

# Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 5 – MARK BERNAL – INCIDENT COMMANDER



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Hours: 8 am – 8 pm

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## Crews continue constructing fireline as some containment is achieved on the Black Fire

Daily Update 5/21/2022

**Acres:** 120,785 acres (Infrared Flight Friday night)

**Location:** 31 miles NW of Truth or Consequences

**Containment:** 4%

**Personnel:** 615

**Start Date:** Friday, May 13, 2022

**Cause:** Human caused, under investigation

**Fuels:** Timber and tall grass

**Fire Update:** On Friday, the Black Fire showed active fire behavior with wind-driven uphill runs and spreading to the north, east, and south. The east side of the Continental Divide continued to show most activity overnight while the fire moves south through previous fire footprints, including the Silver Fire area. Firefighters also scouted and worked on containment lines while crews assessed the number of structures threatened.

Today, the fire is expected to exhibit active, terrain-driven fire behavior. Fire will move in all directions, including on the east side of the Continental Divide from the evening, through the overnight hours and until just before sunrise, as well as movement through canyons and surrounding terrain to the north and south where fuels are available. A combination of hand crews, aerial ignitions, and aerial resources dropping water and retardant will be used to strengthen firelines and slow the fire's rate of spread where effective.

Along the western perimeter, crews will monitor the fire and work to secure containment lines, with mop up occurring on the southwestern side. Further north, fire personnel will prep fireline and begin constructing direct and indirect line along Forest Road 150, south to Rocky Point Trail. To the east, firefighters will conduct mop up and continue prepping the Titanic Road.

Crews will conduct structural assessments and take point protection actions, such as installing sprinkler systems to protect private property, critical infrastructure, and other values at risk. Firefighters are working day and night to contain the Black Fire. This work is arduous and slow going.

**Evacuations:** Several areas have been evacuated or are in evacuation readiness. The sheriffs of Grant, Catron, and Sierra counties are using the **Ready, Set, Go** program to notify residents of evacuation status. For detailed information on *Ready, Set, Go! New Mexico*, visit <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/ready-set-go-new-mexico/>.

In coordination with Grant, Catron, and Sierra counties, the following areas are under evacuation status:

**GO** – Area 2: Encompasses part of Catron and Sierra Counties, including Round Mountain, Diamond Bar Ranch, Me Own Work Center, Links Ranch, Lookout Mountain, and Sugar Loaf Peak

**GO** – Area 4: Areas in Sierra County, including Hermosa and Mud Spring Mountain

**SET** – Area 1 Encompasses parts of Catron and Sierra Counties, including Beaverhead and Poverty Creek

**GO** – Area 5: Areas in Grant County, including 150 corridor 1.5 south of Tom Moore Trailhead

**SET** – Area 3: Areas in Sierra County, including Winston and Chloride

**SET** – Area 6: Areas in Grant County, including the Dispersed area south of Black Canyon Access point along the 150 corridor

**READY** – Area 7: Areas in Grant County, including 150 corridor Rocky Point CDST and Rocky Canyon Campground

Evacuation maps can be viewed at: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8103/>

**Weather:** Today will be sunny and hazy as southwest to westerly winds continue across the fire area with gusts up to 25mph until this evening. Temperatures will decrease slightly to the mid-70s and relative humidity will increase slightly to 12-15%. This cooling trend and lighter winds will continue through the weekend.

**Road Closures:** Highway 59, is closed from the 59/52 intersections west to the 59/150 intersection, as well as portions of Forest Road 150 (aka North Star Mesa Road or Wall Lake Road) to through traffic. I-25 and other state highways remain open.

**Smoke:** Gusty winds will disperse smoke today, so most of the area will have overall 'Good' conditions throughout the day. However, Truth Or Consequences and Socorro may see periods of smoke and 'Unhealthy' conditions this afternoon. Silver City and Las Cruces should maintain 'Good' air quality. The Black Fire is producing heavy smoke that can be seen from all over the state. The smoke is drifting to the east affecting much of New Mexico before moving northward into Texas. Visit <https://outlooks.wildlandfiresmoke.net/outlook/63a6f2d8?> for additional information.

**Aviation Restrictions:** Airtankers, helicopters, and water scoopers are assisting firefighters' suppression efforts. There is a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) over the Black Fire to allow official aviation resources to operate safely.

**Fire Restrictions:** The Gila National Forest entered Stage 2 Fire Restrictions at 8 a.m., Thursday, May 19, 2022. Visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/gila/alerts-notice/?aid=73002>. The New Mexico State Forester has implemented statewide fire restrictions. Information is available at <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/find-current-fire-restrictions/>.

**More Information:**

**Inciweb:** <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8103/>

**New Mexico Fire information:** <https://nmfireinfo.com/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/GilaNForest>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/gilanforest>