

James A. Schmidt II

P.O. Box 286, Dragoon, Arizona 85609 | 520-586-2582 | jschmidt@azammo.com

Mr. Donald Trump, President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Started June 19, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture.
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250.

Dear President Trump,

I am contacting you concerning the recent **Lizard Fire in Dragoon, Arizona**. I feel you are a man of action and will actually do something about this important issue. State Senator Gail Griffin and Congressman Jeff Flake have proven to be action oriented too. Others like Representative Martha McSally and the USDA have clearly not been helpful to me. Please know from the very start that the firefighters, Sheriff's Office, Sheriff's Deputies, Arizona State Troopers, and all volunteers did great fighting this fire. They were very professional, worked very very hard, put themselves in harm's way, and were just plain brave.

This report is NOT a complaint about the firefighters, Sheriff's Department, volunteers, or any and all other groups and law enforcement that responded to the fire.

I am recently retired from the USDA. I am college educated with a B.A. in Business and a have had a professional career in administration since I was 25 (42 years) holding many top level responsible positions. For 19 years I was in public Transportation at high executive levels including General Manager. For some 30 years plus I was in the special events business at the same time. In that time I did many high profile events at a top level. Events like two Woodstock's and the 1996 Olympics. I have planned and operated complex and extremely large operations under extreme pressure while the entire world watched on Pay for View. I know how to prepare, plan, operate, control very large employee groups (union or not), volunteers, civic groups, and deal with the interested public and media. Extreme pressure and the unknown was a way of life.

My writing to you is the concern that I do not believe that the Lizard fire had to grow to the size it did. The fire did not have to destroy homes, damage homes, displace residents, burn thousands of acres, and put so many hard working people at risk. Millions of dollars of public monies were spent too.

PLEASE NOTE-The following time line is supported by a printed copy of my cellular telephone records. The times shown may vary by one (1) minutes from what my cellular telephone recorded and what the printed record shows. I do not know why there is a variation. A 60 second variation is of little concern for this report though.

The so called “Lizard fire” (named after a street in Dragoon called Lizard Lane) was clearly started by a lightning strike behind my ranch in Dragoon, Arizona at the north western base of the Dragoon Mountains. It seems nearly each year that the north side of the Dragoon Mountains is struck by lightning and in my 13 years here Sheriff’s Department records will show that I have called in more than one fire caused by a lightning strike. In our 13 years here we have had fires around Dragoon too so it is not new to us in anyway. On **Wednesday June 7th, 2017** I was standing outside my shop talking with my neighbor Jerry Brewer when I saw a smoke trail rising east and a little south of my neighbor’s ranch house, Thurston Comstock. His family came here in 1956 to start a large ranch.

I pointed out the smoke to Jerry and immediately without hesitation called the Sheriff’s Dispatch direct line using my cellular telephone (I have that number from once working closely with the Cochise County Sheriff’s Department while with the USDA). The time was **2:19 pm** as recorded on my cellular telephone. When they answered I confirmed that the person was with Dispatch and I identified myself as the retired USDA guy, Jim Schmidt, and explained the fire situation quickly. All should be in the Sheriff’s Department Dispatch recorded log. I was immediately transferred to another person, a male, whom I could not understand what he said when he identified himself. I once again advised who I was and once again explained in detail the situation.

In my report I pointed out that I did not see flames at that time. I pointed out that the fire/smoke was to the east and a little south of Thurston Comstock’s house and the person stated that he did not know who that was. and I challenged the person with something like ‘you do not know who Thurston Comstock is?’ and he said ‘I am a visiting dispatcher’ and I advised that Mr. Comstock is one of the people that helped settle this country. The dispatcher then went on to tell me that there had been a lot of lightning strikes reported in the area and that was all. Perhaps there was a little more discussion but it was insignificant to the issue. The entire time of the discussion Jerry Brewer was standing close by and heard the conversation. After speaking with Sheriff’s Dispatch and the Fire Dispatch I telephoned my neighbor Thurston at **2:23 p.m.** to advise him of the smoke and now there were flames coming toward his house. Thurston advised that he was about to leave for Texas and had not noticed the smoke or flames.

