

**Southwest Area
Incident Management Team
TEAM 5 – MIKE SPILDE – INCIDENT COMMANDER**



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Hours: 8 am – 8 pm

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**Cloud Cover to Cause Increased Smoke on Black Fire
Community Meeting will be held tonight at the Winston Country Church at 7pm
Daily Update 5/23/2022**

Acres: 146,679 acres

Location: 31 miles NW of Truth or Consequences

Containment: 8%

Personnel: 661

Start Date: Friday, May 13, 2022

Cause: Human caused, under investigation

Fuels: Timber and tall grass

Structures Lost: 2

Announcement: There will be a community meeting tonight, in person, at 7 pm at the Winston Country Church, 2899 Highway 52, Winston, NM, 87943. Please bring your own chair if you would like to sit during the meeting.

Overview: The Black Fire is expected to be especially active on the northeast and southern sides of the fire today, causing an increase in smoke that will linger in central and southern New Mexico and impact air quality in nearby communities. Firefighters have been working to suppress this fire since it was discovered, and are building fireline to contain the Black Fire as efficiently and safely as possible.

Fire Update: Yesterday, the Black Fire was less active in the morning due to lower temperatures and partial cloud cover. However, as temperatures increased, the fire became very active where fuels and topography aligned, causing the fire to grow an additional 16,000+ acres. Firefighters worked to prep fireline north and south of the fire along roadways. They also conducted firing operations north of the fire around private inholdings to protect structures and try to stop fire progression. On the southeastern part of the fire, helicopters coordinated with ground crews to do helicopter water bucket drops to protect the Hermosa area.

Today, fire will continue its progression to the north, east and south driven by heavy fuels and topography. Fire is expected to show consistent southward spread in the 2010 Aspen and 2013 Silver Fires burn scars. Slightly warmer temperatures and southwest winds of 20 mph are anticipated. Firefighters will conduct firing operations on the southwest side of the fire near Black Canyon to slow progression. North of the fire, crews continue work to protect values like homes and infrastructure in the Turkey Creek area, as well as prep and construct fireline. Crews remain in the Hermosa area today, strengthening firelines north of the community. Structure assessments and identification of values at risk are ongoing.

Evacuations: In coordination with Grant, Catron, and Sierra counties, the following areas are under evacuation status as of 3 pm on Sunday, May 22:

GO – Area 1: New: Starting from Taylor Peak northeast to Kline Mountain, then east to Turkey Creek, following the Bear Creek Road southeast, tying back into the north end of Area 3. The Area 1 portion, including Taylor Ranch and Alexander Peak, remains in GO. The line extends north along the Titanic Road, then east approximately eight miles before heading southeast, tying back into Area 2. The rest of Area 2 remains in Go. The rest of Area 1 remains in Set, and encompasses parts of Catron and Sierra Counties, including Beaverhead and Poverty Creek.

GO – Area 6: No Change: Area 6 east of Forest Road 150 is now in Go. The area west of Forest Road 150 remains in set. This area is in Grant County.

GO – Area 4: No Change: Areas in Sierra County, including Hermosa and Mud Spring Mountain.

GO – Area 5: No Change: Areas in Grant County, including 150 corridor 1.5 south of Tom Moore Trailhead.

GO – Area 7: Change: Area 7 east of Forest Road 150, including the Continental Divide Scenic Trail.

SET – Area 7: Change: Area 7 west of Forest Road 150, including the Rocky Canyon Campground.

SET – Area 3: No Change: Areas in Sierra County, including Winston and Chloride.

SET – Area 8: New: Area beginning at the south end of Area 7, four miles south, then east approximately 27 miles. The area now includes Victorio Park Mountain, Flagpole Mountain, and Pack Trail.

The sheriffs of Grant, Catron, and Sierra counties use the **Ready, Set, Go** evacuation program. For details visit <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/ready-set-go-new-mexico/>.

Weather: Southwest winds are expected today at around 20 mph and will shift to the west/northwest on Tuesday. Relative humidity levels will be around 10%. Southwest winds will return to the fire area by Thursday. A mixture of cloud and sun are expected each day through the week. Temperatures will increase slightly as the week goes on.

Road Closures: Highway 59, is closed from the 59/52 intersections west to the 59/150 intersection. Forest Service Road 150 is closed on North Star Mesa at the Junction of NM Highway 35. I-25 and other state highways remain open.

Smoke: Heavy smoke is expected over the next 48 hours due to cloud cover that will hamper smoke from lifting and dispersing. Winds will blow smoke to the northeast affecting Truth or Consequences, Winston, Magdalena and Socorro with periods of moderate to unhealthy air quality depending on the area. South of the fire will see good air quality for most of the day. Visit

<https://outlooks.wildlandfiresmoke.net/outlook/63a6f2d8?> to view your area's air quality and specific smoke forecast.

Aviation: 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>