



Gila Las Cruces Type 3 Incident Management Team

MARCUS CORNWELL – INCIDENT COMMANDER



For Immediate Release:

Notification for Public Health and Safety

Press Release – June 15, 2026 Firefighters Make Progress on the Bear Fire

Acres: 6,920.4

Location: 18 miles southeast of Quemado, NM

Containment: 11%

Start Date: June 9, 2026

Personnel: 496

Cause: Lightning

Summary: Firefighters increased containment on the Bear Fire yesterday. Fair weather contributed to their progress toward full suppression.

Crews used a variety of tools and tactics to minimize the footprint of the Bear Fire and protect values at risk yesterday. Firefighters constructed handline to protect private land on the fire's eastern flank. They also employed heavy equipment to bolster protection for Mangas Mountain lookout and communications site. With prep work along 11A Road completed, crews finished tactical firing operations to reduce available fuel and limit the fire's potential to spread to the southwest. Prep work around a water well safeguarded an identified value at risk.

Today, resources will work to extend containment lines on the fire's southeastern end. Crews are using direct tactics when possible. Prep work continues around the Mangas Mountain lookout and communications site to ensure those critical values remain protected.

With this week's drying trend, the public should be aware that interior pockets of unburned fuel will likely still produce smoke visible from the surrounding area.

Weather: Today's forecast shows some clouds and a 15% chance of showers. The day will start with higher relative humidity values. Dry air moves in from the north Tuesday. Wednesday is expected to be warm, dry, and breezy.

Safety: A 24-hour Temporary Flight Restriction is also in place. *If you fly, we can't!* The Gila National Forest enacted an [Area Closure Order](#) for the Bear Fire. Along with private dip sites, aircraft are sourcing water out of Quemado Lake. Members of the public should avoid all areas where firefighting operations are occurring.

Evacuations: The Catron County Emergency Management Office and Catron County Sheriffs are implementing the Ready, Set Go! method. Three of the identified zones of private land east of the fire, moved into SET status Thursday evening. Residents are encouraged to monitor official updates and be prepared for potential changing conditions.

Smoke: Smoke may be visible in and around surrounding communities. Air quality will vary based on fire activity, weather, and wind patterns. Residents should reduce prolonged outdoor activity when smoke is present and check the Air Quality Index before recreating or working outdoors. Sensitive groups should take extra precautions to limit smoke exposure. For real-time smoke conditions, visit <https://fire.airnow.gov>.

Fire Restrictions: The Gila National Forest is in Stage 1 Fire Restrictions due to long term severe drought in the Gila region, increased tree mortality across the forest, and forecasted hotter, drier weather conditions. Stage 1 Fire Restrictions limit campfires on forest land to designated recreation sites and campgrounds with constructed metal fire rings. Open burning is also prohibited in the unincorporated area of Catron County and in Catron County Fire District 30.

For more information:

Public Information: 2026.bear@firenet.gov

Incident Information:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/GilaNForest

InciWeb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/nmgf-bear-fire>

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