Immediately after the call our horse shoer Mark Clements drove up the driveway and stopped near Jerry and I and rolled his window down on the passenger’s side and pointed to the smoke and told us he had called the smoke too. That would have been around **2:25 p.m.** I telephoned my wife Nancy at **2:26 p.m.** to advise her of the smoke and now fire as she was driving to work in Benson. I called Thurston back at **3:35 p.m.** to check on him and discuss the fire situation.

I took my truck and went to my only two neighbors homes about 1/4 mile away. Neither were home so I left my card on their doors and returned to the shop. I received a telephone call at **3:50 p.m.** from neighbor Chris who was at work. I did not speak with him as I missed the call.

I received a call from my neighbor Wendy at **3:52 p.m.** asking if I was aware of the fire. I briefed her on what I had done and what I could see from my shop (an excellent vantage point). At that point I had gotten my 60 power Swarovski spotting scope out on a sturdy tripod to monitor the fire with. It is extremely clear and powerful and it was easy to see all around the area of the fire. While watching I telephoned my friend Jeff Nagy at **4:00 p.m.** in Phoenix and advised him of the fire and advised him that I would not be at the upcoming shooting match in Tucson as I knew that I would be tied up with the issues of the fire. Nancy called at **4:31 p.m.** to check on the status of the fire. I spoke with neighbor Wendy at **5:06 p.m.** on the status of the fire as it progressed.

At one point I saw three (3) large airplanes circling the fire. They were easy to see and were at first high above the fire and at some point two of them came much lower. The two lower ones began a circle where it looked like they were going to drop water or chemical on the fire. It turned out that they seemed to be doing 'practice' runs over the fire. I watched them go round and round for some 2 to 3 hours. At **6:32 p.m.** I sent a text message to 5 or so of my friends advising them of the fire and our status. At **6:37 p.m.** Duncan Davis in Phoenix telephoned me and we discussed the fire (he was one I texted). Duncan stayed on the cellular telephone with me for 1 hour and 16 minutes and 33 seconds.

When Duncan called (**6:37 p.m.**) the fire had escalated and expanded and the planes continued to circle but no firefighters were on site that I could see. Between the time of Duncan's call (**6:37 p.m.**) and about **6:45 p.m.** or so, I saw 10 firefighters with white helmets and yellow coats battling the fire near the microwave station. It was still daylight and they were easy to see in my spotting scope. The flames were all around them too. I advised Duncan that I saw them. **That is roughly 4 hours and 18 minutes after the fire started!** I admit that it is possible that the firefighters with the white helmets arrived a little sooner but not much.

From the beginning of the fire the wind was from the west blowing to the east. It was roughly at 5 to 7 miles per hour (MPH). It was easy to see. The smoke moved gently to the east and north and the flames were basically straight up. I have quality weather monitoring instruments on my shooting range too and it is easy to see the wind speed, direction, outside temperature and more on the weather monitoring equipment. My wife Nancy is an official trained volunteer National Weather Service "weather watcher" too. The equipment helps her too.

The strike was about ½ way up a ridge to the east and a little south of Thurston's home. I could see big flames at the strike location traveling to the east and north with lots of smoke toward a microwave station. You can see the microwave station with the naked eye from my shop. The fire was also creeping down the slope to the west toward Comstock's house. The flames were going against the wind and I commented on that to Duncan. The flames were easy to see with the naked eye. Thurston's house is about 0.8 to 1 mile to the south and east of my shop. As I watched I described the situation to Duncan while on the cellular telephone.

From my position I could not see if the draw to the east of the ridge was on fire or not. I felt it was due to the large amount of smoke though.

At one point while watching I saw a red flash in the air near the fire to the west slightly and I used the spotting scope to follow the small red flying object to the right from the fire along the

edge of the mountain. I told Duncan what I saw and as I panned across to the right I then saw a yellow/orange solid body helicopter very low close to the ground west of the fire. I lost track of the red object but I told Duncan that it must have been a 'drone'. I saw the helicopter several more times very close to the ground near the fire. It appeared to be traveling to the southwest low to the ground, stopping, then traveling back to the fire low to the ground. I did not see the red object again. I could not tell what the yellow helicopter was actually doing.

