job, but with a little more help and a little more organization, we could have been a lot more effective and I think we could probably have prevented a lot of loss in Overgaard. Had we been able to go out

a couple of days earlier, which we could have, we were sitting right in the middle of Overgaard with all this equipment setting there, and yet they did not call us. Now if that is not a break down, I do not know what to say.

Mr. FLAKE. Would you clarify, you had a read card, you were certified, you were on the list?

Mr. SMITH. Uh-huh. We had signed up. My brother had signed up all his equipment with the Forest Service way back in April. So I don't know, they had plenty of notice there.

But it was kind of took out of the hands of the locals when they send these management teams in and they have no idea who the local people are or what they can do. And Heber-Overgaard is kind of unique, we still have some local people that were loggers. My dad logged there at Overgaard for 30 years and I used to be a logger until we kind of became an extinct breed.

But anyhow, I think there are a lot of improvements that could be made in this management team issue. I think they should get more local input on what should happen and how it should be addressed.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

Mr. HAYWORTH. Jerry, we thank you very much.

A lady who splits her time between Heber and Phoenix, Jean Farmer. Jean, thank you and welcome.

COMMENTS OF JEAN FARMER

Ms. FARMER. Thank you. I want to thank both of you, first of all, for being here and doing this, and caring enough for all of these people that are out here and everybody that has lot something.

I think I probably have the most controversial question out of all of this, but before I ask it and before I talk about it, I would like to tell you where I come from.

I own a home in Heber, thank goodness it is still standing. I am sure that I have a lot of gratefulness to a lot of local people that I think really worked hard in the Heber area to make that happen. But I do want to let you know that the road that I live on, eight of the 13 homes burned down—eight of them on our road alone. And when we came in the week after the fourth of July when they allowed us in, it looked like somebody had dropped a bomb in that area. That is how severe it was.

And when I look, and I watch the papers, through the summer months every year, wildfires are beginning to become an everyday word that we are all beginning to use more frequently. We have fires burning all over. We have forests that are in serious, serious trouble right here in the state of Arizona. Obviously that is why everybody has been gathered here, that is why all the discussions have occurred. But these forests are not going to get healthy quickly and we still have issues that we have to deal with next year and the year after that.

My concern is how do we educate the public that our forests are fragile right now and that they have to be diligent and they have to be extremely careful when they are there. And the reason I ask this question of what we are going to do to educate the public is because in the July 2001 oversight hearing Committee, quoting Mr.

Bosworth from those meeting minutes, this is in 2001, responding to a question, what does the source of the fire have to do with it. I mentioned arson laws, for example, if a person starts a fire, then they have some responsibility for what happens when that fire burns. What is the situation that we have right now with what occurred with the Chediski fire because obviously Mr. Gregg was arrested and is being held right now for the Rodeo fire, when we have a law on the books that says Federal regulations prohibit setting unauthorized fires on public land and do not make exceptions for emergencies.

So my question is why did the attorney for Arizona, the U.S. Attorney for Arizona, not find in any set of circumstances any way to charge either Ms. Elliott or Mr. Olmstead with any personal or civil liability whatsoever for the fire that was started. And I guess I could ask that question as well, because there have been many other circumstances where people have been held accountable, where there have been charges filed against them, one of them right here in the state of Arizona, the LaRue fire, where they simply left it unattended. There was no criminal intent there either.

So I would like to ask that question and have that answered.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Jean, we thank you for the question. I should point out I am not a lawyer, nor do I play one on TV. As I understand it, inherent in every legal determination, especially that of a prosecutor, is the term "prosecutorial discretion." In other words, they take a look ahead of time to applying the law and the context in which it is applied.

The Congress of the United States, in the separation of powers, with the Judicial Branch does not have the ability to direct or decree prosecutorial discretion in one way or another. It may not be a satisfying answer, but you asked the question and I am trying to answer it to the best of my ability. And that is the reason why the prosecutor in this case has the ability to make such a determination.

Ms. FARMER. But do we understand why he made that determination? I would like something that I could understand.

Mr. FLAKE. I think from my perspective—

Ms. FARMER. I am sorry, Congressman Flake, I think there are quite a few people who would like that answer.

Mr. FLAKE. I can only say that you would have to take from his own comments, he spoke to that, Mr. Charlton, the U.S. Attorney. As Congressman Hayworth said, he represents the Federal Government but the U.S. Congress has no bearing on decisions that he makes.

Ms. FARMER. OK.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Jean, what we can do, and we will be happy to do this for you and everybody else, an inquiry can go to the U.S. Attorney for Arizona, asking for a more formal declaration. It may have been issued that day, I do not have that document here. If you would like the complete document and their rationale, we would be happy to use our good offices to get you that formal statement.

Ms. FARMER. I would very much appreciate your help with that, thank you very, very much.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Jean, thank you very much.

And Bob Applegate. What is the old phrase, last but not least? Certainly not least, but the final comment comes from you, Bob, we welcome you.

COMMENTS OF BOB APPLGATE

Mr. APPLGATE. Well, fine. This old boy is a country boy from Arizona and Attica, Indiana.

I became an inventor when I was five when I took a windup train and put a wire on a knife and stuck it in the ironing outlet, but the train did not run and neither did the family 32-volt Delco system. So after they sent me to Purdue to become an engineer, I got a little better.

