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# News Release

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## Dark, Divide, and Davis fires update or July 19, 2023

**RESERVE, NM, July 19, 2023** – The Dark, Divide, and Davis fires are burning with low to moderate fire intensity on the Gila National Forest, Reserve Ranger District. All of these fires were started by lightning strikes last week. Incident Commander Pete Valenzuela assumed command of the cluster of fires Monday evening.

The **Davis Fire**, located north of Collins Park and east of the Continental Divide Trail, has grown to 177 acres (an estimate of 233 acres yesterday was adjusted down due to more accurate infrared mapping). Crews conducted burnout operations today southward along the eastern and western flanks from northern control lines. Ignitions assist with securing identified containment features by removing available fuels, creating a more effective barrier to fire growth. Crews will monitor Continental Divide Trail for users who could be exposed to fire as it moves across the landscape. The affected section of Continental Divide Trail is located east of Eagle Peak from Cox Canyon trailhead south to Bursum Road. Signs are posted north and south of the Davis Fire. Two Hotshot crews, one Type 6 engine, one dozer, one Fire Use Module and various overhead are currently assigned to the Davis Fire.

The **Dark Fire** is located on Corner Mountain about 18 miles southeast of Reserve, New Mexico. Fire behavior was minimal today, flanking, backing, and creeping in grass, brush, and timber understory with increased relative humidity. It has grown to 485 acres, based on infrared mapping. There is a large amount of down woody material throughout the fire area available for fire consumption. Crews are focused on keeping the fire north and east of Forest Road 180 and south of Forest Road 141. One Type 6 engine is currently assigned to the Dark Fire.

The **Divide and Hay fires** will be discussed together as Divide Fire. Together they cover approximately 1,792 acres on the south side of Elk Mountain and in T Bar Canyon. Divide Fire is exhibiting minimal fire behavior, backing, flanking, and creeping. It is burning in grass, brush, and timber understory. Crews conducted hand ignitions along Forest Road 141 and continued preparing along the boundary of Elk Springs subdivision to reduce fuels and protect values at risk. One Hotshot crew, one Type 3 helicopter, 2 Type 6 engines and various overhead are currently assigned to the Divide Fire.

Values at risk across the three wildfire incidents include private property, cultural resources, range infrastructure, threatened or endangered species habitat including Mexican spotted owl and Mexican gray wolf, recreation trails, and timber sale units.

“Higher relative humidity, which bottomed out around 18% today, helped keep fire behavior minimal, allowing crews to prepare ahead of the fires, improving containment features and conducting burnout operations,” said Incident Commander Pete Valenzuela. “Despite higher-than-normal temperatures, there is enough moisture in the area to allow for daily scattered storms over the burn area, though rainfall isn’t expected to amount to much.”

Temperatures are expected to be warmer than normal, with highs in the upper 80s. Scattered rain showers and thunderstorms are expected to pass through the area today, with about 40% chance of precipitation on any of the fires. Gusty, erratic winds are expected associated with passing storms. For more information contact Maribeth Pecotte at 575-388-8211 or [Maribeth.Pecotte@usda.gov](mailto:Maribeth.Pecotte@usda.gov).

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