



# **SOUTHWEST AREA INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**TEAM 4 – AARON HULBURD – INCIDENT COMMANDER**



## **Red Flag conditions test the Bear Trap Fire**

May 20, 2022 Daily Update

**Acres:** 21,687 acres  
**Containment:** 28%  
**Cause:** Undetermined  
**Total Personnel:** 709

**Start Date:** May 1, 2022  
**Location:** San Mateo Mountains, Magdalena Ranger District, Socorro County, NM  
**Fuels:** Pine, Pinyon-Juniper and Grass

**Highlights:** A Red Flag Warning has been issued for the Bear Trap Fire due to very low humidity and gusty winds. Critically dry conditions and wind gusts up to 35-40 miles per hour will test the strength of control lines throughout the east, south, and west sides of the fire. Under these challenging conditions, firefighters will focus their efforts on closely monitoring fire activity and preventing any fire spread beyond the established control lines. A daily operational briefing video explaining details of the Bear Trap Fire operations can be viewed on the [Cibola National Forest Facebook page](#).

**Operations:** Ahead of the predicted winds, firefighters took advantage of mild weather conditions to further reinforce control lines yesterday. With dozerlines and handlines completed around the southern half of the fire, ground crews ignited interior fuels by hand while helicopter crew members ignited ridgetops from the air. These strategic firing operations help to strengthen control lines by building an already burnt path that widens the line and reduces the likelihood of fire moving across these designated boundaries. Today, firefighters are taking actions to prevent any fire spread during the high wind event, which could limit the use of aircraft. Ground crews are assigned around the fire area to monitor control lines, observe fire behavior, and extinguish any burning material near the lines.

**Weather:** Critical fire weather conditions will develop across the fire today, as stronger and gusty southwest winds combine with a very dry airmass. By late morning, these winds are expected to move from the upper elevations to the lower slopes, with gusty conditions persisting through the afternoon and early evening. Humidity will remain very low throughout the day with temperatures trending slightly downward.

**Closures and Restrictions:** The Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands (NF & NGs) have now issued an updated fire area, road and trail closure ([No. 03-0728](#)) to protect public health and safety during fire operations on the Bear Trap Fire. This closure order expands the previous closure area to provide for continued firefighter safety during wildland fire suppression and emergency operations. This order supersedes the previous order No. 03-0726. Based on high fire danger and severe fire weather conditions, the Cibola NF & NGs have also implemented Stage 2 Fire Restrictions on the Magdalena Ranger District ([No. 03-0724](#)). Both closure orders and maps are available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/cibola/alerts-notice>.

**Safety:** The health and safety of firefighters and the public are always the first priority. Members of the public should stay away from Bear Trap Fire operations. A temporary flight restriction (TFR) is in place over the area, which includes unmanned aircraft, or drones. More information on the dangers drones pose to wildland firefighting aircraft and personnel on the ground can be found at <https://www.nifc.gov/drones/>.

**Smoke:** Smoke from the Bear Trap Fire and other nearby fires may be visible in the areas of Alamo, Datil, Magdalena, Socorro, Winston, and San Antonio, NM. Smoke-sensitive individuals and people with respiratory problems or heart disease are encouraged to take precautionary measures. Information on air quality and protecting your health can be found at the New Mexico Department of Health Environmental Public Health Tracking website: [nmtracking.org](http://nmtracking.org). An interactive smoke map at <https://fire.airnow.gov/> allows you to zoom into your area to see the latest smoke conditions.

Fire updates are posted on [InciWeb](#), [Cibola NF & NGs website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, the [NM Fire Information website](#).

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