

Wallow Fire Update

June 14, 2011 8:00 A.M.

Fire Facts:

Location: Apache, Navajo, Graham, and Greenlee Counties, San Carlos and Fort Apache Reservations, Arizona; Catron County, New Mexico;

Date Started: 05/29/2011

Cause: Human – under investigation

Size: 469,407 acres total

Percent Contained: 18%

Resources: 20 Helicopters, 5 Air Tankers available;
333 Engines; 73 Water Tenders; 20 Dozers

Injuries to Date: 7

Total Personnel: 4,734

Includes 24 hotshot crews; 77 hand crews

Residences: 2,714 threatened; 32 destroyed;
5 damaged

Commercial Property: 473 threatened; 4 destroyed

Outbuildings: 1,216 threatened; 36 destroyed;
1 damaged;

Vehicles: 1 destroyed.

Fire Update

Firefighters have achieved 18% containment of the 469,407-acre Wallow Fire. While the Wallow Fire is now the largest wildfire in Arizona's history, significant progress has been made towards containment. A previously destroyed structure at Pool Corral, in the Greer area, was confirmed yesterday. Mop up of backing fire continues in the Alpine and Tal Wi Wi communities. Burnout operations continue from FR 220 south to US 180. Structure protection activities continue in Nutrioso and Alpine. Mop up and widening of containment lines continues in the Greer and South Fork areas. Electricity has been restored to Greer and South Fork.

There was poor humidity recovery overnight and humidity will remain low today. Firefighters continued with structure protection, line improvement and mop-up on the eastern flank. Roads, dozer lines and natural barriers are being improved for use as containment lines. Crews worked to strengthen these lines along FR 281. The fire remains active in unburned areas of the fire. Good progress has been made on the fire's southeast flank, where crews are working to slow the spread of fire and continue to build and improve containment lines and mop-up. There was minimal movement last night. On the west flank, the fire is backing to the south and further southern spread is expected.

Firefighters made good progress at strengthening and holding existing control lines and are mopping-up north of Black River. Firelines immediately south of Black River are holding. Construction of 8-10 miles of indirect line along the south end of the fire continues in preparation of a planned burnout when conditions are optimal. Along the southwestern and southern flanks, extremely dry fuels and low relative humidity will continue to result in active fire behavior and longer burning periods.

Public Safety

Wildfire alters the landscape in ways that increase water runoff from burned areas. To help cope with potential floods, homeowners near areas impacted by the Fire are encouraged by the State of Arizona to obtain flood insurance. Most homeowners' insurance policies do not cover flood damage. For more information homeowners can contact National Flood Insurance Program at (888) 379-9531 or <http://tinyurl.com/6h8sz2e>.

The communities of Greer, Nutrioso and Alpine remain evacuated due to continued active fire behavior in unburned islands within and around these communities. Hazardous burned-out trees, unstable slopes and rockfall, as well as burned out power poles are being evaluated and mitigated.

Community Meetings Today

- Round Valley High School, Eagar, AZ 6 PM
- McNary Community Building in McNary, AZ. 6 P.M.

Current Evacuations Sunrise, Greer, Blue River, Alpine, Nutrioso, and the following subdivisions along highways 180/191: Escudilla Mountain Estates, Bonita, White Mtn. Acres, and the H-V Ranch. This area includes County Road (CR) 4000, CR 4001, and CR 4225.

Evacuee Information

- **An evacuee meeting will be held today**, Tuesday, June 14 at Blue Ridge High School in Pinetop/Lakeside at 10 A.M.
- Mail for evacuees may be picked up at the Eagar Post Office beginning today.
- The evacuation center is located at Blue Ridge High School, 1200 W. White Mtn. Blvd., Pinetop/Lakeside. The phone number for the Red Cross operated evacuation center is (602) 336-6660.
- Residents with livestock or animals that need care should contact the Apache County Sheriff's Office (928) 337-4321 or the Greenlee County Sheriff's Office (928) 865-4149.

Pre-Evacuation Alert

- A pre-evacuation alert continues in Apache County for Greens Peak, Hidden Meadows Lodge and surrounding areas.
- A pre-evacuation alert by the Catron County Sheriff's Office continues for Luna, New Mexico.
- Residents in the communities affected by this fire are asked to remain prepared for evacuate.

Road Closures according to Arizona Department of Transportation: <http://www.azdot.gov>

- SR 260 will open at noon today from the Hawley Lake turnoff to the South Fork junction (mileposts 369-390).
- US 191 is closed between Alpine and north of Clifton (milepost 176-253).
- SRs 261 (mileposts 395-413) and 273 (mileposts 378-394), the main access roads to Big Lake and Crescent Lake in the White Mountains, are closed.
- SR 373 that connects the town of Greer with SR 260 west of Eagar is closed (mileposts 386-391).
- US 180 is closed between SR 260 junction near Eagar and New Mexico state line (mileposts 403-433).
- In southern Arizona, SR 366 is closed at milepost 118 leading up to Mount Graham (milepost 143) near Safford after the U.S. Forest Service determined the risk of wildfire is too extreme to allow access.
- Partial area closures are in effect for the eastside of the Fort Apache Reservation.

Closures and Restrictions

Apache – Sitgreaves National Forest: The Apache portion of the Forest is closed to all public entry. For the Sitgreaves portion of the National Forest, a temporary emergency closure order is in effect. For further information call the Arizona fire restrictions hotline (877) 864-6985 or www.publiclands.org/firenews/AZ.php.

Gila National Forest:

A closure is in effect for the western portion of the Gila National Forest in the Quemado, Reserve and Glenwood Ranger Districts. See <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gila> or call (575) 388-8201, TTY (575) 388-8497.

Public Information

The public may call the following numbers for area specific fire information:

- Springerville, Eagar, Greer, Alpine (928) 333-3412 from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. or
 - (702) 308-3238, (702) 308-3357, (702) 308-8227 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Luna and Reserve, NM (575) 533-6928
- Areas south and west of the fire including San Carols and Fort Apache tribal lands:
 - (877)701-8201 or (928) 205-9884

Information is available at:

Website Info: www.inciweb.org

Twitter: www.twitter.com/AS_NF

Flickr (photos): www.flickr.com/apachesitgreavesnf

Media

- Media briefing will be conducted at Round Valley Primary School in Eagar at 10 a.m. and 9 p.m.
- Media should call the following numbers to coordinate interviews:
 - Springerville, Eagar, Greer, Alpine Media # (480) 331-9554.
 - Luna and Reserve, New Mexico (east side of fire) Media #: (575) 533-6928
 - Southwest (San Carlos and White Mountain Apache Reservation) Media #: (602) 803-4270