

# Wallow Fire Update

June 17, 2011 6:00 PM



## 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:** 495,016 acres total

**Percent Contained:** 38%

**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

Apache County Sheriff's Office – Residents will be allowed back into Alpine tomorrow morning Saturday June 18, 2011 beginning at 10 am. Please ensure you have valid identification of residency in Alpine.

The **Red Flag Warning** issued by the National Weather Service remains in effect from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. MST for Saturday and Sunday for strong winds and low relative humidity. Critical fire weather conditions can be expected from late morning through early evening today, Saturday and Sunday. Southwest winds are forecast from 15 - 25 mph with gusts of 35 – 45 for today and Saturday. Winds are expected to increase on Sunday to 15 – 25 mph with gusts up to 50 mph. The hot, dry and windy weather coupled with the drought stressed vegetation, and heavy fuel loading in mixed conifer forests have the potential to create extreme fire behavior. Critical fire weather is expected through Sunday.

On the south end the fire continues to back down towards the indirect line which has been constructed along the southern flank. Critical fire weather produced resistance to control of the fire along this flank. Occasional single and group tree torching occurred and when slope, terrain and wind aligned, the fire made uphill runs with torching and spotting. Both fireline and dozer line repair are on-going.

In Nutrioso and Greer, area patrol and hazard tree removal work continues. Firefighters, the Greer FD and Navopache Electric Company are working to develop re-entry plans for evacuees. Significant progress has been made on securing communities despite Red Flag conditions and high winds. The transition from Reinartz's IMT1 to Walker's IMT2 will take place at 6 A.M. Saturday.

On the southeast flank, significant winds pushed fire into the bottom of the Blue River drainage. The temperatures in the canyon's bottom were 90° with relative humidity of 9% and wind speeds up to 40 mph. Continued active fire behavior occurred in other areas today due to gusty southwest winds and dry fuels. There was active surface fire with occasional torching and short slope driven runs. Tomorrow, hoselays will be plumbed from Strayhorse down to Blue River and lines will continue to be prepared for burnout when conditions allow. Hotshot crews were inserted into Raspberry Creek to complete line construction on RD 191 to Blue River and they will be spike camped there.

## Public Safety

A Crisis Intervention Line (928) 333-2683 is available for residents suffering from the stress of living with fire danger. 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.

The State Division of Emergency Management in cooperation with county and local authorities are opening an Individual Assistance Service Center (IASC) tomorrow, June 18 at Round Valley Public Library 179 S. Main St. in Eagar and will serve as a centralized

location for Arizonans from all evacuated communities to find information that will aid in their personal recovery from the fire. The IASC will be open daily from 10:00 Am to 6:00 PM daily.

## Community Meetings

- Critical Incident Stress management sessions will be held at 11a.m. Saturday in the Round Valley Primary School Library, Eagar. The sessions are open to anyone who wants to share personal experiences or obtain services in a safe environment.
- 6:00 p.m. Monday, 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 community of **Greer remains evacuated** due to continued active fire behavior. The Fire Management Team will be meeting with Apache County Sheriff's officials to discuss re-entry. As soon as a decision is reached, [593info.org](http://593info.org) will post the information.

## Evacuee Information

- 10a.m. daily evacuee meetings will continue to be held at the former Evacuation Center at Blue Ridge High School.
- 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) except for residents returning to Nutrioso with escorts from law enforcement.
- 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](http://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](http://www.inciweb.org)

**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, New Mexico (east side of fire) Media : (575) 533-6928
  - Southwest (San Carlos and White Mountain Apache Reservation) Media : (602) 803-4270