While watching the fire and the firefighters somewhere around **7:30 p.m.** to **7:45 p.m.** I told Duncan that the firefighters had the fire beat and within 60 seconds the wind completely shifted and came in strongly (10 to 15 MPH) from the east blowing to the west. The strong gust blew steady for 5 minutes and then settled to about 7 to 10 MPH. At that exact point I told Duncan that "they just lost the fire". The flames grew and I watched as the fire began to "race" to the south west across the edge of the mountain around Comstock's home. The flames quickly grew in size and it was much darker. I could see a motor vehicle racing to the west and south. Its headlights and taillights were easy to see. It could not get ahead of the flames as the fire moved quickly west and south toward Jordan Canyon.

At **7:29 p.m.** rancher Travis Riggs called me to talk about the fire. I returned the call at **7:54 p.m.** and then Jerry Brewer called at **7:48 p.m.** Throughout the evening I watched the fire and spoke with neighbor Wendy and Jerry Brewer. Firefighters began to arrive in their large trucks at my shop. At my shop the view of the fire was 100% at that time. The flames were moving to the east and also up Jordan Canyon (south). There were no flames or smoke to the right or southwest of Jordan Canyon at that time. At no point did I see any smoke or flames back toward the Fourr Ranch. I can see the lights of the Fourr Ranch easily from my home and from the shop.

At **10:08 p.m.** my neighbor telephoned me to see if I needed help. I turned to the firemen watching me hose the yard and asked his opinion of my watering effort and if it would be helpful if the neighbor used his tractor to cut a fire break? He said "it wouldn't hurt". The firemen on site were very very supportive and advised us of all that was going on and that helped. At one point they inspected all my buildings, my propane tank, and marked where I had smokeless powder and primers stored. I am a licensed ammunition manufacturer. At **10:13 p.m.** I telephoned Nancy at work to advise her that we might lose the house as the flames were headed directly at the house. Nancy was aware of the fire from my previous call as she travelled to work.

There has been discussion that the firefighters lost control of the fire around **10:00 p.m.** and that is not true in anyway. Firefighters lost control of the fire on the ridge just after dark and I was watching through my spotting scope and speaking with Duncan Davis on the cellular telephone when it was lost! Hours prior to 10:00 p.m. In fact the wind changed direction Fourr (4) times that evening. I was outside and watching the entire time and witnessed all those changes. A couple of times the wind totally stopped and it was silent and calm and then a wall of wind would come in from one direction or the other.

At **10:00 p.m.** the fire line stretched from Jordan Canyon across to the west northwest toward my home, Old Ranch Road, and the railroad tracks. That would be about 1 ½ to 2 miles long I would guess. The fire was moving quickly with flames about 10 to 12 feet high. The wind was

not excessively high at about 7 miles per hour. I continuously tossed dirt or grass in the air to monitor the wind direction whenever I was away from my meter. We were told that the fire jumped Old Ranch Road and the railroad tracks and the trains were stopped too.

Once Nancy arrived she took over the water spraying and I moved to the back porch and started the garden hose spraying in the back yard. I then went to the shop and got out my DR Brush mower and went into the field east of the horse pens and began cutting a fire break with it. Later my neighbor finished his effort on the fire break south of the house he joined me cutting the eastern fire break. At that time the fire was moving very quickly north along what looked like the location of Comstock's drive way. It was two huge red glows reaching far up into the night sky. It was huge and very alarming. AT that point two fire crews were at our home.

A fire crew(s) remained at our home until Nancy and I went in the house as the fire seemed to stop coming toward our home and was moving to the west toward I-10, it was still going east, and also south up Jordan Canyon. The firefighters left our home at about **3:30 a.m.** to **3:45 a.m.** The fire near the Fourr Ranch was not very visible to us. We actually did not know it was a separate fire and none of the firefighters ever told us there was a second fire.

