



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PILOT FIRE IN YAVAPAI COUNTY LIKELY LONG DURATION FIRE

Prescott, AZ (7/5/23) – The terrain-driven Pilot Fire remains active as it burns within historically sparse fuels with added growth due to last year's unusually wet monsoon and winter. It continues to push its way through rugged terrain within the Mohon Mountain range in far northwestern Yavapai County. The fire started Saturday, July 1, 2023, approximately 20 miles east of Wikieup and is burning in a sparsely populated area that has substantial fire history. The fire is located near the O RO Ranch, but at this time is not a threat to the property, its surrounding infrastructure or grazing lands. It is burning within a mixed fuel type of grass, brush, and Pinyon-juniper. Per Air Attack the fire is estimated at 5,000 acres with no containment.

Over the last 24 hours, fire activity has significantly increased and continues to during the mid to late afternoon hours due to seasonally hot temperatures and low relative humidity. As that fire activity intensifies, smoke off the fire may be highly visible to communities within Mohave and Yavapai Counties, and especially along the State Route 93/Interstate 40 corridor. The Department of Forestry and Fire Management's (DFFM) Air Attack (AA) platform is being used to help with aerial reconnaissance and intel gathering to address the fire's behavior, movement, growth, and activity. Overall, the fire remains active on all flanks. The fire is moving to the northwest and has pushed throughout Hop Creek toward Mohon Peak. On the west side, the fire has crossed Walker Creek and moved into Brushy Basin and is headed toward Walker Peak. The fire is making uphill runs in the Denny Mountain-area on the east aspect and will continue to do so until the area sees substantial monsoon activity. Monsoon conditions bring higher humidity levels which help decrease fire activity and allow fires to normally self-suppress. DFFM is also using satellite-based mapping systems and the agency's UAS platform to monitor the fire's activity.

The fire is burning in a remote area, in treacherous terrain, and therefore is very risky and ultimately unsafe to send in hand crews to engage with fire suppression efforts. However, this is still a full suppression fire using natural fire barriers, previous fire burn scars, including the 2022 Adobe Fire and 2018 Happy Fire burn scars, along with natural monsoon activity to assist with suppression efforts. Operationally, the agency has developed management action plans in the event fire behavior intensifies or warrants additional needs. If those are triggered more resources like field spotters and aircraft will be ordered to the incident. At this time there are no structures, infrastructure threatened or values at risk.

This incident can be found on Inciweb and information will be update daily or as needed during the duration of the incident:
<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/aza5s-pilot-fire>

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