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Release No.0908
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US FOREST SERVICE INITIATES REVIEW OF STATION FIRE

WASHINGTON, September 30, 2009 - US Forest Service Chief Thomas Tidwell announced today the agency's decision to initiate an interagency review of the suppression efforts of the Station Fire on the Angeles National Forest in the Pacific Southwest Region of the Forest Service in southern California.

"Our highest priority is firefighter and public safety and the efforts by firefighters to achieve this were outstanding during this event, and deserve to be recognized," said Chief Tidwell.

"Reviewing our firefighting efforts is part of our normal process, however due to the unprecedented size of the Station Fire and questions being raised about firefighting actions, I am directing a review of the Station Fire, and seeking the participation of our key interagency partners."

"With the significant loss of life, and impacts to the local community, we must determine the effectiveness of our efforts, including how decisions were made and how fire behavior prediction models helped guide our suppression strategies," said Tidwell. "We owe it to the local communities, County and State and all who suffered losses to learn as much as we can," Tidwell concluded.

Nationally, the US Forest Service extinguishes 98% of wildland fires within the first 24 hours. The Station Fire exhibited unusually extreme fire behavior for southern California and involved one of the largest initial attack efforts ever undertaken. To date, the suppression cost of the Station Fire is \$93 million and at its peak, 5,244 firefighters were assigned. The Station Fire burned 160,577 acres, destroyed 89 structures and killed two LA County firefighters.