On Thursday morning I went to Willcox, Arizona for an important blood test and when I returned I stopped at the Dragoon U.S. Post Office where Sheriff Department staff and firefighters were gathered. I stopped to talk with them. I knew several of the Sheriff's Department staff and stood with them. It was before noon is all I remember. I was standing with Sargent Kiel (not sure of spelling) as we looked east. When I stopped there was absolutely no smoke coming from the area near Dragoon Road and Comstock's drive way. Suddenly as Sgt. Kiel watched a plume of smoke started to rise. As we watched it quickly increased in volume and we turned to the firefighters setting under a tree and pointed the smoke out. They quickly rose and rushed to their vehicles and left to investigate.

As all of us watched the smoke increased dramatically. Comments were made that it must be a "back burn" because the fire was out in that area and the smoke made no sense. The fire raced south toward the Dragoon Mountain across the open country where many houses were located. The flames were easy to see at one point too. I returned home after stopping to speak with my neighbor Ron and we discussed the fire to the east of us. The mystery fire! I felt I was safe that morning and now a new fire was in easy range of my home again.

This new fire was responsible for the loss of one home and damage to others I am told. Several out buildings were lost too. I watched the roof of one structure on fire with large flames through my spotting scope. To this date the acknowledgement of the mystery fire nor the cause of that mystery fire has never been offered. It remains a mystery and it should not be!

On Thursday afternoon we lost power and thus lost our well and had no water. From a separate source involved in the fire we were told that the lines were shut off for "safety" reasons. It was confusing at the time and very frustrating. It was later explained by a separate source involved in the fire that the concern was if "hot" wires dropped to the earth they might start additional fires. That was reasonable to us. It still posed a problem for the loss of water.

On Saturday I traveled to Tucson to pick up parts and supplies. I left at **5:00 a.m.** and returned before noon. I was stopped at the Dragoon/I-10 exit on Dragoon road. The Arizona State Patrol stopped me and advised that I could not enter Dragoon road. I advised that I was a resident and my wife and my neighbor were alone at their homes.

The Arizona State Trooper, who was very nice and polite, explained to me that he was told the Dragoon area was on a “hard closure” and no one was being allowed into the area. He further explained that the danger was that heavy large airplanes were being used to fight the fire and the danger was that they might crash...not the fire. I was prevented from returning to my home and wife because firefighting airplanes “might” crash. Of course as a very resourceful person I got home quickly despite the closure.

I spoke directly with Travis Riggs, a local rancher, who was trying to get cattle out of the Comstock ranch area to save them and was prevented from entering Dragoon Road for the same reasons as I was at the same time. He was at Dragoon Road and State Highway 191. He had a large stock trailer and support help as he tried to enter the area. Also being very resourceful Travis and his team found a way around the blockage into the Comstock ranch to gather the cattle. On one of his trips out with a load he was stopped by law enforcement and was challenged as to what he was doing? Now he was in a well-worn ranch truck pulling an open sided stock trailer and was stopped and asked what he was doing? The fire had moved east and it was his opportunity to get the cattle out. Folks we need better training and a better plan than that.

It was reported at the public meeting in Sunsites, Arizona on **Sunday June 11th, 2017** that at **3:23 p.m.** a retired U.S. Forest Service employee reported a fire near the Fourr Ranch. He and his wife saw the fire from I-10 while returning from Tucson. It was concluded by the District Ranger from Douglas, Arizona that his report was for the Lizard Fire too and the time of **3:23 p.m.** was the official start of the Lizard Fire and it was not. Official online reports also state that the Lizard fire started at **3:23 p.m.** That is totally incorrect and I request that it is corrected immediately!

