



Wallow Fire Update

June 17, 2011 8:00 AM

Fire Facts:

Location: Apache, Navajo, Graham, and Greenlee Counties, San Carlos Apache Tribal Lands and White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona; Catron County, New Mexico;

Date Started: 05/29/2011

Cause: Human – under investigation

Size: 495,016 acres total

Percent Contained: 33%

Resources: 15 Helicopters, 5 Air Tankers available; 284 Engines; 75 Water Tenders; 31 Dozers

Injuries to Date: 10

Total Personnel: 4418

Includes 21 hotshot crews;

69 handcrews

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

The **Red Flag Warning** issued by the National Weather Service remains in effect from 11 AM to 8 PM MST due to strong winds and low relative humidity. Southwest winds are forecast from 15 - 25 mph with gusts of 35 – 45. Critical fire weather is expected through Sunday. Relative humidities this afternoon will range from 5 - 10 %. The hot, dry and windy weather coupled with the drought stressed vegetation, and heavy fuel loading in mixed conifer forests has the potential to create extreme fire behavior.

Active interior fire will continue with torching and short-range spotting. Yesterday firefighters responded to spot fires in various areas of the fire and the threat of spot fires continues. Firefighters continue to strengthen and secure lines, prepare lines for burnout, mop-up, patrol and conduct structure protection across the fire. While interior pockets of fire remain active, no fire movement is anticipated in the northern portion of the fire today. However, there is significant growth potential in the northeast due to Red Flag conditions. Active fire behavior continues east of Alpine in unburned islands north of US 180.

Burning along US 180 from Luna to Alpine was completed yesterday. Active burning can be expected in the Blue River drainage. Fire was active in the Grant Creek area last night. Brushing and chipping along SR 281 to improve it for use as a containment line continues.

On the southwest flank, fire crews have completed a line to keep the fire in Warren Canyon. Firelines immediately south of Black River are holding. Operations south of SR 273 and north of Black River are focusing on mop-up and rehabilitation of existing firelines. Road construction crews were allowed to return to work along SR 273 in the Sunrise Ski Resort area. Nearly 30 miles of slash created by improving roads will be chipped on the west flank. Forecasted Red Flag conditions will make it difficult to secure the south end of the fire. As winds increase today and tomorrow, returning evacuees and all individuals within the vicinity of the fire need to be aware of the possibility of increased fire activity.

Public Safety

Following more than a week of danger from fire, mental health organizations have banded together to provide stress relief counseling for residents. The Little Colorado Behavioral Health Center, the County Public Health Services Districts and the Northern Arizona Regional Behavioral Health Authority will provide one-on-one, family and group sessions to address stress issues. A Crisis Intervention Line is available at (928) 333-2683.

Community Meetings

- 11:00 A.M. today and Saturday, at the Round Valley Primary School Library. Critical Incident Stress Management sessions are open to anyone that would like to share personal experiences, vent emotions or obtain additional services in a confidential safe environment.
- 6:00 P.M. Monday, 6/20/11 at the Round Valley High School hosted by the Apache/Sitgreaves National Forest

Current Evacuations

- Evacuations remain in effect in Sunrise, Greer, Blue River and Alpine.
- The communities of **Greer, and Alpine remain evacuated due to continued active fire behavior** in unburned islands within and around these communities. Hazardous fire damaged trees, unstable slopes and rockfall, as well as damaged power poles are being evaluated and mitigated.

Evacuee Information

- The evacuation Center at Blue Ridge H. S. in Pinetop/Lakeside **has been closed** due to lack of use. Meetings previously held here are now being held at Round Valley H. S.
- Evacuees whose Post Office is closed may pick up their mail at the Eagar Post Office.

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 these communities are asked to remain prepared for evacuation.

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

- 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.

Closures and Restrictions

- **Apache – Sitgreaves National Forest:** The Apache side of the Forest is closed to all public entry. A closure order is in effect for portions of the Sitgreaves side of the National Forest. Contact the Arizona fire restrictions hotline for information at (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. See <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gila> or call (575) 388-8201, TTY (575) 388-8497.
- **White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation:** Partial area closures are in effect for the eastside of the Fort Apache Reservation. See <http://www.wmat.nsn.us/>

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

- Spanish fire information 877-632-6678
- Springerville, Eagar, Greer, Alpine from 8 A.M. to 8.P.M. call: (928) 333-3412, (702) 308-3238, (702) 308-3357 or (702) 308-8227
- Luna and Reserve, NM (575) 533-6928
- Areas south and west including San Carlos and Fort Apache tribal lands: (877)701-8201 or (928) 205-9884
- Information is also 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 **High School dome** 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