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National Park Service Press Release

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RELEASES FATALITY INVESTIGATION REPORT, MANAGEMENT REVIEW AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN FOR THE DANIEL HOLMES ACCIDENT

Washington, D.C. – The National Park Service released the fatality investigation report, management report and corrective action plan for the Holmes Accident on April 18, 2005.

Firefighter Daniel Holmes died on October 2, 2004 when the top of a burning snag fell, striking him on the head resulting in fatal injuries. The accident occurred on the Grant West Prescribed Burn located in the Grant Grove area of Kings Canyon National Park. Daniel was a member of the Arrowhead Interagency Hotshot Crew, based at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

A Serious Accident Investigation Team (SAIT) was convened immediately after the accident occurred. The team's role was to conduct the investigation in an objective manner in order to gather the facts and evidence, including causal and contributing factors related to the fatality. Reports produced included the Preliminary Brief and Expanded Brief (respectively the 24 and 72 hour reports); and an Accident Investigation Report that included their findings and causal factors for this incident.

Subsequently, the National Park Service convened a Board of Review (BOR) to evaluate the Holmes Accident Investigation Report submitted by the SAIT. The BOR reviewed the findings, developed recommendations and a corrective action plan.

The corrective action plan contains ten specific action items that include recommendations addressing: working with hazard trees including burning snags; developing a template for a Job Hazard Analysis to enhance employee safety when working in the immediate vicinity of hazard trees; and the need to designate a lookout to watch and warn personnel of objects falling from burning live trees and burning snags during tree felling operations. Varying due dates are presented for the recommendations, with all action items being concluded by October 1, 2005.

On behalf of the National Park Service, Director Fran Mainella accepted the reports and the action plan. Director Mainella and Superintendent Richard Martin jointly stated "We continue to extend our deepest sympathies to Daniel's family, crew members, friends, and the employee family of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. We believe that through this investigation effort, the firefighting community can learn from this accident and prevent future occurrences."

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