



# Arizona Cattlemen's Association

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **A Bomb in Our Forest**

SHOW LOW, AZ, June 30, 2011 – The Arizona Cattlemen's Association (ACA) called for the ushering in of a new era for a forest wide focus on lawsuit reform and returning private ingenuity, private initiative and private investment to reduce forest fuels and return forest management to the multiple uses our state and its citizens desire.

The United States Forest Service (USFS) own Process Predicament Report states, "73 million acres of national forests are at risk from severe wild land fires that threaten human safety and ecosystem integrity." They said this in June of 2002 and after nine years we still allowed a catastrophic situation turn into the largest fire in Arizona history – the Wallow Fire. "The last 30 years of lawsuits, appeals and objections of timber sales, fuel reduction proposals and livestock forage programs have reduced the Forest Service to a shell shocked soldier. They hear a leaf drop and they duck their head," said Steve Brophy, President of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association.

The Apache Forest is growing today as it does every day. Each day it continues to produce wood and plant fuels that continue to build and they do not go away unless people and businesses harvest them. The USFS's own data shows that Arizona's forests have been growing 334 million board feet of timber each and every year from 1986 through 2000. That is 5.5 billion board feet of timber or fuel for the next fire unless we harvest it. Speaking of harvest – during the same 1986 – 2000 time frame the USFS only allowed 1.6 billion board feet to be harvested and 1 billion of it was in the years 1986 to 1990. In 1996 and 1997 it was nearly zero and in 1998 it was zero. We cannot let this bomb to continue to grow in Arizona's forests without managing it. These types of fuel loads will cause another bomb to explode – the only thing we need to determine is if it will be the Coconino, Prescott, Kaibab or the Sitgreaves forest.

In his presentation to the Wallow Fire Hearing, Bas Aja, Government Relations Director of the Arizona Cattlemen's Association said when talking about the fire, "... they say 100 years ago we started suppressing fire; they say about 100 years ago the climatic conditions were perfect for sprouting Ponderosa Pine and we sprouted too many trees; they say 70 years ago we let livestock take too much forage and let the small trees grow; they say 50 years ago we let loggers take out too many old growth trees; and on and on... and I say – yesterday they burned down our back yards; yesterday they damaged our livelihoods; yesterday they polluted our environment, air and water like no one has ever before in our history. So don't talk to us about 100, 70, or 50 years ago – talk to us about yesterday and today!"

Brophy went on to say, "Everyone needs to understand that these wood products are just like fertilizer – they can be used for good or they can be used to build bombs and we have let the bomb makers win. The parts of this bomb were: Removing and reducing private management; the Forest Service paralyzed by process; and lawsuits causing the loss of wood harvesting infrastructure in our rural communities."

For a copy of Bas Aja's presentation to the Legislative hearing call Maria Cadena at (602) 267-1129.

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