During the entire time from **2:19 p.m.** to **3:30 a.m.** the Fourr Ranch fire was a faint small glow at night from my remote home. I never saw any smoke of this claimed fire back at the Fourr Ranch area. We have a photograph taken at night of that scene showing the small faint glow in the dark back at the Fourr Ranch but that was long after the Lizard fire had moved around Jordan Canyon back toward the Fourr Ranch. We were told later that the fire that was near the Fourr Ranch was not connected to the Lizard Fire behind my home. That seemed strange to me at the time. During that time I never went inside where I could not see the fire in full view. When I went to the neighbor’s home I could still see the fire and smoke. I witnessed the fire for 13 hours and roughly 17 minutes continuously! My fire report at **2:19 p.m.** to the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office dispatcher will be on the official recording of that dispatch log. The report of **3:23 p.m.** is totally wrong and needs to be corrected.

The public meeting about the fire in Sunsites was apparently not broadcast to the Dragoon residents because by my count only three people from the Dragoon area attended (including me). I did not see the sign-in list and I did not sign it myself. I was only aware of the meeting due to it being posted on the Cochise County Sheriff’s Departments FACEBOOK page that my wife

located. We found the meeting information on Sunday morning and advised our neighbors Ron, Chris, and Wendy of the meeting. Myself and Wendy attended.

This well intended meeting was not good use for any Dragoon residence. Few if any in that room had yet to experience the fire and its stress and devastation. They simply did not understand what was coming and were at this meeting to learn more! There were roughly ten special speakers setting at the front of the room including the County Supervisor of this area, Sheriff Dannels, various U.S. Forest Service employees, government employees, and the District Ranger for this area.

Unfortunately the meeting was primarily a long period of time for the government employees to congratulate themselves for the great job they were doing.

The actual status of the fire was very briefly discussed and none of the plans on how the fire was being fought was discussed in detail. It was mentioned that there were 300-350 firefighters on the fire and various aircraft. A medium size area map was posted on the wall too small for any of us to see any detail. There was a projector setup but was not used. A brief discussion that the main headquarters was setup in Willcox some 30 to 40 miles by highway from the fire.

In the meeting there was explanations about how hard it was to coordinate the food for all working the fire and other operational issues. The public was not at this meeting to hear about any of that, NO they were there to hear about the current battle on the fire and what the plans were to stop the fire.

- a. Where the fire lines were exactly? (At that point who cares about how many acres had been burned?)
 - b. What direction was the fire moving? (We know the wind changes)
 - a. It was discussed that the fire had created its own atmosphere but not much detail on that. Nothing really on what that meant? Did it push the fire in one direction or another?
 - b. Where would back fires be started? What is the risk of a back fire?
 - c. What methods were being used to fight the fire-in detail? We all saw the airplanes but what do they do? It was never stated that the red slurry did not put out fires (I learned that on my own). That is was not dropped directly on the open flame. That it is used to help prevent the fire from crossing areas. It was never said that the red slurry stuck to everything and would permanently turn whatever it hit to red. That is could be a mess to clean up too.
 - d. What the odds were that the fire would move in the direction of people's homes? Out on the flat country or into the orchards? Details on who was at risk and who was likely safe? We know that is an educated estimate too.
 - e. What could citizens do to prepare to defend their homes? Sprinklers? Mow or cut fire breaks? Put water on their rooves, out buildings, and similar? What? Or nothing?
 - a. Something was said about firemen setting up sprinklers systems at some homes. No details were offered nor provided.
 - f. What citizens could do to protect their livestock? (the Sheriff spoke about this a little and that was good).
 - g. Where the firemen were going to let parts of the fire burn and what parts would be fought? Burn back country for example?
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- h. Where would there be a central refuge for those that left their home? Church, School? Public building? Or none? None is OK but we needed to know something.

The 45 minutes of congratulating each other on the great job they were doing and general rambling could have been used to provide the anxious public valuable details about the fire and the firefighting plans and actions.

Having been in high profile events and required to give the public regular updates on the status of the event while the entire world watched I know the public has little interest in hearing employees congratulating themselves for 45 minutes. The public wants the facts, details, options, plans, and more that will help them be safe, their property safe, their family safe, and their pets and livestock safe. The hard working employees (who were not at the meeting anyway) can be honored later when all are out of danger and harm's way. I mean no disrespect to any of the firefighters, volunteers, or law enforcement in anyway.

