

# Wallow Fire Update

June 15, 2011 6:00 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:** 478,452 acres total

**Percent Contained:** 20%

**Resources:** 25 Helicopters, 5 Air Tankers available;  
315 Engines; 78 Water Tenders; 19 Dozers

**Injuries to Date:** 7

**Total Personnel:** 4,656

Includes 22 hotshot crews; 72 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

**Evacuation for Nutrioso, Escudilla, and White Mountain Acres was lifted at 10:00 AM** for residents only. Residents must obtain a pass from the Apache County Sheriff's office at the rodeo grounds in Springerville.

National Weather Service issues a **Red Flag Warning for Thursday and Friday** from 11 AM to 8 PM MST for strong winds from the SW 15 to 25 mph with gusts of 35 – 45 mph; and low relative humidities from 5 to 12%. Fire crews on the Wallow Fire are preparing for strong winds to challenge containment lines.

Firefighters have achieved 20% containment of the 478,452 acre. Crews continue with patrol, hazard tree removal, structure protection, containment line improvement, holding the fire in place, and mop-up activities across the fire. Continued fire line repair work is occurring in the vicinity of Greer in preparation for eventual re-entry by evacuees.

Today has been a continuation of yesterday's strategic burnout operation, which is continuing westward along US 180 toward a dozer line east of Luna Lake. Spotting is a concern, and a one acre spot was contained this morning. Firefighters continue to coordinate with local fire departments to remove hazards in preparation for eventual re-entry to evacuated areas. Air support continues to slow the spread of the fire.

Firefighters continue to hold existing control lines south of Hwy 273 and north of the Black River along the east flank of the fire, including the portion of the fire burning on White Mountain Apache Tribal lands. Control lines south of Black River on the San Carlos Apache Reservation are still holding. Crews continue to construct approximately 10 miles of indirect line on the Highland Trail (33 Trail) between McBride Canyon and Hwy 191 on the south end of the fire. Burnout operations will begin in the area north of this line when the line is completed and conditions allow. Smoke will be visible from this area once the burning operations begin.

## Public Safety

Residents returning to their homes in Nutrioso and White Mountain after evacuating from the Wallow Fire need to take precautions. Utilities have been restored but residents should check for gas leaks. Food left in refrigerators and freezers without electricity likely perished. Air quality due to the fire remains an issue and residents are advised to return to their homes in the afternoon or evening when air quality is better. View <http://inciweb.org/incident/photograph/2262/3/> for an evacuee safety brochure distributed by Apache County.

Elk on or near highways continue to create a safety hazard for the motoring public and firefighters' vehicles, especially at night and early morning.

## Community Meetings Tomorrow.

- 10 A.M. Burdette Hall in San Carlos, AZ, 10 A.M. Thursday, June 16
- 7 P.M. Community Center in Luna, NM

## 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 burned-out trees, unstable slopes and rockfall, as well as burned out power poles are being evaluated and mitigated.

## Evacuee Information

- 10 A.M. daily meeting for **evacuees only** at Blue Ridge High School in Pinetop/Lakeside.
- Evacuees whose Post Office is closed may pick up their mail at the Eagar Post Office.
- 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 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.
- 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](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 Reservation:** Fire restrictions remain in effect. 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 of the fire 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 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