



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

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M-14-06

MEMORANDUM – 6 June 2014

TO: NWCG Executive Board, NWCG Program Management Unit, NWCG Committee Chairs,
Geographic Area Coordinating Group Managers

FROM: Dan Smith, Chair, NWCG Executive Board

SUBJECT: “A Week to Remember, Reflect and Learn” June 30-July 6, 2014

This summer, the interagency wildland fire community will mark the 20-year anniversary of the South Canyon Fire accident, that occurred on July 6, 1994, and the one-year anniversary of the Yarnell Hill Fire accident, that occurred on June 30, 2013.

Although these accidents were separated in time by 19 years, they are bound together by several tragic commonalities. Both accidents were burnovers; both accidents resulted in multiple fatalities of highly trained, skilled, and experienced wildland firefighters; and both occurred during devastating wildfire seasons in which 34 wildland firefighters lost their lives in the line of duty.

We believe that the anniversaries of these accidents merit designating Monday, June 30 through Sunday, July 6 as “A Week to Remember, Reflect and Learn,” to honor the memories of all fallen wildland firefighters and to reflect on lessons learned from different types of wildland fire accidents. We invite and encourage all local, state, and federal agencies with roles and responsibilities in wildland fire suppression to participate in this commemoration as they see fit.

From June 30 through July 6, the “6 Minutes for Safety Program” will provide resources to facilitate reflection on, and discussion of, the South Canyon and Yarnell Hill fire accidents as well as some of the hazards that pose the most serious risks to wildland firefighters. The 6 Minutes for Safety Resources will be available online at the Lessons Learned Center website at <http://www.wildfirelessons.net/6minutesforsafety> and in the daily Incident Management Situation Report from June 30 through July 6, available online at <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf>

Public commemoration events are being held in Colorado and Arizona. Information is available online at <http://www.southcanyonfire.com> and http://www.cityofprescott.net/hotshots_anniversary.php

Many positive changes have occurred in the culture of the interagency wildland fire community, and many effective tools have been developed, that have significantly enhanced the safety of wildland firefighters during the 20 years since the South Canyon Fire accident occurred. Agencies with roles and responsibilities in wildland fire suppression continue to work together to do everything possible to reduce the likelihood of similar events in the future. The “Week to Remember, Reflect and Learn” offers an opportunity to renew our commitment to enhancing the safety of the men and women dedicated to protecting lives, property, and natural and cultural resources throughout the United States. We hope that your agency will choose to participate.

cc: Jennifer Jones, USFS Public Affairs; Randy Eardley, BLM Public Affairs; Brit Rosso, Manager, Lessons Learned Center; Kathy Komatz, Lead, Six Minutes for Safety