

# Wallow Fire Update

July 3, 2011

## Fire Facts:

**Location:** - Apache, Navajo, Graham, and Greenlee, Counties, Arizona; Catron County, New Mexico  
Fort Apache Indian Reservation,  
San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation

**Date Started:** 05/29/2011

**Cause:** Human – under investigation

**Size:** 538,049 acres total; 15,407 acres in N.M.

**Percent Contained:** 95%

**Resources:** 2 Helicopter;  
34 Engines; 17 Water Tenders; 9 Dozers

**Injuries to Date:** 16

**Total Personnel:** 831  
Includes 2 hotshot crews; 14 handcrews

**Residences:** 32 destroyed; 5 damaged

**Commercial Property:** 4 destroyed

**Outbuildings:** 36 destroyed; 1 damaged

**Vehicles:** 1 destroyed

Today both Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) crews and fire crews continue to remove woody debris from the East and West forks of the Little Colorado River. Debris removal has been completed on Hulsey, Milk, Paddy, and Colter Creeks. In addition, hazard tree removal continues on FR 81 in Auger Canyon which was severely burned. "Feller-buncher" machinery and saw teams are removing dead trees that could fall across the road. The trees are placed in piles for removal at a later time.

No active fire behavior is occurring within the perimeter of the fire. Interior burning is still possible within control lines, although none has occurred in the past 96 hours. Fire crews continue to patrol and mop-up and repair fire lines throughout the fire area. Due to fire fighter safety concerns, approximately 11.5 miles of fire line remains to be secured in the southeast portion of the fire. This area has extremely rocky steep terrain, is inaccessible, and not safe to have fire fighters working. Containment on the fire does not mean the fire is completely out, smoke may continue to be visible from interior fuels burning until a season ending rain event occurs. Mud flows were observed both in the Blue and along S.R 191.

High pressure over the area will continue to feed moisture into the region. Moisture is moving over southern Apache and Navajo counties and will have the best chance for thunderstorm activity. These thunderstorms may create localized flash flooding particularly within or adjacent to the burn area. Take appropriate precautions if a thunderstorm occurs in your vicinity. Today's temperatures will be in the 77-86 degree range. There will be a southwest wind 4 to 8 mph with gust to 18 mph. Relative humidity will be between 25-35%. There is a 40% chance of showers and thunderstorms in the afternoon.

## **Be aware of Thunderstorms:**

- Downbursts can cause extreme fire behavior and lightning.
- A sudden reversal in wind direction, a noticeable rise in wind speed, and a sharp drop in temperature may note the mature stage of a storm.
- Heavy rain, hail and lightning occur only in the mature stage of a thunderstorm.

## **Special Information:**

- Fourth of July fireworks at Sunrise Ski Area and Resort are cancelled.
- Though the sale of ground and hand-held fireworks and their use in some locations is now legal in Arizona, please remember, **fireworks are not permitted on public lands at any time.**
- The July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend is upon us and besides the hazards presented by elk and other wildlife on the roads and highways be aware of heavy holiday traffic in the area. Watch your speed and drive defensively. Remember that the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest is asking that speed be held down to a **maximum of 50 mph during dusk to dawn and at night.**
- An Individual Assistance Service Center (IASC) is available for all evacuated Arizonans to access information to assist in their personal recovery from the fire. It is located at the Round Valley Public Library, 179 S Main, Eagar, Ariz. The hours of operation are: Thursday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., Friday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m, Tuesday through Thursday, July 5-7<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m and July 8<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. **The facility will be closed Saturday through Monday, July 2-4<sup>th</sup>.**

## WALLOW FIRE NOTICES

**Road Closures - Due to heavy fire suppression and repair activities the following roads are closed to the public:**

- US 191 (the Coronado Trail) is closed between Alpine to north of Clifton (milepost 176-253).
- SR 261 (to Big Lake) and SR 273 (between Big Lake and Reservation Lake), remain closed.
- Forest Road 281 is closed two miles south of its junction with US 180 but **is open beyond this point to residences only.**

**Closures and Restrictions:**

- All Forest Service and private commercial facilities inside the road closures are not available to the public.
- **San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation:** Fire Restrictions and area closures remain in effect.
- **Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Closures and Open Areas.** Due to continued fire activity and the unprecedented levels of dry forest fuel along with dry weather, conditions exist for extreme fire danger necessitating closure of most of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. Please go to the following web site for the most complete information: <http://tinyurl.com/6yflpfu>
- For information on closures and restrictions for all public lands in Arizona go to the Public Lands Information Center web site at <http://www.publiclands.org/firenews/AZ.php> or call their hotline at (877) 864-6985
- **Gila National Forest:** A closure is in effect for the western portion of the Gila National Forest. Call (575) 388-8201, TTY (575) 388-8497 or see <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gila>.
- **Fort Apache Indian Reservation:** *Partial area closures are in effect for the eastside of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.* See <http://www.wmat.nsn.us/>.

**The National Weather Service on potential flooding:** *The Wallow Fire burned vast portions of the White Mountains including areas of steep terrain which will make numerous locations vulnerable to flash floods and debris flows even in moderate intensity (10–15 minutes) rains. Some area streams and rivers are likely to see flows beyond anything seen in decades if typical or above average rains occur. Residents should be aware that area roadways may become impassible due to mud, rock and debris slides or due to streams and washes overwhelming existing culverts and bridges.*

**Public Safety:**

- A Crisis Intervention Line (928) 333-2683 is available for residents suffering from the stress of living with fire danger.
- For more safety information see: <http://tinyurl.com/6zvcrcck>.
- Apache County and local Fire Departments have begun identifying locations for staging of sandbags in anticipation of the monsoon season. More information will be provided as locations are confirmed.

**Residents/Public Information:** All persons needing area specific fire related information may call the following numbers:

- Fire information in Spanish: (877) 632-6678.
- Luna and Reserve, N.M., Alpine, Ariz.: (575) 533-6928.
- North and west sides of the fire, including Fort Apache Indian Reservation: 928-369-7317, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
- South between the Black River and US 191, including the San Carlos Indian Reservation: (877) 446-3368.
- For entry into the San Carlos Apache Reservation closure area contact San Carlos Apache Recreation and Wildlife Department Dispatch at (928) 475-2236 for approval.
- **Website Info:** [www.inciweb.org](http://www.inciweb.org) **Articles:** <http://tinyurl.com/6zvcrcck>, **Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/AS\\_NF](http://www.twitter.com/AS_NF) **Flickr (photos):** [www.flickr.com/apachesitgreavesnf](http://www.flickr.com/apachesitgreavesnf).
- Information and assistance for damaged homes and small businesses can be accessed at this link: <http://tinyurl.com/6a94bk5>.

**Media:** Media should call the following numbers to coordinate interviews with the various areas of the fire:

- North and west side of the fire, including Fort Apache Indian Reservation: (928) 369-7317, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
- East, Luna and Reserve, N.M., Alpine, Ariz.: (377) 544-1005.
- South, between the Black River and US 191, including the San Carlos Indian Reservation: (877) 446-3368.

**Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER):** Field assessments documenting resource damages have been completed on Tribal lands and final reports are being prepared. Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team assessments continue and will result in an Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan, which will recommend priority actions that will be accomplished in the near future. The assessment process should be complete within one week. Long term restoration and salvage needs will be addressed after the environmental analysis is finished. To learn more about BAER Teams, go to these sites: <http://tinyurl.com/6xd42mf>, <http://tinyurl.com/5v9p2h5>.