



FIRE INCIDENT UPDATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tiffany Davila, 602-540-1036
tdavila@dffm.az.gov

Start Date: Thursday, July 11, 2024

Location: 14 miles northwest of Oracle

Personnel Assigned: 214

Evacuation: None

Resources: 8 hand crews, 5 engines, 4 water tenders, 1 dozer

Cause: Lightning

Acres: 32,568 **Containment:** 65%

Freeman Fire Update Monday, July 15, 2024

Summary: A planned infrared flight over the fire Sunday night was cancelled due to inclement weather. However, Freeman Fire operations flew the fire earlier in the day and prior to storm activity to update acreage and provide additional intelligence to ground operations. The fire was mapped at 32,568 acres. Fire resources have 65% containment on the fire. Containment is along the north, east and southeast flanks of the fire. Those lines continue to hold through wind events. Late Sunday evening a storm system moved through the fire area bringing high winds and some precipitation. However, the fire did not receive enough rain to help with full suppression efforts. On the southwest and west sides of the fire, resources continue their work along the base of the Black Mountains, strengthening containment lines to ensure they hold in any additional wind events. Some pockets of unburned fuel within the fire's interior on that side continue to burn producing some smoke that may be visible to the nearby communities. There is no threat associated with that fuel burning. Engine crews continue patrolling and monitoring the fire's perimeter for any remaining smokes. The GO notification for Willow Springs Ranch was lifted Sunday at 10 am. However, roads within the fire area remain closed to the general public out of public and fire fighter safety. Those roads include, Willow Springs Road at State Route 77, Willow Springs Road at Freeman, Willow Springs Road at Camino Rio, Freeman at Barkerville, and Freeman at State Route 79. As containment increases on the fire, fire operations will right size the incident to the appropriate number of resources for the work load. With that, multiple hand crews and engines will be released over the next 24 hours for rest or reassignment to other fires burning in Arizona. On Tuesday, the incident will transfer from a Type 3 incident to a Type 4.

The fire started Thursday, July 11, 2024, from a lightning strike near the Oak Well Camp. A second lightning strike occurred almost a mile away eventually merging the two fires. Late Thursday night, a storm system moved across the fire area producing outflow winds that fanned the fire in all directions and pushed it out to the southeast toward ranch structures. At that time, and due to the proximity of the fire to the Willow Springs Ranch, fire operations made the decision to evacuate the ranch. Residents in Pinal County can sign up for emergency alert notifications at: <https://www.pinal.gov/1335/PENS---Pinal-Emergency-Notification-Syst>.

Weather: Mostly sunny with a chance of afternoon thunderstorms producing potential wind gusts up to 20 mph.

Safety: 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-freeman-fire>

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>