



Gila Las Cruces Type 3 Incident Management Team

MARCUS CORNWELL – INCIDENT COMMANDER



For Immediate Release:

Notification for Public Health and Safety

Press Release – June 18, 2026 Suppression Repair Underway on Bear Fire

Acres: 7,769 acres

Location: 18 miles southeast of Quemado, NM

Containment: 82%

Start Date: June 9, 2026

Personnel: 358

Cause: Lightning

Summary: Firefighters focused on strengthening and securing containment lines yesterday as hot, dry, and windy conditions presented an increased threat for fire activity across the incident. Crews extinguished hot spots near the fire's edge to keep the fire within its current footprint. As containment continues to increase, resources and personnel assigned to the Bear Fire will be strategically reduced.

Along with securing and strengthening containment lines, crews are beginning suppression repair work. Repair efforts are guided by a plan developed by resource advisors in coordination with the Gila National Forest and the New Mexico Forestry Division. The plan provides direction for crews repairing areas affected by firefighting activities.

Weather: West and northwest winds will bring increased cloud coverage and a chance of moisture today. Temperatures are forecasted to rise over the next few days.

Safety: A 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>

###