



Pass Fire

Gila National Forest

Incident Commanders –
Billy Trujillo IC - Dustin Roper IC (t)
Pass Fire Update June 30, 2023

Information Phone: 575-388-8211 **Hours:** 8 am-4:30 pm

Email: Maribeth.Pecotte@usda.gov

Acres: 57,670

Location: 40 miles west of Winston, NM

Containment: 12%

Personnel: 140, 1 Type 1 Helicopter, 2 Type 3 Helicopters

Start Date: May 18, 2023

Cause: Lightning

Fuels: Timber, piñon/juniper and grass

Fire activity and growth were minimal yesterday, with low to moderate fire behavior observed. The most active area of fire perimeter was along southwest corner in the Log Canyon area above the Middle Fork Gila River. Today, crews plan to complete hand ignitions along the Iron Trail (771) and White Rocks Trail (27) to remove available fuels and establish containment along the southeastern fire perimeter, where fire has been active in the Burnt Corral Canyon area. With these hand ignitions, fire acreage can be expected to be greater tomorrow.

A “confine and contain” strategy allows fire to play its natural role in fire-adapted forest ecosystems, while protecting private land, infrastructure, and natural resource values at risk. Fire is a normal visitor to the Gila landscape and something with which we all have to cope. Ecosystems here are not only adapted to fire, but dependent on the frequent return of low to moderate intensity fire to maintain healthy forest, watershed, and fuels conditions.

The Wildland Fire Crisis Strategy calls for more fire on forest landscapes, at an increased pace and scale, in order to change the trajectory of ever larger and more frequent catastrophic wildfires. Despite inconvenience to visitors and unavoidable smoke impacts, the occurrence of this naturally ignited, low- to moderate-intensity fire today will help reduce the risk of a catastrophic, crown-dominated fire in this area for years into the future.

Increased smoke production can be expected with today’s firing operations. It settles into lower valleys during overnight heat inversions. Low elevation smokey conditions may persist during early morning hours, generally lifting with solar heating.

Weather: Sunny, with highs of 82 – 87 F and west winds of 5 - 12 mph. Conditions will be very dry with 5 – 10% minimum relative humidity. Fire danger is increasing under these hot, dry weather conditions. The need for fire restrictions on the Gila National Forest is reassessed daily. If they are allowed and weather permits, you must attend your campfire at all times, or extinguish it fully when it is not attended. Douse with plenty of water, stir it into the coals, and feel for heat. Extinguished means cold to the touch with your bare hand.

Aviation Restrictions: A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is still in place over the Pass Fire. All non-fire aircraft are restricted. **This includes civilian drones.** Unauthorized aircraft in the area will ground firefighting aircraft, hindering firefighting efforts. If you fly, we can’t.

For More Information:

- **Inciweb:** <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/nmgnf-pass-fire>
- **New Mexico Fire Information:** <https://nmfireinfo.com/>
- **Air Quality:** <https://www.airnow.gov>