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Razorback Crew Receives Appreciation Plaque from Arkansas Razorback Official Mascot

LITTLE ROCK, AR – Arkansas Forestry Commission wildland firefighters with the Razorback Crew were presented an appreciation plaque today by TUSK IV, official mascot of the Arkansas Razorbacks, and the Keith Stokes family for their service on a 28-day assignment at the Lolo Peak wildfire in Montana. The crew received high praise from the Lolo Peak Incident Management Team (IMT) for their work over two assignment periods. This is the fifth mission for Arkansas firefighters with the Razorback Crew.

For the deployment, the U.S. Forest Service assembled 19 firefighters from Arkansas (9) and Oklahoma (10). The crew began at the Lodgepole Complex wildfire on July 25, and was later transferred to the Lolo Peak wildfire for the duration of their assignment that culminated on August 23. The Razorback Crew participated in fireline construction in rough, mountainous terrain using hand tools and dozers. The Montana wildfire is currently burning over 38,000 acres.

“The AFC is dedicated to wildfire suppression and response wherever we can serve. When wildfire danger is low at home, we are pleased to offer out-of-state assistance through resources like our Razorback Crew,” says State Forester Joe Fox. “We are very proud of the leadership and expertise shown by our firefighters. Our thoughts continue with those serving on wildfires across the western U.S.”

AFC firefighters on the Razorback Crew include: Russell Huskey and Justin Hoopengartner (Sebastian County), Wesley McKinney and Les Miller (Conway County), Wes Morgan (Stone County), Freddie Wolfinbarger (Carroll County), Andy Shaver (Van Buren County), John Pressgrove (Arkansas County), and Seth Sumners (Pope County).

Qualified Forestry Commission personnel can volunteer to assist the U.S. Forest Service with wildfire suppression when Arkansas wildfire danger is low. When personnel assist in this capacity they are in a personal leave status and are working directly for the U. S. Forest Service. Deployments with the U.S. Forest Service provide valuable firefighting training and experience for Forestry Commission personnel without adding any additional cost to Arkansas taxpayers.

The Forestry Commission currently has six assisting the U.S. Forest Service, outside of the state of Arkansas, which can include assignment as single resources in various capacities such as information and safety officers, managers of air resources, staging areas, helibase locations, and equipment, unit leaders for facilities or ground support, and others.

The mission of the Arkansas Forestry Commission is to protect Arkansas’s forests, and those who enjoy them, from wildland fire and natural hazards while promoting rural and urban forest health, stewardship, development, and conservation for all generations of Arkansans. The Arkansas Forestry Commission is a part of the Arkansas Agriculture Department.

The Arkansas Agriculture Department offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

