



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Public Affairs
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YUMA MAN CHARGED IN CONNECTION WITH "LANE 2" FIRE

PHOENIX – David Alexander Cygan, 52, of Yuma, Ariz. has been charged with leaving a fire unattended and unextinguished on the Prescott National Forest, as well as several related violations in connection with the "Lane 2" fire in June 2008. He is also charged with unauthorized possession of a badge belonging to the National Park Service.

On June 28, 2008 a search and rescue was initiated by the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office to try and locate overdue hikers. A helicopter from the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) located the hikers. They also observed a single male lighting signal fires in the general search area. The helicopter left the area in the hope that the subject would not set anymore fires. Upon their return in the early morning hours of June 29, 2008 the signal fires had engulfed an entire tree. Due to the hot and dry weather conditions the fire eventually grew out of control, burning 9,629 acres of forest land and causing the evacuation of the town of Crown King.

When contacted, Cygan explained that he had offered help to a woman who had reported her boyfriend and children missing near Crown King. Cygan reported that after he located the missing hikers, he went in search of additional help. He saw the DPS helicopter and set a signal fire. Later he lit a warming fire and later left as he went toward a cabin for water. Upon his return he was unable to suppress the fire. Earlier he had displayed a badge from his days with the National Park Service (NPS) to the mother of the missing hikers as well as to a Forest Service investigator. He had been terminated from NPS in 2007 and was no longer authorized to possess the badge.

A conviction for each offense carries a maximum penalty of six months jail, a \$5,000 fine or both.

A criminal complaint is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation in this case was conducted by Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office and the United States Forest Service Law Enforcement and Investigations. The prosecution is being handled by Vincent Q. Kirby, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-09-6254M
RELEASE NUMBER: 2009-183(Cygan)

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