



NEWS RELEASE



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Forest Service Employees in Fatal Plane Crash

Two Forest Service employees and a pilot lose lives in fatal plane crash while conducting aerial surveys

Morgantown, W.Va. June 22, 2010 – It is with great sadness that we confirm the names of the Forest Service employees who tragically lost their lives while conducting an aerial pest survey yesterday. The deceased Forest Service employees are Rodney Whiteman and Dan Snider. A contracted pilot was also on board.

Rodney Whiteman, Forester, was 46 years old and had worked for the Forest Service for 24 years. After graduating from Penn State University, Rod began working for the U.S. Forest Service in 1986 as a Forestry Technician with the Northeast Research Station working on Oak Dominated Forests Research projects. In 1987, he transferred to the Morgantown Field Office, Northeastern Area, State and Private Forestry as a Forester in the Forest Health Protection Group. Over the years, he became an expert in all aspects of the Gypsy moth suppression projects on all federal lands in the Mid-Atlantic States. In addition to his work on the Gypsy moth suppression project, Rod worked extensively as a firefighter and was certified as a Firefighter Type 2, Single-resource Helicopter Manager and Faller B. He served as the Morgantown Field Office Aviation Officer and Trainer. Recently, Rod also served as the Invasive Plant Coordinator working extensively on Tree of Heaven Mitigation projects in Ohio, W.Va., Md., Del., N.J., Pa. and the District of Columbia. He leaves behind wife Megan who resides in Morgantown and a daughter Haley.

Dan Snider, Biological Science Technician, was 29 years old and had 9 years of service with the Forest Service. Dan began working for the U.S. Forest Service, Southern Research Station in May 2001 as a student intern Biological Science Technician while attending North Carolina State University-Raleigh. He worked extensively on the Longleaf Restoration Project on the coastal plain of North Carolina. In 2005 Dan transferred to the Northeastern Research Station as a Forestry Technician (Research) in the Disturbance Ecology & Management of Oak-Dominated Forests Research Unit. During this time, Dan responded to Hurricane Katrina as part of a U.S Forest Service Chain Saw Crew assisting with the recovery operations. Dan transferred to his current position in November 2007 as a Biological Science Technician (Forest Pests) with the Morgantown Field Office of the Northeastern Area, State and Private Forestry. Dan worked extensively in the Forest Health Protection Group in cooperation with state partners on Invasive Insect and Pest Detection Surveys in Ohio, W.Va., Md., Del., N.J., Pa. and the District of Columbia. His work included pest surveys for Gypsy moth, Hemlock woolly adelgid, Emerald ash borer, and Sirex wood wasps. He had received extensive training as a Forest Service employee in Geospatial Information, Advanced Firefighting Training and Interagency Incident Business Management and was working on certification as an Aerial Survey Technician. Dan leaves behind wife Elizabeth and son Lee who reside in Pentress, W.Va.

The two Forest Service employees worked for the Forest Health Program of the Northeastern Area, based out of Morgantown, West Virginia. They were onboard the plane to conduct aerial pest surveys in Pennsylvania. The National Transportation Safety Board is in charge of the investigation.

“My sincere sympathies to the family, friends and colleagues of these valued employees,” said Kathy Maloney, Northeastern Area Director. “This is a tragic loss for the Forest Service.”

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