



Gila Las Cruces Type 3 Incident Management Team

MARCUS CORNWELL – INCIDENT COMMANDER



For Immediate Release:

Notification for Public Health and Safety

Press Release – June 16, 2026

Firefighters prepare for incoming warm weather by securing and strengthening lines

Acres: 7,769

Location: 18 miles southeast of Quemado, NM

Containment: 35%

Start Date: June 9, 2026

Personnel: 495

Cause: Lightning

Summary: Yesterday, firefighters increased containment along the perimeter of the fire.

Protection around values at risk has increased as crews completed preparation around the Mangas Fire Lookout. Firefighters also worked on improving roads for crew's access and safety by removing snags and other hazards. There is a potential for unburned pockets of fuel to burn which might produce smoke visible to the local communities.

Increasing temperature and lower moisture in the forecast will increase fire danger and test current lines. Today, crews will focus on holding and securing lines around all sides of the fire while being prepared to address any new starts. Crews will continue to mitigate risk by cutting hazard trees where necessary and assess areas for future suppression repair work.

Weather: Humidity levels this morning will be lower than the past two days and continue to decrease as drier air and winds move in from the northwest. Temperatures will steadily increase over the next few days.

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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