

Southwest Area

Incident Management Team

TEAM 5 – MARK BERNAL – INCIDENT COMMANDER



Public Line: 575-249-1264

Media: 575-249-1294

Hours: 8 am – 8 pm

Email: 2022.black@firenet.gov

Evacuations updated as containment steadily increases; Warming trend will bring active fire behavior

Daily Update 5/25/2022

Acres: 167,378 acres

Location: 31 miles NW of Truth or Consequences

Containment: 14%

Personnel: 747

Start Date: Friday, May 13, 2022

Cause: Human-caused, under investigation

Fuels: Timber and tall grass

Structures Lost: 2

Evacuation Update: Effective at 10 pm, Wednesday, May 25, 2022, additional evacuations have been implemented because of fire activity on the Black Fire. In coordination with Grant, Catron, and Sierra counties, the following areas are under a level of evacuation status:

GO – Area 1: New: The Area 1 Go has expanded north. The area runs from Burnt Cabin Flat west along the south side of NM Highway 59 to the junction with FS Rd 150, then south along the east side of FS Rd 150 back to where it connects back to Area 2.

GO – Area 2: No Change: Existing area 2 evacuations remain in place.

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 6: No Change: Area 6 east of Forest Road 150 to the Continental Divide Trail.

GO – Area 7: No Change: Area 7 east of Forest Road 150, including the Continental Divide Scenic Trail.

SET – Area 9: New: From the north edge of Area 1, running north along the Forest Boundary four miles, then east approximately 24 miles then south back to the Area 1 set northern edge.

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

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

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

SET – Area 7: No Change: Area 7 west of Forest Road 150, including the Rocky Canyon Campground.

SET – Area 8: No Change: 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.

READY – Area 10: New: From the northern edge of Area 9, north three miles, then east approximately 24 miles, then south three miles to the edge of Area 9.

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

Community Meeting: There will be a community meeting Thursday, May 26, 2022, at the Ralph Edward Civic Center at 7:00 pm 400 W 4th Street, Truth or Consequences, NM. It will also be live-streamed on the Gila National Forest Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/GilaNForest>. You do not need a Facebook account to view the meeting.

Overview: Firefighters are working hard to contain the Black Fire. While containment increases, so do acres burned, as interior pockets of fuel continue to be consumed by the fire. This will be a slow process, with rugged terrain, inaccessible country and 175 miles of fireline to construct. Communities are encouraged to continue monitoring evacuation status updates and fire activity.

Fire Update: On Tuesday, Red Flag weather conditions across the Black Fire kept fire behavior active with wind-driven spread, and some spotting. The Black Fire was active on the west side of Reeds Peak on the southern edge, as well as on the east side south of the South Fork of the Cuchilla Negro Creek, and continued to move north east toward Franks Mountain.

Today, the Black Fire will continue to be active due to a combination of terrain and weather conditions. Crews will continue to patrol, and secure the containment line along FS Rd 150 boundary. Suppression repair will also begin today as crews chip slash that was cut along the firelines. There will be increased activity on the northern end of the fire as crews conduct firing operations to mitigate unburned pockets of fuel between the primary fire and containment lines. Firefighters will utilize hand and aerial ignitions to strengthen firelines, and aerial resources will continue dropping water and retardant as conditions allow. These aerial operations are conducted by aircraft, including helicopters, air tankers, and scoopers, to assist firefighters on the ground and slow the fire's rate of spread. Nighttime Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) ignitions – also known as drones – are used when conditions are cooler, less windy, and have higher humidity to consume fuels between control lines and the fire's edge.

Weather: A warming trend will begin today with temperatures ranging from the high 80s to the low 90s across the fire area. Winds will be lighter out of the southwest, and relative humidity will remain low. This warming trend will bring critical fire weather as the week progresses.

Road Closures: Highway 59 is closed from the 59/52 intersections west to the 59/150 intersection. Forest Service Road 150 is closed where it intersects Mimbres Trail. I-25 and other state highways remain open.

Smoke: Northwest winds continue today. Smoke impacts will increase with fire activity in the late afternoon into the evenings. Winston and surrounding areas will see unhealthy conditions again today with periods of hazardous in the mid morning hours. Magdalena and Socorro will see good air quality today. Increased fire activity will bring periods of Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (USG) south of the fire. Truth or Consequences will see smoke impacts late in the evening as winds from the northwest continue. Caballo will see periods of moderate smoke throughout the evening hours. Gila Cliff Dwelling may see some periods of moderate smoke with increased fire activity on the southwest part of the fire. Hanover will see smoke increase along the Mimbres river drainage later in the afternoon. More information is available at <https://outlooks.airfire.org/outlook>.

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

Fire Restrictions: The Gila National Forest is under Stage 2 Fire Restrictions. Visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/gila/alerts-notice/?aid=73002> for more information. The New Mexico State Forester has implemented statewide fire restrictions. More information: <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>