The mystery fire in Dragoon was never discussed at this meeting! I have received no details of this mystery fire since. I do know that large airplanes flew over my home all afternoon dropping water and red slurry on this new fire that was once completely out and emitting no smoke!

For a public meetings on events like this one please consider the following details. Not necessarily in this order.

The very first thing to do before the meeting start is make sure all the speakers have all the correct and complete information. **DO NOT GUESS!** Remember and respect that “someone in the meeting might actually know more about a specific issue or incident in general than the speaker does.” Have respect for the audience as intelligent people.

What should have been addressed in the meeting to be beneficial to the public would have been;

1. **Who is in charge of the entire fire?** The answer given by this group did not give the public much confidence of leadership being organized.
 - a. Talk about the times of all meetings and who is there and what is discussed. Show us leadership! We know the public does not need to be at those meeting(s).
 - b. Do not tell the public how hard it is feed everyone-we know that!
 - c. Outline the actual organizational structure from top to bottom.
 2. **Where to get updates on the fire?** Remember that not everyone in a rural area has a computer or Smart Cellular Telephone (I do not). Also know that electrical power was shut off. The Sheriff's website seems to be the main location? Sheriff Dannels did a good job on this. ALL of the fire officials and public officials setting at the front of the room should have known this and it was clear they did not.
 - a. Local radio stations.
 - b. Local television stations.
 3. **Emergency contact communication** lines numbers or locations?
 - a. 911 only?
 - b. What does the response team want to know about? Provide examples.
 4. **Weather forecast** related to the fire?
 - a. Rain, wind, heat, and more?
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5. **Number of firefighters** on site?
 - a. Planned work shifts (12hours, 8 hours?)
 - b. Planned increased in the work force?
 - c. Planned decreases in the work force?
 6. **Number of firefighting equipment** on site?
 - a. Is more coming?
 - b. What does the equipment do?
 - c. Will any be pulled to fight other fires?
 - d. How well does the red slurry work or not work?
 - e. How well does the water work and where do they get it? (this was discussed at the meeting and it helped).
 7. **Current firefighting lines?**
 - a. Areas that will be fought?
 - b. Areas that WILL NOT be fought?
 8. **What the residents can do** to protect their property, family, livestock, and pets?
 - a. Remove flammable debris from around structures, propane tanks, and etc.
 - b. Move vehicles to a location safe from the flames-open area etc.
 - c. Setup sprinklers- grass areas, on the roof etc.
 - d. Cut fire breaks
 9. **Health cautions?**
 - a. Where are all the health facilities located and how to contact them?
 - b. Impact of heavy smoke and what to do?
 - c. Danger of the fire and how quickly it can change directions and more.
 10. **How many structures** have succumbed to the fire so far?
 11. **How can the public help** the people fighting the fire?
 - a. Donations of food? (what kind (canned, cookies, frozen) and where to donate?)
 - b. Stay off the roads?
 - c. Stay off the telephone so the lines are not tied up? (do not call every five minutes)
 12. **Area Access rules!**
 - a. What is a SOFT closure or evacuation? Describe the procedures or rules. Who enforces them and how?
 - b. What is a HARD closure or evacuation? Describe the procedures or rules. Who enforces them and how?
 13. **Cautions for the public;** There was very little if any cautions to the public about actions or activities they may be involved in or with. Like;
 - a. Do not fly drones! Explain what the dangers and problems are for the firefighters and the aircraft.
 - b. Do not start your own back fires!
 - c. Do not try to join the firefighters on the fire line.
 - d. Do not increase your travel- stay home and if you leave do not come back every five minutes.
 14. **Shutting off power to homes-**
 - a. Why do it?
 15. **Rural residents are tough!** Please remember, as you make your plans, policies, and operational guides, that rural residents will be tough and not ones to run. Many will stay to protect their property, use their equipment to protect their property, go to their neighbors' homes to help them fight!
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These tough rural people will not wait for an action plan to be developed. No...they will attack the problem head on. None of them would wait 3 to 4 hours to deal with a rattlesnake posing an immediate threat! So they will question why anyone would wait 3 to 4 hours for someone to deal with threatening fire.

