



FIRE INCIDENT UPDATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Start Date: Friday, July 19, 2024

Location: 13 miles southwest of Kearny

Personnel Assigned: 154

Evacuation: SET for 3C Ranch

Cause: Undetermined

Acres: 6,900

Containment: 0%

Romero Fire Update Sunday, July 21, 2024

Summary: The fire was discovered Friday, July 19, 2024 with an unknown cause. When it is safe to do so, an investigation will be conducted to determine the cause. The fire is burning in grass and brush to the North of the Freeman Fire that took place last week.

Yesterday, Firefighters were successful with structure protection of Hayden Ranch. Engines and crews worked to prep the structure and retardant was dropped around the property to protect multiple structures and cattle on the ranch. Fire activity was moderate through most of the day until a thunderstorm moved into the area late afternoon. Gusty, erratic winds up to 50 mph created a 180-degree wind shift. Fire crews conducted a firing operation along Barkerville Rd to secure the western edge of the fire while multiple crews and engines worked to secure the east side. The wind-driven fire pushed north-northwest an estimated 650 acres through pockets of heavy fuel, burning within mesquite, grass, brush, and desert shrub. Firing operations and weather influence produced multiple columns of smoke visible to the surrounding communities of Oracle, Mammoth, Kearny and those traveling SR79 and SR77.

Communities within proximity of the fire may see smoke and flames today as temperatures warm up and likely increasing fire activity. Storm chances are increasing with the possibility for high winds over the fire area later this afternoon. Outflow winds could result in extreme fire behavior similar to yesterday.

Today, crews will engage the fire with the objective being full suppression while providing for firefighter safety. With the fire moving North, resources are scouting for new control lines and improving the lines put in place yesterday. There are approximately 154 resources assigned to the fire to include engines, crews, a water tender, medical team and miscellaneous overhead. Aircraft is available to support the fire with a mapping mission planned for later today.

Due to the proximity of the fire to the 3C Ranch west of the fire, near Barkerville Rd, fire operations made the decision to place the ranch in SET evacuation status. That evacuation remains in place. Residents in Pinal County can sign up for emergency alert notifications at: <https://www.pinal.gov/1335/PENS---Pinal-Emergency-Notification-Syst>.

Closures: Freeman Road is closed. Deputies will be placed at roadblocks throughout the fire area. The public is asked to avoid the fire area, including Barkerville and Willow Springs Road. The AZT (Arizona Trail) is closed between Oracle and Kearny. Hikers should plan an alternate route.

Weather: Yesterday, thunderstorms moved into the area late in the evening and scattered precipitation was received. The amount is unknown but fire behavior did moderate during the storm. Sunday weather will be mostly sunny with a chance of thunderstorms moving in this afternoon.

Safety: A TFR (Temporary Flight Restriction) is in place over the fire. Firefighting aircraft and drones are a dangerous combination. Drones in the area could lead to accidents or slow down wildfire suppression operations. If you fly...we can't.

Fire Restrictions: Stage 1 fire restrictions in effect on State Trust lands in Pinal County. Restriction info: <http://wildlandfire.az.gov/>.

Incident Information: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/aza3s-romero>

Twitter: @azstateforestry: <https://twitter.com/azstateforestry>

Facebook: Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management: <https://www.facebook.com/arizonaforestry>

Ready, Set, Go: <https://ein.az.gov/ready-set-go>