During the war, I helped design equipment and since my family had been farmers in Indiana since 1824 and in the U.S. since 1656, I did not have a corporate background. So I invented corn dryers and 30 years ago, I invented the first commercial working air curtain destructors. We have had them in all sorts of states. Bechtel bought two of them and used them out at the atomic plant before there was any concrete in sight, to burn stuff in the desert and we did not catch the desert on fire. And during the hurricane down in Florida, Dr. Ed Middleton of the engineering department that was head of that, asked me to be his consultant on open burning and that stuff was wet and messy. We toured 22 sites and mine was the only site that worked properly.

It appears to me that cleaning the forests is a very simple situation, which we have burned tree slash all over the countryside and outside the country. It takes a bulldozer with forks on the front of it to dig a pit. The air curtain destructor with a diesel engine on it, one man on the bulldozer, one man keeping—taking care to keep anybody from getting into the pit. The smallest unit will burn seven tons an hour and it will only take four acres of forest in order to use up that CO₂.

Now the other remark—and by the way, I walked these down to your office and walked them down to Senator Kyl's office and I never got a call from either one of you.

But I want to tell these people how unhappy this old farm boy is that the town of Phoenix does not, after your 400 hours up here, just do not act like anything happened up here, unfortunately. We farm people, when somebody had a house to burn down out here, everybody was pitching in and doing something.

And the other thing I would like to say is that I gave this to the Mesa paper and I thought they were going to print it, and here is a picture of one operating and I tell people their mother in law would look real good across that fire.

[Laughter.]

Mr. APPLGATE. But I do want to tell the people that the town of Show Low looks awfully good from 10 to 12,000. I have flown by here many times from Attica and told my kids the story of your name.

Have I used up the 2 minutes? If I have not, I will shut up anyhow.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Very efficient use, Bob. We thank you as an alumnus of Purdue and we will be happy—I am glad you brought this face to face with me again and we will be happy to try and

get it in front of the appropriate folks. We thank you for your comments.

One additional comment by the gentleman who was nice enough and patient enough to operate the camera. From Pinedale, Marvin Peterson steps before the mic.

COMMENTS OF MARVIN PETERSON

Mr. PETERSON. Thank both of you. I cannot talk very well because I have been sick for a few weeks, probably all the smoke I picked up a few weeks ago.

You know, when I was just a little kid, I would go out in Pinedale, out in the woods out there and they would be logging. I would not be there when they logged, but I would go out there and I remember as a young child counting the rings back to 1776 on a tree, and that reminded me, and I am sure Mr. Flake knows, many people that are Hancocks in this area, and I would say direct line—indirect because poor Mr. John Hancock, my direct relative or indirect I should say because all of his posterity died, worked very hard and stood forward and had courage. And I think that is what these people have talked about to you today, is to have courage.

I will tell you what, I also heard another story that is very important today. As I recall there was a bus explosion in Tel Aviv a few days ago and there was a young man who was about 19 years old and he was going to be a medical student and he decided to go over and do some service over there in preparation for him to go into medical school. He lost his life. That grieving family—and this is the parallel I am getting to, just like we are grieving over the problems that have been here—was kind enough to donate an organ to save another one's life. I will just tell you, the only thing that would make me upset is that if we let this forest—I do not care if we do not make any money, I do not care if this government does not get any more money—I would rather have a tree cut down and made into a toy for a child than to have it be eaten up and rotted up by a bug.

They are being very conservative. Mr. Porter, I know would—I think if we all were not with this big mask over our face to say that it is going to be 12 months, would tell you the truth that the impact of water and the value of lumber once water gets in under the bark and it turns brown, goes like this, let alone the bugs.

I think that we need to act, I think we need to act with courage, we need to act with the courage that John Hancock had and that is what I am asking you to do, both of you to do. Maybe get on your knees and pray for the help that you need to help people understand that we will truly be wasting the resource that has already been pretty much destroyed from an ecological standpoint. I pray that you will have courage and I will pray for you to have courage to do the right thing, because, you know, I guess if we were unorthodox instead of nailing nails into the stumps, we would be out there cutting it down and hauling it off somewhere so someone could do it, because I would rather see a board on a wall. I would rather see the boards given away to someone to build a house than to see it wasted.

I thank you for this time and for this day and for the opportunity to be an American with you.

[Applause.]

Mr. HAYWORTH. Marvin, thank you.

You have been wonderful this afternoon. I would yield to my friend from the First District for any closing comment he might have.

Mr. FLAKE. I just want to thank all of you, both witnesses and everybody who made comments. I will take back with me and I am sure Congressman Hayworth will as well, an added sense of urgency to work with our colleagues on this issue.

And so I thank you for this.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Thank you, Congressman Flake.

Ladies and gentlemen, we wanted to bring Washington to the White Mountains because not only was it practical, it is a lot easier for folks who encounter difficulties to come a few miles to gather here than to go back 2500 miles across the country.

Your experiences and your perspective will help guide us in the days ahead. We do not expect unanimity from a gathering like this or 100 percent satisfaction. That is impossible in an imperfect world. But the genius of our republic is again found in the first three words of our Constitution, "We the people," and together, in the aftermath of this tragedy, if there is a silver lining to those pyro-cumulus clouds that towered above these communities and a good part of this state and beyond our borders, it is that no longer is this a philosophical abstraction, no longer can people discount the severity of fire. Now the challenge comes in working prospectively to learn the lessons for effective forest management, for more effective interagency cooperation.

But as Mayor Kelley pointed out a minute ago, in the most difficult of times, in the worst of times, the best shows up in Americans. And as d'Tocqueville pointed out in the 1820's, America is great because America is good. You are good people. We are honored to represent you and because of your goodness, this nation will remain great.

Thank you for your ideas, for your input. This Subcommittee hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:46 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]