The head District Ranger reported to the group in Sunsites that the Dragoon Mountains had not burned for 70 years and there was a lot of fuel for the fire. Knowing that why did they wait? They knew there would be a great deal of fuel. I have a report from a longtime local Dragoon rancher, Thurston Comstock, that he was once a voluntary fire marshal for the area and he knew that the mountain had burned once around 20 years ago. He told me that directly.

This report is NOT a complaint about the firefighters, Sheriff's Department, volunteers, or any and all other groups and law enforcement that responded to the fire.

WHAT DO I WANT? WHY AM I REPORTING ALL THIS?

What I am calling for here is an investigation of why it took so long to respond to the so called Lizard fire?

- a. **Why the delay in responding?**- When I called the Lizard fire in at **2:19 p.m.** it was just campfire size smoke and likely could have been extinguished with a 5 gallon bucket of water! Instead it burned 15,000+ acres and destroyed a home and other structures (we have no confirmation yet). It stressed the community, spent millions of public dollars, put private citizens in harm's way, put private property in harm's way, put livestock and wildlife in harm's way, and put hundreds of public personal in danger.
 - b. **Why is my call at 2:19 p.m. being ignored?** I expect that the real reason is to shorten the gap by one hour between the claimed reporting time of **3:23 p.m.** and the firefighters reported response time of one hour that was stated at the Sunsites meeting. The real time is a response time of roughly over 4 hours! **NOT 1 HOUR!**
 - a. If there is a legitimate reason for the delay then say what that was and live with it! It is very simple.
 - b. If someone made a mistake then admit it and fix it for the next time! Learn from it! If people need to lose their job or position then so be it! 15,000 acres burned when it could have been contained with a 5 gallon pail of water!
 - c. **Why did three (3) airplanes circle the fire for hours and appear to do nothing to extinguish this fire?** This is a real mystery.
 - d. **Dealing with the aftermath of the fire.** Nancy has nightmares about the fire over a week after it moved south. Our neighbor Wendy is still traumatized over the fire.
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They certainly not the only ones. There should be information to all in the area about helping those that might have been effected by what happened with the fire.

- a. Mental/emotional counselors to be available for those having difficulties with the aftermath.
- b. After action meeting or request for information involving all residents. This action should be used to improve future fires for all involved.
- c. Discussions with area residents about possible flooding and excessive runoff where the fire burned everything? I personally heard a fire official express that concern privately but not to the public.
- d. Discussion about how hot the fire burned which would possible burn all of the vegetation seed buried in the ground and thus might not grow back in areas.

My thanks goes to the Sheriff himself and all of the Cochise County Sheriff's Department, all the fire fighters, all the volunteers, and all other law enforcement agencies for their determined battle against the Lizard fire. My thanks to the Cochise County citizens that stood and fought the fire to defend their property and family and those that stood to help their neighbors fight the fire. All of you have my highest respect and thanks.

This report is NOT a complaint about the firefighters, Sheriff's Department, volunteers, or any and all other groups and law enforcement that responded to the fire.

- WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG TO RESPOND TO EXTINGUISH THIS FIRE? WHO MADE THE DECISION TO WAIT?
- WHY DID THREE AIRPLANES CIRCLE THIS FIRE FOR HOURS AND DO NOTHING TO EXTINGUISH THE FIRE?
- WHY IS THE START TIME OF THE FIRE AND THE ACTUAL RESPONSE TIME TO THE FIRE BEING REPORTED INCORRECTLY?

I will look for your timely response.

My contact information is;

Email; jschmidt@azammo.com

Personal Cellular- on special request

Home- 520-586-3418

Office-520-586-2582

FAX- 520-586-2582

P.O. Box 286 (US Mail)

4751 East Jackalope Road (UPS or FEDEX only)

Dragoon, Arizona 85609

Sincerely,

James A. Schmidt II (Jim)

Cc State Senator Gail Griffin, Senator Jeff Flake, Cochise County Sheriff Dannels, House Representative Martha McSally, Thurston Comstock, Cochise County Supervisors, Wendy, Ron, Chris, and others.