

# Wallow Fire Update

June 19, 2011 8:00 a.m.



## Fire Facts:

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

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

**Cause:** Human – under investigation

**Size:** 511,118 acres total

**Percent Contained:** 44%

**Resources:** 15 Helicopter; 5 Air Tankers available; 196 Engines; 72 Water Tenders; 21 Dozers

**Injuries to Date:** 12

**Total Personnel:** 3,594

Includes 15 hotshot crews;

56 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 National Weather Service continues its Red Flag Warning for today from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. for strong winds and low relative humidity. Increased winds will affect the entire region today with southwest wind speeds increasing through the morning at 20 – 30 mph with gusts of 40 – 50 mph. Relative humidity will range from 5 – 15 percent. This combination of strong winds and low relative humidity will create extreme fire behavior. With the high winds, spotting is a major concern. A strong cold front will push into the area tonight, shifting the winds to the northwest by Monday morning with cooler temperatures behind the cold front, along with higher humidity.

Strong southwest winds have caused the Wallow Fire to breach containment lines along US 180, on the east side of the fire. The town of Luna, N.M. has been evacuated. Air resources in defense of Luna were grounded yesterday due to high winds. Structural protection is in place for Luna and also in the broad Blue River drainage, where fire has become established in the San Francisco drainage, Raspberry Creek, Steeple Mesa, Quebec drainage and Horse Canyon areas. Air support began early this morning to work on objectives before the expected wind gusts arrive and air support is forced to be grounded.

On the western flank, chipping and repair of firelines continues. Firefighters have completed construction of the firelines between the Black River and Hwy. 191 and continue to bring fire southward to the indirect lines to prevent the main body of fire from moving across Hwy 191. Today, fire crews will continue to work to keep the fire in Warren Canyon and watch for spot fires. Structure protection equipment within the Sunrise Resort area has been removed in anticipation of re-opening the facilities on Monday.

Firefighters continue area patrol and hazard tree removal in the northern area of the fire.

## Public Safety

- Smoke from the ongoing wildfires in AZ. will continue to impact residents in the Wallow Fire area and in southwestern N.M. For more information link to the smoke outlook for 6/19-posted at <http://ge.tt/8sjO9F5>.
- Apache County and the local Fire Departments have begun the process of staging sandbag locations in anticipation of the monsoon season. Burned areas are vulnerable to flash floods and debris flows even in moderate intensity rains. More information will be provided as locations are confirmed.
- A Crisis Intervention Line (928) 333-2683 is available for residents suffering from the stress of living with fire danger.
- An Individual Assistance Service Center (IASC) is open daily from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm at the Round Valley Public Library, in Eagar for Arizonans from all evacuated communities to access information to assist in their personal recovery from the fire.
- For more safety information see: <http://tinyurl.com/6zvcrck>

## Community Meetings Tomorrow Monday, June 20

- 6 p.m. Monday, White Mountain Tribal Council Chambers, Whiteriver, AZ.

- 6 p.m. Monday, Round Valley High School hosted by the Apache/Sitgreaves National Forest.

### Current Evacuations

- Luna, N.M. was evacuated as of 3:15 p.m. yesterday.
- Evacuations remain in effect in Sunrise, Greer and Blue River.
- Yesterday, June 18, the evacuation for Alpine was lifted.

### Evacuee Information

- An evacuation center is open at the High School in Reserve, NM for Luna residents.
- 10 a.m. daily evacuee meetings will be held at the Blue Ridge High School in Pinetop/Lakeside, AZ.
- Arizona 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. Residents in these communities are asked to remain prepared for evacuation.

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

- Northbound US 180 is closed from the junction with N.M. 12 to the AZ. state line (mileposts 20-0). Southbound lanes are open for possible evacuations of Luna, N.M. Please use N.M. 12 or N.M. 32 as alternate routes.
- US 180 is closed east of Alpine to the New Mexico state line (mileposts 430-433).
- US 191 is closed between Alpine and north of Clifton (milepost 176-253).
- SR 261 (mileposts 395-413) and SR 273 (mileposts 378-394), main roads to Big Lake & Crescent Lake are closed.
- SR 373 that connects the town of Greer with SR 260 west of Eagar is closed (mileposts 386-391).
- In southern Arizona, SR 366 is closed at milepost 118 leading up to Mount Graham (milepost 143) near Safford.

### 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](http://www.publiclands.org/firenews/AZ.php).
- **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>.
- **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, and Greer: (928) 333-3412, (702) 308-3238, (702) 308-3357 or (702) 308-8227; from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
  - Luna, Reserve, N.M. and Alpine, AZ: (575) 533-6928.
  - Areas south and west, including San Carlos and Fort Apache Indian Reservations: (877) 701-8201 or (928) 205-9884.
  - Information is also available at: **Website Info:** [www.inciweb.org](http://www.inciweb.org) **Articles:** <http://tinyurl.com/6zvcrck>.
  - **Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/AS\\_NF](http://www.twitter.com/AS_NF) **Flickr (photos):** [www.flickr.com/apachesitgreavesnf](http://www.flickr.com/apachesitgreavesnf).

### Media

- Media should call the following numbers to coordinate interviews:
  - Springerville, Eagar, Greer, Alpine Media: (480) 331-9554.
  - Luna and Reserve, N. M. (east side of fire) Media: (575) 533-6928.
  - Southwest (San Carlos and White Mountain Apache Reservation) Media: (928) 205-9890.